



An Estheticisation of Oral Contests and Dramatization of Antagonisms in the Context of Songo-Beti's Game in Cameroun

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Abstract: *Songo-beti is a Cameroonian game and a social oral art in line with daily relational paradigms. It is all about a recreational practice setting a fake fight and representing a symbolic situation of violence in a more or less figurative, aesthetic and metaphoric manner. This study entails to analyze this Cameroonian traditional game like a recreational contest within a specific culture. Through a careful observation of recreational practices in the Cameroonian milieu, this research aims at highlighting a purely recreational art of living bound to the African cultural identity. This paper seeks to establish a synergy between recreational activities, oral arts and representations.*

Keywords: *Recreational activities, songo, oral contest, language, sociability.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The imposed deculturation of African people had a remarkable influence on recreational activities. Cameroon culture went through tough challenges due to postcolonial societal shifts. Games from colonial countries were preferred to endogenous practices and knowledge bound to a specific environment; meanwhile artistic or oral practices are permanent creations conveying a specific world view of each cultural universe. Nowadays, despite rampant ethnocentrism, groups of individuals organize themselves in our cities to restore part of the threatened cultural patrimony. They stand for the sustainability of some Cameroonian games. In the City Yaoundé, songo is practiced in various associations and clubs.

This paper considers songo-beti as a "figurative recreational battle" entailing oral contests and focuses on the social and cultural dimensions of the game. It also enables us to complete the formal approach of violence proposed by Simmel (1995), and Elias & Dunning's configurational approach (1986), and to contribute to a quite actual global reflection on oral art anthropology. Are these "Contests for laugh"? Fake battles? What are its rules? This research is based on recreational and aesthetic anthropology. Our statement of the problem is built around a series of questions. What is the notion of figurative contest from an ethnography perspective? At what level do participants define the line between the game and the reality? What are its impacts and how are limits collectively specified? Broadly speaking, what is this pseudo-violence all about? How is it possible to negotiate with it and beyond with the construction of ritualistic or emblematic representations of violence?

Literature on games is flourishing in social sciences. In 1907, the German anthropologist Günter Tessmann presented the riches of songo through funny stories that he actually recorded. Some of our predecessors like Caillois R. (1958), Mizony M. (1971), Laburthe Tolra P. (1984), Bilongo B. (1985), Owona S. (2005 & 2007), Maka Obam (2008), showed interest in this topic. In New Guinea, Godelier (1982) documented similar practices opposing two rival factions. A homogenous class of practices related to battles parodies seems to exist, these parodies are often bound to well-studied festive traditions in contemporary anthropology [Fournier & al., 2009; Crociani-Windland, 2011; Boissevain, 2013; Gauthard, 2014], which combines the euphamisation and theaterisation of customary oppositions. Generally, "figurative battles" take place with the objective of preparing for real battles, for entertainment purposes and the taste of "performance" (within the domain of drama, see Schechner [2006] et Pradier [2017]). Songo game does not depart from the general rule. One can first note that it is a simulated festive conflict"; a "recreational battle" whereby players mimic antagonisms without full commitment. It is a sort of "aesthetisation" of rivalries backed up with violent oral contests, a

ritualized recreational battle involving fighting till the defeat of the opponent and his symbolic death. In a nutshell, these are more or less euphemistic representations of violent situations.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses of an eclectic research design made of mixed research methods enabling the analysis of the topic in the light of many approaches and methods. This research undertakes a deep analysis of songo's practices within the urban milieu. This paper exploits statistical data as well as textual and visual materials. Other data were analyzed with the SPSS software and others softwares like QSR NVivo¹. Typological analysis was carried out on the collected data through questionnaires and individual interviews with 10 "presidents"² of *songo clubs* in 10 centers of public games of Yaoundé city and 130 regular players from 35 to 65 years old. Anonymization techniques were adopted. The protection of "survey participants «under observation and interview, went through an anonymous data process, with names change or obliteration. This quantitative and qualitative research work targets fans of "*songo-ewondo*", which differs from "*songo bulu*" and "*songo eton*" by some features³

In order to elucidate our research problem, we follow an ethno anthropological perspective. Apart from quantitative techniques, this paper uses an opinion sampling method related to the research object. This is a qualitative method enabling a good mastery of the research field, emphasizing metropolitans perceptions and representations of songo. To borrow from Hughes E.C. (1996 : 267)⁴

Le travail de terrain sera envisagé ici comme l'observation des gens in situ : il s'agit de les rencontrer là où ils se trouvent, de rester en leur compagnie en jouant un rôle qui, acceptable pour eux, permette d'observer de près certains de leurs comportements et d'en donner une description qui soit utile pour les sciences sociales tout en ne faisant pas de tort à ceux que l'on observe. Même dans le cas le plus favorable, il n'est pas facile de trouver la démarche appropriée.

[Fieldwork will be seen here as in situ people's observation: it entails meeting them where they are found, remaining in their company by playing a role that allow you to closely observe their behaviors and make useful descriptions for social sciences without harming the people observed. Even in the most favorable situation, it is not easy to find an appropriate approach.] (Translated by author)

We therefore carried out individual interviews in songo's clubs. Since we are from Yaoundé neighborhoods, the ethnographic descriptions done in this article come first and foremost from our direct observation of local realities. However; we followed the recommandations of Jean-Claude Kaufmann (1996:51), « *l'enquêteur doit totalement oublier ses propres opinions et catégories de pensée. Ne penser qu'à une chose : il a un monde à découvrir* » [*a researcher must completely forget his own opinions and categories of thoughts. He must think of only one thing: he has a world to discover*]. (translated by the author)

As we have already mentioned above, in-depth interviews were carried out with privileged informants, especially presidents of songo-clubs and regular players. Interviews were structured with semi-opened and opened questions. The aim being to get exhaustive answers, to sensitive issues of addiction and about the perceptions of the players relatives. In the same line, it was necessary to establish a trusting relationship with each of our interlocutors, through the opportunity they had to express themselves freely. We had difficulties in understanding some people due to their low educational levels. We therefore had to reformulate the questions so as to adapt it to their level of understanding. The objective was to deeply analyse from the inside the statements on described or showcased behaviors. The data extraction was based on an elaborated analytic plan, in line with both elaborated questions and objectives, and the content analysis technic.

2.1. Ethnography of *songo*

Songo is a recreational and brain activity and a historical Beti-specific game. Philippe Laburthe-Tolra (1981: 295)⁵, considers this game as a mean of education. This game was exclusively practiced by men after farm work. Songo is a strategy game played by two individuals. A bamboo, palm or raffia stem cross-divided into two equal part of about a meter in length, each having 7 holes. Two

alignments of boxes facing each other have 5 grains of a tree called *ezezang* (In Ewondo) at the beginning. Thus, each hole has 5 grains to be displaced from right to left with respect to specific rules, in order to pick them at a given time. At the end, the winner is the one who accumulates more pawns than his opponent. In reality, one needs to have 40 pawns to win or 31 to have a draw and the loser is the one that has only 30 pawns.

Moreover, this game is characterized by oral battles and opponent's proverbial replies. These proverbs and their responses keep the flow of the game depending on the situation of the game. Mockeries, provocations, jokes, encouragements are meant to distract the concentration of the opponent and intimidate potential substitutes.

Rules differ depending on the cultural area, from "*Eton Songo*", to "*Ewondo Songo*" and "*Bulu songo*". However, songo is a game that we find mostly in the *Ekang* cultural area made of Beti, Bulu and Fang from the center and south regions of Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Congo. If songo once represented a symbol of a mystical-religious life style, it has become an entertaining, educative, dexterity and skill building game laying emphasis on the cognitive activity of the player, in the course of cultural shifts.. Songo is therefore a recreational activity played in an entertaining mood, with rules conveying a specific world view.

2.2. The sociography of *songo*

Songo was a game generally opposing two male opponents of the same age group. But nowadays women are free to play the game. It is possible for an individual to access the game of the elders once he is trained and introduced, or once he is an adult. From this point of view, women and children who were committed to house cores, they did not take part neither actively nor passively in the game. Generally, village farm work ends up with palm wine tapping, which the audience drinks with cola nuts with/or *ndoj* (guinea pepper). During songo game, one can often notice an audience made up of supporters and observers. The audience can participate actively or passively, sitting or standing, observing with rigor, the evolution of sequences of the game.

However, songo, being a game oriented on the cognitive development of players, the audience is strictly forbidden to advice or guide their favorite candidate. The only way for a supporter to attract the attention of his favorite player is to make use of proverbs and abuses. Moreover, these supporters stand permanently between the game stakeholders. Practically, the *songo* game entails opposing two opponents, each with the objective to win the match or at least get a draw. The game takes place in an open-air space, shading from the sun, during daylight. The appropriate time for this game is the dry season, meanwhile the appropriate days of the week go from Monday to Saturday notwithstanding the funerals organized during the weekends. Also, despite the Christianization of the *Ekang* land, the free periods of Sunday are exploited for songo activities.

2.3. The material of *songo*

This paper is interested in the social and cultural dimensions. It focuses on the notion of figurative battle from a social universe perspective: role playing and oral battles. Fighting or pretending to fight, entails specific materials. *Songo*'s material can be classified in three groups:

- The game crate called « *Mbək* » which is an item of 80 to 100 centimeters long and 12 to 15 centimeters wide. The surface of contact from a top view, is made of 2 or three horizontal parallel rows. The middle row(when it exists) helps both to separate the candidates compartments and to keep the grains obtained. However, the traditional *Mbək* is known for its two rows of 7 deep cells able to accommodate a big fist. These cells are made thanks to wooden division segments. Nowadays, the material used for this upper part is Indian bamboo or water canalization pipes. The set stands on four wooden legs, just like a kitchen bench.
- The pawns are made of *Ndjangsang* grains.
- Chairs or wooden stools on which players are sitting.



Photo1. This is the game crate called « Mbək » with black pawns made of Ndjangsang grains (Photo ABENG EDONGO, Yaoundé, 2018).

2.4. The Rules of *songo*

The main objective for each of players is to win the match, either by recording at least 40 pawns on his side, or by filling one of the adversary's box with 5 paws just as it was at the beginning. It is also possible to have a draw. After a given time during the game, one of the players just needs to have 36 pawns. Furthermore, the specific objective behind the player's motivation is to progressively harvest 2, 3, or 4 pawns methodically from the adversary; these will then be kept in the left hand in case the player is a right-handed person.

The game requires the face to face active participation of two players that engage in a battle, everyone having a total of 35 pawns in the cells of his side of the *Mbeck*. Thus, each cell has 5 pawns at the beginning. Each player plays his game by picking the pawns found in one of his boxes and redistribute them into different cells of the board, in the clockwise direction. They alternately make sure they put a single pawn in each cell until the end of all the pawns at hand and so on and so forth. The distribution begins from one's own boxes to that of the opponent. In case the player finds himself just with one pawn in the hand of distribution, he keeps it by passing it to the conservation hand.

Songo's law permits oral battles. These verbal oppositions are so much endowed with the auspices of fair play and mutual respect, that the protagonists do not need the third person or a referee to ensure impartiality. It is necessary to recall that the application of the law of the game has specific features depending on the cultural groups: the Bulu, the Eton or the Bene, the three people who shared the game in Cameroon.

Mbarga Owona⁶ has the credit for digitalizing this endangered game. One can henceforth play against a computer, thanks to the "*bidoua*" equation or display games that were thought of by the elders, conveyed mathematically nowadays. The author of this marvelous game explains the pathway, the rules and the counterattacks in this software online. There is therefore nothing to envy to the chess game, draughts game and other western imported games. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the advanced scientification of this game may wipe all these endogenous artistic aspects that make the specificities of *songo*. But it remains the only condition for a large scale promotion of this passionate game.

3. MATHEMATICAL ANALYSIS OF SONGO

In this part of the study, we suggest a mathematical analysis inspired from Paul Abouna (2017) works in his book titled « *Introduction à l'anthropologie numérique* » [“Introduction to numerical anthropology”]. The author states that :

« ...les chiffres constituent un lieu de sédimentation ou de condensation de la culture. Lorsqu'ils sont pris individuellement, ils révèlent parfois quelques arcanes des cultures des peuples étudiés par les anthropologues... » (Abouna P., 2017 : 14)

[...figures form a sedimentation or condensation place of culture. When taken individually, they sometimes reveal some secrets of the people's cultures studied by anthropologists ... »] (translated by the author)

Talking about songo's mathematical or numerical analysis requires decoding it so as to update the meaning of numbers and figures that can be revealed. Thus, we are going to pay attention mostly with 6 figures: "2", "3", "4", "5", "7" and "9".

Figure 2

Figure "2" appears at two levels during the game.

- The first is the constitution of two teams or two individuals of the same age group contending with one another.
- The second level applies to the 2 pawns partial profit rule of harvest.

In the Black-African cultural universes, figure "2" refers to the fundamental dichotomy of the elements of the universe according to the following designs: good/evil, right/left; male/female, positive/negative, day/night, etc. This approach stipulates that although two elements opposing each other are antagonistic, they can also be complementary (Mbonji Edjenguèlè, 2001). Figure "2" is the potentiator of energies because without the woman, the man cannot deliver a child and vice versa. Without the negative pole, if the battery only had the positive pole, it will never have produced energy continuously ... Duality is therefore the expression of oppositions functioning inextricably in a binary or pair mode.

Figures 3, 4 and 7

Figures "3" and "4" are befitting in the collection of benefits obtained after sharing pawns by the player. As for figure 7, it appears in Songo:

- At the level of the "7" boxes allocated to each of the players:
- At the level of the total number of pawns, that is $35 \times 2 = 70 \implies 7 + 0 = \underline{7}$

In a mathematical point of view, the addition of two figures (3 and 4) also enables to reach "7" according to the following operation: $3 + 4 = \underline{7}$. In the Tikar cultural universe, man is symbolized by the figure "3" meanwhile the woman is symbolized by figure "4". In this line, the King who represents the sacred and power is himself symbolized by figure "7". It is therefore androgynous since it reveals male personality (figure "3") and the female personality (figure "4").

Figure 5

Figure "5" expresses itself at two levels of the songo game:

- The number of pawns in each box or paly cell is "5". From this point of view, figure "5" is the reference starting point of the game.
- One of the ways to win this game is to successfully put 5 pawns in one of the opponent's boxes. This exploit requiring a proved dexterity lay emphasis on the loser's sanction since he is forbidden to take part to a number of competitions. This illustrates a Beti proverb that argues that: "If you find yourself twice around the same tree during a walk in the bush while looking for your way back home, then you are lost." Losing by receiving 5 pawns in one's box, is an evidence of the loser's recreational and social immaturity.

At the first sight, and considering the universe of figures commonly used in the Beti-Bulu-Fang (Ekang People) cultural universe, figure "5" seems only to represent just a few things. It even appears as an insignificant figure in the songo game. An advanced analysis show that figure "5" declines the median or the central point of numbering from the increasing order of the nine figures known in the Beti's culture.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Figure 1: The median point of nine of the Beti's culture. (Nanga Mvogo, 2019)

Figure "5" seems to define Man from an ontological point of view. Basing our analysis on songo's numerical architecture, figure "5" positions itself as the basic figure, in the light of the elements that make up the essence of being both from the starting point and the perdition point. figure "5" is the center of being, it is the figure that is generally ignored or neglected whereas it is part of the key representations of songo.

Figure "9"

Figure "9" is expressed in songo through two perspectives:

- A game is considered as a draw after obtaining at the end of the distribution, a total number of "36" pawns. An addition of figures "3" and "6" equals to "9".
- Pawns' distribution from the right to the left starting from one of the distributor's box designs an ovoid geometric figure or a circular form as represented below:

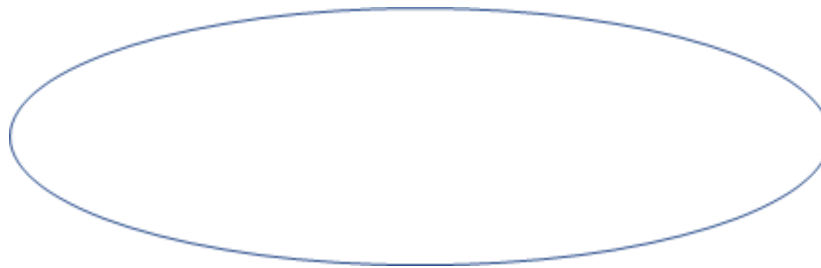


Figure2. Circular form of the songo game (Nanga Mvogo, 2019)

The geometrical form represented above is in reality the stretched representation of a circle. This gives a general ovoid form. However, the ovoid form hereby materialized, gives the impression that the songo game is played in a single turn of pawns distribution, implying a closed figure. That is why a spiral materialization is more expressive.

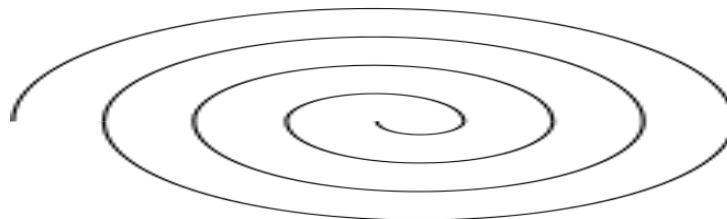


Figure3. Spiral design of the songo game (Nanga Mvogo, 2019)

The set of figures afore-represented is referring to a circle. It is constructed when a ray of "360°", the addition of these figures: $3 + 6 + 0 = 9$. Therefore, it is a link of consubstantiality relationship existing between the circular form and figure "9". From this point of view, figure "9" comes back in the Black-African cultures in general and the Ekang cultural universe in particular. Considered both from the numerical and pictorial dimension it can be found in various local daily activities. According to Fame Ndong (2004), most cultural elements of the Black culture are its the symbols: dances, names, kitchen utensils, etc. On the biological aspect the human body carries its indelible mark, for example the DNA, the shape of the pupils, the shape of the fetus, the number of months of human pregnancy, fingers prints, the shapes of the testicles... Moreover, man's outside world is full: the stars, the planets, the spiral shape of galaxies, etc.

3.1. Functions of Songo in the Cameroon Culture

Songo has the function of knowledge since it enables individuals to integrate new data into their mindset framework. Borrowing from Moscovici (1961)⁷, this knowledge is a reading grid of the individuals' physical, social, and cultural environment. It helps digesting the information through its integration in an existing framework and in line with the shared values of the group they belong to, thus facilitating communication and sharing of information within the group. In a nutshell, representations are a manner of thinking and interpreting the world and daily life. The values and the context in which it evolves, influence the construction of reality. There is always a part of individual or collective creation in representations. That is why they cannot be frozen forever, even if they evolve slowly. With respect to its functions, *songo* is a construction of a complete social reality through sayings, parables and hyperboles. In this occasion, a kind of joking mood is created between

players. That is why each player or observers who take part in the *songo* game will be disoriented by the critics, insults and disrespectful reflections against the loser but also against his family, his lineage, his clan, his village. For example, usually a winner from the neighboring village ask if there are still men in the village of the loser or he wonders why this village is only inhabited by men without wisdom, reasoning or understanding. Therefore, playing *Songo* takes wisdom, reflection, reasoning and other values like patience and observation amongst others.

This helps people to communicate and find their way through their environment. It therefore generate attitudes, opinions and behaviors. Its representation also has a prescriptive aspect that defines what is permitted, tolerable or unacceptable in a given context. Briefly, it allows individuals to orientate their behaviors and their practices, especially faced to strange or new situations. Songo also has the function or the ability to locate individuals and groups of people in a given social field by accepting an elaboration of a satisfying social and personal identity compatible with historically and socially specified standard and value systems. Jodelet (1989) speaks of social affiliation: sharing an idea, a language, it is also confirming a social relationship and an identity. There comes the distinction between "*songo Ewondo*" and "*songo Eton*", often simply called *songo*, and played by the Ekang people.

A better understanding of the game starts from the vocabulary used by the two opponents during the game. The use of this vocabulary is the integral part of *songo*, since it describes the game by commenting on each action, explaining the behavior of the player, and considering the player in his position of winner or loser. Just like in every game, there are rules or laws that the players and the observers must know either to better play as for players or to understand the game as an observer. All this is accepted without physical or verbal violence, especially that one accepts to play with people among whom these fancies are allowed. Therefore, it is abnormal to find a *songo* game between a father and his son, father and son in-law, an employee against his boss etc.

3.2. Oral Battles and The Symbolism of Domestication of Violence

In *songo* game, a part from the game itself is, the engagement of the two protagonists in oral battles aiming at distracting the opponent's reflection. Words are used to confuse the opponent and specially to defeat him psychologically, to have a psychological upper hand. It is worth noting that part of this cultural, social and educative game always entails massive argument, bawdy jokes, proverbs, onomatopoeias and traditional songs conveying the cultural riches of the *sociocultures* having this game as an immaterial patrimony. That is why we have to lay emphasis on the oral battles' representations in the game. As a matter of fact, these representations are a complex result, from the elaboration in which numerous individuals and collective aspects. Jodelet D. (1989 :41) posits that they:

Doivent être étudiées en articulant les éléments affectifs, mentaux et sociaux et en intégrant à côté de la cognition, du langage et de la communication, la prise en compte des rapports sociaux qui affectent les représentations et la réalité matérielle, sociale et idéelle sur lesquelles elles ont à intervenir.

[ought to be studied in materializing the affective, mental and social elements and in including besides cognition, language and communication, taking into consideration social relationships that affect representations and material, social and ideal reality on which they are to intervene.] (translated by the author)

Furthermore, representations also build a system of interpretation, in which the individual interact with his environment. They occur in many cognitive activities and by this aspect, play an essential role in the behavior of the subject. Mbonji Edjenguèlè and Edongo Ntede (2017 : 93-94) argue that :

« Dans la communication locale, tout comportement a une valeur communicative, à condition que les membres de la communauté culturelle les définissent comme tels... Les anthropologues s'intéressent aussi à la communication non verbale car nos paroles, en fonction des cultures, peuvent s'accompagner d'attitudes, de mouvements, de gestes et de mimiques conventionnelles qui ne se comprennent que par ceux qui partagent la même culture. »

In local communication, every behavior has a communicative value, with the condition that the cultural community members define them as such... Anthropologists are also interested in non-verbal communication because our

speeches, with respect to cultures, can entails attitudes, movements, gestures, conventional signs understood by those who share them in the same culture. (translated by the author)

This explains why our paper focuses on the modality of verbal and non-verbal communication in songo. That is the speaking slots, silences, and looks in oral contests and especially kinesics from the stakeholders gestures and body positions during the game. In summary, « *le code secret et compliqué écrit nulle part mais compris de tous* » "the secret code is complicated written nowhere but understood by all" (according to Edward Sapir cited by Yves Winkin (2001)).⁸ The essence of this mastered communication is still to be demonstrated.

3.3. The Meaning of Verbal Pseudo-Violence's Domestication in songo

It is worth recalling that if there is a pseudo-violence in the *songo game*, there is often verbal violence and at times physical violence to be put into context. These verbal and physical deviances are due to the fact that people bet money and valuable items. However, the other game opportunities are the setting of verbal violence metaphors. Since *songo* is one of the games where it is compulsory for players and even the audience to know the rules of the game and oral arts. The game and oral battles are inseparable in *songo* to the extent that mastering only one to the detriment of the other is an imperfection. These jokes are in reality an encouragement to the loser who is called upon to improve and to even overcome his opponent. The game is usually spiced by proverbs, tales, sayings, and contextual abuses. According to Cega (2015)⁹, the pleasure is amplified by oral battles and opponents' answers. Proverbs are uttered depending on the game situation. One can add mockeries, provocations, jokes, encouragements to these. Moreover, each game situation has its proverb and its answer. One can therefore talk to the loser this way "*do men still exist in your village*", or argue that "*his village is only inhabited by people without wisdom, reflexion and understanding*"

This satiric manner of talking and the use of verbal violence metaphor are meant to know and measure the temperament of the player. The latter has to remain steady by only replying using the opponent's style without departing from this framework. Being willingly carried away by the intrinsic battle of the game, is an assessment criteria of one's level of play, cultural knowledge and literature and finally, modal or basic personality. Within the framework of artistic circumstances of the game, there cannot be tensions because the game is beyond what is at stake. *Songo* game has artistic, mathematical, strategic and even human basis. One need to be elegant in pawns throwing; songs and stories which animate the game and its manifestations. The mastery of mental calculation, logical notions and linear combinations are assets that one must have to be a good player.

4. CONCLUSION

At the end of this research, one can argue that beyond the entertaining feature of *songo*, it stands for a hierarchical and structured set expressed in associations of practices (clubs). It promotes group harmony, reinforces confidence and boost energy. It is definitely a cultural foundation knowing that the message conveyed falls within the mechanisms of appropriation of language and speech, notably: endogenous knowledge of African. Adherents of this informal framework of communication on the qualities of recreational practice, known as a voluntary adhesion of those who in an "ethical order" and the respect of formalized rules that regulate hostile desires. This subordinate framework has diversified economic, political and cultural logics. *Songo* is therefore, full of significance. For that reason, it has a social function. That is why we engaged in a reflection on the "arts of doing" (of Certeau, 1980) and living in a universe of identification by focusing on oral battles. *Songo* is a practice consisting of "pretending to fight" without the mediator, representing a symbolic situation of violence in a more or less figurative, metaphoric or demounting manner. *Songo* is a symbolic representation, an oral art and an aesthetic situation of violence in the context of African games. All the same, its adherents are victims of social prejudice. They are often considered as lazy people whereas they seemed to have been socialized in a particular essential philosophy.

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¹ The statistical analysis was not processed from an explanatory or interpretative perspective. It is rather exploratory and descriptive.

² I would like to thank the stakeholders of this project for making our work possible, especially ‘Edongo Mpila Nicolas the President of Kondengui *songo*. I also thank all the *Songo*'s players that I met and who helped me to understand this recreational activity with time. I have discovered new ways of socializing.’

³ In Eton *songo*, in case one keeps 20 pawns in a box, it is no more useful, no advantage can come from it. But it is possible to get 14 pawns in a box. Meanwhile in the Ewondo's *Songo*, the game can move on even with 30 pawns in a box, and one can get 15 pawns instead of 14 in the Bulu game. Finally, In the Bulu's *Songo*, one can transfer pawns even at the sixth box, which is not done in the Ewondo's game. The Bulu call it ‘Tcha tcha’

⁴Hughes, E.C., 1996. "The role of fieldwork in social sciences, "in the sociological point of view 'regard sociologique', Paris, EHESS, p.267.

⁵ The Lords of the Forest '*Les Seigneurs de la forêt*', page 295.

⁶ Serge Mbarga Owona author of the *songo* book, *the Songo game*. Harmattan Editions, Paris (France) 2005. And the games of African Calculations. Harmattan Edition, Paris (France) 2007.

⁷ The theory of social representations, deeply rooted in the social sciences, theorized for the first time in his book: *Psychoanalysis, his image and the public*. (PUF, 1961/1976).

⁸ In his book: *Anthropologie de la communication*.

⁹ Online paper titled: *Culture: le jeu de Songoh published on 22 february 2015*

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