

Synopsis of the film

“THE PALAVER THAT DECIDES”

Film of Sophie Kotanyi © RCN & PICO FILM (71 min.)

1st Palaver: THE AUTHORITY OF THE CLANIC POWERS 31'33”

This palaver treats the conflicts that arose around the sharing of the three (symbolic) powers in a clan: *ndona* (the woman) *ntadi* (the stone) and *lunga* (the sword). After several consecutive deaths, the eldest of the 1st branch of the clan, who possess the *ndona* power, claims the power of the stone (*ntadi*) that remained with the other branch of the clan, which does not, however, have the right to keep it, according the Kongo tradition. Behind the symbolic issues, there are conflicts between the generations and conflicts concerning the use of the land.

2nd Palaver: THE SPEECH OF THE CHIEF 19'33”

The chief woman Fatouma Niongo Makaya, leader of the grouping of eight villages, decides with her notables the case of two girls accusing four adult men of her neighborhood (not being part of her kinship) of having transmitted to them the malefic *kindoki* (so-called witchcraft). After the diagnostic of two diviners, the traditional court refutes the children's accusation.

3rd Palaver: PACIFICATION THROUGH OFFERING AND SEPARATION 18'58”

After the repeated bad dreams of a girl, diviners determined that she was victim of the *kindoki* caused by another neighboring girl. The notable and chief conducting the palaver and both parties involved accept the diagnosis of two diviners. In order to reestablish definitive peace between both families, the chief performs with the fathers and one of the girls a ritual of separation of the two *ndoki* (witches) involved: it definitively puts an end to the witchcraft at issue. Finally, the chief provides both sides with means of protection that hinder future attacks.

The film is used to support the training of judges and academics about traditional justice in a Bantu context. The three case studies are filmed in Bas-Congo (South-West DRC).

Production: © RCN, Justice & Démocratie and Pico Film (2012) florence.liegeois@rcn-ong.be

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Has been working in Africa since 1977 as an anthropological researcher and film director, editor and producer of social documentary films in Cap Verde Islands, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and DR Congo. She supports NGOs in their development activities and conducts applied anthropological research in the field of health and justice since 1992. M.A. on Ethnopsychiatry (Paris), she carried out several applied studies on bridging biomedical and traditional healing in Bantu-speaking cultures (Inclusive approaches to Trauma and HIV/AIDS (1998-2011). She is completing her PhD at the University of Heidelberg (SAI).

She studied local means of justice (Cap Vert 1977, Mozambique 1998-2003; RDC 2011-29012), and has introduced judges, worker in the State administration and legal scholars to the bridging of customary & written justice in Mozambique (2003) and DRC (2012) with UNIKIN, RCN, Justice & Démocracie.

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