

## THE BAKONGO CIRCUMCISION RITUAL AS ONE OF THE ELEMENTS OF AFRICAN PEDAGOGY

*THE BAKONGO CIRCUMCISION RITUAL AS ONE OF THE ELEMENTS OF IT AFRICAN PEDAGOGY*

*THE BAKONGO CIRCUMCISION RITUAL AS ONE OF THE ELEMENTS OF AFRICAN PEDAGOGY*

Chiquito Afonso Fernando Domingos, MsC. Professor at the  
Cuanza-Norte Higher Pedagogical School

[chiquitoafonsodomingos@especn.ao](mailto:chiquitoafonsodomingos@especn.ao)

<http://orcid.org/0009-0005-1414-8588>

Valdmir Francisco Manuel Gamboa, PhD.

Deputy General Director for Scientific and Postgraduate Studies at the Cuanza-Norte Higher Pedagogical School

[valdmirgamboa@especn.ao](mailto:valdmirgamboa@especn.ao)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8448-6348>

### Summary

In this study, we aimed to analyze the Bakongo circumcision ritual as one of the elements of African pedagogy. To this end, the study was based on the interview and bibliographic method. Likewise, the nature of the research is basic and the approach is qualitative. Therefore, the results demonstrated that in *Dilongo*–The Bakongo circumcision ritual also involves the exercise of African pedagogy, because, more than cutting the foreskin, it educates individuals -*Kudas*for life. Likewise, it was understood that the strength of African pedagogy in the context of Bakongo circumcision was undermined by colonial doctrines, which brought new *modus operandi*and, determined the destruction of a large part of the traditional African educational structures. Furthermore, it was realized that Bakongo circumcision is one of the elements of African pedagogical practice, because it proposes the formation of the individual, aiming at his insertion in society. Furthermore, the conclusion reveals that pedagogy was never just the transmission of knowledge through didactic means deeply propagated in contemporary spaces, because, in each complex African circumcision ritual, especially Bakongo, resides a set of educational principles that are responsible for the transformation, integration and social development of the *muntu*( person).

**Keywords:**Dilongo; Maseka; Kuda; Circumcision; African pedagogy.

### Summary

In this study, our objective was to analyze the Bakongo circumcision ritual as one of the elements of African pedagogy. For him, the study is based on the interview and the bibliographic method. Asimismo, the naturalness of investigation is basic and the qualitative approach. Therefore, the results demonstrate that in the *Dilongo* – Bakongo circumcision ritual, there is also exercise of African pedagogy, because, more than cutting the foreskin, it educates individuals – *Kudas* for life. Asimism, it was understood that the strength of African pedagogy in the context of the Bakongo circumcision was undermined by colonial doctrines, which transformed new *modus operandi* and determined the destruction of a large part of traditional African educational structures. Furthermore, it was found that the Bakongo circumcision is one of the elements of African pedagogical practice, because its objective is to train the individual, seeking their insertion in society. Furthermore, the conclusion reveals that pedagogy was never just the transmission of knowledge through didactic media deeply propagated in contemporary spaces, as, in every complex African circumcision ritual, especially the

Bakongo, there lies a set of educational principles responsible for transformation, integration and social transformation. develop the world (persona).

**Keywords:**Dilongo; Maseka; Kuda; Circumcision; African pedagogy.

### Abstract

In this study, we aimed to analyze the Bakongo circumcision ritual as one of the elements of African pedagogy. To this end, the study was based on the interview and bibliographic method. Likewise, the nature of the research is basic and the approach is qualitative. Therefore, the results demonstrated that in the Dilongo – Bakongo circumcision ritual, there is also the exercise of African pedagogy, because, more than cutting the foreskin, it educates individuals - Kudas for life. Likewise, it was understood that the strength of African pedagogy in the context of Bakongo circumcision was undermined by colonial doctrines, which brought new *modus operandi* and determined the destruction of a large part of traditional African educational structures. Furthermore, it was noticed that Bakongo circumcision is one of the elements of African pedagogical practice, because it aims to train the individual, aiming at their insertion into society. Furthermore, the conclusion reveals that pedagogy was never just the transmission of knowledge through didactic means deeply propagated in contemporary spaces, since, in each complex African circumcision ritual, especially Bakongo, resides a set of educational principles that are responsible for transformation, integration and social development of the *muntu* (person).

**Keywords:**Dilongo; Maseka; Kuda; Circumcision; African pedagogy.

### Introduction

This research addressed the Bakongo circumcision ritual as one of the elements of African pedagogy. It is important to emphasize that the aforementioned ritual also known as "*Dilongo*" is a source of education in African culture, becoming a strong pillar of Bantu pedagogy, as it is based on the construction of values capable of triggering good guidance and coordination of the individual's behavior. In this case, Dilongo is a ritual that, more than being a simple cutting of the foreskin (Yota), constitutes a tool for the integrative education of the *muntu*(person) in the Bakongo community.

For Africa, pedagogical work is not simply in the "realization of the teaching-learning activities in the classroom"(Monteiro, 2010), but in every action that involves initiation and passage rituals, conceiving in the individual's mind a set of principles inherent to the *to be, to know, to know how to be and to know how to do*. Therefore, the circumcision camp (Yota), where circumcision (Dilongo) takes place, constitutes a school of life and supports the life of the *muntu*. This ritual, full of symbolism and pedagogical inclination, preserves and connects the individual to the creator of life, the *Nzamby -a- Mpungo*(Almighty God) and keeps it as *muntu to Nzamby*(person belonging to God), who rigorously reproduces the wisdom and education that this creator expects of him.

Madeira (2006) states that circumcision consists of an act of removing the skin that surrounds the tip of the penis. From the Bakongo perspective, in particular, and the Bantu perspective in general, circumcision in Africa is not just the cutting of the foreskin, but a complex process of schooling, in which the man is prepared for the community and life, marking his transition from childhood to adulthood, which determines the adoption of adult habits and activities, such as: smoking in moderation, starting a family (Nkanda), having one's own farm, within the family inheritance and acquiring moral and social responsibility.

2 Likewise, Altuna (1985) does not consider circumcision as the removal of the foreskin, but "a sacred ritual that determines the construction of the man's social and sexual personality, as well as his honor, because, in the Bantu tradition, the true and virile man is the one who undergoes this ritual".

Therefore, it is worth corroborating, because in the African oral and cultural tradition, circumcision determines the maturity of the man, in addition to the cutting of the foreskin, and every man who adheres to this ritual is integrated, respected and considered as educated and a future pedagogue of the family who, through his virility, will continue the legacy.

Circumcision is an ancient practice that has existed since ancient times. It is not just a simple cutting of the foreskin. It carries with it a great cultural symbol because it is a surgical procedure with multiple sacred meanings. It is a passport to married life, that is, it symbolizes the cohesion of the school of love and socialization, aiming at integration and social interaction, as well as an initiative to preserve and emancipate a people with individual traditional laws and expectations.

Despite everything, we currently see many individuals who are unaware of the value of Bantu circumcision, especially Bakongo. And this situation is understandable due to the aftermath left by colonization that separated Africans from their values, that is, from their pedagogy and teaching-learning methods. Just look at the reality of circumcision in the world, where many countries consider this practice to be mutilation and that it should be banned. Furthermore, most African boys are circumcised in hospitals, claiming that the current conditions are an attack on public health. Furthermore, the practice of globalization that contrasts with the real concept, due to the imposition of Western values against former colonies, is killing this mystique and source of African pedagogy. *Dilongo*.

Therefore, in light of this situation, the following problem was formulated: to what extent does the Bakongo circumcision ritual represent one of the elements of African pedagogy? Likewise, the general objective was established as “to analyze to what extent the Bakongo circumcision ritual represents one of the elements of African pedagogy. And, the following specific objectives were determined: to contextualize Bakongo circumcision as a pedagogical element of the African tradition; to establish the methodological framework of the study in question; to detail Bakongo circumcision as one of the elements of African pedagogy.

Furthermore, this research is justified by the fact that it will allow Angolan society to value the pedagogical meaning of circumcision in the traditional context as an African pedagogical element, especially the Bakongo, which has been one of the supports of culture in this regard due to the resilience of its guardians - oral tradition, in an Angola where colonialism left many scars and reduced the strength of the Angolan identity. It will also allow academics and researchers to feel the need to look at African initiation rituals, with particular attention to circumcision, African pedagogy and its value to defend itself, in a world where we are bombarded with globalization that, instead of being globalization, has been a kind of imposition of Western values and cultural neocolonialism.

### 1. Overview of Bantu circumcision

Dilongo among the Bakongo, Mukanda among the Tchokwe, Evamba among the Ovimbundu and Ekwendje among the Ovambos and Nyenka are rituals that serve as preparation for life, in which the individual is educated to be responsible and to deal with the adversities of life. For the African people, circumcision is an indispensable ritual because it refers to a school of life, where the pedagogy exercised by the teachers marks the passage of the students from childhood to adulthood. In this sense, the circumcision camp is a space where the person learns values inherent to their age and, in addition, respect for the elderly, justice and behaviors that serve as guidance in sexual and social relationships.

In this rite, boys and girls who have reached the appropriate age are initiated into the adult phase of their lives. This rite is primarily intended to prepare young people for their respective roles as adults. [...], are elaborate and last at least several weeks and end with a day of celebration for the entire community [...], and often include instructions

on sexual matters in order to prepare these boys for their eminent conjugal role and other tasks that adult life will demand of them. (Altuna, 1985, p. 203)

However, this means that such rites put the boys to the test, where, in some way, they are called upon to demonstrate courage and bravery in order to be considered an integrated part of the community. Therefore, Estermann (1960) states that the boys are subjected to a test of courage and strength, a survival test during which they must remain alone in the forest for a certain period of time, in order to strengthen their masculinity and subsequent integration into society as a man capable of solving problems and proposing a healthy coexistence.

Furthermore, circumcision rituals are performed in specific environmental conditions, isolating the boys from the community, where, through a teacher, they are educated to survive, bear family responsibilities, work for the family, provide for children, be responsible and respect the village elders. It is a process that, on the one hand, functions as a recruitment or camp that determines the separation of young men from their usual environment. This is why Altuna (1985) states that:

Male initiation is completed with the following successive rites: separation from family and community, circumcision, seclusion in a reserved place, [...], and departure and return to the village with reintegration into the community as a new, reborn man. Situations that, because they are charged with emotion, mystery, drama, religiosity and joy, give rise to a psychic experience that marks and determines the Bantu man for his entire life (p. 279).

In Africa, pedagogy works in various ways and is, above all, amalgamated in initiation rituals. It symbolizes attending classes to pass or pass the class, because, to be a man and a respected man, the boy has to be approved by the masters of circumcision – in Mukanda, Dilongo, Ekwendje, Evamba and others. There is no proper integration without the individual undergoing circumcision. If a man does not pass the process to be approved in this process, even if he has married, he becomes shy and if he is discovered, both he and his parents will be intimidated and marginalized until they send him to school for social and sexual education.

## 1.2. Bakongo circumcision and its pedagogical aspect

First of all, it is important to highlight that the Bakongo people are vast and constitute one of the largest ethnolinguistic groups in Angola, comprising the provinces of Uíge, Zaire and Cabinda. In addition to this region, according to Thornton (2012, p. 68), translated in Gabon, "Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congo". Likewise, it is worth noting that the Bakongo are one of the most culturally conservative groups in different parts of the African continent, standing out fundamentally for their respect and appreciation for cultural ancestry and hierarchical succession. They practice and preserve circumcision as a sign of respect for their ancestors.

After all, what is circumcision in the Bakongo context? According to Altuna (1985, p. 188) Circumcision in the Bakongo tradition is called *"zenga, sala or yota"*, which is to remove the skin that covers the anterior part or head of the penis (*mvia*), in order to increase the size of this male sexual organ and give it beauty, more arousal, strength and productivity". In African pedagogy, Yota, part of the Diolongo ritual, is an act that allows the preservation of the man's identity and self-esteem. Therefore, it is an obligatory element to avoid humiliation and embarrassment. On the other hand, the words of Nkondo (2015) are profound when reiterating the following:

For the Bantu [...], circumcision is an act of ethics, virility and male pride. It is only circumcises a man and never a woman. An uncircumcised man is called *"Sutu"* or *"Ebolo"* (singular), *"Masutu"* or *"Mabold"* (Plural) and is stigmatized, discriminant, to the point of having difficulty finding a girl who will accept him for marriage (para. 2-3).

4

Likewise, Silva (2006, p. 55) even states that "[...] there has already been a case of divorce or conflict caused by the fact that the woman discovered that her husband is Sutu, uncircumcised", what

demonstrates the importance and anthropological, sociological and pedagogical value of circumcision in the African context. Another anecdotal case is mentioned by Nkondo (2015), who says that:

[...] a couple, after having lived a long time and having children, when the woman discovered that her husband was Sutu, [...], she filed a complaint with her brothers-in-law and her aunt [...]. They informed the woman's parents who, after verifying and confirming that the man was indeed Sutu, temporarily separated him from his wife and forced him to be circumcised. Only after he had been circumcised and cured did the son-in-law return to his wife (para. 5).

This means that to be a real man and gain respect in society and in the family, you need to be circumcised, because if you hide it, your wife and parents will not have peace, because in addition to you, they will also be stigmatized and marginalized as a sign of parental irresponsibility. In this sense, pedagogy is an element that guides the man's actions, taking into account the standards of the cultural group to which he belongs.

For Esterman (1960), in a Bantu community, being called Sutu is a great insult, a pejorative adjective. For example, an uncircumcised individual will be called Sutu when people see him pass the abuse as follows: "*Kazan, this is the evo cake*", which means it is not circumcised, is *sutuor cake*. This discrimination is a condition that no one wants to go through, so the boys prefer to participate in the ritual to truly be men and frontline volunteers in the community and not objects of humiliation.

Circumcision is performed at adolescence, when the boy is able to hunt wild rats. When the boy manages to make mouse traps, called "*My little boy*" (fixed on the land). Never in babies, unlike Westernism and Colonization that encourage circumcision in babies, so we are losing a pedagogical practice that prepares men for married and family life.

In a village in winter, parents who wish to circumcise their sons hire a specialist. He gathers the boys and chooses a place near the village where they will build a hut to serve as their shelter. This place is called *Seka* or *Maseka*<sup>1</sup>. "*Happy birthday cake*" (to be circumcised). Circumcision is done standing up very early in the morning with a razor. This surgery is performed with a single, quick, dry cut, without anesthesia or tetanus vaccine. Even so, there have been no reported cases of hemorrhage or fainting among those who have undergone surgery. The cut is not repeated. Neither the surgeon nor the circumcised person sees where the removed part goes, which is thrown away in a single, quick cut far from the site (Nkondo, 2015, para. 9-10).

It is worth mentioning that at the time of surgery, the specialist must be careful not to cut the head of the penis and the main vein that is located below the male sexual organ. He must circumcise way to leave the head of the penis completely protruding. According to Altuna (1985): "After the operation, circumcised boys will be called *Kuda*. These will be held in quarantine at *Maseka* for a week and a half or two weeks, until the wound is completely cured" (p. 127). Likewise, Esterman (1960) reiterates that:

Bantu circumcision is performed by two people distinct, a "surgeon" and a "traditional nurse" in charge of doing the dressing, the bandage. The latter is the specialist who, not only makes the dressing, as well as gives the shape, the size of the penis, in length and thickness. He uses a banana bark as plaster and the young leaf of the same (banana tree) that is lightly passed through fire as a bandage (p. 164).

However, "a traditionally circumcised penis is larger in length and volume than one which is operated in modern medicine and satisfies a woman better in bed, because it is more thick and stiff" (Esterman, 1960). Furthermore, Silva (2006) mentions that "[...] the dressing is daily, with

<sup>1</sup>It also means the one who takes care. After the surgery, the work of treating the wound on the penis (nvia) remains and this is carried out by someone who also goes by the name of Maseka. In short, Maseka is where one takes care or the one who takes care..



portions of bark of shrubs called *Lolo* and *Muindu*, as a medicine. Except for the razor, nothing modern is involved in this process. It is to this man that a great bow is made." (p. 71).

He doesn't live with the *Kudan* of *Maseka*, he comes every morning from the village and when he appears, he is greeted by the quarantined boys with obscene chants and dances typical of the process. The *Kuda* hunt rats for him. Until the wounds are completely healed, the *Kuda* only use cloths that are kept away from the sexual organ by a "*Ntambu*", a device of wood placed around the waist in order to stretch the clothing (Altuna, 1985, p. 199).

The process takes place under a ritual displayed by the *Kuda*. During the circumcised men's stay at *Maseka*, the place is closed to strangers, to prevent bleeding from the wounds. If the place is visited by a person who has had sexual intercourse or a woman who is menstruating, the circumcised men's wounds bleed. Visitors are received far from the place, at a type of control or barrier installed at the entrance. The *Kuda* prepare their food, but do not bathe until their wounds are healed. When they move around the place, to relieve themselves or hunt rats, they use a bush called *Nsanga lavu* which he chews and sprinkles along the way, to prevent bleeding if he steps on a place where a person who has had sexual relations or a woman of color has passed by. Instruction "*We are not a king*".

It is clear that this is not a mere cutting of the penis, but rather a set of activities that express the tradition and education of the African man. In Africa, to be a real man one must go through the school of circumcision, a school that teaches a man to be a man, that is, manly enough to take care of the family and properly satisfy his wife, becoming not only a father figure, but a machine for reproduction and multiplication of generations and descendants – the legacy that ancestors encourage and protect to always remain alive in the family.

Para Altuna (1985, p. 235) in "Bantu traditions, an uncircumcised male sexual organ has little arousal, does not get up well and has little strength. Therefore, it does not induce orgasm well and does not excite the woman". In this sense, the perspective of Bantu circumcision has a very cultural symbolism deep, as it is not simply associated with surgery, but with the construction of masculinity, by making men strong and virile.

Furthermore, it is not fantasy to say that circumcision has a great impact among the Bakongo, so much so that Silva (2006, p. 67) states that "the sexual relationship under the condition of 'delays ejaculation, since the hood that covers the head of the penis acts as a condom with a small hole. This hood is an insulator, a broom inside the female sex". Furthermore, it is not to say that a *kuda* cannot have prolonged sexual intercourse and controlled ejaculation, but not excessively so as not to kill the pleasure and the sense of the moment, appearing to be using a condom. In this sense, Bantu circumcision, especially Bakongo, is fundamental, because it restores dignity to the man, removes the child that lived in his soul before the ritual, making him strong and worthy of being a male, as opposed to *asutu*–uncircumcised. Gollaher (2000) reiterates that:

A *Disutu* needs to roll up the skin covering the head of his sexual organ before penetrating the vagina and during sexual intercourse, this skin moves back and forth, leaving the waste underneath it on the partner's body and taking what it finds along the way. (p.76)

Thus, in the oral tradition and African culture, especially in the Kikongo, the *Disuto*, in addition to not having qualities worthy of being integrated as part of the community of men and guardians of the village, his condition is not hygienic enough, constituting in itself a kind of attack on his own health and that of the woman. However, in this school called *Dilongo*, several values are taught, such as: hygiene, respect for one's own body and that of one's partner. Likewise, those who do not obey the circumcision ritual, the *disutu* or *ebolo*, can cause serious problems, in addition to the power of masculinity, as even their descendants are subject to "presenting strange characteristics or being weak children" (Altuna (1985, p. 176).

Therefore, it is understood that in Bantu culture, if a man fails to comply with the circumcision ritual, he may have problems that transcend the foreskin that covers his penis, since even the

descendants may present genetic aspects or congenital characteristics that are strange to the other boys in the community, because they disobeyed a rule that was established by their ancestors. Therefore, the pedagogy of *Dilongo*, besides being practical, it is also mystical, as the disobedient, in addition to social disapproval, also receive rejection and curses from their ancestors, who, mediating with Nzamby-a-Mpungu, have the power to bless or curse.

## 2. Methodology

As for the objectives, the present investigation is “analytical”, because it is based onif in the in-depth analysis of the pedagogical meaning of the Bakongo circumcision ritual in African tradition and culture. According to Selltiz et al. (1965) as cited in Oliveira (2011, p.20), this type of study or research “seeks to describe a phenomenon or situation in detail, especially what is occurring, allowing to cover, with precision, the characteristics of an individual, a situation, or a group, as wellhow to unravel the relationship between events”.

Furthermore, as it is a qualitative research, the interview method was used, which according to Cervo and Bervian (2002) consists “indata collection, based on face-to-face dialogue between the researcher and the intervieweeo, aiming to search for information necessary or crucial to the research”. Likewise, Gil (1999) states that “the interview is one of the most widely adopted data search methods in social investigations, being very relevant in the acquisition or attainment of information about what people understand, believe or desire about a fact or phenomenon, as well as, the reasons for the answers they give”. Therefore, it justifiesif the use of this method is uncontroversial, through the completion of the research, because it is essential to the extent that it facilitated the search for sufficient results, based on the structure or type of interview that we used, due to the need to consolidate and prove the hypotheses or problem raised.

It is important to highlight that the script or list of questions, which configure our “interview” is “standardized”, or “structured interview”, therefore, they converge with what Oliveira (2011, p. 36), according to which, “structured interviews are those in whichis the questions and the order in that they attend are exactly the same for all respondents.” In this case, the interview was applied to a sample of 30 individuals, out of a population of 65 elements, who experienced Bakongo circumcision, aged between 45 and 55 years old. Of the interviewees, 20 are part of the Bakongo community, residing in the city of Ndalatando, but coming from the Province of Uige and Zaire, while 5 are elders from the Province of Uige, born in the Municipality of Negage.

Thereforeunte, it is worth highlighting that the sampling technique related to our study is “convenience sampling”, in which, according to Adelaide Figueiredo and Fernanda Figueiredo (2011) “the elements are chosen because they are located in the location where the data for the study”. Furthermore, the bibliographic method was used in the view of Vergara (2000)is that “It is essentially powered by documents already published and organized, composed mainly of books and scientific articles and is relevant for searching for basic data linked to topic under study”.

## 3. Results and discussions

In this regard, some of the interviewees unanimously stated that the Bakongo-Dilongo circumcision is more than just cutting the foreskin to be fit for marriage, because it is a complete and complex ritual, in which all young men are taught to deal with the adversities of life. Dilongo is in fact a school of life, because the teachings that come from it are so transversal that they form a new man for the community and the culture.

In this interview, Mabanza (pseudonym) said that “circumcision is so important that anyone who undergoes it is considered impure. Therefore, he cannot marry (*na kuzengyluku Kulendi Kwe Laku*) and if he cannot marry, he is still considered a child who needs to be educated.” This interpretation is so significant for us because it represents an important part of African pedagogy. Likewise, it is necessary to understand that for Africans, pedagogy is not

It simply boils down to didactic activities or formal education, since, for the Bantu, pedagogy is a set of actions combined in a series of rituals, where a man is prepared to serve or assume responsibility in the community.

Furthermore, we understand that in *Dilongo*, transmitting values, pedagogy is being exercised. If from the Western perspective pedagogy “is the study of education or strategy that consists of preparing the individual, aiming at their integration into society” (Mateus, 2012), we consider that the *Dilongo* is a school, because in it the individual is strategically prepared for his integration and behavioral adaptation to the social environment or community that surrounds him, passing into the hands of a master, the Nganga Yota, the teacher who trains him, in order to become a true agent of social transformation, in addition to being a good husband. Furthermore, when Mabanza points out the impurity of those who are not circumcised, he draws our attention to the relationship between Bakongo and Jewish pedagogy, because among the Jews circumcision had a meaning beyond the cutting of the foreskin. It was a sign of the pact between God and his people. Thus, the Biblion (n.d.) points out the following:

Circumcision was an ancient Jewish ritual involving the removal of the foreskin of male babies. It had several meanings. First, it was a sign of a special covenant between God and the people of Israel that began with Abraham. God asked Abraham and his descendants to be circumcised as a symbol of this covenant. Second, circumcision also had a spiritual meaning. It represented the need for purity and obedience to God (v. 1-5).

In this statement, it is understood that circumcision was never a mere cutting of the foreskin, but the exercise of pedagogy itself. Obedience is an educational support or value that determined the relationship between man and God and, as such, in this learning process, a relationship of hierarchical respect was favored in the Jewish tradition among men, since someone who learns to be obedient does not cease to be, except in situations in which superiors attack the dignity of those who are expected to obey.

Thus, there is a parallel between Jewish and Bakongo circumcision, because both promote pedagogical practice, since Nganga Yota also teaches the Kuda values of mutual respect, hygiene, obedience, love for one's neighbor, moderate habits so as not to offend against the dignity of their neighbor, as well as ensuring an alliance through Nzamby to Mpungo, the almighty God who is present in all African rituals. Regarding education about hygiene, in this ritual the Mabanza left a phrase very common in his tribe: “*a miaz na mikola, a muntu kia Kazengwa, lendi vaika menga maingi yetu lendi fwa*”, which translated means the following: “when the veins of a child are stiff or already of an adult it can cause bleeding and contracting infection and can lead to death”. This sentence means that a teenager should be circumcised, because its hygiene and healing may be better, but as an adult, it may be a danger, because its skin is resistant. On the other hand, the interviewee Mwanza (pseudonym), reiterated the following:

At the advent of circumcision, boys are isolated from the community for a while, hiding in the woods (*zembuele zembo*) playing drums and dancing, waiting for the day of the foreskin cutting, but when the circumcision date arrives, they undergo surgery by Nganga Yota and the foreskin is cut with a sharp piece of grass known as Kiwewe. The master wraps a strand of grass around the penis in the foreskin part and makes a circular movement in a quick and unique way that leaves the foreskin on the ground and the *Sutu* becomes *Kuda*. Here they learn about the culture, how to live as a woman. It takes time for the wound to heal. When they leave Yota, *Kuda* are allowed to have a wife and work as a responsible person. In the neighborhood they are welcomed with a party and no one goes to the fields by order of the King - *soba*. Then a Chinganji, who is the masked man, starts to dance and play drums. The *soba* chews glue (macazo), puts *sailor* in the mouth and begins to expel it to the face of the *Kuda* as a sign of blessing and baptism into adulthood and social responsibility.



In this intervention, it is understood that Bakongo circumcision is one of the great elements of African pedagogy, since it represents values and, in this case, in addition to enabling the cutting of the foreskin, it constitutes a set of guidelines that will integrate and guide the behavior of the individual in the community. Furthermore, those who are circumcised achieve physical and spiritual purity as their connection with Nzamby is made in a more noble way and the community does not reject them, because they have transitioned from an impure state to a pure state. This ritual is so important that a woman will not accept living with a man if he is not circumcised, as Mwanza states:

There are cases where a girl, when she is won over and interested in a boy, demands that he show her the tip of his penis to see if it is still not *sutu*. Sometimes the parents themselves, when they realize that there is a good boy who has been circumcised, ask the boy's relatives to be their daughter's future fiancé, because a circumcised boy is approved for life, is an adult and adds values that favor social coexistence. He was in Yota, so he was educated enough to take care of his wife and respect the community. Sometimes the boy's parents even advertise, saying "my son has already been there", advertising in the community to generate competition for their son, because a circumcised son dignifies his parents, but *sutu* Even his family is a disgrace to the community. Not just anyone can reach the level of circumcision, because in addition to being a teenager being one of the conditions, it is necessary for parents to gather others, such as: goats, chickens, ducks, cornmeal, fruits and others, because after they leave Yota, the party will be big.

Just as in addition to enrolling or securing a place at school, parents must gather notebooks, pencils, pens, erasers, lab coats, transportation and other conditions for their child's education and throw a party after their child graduates, the same thing happens at Dilongo, the circumcision school. The difference is as follows: Dilongo is one of the mirrors of African pedagogy and the situation referred to above is apparently an element of Western pedagogy.<sup>2</sup>, but the similarity lies in the fact that in both situations, the individual graduates to perform a social function. The exit profile will be a preparation that makes the person a protagonist in the development and transformation of his community.

Furthermore, Mwanza also adds that in my Bakongo region, Negage, whoever does not have their child circumcised at birth dies or becomes disabled, because they did not comply with the ritual left by our ancestors. This is a kind of *myth*, however, its purpose is also to develop *at feeling of fear* and obedience to boys, because in societies where Positive or Conventional Law does not prevail, myths also play this role, reducing the animal instinct or disorder in human beings. Therefore, more than discussing concepts and formal education, African pedagogy is a range of actions that moderate habits, combat vices and enable healthy coexistence among men. Therefore, Bakongo circumcision, with its strength and multiple meanings, becomes one of the richest elements of African pedagogy.

Finally, Sambula (pseudonym) stated that due to "colonialism, this ritual is disappearing. Christian churches teach that children must be circumcised in hospitals. They consider our rituals to be witchcraft and our children are no longer receiving proper sexual education and, many, even out of inexperience, have sex promiscuously." This answer drew attention, because Colonization has in fact killed our values and deconstructed the power of African pedagogy through social and religious structures. Rather than encouraging the recovery of African culture and education, churches have sometimes tended to reduce their strength and impact on new generations, which has produced, relatively speaking, a generation of young people with a weak character and education.

<sup>2</sup>Although there are traces that the first model of schools that the West teaches to the world is of black Egyptian origin, as several philosophers testify and were students of the great academies of this African river empire.

Perhaps anyone would wonder how this interviewee was able to say this if Africa is one of the continents where there is a lot of polygamy? Therefore, it is important to emphasize that polygamy is not promiscuity or prostitution, because it is also the basis of an official and respected marital relationship in the African cultural context. Promiscuity is when a person, whether committed or not, performs sexual acts in a disorderly and disrespectful manner. And, the boy who does not pass the Dilongo does not learn enough about sex education, so he thinks that every sexual act is legitimate. Today, many boys get pregnant early, because many of them did not pass the Dilongo, Evamba and Ekwendje, where pedagogy reigns and men learn about responsibility and respect for themselves and others, as the basis for their social integration and interaction.

Furthermore, in the hospital, the nurse does not teach about sexuality, especially because the baby has not developed enough cognitively to understand this phenomenon. He grows up seeing himself circumcised and thinking that he is ready to penetrate a female genital organ with his penis, in a society where many families still see sexual education as taboo, because they understand it as being the exclusive responsibility of the Dilongo. However, the boys do not have sexual care, get many girls pregnant, deny paternity as a defense mechanism, assume that they are still children after becoming pregnant and, sometimes even as adults, still have a low level of sexual education, because they did not pass through Meseka, where African pedagogy flows gently into the ears of the Kuda, making them ready for life's challenges.

### Conclusion

With the data obtained, it was concluded that Dilongo or Bantu circumcision is a pedagogical exercise, because it is aimed at the formation of the individual, aiming at his integration into society. We also understand that in the oral tradition and African culture, pedagogy is expressed through multiple rituals that transform the mind and make man more capable for life. Therefore, *Dilongo* it also constitutes a school for life, because, more than teaching how to be a man and have a wife, it prepares the individual to respond to the challenges of social life. Furthermore, the research demonstrated that there is a pedagogical parallel between the Bakongo and Jewish circumcision rituals, as both represent purity and the consolidation of a relationship between the muntu and Nzamby (person and God), which makes it worthy of being called a *Manzambyor Mwana Nzamby* (belonging to God or son of God).

The study also shows that in the *Dilongo* one learns to obey and respect hierarchical superiors and the community, values that can maintain social cohesion and health. Likewise, it was understood that cutting the foreskin, not enough to complete the *Dilongo*, however, Ngana Yota and Maseka, turn this ritual into a school, where in addition to sexuality, *Kuda*, they learn skills that will allow them to revolutionize their environment through work.

Consequently, it was found that colonialism reduced the essence of African pedagogy in the context of Bakongo circumcision, because it was replaced by hospitals and churches (the other stronghold of colonization), which weakened this ritual and encouraged the natives to abandon it, killing one of the greatest sources of sexual education, solidarity and respect in the African context. Finally, it was concluded that pedagogy in Africa is more than discussing concepts, as it corresponds to a space for guidance and construction of the personality of the muntu (individual).

### Bibliographic References

- Altuna, R.R.A. (1985). *Traditional Bantu-Angola culture*. Lisbon: Fantix. Altusser, NS (2002). *The art of interpersonal relationships*. Lisbon: UEL.
- Alves, C. M. V. (2010). *School failure in Portuguese: a case study*. Master's degree in educational sciences, João de Deus Higher School of Education.

- Alves, L. R. (2013). *The development of writing skills in Portuguese language students foreign: lexical, grammatical, graphic and pragmatic components*. Master's Dissertation, Minho: University of Minho. Bíbliaon (sd) Circumcision in the Bible and the your meaning. Available in: <https://www.bibliaon.com/circuncisao/>
- Cervo, AL & Bervian, PA (2002). *Scientific methodology*. 5th ed. São Paulo: Prentice Hall.
- Estermann, C. (1960). *Ethnography of Southwest Angola*. Lisbon: Information Board. Estermann, C. (1983). *Ethnography of Angola: Southwest and Center*. Lisbon: Information Board. Figueiredo, AM & Figueiredo, FO (2011). *Sampling theory: theoretical notes and complementary statistics exercises*. Porto: UP.
- Gil, A.C. (1999). *Methods and Techniques of Social Research*, 5th ed., New York: University of Chicago Press.
- Gollaher, D. L. (2000). *Circumcision: the world's most controversial surgical story*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kauark, FS, Manhães, FC & Medeiros, CH (2010). *Research Methodology: A Guide Practical*, Bahia: Via Litterarum.
- Madeira, SP (2006). *Feminine initiation ritual*. Porto: Plural Publishers.
- Marconi, M. A. & Lakatos, E. M. (2003). *Fundamentals of Scientific Methodology*, São Paulo: Atlas.
- Munro, A. (2012). *Historical and pedagogical studies*. Lisbon: Raiz Publisher.
- Mateus, GC (2012). *Pedagogy of Concept*. (Master's Dissertation) University of Beira Interior.
- Nkondo, M. (2015). *Male circumcision as an act of virility for the people*. Luanda: Club K. Removed of: [https://www.clubk.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=20661:circumcision-masculine-as-an-act-of-virility-for-the-bantu-people-akutankondo&catid=17:opinion&Itemid=124&lang=pt](https://www.clubk.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20661:circumcision-masculine-as-an-act-of-virility-for-the-bantu-people-akutankondo&catid=17:opinion&Itemid=124&lang=pt).
- Oliveira, M. F. (2011). *Methodology Scientific: a handbook for conducting research in administration*. Catalan: UFG. Prodanov, CC & Freitas, EC (2013). *Scientific Work Methodology: Methods and Research and Academic Work Techniques*, Rio Grande do Sul: Feevale Publishing. Silva, AR (2006). *Phimosis and Circumcision*. *Urological Acta*. Rio de Janeiro: JAR.
- Silva, E. L. & Menezes, E. M. (2005). *Research methodology and dissertation preparation*. 4th ed. Florianópolis: UFSC.
- Thornton, N. (2012). *Rites and urban legends*. Porto: Porto Publisher.
- Vergara, S. (2000). *Management research projects and reports*. 3rd ed. Rio de Janeiro: Atlas.