'*MBOKA MUNDELE*': AFRICANITY, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE MILITARIZATION OF PROPHETS IN BRAZZAVILLE AND KINSHASA

Sarah Demart and Joseph Tonda

In recent decades, Kinshasa and Brazzaville have given rise to movements of prophecy, messianic fervour and revival (Pentecostalist in nature) in the field of religion. The patterns of liberation and deliverance that can be discerned here reflect forms of identity politics in which Africanity, in the ethnic and national sense, is not only a major issue, but a component that is increasingly associated with armed conflict. In the context of long-term history (*histoire longue*), one may be tempted to read this as a continuation or resumption of Kongo forms of prophetic activity that were in evidence throughout the precolonial and colonial periods (Balandier 1953; Asch 1983; Mokoko-Gampiot 2004; Mélice 2011). However, although the ethnic and spatial fragmentation and promiscuity at the heart of these political and religious disputes are largely dependent on colonial borders and/or intermingling, the internal conflicts to which these ethno-identity dynamics lead are the expression of a radical change of paradigm. And this paradigm depends on the postcolonial situation (Mbembe 2001) that we will be

SARAH DEMART is a social scientist at the Centre d'Études de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations (CEDEM) at the University of Liège, Belgium and the Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre at KU Leuven, Belgium. Her thesis on religious revival in Congo is the subject of a forthcoming work, 'Les territoires de la délivrance: l'enchevêtrement spatio-temporel du Réveil congolais en RDC et diaspora', being published by Karthala in 2016. She has also published a series of articles in the *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* (2008; 2013), *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* (2013), *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* (2008), *African Diaspora* (2013), *SociologieS* (2014; 2016) and *Brussels Studies* (2013). Her current research focuses on postcolonial legacies in Belgium as the former colonial metropolis of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Email: sarah.demart@ulg.ac.be

JOSEPH TONDA is a professor of sociology and anthropology, and a writer. He teaches at the University of Libreville, Gabon, having formerly held a position at the University of Brazzaville, Congo, where he headed the Department of Sociology between 1991 and 1997. His research focuses on the violence of the *imaginaires* of power in the fields of religion, politics and the body. He has published several articles in international journals, and his key work, *Le Souverain modern: le Corps du pouvoir en Afrique centrale (Congo, Gabon)*, was published by Karthala in Paris in 2005. This work was preceded by *La Guérison divine en Afrique centrale (Congo, Gabon)* (Paris: Karthala, 2002). He is also the co-editor, with Jean-Pierre Missié, of *Les Églises et la société congolaise d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006). In December 2015, Karthala published his book *L'Impérialisme postcolonial*. His first novel, *Chiens de foudre*, was published in Libreville in 2013, by ODEM Editions. This translated article represents his first major publication in English. Email: josephtonda@yahoo.fr

This paper was translated from an original French article by Andrew Brown, a writer and translator who works mostly in the social sciences, and who has translated books and articles on a variety of African themes, including Pentecostal movements, armed conflict in Chad, the Burundian civil war and Tunisia. The original French text is available with the supplementary material published with the online version of this article at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000012>.

interpreting via the logic of the spatio-temporal and social dovetailing that shapes these religious spaces.

While these churches preach a living God and the possibility of human beings playing a part as the actors of their own lives, and while they exhort people to break out of the pattern of misfortune and failure and to believe that nothing is impossible for those who believe, they are also the cause of social divisions, and lead to a process of breakdown of the kind witnessed in the accusations of witchcraft that have burst onto the scene since the 1990s. Although these processes are not identifiable from an institutional point of view, they are linked to transversal tendencies that are developed in different ways by pastoral idiosyncrasies: we will address these tendencies in terms of territory and its socio-historical reconstructions.

In this sense, we would like to investigate the relationship of civilizational exteriority suggested by the way in which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Congolese town was given the emic name *Mboka Mundele*, the village or country of the Whites, by its Black inhabitants. From a historical and socio-anthropological point of view, this relationship of exteriority could be linked to another, one established by scientific thought: the exteriority of the term 'religion'[1] vis-à-vis African civilization (Marshall 2014).

In both Congos, religion was, indeed, designated by *Nzambe* (God), a term that was varied in many different ways through its identifications and its functions. At the historical level, *Nzambe* was thus identified as '*Nzambe ya ba* Catholics' (the Catholic Church), '*Nzambe ya ba* Protestants' (the Protestant Church), '*Nzambe ya* Bakongo' (the Church of the Bakongo), Kimbanguism, Matswanism, the Prophetic Mission of Lassy Zéphirin or '*Nzambe ya ba Makwa*' (the Mission of the Cedar). All these names are part of a logic of pluralization of ethnic identity. On a more functional level, *Nzambe*, understood as religion *or* church, refers to a historical centre of socialization with a certain modern cast in matters of economics, politics, culture, medicine and health, albeit one that also has a link to mortality since it is the main place where death is socialized.

If we can agree on the fact that the term 'pluralization' suggests a context in which monopolies collapse, we can deduce that the term 'religious pluralism' refers to the idea of a religious market that is solidary with other markets (in health, education or development, but also in death, sex, guns, politics, identities, and so on) and therefore other plural supplies of goods and services, material or symbolic. In this context (the updating of religious pluralism in this particular space), *Mboka Mundele* involves a questioning of the functions of socialization as it affects death, the economy, politics and the ethnicity of churches. Indeed, although the term *Mboka Mundele* (which once meant the city in contrast to the village) is no longer used by the inhabitants of the two Congolese capitals, a thorough examination of the plural figures of *Mundele*, as an agent of Africanity, can explain the processes of competition, influence and differentiation at work in this cross-border religious field.

What is involved here is not a perspective comparing Brazzaville and Kinshasa, but an updating of the logics common to a space whose geographical boundaries,

---

[1]See, for example, the article by Mondher Kilani, 'La religion dans la sphère civile. Une critique du désenchantement', *Esprit*, February 2011, pp. 91–111.

as inherited from the late nineteenth century, do not exhaust processes of continuity and fluidity (Gondola 1997). Connected by permanent 'flows' of populations, products and spirits from an 'Africanized' Christianity, the two Congolese capitals present us with a picture of a market that is both unique and cross-border. Among other examples, we may cite the countless Christian television channels of Kinshasa that broadcast to Brazzaville, or the all-powerful 'Christian Community of Women Messengers of Christ', which was created in Brazzaville in 1990 but is based in Kinshasa (Missié 2006). On the other hand, the diaspora territories forged over the last few decades by migratory and missionary movements comprise politico-religious extensions that make the Kinshasa and Brazzaville spaces part of a transnational territory.

The data presented here are part of research conducted separately in Congolese religious circles for several years. Longer or shorter periods of immersive research were conducted in some forty churches in these two cities. Semi-structured interviews and the monitoring of the Congolese press, both religious and non-religious, through the internet have formed the bulk of the empirical material of this article, sometimes supplemented by participant observation in the private spaces of practitioners and leaders. These data form part of a much broader framework of research involving other places in the country, in Central Africa (Tonda 2002; 2005) and in Europe (Demart 2008; 2013), but these areas will not be addressed in this article, nor will the processes internal to the field, the relationships between churches or the practices of their members.

AFRICANITY IN *MBOKA MINDELE*

From the 'native' perspective suggested by the expression *Mboka Mundele*, the relationship between Africanity and religious pluralism informs a conceptualization of the experience of 'colonial modernity' (Stoler 2002; Cooper 2010). The perspective suggested here has nothing to do with any idea of the postcolonial 'incommensurability' (Chakrabarty 2008) of the 'vision' of the natives. Rather, we would like to show how the contemporary forms of *Mboka Mundele*, the city, inform Africanity as an operator of religious pluralism as well as the identity dynamics shaping spaces that were organized historically as required by the needs of the *Mundele*, 'the White', a figure that is plural in its historical essence. So it is on the basis of the relation between, on the one hand, Africanity – a word that suggests ideas of 'tradition', of 'ancestral character', of 'authenticity' and thus of 'cultural particularism' – and, on the other, *Mundele* that we will be examining the native experience of the 'Cruel City' (Beti 1954) in religious fields as being inseparable from the political field.

The plural figure of Mundele

The political space has comprised the first market of the production of death and its deadly identities since at least the advent of the global and neoliberal era and its various types of 'magic', of which Pentecostalism is an essential modality (Comaroff and Comaroff 2010; Tonda 2001). But, insofar as they are *Mboka Mundele*, Brazzaville and Kinshasa were produced according to the principle of the economic consumption of the black labour force by the colonial market.

This market, which had forcibly replaced the native markets, was conceptualized in the African imagination according to a logic of sacrifice rendered by the term *Mundele* and its variations: *Mundele Ngulu* (the White as pig), *Mundele Mwinda* (the White as light), *Mundele Ndombe* (the White Negro) and *Bula Matari* (the state).

So *Mundele* is a concept that expresses more than the physical person of the 'White'. Thus, in Kinshasa, and to a lesser extent in Brazzaville, the story of *Mundele*'s functions was noted at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the Whites turning the Blacks into pigs whose flesh, reduced to a pâté, is consumed from tin cans (Lomami Tchibamba 2007). This story of the cannibalism of the 'Whites' did not spare missionaries, especially the Catholics. This was a tacit accusation of witchcraft that, according to Mélice (2011), was also to favour the advent of the Kongo prophet Simon Kimbangu in the early twentieth century. Kimbangu was known as the 'Black Christ', and his elevation to martyr status, like that of the Kongo prophetess Kimpa Vita who preceded him (in the early eighteenth century), would be permanently associated with the emergence of an 'inculturated' Christianity in both Congos.

The figure of *Mundele* was also conceptualized in the notion of *Bula Matari* (the 'breaker of rocks'), a nickname given to the explorer H. M. Stanley and generically designating 'territorial administrators, colonials, soldiers and police' (Lomami Tchibamba 2007: 317) – the colonial and postcolonial state. In addition to the deadly violence of the colonial era, it is the mixture of ethnically differentiated populations that the plural figure of *Mundele* came to represent. For it was on the building sites of *Mondele Ngulu* or *Bula Matari*, as well as in its churches, schools, barracks and clinics – in short, those places where they experienced the practices and ideologies of *Mundele* – that these Africans also experienced a certain ethnic pluralism of identity.[2]

But this power that could consume bodies and devour the flesh of the Blacks deployed a predatory activity following the biopolitical recruitment of the production of urban spaces, which were marked by a plurality of people whose identities were not only ethnic. This biopolitics simultaneously divided and mixed the dead and the living. Structured both by a strong symbolic logic (the economic sacrifice of the flesh of the Blacks, the coexistence of the dead and the living) and by plural logics of ethnic identity, these spaces were destined to serve as places in which ethnic powers could nest. This dovetailing resulted both from Africanity and from religious powers shaped by market logics, the logics of an enduring 'material dispute'.

The constructions of Africanity

Within the colonial context of pre-independence the figure of *Mundele Ndombe* (Black-White) emerges: this referred to those 'Africans who mimic, to a ridiculous degree, the habits and attitudes of Europeans' (Lomami Tchibamba 2007: 333; Mulumba 2007). The terms in which the Europeans are described constitute a severe criticism of the 'White Negro'. This criticism also forms part of a

---

[2]Urban sociology and history have often focused on these phenomena; see Balandier (especially 1970), Gondola (1997) and Martin (2005).

demand for Africanity aimed at emancipating Africans from their ridiculous be-
haviour and their 'aping' (Martin-Granel 2010) of Whites. This idea was already
being voiced by the prophets,[3] who saw religious and political emancipation as de-
pendent on the advent of a strong and true Africanity brought about by a re-
reading of the Bible, and is being taken up by contemporary prophetic and
Pentecostal trends, but in a quite different way since the new birth is accompanied
by calls for a clean break with 'traditions', the past, kinship, and so on.

The requirement of 'emancipation' through Africanity was also a topic, during
colonization, to which colonialism and its churches (Makiobo 2004) devoted
much thought. In this sense, Africanity as a world of normative meanings for eth-
nically differentiated populations forced to share the same living spaces imposed
itself as the product of the relationship between Africans and the world of norms
of the *Mundele, Bula Matari* and 'his' God.

In Brazzaville and Kinshasa – the capitals of the two states keen to 'become
modern' – 'Bantu socialism'[4] and 'resorting to authenticity'[5] were unable to
impose the 'African' development being advocated, since the levers of the national
economy were in the hands of the *Mundele*.[6] In other words, these 'African values'
could not break away from the White domination that had created Brazzaville and
Kinshasa in accordance with its need for a labour force (Gondola 1997). This logic
explains why, across borders, the first leaders of the political market were, ethnic-
ally, the Bakongo, who were quicker than the Teke to enrol in the colonial labour
force in all areas of colonial modernity, including the 'religious innovations' that
marked the 'inculturation' of Christianity and influenced postcolonial politics.

Thus, Africanity emerged as an ideology that was inseparable from the histor-
ical experience of the ethnic and religious pluralization of identity on *Mundele*
sites; and *Mundele* was a power imagined or experienced as a power of death
(*Mundele Ngulu* and *Mundele Mwinda*), organizing *Mboka Mundele* in accord-
ance with its need for the *consumption* of the indigenous *labour force* and based
on the principle of 'command' (Mbembe 2001). As an ideology with prophetic
or messianic connotations,[7] Africanity would establish its bearers as figures
who, without distinction, were political, religious, economic, national and
ethno-national, struggling against the death principle of *Mundele* power.

Postcolonial heterotopias

At the current time, one could say that Brazzaville and Kinshasa still operate
according to the scheme described by the indigenous concepts of *Mundele
Ngulu* and *Mundele Mwinda*. Thus, in Kinshasa, the crowded cemeteries, the

---

[3]Simon Kimbangu is the most emblematic, but he is far from being the only one, just as the
space of the Kongo does not account for all the prophetic enterprises found throughout
Congolese colonial history.

[4]Under President Alphonse Massamba-Débat (1963–68).

[5]From 1971 to 1997 under President Mobutu (see Ndaywel è Nziem 1998).

[6]Plural of *mundele*.

[7]Mobutu and, before him, the Reverend Father Tempels, both supporters of Africanity, were
also both the founders of churches. For more on Tempels, see Fabian (1971) and Mary (1997:
47–74), and see Serge M'Boukou, 'Mobutu, roi du Zaïre. Essai de socio-anthropologie politique
à partir d'une figure dictatoriale', *Le Portique*, May 2007 <http://leportique.revues.org/index1379.
html>, accessed 2 December 2009.

abandoned corpses in the morgue and the permanent *matangas* (mourning rites) can lead to talk of necropolises and thanatocracy (De Boeck 2009). To a lesser extent, the same situation has been observable in Brazzaville, especially after the wars of the 1990s and 2000s. Therefore, the reconstruction of the religious market in these two cities in recent years appears to be closely linked to their characteristics as necropolises or *heterotopias*,[8] one of whose forms is, significantly enough, the cemetery.[9]

The coexistence of the living and the dead that reconstructs *Mboka Mundele* in comparison with the 'village of the dead' can be read as an extreme manifestation of much broader processes that make the city a place of *religious socialization* and the *politicization of death* (Vangu NGuimbi 1997; Tonda 2000). Religious socialization is evident in the family's enforced disengagement in the treatment of death by a plurality of groups, including the forms of solidarity established by the churches. The 'Cruel City' is imposed here as a 'dead city', an *other place* produced by the system of *Mundele*, and partly reproduced and 'governed' by Papa-pastors who establish and multiply these *other places* or *heterotopias* – in people's homes, where the dead are displayed before burial; in the streets, through which the funeral processions pass; and in the courtyards of morgues, public buildings and stadiums, among other places. This involvement of religious charismata in the pluralization of the treatment of death occurs, significantly, at the same time as we see emerging new forms of pluralization of those who cause death: militiamen and soldiers, 'child witches' (De Boeck 2000) and 'night husbands', whose relationship with religious pluralism can easily be observed. The emergence of so-called child witches in Kinshasa's urban space is emblematic of this relation. Not only is it contemporary with the media explosion of the 'work of God' (Tonda 2002), but it aligns with the business carried out by the revivalist churches (Pype 2009; 2011; Demart 2013; Demart *et al.* 2013). The process of the production of childhood as a 'scourge' is, for example, largely the result of an unregulated current in the 'Revival' in which the persecution of witches and an Africanity that is seen as evil are inseparable.

It is in this context that strong, literate personalities, socialized in the 'world religions' in Weber's sense, and in 'revolutionary' or 'authentic' single parties that are distinguished by ethno-nationality, are emerging as 'the businessmen of God'. Fernando Kutino, Ntoumi, Yaucat Guendi and Ne Muanda Nsemi are four politico-religious figures who embody an ideology of Africanity related to complex types of 'magic' and processes of pluralization. Their biographical trajectories bring out the 'logic of accumulation' (Dozon 1995) and capitalization of

---

[8]We are here referring to the definition of 'other spaces' given by Michel Foucault through the notion of heterotopias, which he uses to describe real places operating as 'counter-locations, types of actually realised utopias in which the real locations, all the other real locations that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted, sorts of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable' (Foucault 2001: 1571–81). In Kinshasa, Filip De Boeck includes as heterotopias: churches, bars, nightclubs, the body, the street, theatres, podiums, stadiums and, of course, cemeteries (cf. De Boeck and Jacquemin 2006: 96). Sarah Demart, meanwhile, draws on this concept to put into perspective the (re-)composition of religious territories associated with the Revival and included in the long history of (pre)colonial prophetic movements and postcolonial political liturgies (see Demart 2010).
[9]See Filip De Boeck's film *Cemetery State* (2009).

these prophets, in terms of power, knowledge and assets, which almost inevitably brings them face to face with actors in the political market. We have also decided to focus on their strong investment in public and media space and their extraordinary ability to mobilize crowds around a certain form of Africanity.

ARCHBISHOP KUTINO: FROM PROSPERITY TO CONGOLITY

Coming from the Ministry of Fepaco-Nzambe Malamu, who took him in when he was 'crazy', and later a pioneer in bringing the gospel of prosperity to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Archbishop Kutino revealed himself to the public in the late 1980s. This was partly thanks to the support of a very wealthy Dutch evangelist, Johan Maasbach, who placed the first Christian radio and television channel at Kutino's disposal. The social success that was displayed for many years by 'Archbishop Kutino', the head of his television and radio channel and an important member of the SAPE,[10] reflected a luxurious lifestyle that included frequent trips to Europe. The Kinshasa pastor is apparently of Angolan origin, although he mainly showcases his spiritual origins so as to demonstrate the power of Jesus. The fetishistic practices of his Kongo parents demonstrate Africa's inability to escape poverty and mediocrity, while his piety and faith in Christ justify his own social and economic success.

In 2003, a new discourse started to make itself heard. The context was that of the 'transition' marked by the assassination of Laurent-Désiré Kabila (in 2001), the accession of his son Joseph Kabila as transitional president, the war of Ugandan–Rwandan aggression that began in 1998, and the Sun City Agreement of 2002 (which, among other things, recognized the Churches of the Revival in the form of the ERC – Église du réveil du Congo – as the sixth denomination in the country). This period of transition continued into 2006, with legislative and presidential elections that were eventually held in 2006. Returning from a trip to Europe and the United States, the Archbishop launched the programme 'Let's save Congo' on his television channel. This 'patriotic revival', as it is called, gained a vast audience among the Congolese population.

Very soon, however, the Archbishop focused on the figure of the President, who was held responsible for the Rwandan aggression that had been taking place since 1996 in the east of the country. He repeated the charges made in 2001 by Honoré Ngbanda,[11] a sworn supporter of Mobutu but one who had been 'cleansed' in the Churches of the Revival[12] and who, from his exile in Paris, accused Joseph Kabila of being Rwandan. Without going into the details of this politico-religious scheme of deliverance, where the figure of diabolical evil is located within the self (be that 'self' individual, cultural or national), we will note that the churches' accusation of witchcraft, drawing its full impact from the climate of suspicion, would

---

[10]For more on the SAPE, the Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Elegantes (Society of Party-goers and Elegant Persons), which is associated with travelling to Europe, see Gandoulou (1984: 213).

[11]Former Minister of Defence of Zaire and former special adviser to Mobutu in charge of special services.

[12]Like many dignitaries of the regime when the country was 'democratized' in the early 1990s (see Ngandu Nkashama 1995; Ndaywel è Nziem 1993: 102).

permanently leave its mark on political debate; in 2006, as in 2011, opposition candidates would counter the *mopaya* (the foreigner), who was more or less implicitly accused of being a Trojan Horse for the war, with the slogan '*mwana mboka*' ('child of the country').[13]

Above all, from 2003 Archbishop Kutino would experience legal problems that eventually landed him in jail. In June 2003, he organized a rally in Kinshasa, following which a police raid took place on the premises of his TV channel. Material was destroyed and broadcasting halted for six months. Kutino then went into 'forced' exile in France, where he established a parish of his church. On his return to the DRC in May 2006, the Archbishop was given a hero's welcome as a symbol of Congolese resistance. He organized a 'thanksgiving service', after which he was arrested in his office in possession of weapons of war.

In June 2006, the press disclosed that the military court had sentenced Kutino to twenty years in prison, to serve a minimum of ten years without parole, for 'inciting hatred, illegal possession of weapons of war, criminal association and attempted murder' of another pastor. The sentence was upheld on appeal in 2008 on the basis of the attempted murder of Pastor Ngalasi, whose church was nearby. The press then referred to a settling of accounts between the pastors over a 'land issue', while the population was outraged by the indictment of the Archbishop. In the eyes of the faithful, and for much of the public, his trial confirmed their suspicions that the head of state seemed to be attempting to 'silence' the man of God. However, at the same time, the charges gradually revealed the details of the disappearance of the *mabonza* (offerings) supposedly invested in the purchase of the plot of land. And so, for others – often those who were not members of the revivalist churches – Archbishop Kutino was a swindler and an adventurer, and his theology of prosperity was mainly perceived as an instrument for making himself rich and the population as a whole poor.

In the DRC, as in the diaspora, pastors and Christians of the Revival mobilized to denounce the violation of Kutino's human rights (Demart and Bodeux 2013). Amnesty International issued several reports. Demonstrations were held in support, in Kinshasa and in the diaspora, denouncing the political machinations at work. In Kinshasa, some demonstrators were arrested. The ERC was divided: for its leading pastors, the 'Congolity' of the head of state was not in any doubt, or at least was a secondary issue compared with his political plans (restoring peace and leading the country into elections). These pastors, often from Katanga, as was the head of state, were then accused of corruption and of a betrayal of Kutino, a founding member of the ERC. In the churches of the ERC, members were often caught between two ideological and political positions, and some reached a compromise by abstaining from voting. In 2014, the Archbishop was granted a presidential pardon. He left jail transformed, emaciated and apparently in very poor health.

We cannot go into the details of the trial here, nor into the different trends of the Revival that this conflict revealed and reshaped, but it is important to note that the Archbishop's history makes explicit his penchant for weapons. A first prison sentence of eight months with no remission in 1996 followed the revelation that he had not only weapons of war but also politico-religious links with Mobutu's

---

[13]See Demart and Bodeux (2013).

supporters, if not the intelligence services.[14] But the shift from a theology of prosperity to 'patriotic revival' renders intelligible a shift in the 'blockage'[15] and a significant change in the location of the Africanity that needed to be resisted. This movement refers to the material dispute that was created by the theology of prosperity but that was also illustrated, in a concrete way, by the case of the plot of land. Was this a sort of repetition of the primal scene of conversion to the God of the *Mindele*, the provider of material power (Mbembe 1993; Bayart 1998)? How, then, can one avoid suggesting that there is an inextricable link between material, political and spiritual powers in the wars waged against the Devil in the 'territories of deliverance' (Demart 2010), and, beyond that, in all markets of the occult, just as there is in the diamond or coltan markets,[16] continuously expanding since the beginning of a neoliberal era that was defined as the end of the era of borders? In the rhetoric of tradition, with the fetishistic practices that are closely linked to it and comprise a 'blockage', is this material dispute (*le contentieux materiel*) not the idiom of a power struggle mainly involving the state, accused of siding with the enemy because of the assumed foreign origin of the head of state? The trajectory of Pastor Ntoumi in 'the other Congo' supports this hypothesis through his social and political ascent as a result of an 'opposition', manifested here by an unprecedented use of arms.

PASTOR NTOUMI: THE 'ENVOY' OF TERROR AND RECONCILIATION

Formerly known as Frédéric Bitsangou, until 1997 Pastor Ntoumi looked after the health of the mentally ill whom he gathered from the streets of Brazzaville and treated in his church in Bakongo. In 1997, when (on 5 June) war broke out between the militia of General Sassou Nguesso and that of Pascal Lissouba, Bitsangou, the so-called 'envoy', emerged as someone who was at once a military, political, ethnic and mystic figure. His ability to inflict death on a massive scale was then added to his roster of abilities and charisma, and to the way in which he capitalized on them.

On 15 October 1997, the victory of the militia troops of Sassou Nguesso, helped by Angolan troops and by the flight of Bernard Kolélas, Pascal Lissouba's Prime Minister and founder of the Ninjas militia, led Pastor Bitsangou to organize militia violence in the Kongo region of Pool, in the south-east of the country. His militia comprised his patients and also young men, the majority of whom were former Ninjas militiamen of Kolélas, himself endowed in the collective imagination with the aura of the extraordinary prophetic and messianic powers of the Kongo tradition.

---

[14]We are here relying on the testimony of several pastors and his former bodyguard, now a worker in the church of Pastor Ngalasi, who after many negotiations agreed to go back over his years with Archbishop Kutino (1992–96). We have also partly followed the trial of Archbishop Kutino in 2007–08 (held in Makala, Kinshasa).

[15]In the Pentecostal vocabulary, 'blockage' refers to the action of witches and can relate to work, health, sexuality, marriage or migration, among other aspects of an individual's life.

[16]This is the real issue at stake in the war of aggression occurring in eastern Congo.

As the press wrote in 2007, 'guru and healer, he [Ntoumi] reigns over this army of barefoot soldiers who indulge both in armed terror against the population and in the construction of basic infrastructures (i.e. schools, clinics) and various manual trades which bring in substantial revenue'.[17]

The politics of death and the material dispute that guided the military-religious action of terror spread by Ntoumi and his mystical and mystified soldiers are expressed in journalistic rhetoric in the common terms of a tribal or ethnic Africanity. We need simply note that this terror is not only directed against government forces; it also falls on the 'ethnic kinsfolk' (the 'populations') of the leader and his fighters, which helps us understand the inherently ideological character of such rhetoric. The terror of Pastor Ntoumi appears, indeed, as an *ethnically anti-kinsfolk* terror that thereby turns child soldiers, militias called *Nsilulu*, into 'child witches' who violate the bodily integrity of their 'kinsfolk' with their physical and sexual weapons.

On the level of the political game, Ntoumi would be defined as 'a friend of the United States and President Bush, whom he contrasts with President Sassou Nguesso, who in his view is supported by France'.[18] It was in the name of this 'friendship' that he would demand the presence of US officials[19] at the negotiating table, which resulted in the agreement of 17 March 2003.[20] Thus, a 'mediator' from Gabon, a representative of the World Bank and another from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were invited to take part in the peace negotiations between the National Resistance Council (Conseil national de la résistance or CNR) of Ntoumi and the Congolese government. Following the agreement, the US ambassador in Brazzaville proposed his 'assistance' to the military man of God who had now become a politician and apostle of peace. But, above all, this agreement gave its blessing to the military-religious action of the pastor by bringing him onto the national political scene. After twelve years of underground resistance, he was named 'Delegate General in charge of promoting the values of peace and repairing the consequences of war' in December 2009.

This politico-religious conversion reflected the insecurity he fostered as a member of the 'opposition' in Pool, in the Kongo region. It would, of course, be interesting to examine the ethnic cleansing carried out by the pastor in the context of the psychiatric normalization enterprise previously conducted by means of the Gospel, on the one hand, and in the context of the overall policy framework, and the issues relating to Franco-American strategies in the region, on the other. However, as far as we are concerned, let us note especially that this agreement confirmed the political career of Pastor Ntoumi by capitalizing on his ability to deal out death while reducing Africanity to an effective ideology, obscuring its historical link with a certain power. In this case, that power was the

---

[17] *Continental: Magazine panafricain d'information*, 64, October 2007, p. 19.

[18] See Centre d'Information géopolitique (2004) 'Prophètes, églises et milices au Congo-Brazzaville'. Paris: Commission des Recours des Réfugiés (CRR), 24 August <https://web.archive.org/web/20071108212205/http://www.commission-refugies.fr/IMG/pdf/Congo-prophetes_Eglises_et_milices.pdf>.

[19] The article indicates the refusal of the Congolese government to invite Americans to these negotiations (*ibid.*).

[20] *Ibid.*

Mundele or *Bula Matari* system, which was inherited and reconfigured by *Mundele Ndombe* (the White Negro), under pressure, in all areas, from material dispute and the anti-kinship logic as it affected ethnicity and lineage. Many of our respondents in Brazzaville have argued that Ntoumi was being used by the government and the Congolese army (officers are said to have benefited from the money disbursed by the state to wage war against the warlike pastor). This is likely. However, it does not entirely account for the fact that the ethno-national logic of his mission was belied to a significant extent by his actions and the transformation of the Kongo region of Pool into a military-religious 'camp'.

The 'transnationalism' demanded and staged through a network providing support for the political rise of the pastor contrasted strongly with another form of transnationalism, that of Pastor William Arsène Yaucat Guendi, as evidenced by its place of production: Europe.

WILLIAM YAUCAT GUENDI: 'PROPHET OF THE NATIONS' OR 'MAKWA PROPHET'?

It was in Paris that William, a former activist of the Union of Socialist Youth of the Congolese Labour Party (Parti congolais du travail or PCT), encountered God's divine power. While in Algeria, he was 'guided' towards the Institute of Economics although he preferred computer studies, given the 'plethora in the economic sector in our country', and after three years of study he changed subject.

In Paris, as part of the engineering and programming syllabus, he attended a conference on 'The computerization of the Third World and its consequences'. During the buffet after the conference, he heard 'people singing in the premises next door'. After the praise giving, some words caught his attention: 'The Lord saves, the Lord heals.' Then came the testimony of various people, including a woman cured of a 'generalized cancer' and a twelve-year-old girl, 'originally a dwarf, who has resumed her growth after the "things" that had condemned her had been burned'. William enquired of the head of the religious group: 'Sir, tell me, what is this sect?'

The 'cult' in question was an evangelical congregation called 'Meeting Hope' ('Rencontre Espérance'), which gave him a Bible. William began to read in order, he said, to 'contradict the gentleman'. To do this, he needed to formulate 'as many questions as possible'. However, from this position of 'doubt', he was 'overwhelmed' and began to 'speak strangely', before meeting a man who told him: 'The Lord has said, "Seek and you will find."' This man gave him the teaching on the Sermon on the Mount, adding: 'Keep carefully what you have just received.' Thus began the Paris-based prophetic-therapeutic vocation of the man who considers himself the 'father of the spiritual revival in Congo Brazzaville', first in white circles (not without competition from the *marabouts*), and later extending far beyond these.

A few years later he returned to his home country, and, in 1987, he founded his church: the Prophetic and Apostolic Universal Mission of the Cedar, more commonly known as 'the Mission of the Cedar' or 'William'. The church is located in the northern part of the capital; in the politico-ethnic geography of Brazzaville, inherited from the colonial biopolitics of *Mundele*, the north of the city

corresponds to expansions of the originally multi-ethnic district of Poto Poto. Although the establishment of the church in this area has followed a geopolitical or ethno-national spatial logic, the 'Prophet of the Nations' would also, like Pastor Ntoumi, be confronted with the logic of death that is constitutive of colonial and postcolonial power.

For the members of his Makwa ethnic group (based in the north of the country), the arrival of a Makwa prophet essentially indicated the advent of their own God, one that competed with the God of the Bakongo. For William, however, the important point was to define himself as 'Prophet of the Nations'. And in this attempt to define his mission, the 'prophet' went so far as to prophesy against the interests of his brothers in the north, announcing the defeat of their political leader in the presidential elections. On the same day, 13 April 1997, six weeks before the start of the war, the members of his church were savagely beaten in the northern districts of Brazzaville and driven away by the Cobra militia of General Sassou Nguesso (Tonda 1997).

William's prophecy recognized the challenge posed by the 'northern' single party and its leaders, who spoke in religious terms of Satanism and witchcraft. From the perspective of the northern supporters of Sassou Nguesso, this prophecy showed that William was a northern traitor in the service of the ethno-regional cause of southern Kongo. The violence against church members was a harbinger of war in 1997, and took place inside the 'North Camp' (Tonda 1998): it would reveal a major issue, irreducible to the ethnic arguments put forward, when the pillaging of goods punctuated the fighting, regardless of the ethno-regional camps in which this took place.

The material dispute here appears at the heart of a massive production of death. William's religious enterprise nonetheless demonstrated that it was fully included within the economic logic of material dispute, particularly through his aims for 'development', to which the village of Djiri can bear witness. With a population of more than 700 people, this village, which in many respects displays the characteristics of a camp of '*disciplinarisation*' (Foucault 1997: 163) by means of economic and religious knowledge, turned the Prophet of the Nations into a powerful economic entrepreneur employing a workforce disciplined by the Pentecostal fervour that he was able to produce, maintain and strengthen by such mechanisms as publicizing his work in the media, including in the church's own newspaper and website.

Here, two dynamic processes of identity are dovetailed. We see the national and transnational ambitions of the leader, on the one hand, and the affirmation of ethnic identity of the faithful, endorsed by the relations between the Prophet of the Nations and the traditionalist Congolese authorities in Kinshasa, on the other.[21] However, when investigating the confusion surrounding border ambitions as opposed to the ethno-prophetic demands of a religious movement, we cannot ignore the *Bundu dia Kongo* movement in Congo-Kinshasa.

---

[21]On 24 March 2010, the Prophet of the Nations received the award for 'Perfect agent of development' from the Ordre Divin de l'Autorité traditionnelle (Divine Order of Traditional Authority) in Kinshasa (see *Les Dépêches de Brazzaville*, no. 955, 26 March 2010).

NE MUANDA NSEMI AND THE RESTORATION OF KONGO TERRITORY

Bundu dia Kongo (BDK)[22] claims to be fighting for the rehabilitation of the cultural values of the Kongo ethnic group and for the rebirth of the civilizations that existed in Central Africa before the arrival of *Mundele*, the White man. As such, it challenges the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), whose borders were established by the Berlin Act. But while the movement has existed since 1986,[23] the 2000s were marked by major clashes between this prophetic movement and the government in Kinshasa. While the religious movement has denounced the massacres orchestrated by the state in the province of Bas-Congo since 2002, the state has accused the BDK of acts of insurrection (including the assassination of officials from state enterprises) and secessionist intentions.

On the BDK website, it says that the founder of the movement was visited by the Spirit of God in 1969, while he was a chemistry student at the University of Lovanium (Kinshasa); the Spirit revealed to him that Simon Kimbangu was unable to complete his mission and his work had been deflected from its path: 'Lead my people to the "Kongo Nzila" because the Kongo tradition is the main axis of the universal religion adapted to the mentality of the African Negro peoples. The Kongo religion will be the soul of the Black African Renaissance.'[24] In line with the classical trajectory of prophetic careers, Muanda Nsemi refused the mission, given his scientific training, saying: 'I've never been interested in religion. I am not qualified to perform such a task.'[25]

Not until seventeen years later did he accept the mission and establish the BDK, whose objective was not only to promote the 'renaissance' of the African people and its values but to restore economic resources to the geographical area of the former Kongo Kingdom. The movement appears both as a 'staging post for integration' of foreigners from countries in the area of the former Kongo Kingdom (including the two Congos and North Angola) and as a 'barrier excluding non-natives of this area' (see Kiangu Sindani 1992: 71–4), namely Whites and ethnic groups that have become 'mixed' with the Bakongo. Following this logic, Kinshasa has been confiscated by the Bangala, originally from Equateur (under the Mobutu regime), and the Baswahili, originally from the east (under Joseph Kabila's regime), while the country's independence is the result of Kongo nationalist federalism and the capital was part of the former Kongo Kingdom.

In the 2000s, a series of clashes and massacres took place in Bas-Congo. The followers of the BDK attacked government representatives, including the non-Kongo leaders of state-run companies. Under the Minister of the Interior, General Denis Kalume, government repression was ruthless. In 2005 alone, there were over one hundred dead, including both followers of the movement and members of the police. The insistence on the way in which Kongo mentality

---

[22]See the doctoral thesis (unpublished) on this subject by Odon Kawaya Meya: 'Ethnographie de Bundu dia Kongo en RDC. Religion, gouvernance, pluralité normative et résilience'; thesis defended on 13 September 2014 at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve.

[23]Recognized on 11 June 1988 by a decree of the Minister of Justice and approved on 14 July 1995 by a decree of the Minister of Social Affairs.

[24]See <http://www.bundudiakongo.org/>, accessed 22 December 2010.

[25]*Ibid.*

and culture had been literally defiled by the ethnic mix resulting from colonial and precolonial occupation was expressed in the following terms:

> sending police, with their genocidal mentality, to a province with a noble mentality, is a disaster for the province, a moral catastrophe for the aboriginal people in the province. From 1965 to date, a centralizing and dictatorial unitarianism has failed. The Territorial Army of Non-natives has spread anti-values banned by the Sacred Law of the Lord Akongo. The time has thus come to draw the lessons from this negative past, and to change course. (quoted in Kiangu Sindani 1992)

In 2006, Muanda Nsemi was elected Member of the National Assembly as an independent candidate for the Luozi region in Bas-Congo. However, this election did not end the fighting. Between June 2006 and February 2007, there was more bloodshed in Bas-Congo as a challenge was mounted to the outcome of the election on behalf of the governor of the region, Mbatshi Mbatsha, a member of the PPRD (Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie), the ruling party. He was accused of not being Mukongo; he was in fact from the Mayombe, a region of Bas-Congo. It was claimed that there had been fifty deaths, and there was a renewed outbreak of violence in 2008. Eventually, the movement was banned and urged to become a political party in order to remove any ambiguity – and this finally became a reality with the arrival of the party *Bundu Dia Mayala*, with Ne Muanda Nsemi as its president.

Since his election to the National Assembly, Ne Muanda Nsemi has denied the charges against the BDK and has denounced the methods of the 'restoration of state authority'. In 2008, those attending a parliamentary session could hear him denying each of the charges laid by the state: these extended from the forms of mediation that had been created by the movement to deal with the failures of a 'corrupt' state, and that were not in any way linked to the 'courts', to the 'alleged' links between the BDK and the Ninjas of Pastor Ntoumi (see above) or the FLEC (the Cabinda independence movement in Angola). For Ne Muanda Nsemi, these accusations of BDK militarization were part of a 'complete put-up job by the state' to attract the sympathy of Congo Brazzaville and Angola for the 'massacre of the Bas-Congos'.

In 2009, Lokasola N'Koy Bosenge noted in an article published on the Société civile (civil society) website that 'once again, everything now suggests that the powers that be are about to honour for the umpteenth time those who had opted to challenge them by military means'.[26] Observers could draw a comparison with the CNDP (Conseil national pour la défense du peuple) of Laurent Nkunda,[27] who, having waged war in the eastern DRC, was 'rewarded' by ministerial positions in the provincial government. Would this movement today be the subject of such discriminatory treatment if it were once as militarily strong as the

---

[26]'Serait-il prudent et juste d'ignorer politiquement la question de Bundu Dia Kongo?', *Société civile*, accessed 4 January 2011.

[27]A Tutsi officer, promoted to the rank of Brigadier General; during the Transition, he refused to join the new national army. He championed protection of his ethnic group and fomented a rebellion that raged until August 2009, when he was arrested by Rwanda, which, to this day, refuses to extradite him to Kinshasa.

CNDP of Laurent Nkunda? The question remains open; however, the dossier was brought up again in connection with the case of Chebeya, a human rights activist whose assassination in June 2010 was linked to 'dossiers' that were compromising for the state and that concerned the massacres of followers of the BDK and the mystical-military rebellion of Enyele, an insurrection that took place in Equateur. These arguments are regularly brandished by the opposition.

However, Ne Muanda Nsemi's career was heading towards an incorporation within the centralizing project of the state; in 2011, he stood under the banner of another party with ethnic rather than religious overtones, 'Congopax', and was elected as member of parliament for the city of Kinshasa. His language now expressed a more conciliatory attitude towards power; this was ideologically consistent with several leaders from Bas-Congo who were calling on people to support the government and break away from a systematic posture of opposition.

CONCLUSION

As characters with multiple or plural vocations, these pastors and prophets embody the deep intricacies of different social fields within postcolonial African societies. The dynamic processes that are intrinsic to them form and inform the relationship between Africanity and religious pluralism within territories 'originally' considered as 'villages or countries of the Whites' – that is, villages or countries of modernity. In this sense, we can say that *Mboka Mondele* indicates a structural *elsewhere* from which a set of things can be imagined, conceived or carried out, starting with Africanity in relation to the dynamic processes of national, ethno-national and/or transnational identity produced by these spaces.

Thus, the processes of conflict, competition and alliance at work are expressed through differentiated and strategic uses of the Bible, as a symbol of modernity, and the idiom of witchcraft (and thus of practices and representations of 'occult economies'), as a symbol of Africanity. These practices reflect not only the belief of 'everyone' (both Christians and 'pagans') in the contents of the myths that define them but also the fact that the Bible and witchcraft are being set up as weapons of war against each other. Vested with what is simultaneously a spiritual and a political agency,[28] these 'weapons' exercise their power indiscriminately, without regard for the spatio-temporal variations in the conflict intrinsic to these religious forms. The logics that govern the process whereby misfortune and 'blockages' (regarding individual success, health and national development) in customs, attitudes, kinship or power lead to religious geographies can be heuristically apprehended in the long term (*temps long*) and through multiple perspectives. This is particularly true when it comes to distinguishing what is a variation of scale as opposed to a difference of logic in the transformation of the mechanisms of deliverance. For throughout the prophetic-Pentecostal market, a notable continuity can be discerned. Just as the misfortunes of the individual are referred to the family economy, those of the nation can be interpreted in accordance with the logic of a 'we' or a collective (family) 'body' subject to 'blockages' or

---

[28]On this concept, which is attributed to art objects and fetishes and means an 'intention', akin to that of a human mind, see Gell (1998) and also Ortner (2006).

'external' attacks with 'internal' complicity. The case of Archbishop Kutino shows particularly clearly the logical continuity between a theology of prosperity and an accusation of witchcraft in the guise of ethno-nationalism. The careers of Pastor Ntoumi and Prophet of the Nations William Yaucat Guendi, meanwhile, are examples of religious vocations closely related to the trajectories of political militancy and divine healing, which lead to original entrepreneurships in 'development' and 'political healing' after a period of ethno-national conflict. And the Kongo prophetism that Ne Muanda Nsemi has established against the post-colonial state articulates the idea of economic development through the emergence of an ethno-transnational religion that could revive a precolonial territory.

In different forms, the transition to military action at the behest of, or against, religious movements systematically links ethnicity to material dispute whose variations inform the mythical *and* contemporary figures of *Mundele*. Through their involvement in the work of God, *mosala ya Nzambe*, in *Mboka mundele*, the men of God confront identity issues and the political, economic and mortuary questions that constitute the institutionalization of religious pluralism in this space. These markets invested by religious leaders – which have their entrepreneurs, their clients, their marketing strategies, their 'places' and 'non-places' (Augé 2008) – are often indistinguishable from the markets of 'occult economies' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2010), thanks to sometimes spectacular conversions in the politico-religious and military-religious fields. The resulting blurring of categories and typologies signals the dovetailing of the registers and temporalities that underlie these religious enterprises and innovations.

The notion of 'necropolitics' (*nécropolitique*) developed by Mbembe (2006) may be related here to the militias of the religious chiefs, those 'war machines' that allow the religious power whose constituency is the ethnic group (*ethnie*) or the nation to make 'foreignness' (of the Rwandan or any other 'race') a justification for killing.

The blurring that results from this also applies to the empowerment of religious-political schemes, such as the accusation about the origins of the Congolese president, that are largely taken up outside the churches – for instance, within the political movements of the diaspora that are openly 'anti-pastor' (Demart and Bodeux 2013) or those that disqualify Honoré Ngbanda because of his Mobutist past, while repeating the central argument about Congolity conveyed by the accusation about the Rwandan origins of the head of state.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the neoliberal era of political pluralism, which in Brazzaville and Kinshasa followed the era of single parties, was marked by the rise of leaders mainly located in the Pentecostal religious market and having a more or less direct connection with the markets of death, whose rhetoric and military expression are currently among the most significant forms. How, then, can we fail to analyse political-religious or even military-religious conversions in terms of the 'capacity for sacralisation of urban space based on the use of ancient and contemporary foundation myths' (Dorier-Apprill 2006)? But above all, in these heterotopias, the reference to *Mindele*, those 'ghosts',[29] reveals, in the context of endless transition (Mbembe 2001; 2006; Marshall 2009), the

---

[29]This is how, in the fifteenth century, the people of the Kongo coast referred to the Portuguese from the other side of the ocean.

potential violence of 'imperial debris' (Stoler 2008), those remnants of the colonial era, the effects of which, in the lives of people or environments (social or religious, for instance), continue to question the strength of the imperial legacy far beyond its fragmentation.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The original French text, '"*Mboka Mundele*": Africanité, pluralisation religieuse et militarisation des prophètes dans les villes de Brazzaville et Kinshasa', on which this translation is based, is available with the online version of this article at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0001972016000012>.

REFERENCES

Asch, S. (1983) *L'Église du prophète Kimbangu. De ses origines à son rôle actuel au Zaïre*. Paris: Karthala.

Augé, M. (2008) *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. Translated by J. Howe. London: Verso.

Balandier, G. (1953) 'Messianismes et nationalismes en Afrique Noire', *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 14: 41–65.

Balandier, G. (1970) *The Sociology of Black Africa: social dynamics in central Africa*. Translated by D. Garman. London: Deutsch.

Bayart, J.-F. (1998) 'Fait missionnaire et politique du ventre: une lecture foucaldienne', *Le Fait Missionnaire* 6: 9–38.

Beti, M. [under the pseudonym Eza Boto] (1954) *Ville cruelle*. Paris: Présence Africaine.

Chakrabarty, D. (2008) *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference*. Princeton NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Comaroff, J. and J. L. Comaroff (2010) *Zombies et frontières à l'ère néolibérale. Le cas de l'Afrique du sud post-apartheid*. Translated by J. David. Paris: Les Prairies Ordinaires.

Cooper, F. (2010) *Le colonialisme en question. Théorie, connaissance, histoire*. Paris: Payot.

De Boeck, F. (2000) 'Le "deuxième monde" et les "enfants-sorciers" en République Démocratique du Congo', *Politique Africaine* 80: 32–57.

De Boeck, F. (2009) 'Death matters: intimacy, violence and the production of social knowledge by urban youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo' in A. Pinto Ribeiro (ed.), *Can There Be Life Without the Other?* Manchester: Carcanet Press.

De Boeck, F. and J.-P. Jacquemin (2006) 'La ville de Kinshasa, une architecture du verbe', *Esprit* 12: 79–105.

Demart, S. (2008) 'Le "combat pour l'intégration" des églises issues du Réveil congolais (RDC)', *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 24 (3): 45–167.

Demart, S. (2010) 'Mises en perspectives historique et plurilocalisée du Réveil congolais (Bruxelles, Kinshasa, Paris, Toulouse)'. Doctoral thesis, University of Toulouse-le Mirail and University of Louvain-la-Neuve.

Demart, S. (2013) 'De la transgression des normes morales et sexuelles dans les églises de réveil congolaises (en RDC et en diaspora)', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 4 (212): 783–811.

Demart, S. and L. Bodeux (2013) 'Postcolonial stakes of DRC political space: 50 years after independence', *African Diaspora* 6 (1): 72–96.

Demart, S., B. Meiers and A. Mélice (2013) 'Géographies religieuses et migrations postcoloniales: déclinaisons kimbanguistes, pentecôtistes, olangistes en Belgique', *African Diaspora* 6 (1): 122–49.

Dorier-Apprill, E. (2006) 'Les échelles du pluralisme religieux en Afrique sub-saharienne', *L'Information Géographique* 70 (4): 46–65.

Dozon, J.-P. (1995) *La Cause des prophètes: politique et religion en Afrique contemporain*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Fabian, J. (1971) *Jamaa: a charismatic movement in Katanga*. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press.

Foucault, M. (1997 [1976]) *'Il faut défendre la société': cours au Collège de France*. Paris: Hautes Études, Éditions Gallimard and Éditions du Seuil.

Foucault, M. (2001 [1967]) 'Des espaces autres' in *Dits et écrits*, volume 2. Paris: Gallimard.

Gandoulou, J.-D. (1984) *Entre Paris et Bas-Congo*. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou.

Gell, A. (1998) *Art and Agency: an anthropological theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gondola, D. (1997) *Villes Miroirs*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Kiangu Sindani, E. (1992) 'Les identités régionales et ethniques dans l'Ouest de la République démocratique du 49 Congo (Bas-Congo et Kwango-Kwilu)' in B. Jewsiewicki and L. N'sanda Buleli (eds), *Constructions, négociations et dérives des identités régionales dans les États des Grands Lacs africains: approche comparative*. Quebec and Bukavu, DRC: Chaire de recherche du Canada en histoire comparée de la mémoire, Université Laval and Réseau Démographie, Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), Unité d'enseignement et de recherche sur l'histoire de la mémoire, Institut pédagogique supérieur.

Lomami Tchibamba, P. (2007) *Ah! Mbongo*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Makiobo, C. (2004) *Église catholique et mutations socio-politiques au Congo-Zaïre. La contestation du régime de Mobutu*. Paris: L'Harmattan and Congo/Zaïre Histoire & Société.

Marshall, R. (2009) *Political Spiritualities: the Pentecostal revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press.

Marshall, R. (2014) 'Christianity, anthropology, politics', *Current Anthropology* 55 (Supplement 10): S344–S356.

Martin, P. M. (2005) *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville*. Paris: Karthala.

Martin-Granel, N. (2010) 'Singeries au Congo', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 198–199–200: 1113–45.

Mary, A. (1997) 'La religion des anthropologues et l'anthropologie religieuse des théologiens' in J. Joncheray (ed.), *Approches scientifiques des faits religieux*. Paris: Beauschesne.

Mbembe, A. (1993) 'La prolifération du divin en Afrique' in G. Kepel (ed.), *Les Politiques de Dieu*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Mbembe, A. (2001) *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Mbembe, A. (2006) 'Nécropolitique', *Raisons Politiques* 1 (21): 29–60.

Mélice, A. (2011) 'Anthropologie du néokimbanguisme: un imaginaire fragmenté et délocalisé'. PhD thesis, University of Liège.

Missié, J.-P. (2006) 'Les églises de Réveil et l'imaginaire sorcelaire au Congo' in J. Tonda and J.-P. Missié (eds), *Les Églises et la société congolaise aujourd'hui*. Paris: Karthala.

Mokoko-Gampiot, A. (2004) *Kimbanguisme et identité noire*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Mulumba, J. (2007) 'L'évolué au Congo belge: l'homme à l'identité en pieces', *Mondes Francophones: Revue mondiale des francophonies* <http://mondesfrancophones.com/tag/articles/page/15/>.

Ndaywel è Nziem, I. (1993) *La société zaïroise dans le miroir de son discours religieux (1990–1993)*. Zaïre, Années 90, volume 3. Brussels: Institut Africain and CEDAF.

Ndaywel è Nziem, I. (1998) *Histoire générale du Congo*. Bruxelles: De Boeck.

Ngandu Nkashama, P. (1995) *Les magiciens du repentir: les confessions de Frère Dominique (Sakombi Inongo)*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Ortner, S. (2006) *Anthropology and Social Theory: culture, power, and the acting subject*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

Pype, K. (2009) 'Media celebrity, charisma and morality in post-Mobutu Kinshasa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35 (3): 541–55.

Pype, K. (2011) 'Confession cum deliverance: in/dividuality of the subject among Kinshasa's born-again Christians', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 41 (3): 280–310.

Stoler, A. L. (2002) *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: race and the intimate in colonial rule*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Stoler, A. L. (2008) 'Imperial debris: reflections on ruins and ruination', *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (2): 191–219.

Tonda, J. (1997) 'La démocratie aux risques du prophétisme et du corps-sexe féminin', *Politique Africaine* 67: 103–12.

Tonda, J. (1998) 'La guerre dans le "Camp Nord" au Congo-Brazzaville: ethnicité et ethos de la consommation/consummation', *Politique Africaine* 72: 50–67.

Tonda, J. (2000) 'Enjeux du deuil et négociations des rapports sociaux des sexes au Congo', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 157: 5–24.

Tonda, J. (2001) 'Pentecôtisme et "contentieux materiel" en Afrique centrale. La magie du système capitaliste', *Social Compass* 58 (1): 1–19.

Tonda, J. (2002) *La Guérison divine en Afrique centrale (Congo, Gabon)*. Paris: Karthala.

Tonda, J. (2005) *Le Souverain moderne. Le corps du pouvoir en Afrique centrale (Congo, Gabon)*. Paris: Karthala.

Vangu Nguimbi, I. (1997) *Jeunesse, funérailles et contestation socio-politique en Afrique*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

ABSTRACT

In recent decades, Kinshasa and Brazzaville have given rise to movements of prophecy, messianic fervour and revival (Pentecostalist in nature) in the field of religion. The patterns of liberation and deliverance that can be discerned here reflect forms of identity politics in which Africanity, in the ethnic and national sense, is not only a major issue, but a component that is increasingly associated with armed conflict. These processes express a radical paradigm shift that we place within the context of the relationship between Africanity and religious pluralism that has become evident in these two religious areas in recent years. The term '*Mboka Mundele*' (the village or country of the Whites) points to an experience of 'colonial modernity', and allows us to describe in objective terms the current urban context in which these 'businessmen of God' emerge. Fernando Kutino, Ntoumi, Yaucat Guendi and Ne Muanda Nsemi are four major politico-religious figures who embody an ideology of Africanity related to complex types of 'magic' and processes of pluralization.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis quelques décennies, les champs religieux kinois et brazzavillois donnent à voir des mouvements prophétiques, messianiques et de réveil (pentecôtistes) dont les schémas de libération et de délivrance traduisent des politiques identitaires pour lesquelles l'africanité, au sens ethnique et national, est non seulement un enjeu majeur, mais une composante de plus en plus associée à des conflits armés. Ces dynamiques expriment un changement de paradigme radical que l'on met en perspective au regard du rapport entre africanité et pluralisation religieuse qui se donne à voir, depuis quelques années, dans ces deux champs religieux. Significative de l'expérience de la « modernité coloniale », l'expression Mboka Mundele (le village ou pays des Blancs) nous permettra d'objectiver le contexte urbain actuel au sein duquel émergent ces « hommes d'affaires de Dieu ». Fernando Kutino, Ntoumi, Yaucat Guendi et Ne Muanda Nsemi sont quatre figures politico-religieuses majeures dont on verra qu'elles incarnent une idéologie de l'africanité liée à des « magies » et à des processus de pluralisation complexes.