

The Loincloth, a Textile Technology through Time in Congo-Kinshasa. An Ethnosociological Study Among Women in Kinshasa

Mbuyi Madika Veronique

Researcher on Endogenous Knowledge in the Field of Clothing and Human Culture,
Postgraduate Learner at the National Pedagogical University

Abstract:- It would be uncertain if, in fact, textile technology in Congo-Kinshasa has not followed the evolution of clothing over time. The loincloth is a piece of clothing that corroborates a culture based on the civilization of a people.

This fabric represents respect for certain texts linked to morality in women as well as in men. For the Congolese woman, the loincloth represents a textile technology which vibrates to the rhythm of creation and production of models which constitutes the ingenuity of the couturier artists in a workshop.

This study is part of the impact of textile technology for holding cultural-ethnic events, in particular: national holidays, customary weddings, prayer evenings, gala evenings, etc.

Thus, the persuasive theory (BARABARS H., 2009) provides a favorable view in the semiology of clothing communication on the need to dress Congolese women in loincloths. This theory is linked to the mechanisms of cognition through the abstraction inherent in the idea and the notions learned in thought.

In experimental psychology, in humans, we distinguish scales of conscious and unconscious perceptions, also called implicit or subliminal. This distinction has been extended to other animals to the extent that it is recognized or, to another extent, can be trained and conditioned to indicate whether or not they have perceived a stimulus.

Fashion offers its non-inevitability for the maintenance of the textile and clothing industry. This theorization relating to persuasion appeals to the senses, the mind, ideas, the moment and time for clothing fashion. It is sensory and "immediate" as the senses deliver direct information, and reverberate in people's culture on respect for the morals and customs surrounding an evening or a festive event.

Thus, through surveys carried out in Kinshasa, this study will focus on the necessity of women's clothing in loincloths and its impact in Congolese culture.

Keywords:- Loincloth, Woman, Fashion.

I. INTRODUCTION

➤ *The Loincloth*

The loincloth is a (Bibila N, 2009) light outfit that is worn in hot regions. It is a fabric, leather, feather or woven plant material, generally rectangular, fitted around the hips and reaching down to the thighs (short loincloth) or the ankles (long loincloth). It is still large enough to hide at least the genitals.

From adolescence onwards in general, the loincloth is worn by women, by men, outside or inside, depending on the times, cultures and ages of life.

Apart from the woman, the man wears the loincloth in the deep Congo. This is a separate category, particularly for requirements relating to spirituality or customary power. This fabric has a varied, authentic and cultural connotation, which unites the Congolese woman in a context of her value and the guardian of customs and morals. The loincloth affectionately called in Lingala "Liputa", semantically a term which demonstrates that it is a garment which is worn with a knot at the hip.

It is one of the easiest clothes to make and wear, still very common in warm regions. He inspires some fashion designers and artists.

There are many varieties of loincloths in Africa, made with materials from the forest. You can find beaten bark loincloths with Mbuti patterns made by the Pygmies in Zaire, colorful Masai loincloths and short, alluring loincloths reserved for intimacy in the West and Center-West of the continent.

➤ *The Woman*

The concept woman alludes to the various understandings of the authors. Philosophy thinks about women (Evelyn Pisier et All., 2000), on the question of the sexes in general. In politics, women are understood in a gender context, in particular: inequality, parity, sexual violence, violence against women, etc. These are the themes that have led several researchers to talk about women. Naturally, the woman is a human being, who has the female sex called to produce children.

In society, the woman is a being who fills the void left by the man. Its empowerment consists of working in the dynamic of founding the home together with man and developing it over time. Its growing place in public and private institutions is a necessity for successful emancipation (MOBUTU J. 1990).

In this field of clothing, the woman is a social actor who evolves through time, trends, the influences of fashion on the market, the guardian of the culture of her society in the face of respect for customs and mores etc.

➤ *Fashion*

Fashion (THOMAS M., 2022) is a reflection of society and its representations. It is an expertise of modeling artists on a fabric to dress a human body. Talking about fashion is a universal concept that characterizes culture, civilization as well as social life.

On a commercial level, it is a model made using a quality fabric which is creating a buzz on the clothing market as well as in public opinion. Such models are the subject of a starization of Congolese musicians whose various spotlights of their fanatics, music lovers and sympathizers immerse themselves in them to dress like them.

The loincloth, a fabric which has an emerging textile industry in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is increasingly successful on the market following the innovations of model makers. The latter innovate women's and men's models using this fabric, which characterizes a cultural sartorial value, a purely Congolese signature facing the review of clothes that come from elsewhere.

What is in fashion is a narrative, a noun in the street of Kinshasa to encourage others to dress in such a model which creates a buzz at the present moment or for any festive event.

II. METHOD AND MATERIALS

In order to present the survey results, this study is based on the ethnosociological approach. It is understood as being a type of empirical research based on field investigation, which draws inspiration from the ethnographic tradition for its observation techniques, but which constructs its objects with reference to sociological issues.

To find the results, we opted for the survey (GRAWITZ M., 2004) using a sample (REUCHLIN, M. 2003), 80 women.

Table 1 Representative Table of Respondents

Category of Respondents	Age Group	Number	%
Brides	30-40	52	65
Singles	20-30	28	35
Total		80	100

This table indicates the age range of our respondents, their gender as well as the frequency of participation in these surveys.

➤ *The Cultural Value of a Loincloth*

Taking into account the cultural diversity in Congo-Kinshasa beyond music, the loincloth is a symbol of identity and pride for a Congolese woman, according to 89% of our respondents.

The Congolese woman identifies herself by cultural value, and draws deeply from her morals and customs. Diversity of Congolese ethnic groups, conceives the loincloth as a fabric, a symbol which places women in a highly guardian dimension of culture for the future generation. 11% of our respondents think that, even if in the street some girls do not wear the loincloth, but they use it at home and also, in several models, in particular: dress, skirt, pants, shirt, etc.

➤ *The Loincloth and the Reputation of Women*

Women's clothing made from loincloth constitutes a good reputation for 78% of our respondents. This fabric allows the woman to cover her body well and avoid any clothing that exposes parts considered intimate according to Congolese culture. When a woman dresses in a loincloth, without forgetting other models emanating from it, she has an enormous reputation within Congolese society.

Everything makes sense to respect it, alluding to the policy of authenticity advocated by the late Mobutu.

Especially the country's authorities prefer to see women dressed in loincloths, think 22% of our respondents. In the office, in education, in parliament, the loincloth gives a responsible image of women towards the world around them.

➤ *Place of the Loincloth in the Congolese Textile Industry*

The loincloth has remained the fundamental element of African culture (<https://www.starducongo.com/>.) Formerly it was used particularly to cover nudity, but today it finds itself at the heart of African fashion and even international.

In the past, this industry experienced an evolution through textile factories, such as: Sintexki, sotexki, Utefrica SPA, 92% of women surveyed, think it was a godsend, but today, these companies are nailed to the ground, this does not This did not prevent the Congolese from identifying themselves culturally through decent clothing made in loincloth.

Thus, the absence of these factories means that other countries can overwhelm their products on the Congolese market, in this case loincloth fabric. 8% of our respondents talk about China, Turkey, the Netherlands, etc. Despite this, the loincloth constitutes a multifaceted cultural fabric for

various ethnic groups and tribes of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

III. DISCUSSION

Beyond modern factories, the loincloth has been a fabric since time immemorial for the Congolese and other Africans. Yesterday, the loincloth was invented to cover the nudity of women in ancestral societies using raffia, banana leaves.

For certain Congolese sociolinguistic spaces, the loincloth has a name which determines its genesis in Congolese clothing fashion. In Lingala: *lingwanda*, Tshiluba: *Mukaya*, Kikongo: *Taba* etc.

To date, clothing in loincloth is an evolution through time which has its origins in the ancestral industry until modern times where factories take charge of shooting several films in order to emerge on the market and dress many people without precariousness.

IV. CONCLUSION

Textile technology offers opportunities for clothing and pattern making technicians to increase their services and emerge in the fashion clothing market. The various contributions such as plastic art, computer graphics, etc., contribute effectively to these two areas for the survival of their profession.

The loincloth constitutes a basic culture, in terms of clothing for Congolese women. Its industry is increasingly preoccupying workshops, boutiques, factories, starization, the theme of historical events... with the aim of culturally coloring the under-study fabric.

From generation to generation, the loincloth has evolved over time for no other reason than that, because its industry draws on respect for the morals and customs that constitute Congolese culture.

The cultural aspect that must be remembered is respect for women being the basis of the sustainable development of the Congolese nation. She is the guardian of customs and morals, she is called to play the role of educator, to found the home for a society, to instill culture through her actions, etc.

The loincloth is a fabric, a cultural garment which gives a connotation of highly solemn and eventful respect to Congolese women. Its industry can only evolve over time.

REFERENCES

- [1]. BARABARS H., Perception, essay on the sensitive, Paris, Vrin, 2009, p.95.
- [2]. BADINTER Elisabeth, The Conflict - the woman and the mother, Le livre de Poche, 2011, 124 p.
- [3]. BIBILA N (2009, October). Women's clothing fashion in Brazzaville in the context of the ICT revolution: between entrepreneurial innovation and imitation.
- [4]. GRAWITZ, M, Methods in the social sciences, ed. Dalloz, Paris, 2004, p.45.
- [5]. HILDE HEYNEN, "In de ruimte gevestigd: gendermodellen in architectuur" ["The inscription of gender in architecture"], *Onze Alma Mater*, August 2001, p. 306-329.
- [6]. MAUD DE BELLEROCHÉ, Women, La Jeune Parque, 1970.
- [7]. MOBUTU J. Speech on emancipation, Kinshasa, Zaire, 1990.
- [8]. NATHALIE HEINICH, States of woman. Feminine identity in Western fiction, Collection NRF Essais, Gallimard, April 1996.
- [9]. PISIER Evelyne, Françoise Collin and Eleni Varikas, Women from Plato to Derrida: Critical Anthology, Paris, Plon, 2000, 830 p.
- [10]. REUCHLIN, M. Qualitative methods in psychology, ed. PUF, Paris, 2003, p.313.
- [11]. THOMAS Mélody, Fashion is political, *Les Insolente*, April 13, 2022.
- [12]. Vaillant Maryse, How women love. Of desire and men, Seuil, 2006.
- [13]. Vaillant Maryse, Sexy be she, The Links that Free, 2012.
- [14]. <https://www.starducongo.com/>