

A STUDY OF SIPELU MUSIC AND DANCE AMONG THE MASUBIA PEOPLE

OF THE ZAMBEZI REGION OF NAMIBIA

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Abstract

This study examined Sipelu music and dance among the Masubia people of the Zambezi region of Namibia. The main objective of the study was to determine the meaning and beliefs attached to Sipelu music and dance. It also investigated how Sipelu music and dance related to other Masubia cultural elements. The study, furthermore, explored how the Masubia people managed to preserve and transmit Sipelu music and dance knowledge and practice within their community. Interviews were conducted in the Zambezi region with four Sipelu dance groups comprising group leaders, costume makers, song makers and dancers. Photos and video clips of the singing and dancing were also taken to strengthen/validate observations. The main findings reveal that Sipelu music and dance are social activities that takes place throughout the year at different social gatherings in the community. The dance is performed by the dance groups for the King at his palace or when he visits the communities in their villages. Dancing also takes place at weddings, political rallies, beer parties or school meetings but never at a funeral. Each Sipelu group composes its own songs, making its repertoire completely unique from the other dance groups. The composed songs and dances symbolise unity, always addressing social issues in the community. The songs and dances mainly express happiness, sadness, praise or social comments. The dance groups admitted that Sipelu was slowly becoming extinct, hence their efforts to teach the dance to school learners, as well as out-of-school youth. Although Sipelu is mostly practised among the Masubia, it was discovered that the Mafwe people, in the neighbouring kingdom, also practised the same dance. The study finally revealed that Sipelu was not just a dance, but a significant, respected and well-structured cultural practice of the Masubia people of Namibia.

Table of contents

Contents	Page
Abstract	ii
Contents list	iii
Appendices	vi
Acknowledgements	viii
Dedication	x
Declaration	xi
Map of the Zambezi region	xii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Orientation of the study	2
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the study	4
1.4 Significance of the study	4
1.5 Limitations of the study	5
Chapter 2. Literature review	10
2.1 Historical background	13

2.2 The role of musicians	22
2.3 The making/composing of songs	23
2.4 Music and dance performances in Africa	25
2.5 African music and dance as a motional system	27
2.6 The use/role of instruments in African music and dance	28
2.7 Recruitment of musicians in Africa	29
2.8 Training of musicians in Africa	32
2.9 External influences on African music	33
2.10 Preservation efforts of music and dance in Africa	36
2.11 Active tradition	36
2.12 Passive tradition	37
Chapter 3. Methodology	39
3.1 Research design	39
3.2 Population	39
3.3 Sample	40
3.4 Research instruments	40
3.5 Research procedure	41
3.6 Data analysis	43

3.7 Research ethics	44
Chapter 4. Results presentation and discussion	47
4.1 Interview findings	47
4.2 Historical background of the Masubia people	47
4.3 Costume	49
4.3.1 Significance of costume	50
4.3.2 The art of costume making	50
4.4 Dance structure	51
4.4.1 Purpose/meaning of dance	51
4.4.2 Dance formation	51
4.4.3 Sipelu performers	52
4.4.4 Performance venues	53
4.4.5 Dance frequency	54
4.4.6 Dance group dynamics	55
4.5 Songs	56
4.5.1 Song text/lyrical content	56
4.5.2 Song makers/composers	56

4.6 Instrumentation	58
4.6.1 Choice and role of instruments	58
4.7 Sipelu and other cultural elements	58
4.8 Preservation of Sipelu music and dance	58
4.8.1 The lost tradition	58
4.8.2 Picking up the pieces	59
4.9 Findings (Observation)	60
4.9.1 Movement	60
4.9.2 Instruments	62
4.9.3 Singing	63
4.9.4 Costumes	64
4.9.5 Male and female dancers role	66
4.10 Challenges	67
4.10.1 Promotion and support	67
Chapter 5. Conclusion and recommendations	74
References	80
Appendix 1. Pictures	83

Picture 1	Sibwanga group, quartet movement	83
Picture 2	Sibwanga group, duet movement	84
Picture 3	Ikumwe whole group linear formation	85
Picture 4	Ikumwe group, solo movement	86
Picture 5	Ikumwe group, trio movement	87
Picture 6	Ikumwe group, duet movement	88
Picture 7	Ikumwe group, trio movement	89
Picture 8	Ikumwe group, solo movement	90
Picture 9	Intenge group, duet movement	91
Picture 10	Intenge group, solo movement	92
Picture 11	Intenge group, duet	93
Picture 12	Bukalo group, linear movement	94
Picture 13	Bukalo group, double linear formation with dancers in the centre	95
Appendix 2.	Song repertoire (Text)	96
Appendix 3.	Movement videos	108
Appendix 4.	Misisi costume	109
Appendix 5.	Interview guide	111

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- (i) The Sibwanga Sipelu group in the Mubiza area
- (ii) The Intenge Sipelu group at Bukalo Settlement
- (iii) The Bukalo Entertainment group in Katima Mulilo
- (iv) The Ikumwe Sipelu group in the Ikumwe area

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x

Dedicated

to

My wife, Ruramai, and children,

Vimbai, Tamuka and Patience

Declaration

I, Emmanuel Karumazondo, declare that this is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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[Student's name]

Chapter 1

Introduction

Ethnomusicology is the study of music in culture, revealing meanings and beliefs found in music and dance. (Merriam, 1977). These are part of culture, itself being a group's way of surviving in their particular time, environment and circumstances. Culture finds expression in various activities linked to cultivation, livestock for living, gathering and hunting, traditional healing, initiation, language, ritual and religion. Thus, the research on the Masubia Sipelu music and dance in the Bukalo area in Zambezi region was to establish the meanings and beliefs attached to music and dance as these are still being practised since the time the Masubia people settled in the Zambezi region. Traditional music in Africa should not be compared to contemporary music and dance that cater only for entertainment. It is a way of life, an expression of people involved, performed for a purpose, and sometimes linked to spiritual activities that have specific meanings to the lives of the concerned people.

According to Nettl (1956, p. 6), "the stylistically simple music of a primitive tribe often has great prominence within its culture because of its prevailing functionality: most primitive music (despite some notable exceptions) serves a particular purpose other than providing pure entertainment or aesthetic enjoyment." In many parts of Africa, music and dancing are generally activities of 'social' occasions; that is, occasions when the members of a social group meet for recreation or for the performance of a ceremony or rite. The dance arena may, therefore, be the village square, the street, the courtyard, the town plaza or sacred places where particular rites are observed. There are dances which may be

performed any day, as well as others which are performed only on specific, 'social' occasions or on specific days of the ritual calendar. They may be dances for general enjoyment or dances designed for limited participation, such as royal dances, dances of heroic and occupational associations and dances of cult groups.

According to Nketia (1974, p. 92), "There are dances whose music consists principally of songs. Here accompaniment may be provided by hand clapping or non-melodic idiophones or both." In this study the researcher attempted to establish whether Sipelu music and dance were linked to spiritual activities, a way of life or served as a means of communication in the community.

1.1 Orientation of the study

The international society for music educators journal (ISME) policy document (1998, p. 1) states that "music is a cultural universal; all cultures have music, and each society has a musical system with which it is principally associated." This statement supports that every cultural group in Namibia has survived over centuries, not by mistake, but by a deliberate and delicate effort to preserve its identity. It is very important for each of the cultural groups in Namibia to identify clearly who they are in terms of where they come from, where they are at a particular moment in time and where they intend going. According to Tsoubaloko (2003, p. 9), "ethnicity encompasses the history, culture, language, literature, religion, customs, traditions and social/moral values of a group of people who together purely try to preserve them and maintain them but without any political intent or ulterior motives." Tsoubaloko (2011, p. 2) further elaborates that "the acquisition of African cultural knowledge is by doing it in a routine way, imitation, observation and inclusion.

Namibia's cultural aspects should not be ignored and should not stand as things of no value, things of the past life, rudimentary, primitive, archaic or childish.”

Cultural practices of all the ethnic groups of Namibia are treasured as a form of identity. As in other parts of the world, every cultural practice has a meaning to the ethnic group that practises it. This study investigated the meanings and beliefs in the Sipelu music and dance among the Masubia people in the Zambezi region.

It is of great importance to study music systems separately in order to reveal a deeper meaning. In support of this statement, ISME (1998, p.1) posits that “music can best be comprehended in social and cultural context and as a part of its culture.” Namibian indigenous music and dance have not been documented adequately in terms of investigating the meaning to a particular culture of dances. More material still needs to be written for music educators and those interested in understanding Namibian cultures, since preserving culture to consolidate identity is vital in every society.

1.2 Statement of the problem

It is often said that the cultural identity of a country is rooted in its people and their cultural practices. In Namibia part of the elements that constitute culture has disappeared and is still vanishing for various reasons, such as a lack of the transmission of knowledge to others to ensure continuity and also contemporary society influencing the current traditional practices. Most of this knowledge is not documented in, and about, Namibia. It makes it thus difficult to reference for further studies in the field.

This concern was expressed before by Diaz (1998) during the National Cultural Festival in Ondangwa and also Mans (2003) in her case study on music in Namibian society, based on

the state, politics and culture. It is against this background that the study documented Sipelu music and dance ranging from its meaning to the Masubia, historical background (origin), the context in which it was and still is being performed, who participated in terms of gender and age, what societal issues the music and dance addressed, as well as the role, if any, that instruments played to accompany the dance. The study of Sipelu music and dance could be a way of alleviating the crisis we face in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, particularly in the music section regarding arts and culture references. Public and private libraries, as well as information centres, will have access to this information upon the completion of this study.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research was to determine the meaning and beliefs attached to Sipelu music and dance. Investigating how Sipelu music and dance relate to other Masubia cultural elements and exploring how the Masubia people managed to preserve and transmit Sipelu music and dance knowledge and practice within their community were additional objectives.

1.4 Significance of study

This study will contribute towards the establishment of a body of knowledge that may be utilised by Government and the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, in particular Music, at the University of Namibia at the main campus in Windhoek, as well as at all satellite campuses throughout Namibia. Campuses that handle teacher training might benefit much more than those with students and staff who will only read the thesis for fun.

In addition to the larger community at the University of Namibia, other readers in Namibia, as well as from other countries and cultures, will benefit from the study.

This study will also benefit scholars, especially those who are in the ethnomusicology and anthropology fields, as well as other cultural enthusiasts/activists. This report can be made accessible to the national library and other public libraries throughout Namibia. Access to this report may encourage other researchers to contribute what could be the missing link in this study, probably making use of the same objectives and methodology to study yet another Namibian dance.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Limitations of this study include a lack of documented information of past Masubia music and dance performances, as well as time limitations because I had to travel 1200 kilometres between Windhoek and Katima Mulilo on a single trip. More interviews than originally planned were conducted because the memories of some informants did not seem to be accurate. Given this situation, I therefore, had to maximise a single trip by working for long hours in the field. Under such circumstances, I had to identify a contact person to help with pre-arranging and confirmation of meetings and interview dates and times. These arrangements had to be regularly and timely checked before going into the field. On two occasions I had made an appointment through the office of Chief Liswani III but he was not available. The chief, however, gave the green light to the field work which then went on very well.

Chapter 1 indicates to the reader that the study was culturally based. Cultures of Africa have been practised for years but as modernity was introduced into different societies of Africa, such practices were increasingly being lost as time progresses. Many African

cultures, including music and dance, have become extinct because of various factors. Some of these are the migration of the youth to urban areas in search of jobs, better high school and tertiary education. In the meantime, the rural elderly men and women did not maintain the tradition as their age advanced with time. They were literally left without enough energy to keep the singing and dancing alive, hence the decline of cultural performances.

It is in this chapter that the study attempts to achieve the set objectives which were to determine meanings and beliefs attached to Sipelu music and dance, investigate how Sipelu music and dance related to other Masubia cultural elements and explore how the Masubia people managed to preserve and transmit Sipelu music and dance knowledge and practice within their community. Field preparation and execution were timeously done throughout the field work. The few notable limitations were that there were some members who were delayed to assemble for our meetings because they travelled a longer distance than the others. These three members were, however, fetched by the research team members within reasonable time to carry on with the scheduled programme. I would have preferred a little more time in the field to gather more data from more informants. However, I, being an employee of University of Namibia (UNAM), had to make do with the available time since I had to apply for leave to travel to and from Windhoek to Katima Mulilo.

Chapter 2 looks at all possible topics that could be linked to African traditional music and many dances of sub-Saharan Africa. Basing the argument on the fact that most of the dances in the mentioned region are communal, they all can be identified through historical background of origin, performance purpose and the significant role of singers and dancers.

The different roles of performers are specified in this chapter with some being dancers, instrument players or song makers/composers. The frequency of performances by each dance group varies with some performing only on special occasions while others would perform regularly.

The issue of some dances losing their importance, thus becoming extinct, is discussed in relation to the advancing age of elders in the rural areas and migration of the youth to urban areas as these factors create an imbalance. Measures of preserving Sipelu music and dance are addressed to try and prolong the life of the present Sipelu music and dance performances.

Chapter 3 looks at the methodology of this study where a qualitative design had been selected as appropriate. This study is ethnographic and such a method would be most appropriate since the study deals with a cultural setting. Ethnography has always been conducted in a natural setting (Clifford, 1988, p. 31).

The snowball sampling helped me in identifying informants that were experts in the Masubia culture. Informants would always refer me to others who had more knowledge on the subject. It was essential in this study to involve multi-sources in order to improve the validity and reliability of the study since there could be some informants who might provide inaccurate information to me just for fun. All they could have been interested in was just to say something, just to be heard, just to be involved in the research.

The collection of data in this study was done through interviews and observation. Both a video recorder and audio recorder were used to record voices, dances and interviews.

Between video and audio recordings, observation was conducted by me to establish how Sipelu music and dance were presented/conducted.

I contacted the Sipelu groups, made appointments, visited them on specific dates and times, and introduced myself while explaining clearly the purpose of the study. Group leaders were interviewed by using a prepared interview guide (see Appendix 5), working from one group to the next. Costume makers, instrument players, song makers and dancers were interviewed and observed as well (see Appendix 5).

Chapter 4 looks at the results, presentation and discussion of the study. What the collected and analysed data reveal is discussed here. The participants' responses regarding Sipelu music and dance performances are also clarified in this chapter.

Video and audio recordings, as well as observation reports, were then analysed in relation to the literature reviewed. Interviews and observations based on Sipelu groups were compared to find any similarities and differences.

This chapter also interrogates the literature review in relation to the findings. Research objectives have been revisited to establish whether they were responded to/answered after the data collection and analysis. The research design and methods of data collection are discussed in relation to their intended purpose.

Chapter 5 concludes the report by discussing the importance of song and dance in teaching class music where singing and dancing are seen as the fibre that holds the Masubia culture together through performances. The benefits of teaching Sipelu music and dance are compared to the western teaching of class music. Recommendations by me based on the outcome of the study are also presented in this chapter. I do recommend that a follow-up to this study should be carried out, this time with more time and better resources. The follow-

up might be in the form of studies done on other Namibian music and dances. A number of such studies will build a resource base for readers who could be interested in the music and dance activities of Namibia. Eventually the idea would be to compile a collection of Namibian music and dances.

The next chapter reviews literature used in this study.

Chapter 2

Literature review

The literature reviewed in this study looked at some of sub-Saharan, African music, ranging from the purpose of practice, individual groups of people and their speciality, the place of music and dance in the community, as well as the preservation of music and dance as a form of cultural identity. The contribution of music and dance to other cultural practices are similar in the above mentioned region of Africa with some cultures closer than others. Various authors have written about African music regarding the key contributions stated above.

As pointed out in the statement of the problem, there is a lack of resource materials in the field of arts and culture in Namibia. Likewise, Journal Storage (JSTOR) lists sources, focusing on cultural topics different from those of mine. Little has been published in this regard, and some resource materials may even be old. Thus, references used are based on other topics regarding arts and culture in Namibia or elsewhere. This was done to gain knowledge that could be applied here in Namibia. Mans (1997) in *ONGOMA* discusses the importance of song and dance in teaching class music. In this book, translations and the pronunciation in Namibian languages are given for various musical terms, as well as songs, dances and instruments. This book touches on various dances from different regions and ethnic groups of Namibia. This book cuts across from Tsumkwe in the east to Opuwo in the west, from Katima Mulilo in the north – east to Gibeon in the south and from Omusati in the north to the central regions. An attempt has been made in this book to notate dance and instrumental rhythms. Although details are given concerning the above musical aspects, meanings attached to each musical activity are not discussed.

Mans (2003, p. 1), in strengthening the need to document indigenous music of Namibia, argues that “during the Apartheid era, cultural isolation and the impact of the Christian missions led to a devaluation of African musical traditions.” Cultural activities were referred to as pagan, savage and backward. While traditional dances were banned; accompaniment of hymns with drums was also prohibited during that fearful era.

Tsoubaloko (2003), in his case study, argues that the importance of language in preserving cultural identity focuses on how language helps people to communicate cultural values. According to the author, language becomes the vehicle through which cultural activities are carried out on a daily basis. The use of song and dance in society is also discussed by Tsoubaloko (2003), emphasising that music, whether vocal or instrumental, is both literally and figuratively a form of language or speech. However, this study does not focus on the meaning attached to the songs and dances by various Namibian ethnic groups that practise them. A more detailed and focused approach should be pursued in order to provide a meaningful and relevant documentation of Namibian music and dances.

The author highlights some dances that are performed at various occasions for specific purposes, for example, Eefundula, a dance for girls where they undergo an intensive test to see if they are pregnant or not. As soon as they pass this test, prospective husbands will be waiting to propose marriage to these girls. The author, however, does not focus on the meaning the Aawambo attach to these dances. Instead, the author simply describes the practice as a customary requirement, as a rite of passage. Nettl (1956) in *Music in Primitive Culture* discusses various primitive cultural aspects but spends more time on

music and dance. The author expresses how little the world seems to comprehend African music.

There is great emphasis placed on the fact that primitive music is always done on purpose. Every song and dance is done in response to a particular societal need, be it while pounding, hunting, at a wedding or simply for entertainment. The author's view of the importance of African music does, however, not deal specifically with meanings attached to various, primitive, music practices.

ISME Journal (1998) acknowledges that every culture has its own unique music and dance forms and that those performances are organised in such a way that people are entertained, as well as educated, by their practices. In agreement with Nettl (1956), ISME (1998) also highlights that each musical system serves to identify a particular culture. This article does not, however, discuss the meaning attached to various songs and dances investigated.

Bradley (1998, p. 1) observes that "a traditional dance is a musical comedy, act or drama accompanied by music. Every act or dance tells a story." I would like to tell the story behind Sipelu through this study. Ethnomusicology research literature will help to explain the value of an ethnographic study on a chosen group of people.

According to Mans (1999, p. 71), "The term music must be understood in an African framework where dance and music are usually holistically integrated and often inclusive of costume, ritual, stories framed within a particular cosmology." Mans (1999, p. 71), furthermore, states that an interesting characteristic of Namibian cultures is that a major portion of all musical performance amongst different cultural groups is called play, not only for children but also for adults. Of course, play is central to our understanding of young children, but we often forget how much of their play is musical play, in which

rhythm, movement, characterisation, drama or pantomime and imagination are combined. Play usually involves the group collectively singing and clapping while others (ones, twos or more) take turns at dancing individual variations to fixed rhythmic patterns in the centre of the circle or space.

2.1 Historical background of African music and dance (purpose, meaning importance, justification for existence)

Sachs in Meriam (1963), referring to Traditional African music says, “Such music cannot be bought in stores, but comes from faithful tradition or from personal contributions of tribesmen. It is never soulless or thoughtless, never passive, but always vital, organic and functional; indeed it is always dignified. This is more than we can say of music in the West.” As an indispensable and precious part of culture, it commands respect. And respect implies the duty to help preserving it (1963, p. 3). Hood (1957, p. 10) emphasises the point that music is a neglected means of communication which can be used more widely for such purposes than has been the case in the past.

Turino Thomas (1990, p. 171) argues that because many musical traditions are linked to specific ethno-linguistic groups and cultures, it is better to think about African music in these rather than in national terms. The author goes on to clarify that “in contrast to the stereotype vision of small, so-called primitive tribes in Africa, it has been shown that there were various kinds of traditional indigenous political organizations including: (1) complex, hierarchical, centralized states with political authority vested in the hands of hereditary rulers; and (2) more decentralized, smaller-scale societies where political power was regulated by interactions between kinship groups such as clans or lineages.”

Centralised kingdoms with a highly developed political organisation have existed in Africa from early times. As only one example, the state of Zimbabwe (the modern nation being named after this early empire) was thriving by the twelfth century. On the other hand, small, egalitarian bands of hunters and gatherers, such as the BaMbuti Pygmies, have lived for centuries in the Central African rain forest. Hunter-gatherer groups, such as the Pygmies and the San (Bushmen), are in a small minority; however, Merriam (1964) argues that “African music” in an extended sense also includes “dance,” both are intimately linked aspects of the same cultural complex. Further ramifications of African music/dance led me to include “oral literature,” theatre arts and some aspects of visual anthropology in his area of study. But African music is also closely connected to language, to an extent that it is hardly possible today to study it without the necessary background in African languages.

Stylistic traits in African music have been found to be correlated with language in Africa, at least in its broad divisions, and in many cases also with regional ethnic/linguistic relationships. Christoph (1981, p. 28) has observed that

Polyrhythmic music and dance is often thought of as quintessentially African. In fact it appears to be a feature of culture particularly associated with Niger-Congo peoples. It has spread so widely because Niger-Congo societies, especially the Bantu, have covered so much of the continent. It has come to have an enormous impact on modern, Western, popular music and dance because so many of the African, slaves transported by Europeans, were of Niger-Congo background. Outside the Niger-Congo-speaking regions in Africa other musical styles, frequently based on stringed instruments, tend to prevail, along with quite different styles of dance.

Nettl (1956, p. 2) argues that “every tribe uses music somehow in its ceremonies, although the forms vary considerably.” Nettel further argues that, “in a great many primitive religious rites, dancing plays an important part. It is almost always accompanied by music; hence many primitive dance songs are basically religious in function.” “Perhaps the next most prevalent use of music is as an accompaniment to non-religious dances.”

Nketia (1965, p. 91) highlights that in many parts of Africa, music and dancing are generally activities of ‘social’ occasions; that is, occasions when the members of a community or a social group meet for recreation or for the performance of a ceremony or a rite. The dance arena may, therefore, be the village square, the street, the courtyard, the town plaza or sacred places where particular rites are observed. Although there are still traditional dances practised in Namibia, such dances are not performed regularly.

Generally, Namibians prefer to substitute traditional marriages with the modern, white weddings; therefore, they are unknowingly and unintentionally reducing the need to perform traditional songs and dances. This of course is a disturbing development to the elderly whose hearts bleed with anger and agony when they watch their culture being mercilessly eroded. Nketia (1982, p. 21) describes the importance of African music in the community by saying, “In traditional African societies, music making is generally organized as a social event.”

Public performances, therefore, take place on social occasions; that is, on occasions when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreation or any kind of collective activity, such as building bridges, clearing paths, going

on a search party or putting out fire - activities that, in industrialized societies, might be assigned to specialized agencies.”

Based on the researcher's observation, Sipelu music and dance symbolise most of sub-Saharan African dances that are on the verge of extinction. There was a sense of decline of cultural pride among the Masubia people and they bemoaned the lack of interest for cultural activities by the youth, the urban dwellers, as well as church goers. For those who still practised the dances, it was also emphasised by the group leaders that performances had declined since 1990 because a significant number of formerly, loyal, culture activists had found another route of entertaining themselves, that is radio, cell phones and television where the music and dances were available.

At the press of a single button entertainment of your choice comes fast and is easy to access. The general argument from those who enjoy the ready-made music and dance is that it is of a better quality. I do argue that this type of music and dance may sound and look better than our own traditional pride but the question is always to what extent we can make other people's music our own. Can we emotionally feel this music since it comes as an external force? Our culture, including music and dance, beliefs and customs should come from inside. In most of the cases when we nurture and reflect our identity, we are proud of it, and we practise our culture in everything we do on a daily basis. Unfortunately, this is generally on the decline in the sub-Saharan African region in which Namibia lies.

Nketia (1982, p. 21) further relates that “those who get together in such communal activities generally belong to the same ethnic or linguistic group. The basis of association for music making, however, is usually the community, those members of the ethnic group

who share a common habitat (such as a group of homesteads, a village, a town, or a section of a town) and who live some kind of corporate life based on common institutions, common local traditions, and common beliefs and values.” In the African culture, when music is performed, there should always be a reason, as the proverb says “*there is no smoke without fire*” *hakuna moto usina utsi* or “*when you see a vulture flying at one place, you should know that there is meat somewhere in the vicinity*” *ukaona gora richitenderera muchadenga ziva kuti pane nyama pedyo*.

According to my deduction through interviews as well as through observation, the economic challenges in the Bukalo settlement in the Zambezi region and Namibia as a whole is that the tradition of staying together as a family unit has been reduced to some extent. Some rural parents send their children for secondary, as well as for tertiary, education. Such schools and institutions happen to be located only in towns and cities and, in the case of Namibia, every student’s dream is to be in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia and be enrolled at UNAM, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), the International University of Management (IUM) or other smaller institutions. For the students who leave their rural or small settlement homes to better their education, a heavy price is paid within the process.

These students will, over a period of time, lose their cultural identity. Here and there they start forgetting how to greet properly, how to speak properly, how to behave properly at certain places or occasions, rendering themselves as less cultured children in the eyes of those who would have the opportunity to stay in a setting where cultural practices would still to some extent be intact.

I pose a question by saying, *who then is true and authentic Mafwe or Subia? Can we still trace someone in this category or would most of the people by nature be more comfortable with other cultural aspects than the others? When do people sit as a family and learn something from those that are supposed to teach us?*

It looks as if people have more time to do their business, family, work than the extended family. Because of the situation people find themselves in, the rural people are solely responsible for the promotion of culture while those in urban areas find it in order to chip in here and there. The urban families will try to join at funerals and/or weddings in the villages but what some of them would remember about how rituals should be conducted remains a puzzle if not a mystery.

Merriam (1960, p. 111), elaborates that in Dahomey, the institute of the avogan, the dance in the market-place is recognised by the natives as affording release for suppressed emotions. At stated periods the people of each of the quarters of the city of Abomey have in turn their opportunity to stage such a dance. Crowds come to see the display and to watch the dancing, but most of all, to listen to the songs and to laugh at the ridicules to which those who have offended the members of the quarter giving the dance are held. Names are ordinarily not mentioned, for then fighting may result. In any event, the African relishes innuendo and circumlocution too well to be satisfied with bald, direct statements. However, everyone who is present already knows to whom reference is being made.

Thus the song might be:

Woman, thy soul is misshapen.

In haste was it made, in haste?

*So fleshless a face speaks, telling
 Thy soul was formed without care.
 The ancestral clay for thy making
 Was molded in haste.
 A thing of no beauty art thou,
 Thy face unsuited to be a face,
 Thy feet unsuited for feet. (p. 77-8)*

Such release is also given to co-wives who sing songs against each other.

Based on the source, http://en.org/Music_of_Africa, Africa is a vast continent and its regions and nations have distinct musical traditions. The music of North Africa, for the most part, has a different history from that of the sub-Saharan, African music traditions.

The music and dance forms of the African diaspora, including African-American music and many Caribbean genres (like soca, calypso and Zouk) and Latin-American music genres (like samba, rumba, and salsa) and other clave, rhythm-based genres, were founded to varying degrees on the music of African slaves. This, in turn, has influenced African popular music.

Elaborating on the use and social roles of music, Don (2003, p. 20) (Ed) says that music in Africa is intimately linked with the four major life-cycle events, namely just after birth, initiation into adulthood, marriage and death; the agricultural calendar; spiritual, religious, and healing ceremonies; work activities; the creation reification of personal, group, national, and transnational identities. Don (2003, p. 2) further argues that “initiation into adulthood, which can entail male circumcision or female excision, is typically

accompanied by drumming, singing, and dancing.” Music is also an integral part of possession or trance ceremonies, which take place throughout the African continent.

Professional musicians retain the expertise needed to induce possession, which is the state in which direct communication with ancestors, local spirits or gods takes place.

Nettl, (1956, p. 8) argues that music also frequently plays an important part in storytelling. Throughout the world, songs are inserted into stories, as much in western European folk cultures as in primitive ones.

Walton (1987 p. 13) (Ed) argues that

For African people, music-making is essential for processes of socialization, and musical ability is something that every person is born with, and anyone can become good at music, given the right encouragement and stimulus, and given the opportunity to participate in music as often as possible. This African view of musicality is so different from the Western European view: that only a few people can understand music, and even fewer do it well, or practice it as an essential part of life.

According to Kubik (1987, p. 21), the African concept of music and the western concept of it are not equivalent; if one gives the concept ‘music’ a western, European connotation, it is hardly appropriate in an African context. African peoples tend to speak of the music-making process as “singing” - a process which produces song.

Furthermore, “singing” does not involve only the use of the voice. It also includes physical movements, i.e. dance steps and other physical movements, symbolic and non-symbolic

gestures, clapping and also the actions and movements which are required for playing specific sound instruments (e. g. drumming and even the bow technique which are taught initially in terms of the physical movements which are required and which, therefore, underlie the sound result.) These are energy movements or kinetic movements and they are a crucial part of the activity which produces “song” (music).

According to the source; <http://www.africaguide.com/culture/music.htm>, African music can be defined as indigenous African musical and dance expressions that are maintained by oral tradition and that are stylistically distinct from the music and dance of both the Arabic cultures of North Africa and the western, settler populations of southern Africa. African music and dance, therefore, are cultivated largely by societies in sub-Saharan African. All sub-Saharan traditions emphasise singing, because song is used as an avenue of communication. African traditions also greatly emphasise dance, for movement is regarded as an important mode of communication. For this purpose the dance utilises symbolic gestures, music, props, masks, costumes, body painting and other visual devices.

The basic movements may be simply emphasising the upper body, torso or feet; they may also be complex, involving the coordination of different body parts and intricate actions, such as fast rotation ripples of the body and contraction and release, as well as variations, dynamics, levels and use of space.

The dance may be open to all, or it may be an activity in which one, two, three or four individuals (regardless of sex) take turns in the dancing ring. Team dances also occur. The formations may be linear, circular, serpentine or in columns of two or more rows.

2.2 Role of musicians and dancers and those who come to watch

Nketia (1965, p. 100), elaborates that at public dances, the roles taken by musicians and dancers and those who come to watch them are not mutually exclusive. In some dances there is no clear-cut distinction between the dancer and the musician.

- In the *galgo* dance of the Frafra of Northern Ghana, for instance, the same participants drum, sing and do acrobatic movements.
- In the *sinyagere* and *dea* dances of the Frafra, all the performers sing and make the appropriate movements.
- Where the three roles are taken by different people, as in *adowa* and other dances of the Akan people, a person can change from one role to another after one round of performance if he is versatile. He may sing in the chorus for a while, then join the drummers and play a minor drum or a bell and later hand over the instrument.
- The original player or someone else who wishes to relieve him may watch others or join in the dancing ring.

A spectator, who does not want to step into the ring, stands where he is and points two fingers upward as a mark of his appreciation. When a chief is present at the dance, he may send a sword bearer into the dancing ring to congratulate any of the elders who happen to be there, he may be followed by a small group of supporters who move unobtrusively behind him.

Don (2003, p. 22), emphasising the uniqueness of African musical aesthetics, says that “even with the great diversity of musical expression across the continent, much music exhibits features and mark it as uniquely African.”

Kubik (1983 in SAMUS 5, 1985, p. 3) states that

In the realm of movement behaviour, adherents to non-African musical patterns as ‘syncopated’, when these patterns are in no way conceived as syncopated by the African performers. Often Westerners, thrown off by the accentuations and a regular anticipation of harmonic change here a piece inverted, that is, they hear the beat in the wrong place. This is particularly endemic when certain types of urban South African music such as simanje-manje or mbaqanga is played to foreigners. Tests undertaken in Ghana, Ivory Coast and European countries have shown that persons from these very different cultural regions react unanimously, inverting the structure.

2.3 Making/composing songs in Africa (who composes/owns song text)

Mans (1999), p.72), states that “songs illustrate social structures and values through references to kinship and family structure, world views, the importance given to marriage and lineage systems, religious systems, value systems and production systems. Song not only provides a channel for the transmission of societal values and histories, but is in itself a way of knowing and reflecting on self and society”. Blacking (1985) in Mans (1999) states that “music is an important way of knowing, and the performing arts are important means of reflection, of sensing order and ordering experience, and relating inner sensations to the life of feelings of one’s society” (p. 65). Chernoff (1979) underlines this approach by writing that “music’s explicit purpose, in the various ways it might be defined by Africans, is, essentially, socialization.”

According to Mans (1999, p. 74), Kxoxo !Kung and Ju/'hoan people have many songs and dances that teach about the character and habits of animals and birds. This is important

knowledge for a future hunter. Among Ju/'hoansi there are special songs following the hunt, indicating whether it was a 'good' killing or not. In this event, the community is informed and instructed in terms of the inherent meaning of the hunt and ethical standards are reinforced. Even when these songs are not performed by children, they listen, observe and learn through enculturation.

According to Nettl (1956, p. 3), "In most primitive cultures, songs and instrumental music are frequently associated with social dancing, some of the song text are simple lyrical love songs in the Western sense of the word, and others are love charms having religious or magical connotations."

Kubik (1987, p. 29) argues that "The absence of a concept of purely instrumentalized music is further stressed by an African notion that all songs whether sung or played on instruments, have words, or at least titles, which refer to the emotional content of the music and ideas associated with that music. Thus all songs are conceptualized with words, but these are not necessarily sung in a performance, whenever that song is performed". Kubik (1987, p. 30), furthermore, argues that "There is the common practice among African peoples to instrumentalize their vocal music, and since the playing of certain instruments disallows singing (e.g. reed-pipes and mouth-bows), the words of the songs cannot be sung by the performer". Such performances often attract an audience; however, members of such an audience will usually join in with singing. Because many African languages are 'tone languages' where pitch level determines meaning, the melodies and rhythm of songs generally follow the intonation contour and rhythms of the song texts. Melodies are usually organised within a scale of four, five, six or seven tones.

In group singing, some societies habitually sing in unison or in parallel octaves with sporadic fourths or fifths; others sing in two or three parts, using parallel thirds or fourths. Songs generally are in call-and-response form.

According to *Music and Ritual Symbolism in the Ga Funeral*, (Hampton) in *Year book for traditional music* (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/768072>, pp. 75-105), as a song leader, the *latatsE* must be eloquent. Her eloquence is evidenced mainly by her ability to manipulate and improvise song texts and to choose appropriate music for a particular occasion. She must be skilful in the technical application of musical resources. She must command a vast repertoire since the number of songs that the group can perform is contingent on the number of songs that she can remember. The music, itself, best substantiates this as the songs are in responsal form. These are clearly defined call-and-verse sections performed by the *latatsE* which serve as mnemonic devices for choral entrance points.

2.4 Music and dance performance in Africa (length/duration)

According to Nketia (1965, p. 98),

Pieces for the dance vary considerably in length. Repetition is a pre-dominant characteristic of this music and it may be reflected in the organization of the dance itself.

According to Nketia (1982, p. 35),

In African societies, participation in music may be a voluntary activity or an obligation imposed by one's membership in a social group. Such a social group may be a descent group (a group of people who trace their ancestry back to the same person), or it may

be any group based on the broader societal classification of age, sex, interest, or occupation.

Where an African society is stratified, as, for example, the societies of the Hausa of Nigeria and the Wolof of Senegambia, musical activity may be related to class structure. In such societies, music-making generally belongs to a lowly ranked social class, and active participation usually takes place only on this level. The higher class is content to be entertained, or to leave the musical aspects of ritual and ceremonial occasions to professional musicians and others who assume musical roles in such contexts.

Nketia (1982, p. 50) further argues that

The range of musical activities that each generation supports is not limited to items passed on to them by the previous generations. New pieces are added to the repertoire of a musical type from time to time, while others are modified or abandoned. Every so often, new musical types similarly come into vogue, while some of the existing ones lose their popularity or cease to be performed. The cultivation of musical life in traditional African societies, therefore, is promoted through active participation in group life, rather than through the creation of special musical institutions.

Nketia (1982, p. 50) continues that

This is what forms music making in Africa into a community experience, for the continuity of musical traditions depends to some extent on both individual and collective effort. It is the creative individual who builds up the repertoire or recreates it, but those who learn it and perform it on social occasions sustain the tradition and

make it a part of the common heritage. One or two people may step into the dancing ring while the music the music is going on, dance for a few minutes and then retire. Another group may similarly enter the ring, perform the same set of basic movements and then retire. We even find a similar state of affairs in team dances, except where elaborate dance routines are worked out in relation to the music learnt by the dancers.

According to the source, http://en.org/Music_of_Africa, (p.2), African traditional music is frequently functional in nature. Performances may be long and often involve the participation of the audience. There are, for example, few different kinds of work songs, songs accompanying child birth, marriage, hunting and political activities, music to ward off evil spirits and to pay respects to good spirits, the dead and the ancestors. None of these are performed outside their intended social context, and much of it is associated with a particular dance. Some are performed by professional musicians, are sacral music or ceremonial and courtly music performed at royal courts.

2.5 African music/dance as a motional system

If there is any trait in African music/dance traditions of nearly pan-African validity, it is the presence of distinctively African concepts about, and attitudes towards, motion. Movement style is what sets Africa and Afro-American apart from the rest of the world, for example, China, Japan, Melanesia, Europe, North America, Indonesia, to mention but a few.

This is an area where research is even more challenging than is the study of the sounds produced. As far as Africa is concerned, dance research has been mostly descriptive,

however, and from a western angle. Only very recently, ethno-choreographic studies that include extensive notations of music and dances have become available from within specific African societies.

One basic difference between African dance cultures and those mainly in the northern half of the globe is that in the latter the body it tends to be used as a single block, while in Africa it seems to be split into several seemingly independent body areas or centres (Gunther, 1969).

2.6 The use/role of instruments in African music and dance

Nketia (1965, p. 99) argues that

While the dance is in progress, dramatic action may be stimulated and its intensity heightened through the use of instruments which do not form part of the main ensemble, instruments whose sound symbolize the presence of a divinity, a chief or some particular character in a dance drama, or instruments played merely for creating special effects because of the intensity or penetrating quality of their sounds. A flute player may wander round a circle of dancers blowing one or two notes on his instrument to urge them on. The trumpet player may play his instrument intermittently to convey a message, or to create definite effects. Nowadays bugles, whistles, bells may be used for a similar purpose.

Nketia (1974/1982, p. 89) elaborates that sometimes the text of songs or the language played by drums and other talking instruments, like trumpets and gongs, suggests actions which the dancer may incorporate into his movement. The poetry of the drums played for a dance can similarly contribute to the action of the dance, or to the general enjoyment of the

music which may be reflected in the dancer's movements. While the dance is going on, the drummer may give directions to the dancer, quote proverbs, praise individuals and so forth. What has been said about the poetry of drums applies to an even greater extent to the words of the songs, for these can make a more direct verbal appeal to the dancer than drums.

According to Kubik (1983 in SAMUS 5, 1985 p. 3), African musicians who play Western instruments within urban African traditions, such as highlife or juju music in West Africa or mbaqanga in the South Africa, use chords which have a well-defined function and meaning to them as Western musicians do. Some Zairean (now Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) guitar bands may play music which to a western listener appears to be based on tiresome repetitions of the three common chords, while the performers and their local audiences may appreciate these chords as an extension of tonal progression which are familiar to them from Zairean musical traditions. Accordingly, a westerner may then be very surprised when the cycle suddenly ends on the sub-dominant or dominant instead of the tonic. (Kubik, p.18).

2.7 The recruitment of musicians

Nketia (1982, p. 51) discusses recruitment and the training of musicians by saying, Although active participation in music making is encouraged, participation differs with respect to performing roles and the skills and knowledge that individuals playing a given role bring to bear on a performance. Moreover, the performing roles that individuals can assume in any given situation are limited.

Nketia (1982, p. 56) argues further that

Since the success of a musical event depends on a large extent on good musical leadership, the recruitment of musicians is something of a prime concern to social groups, especially where performances are based on differential participation and role distribution that demand specialization.

Recruitment refers to any social arrangement that ensures the availability of specialists for established roles and positions in society.

According to Don (2003), music makers can range from highly trained specialists, whose family lineages have been responsible for guarding musical traditions for centuries, to virtually any member of the community participating in group events by singing or hand clapping. Obviously, the question of recruitment does not arise in the case of solo performers who have no attachment to a patron or to any establishment, nor does it apply to spontaneous groups who do not remain in associative relationships, for these are taken care of automatically in the institutional arrangement that governs spontaneous performances in different contexts.

In all other cases, the problem lies in ensuring that there is a sufficient number of performers within established performing groups who satisfy the criteria of musicianship in the society and who can play the roles of specialist as required.

Nketia (1982, p. 58) argues that

Where a musical band clusters around a musician who initiates it, the problem of recruitment does not arise. In other cases, however, a musician of the highest calibre

will have to be encouraged to join the group through the admiration and respect that is shown for his ability, or through the size of his share of gifts that are given to the group. In some musical cultures, drummers are always given a greater share of anything that a performing group gets, since the success of a performance depends so much on them.

Similarly, socio-musical groups, such as warrior or hunters' associations, have the problem of ensuring that there are musical specialists among them to take up vital roles. Individual members who achieve reputations as lead singers or instrumentalists are encouraged to remain with the group. Where membership of a group is not voluntary, a musician, of course, has no choice but to provide the service that he alone can give. Cases have been noted in Ghana in which musicians who are not members of socio-musical groups play regularly for such groups by invitation. The membership of a particular royal ensemble or responsibility for particular music may be organised on the basis of kinship or territory.

A given household may be made responsible for maintaining a particular musical tradition, or for supplying a musician for a specific band; in Dagomba country, for instance, the son of every player of the hourglass is expected to become a drummer. The daughter of a drummer is released from this obligation, but she must send a son to replace her when she has one. If she brings forth only daughters, one of them must marry a drummer, so that the descent line of drummers may continue.

Nketia (1982, p. 58) further explains that, "Recruitment is thus almost automatic, except that musical ability is a selective factor within the descent group in determining performance roles. The transmission of roles from father to son is quite common. In some

musical cultures, however, it may not necessarily, be due to belief in heredity of musical talents, but simply a convenient arrangement. For example, among the Ankole of Uganda, the king's praise singers are young men recruited from the sons of the prominent men in the kingdom. Besides their musical duties, they also amuse the king by wrestling, and they follow him when he goes hunting.”

2.8 The training of musicians in Africa

According to Nketia (1982, p. 58 - 59)

Since musical specialists are required for group leadership and for performance in different contexts, some kind of institutional arrangement that enables musicians to acquire their technical training or that provides them with the sources of their artistic experience would seem to be of paramount importance. The evidence available so far shows that this problem is not approached in a formal, systematic manner. Traditional instruction is not generally organized on a formal institutional basis, for it is believed that natural endowment and person's ability to develop on his own are essentially what is needed.

This endowment could include innate knowledge, since the organisation of traditional music in social life enables the individual to acquire his musical knowledge in slow stages and to widen his experience of the music of his culture through the social groups into which he is gradually absorbed and through the activities in which he takes part.

Nketia (1982, p. 60) argues further that “Formal systematic instruction is given only in very restricted cases demanding skills or knowledge that cannot be acquired informally, or

in cases which the specific roles played later by particular individuals make it imperative to ensure that they have acquired the necessary technique and knowledge.”

Nketia (1982 p. 61) argues that “since specialization in musical instruments tends to run through families, or households, children are encouraged to start learning early, especially where an instrument is believed to be difficult to master.”

The Chopi musicians of Eastern Africa, for instance, assert that to become a really good xylophonist one must start young, preferably at the age of seven. There seems to be general agreement on this in other societies. In such instances, definite attempts at giving instruction may be made.

Tracy (1948), who has done an intensive study of Chopi musicians, tells us that among the Chopi, “A father will take his seven or eight year old boy and sit him between his knees while he plays. The boy will hold the two beaters with his arms well-flexed and pliant while the father claps his hands over his son’s and continues to play in the usual way.” This is to give the child the “feel” of the instrument so that after a few months he can play any note and learn to play simple runs and rhythms.

2.9 External influences on African music

According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Africa (p. 3), historically, several factors have influenced the tribal music of Africa. The music has been influenced by language, the environment, a variety of cultures, politics and population movement, all of which are intermingled. Each African tribe evolved in a different area of the continent, which means that they ate different foods, faced different weather conditions, and came in contact with different tribes than other societies did. Each tribe moved at different rates

and to different places than others, and thus each was influenced by different people and circumstances.

Furthermore, each society did not necessarily operate under the same government, which also significantly influenced their music style. My view is that influence was, and still is, accepted by underdeveloped African nations. The colonial era in most formerly colonised nations forced western ways of doing things, monetary value, clothing, imported processed food, Christianity, music and dance, among others. In most cases, a language that seems to improve the people's lives is used only to discover that Africa is the loser. Some developments are good for Africa, but the leaders at all levels should watch the influence of such developments. The programme of rural electrification is a noble gesture but if not controlled, it comes with dire consequences. The same electricity that lights our houses, power household electrical gadgets, helps learners to study during the night, can be disastrous when used to keep a shebeen running twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This becomes a source of noise pollution, fights, disastrous disputes, cases of rape, with many ending in shooting incidences.

If the local authorities of the areas do not control such behaviour, more chaos may be silently promoted. The shebeen environment is not conducive to learners and students who besides being deprived of some quiet study time, may eventually be attracted to the smoking and drinking. Young girls may also be tempted to ask for money or accept gifts from elderly strangers who might be regular patrons at these drinking places. Shebeens could be a source of so many evils. Apart from the above, learners could end up abused or selling drugs and alcohol.

Kubik, (1987, p.13) in response to the question: “*Why and under what circumstances do external influences become effective in a culture?*” states that there are psychological factors which play an important role in determining acceptance or rejection. In one case, external styles of expression, foreign objects, techniques, attitudes, and so forth, which are associated with a foreign life-style, culture and/or language, are perceived by the members of the recipient as superior.

Such feelings can be unleashed by (a) the foreign culture’s verbal claim to superiority, often accompanied by some form of indoctrination and/or (b) by its deliberate macho-type or showpiece-like display of novel technologies. In the second case, one subsection of the larger society in the recipient culture (for example, an age-group) identifies with the foreign culture in revolt against an indigenous establishment, e. g. elders of their own society, authoritative parents, preponderant aristocracy, etc. The generation conflict is a natural phenomenon in many, also matri-lineally organised societies, but it may receive dramatic fuel from a foreign culture within sight, which serves as an alternative.”

Don (2003) agrees regarding the dangers of foreign, negative influence of African cultural practices by giving an example of Central Africa. While Central Africa is perhaps best known for the complex, polyphonic singing of pygmies and the very popular, guitar-based dance music known as Congolese rumba or soukous, Bantu interaction with forest peoples, known by their local names of BaBenzele, BaMbuti and BaAaka, among others, resulted in pygmies losing their own language and borrowing musical instruments.

2.10 Preservation efforts for music and dance in Africa

Atta in Tracey (1970, p.96) makes a distinction between active and passive traditions in Southern Africa by referring to the Zumaile village in Zambia. The rise of new musical forms and idioms in the twentieth century Africa has created a widespread interest in the question of change. Change may well be the constant in the development of music on this continent.

There is increasing evidence to show that what has often been regarded as age-old and unchanging in African traditional music would, in fact, be more accurately described as part of a changing process. The material presented here is an illustration of this process through a few examples and accounts of their own music by members of a single village. It also depicts some of the ways in which new musical traditions spread, flourish and become outmoded or adapted in new traditions. Many of the musical traditions of the village had become obsolete and new ones had replaced them.

2.11 Active traditions

Nyau dances are widely performed in the eastern and central provinces of Zambia, and to a lesser extent in other provinces. It is generally believed to be of an ancient tradition introduced into Zambia during the 18th century by the in-coming Chewas from Malawi.

The Zumaile nyau, like those still to be seen elsewhere in Zambia, features virtuoso dances by a masked performer clad in a tassled skirt with feathered headgear, holding a switch or a stick with which he signals to the accompanying drummers and chorus from time to time.

2.12 Passive traditions

Ndendeule, for instance, a circle dance for women, was long dead in Zamueile; but in some Nsenga areas it was still an active traditional form of entertainment during September, 1968. Ndendeule groncesups could be found in which the dances were accompanied only by clapping. In Zumaile, it had been a circle dance for women, with male drummers accompanying them from the centre of the ring.

The last time Chiwele dances were seen in Zumaile was during the late 1940's, a dance in which two lines of boys and girls stood facing each other. They danced together in pairs along the space between the lines, re-joining their own lines at the opposite end. Drummers accompanied the dancers singing from an adjacent platform erected for the purpose (<http://www.africaguide.com/culture/music.htm> Retrieved 28/7/2015, p.96).

The main points that have emerged from the literature review serve to justify that sub-Saharan, African music and dance are constructed, practised, protected and preserved in a similar way because values attached to this music area are rooted in the region.

There are music and dance practices that have disappeared or taken a new twist/direction; yet in some parts of the region, there are clearly some music and dance practices that are very much alive, with very little of their original form lost when compared to the lost practices.

Answers to the Sipelu music and dance emerged from the position that Sipelu music and dance are musical practices within the region, showing great similarities in sub-Saharan Africa. Modern trends with urbanisation and the impact of western culture, traditional music and dance, although still practised, have decreased.

New idioms have emerged, however, that combine African and western elements. They include West Africa Highlife (showing certain Caribbean traits), Congolese popular music (reflecting Latin-American influence) and in Southern Africa, Sabasaba and Kwela (both akin to U.S. swing and jive music).

Evidence suggests that the needs of the Church and other transplanted institutions may stimulate a new art music. Traditional music and dance face a serious threat of decline. Because of their political and cultural importance, however, their preservation is given special attention in many countries.

I acknowledge the informants for not only giving their time, but also selflessly sharing their expertise. As observed by Bruce (1978), researchers should genuinely appreciate the informants because, the informants, as I said earlier, have agreed to be interviewed by you because they like you and want to help, because they owe you a favour, because they think the information you collect and transmit will do them some good, because they think the information you collect and pass along will help someone or some cause they want helped, because they are bored and, therefore, happy for the opportunity to talk to someone not noticeably bored by their rambling, because you are paying them for their time and talk or for other reasons buried so deep in the mind neither of you will ever know what they were. By the time you sit down to talk, the decision to help you has been made. But if you do not handle it carefully, you can miss the most important information they have to give you.

The next chapter looks at the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis as well research ethics applied.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research design

In this study I used a qualitative approach. The ethnographic research design was the most appropriate, since the study deals with a cultural setting. Ethnographic research is, research in a naturalistic setting because of its extensive use of human culture. (Gay 1996).

According to Clifford (1988, p. 31), ethnography has always been conducted in natural settings, but over time the focus of ethnographic research has shifted and expanded. Ethnographic research was originally a form of salvage anthropology; its aim was to record the exotica of rapidly vanishing societies. These first-generation ethnographies were compilations of societies' cultural components, and included information on kinship, social control, economic and property relations, religion and ritual. The goal of the research was twofold: to document the ways of life in a rapidly vanishing society and to discover cultural patterns that were similar across societies.

This study looked at a group of people and only in that specific context. I was in the field to gather first-hand information which in itself played a pivotal role in the success of this study; hence, I could ensure that all data collected resulted from first-hand information.

3.2 Population

The research population comprised the Masubia people of Bukalo in the Zambezi region. Only a small part of the Masubia population was used by me although the Masubia represents a vast area of the region.

3.3 Sample and sampling procedure

The sampling techniques that were used are known as purposive and snowball sampling. A selective sampling of informants was undertaken to ensure a representative spread throughout the study. Increase or reduction of sample size was adjusted while the study was in progress, depending on what information that I needed at a given time.

The sample included individuals of various ages, religious beliefs, and so forth, drawn from both the selected villages, as well as Katima Mulilo. The snowball sampling method helped me in identifying informants who were experts in the Masubia culture. It was essential in this study to involve multi-sources in order to improve the validity and reliability of the study.

3.4 Research instruments

The data collection instruments included an interview guide for both structured and semi-structured interviews to be used by me during interviews. A Bell audio recorder was also used to record voice and instrumentation during the interview.

I also conducted Key Informant Interviews (KII) with informants who had expert knowledge of Sipelu music and dance. Subsequently, I used in-depth, semi-structured interviews, as well as participatory and non-participatory observation during the data collection period. Mans's (2000, p. 3) framework which provides examples of suitable questions that might be asked to the informants and to guide the researcher's personal observation, was used by the researcher.

Participating and observing the performance of Sipelu music and dance provided me with practical insight into how the music and dance was put together and how the dancers were attached to Sipelu. Since observation is a main tool in an ethnographer's toolbox, the

researcher spent a good deal of time in the field, either observing or as participant or non-participant observer.

3.5 Procedure

Data collection/field work was conducted during 19 to 27 June, 2014. The following dates were reserved for specific Sipelu groups given below: The first group to work with the team was the Bukalo Entertainment in Katima Mulilo on 24 June, 2014. The Sibwanga group was observed and interviewed on 26 June 2014 while the Intenge group made their contribution on the same day, 26 June, 2014. In the Ikumwe area, the Ikumwe group worked with the research team on 27 June, 2014.

Interviewing and observing these four groups helped to verify information regarding Sipelu music and dance among the Masubia and Mafwe people. Although the field work did not have many challenges, on one occasion the research team had to go to fetch some of the dancers who would have been late, if they had walked to the performance venues. Besides this isolated incident, all scheduled meetings were conducted on time, with both sides (dancers and research team) confirming that the sessions were worthwhile, leaving with a great sense of giving back to the community. For them, having Sipelu music and dance documented was a tremendous, tangible, cultural contribution. The dancers expressed their happiness to see a document on Sipelu and dance being accessed by Masubia, other Zambezi region people, Namibians interested in the dance, as well as readers from other parts of Africa and overseas.

The research procedure followed the structured, semi-structured interviews and observations that were conducted with all sample groups identified by the researcher. I

went into the field to interview informants, take photos of dances and participate in the dance.

Video clips and photos of performed dances were taken while voices were recorded with a voice recorder. Interviews were structured around the meaning the Masubia attached to Sipelu music and dance, how the dance related to other Masubia cultural elements, as well as in what ways the music and dance had been preserved over time.

The photo captions helped me with revealing colours and designs of costumes, movements in the dance, the roles of individuals and specific gender-related activities in the dance.

Audio recordings captured any vocal utterances within songs which were analysed to provide more information that could otherwise have been missed through observation. The interview with the Sipelu dance group leaders focused on how the groups were started and what the motive behind forming such a group was. In most cases during the interview, the group leaders had to be prompted in order for them to give reasons regarding the dance's meaning to the Masubia people.

Time slots for interview and dance appointments were booked through Mr Charles Nchindo, the main contact who utilised telephone and e-mail facilities. The group leaders were reachable through cell phones, and the network was generally active most of the time during the field work period/duration.

Questions were also asked to establish what it was that the Masubia people would miss in the event that Sipelu music and dance were removed from their day-to-day, physical and spiritual lives. Since Sipelu dance involves male and female, the selected members of the group were asked to provide information regarding their specific gender roles in the dance.

The females proudly provided information, for example, on how female dance costumes were designed the way they were, and what significance their particular dance movements had on the overall performance. On the other hand, the male role was defined through male informants who defined their dance steps and dance costumes. I managed to obtain more clarity in terms of what meaning the Masubia had regarding this dance which they had practised for centuries and which they dearly guarded. The relationship between me and informants helped to establish the context in which Sipelu was performed.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis was achieved through the application of interpretive and deductive reasoning methods. Deductive reasoning involves arriving at specific conclusions based on generalisation. The information obtained from recorded interviews, as well as captions on video, were analysed through interpretive and deductive reasoning methods and presented in narrative form. Still photos provided information on dance postures and costume designs while video clips provided information on a particular dance sequence, as well as coordination within the whole dance presentation.

The texts of selected songs were written in Silozi and Subia with a free translation provided at the end of the text. Selected pictures are presented as Appendix 1, while the song repertoire Texts of selected songs are presented as Appendix 2. Movement videos of Sipelu songs and dances are presented as Appendix 3. Photos of Misisi, (Sipelu music and dance costume) were incorporated in the section that deals with costume making, as well as in Appendix 4. Interview guide questions are presented in Appendix 5.

3.7 Research ethics

The participants were initially informed by the main contact person about the research objectives, as well as a provisional time of contact for each dance group. Originally this information was transmitted by text message from me to the contact person and eventually by word of mouth from the contact person to the participants.

When I arrived in Katima Mulilo, (the work field), all the informants were contacted, informing them that the research team was in the area. Specific appointments were arranged with each and every dance group, agreeing on which day and time the first meeting could be held. All the groups preferred to meet at their respective rehearsal venues.

During the first meeting, I introduced the research team, clarifying why the research was important to both sides, myself and the dance group. I also made it very clear that the most important reason for the study was that, generally, traditional dances in Namibia were on the verge of becoming extinct; hence the need to capture and document what the dancers still had (Sipelu music and dance). The research team's presence was an indication that the team appreciated that the Masubia and Mafwe still had a heritage which was visibly alive and meaningful to the custodians themselves (Mafwe and Masubia). The contributions of all the groups were voluntary.

All groups respectively gave their time, expertise and energy during the hours that the research team worked with them. The groups were asked verbally and in writing to share what they still knew about Sipelu music and dance. I explained clearly to the groups that the research was not sponsored, but conducted by a student from UNAM to document the importance of Sipelu music and dance to the Masubia and other readers from outside their

culture. The informants were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the study whenever they deemed it right. Although all groups agreed to participate voluntarily, the research team provided some refreshments during the sessions.

A token of appreciation was also extended to translators, each from the three dance groups. Bukalo Entertainment group did not need the services of a translator because the group leader spoke and understood English; in fact, she is a school teacher in Katima Mulilo. I assured group leaders that the final report on the study would be accessible to them on request.

I tried to be transparent by explaining to the informants why the research should be conducted. All data collected were treated with utmost confidentiality and all those involved in this study would be informed verbally, as well as in writing when the final report would be accessible to them. I made an attempt to provide a reliable report by the end of the study. A consent form was signed by all group leaders, as an agreement that the data collected by the researcher would be given willingly and not for any gain or compensation.

According to Bruce (1978), the researcher should be aware of his or her conduct, especially during observation and when interviewing the informants. The following hints are encouraged by Bruce (1978):

Never turn off the tape recorder when you're doing an interview. Every time you turn the tape recorder on or off you're giving the informant an instruction about what you think is valuable and you force a reconsideration by the informant of what should be considered valuable and what should be considered useless. Every time you turn the record off you're saying, "What you're talking about now doesn't strike me as being

important or interesting.” Even if what’s being said is unimportant and boring, you don’t want to communicate that message so clearly. It’s far better to waste a little tape or to redirect the conversation by a question or a comment than to make the exclamation mark statement by pushing that button (p. 91).

Some technical faults developed with the audio voice recorder to such an extent that it was never used throughout the field work. After this experience, both interviews and observation were handwritten. The attempt to capture both video clips, as well as audio sound, on a video camera, did not work either because of poor sound quality as a result of windy conditions during interviews. However, the interview conducted with the Intenge group was of a reasonably better quality and could be used in the study.

The following chapter presents the results and engage in a discussion of the findings in this study.

Chapter 4

Results presentation and discussion

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected. It discusses the data collected from the interviews held and the observations made during the field work. All the four dance groups made an enthusiastic and exciting contribution towards these findings.

4.1 Interview based findings

The interviews contributed tremendously to the findings of this study. Through the interviews and observations, the history and present state of Sipelu music and dance was exposed. It was an exciting moment for the research team to find and work with people who were still practising Sipelu. It was encouraging, as well, to realise that all the four groups were concerned about the reality of losing the Sipelu music and dance. Group leaders, costume makers from the groups and song makers expressed concern over the loss which was already evident (the present youth are not interested in the dance; hence, dance frequency has declined).

4.2 Historical background of the Masubia people

Kangumu (2011) argues that colonial, administrative control in the Caprivi was largely informed by negative perceptions of both the region and its people. While the land was presented as unhealthy, malaria-ridden and useless, its inhabitants were classified as neither prepossessing nor attractive, 'wandering Bushmen' who showed no tendency to abandon their own customs. Clearly, these customs were considered to be primitive, or even worse, non-existent. (Kangumu 2011, p. 25).

However, Kangumu (2011), furthermore, elaborates that

Not much is recorded on the history of the Caprivi prior to Lozi domination. Apart from factors such as the late arrival of outside (particularly European) influence and cross-border migration, the area's relatively small size meant that its history was intertwined with that of surrounding territories. Thus historians have tended to read and rely heavily on historiography pertaining particularly to Barotseland in an attempt to make sense of matters and events in the pre-colonial Caprivi.

All the groups agreed that the Masubia came from Zambia, into Botswana and then went back to settle in the areas around Bukalo. When asked who had occupied the Bukalo area when the Masubia arrived there from Botswana, all the groups concurred that some San/Barakwena people had occupied the land. They then co-habited in this area for many years. However, it was not established when/why the Barakwena eventually moved out of this area.

Another element that added to the background of the Masubia, confirmed by sources from the Ikumwe and Intenge groups, was that when they settled in the areas around Bukalo, they were actually fleeing from a war which was waged in the western part of Zambia. All groups also mentioned that while they settled in Botswana, it became a worry to the leaders that their numbers began to swell to a level that constituted overpopulation. This concern resulted in a move regarding an agreement among the leaders and their subjects that a few of their people had to scout for more land so that the group could eventually split.

When the scout group arrived in the area around Bukalo, they found enough water resources, fertile soil for farming, good pastures for their domestic animals and plenty of game, and sent a message that they had found a new home. Some of the people who were left in Botswana joined who came to Bukalo earlier and had settled there until today. Although it was not confirmed to the researcher, the practice of clans splitting because of over-population was a general practice among the Africans of sub-Saharan Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, as populations grew among the same clan, it usually came to a point where it became impossible to find someone to marry because everyone had become related to everybody else, making it not only impossible, but a taboo to marry one's own blood. The splitting then allowed some of the clan members to mix or find people of different clans and sometimes different cultures than their own to marry. This could have been the reason behind the split of the Masubia of Namibia from those of Botswana.

4.3 Costume

Except for the Bukalo Entertainment group, all Sipelu groups that I worked with, were dressed in a costume known as Misisi. The Misisi was designed such that it was a uniform for the dance group, having designs and colours that looked exactly the same. This costume was made up of two separate pieces. One of the pieces was referred to as the underwear/petticoat which was worn under/below the skirt. There was also another piece, a suit which consisted of a skirt and blouse (see Appendix 4). In addition to this, there was also another piece, a headgear/duick, as well as a scarf which was wrapped around the waist. As part of the uniformity, socks and shoes should be in the same colour. It was

emphasised that in the past, the costume was made out of animal skins, a practice that changed with modernity.

4.3.1 Significance of the costume

According to the dancers, uniform costumes instilled a sense of group unity, and all movements became visible, articulate and satisfying to the eye. The costume was, in most cases, made of light and colourful material (see Appendix 4). The significance of Sipelu costume was for the group to look like an attractive team, and to synchronise their movements when they dance. If the group members could afford to acquire the same design, it only served as an added bonus to the outward appearance of the group. That on its own enhanced the group's image and presence, since uniformity in the choice of costume was stressed.

4.3.2 The art of costume making

According to all three costume makers that I interviewed, depending on individual sizes, about five metres of material should be enough to sew the Misisi underwear. The suit comprised two pieces, a top and a skirt. With a duick/headgear added to the skirt and top, depending on individual size, about eight metres of material should be enough.

The sewing was done with a sewing machine because doing it manually would take many days. On average, a single costume took one whole day to complete, and the skirt had gathers that revealed peacock colours. The costume was designed such that when the women swayed during the dancing, the shiny, attractive colours of a peacock were revealed (see Appendix 4, Misisi costume).

4.4 Dance structure

4.4.1 Purpose/meaning of dance

According to the Sibwanga Sipelu group leader, they felt good when they danced and always had a feeling that the nation's dance would be elaborated. Another purpose of dancing was that they wanted to prove to the Zambian Masubia that the Namibian Masubia still remembered and were proud of the Sipelu dance, and that their roots and identity were still tangible. The dancers said that Sipelu was who they were, and that it was their tradition which kept them going as a people; hence, it was their identity and pride. It was elaborated by all dance groups that I had worked with that they danced for no payment when they were entertaining themselves; this included dancing at the Masubia festival. However, when the group was hired to perform, there was a fee that they would charge. This fee was not standard but fluctuated, depending on the financial status of the client. Some co-operate organisations had their own rates that were usually non-negotiable but in most cases reasonably better than other offers, a good bargain.

According to the Intenge Sipelu group leader, "Sipelu dance to us is like disco to the young generation. It is some form of entertainment." She added that they danced Sipelu to educate the young about the past traditional music and dance since the generation of today was losing almost everything that originally had been theirs: healthy food, language, customs and many other traditions.

4.4.2 Dance formation

Both men and women participated in the Sipelu dance, although there were always fewer men than women. I, however, could not establish why this was the case. The people

interviewed simply said it had been like that for a long time but could not explain why.

The Intenge and Bukalo Entertainment groups did not have male dancers when I worked with them. The Bukalo Entertainment group trained school-going boys and girls as an option and, therefore, did not need to work with men. The dancers stood in a linear formation with both men and women in the same line. The male dancer moved across to pick a female dance partner who danced with him for a while. The same man moved on to the next partner and the process went on until the end of the song. The females, one, two, three or four at some stage, moved forward to dance and then retreated back to the line formation with another group taking over. The dancing usually commenced with the queue of a glottal/hippo sound that is mimicked by the whole group (watch Video No 1, Appendix 3, Haluna kiliniki).

Male movements were basically the same as those of women, with the difference being that males did not do peacock movements, because they did not wear skirts. In some cases, while the majority were standing in a line, dancers stopped singing and danced as a group, with ululation and the glottal/hippo sounds emphasised.

4.4.3 Sipelu performers

Sipelu dance was performed by the elderly men and women, and the reason given was that the young generation was not interested in taking part these days. The Bukalo Entertainment group trained school-going and out-of-school learners. One group comprised two distinct levels of school-going learners. Group A fell between the ages of 7 to 16 years while Group B fell between 18 to 35 years. The non-school going youth fell

into Group B, while the elderly women were the dance instructors who trained the learners and youth. The dance group leader was a local teacher in Katima Mulilo who took the initiative, together with the other women, to train the learners and revive Sipelu music and dance.

The Intenge group did not have men on the day that I worked with them but others confirmed that they had a few men in the group. The women's average age could be about 50 years while the Ikumwe group comprised men and women of an average age of about 55 years.

4.4.4 Performance venues

Performance venues for Sipelu dance were always in the open air, shifting from under a tree shade in the centre of a homestead, on the school grounds, at a beer party and the headman's residence. In most of the cases, the venue would be determined by the reason for gathering, being it a wedding, school function, funeral or simply a beer drinking party. Although performance venues changed from time to time, rehearsals were usually held at a designated place, which in most cases would be central.

The Bukalo Entertainment group rehearsed at the Katima Mulilo town hall where they had taken the initiative to teach Sipelu music and dance to the learners and youth. The group leader expressed gratitude towards the Katima Mulilo town management for donating the venue. On the other hand, the parents staying close to the venue, encouraged their children to go and be trained in Sipelu music and dance where they would sing and dance, be made aware of the past and see where their culture was moving and be proud of themselves.

When I met this group, it had just entered its 4th week of training and they met every Tuesday for an hour (16h00 to 17h00).

Intenge rehearsed and performed at the group leader's homestead at the Bukalo Settlement. Sibwanga rehearsed and performed close to the Katima Mulilo-Ngoma national road at a kutla in the Mubiza village. Ikumwe used their usual rehearsal venue which happened to be the old, deserted homestead of Mr Nchindo, husband to the group leader.

4.4.5 Dance frequency

All traditional authorities in the Zambezi region set aside days to celebrate their cultural practices that include music and dance, food, natural resources, as well as customs and traditions. It is known that the Masubia people have a festival once a year. The date of this festival is communicated to the community well in advance. This festival is held at the Bukalo settlement within the Chief's palace. During this festival, the Masubia present different dances which include Liyala, Subia and Sipelu. This is the platform where they also display other cultural aspects: artefacts, food, fruits and others. Besides this festival, Sipelu is performed throughout the year at different occasions as demand arises.

Birthdays, weddings and funerals may not be easily foreseen; however, any time such functions/activities arise, the Sipelu dance will be performed. In this world of technology, any need for gathering to practise was always communicated by text messages, email, and land-line telephone, by word of mouth or any device that could facilitate communication. The amount of time spent on rehearsals depended on the magnitude of the occasion. A twenty minute dance at a birthday party would not be as important as one hour performed at a political rally. In cases where the dancers were remunerated for their services, there

was a natural tendency to rehearse longer in a bid to try and equate what they were offered by displaying their expertise.

4.4.6 Dance group dynamics

The popularity of the different Sipelu dance groups depended on a number of aspects, some of them being their song repertoire, costume, staging of performances and overall professionalism. Although songs were written as text, groups rehearsed them and remembered every word and movement for every song. One dancer justified this ability as an inherited talent.

When groups competed, that competition would always be based on an overall assessment of the group from costume, energy level, expression, message in songs and overall staging. In addition to the dancers, the group leader, song makers and costume makers were well respected in the community. The success of each group depended entirely on the energy and skill of the above. Although songs were shared among different groups, the song makers told me that there would always be songs that would be privately owned by individual groups. It was not easy to give away songs that groups would have worked hard to create and produce.

My observation revealed that no two groups had the same repertoire of songs. Each group had its own dynamics, ranging from energy level, costume, song focus, as well as general commitment to their performances. In general, all groups demonstrated enthusiasm, a sign of understanding and enjoying what they were doing. It clearly showed that they were proud of who they were, their true identity.

4.5 Songs

4.5.1 Song text/lyrical content

Sipelu songs were sung to address social issues like marriage, weddings, complaints, pleas, funerals, social comments and any other activities within a particular society. The Ikumwe Sipelu group sang songs of welcoming for the research team (visitors), songs of self-praise, referring to themselves as the best Sipelu group in the area, songs of remembering the heroes of the liberation struggle, in particular Greenwell Matongo, who hailed from their area, songs of praising our national leaders and the Swapo flag, singing that it had beautiful colours and that they thanked comrade Sam Nujoma for his wise leadership.

The Intenge group performed songs that praised the Zambezi region's rich, cultural heritage, while the Sibwanga sang a song, "Haluna Kiliniki", a song that they sang to regional and local authorities complaining why politicians needed them during the time for votes and then deserted them when they had won their seats. They sang about non-development in their area where they struggled with clinics, as well as the communication network. Bukalo Entertainment sang a song about a little bird that was always watching us in life. After observing everything, the birds told you that they would have seen it all, a song that suggested that there was somebody watching us, for both good and bad reasons.

4.5.2 Song makers/composers

When I conducted interviews with all the group leaders, as well as song makers, it emerged quite clearly that making or composing songs was a specialised skill that was not a gift that every dancer had. In each Sipelu dance group, there were always song makers or composers who prepared songs long before the whole group started practising the songs.

Two or three song makers would meet regularly for the purpose of coming up with new songs. When such songs were ready for presentation, the song makers would assemble the whole dance group to unveil the song.

They would then draw up a schedule of when they would teach the songs to the group. This was how the group's repertoire grew and that was why songs from one group would differ from those of the next group. Each group had its own songs, making each group unique. As these old songs were sung over and over again, new ones came up and this was how Sipelu kept on going. Dancers never ran out of songs. The song makers were also the ones who started the song.

The reason given was that they would know the songs better than anybody else in the group. Those who were good singers would always be the next in line after the next song makers. Although songs were composed by two or three ladies, the rest of the group's input was welcome. When asked how and where the song makers did what they did, all song makers said that their talent came from either the family or they could learn from other song makers. They all agreed that a song maker just had to be a bundle of talent, energy, creativity, sensitivity and charm, hence, making this role not to be for everybody.

Song makers should naturally be prepared to work for long hours so that they produced good and tangible results. When new songs were rehearsed for the first time, some lyrics might not fit the rhythm or the message might not be as clear as intended. In such a case, changes would be accommodated for the good of every group member. All songs presented by the groups were in call-and-response form, except for the greeting song that was presented by the Ikumwe group.

4.6 Instrumentation

4.6.1 Choice and role of instruments

The main instrument used by all the groups was handclapping. Accompanying handclapping, ululation was common in all groups as well. The Intenge, Ikumwe and Sibwanga groups used the whistle in addition to handclapping.

Only one Sibwanga group member used clappers (see Video SDV_ 0281 Appendix 2), making Sibwanga the only group playing such an instrument. Every group used ululation extensively to create a happy atmosphere. Clapping was used to keep the time and a basic pattern while very little variation was kept throughout the dance.

4.7 Sipelu and other cultural elements

According to all the group members, Sipelu was placed centrally in their everyday lives, because it touched every aspect of their lives. When people attend a wedding, Sipelu music and dance became part of it. When the elderly went to a beer party, Sipelu became part of it. When people attended a funeral, Sipelu became part of it. Social comment was common, as well, since with the singing, people could be reprimanded, corrected or praised for their exemplary behaviour in the society.

4.8 Preservation

4.8.1 The lost tradition

It was vividly confirmed by all Sipelu groups that Sipelu singing and dancing were not as frequently practised as it was in the past, the reason being that the younger generation had lost interest in such traditional activities. The majority of them preferred foreign cultures,

and had been absorbed by television, the radio and face book programmes that would always make them more lazy and hopeless. Urbanisation had also made an impact on the diminishing of interest regarding cultural activities.

The youth argued that music on television and the radio had already been made, while traditional music still had to be made. If these youth were not exposed to the cultural/rural activities, it would become a challenge for them to participate fully in such activities. “They simply do not know how and it is a big shame to the community”, complained one dancer from Ikumwe.

4.8.2 Picking up the pieces

Although there was a general decline of Sipelu music and dance practice among the Masubia and Mafwe people, I was impressed to see and hear that the elderly Sipelu dancers and teachers had started to teach the dance to learners and out-of-school youth. I witnessed about 20 learners and about 5 young women who gathered and practised at Katima Mulilo town hall every Tuesday between 17H00 and 18h00.

All the other groups that I worked with confirmed that the teaching of the Sipelu dance was happening in schools, although I could not identify such schools as evidence that indeed there were elders who were trying to revive Sipelu among the youth. School-going learners of the Bukalo Entertainment group confirmed to me that it was indeed a good undertaking by the elders to teach them Sipelu music and dance, including the history of other Masubia beliefs and customs.

The learners also said that they had learnt that some dances from the past had actually become extinct, just like types of food, types of grass, specific breeds of domestic animals,

as well as wild animals. They were convinced that, if other practices had disappeared, that Sipelu would do the same. According to them, the time was now to act, and the wise way was to join any Sipelu group and learn from the experts, custodians of culture, while they were still alive. “If they die, there will be no one to blame but ourselves,” said one learner.

4.9 Findings (Observation)

4.9.1 Movement

The dancers of the Sibwanga group stood in a semi-circle close to each other but not too close to interfere with the one standing next. There had to be enough space for the next dancer to move freely and clap hands. Every song performed was done with great enthusiasm shown on every dancer’s face.

The energy displayed showed the dancers enjoyed what they were performing. They put all their energy into the performance. The singers, standing in a semi-circle, stooped as they clapped hands rhythmically in a co-ordinated manner.

Depending on the song, dancers moved forward to dance in front of the rest in twos, threes, or fours. These movements were simultaneously co-ordinated and pleasing to the eye. One man joined the women dancers at one point with the ladies swaying their skirts to reveal the multiple colours shown from the inner side of their skirts. The stooping position, as was with the Sibwanga group, was also maintained by the Intenge group dancers while they stood in a semi-circle formation. This stooping posture was well coordinated with hand clapping throughout the performance. Only the ones who went in front to dance

would stop clapping. The feet of the dancers in the semi-circle remained stationary with movement only done by the solo dancers (see Video_0290, Appendix 3, Zambezi region). Sometimes the dance was done by two dancers who executed coordinated steps in front of the group.

The movements by the Intenge group were more relaxed compared to those of Sibwanga which were more energetic. However, the relaxation also came with somberness and well-calculated movements. Members of this group expressed happiness in displaying their cultural expertise through movement and ululation. The stooping while clapping posture was also maintained by the Ikumwe group. The dancers could go to the front from the semi-circle formation and do a few coordinated steps before retreating to their semi-circle position. At some point, two women were joined by a man on the dance floor. The singers in the semi-circle formation did not move their feet until they stepped forward to take their turn in dancing, either as solo, part of duet, trio or quartet (see SDV_0303, Appendix 3, Greenwell Matongo).

The Bukalo Entertainment group stood in a straight line, stooped in rhythm with their clapping. They stood in two lines with dancers facing each other, each line with male and female dancers. A few dancers would come from either side and meet each other in the centre, dance for a while and then retreat back into their linear position. This movement was then followed by another one until most of the dancers had taken part.

The Bukalo Entertainment group was the only group that I met, which was currently training school-going and out-of-school youth. The group, however, showed great excitement in singing, movement and hand clapping. To some extent, these youth seemed

here and there to be unsure of the correct movements, especially when dancing either in a duet or bigger group. Interestingly and courageously, none of them minded dancing in front of the cameras. It is my assumption that some of these learners' movements were not perfect because they had started training not long ago.

4.9.2 Instruments

Besides handclapping and whistle blowing being common in all other groups, the Sibwanga was the only group that played a pair of wood clappers. This instrument was played by a woman dancer who kept herself occupied by the clappers without any interruption. The sound of the clapper sounded a bit sharper than handclapping.

The songs, clapping and clapper rhythm was in 6/8 time, typical of Southern African rhythms. Handclapping and clappers created some interlocking patterns, resulting in a rich polyrhythmic pattern which the dancers produced effortlessly. A whistle was oftenly blown in rhythm to add some atmosphere.

Like in the other groups, stooping while clapping hands and whistle blowing were common features in the Intenge group. The hand clapping, like in other groups, created an interlocking pattern in 6/8 time, again typical of Southern African rhythm.

At this stage, I could tell that stooping and hand clapping seemed to be a common feature in Sipelu music and dance performance. Hand clapping and stooping were also clear with the Ikumwe group, like with other groups. The feet of the dancers in the semi-circle remained glued to the ground, except for those dancers who moved forward to dance.

The clapping had such a rich texture when one listened to it. Clapping different rhythms created interlocking patterns that produced a polyrhythmic end result (see all videos, Appendix 3), A whistle blown by a man created a happy and jovial atmosphere (see Video SV_0303, Appendix 3, Greenwell Matongo).

Although stooping and hand clapping cut across the groups, the Bukalo Entertainment group offered something unique. The attempt to produce clear, deliberate, interlocking polyrhythms was not as clear as in the other groups. Here and there some of the dancers would miss the rhythm but without much concern. My assumption was that it was because this group had just started training and that it would take time to master some of these skills and for many it would take almost their whole life to master. A good effort indeed by the youth; they were trying and had a focus to revive their culture, Sipelu music and dance, in particular. The group coordinators, as well as the older ladies helping the trainers, seemed to be doing a tremendous job.

4.9.3 Singing

As a signature, groups produced a sound with their mouths that sounded like the sound that a hippo makes, usually at the beginning and end of songs. All songs performed by the Sibwanga group followed the call-and-response style, with the lead singer starting and then being answered by the rest of the group. While the response took place, voices were normally in unison. Although here and there in the song there could be a voice or two planted where harmony was incorporated, songs were generally and naturally in unison (see Video SDV_0281, Haluna kiliniki). There were, however, some songs that were sung

in unison but that had a very short call part. Without listening carefully, the whole song sounded like an ongoing chorus (see video SDV_ 0278).

Call and response, as well as singing in unison, were common features with the Intenge group as well. While the caller had the privilege to shift from text to text, the response to these songs were stuck to the same text (see videos SDV_ 0292 Bana Intenge and (SDV_ 0290, Zambezi region).

The Ikumwe group's songs were sung in call-and-response, while here and there a very weak harmony was attempted. Much of the songs were sung in unison (see Video SDV_0308, Aids and Video SDV_0303, Greenwell Matongo). The Swapo flag (see Video SDV_0305) was sung in UNISON throughout with no harmony elements included.

Kana kazuni (see Video SDV_0277), sung by Bukalo Entertainment, was also in call-and-response style with a clear UNISON voice. The pitch of this song kept on shifting higher and higher as the song progressed (see Video SDV_0277). Some dancers (youth) lost their clapping rhythm by trying to sing and clap at the same time. This song, however, was also sung by the Sibwanga group (see Video SDV_0286).

4.9.4 Costumes

Sipelu music and dance costume was called Misisi, and each group designed its own costume according to their liking. Each group that I observed had a different design and colour from the other groups. The Sibwanga costume was as follows;

Headgear: Pink, boxed material (table cloth design)

Blouse: Matching pink and boxed, with green and purple ribbon/lace

Scarf: Red

Skirt: Matching pink with green and purple ribbon/lacing (double line)

Socks: Most dancers were without socks. Only two women, including the leader, with socks

Shoes: All in tennis shoes. Most of the shoes were black, except for two (blue and white)

The Intenge costume looked as stated below:

Headgear: Orange

Blouse: Green with orange ribbon/lace

Scarf: Green with orange lace

Socks: All performers had no socks

Shoes: Pink tennis shoes by all members

The Ikumwe group members had costume which looked as stated below:

Headgear: White, blue-spotted material

Blouse: White with blue spots with purple lace/ribbon

Scarf: Gold, blue, white material

Skirt: White with blue spots with pink lace/ribbon

Socks: Some had socks with a zebra design, (red and white, black and white, grey and white). A few did not have socks.

Shoes: All were in assorted colour shoes (black, white, blue).

The Bukalo Entertainment group did not have a specific costume. The dance instructors had just started to train the youth and had not so much focused on performances. Individual dancers wore different clothes.

4.9.5 Male and female dancer's role

The total number of dancers in the Sibwanga group was sixteen, fifteen women and one man. Only one man participated in one dance (see Video SDV_0279). He danced without singing and hand clapping. Women formed the bigger group.

Male movements were different from females' in the sense that women had to sway their skirts to reveal the inner, colourful material. Male movements were steadier than the females'. The Intenge group had seven female dancers while there were no male dancers on the day of observation.

The Ikumwe group had twelve female and two male dancers during the observation. Males and females danced together in front of the whole group, with either one man joining one female or both men joining two females. One of the two males blew the whistle rhythmically.

The Bukalo Entertainment group had the biggest number of both male and female dancers. Most of the youth were of school-going age with a few out-of-school youth. The movements for males and females were the same, basic and easy for beginners.

4.10 Challenges

4.10.1 Promotion and support

The promotion of traditional music and dance is a noble gesture in every society. It takes much energy, time, expertise and resources to advance this cause. Every dance group admitted that they would keep on dancing and promote the dance, although they sometimes faced some challenges. Among the challenges there was the lack of resources. It became extremely difficult for most rural-based dancers to maintain their costumes in case these became worn out or dirty. It was a big challenge to guarantee that there would be soap to wash the costumes when they became dirty.

Although most of the dancers could receive a government pension benefits for the elderly – that was if they were registered properly and in time, the money was not enough to cover all expenses. A concern was also raised that, in general, the groups usually did not have transport money to go to dance at different places within the Zambezi region or around Namibia, something that they believed would be good for promoting Sipelu and other Masubia cultural activities.

Findings in this study are supported by the literature reviewed concerning the origin and background of African, traditional music and dance within the sub-Saharan, African region. It looked at dance formations, song making, performances context, performance venues, dance frequency, meaning of music and dance to specific cultures, instrumentation

associated with different dances, as well as the role and making of costumes for the dance groups. The role of Sipelu music and dance in the Bukalo area confirmed what the literature review revealed. Most of the sub-Saharan, Africa music and dance, as cultural elements, were linked, with some cultures practising more than others.

The natural phenomenon of foreign influence on dances, as well as elements of extinction, were discussed as they were evident as well. Due to the threat of extinction of such dances, efforts were being made, at least, to sensitise the young generation in schools and those out of school. All the groups that the researcher worked with in the Bukalo area, confirmed that they were concerned about the decline in Sipelu music and dance practices, and were taking steps to find workable solutions to promote Sipelu music and dance with the Masubia people in general. Results were not completely as they came, since in other cultures, traditional music and dance, not mentioning other cultural practices, have disappeared (kurova guva among the Shona people of Zimbabwe). The neglect is caused in the name of people being church goers and that the Bible says there is no life after death. The dead do not come back to the earth.

Within the same Shona culture, burial rituals are on the verge of extinction among many because of the church teachings. According to the elderly who are diehard culturists, death rituals are now slowly being replaced by a shortcut, Christian ceremonies. To some extent, people who are buried in urban cemeteries, do not benefit from rituals because of a lack of expertise and resources. Even how the grave should look like is controlled by by-laws in the urban areas which prescribe how deep, how wide, the distance from and to the next grave's top, bottom, right and left should be. If one has to bury someone at such a

cemetery, there are not many choices besides paying for the grave site, bring a pastor to conduct a short ceremony and get done as soon as possible.

Jiti, a dance that was performed up to the early 90s in most Zimbabwean villages, is not seen in most of the country unless there is a special request for such a performance. This dance has to be literally reconstructed by a few people (elderly who still remember). The dance was a youthful dance that took place at weddings, funerals, school functions or any other functions that could have requested for the dance. In the case that a Jiti performance was requested for, one of the former dancers had to organise and assemble a group of those that once upon a time performed Jiti, rehearse some dance routines and perform. Jiti has no relevance to the youth of Zimbabwe at the present time, because there is no time to perform, there is no need to perform, and the generally feeling is that it is sophisticated.

The youth of today never had exposure to Jiti and they feel the music that they are exposed to (Hip-Hop, R&B, Sungura and Kwasa kwasa) is the real and only music for them. Because Jiti has become virtually extinct, the youth now feel that it was both a primitive and backward practice.

In Namibia, the frequency at which !Gais was performed by the traditional Damara people has declined drastically. !Gais has to some great extent been replaced by other genres that the youth and elderly listen to. The main reason for this decline is that the elderly, those who performed !Gais, have grown older with no one to replace them. The youth have migrated to urban areas in search of jobs, schools and, generally, a better living. As the gap between the elderly getting older and the youth immigrating to urban areas widens, a void has been left in terms of those who should practice !Gais. Through the evolution of

musical practices, !Gais has been turned into Damara Punch, a vibrant, modern, danceable beat that is popular among the youth during their social gatherings, as well as at disco dances. This genre appeals to black youth throughout the country, cutting across most of Namibia's cultural boundaries. Modern musicians, like Bakos, Stanely and Phura, among others, have made their mark in modernising !Gais into Damara Punch.

While the elderly cry over their lost genre, musicians like Axue have kept the tradition going, adding some modern instruments, like the acoustic guitar, bass guitar, drum kit, keyboards and arranged vocals. This version of !Gais has proven to be appealing even to the elderly, some who easily substitute the traditional !Gais at functions like weddings.

There are also instances in southern Africa where relatively new genres have emerged as a way of revamping old traditions, especially where original resources like instruments, expertise or just the interest of audiences are limited. Damara Punch, Hikwa and Shambo would fall under this category. Still in this category, Emmanuel Karumazondo and Manda Saize have recorded an Mbira album, *Regai nditaure* (Let me talk), which centres on Mbira, percussion and voices. On this album, although the Mbira dominates, there are compositions that are not typically traditional. Voice arrangements are completely different from that of the traditional Mbira singers. The concept of choral harmony is clearly emphasised and demonstrated in this album. In the traditional context, singers of an Mbira ensemble sing individually, moving from one singer to the next. It is not common for two or more singers to sing simultaneously.

Phrases can be sung repeatedly, either by the same singer or by more. During this performance, nobody is identified as the singer; rather, the emphasis is on a collective

performance where instrumental and voice efforts will blend through several polyrhythms and polyphonic executions done effortlessly by most of the group members.

Mbira performances are communal; everyone contributes something to the performance. Although there are not many spectators, a few people every now and again watch from a distance, but still learn something from the overall performance.

According to the literature review, sub-Saharan African song making has always been communal (working together, collectively). Individual composers were not encouraged in the sense that all that they would sing about was every community member's experiences, hence, communal property. Song making among the Masubia agrees with the practice throughout most of the sub-Saharan, African countries.

Song text comes from everyday experiences of the community members, their complaints, praises, advice, and general life expectations. What might be different is just the subject of text because the issues affecting today's community are not the same as in the past.

The Sibwanga Sipelu group complained in one of their songs about regional councillors who only came to them to campaign for votes but disappeared when they had been voted for. The villagers were saying that they did not even have a clinic and network for mobile communication (see Video SDV_0281, Haluna kiliniki ninetiweki).

The Ikumwe Sipelu group praised Greenwell Matongo and Sam Nujoma as their Swapo heroes, a song that demonstrated unwavering patriotism indeed. This group also warned people by singing the song 'Aids' (see video SDV_0308), warning the community about the dangers of Aids. They also gave some advice to the community to be vigilant and aware because it kills 'kiya bulaya'. The Intenge Sipelu group, in the song Zambezi region

(see Video SDV_0290), praised the region for practising its cultural past by wearing their traditional attire.

All the four dance groups vowed that song making would continue since it simply reflected the community behaviour. Songs are supposed to be the instruments by which all community activities are mirrored: the good, the bad and the general. They all said that, for as long as there is a language to express themselves in about issues happening in the community, Sipelu songs would always be there to educate the community.

Since I did not encounter a research study in this line/direction, all the arguments presented here come directly from the Masubia in the Zambezi region of Namibia. There are findings by various authors/researchers in the literature review that show that most of the cultural practices of sub-Saharan Africa are similar. Based on that premise, Sipelu music and dance performance practice is similar to other dances in the region (sub-Saharan Africa). Although three groups performed in their costume (Misisi), each group had its own specific design and colours.

Within each group, there was a costume maker who sewed the costumes, taking on average two days to make a complete piece. Every member of the group contributed towards buying material for costume making. This material was then given to the costume maker who then took the measurements of individual group members, sewed the agreed design, gave it back to members to fit and made adjustments, if there would be any. Each group member would then keep their costume.

The various aspects of Sipelu music and dance, for example, the historical background, costume, song making, meaning of dance and others, were closely linked to what various

authors say. It was also discouraging to hear the dancers admit that Sipelu was not practised as often as before and, at the same time they were making encouraging pledges that they would make a concerted effort to preserve what they had, for the sake of the young and coming generations.

In the following chapter, the study is concluded and an attempt is made to make recommendations to the reader or scholar.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

The importance of song and dance in teaching class music as highlighted by Mans (1997) who conducted a study on singing and dancing were seen as the fibre that held the Masubia culture together through performances. Although the teaching of Sipelu music and dance is done informally, the overall goal is to preserve the traditional dance for the benefit of the future generations. The effect and benefit of teaching Sipelu music and dance can be compared to the western teaching of class music. This study managed to document Sipelu music and dance in various aspects, an effort and direction that Mans (2003), discusses as the only way to strengthen indigenous music of Namibia.

Although Sipelu music and dance songs are not transcribed in western notation, the songs are written in text form and preserved as such. This act of cultural preservation solidifies Tsoubaloko's (2003) argument that language helps to communicate cultural values. Sipelu songs are kept and sung for a long time because they are written down. Not all songs are written down although they are still remembered for a long time before they are forgotten.

The effect of improvisation changes or shifts song text over a period of time. Whether songs are written down or not, the performers will soon be caught up in the tragedy of losing and reinventing song text.

The study of Sipelu music and dance brings out what was not known by most Namibians, as well as readers from other parts of the world. The fact that not much about African

music and dance seems to be comprehended by the world, encouraged Nettl (1956) to spend more time writing about African music and dance.

Since Sipelu music and dance were found to be the only dance in Namibia, its characteristics were also found to be unique. This phenomenon was acknowledged by ISME (1998) who states that every culture has its own unique music and dance forms and that those performances are organised in such a way that people are entertained, as well as educated, by their practices. ISME (1998) further argues that each musical system serves to identify a particular culture. In this study, Sipelu music and dance are a culture that has unique features that cannot be confused with any other Namibian dance. It clearly identifies the people who practise it, namely the Masubia and Mafwe.

Sipelu music and dance costume, songs and instruments are presented in this study as traditional African music which cannot be bought in stores, but that comes from a faithful tradition or from personal contributions of tribesmen. It is never soulless or thoughtless, never passive, but always vital, organic and functional; indeed, it is always dignified. As an indispensable and precious part of culture, it commands respect (Sachs in Meriam, 1963).

The fact that in this study Sipelu music and dance were found to be a social event where people gather and perform on various occasions, including beer drinking parties, weddings, funerals and the like, solidifies what Nettl (1965) highlights. He states that in many parts of Africa, music and dance are generally activities of 'social' occasions; that is, occasions on which the members of a community or a social group meet for recreation or for the performance of a ceremony or a rite.

Traditional African music and dance performances, as Nketia (1965) puts it, could be held in a dance arena, the village square, the street, the courtyard, the town plaza or sacred places where particular rites are observed. This conforms to the fact that Sipelu performances are held mostly in the open air and designated meeting places in every Masubia village.

The fact that Sipelu music and dance are practised by the Masubia, people who are of the same ethnic group, confirms what Nketia (1982, p. 35) says:

Those who get together in such communal activities generally belong to the same ethnic or linguistic group. The basis of association for music making however, is usually the community, those members of the ethnic group who share a common habitat (such as a group of homesteads, a village, a town, or a section of a town) There are many Sipelu dance groups among the Masubia mainly because the area is wide and that it is easier to organise a group within peoples of proximity. This just confirms that it is an African traditional music trend to find birds of the same further flocking together.

Sipelu dancers confirmed that one of the reasons why they sang and danced was to relax, not only they themselves but the audience as well. Sipelu dancers did not dance for themselves; rather, they entertained an audience whose lives could be touched in one way or the other.

These sentiments are echoed by Merriam (1960) in Herskovits (1954, p. 77), who says that in Dahomey “crowds come to see the display and to watch the dancing, but most of all, to

listen to the songs and to laugh at the ridicules to which are held those who have offended the members of the quarter giving the dance.”

It emerged from the literature reviewed that for African people, music making is essential for processes of socialisation, and musical ability is something that every person is born with; thus, anyone can become good at music, given the right encouragement and stimulus, and given the opportunity to participate music as often as possible (Kubik, 1987). This is how the Masubia people became singers and dancers, imitating what the elders did until they had learned enough to be appreciated and integrated into the main dance group.

In Namibian traditional music, songs illustrate social structures and values through references to kinship and family structures, world views, the importance given to marriage and lineage systems, religious and production systems (Mans, 1999). Sipelu music and dance performers emerge from the same structures as indicated by Mans, solidifying the fact that Sipelu songs will only have meaning to the Masubia if sung in the expected manner, as given above. Sipelu songs do provide a channel for the transmission of societal values and histories, something that would not happen had the Masubia placed no value on their cultural practices.

All songs performed by the four Sipelu groups involved in the study had some dancing for every song that they sang, although Kubik (1987) argues that it is an African notion that all songs, whether sung or played on instruments, have words or at least titles which refer to the emotional content of the music and ideas associated with that music.

Most African singers, dancers and instrument players learn by imitation, and the more they observe, the more they learn the art. The training of singers and dancers, as well as instrument players, is not done on a formal, institutional basis among the Masubia, a trend that Nketia (1982) points out by saying that he believes that natural endowment and a person's ability to develop on his own are essentially what is needed. Although Nketia (1982) argues further that "formal systematic instruction is given only in very restricted cases demanding skills or knowledge that cannot be acquired informally," the Sipelu dance groups did not bring out this during interviews. They seemed to assume that all skills were learnt by observation and imitation. Like music and dance from other parts of Africa, Sipelu music is facing challenges in its promotion and ability to find attractive ways of preserving the dance.

Although attempts are being made to teach Sipelu to the school-going, as well as out-of-school learners, the numbers are still insignificant to justify a remarkable turnaround strategy. More work is still needed in this regard. Referring this argument to Nketia (1974, p. 3), African music in general has been influenced by language, the environment, a variety of cultures, politics and population movements, all of which are intermingled factors that have influenced Sipelu music and dance. The decline of Sipelu music and dance was not denied by the Masubia people; hence, their efforts to train the young as a means of preserving what existed, now for the good of the future generations.

An African trend that traditional music and dance are facing a serious threat of decline is argued by the site, www.africaguide.com/culture/music.htm, which says that because of the political and cultural importance of music and dance, their preservation is given special attention in many countries.

This study, however, will contribute enormously to the body of knowledge because, through this study, it has been made possible for other, junior researchers to receive guidance regarding the procedures of becoming involved in a study of this nature. This study thus has relevance to the Namibian researchers, since there are still countless dances to do research on. The foundation has been laid to expand on this study by doing studies on other kinds of Namibian music and dances. This study can now be distributed to the national library, various libraries, public and private, the UNAM libraries, as well as many other strategically positioned offices where other readers from other parts of the world will read this study.

The study revealed some similarities and differences regarding the state of Sipelu music and dance among the Masubia people in the Zambezi region. Because of the diminishing effect of Sipelu music and dance performances, I would like to suggest issues for further research. A follow-up programme initiated by the researcher could be organised to encourage the existing Sipelu groups to train the youth in Sipelu music and dance performances.

With the help of the practising Sipelu groups, schools should be visited and discussions held on the importance of Masubia culture, including the dances, since Sipelu is one of them. Modalities could be worked out on how to train learners in primary and secondary schools, as well as those youth who are out of school. In addition to the above, research should be conducted on various Namibian music and dance practices, with results compiled in a volume to be utilised in institutions of higher learning, public and private libraries, as well as for readers within Namibia and from other parts of the world.

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Appendix 1: Pictures



Picture 1. Sibwanga Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

A quartet movement

Location: Mubiza area



Picture 2. Sibwanga Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Duet movement

Location: Mubiza area



Picture 3. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Whole group (Linear formation)

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 4. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T.Karumazondo (June 2014)

Solo movement

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 5. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Trio movement (Two women & one man)

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 6. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Duet movement

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 7. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Trio movement (Two women & one man)

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 8. Ikumwe Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Solo movement

Location: Ikumwe area



Picture 9. Intenge Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Duet movement

Location: Bukalo Settlement



Picture 10. Intenge Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Solo movement

Location: Bukalo Settlement



Picture 11. Intenge Sipelu Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Duet movement

Location: Bukalo Settlement



Picture 12. Bukalo Entertainment Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Double Linear formation

Location: Katima Mulilo town council hall



Picture 13. Bukalo Entertainment Group

Photo by T. Karumazondo (June 2014)

Going through the paces of Sipelu dance

Double Linear movement

Location: Katima Mulilo town hall

Appendix 2. Song Repertoire (Text)

Bukalo Entertainment Group (Katima Mulilo)

Song 1. (SDV _ 0277) Kana Kazuni

Call: Kana Kazuni

Response: Kawamba kana kazuni kawamba

Call: Ciyo – ciyo

Response: Kawamba kana kazuni kawamba

Call: Kana kazuni

Response: Kawamba kana kazuni kawamba

Call: Ciyo – ciyo

Response: Kawamba kana kazuni kawamba

Free translation

That small bird has spoken. Ciyo – ciyo sound from the bird means that it has spoken.

Sibwanga Sipelu Group (Mubiza)

Song 2. (SDV_ 0281) Haluna Kiliniki

Call: Haluna kiliniki ni manetiweki, butata boluinezi mua Mubiza

Haluna kiliniki sicaba simwa butata

Response: Bana baluna, bana luna ba ipetuzi linali mua macacani

Call: Ha batata kubotelua balata batu. Hase ba winile Habana taba.

Response: Ha batata kubotelua balata batu, Hase ba winile Habana taba

Free translation

We do not have a clinic, not even network for communications. These are the difficulties we are sitting with here at Mubiza village. When our leaders want to be voted in, they like us (voters) but once they are voted for and win the elections, they do not like the voters anymore. Our children have turned themselves to buffalos in the bushes. We are not safe in our own homes. Our leaders do not deliver what they promised.

Intenge Sipelu Group (Bukalo Settlement)

Song 3. (SDV_ 290) Zambezi region

Call: Zambezi region

Response: Itaha itamboka itinile sizo

Call: Zambezi region

Response: Itaha itamboka itinile sizo

Call: Zambezi region

Response: Itaha itamboka itinile sizo

Call: Zambezi region

Response: Itaha itamboka itinile sizo

Free translation

Zambezi region is walking wearing traditional attire.

Song 4. (SDV -0292) Bana Intenge

Call: Bana Intenge cizo cabo mawe co kuzana

Bana Intenge

Response: Cizo cabo mawe co kuzana

Call: Bana Intenge

Response: Cizo cabo mawe co kuzana

Call: Bana Intenge

Response: Cizo cabo mawe co kuzana

Call: Bana Intenge

Response: Cizo cabo mawe co kuzana

Free translation

Dancing has become a tradition of the group or community.

Ikumwe Sipelu Group (Ikumwe)

Song 5. (SDV _ 0303) Greenwell Matongo

Response: Lua lila – lua lila mawe lua lila, lulila Greenwell Matongo mawe lua lila.

Mawe lua lila ndivalume wa Swapo Greenwell Matongo, mawe lua lila

Call: Mawe lua lila – lua lila,

Response: Mawe lua lila – lua lila, mawe lua lila lulila, mawe lua lila lulila

Greenwell Matongo mawe lua lila, ndivalume wa Swapo Matongo mawe

lua lila.

Call: Mawe lua lila – lua lila mawe lua lila mabulu bana ni lunya bana bahesu

Mawe lua lila ba bulaile Greenwell Matongo mawe lua lila.

Response: Mawe lua lila – lua lila mawe lua lila Musipili wa Swapo kalilabule mawe

lua lila.

Call: Mawe lua lila – lua lila mawe lua lila mabulu bana ni lunya bana bahesu

mawe lua lila ba bulaile Greenwell Matongo mawe lua lila.

Response: Mawe lua lila – lua lila mawe lua lila Musipili wa Swapo kalilabule
mawe lua lila.

Free translation

We are morning/weeping for our Swapo hero, Greenwell Matongo. The whites have murdered him that is why we are weeping. The trip to exile was very bad.

Song 6. (SDV _ 0305) Swapo flag

Call: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Swapo

Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Swapo

Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye Swapo

Response: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye Swapo

Call: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Swapo

Response: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Swapo

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ye nozwi

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ye nozwi

Response: Ye nozwi Swapo

Call: Ye nozwi

Response: Ye nozwi Swapo

Call: Ye nozwi

Response: Ye nozwi Swapo

Call: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Nujoma

Response: Lua lila – lua lila ndembela ya luna ye nozwi Nujoma

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ha muibone

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ki yende

Response: Ndembela ya luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Call: Ya mubuso

Response: Ya mubuso wa luna

Free translation

Look at our beautiful flag which is written Swapo. The beautiful flag for our ruling party.

The flag which is written Nujoma. We weep for our flag which is written Swapo/ Nujoma.

Have a look at it, have a look at it.

Song 7. (SDV _ 0308) Aids

Call: Butuku bua Aids musululo bua bulaya

Response: Malimanga

Call: Bufelize kuca muana likalibe mua Namibia

Response: Malimanga

Call: Aids

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Call: Tuku la Ee malimanga tuku la Ee

Response: Malimanga

Call: Tuku la Ee malimanga tuku la Ee

Response: Malimanga

Call: Butuku bua Aids musululo bua bulaya

Response: Malimanga

Call: Ku kalela kua toho ni mazoho ni mautu

Response: Malimanga

Call: Kukalela fa sifuba musululo ni kutaza

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Call: Aids

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Call: Aids

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Call: Ku utua licaziba madokota nebaize

Response: Malimanga

Call: Mina banana musa libula bua bulaya

Response: Malimanga

Call: Aids

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Call: Aids

Response: Malimanga ya bulaya malimanga

Free translation

Aids, a killer disease can start in the stomach or in the chest. It can also attack you on your feet. It is a terrible disease. It has killed many ladies in Namibia. Malimanga- a deadly killer disease.

Appendix 3. Movement videos

(A) Bukalo Entertainment Group (Katima Mulilo)

(i) (SDV_ 0277) Kana Kazuni

(B) Sibwanga Sipelu Group (Mubiza)

(ii) (SDV _ 0281) Haluna Kiliniki

(C) Intenge Sipelu Group (Bukalo Settlement)

(iii) (SDV _ 0290) Zambezi region

(iv) (SDV _ 0292) Bana Intenge

(D) Ikumwe Sipelu Group (Ikumwe)

(v) (SDV _ 0303) Greenwell Matongo

(vi) (SDV _ 0305) Swapo flag

(vii) (SDV _ 0308) Aids

Appendix 4. Misisi costume



skirt (backside)



skirt (front side)



Blouse



headgear



scarf (worn around the waist)

Appendix 5. Interview guide

The following questions were posed to all costume (Misisi makers from the four groups)

Document title: Sipelu music and dance costume

1. Which costume is used during Sipelu music and dance performance?
2. Who makes/prepares/designs this costume?
3. How long does it take you to make a complete single costume?
4. What and how much material goes into making a single costume?
5. Whose property is the costume? (individual/group)
6. On average for how long would a costume last before it gets replaced? (life span/durability)
7. Take me through the process of making a new costume. Where do start and where is the end?
8. What is the significance of choosing particular material and colour when making costume?
9. What value do you attach to a set of costume?

The following questions were posed to group dancers

Document title: Sipelu dance movements

1. Are all Sipelu songs for dance?
2. If not all songs are for dance, which ones are for dance and which ones are not for dance?

3. Are there specific movements for men and for women?
4. If men movements are different or come at a different point from women, how do the two complement each other?
5. Are there any dramatic stories depicted by specific movements or dance sequences, e.g. imitating animals or birds?
6. What marks / signifies the beginning of a dance sequence (chant, count in, instrumental playing)
7. What elements could distinguish a good dance from a bad one (What to include and what to avoid)?
8. How do you judge the overall performance? (When is good, average or bad)
9. How different could a contextual performance be from a situational one?(Observing a performance in its natural context e.g. at a wedding and one that is hastily organised for recording purpose)

The following questions were posed to instrument players

Document title: Instruments used to accompany song and dance

1. Name one of the instruments played and give a brief background of this instrument.
2. Why is this instrument chosen/played as the most suitable (significance)
3. How is the instrument structured? (see and handle/ feel the instrument)
4. Is this instrument manufactured by hand in this village? If not who did?
5. Take us through the process of making this instrument if you are familiar with how it is manufactured by supplying the following information:

- Material used to make the instrument
 - Duration of making one
 - Tuning of the instrument
 - Basic rhythmic patterns played on the instrument
 - Any names given to specific rhythmic patterns
6. How authentic is this instrument to date? Is this instrument kept for generations or can one instantly make one or just walk into a shop and buy one which is an imitation of the original instrument.
7. Is this a solo or ensemble instrument? If played in an ensemble, how big should the ensemble be?

The following questions were posed to Sipelu dance leaders

Document title: Performing Sipelu music and dance

1. Which times/ circumstances are best for Sipelu performances?
2. What activities/steps usually precede the Sipelu performance? (preparation and build-up)
3. What is the determining factor of duration in each Sipelu performance? Does each performance take a standard time from start to end?
4. How is each performance structured? (Who starts, who ululates, who blows the whistle, and who does etc.?)
5. Which musical instruments are traditionally parts of Sipelu?
6. What influences the dance? What makes people want to perform Sipelu?
7. Does a Sipelu performance have a clear distinction between the performer and the audience?
8. What are the performance venues for Sipelu? (indoor, open air, market place etc.)
9. Does each performance have a theme and do songs underline the theme?
10. Is there any special atmosphere created/needed during the performance.
11. How does each performance generally conclude?
12. How does the recruitment of newcomers in the dance take place? Who is in charge of recruitment?
13. What emphasis do you have on the training of newcomers?
14. At what stage do you consider the newcomers to be ready for inclusion/integration into Sipelu performance?
15. Have you noticed signs of change/influence to Sipelu performances? If yes, does it pose a threat to Masubia culture and what collective action are you taking to preserve the dance?

The following questions were posed to song makers/ writers/ composers

Document title: Vocal structure in Sipelu songs

1. Who creates/ makes/ composes songs for Sipelu dance?
2. Who starts songs during a Sipelu performance? (men only, women only, any one of the two)
3. How are Sipelu songs structured? (call and response, unison, canons, many voice parts)
4. If instruments are involved, how are they related to the voices? (Is it the voice or instrument that starts or vice versa?)
5. What is the general lyrical focus when singing Sipelu songs? (What societal issues do the songs address?)
6. How do you integrate the voice, instruments and dance steps? (Is there any of these that dominate or lead/direct the others?)

The following questions were posed to Sipelu group leaders.

Document title: Interview guide questions

1. Where did you, as Masubia come from before settling in Zambezi region?
2. What links are there if any in lifestyle between you and other language groups in Zambezi region?
3. For who is Sipelu music and dance intended and why? (Who owns Sipelu music and dance?)
4. Which dances have been attached to the Masubia people since they settled in the Zambezi region? (Sipelu co-exists with other cultural dances)

5. What is the historical background of Sipelu music and dance e.g. founder/ creator. (Does it signify a continuation or decline of tradition?)
6. How important is Sipelu music and dance to you as Masubia people? What does Sipelu represent in your life?
7. By tradition, who is allowed to perform Sipelu dance? (elderly men or women, young boys or girls, widows or widowers etc.) Is this tradition still standing or anyone is allowed to perform the dance?
8. In context is Sipelu performed? (Season of the year, event, day of the week, time of the day etc.)
9. Are there any aspects of Sipelu that have been lost? If lost what factors contributed to this loss?
10. In the event that some aspects of Sipelu are lost, what are you doing as a community to (a) bring back the lost and (b) preserve what you still have?
11. Are you aware of any attempts by individuals or organizations to document Sipelu music and dance?