The significance of music in the performance of *svikwembu* ritual practices amongst the Shangana Tsonga people of semi-urban southern Mozambique

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Compulsory Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted as a whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Abstract

This research investigates the significance of music in *svikwembu*, one of the most regularly used ritual practices amongst the Shangana Tsonga people of southern Mozambique, specifically in the Maputo province. The significance and importance of music is applied to all practitioners of *svikwembu*. *Svikwembu* includes trance (spirit possession), divination, consultation (*ku pahla*), exorcism (*ku femba*) and healing practices. Music activity has different functions in each of the above-mentioned practices. Specific instruments (*gocha*, *ngoma*, *ntxomana*, and whistle) and styles of music (Ndau, Nguni, *mahlonga* and Monhé) are used and performed in these set ritual practices.

The main purpose of this thesis is to find out why music has to be performed in order to establish communication between the practitioners of the medium of *svikwembu* (traditional healers) and spirits (Ndau, Nguni, *mahlonga* and Monhé). This thesis aims to fill a gap in the field of knowledge concerning music, trance and spirit possession of the Shangana Tsonga of southern Mozambique.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Abílio Matutuane Mazuze and Maria Felicidade Ferreira da Conceição. Thank you for your unwavering support.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Motivation for the study

I grew up in a semi-urban area called Chamanculo, part of Maputo city, Mozambique. In this area a considerable number of people practice a ritual that I refer to as *svikwembu*, a type of spirit possession. A family member (my aunt) affected by this spirit possession, as well as the constant drumming through most nights from the home of a neighbour who was a traditional healer, influenced my desire to research the field of spirit possession and music amongst the Shangana Tsonga people of southern Mozambique. I was unable to attend such rituals as a child; children below a certain age could not participate and I was five years old at the time. Being a curious child, I would ask my mother, grandmother, close relatives or friends, "What is this drumming?" They would simply answer; "*Hi svikwembu*" (it is *svikwembu*)". In my grandmother's house I would watch out for the times when my aunt would be affected by the symptoms of the *svikwembu* phenomenon; she would either shake as she entered into trance or fall to the ground, and I would often hear her speak in a deep man's voice once she was possessed by the spirit or spirits.

The full extent of the *svikwembu* ritual does not only involve spirit possession or trance, though the term *svikwembu* already suggests spiritualism (Honwana, 2002).[1] The practice also deals with healing, exorcism and divination, in which trance spirit possession and music may or may not be involved. There are certain types of traditional healers who deal in curing people with different types of infirmities with the use of traditional plants and herbs for treatment. For instance, from the ages of about five until I was ten years old I was asthmatic and was cured by a traditional healer in the location of Chamanculo where I lived and where I have subsequently conducted my fieldwork. I was required to drink some herbs and not eat eggs for about three

[1] The term *svikwembu* suggests spiritualism because it denotes ancestor worship and spirits.

years. The treatment was successful and I have had no symptoms of asthma since then.

The Department of Health in Mozambique has embarked on a partnership with traditional practitioners of medicine, as the "state institutions such as the Ministry of Health show a greater awareness of the need to cooperate with traditional institutions of health care" (Honwana, 1996:151). While conducting fieldwork in Maputo, the relationship between the two types of medicine, traditional and modern, is continuously developing as traditional healers are now allowed to diagnose people in hospitals and at other facilities available to the public.

1.2 Reasons for choosing the topic

Music (*ku xaela* in Xichangana) plays a very important role in the *svikwembu* ritual (Honwana, 1996) and it is for this reason that I thought that I should expand my research in this direction. Honwana (2002:107) has also pointed out the instruments used by the musicians during the ritual.[2] Johnston (1972:297-30) has earlier demonstrated various rhythms and their usage in *mancomane* exorcism. Because music is extremely important for the realisation of this ritual (practice), for triggering the spirits, pleasing the spirits, maintaining the spirits' presence, and thanking the spirits, the study and understanding of the issues relating to spirit possession and music is central to understanding *svikwembu* in its entirety.

The main reason behind my choice of this topic is that very little of what has been published has dealt adequately with music in the ritual which I refer to as *svikwembu*. By undertaking this investigation, I hope to fill a gap in the study of Shangana Tsonga music of semi-urban southern Mozambique, and possibly to contribute to developing new knowledge in the field of music, trance and spirit possession.

In my experience, music was an integral part of the ritual. In the community where I grew up and conducted my fieldwork, music is the sonic

[2] *Os músicos tocavam tingoma (tambores), matxomana e magocha (instruments locais de percussão), enquanto a audiência cantava e batia palmas para criar um ambiente propício a entrada em transe dos candidatos* (Honwana 2002:107).

sign of *svikwembu*, an attention-getter to point out those households where *svikwembu* was taking place.

1.3 Some case studies

Two authors, Johnston and Honwana have researched Shangana Tsonga music (Johnston, 1972a) and *svikwembu* (Honwana, 2002). Johnston dealt briefly with the music of *mancomane* exorcism amongst Shangana Tsonga people, while Honwana has not approached the issue of the spirit possession and music in *svikwembu* at all. Overall, the work of neither deals in depth with the issue of spirit possession and music.

I do not want to criticise ethnographers like Honwana alone for, according to Friedson (1996:xiii), many ethnographers have failed to give musical experience a prominent place in their research. Friedson is not suggesting that ethnographers should all be ethnomusicologists, or that their work on aspects of culture has not been valuable. Friedson (1996:xiii) states that

> when a particular phenomenon in this case music is repeatedly mentioned in the literature as a prominent element of indigenous healing systems in Africa and yet is still given only perfunctory treatment, then an important dimension of the cultural experience being studied is silenced.

Music is usually treated as an epiphenomenon, something that accompanies other, more important ritual activities.

1.4 Research design and methodology

This research comprises an empirical study which aims at exploring the importance and relevance of music in the *svikwembu* ritual practices amongst the Shangana Tsonga of semi-urban southern Mozambique, specifically in Maputo province. The main methods that I used in this investigation were those of library research, observer and interviewer. Through observation I was able to take notes while observing, which became one of my main strategic methods. The use of informal interviews was the most productive method in this research project, as research consultants provided me with extensive information about the topic.

1.5 Research question and objective

This study, an investigation and description of *svikwembu,* seeks to interpret the meaning that the music in *svikwembu* performance has for Shangana Tsonga people in urban southern Mozambique. In other words, the objective of this study is to expand the knowledge of Shangana Tsonga music, demonstrating how and why it is performed in *svikwembu* ritual.

The music's significance applies to all those individuals participating in the ceremony as well as to the medium (possessed person).[3] Analysing the performance of *svikwembu* helped me understand the significance of the music in the different stages of this ritual practice. Most Shangana Tsonga music is provided by the playing of drums and / or singing and this holds true for *svikwembu* ritual music (Johnston 1972a).

This paper investigates the significance of music in the performance of *svikwembu* ritual practice amongst one of the largest population groups in southern Mozambique, the Shangana Tsonga. The research deals with one of the commonly occurring ritual practices in southern Mozambique, specifically in the Maputo province. According to my research consultants and Honwana, (2002), the ritual known as *svikwembu* or *mhamba* is mostly practiced by the Shangana Tsonga people.[4] Honwana (2002:52) explains *svikwembu* as a Tsonga term denoting spirits or god.[5] Etymologically the word *svikwembu* comprises two elements, the prefix *swi* for the plural and the term *xikwembu.* which denotes god (Honwana, 2002:53).

1.6 The scope of the thesis

To conclude this chapter, I should like to give an outline of the rest of the thesis by briefly discussing the main topics of each of the remaining chapters. In Chapter two I present the historical background of Mozambique, issues

[3] The medium is an individual who is possessed by the spirits and through whom the spirits speak.

[4] The research consultants I worked with are a group of individuals that I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter five. These individuals have occupations other than that of research consultants in their professional lives.

[5] *"Svikwembu é a palavra Tsonga utilizada para designar os espíritos. Etimologicamente, esta palavra é composta por dois elementos: o prefixo swi para o plural e o termo xikwembu que significa deus. Assim, svikwembu significa deuses e espíritos"* (Honwana, 2002:52).

regarding terminology, and an overview and discussion of how *svikwembu* came about in southern Mozambique.

In Chapter three I discuss literature regarding African religious beliefs and their relationship with music. Literature concerning altered states of consciousness and the relationship with music, general theories about musical elements as a trigger of trance in the spirit possession ceremony setting is also examined here.

In Chapter four I discuss my initial research methodology design before embarking on fieldwork research. Changes that occurred during the field research are demonstrated and discussed in terms of how these have affected the data. Lastly I present ethical considerations that deal with issues of informant consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

In Chapter five I present a general description of my fieldwork findings. These findings include a detailed description of *svikwembu* ritual practices with its phases, practitioners and their functions, spirits, languages involved, gender, and age. Regarding the musical performance of *svikwembu,* I discuss the musical instruments, the performers and the repertoire and analyse musical transcriptions. The research question concerning the meaning and significance of music for practitioners of *svikwembu* is considered in closing this chapter.

In Chapter six I conclude this thesis by restating the main points of the thesis by presenting my main findings, and relating them to the literature and to the theories of other scholars. A discussion of the surprising results and gaps is also presented in this section. Lastly, I show why studying this topic is relevant and I present its importance and value.

Chapter 2

The social historical background of Mozambique and its population, and of *svikwembu*

In this chapter I give an overview of the historical background of Mozambique, the country where I conducted my fieldwork and where there is an abundance of *svikwembu* practitioners. I introduce Mozambique, its history, climate, location, physical features, population (ethnic groups), religions and languages.

I also discuss the different terms used to indicate the ethnic group of this study, the Shangana Tsonga. I open the discussion by demonstrating the variety of terms used by various authors and justify the use of the term Shangana Tsonga rather than other terms. I go on to discuss the origins of Shangana Tsonga as the result of series of events that occurred during the 1800s. I also discuss these events in terms of the process of migration and social structure. The *mfecane* migration process, the social structure and conflicts within the Gaza Kingdom gave rise to the emergence of the *svikwembu* phenomenon.

Drawing on previous studies of *svikwembu* (Honwana, 1996 and Johnston, 1972), I present a history of how *svikwembu* came about and developed amongst various people in southern Mozambique.

Lastly, various cultural traditional values in Mozambique, including *svikwembu*, were vigorously suppressed by Mozambican authorities before and after independence. I present the reasons why the cultural and traditional values were suppressed, both by the Portuguese colonial regime and the FRELIMO government.

2.1 Mozambique

2.1.1 Location

Mozambique is located in Southeast Africa and shares borders with the following countries: South Africa and Swaziland in the south; Tanzania in the north; Malawi and Zambia in the northwest; and Zimbabwe in the west. The country has an area of 303,037 square miles (799,390 sq. km), it is 1,120 miles

long, and has a coastline of some 1,737 miles (2,470 km). Mozambique is located south of the equator and encompasses the area between latitude 10 degrees north and 26 degrees south with a longitude of 30 degrees west and 42 degrees east. Its longest distance from east to west is 380 miles (Azevedo, 1991:1).

The Maputo province, where I conducted my fieldwork, is situated in southern Mozambique and was formerly known as Lourenço Marques. The Maputo province borders on Swaziland in the west, Gaza province in the north, and South Africa in the northwest and the south.

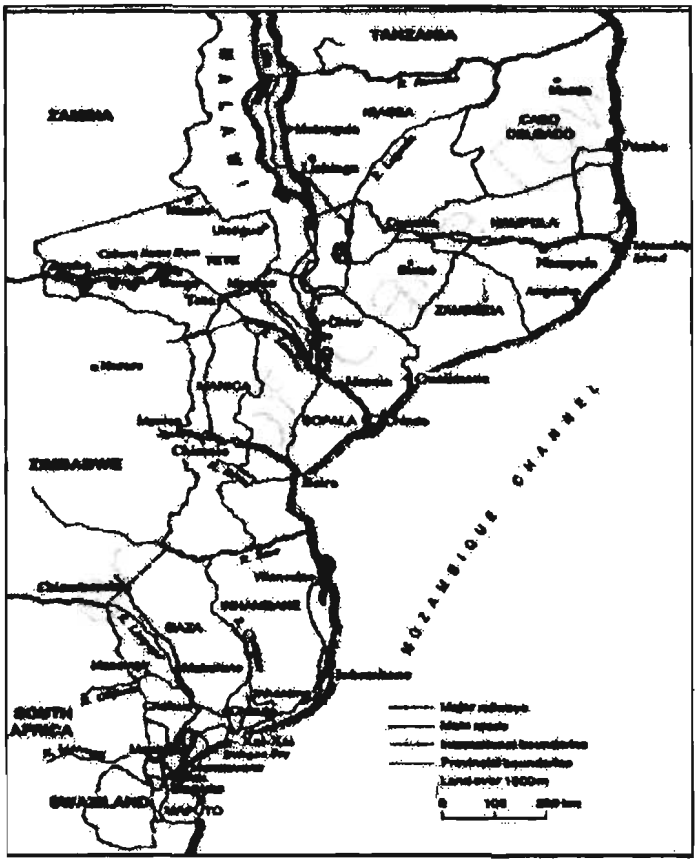

Figure 1: Map of Mozambique (Azevedo, 1991:1)

2.1.2 Climate

Mozambique's climate is tropical and its temperatures and rainfall vary from region to region. It essentially comprises two seasons, wet and dry. According to Azevedo (1991:1), the wet season begins around October and ends around March, while the dry season occurs between April and September.

According to Azevedo (1991:1), "the tropical climate of Mozambique is responsible for its various widespread diseases in the central and northwest part of the country, malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis, and hepatitis". The coastal areas of Mozambique tend to be warmer due to the warm current which flows south from the environs of the Equator through the Mozambique Channel.

2.1.3 Mozambican demographics

Mozambique has a total population of approximately 16,099,246 inhabitants, (7,714,306 male and 8,384,940 female) (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 1998:i).[6] The majority of the population is rural, with approximately eleven and a half million (11,498,114) inhabitants living in rural areas and approximately four and a half million (4,601,132) living in the urban areas (INE, 1998:i). Azevedo (1991:3) points to the fact that "The population of Mozambique has grown by leaps and bounds during the second half of the twentieth century", with the densely populated areas found in the northern and southern coastal flatlands, where people depend on farming. In colonial times the country's urban centres (Maputo, Beira and Nacala) constituted the focal points of the European population. Maputo remains the largest centre, with almost a million inhabitants. The city's growth has been stimulated by an excellent harbour, the railway, and a number of paved roads.

During the mid-1980s, the rural population was estimated at approximately 86.8 percent of the total population of Mozambique. The flow of immigration towards urban areas like Maputo was greatly exacerbated by the civil war (1978 to 1992), because cities like Maputo were the safest places in the country. The FRELIMO government has attempted to slow the flow of urban immigration by setting up communal villages, moving unskilled, unproductive and unemployed people and settling them in the so-called "green zones" away from the city (Azevedo, 1991:4).

Due to Mozambique's tropical climate and lack of adequate health facilities, the country has low life expectancy and high infant mortality rates, though the Mozambican birth rate is among the highest in the world (Azevedo, 1991:4).

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[6] Instituto Nacional de Estatistica (INE,1998a)

Maputo province has a population of approximately nine hundred and sixty six thousand (966.837). It is difficult to estimate figures for the variety of ethnic groups situated in Maputo city, not least because many people from different provinces of Mozambique migrated into Maputo during the civil war. I conducted the fieldwork for this research project in an urban area of Maputo called Chamanculo. In Chamanculo there are approximately 11,000 inhabitants, approximately 5,305 of whom are male and 5.701 female (INE, 1998a:4). It is believed that the majority of the *svikwembu* practitioners are women (Morais, 2005b). :

Total population	16,099.246
Population, men	7,714,306
Population, women	8,384,940
Population, 0-14 years old	7,206,403
Population, 15-64 years old	8,429,475
Population, 65 years old or more	463,368
Women, 15-49 years old	4,003,506
Index of masculinity (per 100 women)	92
Population's average age (in years)	17,5
Index of dependency (per 100 people of active age)	91
Economically active population (15 years old or more)	5,916,377
Economically non-active population (15 years old of more)	2,395,862
Urban population	4,601,132
Rural population	11,498,114
Population density (hab/km2)	20,1

Figure 2: Population of Mozambique[7]

2.1.4 Religion in Mozambique

Catholicism is the most popular religion in Mozambique, with adherents making up 23.8% of the population, followed by people without religion (23.1%) as a close second (INE, 199:44-45). Islam is the third most widely practised religion in Mozambique, with approximately 17.8% of the population as followers (INE, 1999:44). The percentage of the adherents of the

[7] (INE, 1998a).

indigenous religions is significantly lower at 2.1%, with a higher percentage of animists (as they are termed in the census) in the rural areas (2.5% of the population) compared to the urban areas with 1.3% (INE, 1999:44-45).[5] It is probable that part of the population group identified as being without religion in fact practices some sort of non-organised religion, e.g. animist beliefs or ancestral worship in "*svikwembu*" (INE, 1999: 44-45)

Catholicism and *svikwembu*, which would probably be classified as animist, are not mutually exclusive. From ancestral evidence and the experiential case of one of my family members, it is clear that some *svikwembu* practitioners do attend church. My own experience and research results clearly show that the clients and practitioners of *svikwembu* include members of various churches and mosques (Manuel, 2005). Taken together, these considerations indicate that there may be a significantly larger number of *svikwembu* practitioners than the statistics indicate.

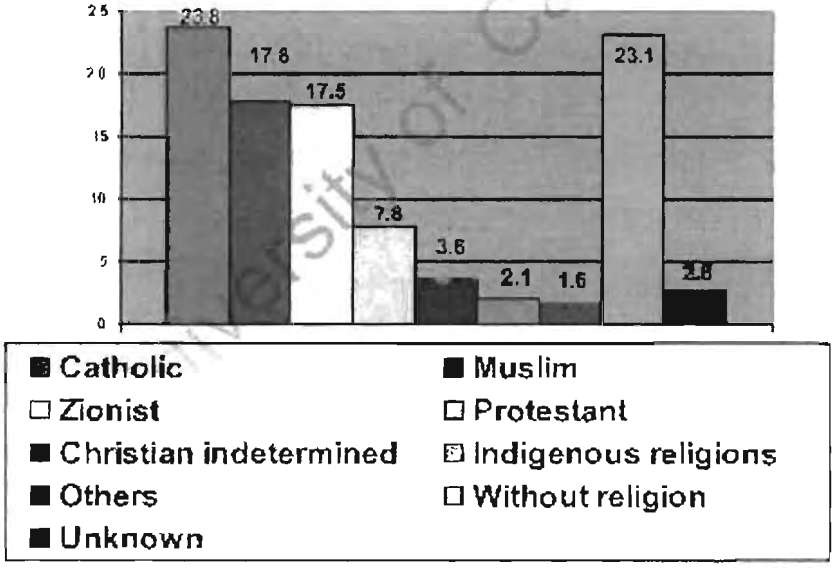

Figure 3: Graphic presentation of the religions affiliations of Mozambique (INE, 1997:44).

[5] According to Idowu (1973:128), the term animist (animism) was popularised by Edward B. Tylor, who describes it as "the doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general". In Tylor's words, the theory behind animism states the following: "Animism divides into two great dogmas, forming part of one consistent doctrine; first, concerning souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body; second, concerning other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities. Thus animism, in its full development, includes the belief in souls and in a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits, these doctrines practically resulting in some kind of active worship".

2.1.5 Languages spoken in Mozambique

Mozambique is marked by linguistic diversity. Linguistically, most Mozambicans speak the Bantu languages. The INE (1998a:38) indicates Portuguese as the official language in the country. The most widely spoken indigenous language in Mozambique is Emakua (26.3%), followed by Xichangana (11.4%) and Elomwe (7.9%) (INE, 1998a:38).

A more detailed analysis of language speakers is provided by INE (1998a:38), whose findings are presented in table form in Figure 4.

Mother tongue	Total	Age groups		
		5-19	20-49	50+
N (000)	12,536.8	5,680.1	5,430.6	1,426.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Portuguese	6.5	8.5	5.5	2.1
Emakua	26.3	24.8	28.0	25.6
Xichangana	11.4	11.8	10.2	14.1
Elomwe	7.9	7.4	8.6	6.8
Cisena	7.0	6.9	7.2	6.7
Echuwabo	6.3	6.1	6.6	5.9
Other Mozambican languages	33.0	32.7	32.2	37.5
Other foreign languages	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.6
None	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Unknown	1.3	1.5	1.2	0.7

Figure 4: Distribution of languages spoken as the mother tongue as percentages of the population from five years of age (INE, 1998a:38).

2.1.6 Major ethnic groups and sub groups of Mozambique

Mozambique comprises twelve major ethnic groups, each with sub groups. The major groups are: Nguni, Shona, Maravi, Tsonga, Maconde, Chopi, Swahili, Makwa-lomwe, Lower Zambeze, Tonga, Yao, and others of Islamic and Asian extraction. Mozambique is the longest country in Africa, and has a correspondingly wide range of cultures and music. The area below the Zambezi River is generally and musically related to the Shona of Zimbabwe; the northern area is greatly influenced by Arab music and the south by the Nguni sound. According to Azevedo (1991:4), anthropologist Antonio Rita Ferreira has also provided the best classification of Mozambican ethnic composition, but I only discuss the most relevant groups and subgroups related to this study.

2.1.6.1 Nguni

According to Ferreira (1958:17), the Nguni group in Mozambique is known as the Zulu. Due to the profound cultural influence that they have exercised over the ethnic groups of the southern Zambezi region, it is important to focus on relevant aspects of the particular culture. Problems around the history and origin of the Nguni ethnic group are complicated due to the extreme confusion resulting from expeditions and conquest by Shaka's successors and repercussions thereof.

The Nguni live in southern Mozambique, in Gaza and scattered through the Maputo province, numbering more than a million. They speak a Zulu dialect and use the click sound which reveals their contact with the Khoisan and the Xhosa (Azevedo, 1991:5).

The Swazi are considered to be a subgroup of the Nguni and live in Namaacha, about twenty-five miles from Maputo, having migrated from their original home in Swaziland during the nineteenth century (Azevedo, 1991:5).

2.1.6.2 The Tsonga group

The Tsonga people form the second largest ethnic group in Mozambique. They are a derivative of the Zulu clan and have occupied part of southern

Mozambique, namely Gaza province, since the nineteenth century (Azevedo, 1991:4). The Tsonga migrated from farther south and defeated the indigenous settlers, the Chopi and the Bitonga, during the early nineteenth century (Azevedo, 1991:4). The designation Tsonga, which has a problematic meaning, was allocated by the Nguni conqueror (Ferreira, 1958:27). The Tsonga are divided into three subgroups, namely the Rhonga, Shangana and Tswa (Azevedo, 1991:5).

The Rhonga people are a subgroup of the Tsonga and inhabit parts of Maputo province, Marracuene, Matola, Manhiça and Sabie. According to Azevedo (1991:5), the Shangana, also a subgroup of the Tsonga, intermarried with the invading Nguni and live in the Bilene, Magude, parts of Sabie, Chibuto and Guija districts.

The Tswa are also related to the Tsonga. They inhabit the region that extends from Limpopo to the Save River and parts of Mossurize and Sofala.

2.1.6.3 The Shona group

According to Azevedo (1991:5), "some Portuguese anthropologists prefer to call the Shona, who number about a million, Caranga [sic], because they are associated with the culture of Zimbabwe and the empire of Mwenemutapa". The Shona Karanga live south of the Zambezi near the border of Zimbabwe and north of the Save River.

The Ndau is a Shona subgroup that was militarised by the Nguni, who incorporated them into their regiments. The Ndau were previously known as Mataos (Shillington, 2005:1034). According to Azevedo (1991:6), the Shanga (*machangas*), the Gova, the Danda, the Watombodji and the Zezuru of Zimbabwe may be classified as Ndau clans. According to Ferreira (1958:46), the designation *Va-ndau* seems to be have been given by Nghugunyane and derives from the Nguni (Zulu) word *ndaue*, which is a manner of answering a greeting or giving a salutation. The Ndau were greatly affected by the Nguni invasions and many of them were incorporated in the military regiments of the Nguni, where they came into contact with the Tsonga people, and this explains the importance that the spirits of the Ndau, together with the Nguni, have

amongst the superstitious religious practices of the Tsonga people (Ferreira, 1958:47).

2.1.6.4 Asians

Azevedo (1991:7) states that "Mozambique is also the home of some twenty thousand Indians from India (particularly from Goa, Damao and Diu), Pakistan and Bangladesh". Fewer than five thousand Chinese business people have made Mozambique their permanent home (Azevedo, 1991:7). Some people of Muslim origin are referred to as Monhé, a point that I shall discuss in Chapter five.

Figure 5: The division of the ethnic groups of Mozambique (Ferreira, 1958:47).

2.1.7 Early history of Mozambique

"The history of Mozambique prior to the fifteenth century is based mainly on circumstantial evidence derived from archaeological discoveries in east Africa and the scarce written sources indirectly related to that part of the continent" (Azevedo, 1991:8). From such archaeological and anthropological sources it is believed that Mozambique was inhabited as far back as four hundred years before Christ (Azevedo, 1991:8).

Mozambique's population comprises a mostly Bantu speaking population, which may have originated in the Cameroon, Congo and Nigerian plateaus and forests (Liesegang, 2005:1032). Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Mozambican territory consisted of a string of settlements with surrounding rural estates on the coast of the Indian Ocean and on the Zambezi River (Liesegang, 2005:1032).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, most of the Mozambican territory was the domain of independent of African states or chiefdoms, but between 1869 and 1891, Mozambican territory was delimited as a Portuguese overseas province or colony. When the Portuguese arrived in Mozambique, central Mozambique was linked to two major political entities: the kingdom of Mwenemutapa (today's Zimbabwe) and the confederation of Malawi (Azevedo, 1991:8). "Portugal maintained an administrative centre on the island of Mozambique and garrisons at Ibo, Quelimane, Sofala, Inhambane, and Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) on the coast and Sena and Tete on the Zambezi" (Liesegang, 2005:1032). With the arrival of the Portuguese in Mozambique, the overall social and political evolution of Mozambican societies was drastically altered (Azevedo, 1991:8).

Ever since the seventeenth century, the coastal area, including Sofala province, was controlled by Arab and Swahili aristocracies and traders who had mixed with the Bantu speaking population and had adapted to the areas and the existing culture. The north of Mozambique largely accepted Islam, while the rest of the country continued to follow traditional cultural practices until the Portuguese introduced Catholicism, which until today remains one of the religions of a minority in the country (Azevedo, 1991:8).

In the nineteenth century, southern Mozambique suffered significant invasions from the Nguni peoples of South Africa as a result of the *mfecane*process. [9] These invasions affected the indigenous population of southern Mozambique culturally and linguistically. As a result of these raids and invasions, the kingdom of Gaza was established under the leadership of the Nguni chief, Soshangana. It is possible to identify some aspects common to the present-day people of southern Mozambique and the Nguni of South Africa, the Zulu, in particular habits of language and other aspects of cultural practice.

2.1.7.1 *Mfecane*

"*Mfecane* is a term widely used by historians from the late 1860s to the late 1880s to refer to a series of wars and population movements that took place over much of southern Africa from the 1880s to the 1830s" (Shillington, 2005:979).

> The *mfecane* was presented as a positive process of political change with the objective of enlarging state power through improved military organization with increased centralization, and the expansion of political organization as well as the assimilation of members of previously separate political communities. The process was characterized as an achievement of African leaders employing and modifying traditional institutions, values, weapons and tactics, rather than borrowing external models or techniques in building their own kingdoms (Cooper, quoted in Hamilton 1995:277).

According to Serra (2000:87), large parts of southern Africa shared a similar political structure. The situation changed as a result of the period of conflict and political transformation known as *mfecane,* in the area known today as Zululand. This period of political transformation was characterised by an extensive movement of Nguni migration. According to Serra (2000:88), the conflict seems to have derived from a complex combination of factors in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The *mfecane* process resulted in the emergence of the Swazi and Zulu kingdoms, and the creation of the Gaza kingdom in southern Mozambique. Amongst the Nguni emigrants were the Zuangendaba, Soshangane (also known as Manicusse), Nqaba Msane and Nguana Maseko. At the beginning of

[9] See next page

the conflicts, Sobhuza, of Nguane-Dlamini, emigrated towards the north, where he established the Swazi kingdom. Three of the above-mentioned Nguni groups under the leadership of Zuangendaba, Nqaba and Maseko settled within the actual borders of Mozambique for some time. In the case of Soshangane, the Nguni of Gaza conquered the territory between the Maputo Bay and the Zambezi River and a large part of the area they conquered was in actual Mozambican territory.

2.1.7.2 The Gaza kingdom

According to early Portuguese accounts, the Tsonga people were already living in the central and southern areas of Mozambique, between the Indian Ocean and the Lebombo Mountains, during the early 16th century. Being fairly isolated, they lived a peaceful life in dispersed settlements, having some customs in common, but lacking a common political identity[10].

Prior to the formation of the Gaza kingdom in the twentieth century, during the process of the formation of the Zulu kingdom, Shaka Zulu and his cousin Soshangane came into conflict. Around 1819, Shaka defeated Soshangane, thus causing the migrations of Nguni people towards southern Mozambique to the area south of the Save River. Soshangane and his followers fled from Zululand, and in migrating brought their habits and costumes to Mozambique, where they came into contact with the Tsonga indigenes. Due to their superior military organisation, the displaced Nguni conquered various peoples, including the Tsonga, and established the Gaza kingdom in southern Mozambique. Soshangane, the first king (1821-1858), adopted a policy of assimilation of the local population.

The Gaza kingdom was a complex social formation with societies subjected to different degrees of domination. According to Serra (2000:90), there was a central dominant upper class consisting of elements of the lineage of the king (descendants of the first king), then a middle class comprising Nguni of minor category and, thirdly, the assimilated social class ("*classe dos*

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[10] [Online].Available:http://www.siyabona.com/africa_tsonga.html [2005, April 16].

assimilados"), many of whom had originally been war slaves or "*cativos de guerra*". The latter were designated as *tinhloko,* meaning heads. Gradually emancipated, the *tinhloko* did not form part of the slavery class. In the table six below is the social stratification of Gaza kingdom

Ethnic groups	Tsonga	Nguni	Ndau
Status	Dominated assimilated class	Dominant class	Dominated class
Social stratification	Tsonga chiefs Subjected Tsonga	King of Gaza Upper class Middle class	*Tinhloko* (recent captives)

Figure 6: Social class formation in the Gaza kingdom.

Assimilated boys were integrated in the regiments of the kingdom as civil servants and in the Nguni military territorial administration. Captured women and girls were given as spouses to the Nguni without their husbands having to pay *lobola*.[11] The Gaza state comprised three major social classes: the Nguni dominant class which considered themselves as "pure", the Tsonga, and the most oppressed class the Ndau. For the most part, the people most acculturated to the Nguni were the Tsonga. The acculturated were allowed to marry Nguni people (Honwana, 2000:54).

According to Serra (2000:95), the people that were not integrated into the dominant class were designated as Tsonga. Some of the subjected Tsonga who had over a long time built good relationships with the Gaza state, attained a special status, and were included in the assimilated class. One of the reasons why they are known as Shangana today is because the term originally meant people of Soshangane.

[11] "*Lobola* is a centuries old tradition, still common throughout Africa. This system requires that a price be paid for the right to marry women. This practice is still used extensively in contemporary African society and has raised both critical and supportive voices" [Online] available: http://azaz.essortment.com/africanmarriag_rntr.htm

In the late nineteenth century, the Portuguese defeated the political regiments of Nghugunyane, the ruler of Gaza, and established Mozambique as their colony. From the late nineteenth century, Mozambicans became the most important single group of migrant workers in the mines of South Africa (Katzellenbogen, 2005:1036).

2.1.8 The colonial regime period

Mozambique was supposedly conquered by the Portuguese in the sixteenth, however it was only until nineteenth century that the Portuguese effectively colonized Mozambique territory (Katzellenbogen, 2005:1036).

During the Portuguese colonial period, imports of textiles and other goods were paid for mainly by the sale of slaves and ivory. Ivory went mostly to western India, whence most of the imported cotton textiles and some of the beads offered for trade were obtained (Liesegang, 2005:1032). The slaves were exported mainly to Brazil and French colonial possessions and, from round about 1837, also to Spanish colonies such as Cuba (Liesegang, 2005:1032).

> Mozambicans had at least by 1850 a history of migrating to various parts of southern Africa to seek work in agriculture, construction, and diamond mining. Attracted by higher wages than they could get in Mozambique, they also sought to escape social restrictions imposed on them and, more significantly, the harshness of the Portuguese forced labour (Katzellenbogen, 2005:1036).

With a combination of military and diplomatic endeavour ensured that Mozambican territory was recognized as belonging to the Portuguese in 1875. From 1885 the Portuguese gained control of the Mozambique interior and proceeded to establish its oppressive colonial system based on forced labour and taxation. As a response to the colonial system, variety of resistances laid the foundation for national liberation movements of the 1960s such as the FRELIMO front (Katzellenbogen, 2005:1036).

2.1.9 The formation of FRELIMO in 1962 and Independence of Mozambique in 1975

In September 1962, a unified and effective organisation named FRELIMO (Frente de libertação Moçambicana, literally Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) was created. Crucial in the creation and development of this organisation was the role of Eduardo Mondlane, who returned from a University teaching career in the United States and employment with the United Nations to take up the position of first president of FRELIMO. Eduardo Mondlane was assassinated in 1968 and was succeeded by Samora Machel (the first president of the independent Mozambique). Under Machel's leadership, FRELIMO defeated the Portuguese regime and Mozambique became an independent country in 1975.

With the overthrow of the Portuguese colonial resistance in Mozambique, FRELIMO came to power with an ambitious agenda of nationalist ideals and developmental socialist goals. The key figure in this socialist process undoubtedly was President Samora Machel. Mozambique's socialist programme was actively pursued until 1986, when circumstances and political will led to ideological and practical changes. Following the death of Samora Machel in 1986 in an airplane crash, Joaquim Chissano assumed the presidency of Mozambique and of the ruling FRELIMO party in a peaceful and uncontested transition (Katzellenbogen, 2005:1036).

2.1.10 South Africa and RENAMO

South Africa's apartheid regime responded to independence and majority rule in neighbouring states with a policy of destabilisation, which fomented war and created economic problems in those states. RENAMO (*Resistência Nacional de Moçambique*, literally Mozambique National Resistance) was South Africa's agent in Mozambique and caused country wide destabilisation during the period from 1981 to 1992 through a war against FRELIMO (Hanlon, 2005:1043). At least a million people died and five million were displaced or became refugees in neighbouring countries and damage exceeded an estimated twenty billion dollars (Hanlon, 2005:1043). By 1987,

Mozambique had become the poorest country in the world, with a per capita GDP of less than a hundred dollars (Hanlon, 2005:1043).

2.1.11 Peace agreement and multiparty elections in Mozambique

In 1992, after two years of negotiations between RENAMO and FRELIMO in Rome, the two parties signed a peace accord. The first national multiparty election was held in October 1994, followed by another multiparty election in December 1999. FRELIMO and its president, Joaquim Chissano, won both elections.

In February 2000, southern Mozambique suffered the worst floods since 1895: 700 people died, 40,000 people were saved by the Mozambican navy and the South African air force, and 500 000 were evacuated and assisted by the international community (Hanlon, 2005:1043).

2.1.12 Economic growth and development in Mozambique

The country has experienced noticeable economic growth since the end of the war between FRELIMO and RENAMO. Economic recovery was encouraged by the peace process and privatisation. A considerable expansion of private investment took place, mainly in massive projects involving aluminium smelting, iron and steel production, offshore gas, heavy metal sands mining, hydroelectricity, and tourism initiatives. A significant breakthrough occurred when Mozambique was chosen for the implementation of the highly indebted poor countries debt relief initiative, which enabled almost three billion dollars of debt to be cancelled (Munslow, 2005:1044).

Today Mozambique continues under the leadership of a FRELIMO government and its new president, Armando Guebuza (a veteran in the FRELIMO organisation).

2.2 The term Shangana Tsonga

The Shangana Tsonga people derive their name from the Tsonga and Nguni ethnic groups. The term comprises two separate parts: Shangana, deriving from Soshangane (also known as Manicusse, the name of Shaka Zulu's rival

cousin), and Tsonga, deriving from the indigenous ethnic group in Mozambique inhabiting most of the southern area at that time. According to Johnston (1972:xv), these people had previously been known as Tonga, Shangaans, Thonga and Shangana Tonga, but I use the term Shangana Tsonga to indicate this ethnic group. To call the Tsonga people Shangana is definitely misleading, as the Shangana are the offspring of Soshangane. The term in common use in southern Mozambique, specifically in the Maputo province, is *machangana.*

2.2.1 Different terms used for the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group

The Shangana Tsonga ethnic group originated during the *mfecane*, the period of social upheaval due to political and economic crisis in Zululand. Different authors, at different times have used different names to describe this ethnic group, including

- Shangana Tonga
- Tonga
- Shangaans
- Thonga
- *Muchangana*
- *Machangana*

> Written information often confuses the Shangaan with the larger group of Tsonga people. The name of the Shangaan subgroup, of Tsonga, is also often used to refer to the whole group. So, when reading information, it is often difficult to determine whether a given population estimate is of the Shangaan people specifically, or of the larger group of the Tsonga people.

[Online].Available:http://imb.org/cesa/TheRegion/mozambique/Shangaan.htm [2005, April 12].

In their own language, the name of the people is *vachangana* and the singular form is *muchangana.* "The standard English grammar uses the word stem, Shangaan, as the name" [Online] Available: http://imb.org/cesa/TheRegion/mozambique/Shangaan.htm [2005, April 12].

2.3 Svikwembu and history

In the context of *svikwembu*, the spirits that possess people are always believed to be of Nguni or Ndau origin. Nowadays Shangana Tsonga people are exposed to foreigner Nguni and Ndau spirits and ancestral spirits *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* through a trance phenomenon, *mpfhukwa*.[12] *Mpfhukwa* derives from the Shangana Tsonga verb *kupfukwa*, meaning "to revive" (Honwana, 2002:57). In this region, the *vanyamussoro* are Tsonga traditional healers that have been influenced by Ndau and Nguni spirits in their religious practices.[13] Honwana (2002:52) explains that, according to her informants, there were only two types of traditional medicine before the Tsonga came into contact with the Nguni and the Ndau in nineteenth century, and that the traditional healing was practiced without people going into a trance (Honwana, 2002:5).

The *tinguluve or malhonga* were the only type of spirits known in the region of the direct Tsonga ancestors. These spirits did not take over the individual in a trance. They did not speak or manifest through a medium (Honwana, 2002:54).

In southern Mozambique, after the wars of Soshangane and his grandson Nghughunyane, when the Nguni entered their regional domination, the spirits those of dead Nguni and Ndau soldiers arose as a result of this troubled period. This characterises *mpfhukwa*. The spirits are believed to have the capacity to resuscitate themselves and take revenge by provoking illness and misery among their killer's descendants, or to ask them for protection (Honwana, 2002:57). The rationale for this behaviour is that slain soldiers were not properly buried and that their family members could not practice the necessary rituals to place them in the world of spirits (Honwana, 2002:57), thus their souls are unsettled and they are spirits troubled with *xiviti* (a Xichangana term meaning bitterness, anger, resentment or unpleasantness). "Apparently the phenomenon of *mpfhukwa* is originally Ndau" (Honwana, 2002:57).

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[12] My translation: *mpfhukwa é um termo derivado do verbo kupfukwa que significa ser acordado, ressuscitar e que indica um pessoa que foi ressuscitada de entre os mortos. O mpfhukwa tornou se um fenómeno generalizado no sul de Moçambique depois das guerras de Soshangane e Nghunghunyane, que tiveram como objectivo impor o dominio Nguni na região.*

[13] *Vanyamussoro* is a plural form for *nyamussoro*

Honwana (1996:65) states that majority of the Ndau spirits are male and that she only found two cases in which the spirits were female.

In general, the majority of those who are affected by the *svikwembu* phenomenon are young virgin girls (Honwana, 1996:69). These young girls are offered by their families as spirit wives when afflicted by *mipfhukwa* spirits and they are named *nsati wa svikwembu* (a Xichangana term meaning "the spirit's wife"). According to Honwana, the ages of girls in this group age vary form twelve to seventeen.

The *nsati wa svikwembu* may marry, depending on the support of her family and, most importantly, the authorisation of her spirits. If, for instance, a ritual to get permission from the spirit to proceed with the marriage has not been performed, the spirit or spirits may cause major turbulence in such a girl's marriage life.

It is believed that spirits that possess the Shangana Tsonga people today are either of Nguni or Ndau origin. The combination of three different spirits cohabiting in the body of the same individual gives rise to the multifunctional traditional healer named *nyamussoro*. Each of the spirits has specific different functions and powers: "the powers of herbal remedies given by the *tinguluve* or *mahlonga* spirits, the divination powers of the *tinhlolo* from the *vanguni* spirits, and the exorcising powers of the *vandau*[14] spirits (Honwana, 1996:72).[15]

2.3.1 The oppression of traditional cultural values in Mozambique before independence in 1975

According to Honwana, (1996:107) the Portuguese colonial system created a policy of assimilation aimed at developing an intermediate class of indigenous people assimilated into Portuguese culture (known as *assimilados*). The introduction of Christianity and basic missionary education for the indigenous people was structured to replace their "superstitious" beliefs and practices and equip them with the minimum skills to serve colonial rule. Basing her discussion on a series of documents in the Mozambican Historical Archive, Honwana (1996:95-106) reveals that there was a tremendous effort during the

[14] *Vandau* is the plural word for Ndau
[15] *Vanguni* is the plural for Nguni

first decades of colonial rule to suppress and prohibit the functioning of traditional religious institutions, specifically those practices involving spirit possession including performances of divination, exorcism and healing rituals (1996:96).[16] "The Portuguese colonial government banned the rituals with their drumming, dancing and gatherings which honoured the indigenous ancestors" (Honwana, 1996:96). Individuals practising traditional religious rituals were arrested, sent to jail and sentenced to do forced labour. Portuguese colonial officials did not believe in the effectiveness of traditional healing and saw traditional practitioners as deceivers who prevented patients from being effectively treated with modern drugs and surgery (Honwana, 1996:97).

2.3.2 FRELIMO's rejection of Mozambique's traditional institutions

My argument below is based on Honwana's research (1996:133-140). In FRELIMO's view of social reality, the beliefs and practices of traditional society were superstitious. Even before independence in 1975, FRELIMO's view and that of the late Samora Machel was that superstitious beliefs take the place of science in education. The system of age groups and initiation rites was seen as being intended to keep the youth under the influence of old ideas in order to destroy their initiative. Thereby all progress was prevented and the society survived in a completely inactive way (quoted in Honwana, 1996:134). This position of FRELIMO towards traditional institutions did not change until the late 1980s / early 1990s (Honwana, 1996:141). Traditional institutions were to be eradicated and received no recognition in the political and social functions of society. The traditional healers were not allowed to practice their rituals freely; consequently ritual performances of any kind, especially those aimed at evoking ancestral spirits, cleansing, healing and exorcism of evil spirits were prohibited (Honwana, 1996:135).

Despite all the repression aimed at traditional institutions, traditional practices did not disappear, but continued in secret, both in rural and urban areas (Honwana, 1996:137). The rationale behind this persistence is that even

[16] Fundo dos serviços dos negócios indígenas, Secção A, "Feiticeiros e Curandeiros", Processo no. 118, cota 83, Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (AHM).

though the traditional practices were prohibited, people did not stop believing in them and consequently continued to practice them.

2.3.3 FRELIMO changes its policy towards traditional institutions

Although the change in the policy towards traditional institutions was not announced publicly, the approach regarding traditional institutions was changed. For instance during the 1980s:

> Traditional healers were encouraged by the government to create a national association. Likewise a research group to study the forms of integration of the traditional political authorities in the state local administration was established in the Ministry of State Administration (Honwana, 1996:141).

Honwana (1996:143) relates the obvious transformation in FRELIMO's approach towards traditional institutions to the economic crisis that was aggravated by the civil war (1981-1992). In order to confront the traditionalist policy of the opposition's RENAMO party, FRELIMO needed to regain a popular mandate and support from the people to reconstruct the country in the early 1990s. FRELIMO needed to regain the peasantry's support and gain authority by means of ancestral powers and beliefs. Some of the approaches that FRELIMO used towards the practitioners of traditional culture were the following: the traditional healers were motivated by the government to create a national association and the "Office for Studies of Traditional Medicine at the Ministry of Health, which was established in 1977 strictly to study plants with therapeutic value, took a new approach in its research" (Honwana, 1996:141). As a result of the changes of FRELIMO's view towards traditional institutions, AMETRAMO was created as a national association for traditional healers in Mozambique in September of 1992 (Honwana, 1996:146).

2.4 Summary

The majority of the people inhabiting Mozambican territory are believed to be from northern and western Africa and are Bantu speaking people. In the 1820s Mozambique suffered a number of Nguni invasions from South Africa. By the late 1800s Mozambique was regarded as Portuguese province or colony and the import of textiles and other products were mainly paid for by slave and

ivory trading, with most of the Mozambican slaves exported to French and Spanish colonies and the ivory to west India.

In 1975 Mozambique became an independent nation under FRELIMO. Because of the war between RENAMO and FRELIMO, which was waged from 1981 to 1992, causing a devastating economic crisis, Mozambique was considered the poorest country in the world by 1987. Since the peace agreement in 1992 there has been noticeable economic growth in Mozambique, although the country remains one of the poorest countries worldwide.

Various names have been used to identify the ethnic group in this study, but I use the term Shangana Tsonga to designate this ethnic group.

During the second half of the nineteenth century the entire southern African region was affected directly or indirectly by immense demographic upheaval and revolutionary social and political change. This period, named *mfecane*, was marked by enormous migrations, irregular attacks, battles and frequent periods of misery and food crisis for many people in the region. The *mfecane* process resulted in the emergence of the Swazi and the Zulu, and the creation of the Gaza kingdom in southern Mozambique. The Gaza state comprised three major social classes: dominant class Nguni, the Tsonga, and the most oppressed class, the Ndau.

Before the Tsonga in southern Mozambique came into contact with the Nguni and the Ndau in the nineteenth century, traditional healing was practiced without people going into a trance. Nowadays various people in southern Mozambique are affected by the *svikwembu* phenomenon, during which people host Nguni, *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* (Tsonga) and Ndau spirits.

Cultural traditional values were oppressed significantly by both the Portuguese colonial regime and the FRELIMO government. The Portuguese colonial regime's introduction of Christianity and basic missionary education for the indigenous population was structured to replace the superstitious beliefs and practices and equip them with the minimum skills to serve colonial rule. The FRELIMO view and that of the President Samora Machel was that

superstitious beliefs take the place of science in education. Traditional institutions were eliminated and received no recognition within the political and social functions of Mozambican society. At a later stage during the aggravated civil war, FRELIMO needed to regain the peasantry's support to maintain their authority and reversed their policy about ancestral powers and beliefs.

Chapter 3

Literature review and theoretical framework

In researching the significance of music in *svikwembu* practice amongst the Shangana Tsonga people of rural southern Mozambique, I explored different issues dealing with terminology, people, language, spirit possession and trance, and history. The literature I have drawn on for this thesis is mostly related to the issues indicated above. Other texts have contributed towards my understanding; Rouget (1985), Berliner (1978), Johnston's doctoral thesis (1972) and Honwana (2002) have been invaluable sources.

To demarcate the scholarship included in my literature review, I have divided the title of the subject into different sections. I looked for research that would answer questions that arose from the research question, e.g.: Who are the people who practice the ritual? What kinds of trance phenomena are predominant in the ritual? What does the music mean for the people involved in the ritual? In searching for literature at the beginning of my research, the books and articles I read mostly related to these questions.

Because *svikwembu* is a ritual involving trance and spirit possession, and is mostly practiced by Shangana Tsonga people, I have read literature that deals separately with the history of migration of South African people into southern Mozambique. I also read literature whose main concern is trance and spirit possession in order to more deeply understand the trance phenomena in *svikwembu* practice. As music is the focus of the whole research project, I have read literature that deals with music and trance or spirit possession. As my writing and research progressed, many other questions and issues arose, such as seeing *svikwembu* ritual practice as part of the African traditional religion. In this chapter, before embarking on the study of trance and altered states of consciousness, I will review pertinent literature that deals with the concepts of ritual in the *svikwembu* context.

3.1 African traditional religion

Svikwembu may be seen as forming part of African traditional religion, because of its characteristics and beliefs within the whole ritual complex.

Svikwembu is a practice inherited from the past and from the ancestors of its practitioners. The practice of the *svikwembu* ritual incorporates a strong belief in ancestral and alien spirit possession.

According to Ray (1987:83), "African traditional religion is closely tied to ethnic groups", therefore it can be said that there are as many different "religions" as there are ethnic groups. Ray (1987:84) furthermore regards the assumption that human beings are largely responsible for their own misfortunes and that they possess the ritual means to overcome them as a general characteristic of African religions. A belief in the perfectibility of human beings is not part of African traditional religions; instead, African religious beliefs are associated with means of correcting certain social and spiritual relationships that are understood to be the cause of misfortune and death (Ray, 1987:84). There is an assumption that ancestors maintain the moral and social values which are the guidelines for the good life of the living descendants and that ritual performance has value as a form of renewing people's commitment to their forebears (Ray, 1987:84). These rituals are aimed at renewing the relationship between the living descendants and their ancestors and are deemed to affect people's health and well being. A person's life goes through different stages, and one of the important tasks of African traditional religion is to successfully move people through each stage. Each phase is constructed by rites of passage and duties to ensure that all individuals know their responsibilities; in that way there is guidance and direction for the lives of people to run smoothly (Ray, 1987:85).

Booth (1978:81) states that African religion, at some point, had been the poor relation of anthropology, being viewed as "primitive religion". He also states that scholars had been anxious to pin labels on African beliefs and practices, arguing that African beliefs were animistic. However, the study of African religion is now recognised as a subject in its own right and the name now applied to indigenous African religion is "African traditional religion", a designation that, Booth takes to indicate not only the religion which was practised before the coming of Islam and Christianity, but also tells something about the nature of the religion. A further term that has been used is "tribal

religion" and Booth, explains that "African traditional religion is also a communal religion" (Booth, 1978:81).

According to Uka (1991:21),

> African traditional religion comprises the religious beliefs and practices of the Africans which had been in existence from time immemorial, and are still utilized today by many Africans. It is the indigenous religion of the Africans which has been handed down by their forebears.

Uka agrees with Awolalu who says that African traditional religion refers to the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is a religion that has been passed from generation to generation by the ancestors of the present generation of Africans and a religion that Africans have made theirs by living it and practicing it. Similar to this definition of African traditional religion is that which is suggested by Idowu (1973:x) when he states that

> the world outside Africa still has to wake up to the fact that African traditional religion is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans, which is being practiced today by the majority of Africans in various forms and various shades and intensities (...).

Uka (1991:22) suggests that African traditional religion is "traditional" in a sense that it that came into being long ago. "African traditional religion is "traditional" not because it is a relic, static and incapable of adaptation to new situations and changes, but because it is a religion that originated from the peoples' environment and on their soil" (Uka, 1991:22). African traditional religion has no written literature; it is based on oral tradition as a way of transmitting knowledge (Uka, 1991:22).

3.1.1 Spirits in African belief

According to Uka (1991:45)

> It is a common feature among traditional African people to believe in a host of spirits who inhabit all sorts of places such as trees, hills, rivers and sometimes plants and animals. For this reason, African traditional religion was variously described as animism.

Idowu (1973:173) refers to spirits as

> those entities which form a separate category of beings from those described as divinities. Divinities and ancestors come under the general nomenclature

> of spirits. Divinities and ancestors could be described as 'domesticated' spirits. The ancestors have always been part of the human family, and the divinities are intimately a tutelary part of the personal or community establishments.

Spirits may be conceived as powers which are almost abstract, as shades or vapours which take on human shape; they are immaterial and incorporeal beings (Idowu, 1973:174).

> It is believed by Africans that a person whose dead body is not buried, that is, with due and correct rites, will not be admitted to the abode of the blessed departed ones, and therefore will become a wanderer, living an aimless, haunting existence (Idowu, 1973:174).

3.1.2 Ancestral spirits

> An [a]ncestor is a departed spirit who stands in peculiarly close relation to the tribe of the family: the life of the latter has been derived from him, and because he is still in a sense one with it (Idowu, 1973:179).

According to Uka (1991:46), there is a belief among Africans that communication and communion is possible between the living and the dead through "ancestor worship". In a traditional African religion, the spirits of people who die are believed to continue to affect the lives of their descendants; therefore it is believed that the dead have the power to influence and help the living. The lives of the living descendants are a function of the works of the spirit world (Hardacre, 1987:322). It could be said that there is a continuing interdependence between the living and the dead (Uka, 1991:46). For example, in the traditional Shona's view, a person's fortune and fate in the world are to some extent regarded as the result of an interplay of forces outside of the person's own control (Berliner, 1978:186).[17]

In Africa, according to Hardacre (1987:322), "ancestor worship forms only one aspect of an African people's religion"; those who die without descendants cannot become ancestors, and, in order to establish a good future

[17] The name Shona refers to a group of Bantu speaking peoples who live between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers in Zimbabwe and parts of Mozambique and Zambia. Their population counts over four million, and their basic dialects include Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Manyika, Ndau and Kalanga. Shona people are culturally and linguistically distinct from their fellow Bantu speaking neighbours both north of the Zambezi and south of the Limpopo (Berliner, 1978:18). "The Shona fell victim to a series of three invasions by the Nguni warriors from the south. It is said that the appellation Shona has been given by the Nguni warriors, (Ndebele people led by Mzilikazi) to the indigenous peoples they encountered in Zimbabwe" (Berliner, 1978:20).

relationship with your ancestor, the necessary rituals and proper burial have to be carried out. In Africa "ancestors are believed to be capable of intervening in human affairs, but only in the defined area of their authority, that is, among their descendants" (Hardacre, 1987:322). Nevertheless, it is important to make a distinction between ancestor spirits and spirits that do not form part of certain lineages but still affect their lives. Hardacre (1987:322) explains that, according to Gluckman's study (1937) on African ancestor worship, the ancestors represent positive moral forces that can cause or prevent misfortune and require that their descendants observe a moral code. On the other hand there are those spirits not exclusively directed to the family but can act amorally and in an antisocial way towards living human beings. This is the case among the Shangana Tsonga of southern Mozambique; people may host ancestor spirits as well as alien spirits that do not belong in a particular lineage.

3.2 What is ritual?

Ritual is a broad term discussed and defined by many scholars from within different subjects and disciplines. According to Seymour-Smith (1986:248)

> [I]t is extremely difficult and perhaps ultimately unnecessary to define ritual, or to delimit it from ceremony on the one hand or from instrumental or practical action on the other.

Even though there are quite a number of different definitions for ritual, depending on context, Seymour-Smith (1986:248) points out that

> ritual is regarded by some anthropologists as a category of behaviour, in which case it may be defined as a form of ceremony characterized by its religious nature or purpose.

Matta (1979:589) observes that the "term ritual is loaded with substantive meaning in modern social anthropology, and this complicates structural consideration of the phenomenon". He starts by asking a basic question: what transforms a given action into a ritual? For Matta (1979:589), ritual is "perhaps best interpreted as an action related to other actions seen in a relational and comparative perspective", suggesting that "instead of studying ritual as something discrete, we should try to study it always in relationship to

other systems of social action". He also asks questions like; "Is washing hands a ritual?" The answer to this would be "yes" or "no" depending on the context. I find Matta's discussion of ritual helpful in the context of the ritual performance of *svikwembu*, as the *svikwembu* ritual is an action related to other systems of social actions as discussed in Chapter four. "Social actions that in a given context are perceived and classified as a non remarkable and non ritual part of the instrumental and functional routines of everyday life, may be transformed into dramas and rituals in the event that they change position or place in time or space" (Matta, 1979:589).

According to Grimes (1982:540), Victor Turner defines ritual as "formal behaviour prescribed for occasions not given over to technological routine that have reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers". Drewal (1988:25) states that Turner

> believed only in stable societies with a strong corporate life-those least influenced by technological change-is ritual able to maintain its function and that only with stabilization would a widespread revival of ritual be possible.

Turner's later writings (quoted in Drewal, 1988:25), according to Drewal, suggest that Turner "believed that ritual in Africa largely meant the maintenance of an existing social order". Grimes criticises Turner's definition of ritual by saying that the definition he uses does not express the sense of ritual that one finds either in his theories or the collaborative explorations. For Grimes, Turner's definition is unsatisfactory.

Grimes (1982:540) states that "most definitions of ritual are disappointing because they define the word too narrowly or lack fruitful images", the popular definition of ritual identifies it negatively and the scholarly one, he suggests, identifies it too narrowly with liturgical ritual (Grimes, 1982:541).

Grimes (1982:540) speaks of "creative" or "nascent" ritual and uses the term ritualising, defining it as a process which occurs continually, and may or may not result in stable structures that a culture may consider "rituals".

> Ritualizing emerges periodically in the interface between cultural and genetic heritage. Some rituals are intentionally chosen, but others arise spontaneously. The danger of defining ritual in terms of more mature or

> sacred examples such as Pass over celebrations or the Mass is that we miss the continuity between habits and symptoms, or mannerisms, on the one hand, and civil ceremonies, formal liturgies, or ludic celebrations, on the other. Rituals are commonly spoken of as paradigms, models or structures. They are regarded by anthropologists as ways of classifying the world (Grimes, 1982:542).

Jennings (1982:112) suggests that, in order to gain a better understanding of ritual, ritual may be understood as performing noetic (intellectual or intellectually intutive) functions in unusual ways; he regards ritual as not being "senseless activity but [...] rather [as] one of many ways in which human beings construe and construct their world" (Jennings, 1982:112). "[R]itual action is a means by which its participants discover who they are in their world and how their world functions" (Jennings, 1982:113). He distinguishes three moments in the noetic function of ritual: first, ritual action is a way of gaining knowledge; ritual activity may serve as a mode of inquiry and discovery; second, ritual activity serves to transmit knowledge; third, ritual performance is a display of the ritual and the participants in the ritual to an observer, who is invited to see, approve, understand or recognise the ritual action (Jennings, 1982:112-113). Jennings (1982:113) suggests that the aspect of ritual knowledge serves as a point of contact between the ritual action and the attempt to gain theoretical critical understanding of ritual.

Jennings (1982:112) also suggests that focusing on the noetic functions will facilitate the development of a basis for theoretical and critical reflection on ritual. An analysis of noetic functions will not necessarily prove to be a comprehensive analysis of ritual; for Jennings, noetic functions do characterise rituals to some degree, allowing that other functions may predominate in some examples of ritual action.

"Ritual practices are the foundation of African traditional religion" (Ray, 1987:87). Ritual is the means to become possessed and communicate with the spirits and ancestors, to perform offerings and sacrifices and to renew the relationship between the living descendants. According to Ray (1987:88), almost every African ritual is an occasion in which human experience is

morally and spiritually transformed. The two most important forms of African ritual are animal sacrifice and rites of passage.[18]

To close this discussion, I would like to make a few important remarks about the definition of ritual. Bell (2005:7848) states that "the term ritual remains difficult to define, which is hardly surprising, since central activities and concepts are always the ones probed most restlessly". The ability of ritual to pull together scholars from different subject fields, approaches and disciplines is witnessed in the many conference panels and subsequently published collections (Bell, 2005:7849). Bell (2005:7848) suggests that the difficulties in defining ritual are related to the varieties of input into the discussion, and for this reason, ritual has been identified in many unexpected places.

3.2.1 Divination

According to Zuesse (1987:2369), "divination is the art or practice of discovering the personal, human significance of future or, more commonly, present or past events". Seymour-Smith (1986:79), on the other hand, defines divination as the acquisition of information through the use of magic. He suggests that ancestors, spirits or divinities are believed to communicate with humans through a divinatory process who may speak of prophecy (Seymour-Smith, 1986:79) According to Zuesse (1987:2369) there are a number of different kinds of divination forms namely intuitive, possession and wisdom divinations. For example, intuitive divination occurs amongst the Shona of Zimbabwe who

> regard their *hombahomba* diviners above all other kinds because these remarkable people, consulted by strangers who travel from far off to seek their help, can spontaneously tell their visitor's names, family connections, urgent problems and even minor experiences encountered on the journey (Zuesse, 1987:2370).

[18] "Rites of passage are a category of rituals that mark the passage of a person through the life cycle, from one stage to another over time, from one role or social position to another, integrating the human and cultural experiences with biological destiny: birth, reproduction and death" (Myerhoff, Camino and Turner, 1987and 2005:7796). "All African societies have different age-linked rituals, and mark the passage from one to another, but not all have the same rituals either in number or in kind" (Cox, 2005:7804).

According to Seymour-Smith (1986:79), divination is typically employed to discover the identity of a criminal, to resolve disputes regarding some offence, or to predict the outcome of a future event.

3.2.2 Exorcism

Those individuals who host undesirable and malevolent spirits in their bodies, and are consequently affected by witchcraft, have to be exorcised in order to expel these evil spirits. "These evil spirits possess the bodies of their victims and completely control or at least strongly influence their actions" (Caciola, 2005:2927). Exorcism is strongly related to and better understood by referencing the concept of spirit possession; exorcism is a phenomenon involving spirit possession. The spirits that are to be exorcised are conceived of as troublesome, demonic and dangerous. It is important to note that, in certain social religious contexts, spirit possession is understood as the work of evil spirits or demons dedicated to harming humans, and exorcism viewed as an important form of healing. On the other hand, possession by beneficent spirits is highly valued and respected and in these contexts exorcism is unlikely to be an important element of the local culture (Caciola, 2005:2928). According to Caciola (2005:2928), "many cultures use dance and music as essential elements of exorcism rituals". In *svikwembu* exorcism is referred to by the name *ku femba*; the importance of this practice lies in healing individuals affected by malevolent spirits and witchcraft.

3.3 Music in religious settings in Africa

One of the most important elements in African religious settings is the performance of music to establish the communication with the spiritual realm.

> The most compelling reason for music making in Africa derives from religious experience, for it is generally believed that the spiritual world is responsive to music and deeply affected (Nketia, 1987:6256).

The spirits are hosted by human mediums, who are known to sing and play musical instruments, particular songs, and express dissatisfaction when the performance is lacking in liveliness. The spirits or gods can also bring new songs to the existing repertoire of the worshippers. During worship rituals, music making can last for hours and even days without stopping; in that way the worshippers not only please their ancestors, spirits or gods, but also, by

making music, renew their contact and relationships with them. According to Nketia (1987:6256), "those who worship particular gods often describe themselves in songs as the children of those gods and may distinguish themselves from other members of the community, among other ways by their repertoire of songs, instruments, and dances". "Because the spiritual world is believed to be sensitive to sacred music, performances of sacred music are usually controlled" (Nketia 1987:6256). For instance, there are occasions during which little or no music is performed during such occasions as personal ritual and worship, but music other than sacred music may be performed during social gatherings (Nketia 1987:6256). Sacred music is performed on fixed days of worship, at celebrations to invoke the name of the ancestors, especially in those practices involving trance and spirit possession.

Different sacred music repertoires used in ritual practices of different regions in Africa have specific instruments, songs and sounds to establish communication with the spirit world. It is widely believed that drums are the major means for evoking trance and spirit possession in African worship practices.

According to Nketia (1987:6257),

> as in many cultures of the world, African songs provide avenues for making references to the sources of religious experience and to the values that hold a community of worshippers together.

The repertoire of sacred songs usually includes songs that are performed at a particular stage of the ritual. Some songs are performed at the beginning and the end of the ritual practice, while others accompany the whole ritual process. Getting in and out of trance or remaining in a state of trance and the consequent maintenance of the spirit's presence is aided by specific types of songs (Nketia, 1987:6257). In performing sacred songs to call the spirits, please and thank them, it is important to perform the appropriate music. According to Nketia (1987:6257), "Africans sing about their gods and their own social history in their sacred songs because their gods accompany them during their migrations as well as in their encounters with other societies".

3.4 Altered states of consciousness

According to Ludwig (quoted in Tart, 1968:9), altered states of consciousness are regarded as

> any mental state(s) induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness.

He also suggests that

> altered states of consciousness may be produced in any setting by a variety of agents which interfere with the normal inflow of sensory or proprioceptive stimuli, the normal outflow of motor impulses, the normal emotional tone, or the normal flow and organization of cognitive processes (Tart, 1968:10).

Spirit possession that occurs in *svikwembu* is an altered state of consciousness; the spirits embody themselves in the medium's body, working and communicating through him. In my experience, the medium does not remember what was happening while he or she was possessed and speaks languages that he or she cannot speak while in a normal state. The medium's behaviour is very different to his or her everyday behaviour. For example, shaking and falling to the ground unexpectedly are common at the beginning stage of *svikwembu*. I regard these signs as signifying an altered state of consciousness.

3.4.1 Trance

Rouget (1985:3) defines trance as an altered state of consciousness composed of a series of events that can only be described by those who have lived through them. He further distinguishes two kinds of altered states of consciousness: ecstasy, an altered state attained in silence, immobility and solitude, and "trance referring to those altered states that are obtained by means of noise, music, agitation, and in the presence of the others".

While Rouget prefers to distinguish between trance and ecstacy, Becker (1994:41) prefers a generic category of trance that includes meditative states, possession trance, shamanic trance, communal trance, aesthetic trance, and isolated moments of transcendence. Becker defines trance as a "state of mind characterized by intense focus, the loss of strong sense of self and access to types of knowledge and experience that are inaccessible in non trance states". According to Becker there are different kinds of trance states: the trance of the

performer who feels him or herself to be one with the music he or she plays, the mild trance of the listener whose whole attention becomes focussed on the music and possession trance in which one's self appears to be displaced and the body is taken by a spirit or divinity. "Trance like most natural languages categories is a cover term for a set of things that more or less resemble each other" (Becker, 1994:42). Becker states that people who go into a trance act differently from place to place and that part of being in a trance is knowing how one is supposed to act.

Applying Rouget's distinction between trance and ecstasy, I investigated trance rather than ecstasy in this study focused on music and spirit possession. Despite the number of trance varieties, I am presenting two (shamanism and possession) which are relevant to the topic under investigation.

3.4.2 Shamanism and possession

According to Honwana (2002:52), "shamanism refers to the temporary absence of the soul of a person that leaves the body to encounter the spirits"[19]. In one *svikwembu* practice, divination, the medium communicates with the ancestral spirits of the patient while exercising great control over them. This communication with the spirits mainly has to do with infirmities or issues concerning the patient's life. In possession, on the other hand, the communication between the visible and the invisible (the medium and the spirits) operates in the opposite direction, as the spirits embody themselves in the medium's body and communicate through it. At the initial phase of *svikwembu*, spirit possession is mostly an unexpected and, in some cases, an undesirable occurrence which characterises the very beginning stage of *svikwembu,* when a particular chosen individual is possessed unexpectedly by spirits.

In shamanistic practice "it is no longer the man who visits the inhabitants of the invisible world but, on the contrary, the latter who visit him" (Rouget, 1985:19). Mischel (1958:249) argues that shamanism is considered a form of spirit possession in some societies, for instance the fairly typical case of

[19] My translation."*O xamanismo refere-se a ausência temporária da alma do indivíduo, que deixa o corpo e parte para combater os poderes que provocam a doença e desgraça*" (Honwana, 2002:52).

Trinidad's Shango group, Tanti. In the Shango group there is a state between full possession and normal behaviour known as *weré,* which occurs with some regularity. Individuals in this state are considered "messengers of the powers" and a high degree of consciousness is retained (Mischel, 1958:252). In this state "behaviour is marked by disobeying ceremonial regulations by such acts as smoking, swearing, or mocking sacred places by spitting on the tombs of the powers" (Mischel, 1958:252).

> *Weré* possession may or may not follow actual possession. Most often, an individual who has just been strongly possessed will manifest a *weré*, also observed where the *weré* persons had not undergone a previous possession (Mischel, 1958:253).

The differences between shamanism and possession trance thus seem to rest on three main factors:

> 1) Shamanism is a journey made by a man to visit the spirits, while possession is by a spirit or divinity to the world of men. 2) In the "former the trance subject gains control over the spirit embodied within him, in the latter the reverse is true, and lastly, 3) the former is a voluntary trance whereas the latter is an involuntary one (Rouget, 1985:23).

3.4.3 Trance and spirit possession

Bourguignon (quoted in Prince, 1968:3) separates the phenomena of trance and spirit possession as two different behaviours and says that the two phenomena might be interpreted and experienced in different ways in different societies. He states that he and his team in their investigations discovered that

> dissociation or trance, itself a complex and variable phenomenon might or might not be interpreted and experienced as possession in a particular society, and that the concept of possession, in turn, might or might not be utilized to account for forms of behaviour other than those of dissociation. (Prince, 1968:3)

There are different definitions for spirit possession but I follow Boddy's definition (1994:407), which most closely reflects what spirit possession in *svikwembu* ritual appears to be. Boddy defines spirit possession as commonly referring to the hold exerted over a human being by external forces or entities more powerful than the medium. This definition reflects what happens at the beginning stage of *svikwembu* (which I will discuss later), when people become possessed by external forces (spirits in this case) that are more powerful than the individuals who are possessed (medium). These forces or

spirits have the capacity to possess people unexpectedly, without anybody's consent or intervention.

Boddy (1994:407) states that these forces may be ancestors or divinities, ghosts of foreign origin, or entities both ontologically and ethnically alien, and that in some societies demonstrate multiple spirit forms. With reference to Boddy the forces in *svikwembu* are Tsonga ancestors and spirits, and spirits ethnically different from, and in origin foreign to the Tsonga; here I am referring to Ndau Nguni and Monhé spirits. The spirit possession in *svikwembu* has historical, ethnic and culturally diverse features, which I will delineate in what follows.

3.4.4 The role of music in trance possession and shamanism

The relationship between music and shamanic trance on the one hand, and possession trance on the other, are by no means the same. Rouget (1995:125) argues that the relation to music of the possessee in possession is totally passive during initiation, and becomes progressively more active as the possessee passes from the initiation phase to more advanced phases. In shamanism, on the other hand, the shaman's activity as musicant (performer, non-professional musician) begins from the moment of the initiation of the ritual.[20]

In investigating the relationship between music and trance, I sought to discover what role music plays in the different stages of the ritual: in the preparation for the trance, in the onset, in the maintenance, in the emergence of the spirit, all this being seen in terms of the stage the adept has attained in his career and of the particular moment in the ceremony.

According to Rouget (1985:32), "the behaviour of the possessed person varies during his career and his trance takes different forms depending on the stage he has reached". It is therefore essential to set trance within this dynamic process when one investigates the relationship with music.

In investigating this relationship between music and trance it is also important to establish the cultural and social significance of music to the people involved in the ritual (medium, audience and musicians). Blacking

[20] Possessee is the term used by Rouget (1985) to refer to the possessed person or medium.

(1985:64-87) argued that there is no direct connection between the sounds of music and human emotional responses to them. He argues, "Musical symbols are effective and affective insofar as human beings use them for a variety of purposes and consciously make sense of them". This is a very interesting point. Would the effect of the music performed in a certain ritual be the same in a different social environment? Would the same subject become possessed in this different social environment?

It is widely believed that trance is associated with music in most cases. Several authors, including Greene, Norton, Friedson, Erlman, Rouget and Blacking discuss this association. For example, Friedson, in his study (1996:64), states that music, "drumming, dancing and singing heat the *vimbuza*, providing the energy that fuels the trance state".

In some cases, however, trance may occur without any music at all being performed. In the case of the Hausa Boori cult of Niger, individuals not initiated into the cult may unexpectedly enter into trance without any music being played. Boori adepts "consider this to be a case of savage trance, which generally leads to incurable mental illness" (Erlmann, 1982:51).

Rouget (1995:39-40) typifies this phenomenon as a prepossession crisis, by which he designates a state of crisis, chronic or acute, that leads the individual experiencing it to follow the path of ritual possession.

Greene (1998:179) explains that, because spirit possession may happen at any time during the ritual, cultural conditioning must be considered a possible explanation for possession to occur with or without music. Becker(1994:41) suggests that scientific literature can contribute some striking new mental images of how and why people often respond to music by going into trance. However, Blacking (1985:64-87) argues that:

> [t]he effectiveness of the musical symbols depends as much on the human agency and social context, as on the structure of the symbols themselves. Music has no effect on the body or consequences for social action, unless its sounds and circumstance can be related to a coherent set of ideas about self and other bodily feelings.

According to Rouget (1985:73), trance, as a general rule, is accompanied by music, and music is regarded as being responsible for the onset of trance. Different cults have different kinds of music which trigger the entry into trance. One has to accept that there are as many different kinds of possession

music as there are different possession cults. The music for triggering trance can be vocal or instrumental, or both, depending on any given cult; according to how the ritual unfolds; and how the trance develops. For instance in Java (Kartomi, 1973:179-182) and Bali (Belo, 1960:201-225) there are possession ceremonies which are accompanied by purely vocal music. On the other hand, in southern Italy, in tarantism, the music is provided by an instrumental ensemble unaccompanied by any sort of singing (Rouget, 1985:75). Nevertheless, of all different theories about music and trance Rouget (1985:326) believes that music does nothing more than socialise the ritual, and enable the ritual to attain its full development.

3.5 Gender in music and spirit possession

Gender is an important aspect of the process of music making and spirit possession. It is widely believed, and partially true, that the spiritually afflicted are predominantly women (Skultan, 1987:57). King (2005:3296) suggests that it needs to be clarified right at the start that gender is not a synonym for women although the term is often mistaken as such and studies of gender are directly linked to women's studies. According to Skultan (1987:57), "informants themselves, both women and men, readily acknowledge that women are more vulnerable to spirit possession". The most commonly advanced reason for this is women's alleged lack of determination and alleged emotional liability (Skultan, 1987:57). Some societies believe that women are more vulnerable and at greater risk of attack by spirits during menstruation (Skultan, 1987:57). According to Skultan (1987:57), members of spirit possession and healing cults of northeast Africa are almost exclusively female.

More women than men experience possession in the *dugu* ritual of the Garinagu of Belize, and they are regarded as being lighter, and spiritually less resistant to the advances of ancestor spirits, according to Greene (1998:170). Greene also records that the "Garinagu traditionally believe that women are simply more interested in indigenous religious rites associated with the ancestor temple" (1998:170).

In Vietnamese mediumship rituals in this situation, musicians and other participants in the ritual feel that certain melodies sound feminine because they are soft, lyrical and smooth, whereas other melodies sound masculine as they are heavy, authoritative and serious; the different songs for male and female spirits evoke the gender of the spirit incarnated (Norton, 2000:89).[21] In the case of the Shango ceremony of Trinidad (Mischel, 1958:251), the majority of individuals who experience possession are women (75%). In the Serenje district of Zambia, cult leaders in Chibale are mostly women (Ijzermans, 1995:251). "No particular group is specially chosen by the spirits for possession, though they have a preference for women because women are more easily stained than men, and are therefore in more need of help" (Ijzermans, 1995:251). According to Ijzermans, approximately 14% of the population of this particular area in Zambia experience possession and three quarters of those possessed are women.

Crapanzano (1987:8687) argues that spirit possession occurs more frequently in agricultural societies than in hunting and gathering ones, and that women seem to be possessed more often than men. According to Bargen (1988:95), anthropological studies, especially those focusing on polygynous societies, show that it is frequently women who fall victim to spirit possession. From an anthropological point of view, spirit possession and exorcism are understood on the one hand as a dramatic, subversive response to social injustice and the psychological repression of women and, on the other, as the attempt of controlling groups to pacify frustration and anger. Keller (2005:8694) states that the "proliferation of spirit possession ethnographies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries indicates that spirit possession is a major force in a globalized world because the practice survives dislocations and relocations of culture, and women predominate in these accounts" Spirit possession in women is also viewed by Keller as an exemplary religious subjectivity. Keller states that the subjectivity of the possessed woman is radically non-autonomous but rather than seeing this as an aberration, it can be viewed as exemplifying religious subjectivity in general (Keller, 2005:8695).

[21] The spirit emerges, speaks and communicates through a medium.

3.6 Musical instruments in ritual practices of spirit possession

It seems that not all ritual practices use the same type of musical instruments to produce the effect of possession or shamanistic trance, but that the effect that different musical instruments produce might be the same. "In the context of the *bira* of Zimbabwe, the people believe that *mbira* have the power to project the sound into the heavens, bridging the world of the living and the world of the spirits and thereby attracting the attention of the ancestors" (Berliner, 1978:190).[22] It is believed that, in the hands of powerful and skilful performers, the *mbira* has the capacity to invoke spirits to possess mediums, and at *bira* the musicians are responsible for the possession of the spirit mediums (Berliner, 1978:190).

At one stage it was thought that the possibility of triggering trance might be attributable to a certain powerful characteristic of musical instruments. Drums and percussion were widely believed to be the instruments *par excellence* for triggering trance (Rouget, 1985:167-172).

3.6.1 Drums

Ellingson (1987:2493) notes that, while the religious use of drums is historically and geographically extensive, it is by no means universal.

According to Friedson (1996:129), findings about *vimbuza* practice show that "of all the musical phenomena present during *vimbuza*, it is the sound of drums that is most closely associated with spirits". Later he points out that "it is the drumming that both fuels the trance state and helps to stabilize it" (Friedson, 1996:130).

Mischel (1958:251) argues that drumming is an integral part of formal ceremonials amongst the Shango of Trinidad. The categorisation of "falling with or without the drums" is most commonly made by participants (Mischel, 1958:251). In *svikwembu,* falling with or to the drumming by the practitioners of is a sign of possession. Mischel (1958:251) also argues that drumming,

[22] The *mbira* is a *Shona* lamellophone with metal keys, a wooden body and resonator of gourd, wood and fibre glam. In ethnocentric terms *mbira* is referred as finger piano, thumb piano or hand piano and little interest is shown in learning its African name. "In the Shona language, the word *mbira* is both singular and plural, and can be used to denote either one or more individual mbira keys, the instrument itself (that is an aggregate of keys) or several instruments" (Berliner, 1978:9).

combined with the crowd excitement, singing, darkness, candles, circular rhythm dancing and other ceremonial aspects engenders an atmosphere in which possession has become the expected, desired, and usual behaviour, stating that these aspects are by far the most common immediate stimulus for possession.

> Possession without the stimulation of drumming and formal ceremony is much more rare and almost completely restricted to the *Orisha* leaders and dominant followers (Mischel, 1958:252).

Needham states that the impact of trance derives from percussion itself and not from the rhythm, melody, or the repetition of a particular note or resonance (Rouget, 1985:170). However, in the spirit possession occurring in the Shona *bira* ritual of Zimbabwe, the main instrument is the *mbira* (Berliner, 1978:188), which is not a percussion instrument, though it may be argued that it is played percussively. According to Berliner (1978:188), all the spirit possession ceremonies that he attended in the areas of Mondoro and Salisbury, now Harare in Zimbabwe, were accompanied by ensembles of *mbira dzavadzimu*.[23]

> At some ceremonies, in other parts of Zimbabwe drums accompany or replace *mbira* depending on the musical practices of the region in which the ceremony takes place, the needs of the spirits for whom the *bira* is held, and the availability of the musicians for the ceremony (Berliner, 1978:188).

According to Berliner, musical ensembles consisting of the *mbira dzavadzimu* do not include drums in their performances; Berliner's (1978:188) informants state that the *mbira* has a big voice and does not need drums in order to produce trance. This seems to indicate that Needham's theory is not valid for all rituals.

Rouget (1985:73) argues that possession music can be vocal or performed on any kind of instrument. He is of the opinion that all instruments can be used, contrary to the commonly accepted idea that drums are the major cause of possession.

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[23] *Mbira dzavadzimu* is one of the five common types of Shona *mbira* instrument, which is associated most closely with the Zezeru people of central Zimbabwe (Salisbury, Beatrice and Mandarellas) (Berliner, 1978:30). The keys of the contemporary *mbira dzavadzimu* are thicker, wider, and more spatulate than those of the other Shona *mbira* (Berliner, 1978:31).

3.7 Musical elements for trance effectiveness

From my survey so far it is clear that music for spirit possession or shamanism can be either vocal or instrumental, but I have not specified what music features could contribute to an effective trance. I would now like to look at the musical elements that constitute the whole musical performance in order to trigger trance. It could be argued that certain characteristics of rhythm, tempo (speed), and volume could induce trance.

3.7.1 Rhythm and melody

A considerable number of theories about the nature of music for triggering trance have been proposed. Alain Danielou, for instance, wrote quite seriously that in "all regions of the world the rhythms employed to produce trance states are always odd, in five, seven and eleven time and that square rhythms in four or eight time have no hypnotic effect" (Rouget, 1985:xviii). Basing my observation on Johnston's transcriptions (1972:299-315), it is clear that some rhythms of the Shangana Tsonga people's *mancomane* exorcism music is in duple rhythm, for example the foursquare *mandhlozi* rhythm, which is necessary to expel a Zulu spirit. This contradicts Danielou and supports Rouget (1985:xviii), who contends that Danielou's theory is "pure fantasy".

Johnston (1972:293) demonstrates the importance of specific musics in Shangana Tsonga *mancomane* exorcism to communicate with specific spirits. Figure 7 reproduces his transcriptions of *mandhlozi* and *xidzimba* rhythms. Both the rhythms and melody are important; in order to expel a Zulu spirit, both a pentatonic scale and a foursquare rhythm are needed, and to expel an Ndau spirit, a heptatonic scale and a triple drumming rhythm is needed. [24] "The fact that one rather than the other scale is chosen is directly related to the fact that Zulu music is pentatonic and Ndau music is heptatonic" (Rouget, 1985:93).

[24] I take 'foursquare' to mean a 4/4 rhythm.

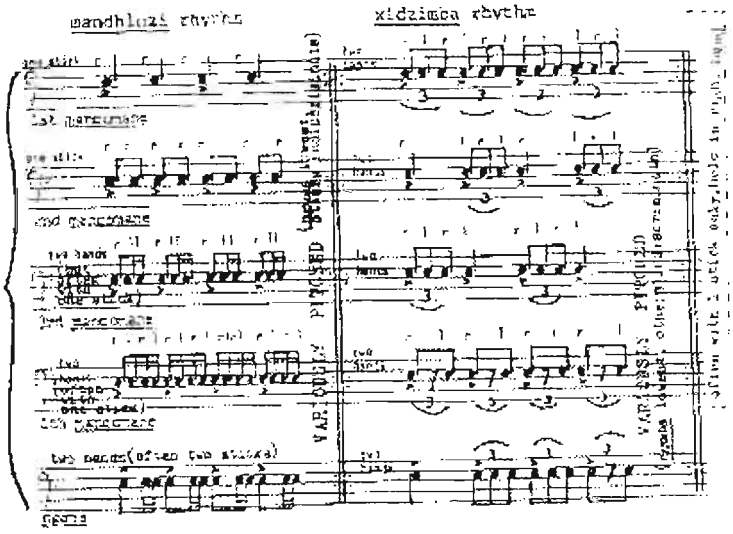

Figure 7: Transcriptions by Johnston (1972:297) of the *mandhlozi* rhythm to expel Nguni (Zulu) spirits and the *xidzimba* rhythm in a triple drumming to expel Ndau spirits.

Rouget (1985:80) claims that in the Greek Dionysiac cult traditions, no specific kind of rhythm was associated with possession dance; that is to say that there must have been several rhythms, none of them specifically associated with trance

Andrew Neher (cited in Ellingson, 1987:2500) offers a controversial hypothesis that makes a physiological link between drumming and ritual experiences of an altered state of consciousness. Neher conducted laboratory experiments with photic driving (pulsating lights) and co-variation of alpha rhythms in the brain to support a suggestion that rhythmic drumming would automatically affect a normal brain in such a way as to affect alpha rhythms and produce unusual behavioural reactions. He calculated that a beat frequency of eight to thirteen per second (the range of normal alpha variation) will be found to preponderate in possession rituals with drums Rouget argues, on the basis of his wide study of trance spirit possession and music (1985) that the laboratory experiments conducted by Neher differ from conditions and experiences of actual ritual practices and ceremonies. His argument is based on those individuals who hear drumming on different occasions and experience neither trance nor spirit possession. Rouget (1985:172-174) argues that "if Neher's calculations were correct, the whole of sub-Saharan Africa would experience trance or spirit possession from the beginning to the end of the year".

It is also important to mention that there is a noticeable increase and decrease of the speed during the performance of the ritual music. The increase and decrease of tempo is greatly dependent on the stage that the ritual has reached.

> In Tunisia, in the case of the possession dances performed by women as they listen to the *dhikr* chanted in the neighbouring room by the men, it is when the rhythm of this chanting accelerates that they begin to dance and fall into trance. (Ferchiou quoted in Rouget, 1985:82)

Rouget argues (1985:82) that ritual possession music that is played specifically for the purpose of inducing possession may consist of two phases:

> the first when the atmosphere is relaxed and the rhythms are slow and the second phase, which becomes progressively more intense and the rhythms, which steadily accelerate are those of the possession dance. (Ferchiou quoted in Rouget, 1985:82)

In the *barong* ceremonies of Bali, the ensemble music accompanying the trance of the *kris* dancers maintains an even tempo from start to finish. Belo (1960:35) describes how the musical ensemble accelerates suddenly in order to trigger the trance. The acceleration of tempo often goes together with an intensification of sound (Rouget, 1985:82).

The literature thus suggests that there is neither set structure nor specific rhythm for the type of ritual music to help produce trance and spirit possession. The ritual music appears to differ from one cult to another depending on regional or local differences, including symbolic or associational differences (as described by Johnston for Ndau and Nguni spirits) in the possession ceremonies; there therefore is no easy identifiable rhythm and musical structure for triggering the entry into trance.

3.7.2 Dynamics

The dynamics of music are to a great extent linked to the tempo, as I explained before. Junod (1913:438) describes a spirit possession session among the Thonga of Mozambique which seemed to emphasise "violent drumming", the purpose of the session being to induce a patient to declare the spirit possessing him or her. In Belo's (1960:50) description of a Balinese ceremony, he observes that, in order to encourage trances in the mediums, people were singing loudly while the ensemble played as loudly as it could, since the dynamics of the music of these rituals is to a great extent linked to

the rhythm and speed of the songs. I would like to note based on my observations of *svikwembu* music, that the faster the acceleration of the tempo, the higher and louder the intensity of the music performance: on the other hand, the slower the songs are, the lower the volume and intensity are.

3.8 Music makers and consciousness

According to Rouget (1985:102-106), it is important in most cases, whatever the cult, to make a distinction between two categories of individuals: "those whose activity is expressly and exclusively to make music, in other words, those appointed to make music, whom he calls the musicians, and those whose activity is to make music only episodically, accessorily, or secondarily, whom he calls *musicants*".[25] In Bali, when trances are caused by gods, the musicians of the village orchestra are the ones who provide music (Belo, quoted in Rouget, 1985:105). In the *ndöp* ritual practice, where the musicians are professionals who belong to a particular social group, they only play drums and do not take part in the singing, which is performed by the officiant, while the chorus is repeated by the ordinary adepts (Rouget, 1985:105).

> The spectators participate by clapping their hands, and in the *holey* cult, among the Songhay, the principal instrumentalist, who plays the single stringed fiddle, and the gourd drummer(s) who accompany him are professional musicians. (Rouget, 1985:105)

In *svikwembu,* the traditional healer and his family members or friends perform the ritual music. Because I did not attend any ritual musical performance in its context I did not witness participation by the spectators in the musical performance of *svikwembu.*

In general, Rouget (1985:105) finds that the role of the medium as musician varies according to his or her seniority and importance in the ritual and that the more he or she takes part in it, the more experienced the medium becomes or, at least, the more he or she is likely and able to take part in it, although the situation changes from one cult to another.

It would seem, moreover, that the ordinary adept, when possessed, more often than not (but not in all cases) does not take part, or takes very little part

[25] Rouget (1985) uses the term *musicants* to indicate individuals who are not professional musicians but perform music episodically.

in the music making when he is possessed.[26] The officiant, on the contrary, a veteran adept who is used to possession, can sing and can play the ritual musical instruments while he or she is involved in the ritual while possessed (Rouget, 1985:106).[27] I would like to make an important qualification to the above argument based on my interviews about *svikwembu* by saying that, if the veteran adept sings and plays when possessed, there is a distinct possibility that the spirit who hosted by the medium performs all the actions through him. Morais (2005a) and Candinha (2005a) state that the spirits perform all the actions when the medium is possessed.

To close this point I would like to say that the structure of the performance of ritual music differs from cult to cult and that, once again, there is no easily identifiable common structure(s) for those who perform music in spirit possession ritual practices.

[26] Rouget (1985) uses the term adept to indicate those individuals who experience spirit possession states.
[27] Rouget (1985) uses the term officiant to indicate those individuals who are well experienced in spirit possession states.

Chapter 4

Research design and methodology

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss my initial methodological planning and the subsequent changes that occurred during the whole research journey. I introduce my initial planning for field work and later I present the limitations that I encountered during the field work, and discuss how the exigencies I encountered led to changes in the course of the research. It is worthwhile recounting these changes, because they affect and are reflected in my current field work data.

4.2 Research planning theory before field work

Many of the initial plans did not materialise because of limitations affecting the field work. Firstly, I will give an overview of the initial planning theory and then discuss the limitations experienced during field work. I proposed to use participant observation as the main method in this research. I planned to observe and participate either as musician or simply as one of the people attending the *svikwembu* ceremony. I planned to record the rituals and write up my own record of the experiences. This participation would include myself playing instruments during the ceremony's performances in order to better understand the music elements and have a close interaction with the performers. This research would primarily be a qualitative, empirical study based on new primary data and the analysis of existing or secondary data. Collection of primary data would include the recordings of audio-visual and audio of the performances of *svikwembu* rituals. Where I was not able to use audio-visual and visual equipment, field notes would provide primary data.

I would also conduct interviews which would be either open-ended or unstructured. Where appropriate I would also use semi-structured interviewing, based on an interview guide, for situations where there is no chance of interviewing more than one person.

The secondary data I would investigate include material in all kinds of archives such as those held by churches, radio stations, and libraries.

I also intended to use a camera to produce photographic records to stimulate discussion amongst research associates and me in subsequent writing, instead of mere words as the visual resources give an idea of what the author is writing about.

In order to get access to the research site(s) I planned in anticipation a process of negotiating my entry into *svikwembu* musicianship. In order to approach and build a good relationship with the *svikwembu* practitioners, I hoped to become a participant observer by learning to play the music for *svikwembu,* would be a very useful method.

I proposed to interpret, compare and analyse the data only after it had been collected from different locations and performances of the same ritual practice, *svikwembu.*

I proposed to conduct field work in the following delimited areas of southern Mozambique: in Maputo province in the suburban areas called Chamanculo, and Matola Rio. To the north of Maputo I would conduct research in the Mandlakhazi district of Gaza province. I proposed to study one ritual in each location making a total of three rituals. Because of the funding and time restriction it became impossible to reach and research in some of these locations. I was granted funding for field work research only a year later after I had commenced this study. The funding that I received was not sufficient to conduct a long term field work and in areas outside Maputo city.

"Informants have the right to remain anonymous" (Mouton, 2001:243). *Svikwembu* is, in some situations, a secret ritual. The use of cameras or tape recorders for collection of data, as well as collecting data through face to face interviews or in participant observation might be forbidden. It was and is my obligation as a researcher to maintain confidentiality about certain data that informants identified as requiring discretion.

First of all, I obtained permission and written approval from the people involved in these rituals to proceed with my research. In order to gain their permission I would tell them about my intentions, what institution I belong to,

and what the aims of the research were. Depending on my financial resources during field work, the people would receive some rewards for their help.

This study should not be secret or clandestine. Therefore, at the end of the study, I will offer the research results to the people involved in the research. Some of the presentation of findings might be required to be demonstrated in a certain language, in this case Xichangana. It will be my obligation as a researcher to present these findings as the people wish. The right to withdraw the findings of the research is entirely dependent on the people. They have the right to deny permission to publish my findings.

4.2.1 Time frame

Planning for the research was done according to the following time frame:

1. Literature research (four months–May to August 2004)
2. Five months (September 2004 to end of January 2005) would include data collection in Mozambique, and the methods would take the form of: participant observer, interviews, video and audio recordings, field notes, and researching all secondary sources: all kinds of archive-library and archival research in Mozambique.
3. Copying of recordings and transcriptions (two months: February to March 2005).
4. Two drafts to be submitted before the final writing. The first draft by the end of June, the second by August 2005 and the final text at the end of October 2005. Final analysis and interpretation. Integrating results and writing the thesis. (Eight months: March to October 2005).

The above time frame was proposed in my research proposal. However, the proposed time frame was affected by the funding factor: I only received funds to proceed with field work in June 2005. I started field work in July 2005 and could only work in the field for four weeks because of financial restraints. The timing and funding issue affected the results of my data. If I could have spent more time in the field, I would possibly have been able to answer and clarify some of the issues regarding the collected data. Also because of the above factors, I was unable to participate in spirit possession ceremonies of *svikwembu*. Nevertheless, I was able to conduct interviews and

arrange performances of the music for *svikwembu* spirit possession practice, which I recorded as part of the data for this study.

4.2.2 Limitations in the field work

I conducted field work in Maputo from July 2005, during the second year of a Master's Degree programme, when funding became available. On my arrival in Maputo, Mozambique, my first task was to identify a target population and research consultants. My mother advised me to contact an organisation of traditional healers called AMETRAMO (Associação dos Médicos Tradicionais em Moçambique, literally Association of Traditional Healers in Mozambique). The majority of traditional healers in Mozambique are members of this association.

AMETRAMO is colloquially known as *nyanga* in southern Mozambique.[28] It was officially created by the government of Mozambique in September 1992 (Honwana, 1996:146), as a professional association that would operate nationally and assemble country wide to represent Mozambican traditional healers regardless race, sex, age and religious or political affiliation (Honwana, 1996:146). Because of "fake" traditional healers in Mozambique, AMETRAMO membership is open only to individuals who have exercised the profession of traditional healing for at least two years (Honwana, 1996:150). The respondents selected for this research are all residents in the semi-urban areas of Maputo. Although most of the respondents were members of AMETRAMO, I met only three of them through AMETRAMO. The other three were introduced to me by my close friend and uncle.

I conducted field work in three neighbourhoods of the urban district of Maputo, namely *bairro do* Chamanculo, *bairro do* Jardim and *bairro de* Maxaquene.[29] These are all semi-urban areas situated between 10 and 15 km from the city centre.

I did not live in the neighbourhoods where I was conducting field work because there was no need for it. These neighbourhoods were not far from my

[28] *Nyanga* is a Xichangana term to indicate a specific traditional healer and also to indicate AMETRAMO.
[29] *Bairro do* or *d* in Portuguese means "the neighbourhood of..."

parent's home, and no late night sessions were arranged between me and my research consultants. I would usually make an appointment for an interview with my research consultants; each interview lasted about one-and-a-half to two hours. Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to attend a spirit possession ceremony as an observer because, coincidently, none of the traditional healers that I worked with had a trainee undergoing training at the time. But I did participate in two music performance sessions that my research consultants arranged specifically for me. I am aware that I missed important aspects of the spirit possession musical performance such as dance, movement of the practitioners, and duration of performances.

In these sessions, the different styles of *svikwembu* ritual music were performed, namely Nguni, Ndau and *mahlonga* or *tinguluve*. Although this music was performed out of context, according to my research consultants, the songs performed at these sessions were exactly the same as those performed during the spirit possession ceremonies and during the course of training.

Gaining access to interviews proved to be quite difficult, as I was charged a significant amount of money (about R2000 in total) for few interviews with research consultants. Not all research consultants asked to be paid for the interviews, yet those who did ask really charged quite a lot of money. I had the option of looking for other research consultants, but I really had no choice as those who asked to be paid for the interviews turned out to be very significant sources of information in this study.

I must admit that I made a mistake in the way I presented myself to some of the research consultants. I was well presented in the smart casual clothing that I normally wear, drove to meetings in my father's car and carried a laptop computer in a bag. This presentation may have made some of my research consultants think that I had money to spare and they consequently charged me a good deal for their services. One research consultant, the traditional healer, Candinha, during an informal conversation explained that some people take advantage of researchers by charging them for an exchange of information. She recalled that researchers from overseas doing research in traditional medicine had paid their research consultants for their services. This may have

created a wrong perception of what academic research is about in some of these traditional healers. From my point of view it was nevertheless fair enough that the traditional healers be paid for their time, as these are professional traditional healers who are very busy with clients. In order to get an interview, I had to pay for the time during which they could have seen clients. But I was unprepared financially for the payments, being caught by surprise, and for this reason I was unable to spend more than a month in the field, with funds being limited after paying the research consultants.

4.3 Research methodology

This section defines the research problem that I explored and my research goals and objectives. Research methodology sets out detailed procedures followed for carrying out the research and field work, relating these to the overall research design. Research methodology focuses on three main aspects of the research process: the data collection method or instrument, the research population and sample, and the data analysis process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Research tools or instruments indicate the methods of data collection. I refer to tools to indicate the instruments and devices used to gather data. I used a Sony® Walkman cassette recorder WM-GX221 recorder with stereo microphone able to capture a minimally satisfactory quality of music performance and interviews for the fieldwork study. I also took notes, visited archives in Maputo and at the University of Cape Town, and national libraries, in order to gather primary, new and secondary data. The procedure refers to different consecutive steps that I took during the research journey. I started the procedure by defining the research problem, reviewing the literature, embarking on field work, analysis of the data, interpreting my findings and drawing conclusions.

4.4 Access to the research site

The official language of Mozambique is Portuguese and I conducted my interviews in Portuguese because of my high proficiency in the language and lack of proficiency in Xichangana. I interviewed six traditional healers, five of

whom could speak Portuguese well. In the sixth case, my uncle interpreted as he speaks Xichangana, the indigenous southern Mozambican language spoken not only by the traditional healers but also by the majority of the people in that specific area of Maputo. I do not speak any indigenous languages of Mozambique fluently, but was fortunate to work with a majority of research consultants who speak Portuguese fluently.

4.4 Research goals and objective

The research goal that I set was to explore and gather as much information as I could about the range of characteristics of the *svikwembu* as seen in its practice and musical performances. A significant part of the goals has been achieved, but not in total. Because I was unable to participate in spirit possession ceremonies, I did not achieve all the goals that were set; specifically I was unable to attend the musical performance of spirit possession ceremony or to conduct the research in different areas outside Maputo city. The objective of this research was to provide significant data to adequately describe the *svikwembu* ritual complex, the role of its practitioners and, most essentially, the significance of music within *svikwembu* ritual practice.

4.4.1 The information required

In order to achieve the research goals, I formulated a number of research objectives namely:

1. To establish the historical relationships between the Nguni, Ndau and Tsonga ethnic groups that contributed to forming the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group. I addressed the following issues:

-The migratory movement during the 1820s among the peoples of South Africa away from the area known today as KwaZulu-Natal northwards and into southern Mozambique,

-The reasons for this migratory movement during this period,

-The characteristics of the *mfecane* and its effects,

-The formation of the Gaza kingdom in southern Mozambique and its social structure, and

-Shangana Tsonga terminology

2. The study of different forms of altered states of consciousness in order to indicate the most predominant characteristic states experienced in *svikwembu* ritual practice. I asked the following questions:

-What is an altered state of consciousness?

-What forms of altered states of consciousness have been identified and which are relevant to this study?

-What are the differences between one altered state of consciousness and another?

-Which altered state(s) of consciousness occur in *svikwembu* ritual practice?

3. To describe *svikwembu* ritual practices in terms of their phases, practitioners and spirits. This included:

-Investigating the different *svikwembu* practitioners and their functions,

-Describing *svikwembu* ritual as sets of different practices, and

-Describing the phases of *svikwembu* ritual practices in terms of the practitioner's progressive experiences.

4. To produce an analysis of the music components of *svikwembu*.

5. To describe the musical instruments and vocal resources used in the performance of *svikwembu* in terms of

-The type and function of the musical instruments.

-A description of the performers, and

-Vocal resources practices.

6. To investigate the significance that music has in *svikwembu* ritual practices in terms of function, significance and importance for the practitioners. I considered the following:

-Music seen as a triggering element for spirit possession,

-The occurrence of spirit possession with or without music, and

-The reasons for the presence of music in the *svikwembu* ritual.

4.5 Research design

The research project took the form of empirical research aimed at exploring the use and importance of music in the *svikwembu* ritual amongst the Shangana Tsonga people of semi-urban southern Mozambique. In order to gather information relevant and meaningful to the research topic, I used a qualitative research design.

The recordings made of interviews and music comprise primary data. At some stage of the research I selected the personal questionnaire as part of the research method, but it did not quite work out in the field. By personal questionnaire I mean a list of questions completed while I was present, unlike a questionnaire which is completed by the respondent on his or her own (Mouton, 2001:55-65).

Within the parameters of the qualitative research design, I worked with a combination of ethnographic research methods including observation and interviews.[30] From my point of view, the personal questionnaire did not motivate the respondents to explore the questions in the questionnaire, while the informal interviews did motivate the respondents to provide me with additional information. The personal questionnaire ensures a one hundred percent (100%) response rate if respondents agree to participate in the research. In this case, my experience was totally different, because I turned the personal questionnaire into informal interviews where what is most important is the quality of the information rather than the quantity. Since gaining access to the traditional healers was not an easy task, I tended to explore as much as I could from the few research consultants with whom I was able to work. From the respondent's point of view, the informal interview is not as time-consuming as the personal questionnaire. By using the informal interview, I therefore did not waste the respondent's valuable time exploring possibly insignificant issues. By directing the respondent's attention to what I selected as the most crucial issues, the respondent's additional comments, if any, were relevant to the information requested.

[30] The ethnographic methods in this research was not of a long term fieldwork as I explained previously

The music sessions were arranged specifically for me to record performances of the ritual music involved in the *svikwembu*. The reason for this is that I did not have the opportunity to participate in a spirit possession ceremony with music in the field. By not having an opportunity to participate in these ceremonies, I mean that I was not able to locate such a ritual in the short time available to me. Being in this situation, I negotiated with two traditional healers (Carolina and Manuel) from the neighbourhood of Chamanculo to arrange music sessions that I could record. Both Manuel and Carolina arranged for players who often perform with them during the spirit possession rituals. I am aware that these music sessions may not reflect exactly what happens during the spirit possession ceremonies in terms of actions, emotions of the participants, and changes that songs may pass through during the ritual, such as variation in tempo, volume and intensity. Nevertheless the music recordings were important for later analysis of components such as the rhythm, language, scales, and the different genres and styles of *svikwembu* music.

I recorded two music sessions containing the three most common styles of *svikwembu* music, *mahlonga*, Ndau and Nguni, but time constraints made it impossible for me to record the music used to invoke the Muslim (Monhé) spirits. I recorded the session that Carolina arranged in two different parts: I first recorded the songs performed by full ensemble (vocals and all the drums and percussion instruments) and later recorded vocals alone. The reason for this was to be able to clearly transcribe the song texts, as I could not easily understand or hear the words when the full ensemble performed. The tape recorder and microphone that I was using were not adequate to clearly record a full ensemble with drums and vocals. Unfortunately it was not possible to record vocals apart from the full ensemble at Manuel's session. My initial plan was to record the same songs twice. But by the end of the first part of the recording with the full ensemble, some of Manuel's clients started to arrive, and the music session had to stop because he had to work. Under these circumstances, it was not possible to record the vocals separately.

In addition to interviews, I collected data through document analysis (Mouton, 2001), using texts sourced from the Historical Archives, the National Library of Mozambique, and the University's Eduardo Mondlane Libraries in Maputo.

4.6 Data collection methods

The data I gathered in this research mainly comprises new data (primary data), which was not easy accessible because the *svikwembu* rites are, in some circumstances, secret and not accessible to the public. Out of respect for this privacy, I had to consider how to gather reliable information in an ethical way.

4.6.1 Research consultants

I collected data mostly from members of the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group; there is only one respondent who is not from the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group, but from an ethnic group not mentioned by the respondent from the Zambézia province of Mozambique.

4.7 The questionnaire

I developed a questionnaire based on a review of current literature. I developed a basic questionnaire as information concerning the subject arose during field work. Administering a questionnaire with pen and paper did not work during this research, but the informal interview with recording device was useful for the interviews.

4.8 The Informal Interview

In this research I use the term informal interview to describe a conversation initiated by the respondents in relation to the questionnaire. One has to be careful with this form of interviewing as a lot of irrelevant information may be advanced, which can be time consuming. I did prepare myself with specific questions before meeting with the respondents, but I did not rely on my back-up questions; I just let the interview flow in a form of conversation. These informal interviews provided valuable additional information which aided better understanding of certain issues regarding the subject. I wrote field notes while I participated in the interview. These field notes recorded aspects like

the facial expression of the respondents, the emotions and motions of the respondents while answering specific questions, among other observations. I also took photographs of the performers, instruments, and the traditional healers' house or "*ngoma*", to serve as visual examples in the thesis and during further analysis.

4.9 The recordings of the interviews and performance

I tape-recorded the informal interviews and responses to the personal questionnaire for further transcription and content analysis. In transcribing I, heeded Babbie's injunction:

> Whenever the questionnaire contains open-ended questions, those soliciting the respondent's own answer, it is very important that the interviewer record that answer exactly as given. No attempt should be made to summarize, paraphrase, or correct bad grammar (Babbie 1995:266).

I marked the recorded data with the date and time and place of the interviews, noting the participants' names and other relevant details. From the first to the last interview, the tapes were marked consecutively with numbers ranging from one to four.

I made the same notes for the audio cassette recordings of music performances and, in addition, noted the relevant details for each song, including titles (where available), language and style. The styles of music are also divided into sub-styles of ritual music.

4.10 The interview transcription

It is imperative that the data collection process be documented as accurately and in as much detail as possible, as a historical record for the researcher and for other possible researchers, and as a form of quality assurance (Mouton, 2001:104).

I transcribed the interviews in full from the recordings. The pronunciation was also included. I included Xichangana terms without translation and just as the respondents pronounced their words. For the writing of Xichangana words, I followed the unified standard orthography for Xitsonga and Xichangana (Sitoe, Chimbutana, Mabaso, Nkuna, Nxumalo & Hlungwani 2003:6-11).

4.11 Transcription of the performed music

I transcribed the ritual songs and classified them according to different groups. For transcription purposes, I used the Wave Pad v 1.2 transcription programme. This free wave programme slows down the tempo of the songs, at the same time maintaining the pitch. I classified the transcriptions in terms of rhythm and vocal sections. The original tempi of the songs were documented, with an analysis of the tempo according to the style of songs. I wrote field notes about the musical performances. My field notes included details of the players present, the musical instruments used, the number of ensemble performers, and the interaction between performers, including lead and backing singers.

4.11.1 Transcription and comparison of the performed music

My transcriptions are useful for comparing data analysed previously by other researchers and my own data. The styles and terminology of the ritual music have previously been studied by Johnston (1972, thesis). Finally, I have analysed the musical styles and the related terminology.

4.12 Research population and sample

Because *svikwembu* is a secret rite, the selected respondents were all experienced traditional healers who, I assumed, would provide reliable and meaningful information about the study. As I explained before, the traditional healers selected were mostly members of the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group. My objective was to interview only traditional healers of the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group affected by *svikwembu* and I was surprised to find that practitioners from ethnic groups other than Shangana Tsonga were affected by the same phenomenon. Thus it was relevant to the study to interview these individuals.

4.13 Ethical considerations

Mouton (2001:238) states that "the ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research". Babbie (1995:448) suggests that, if a particular researcher is going to do social scientific research, it is

extremely useful to know what that society considers to be ethical and unethical, as well as "to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific inquiry". So, in addressing my research consultants and explaining the subject of my research, I needed to be very specific and careful about the key questions I sought answers to, as some issues should not be publicly presented.

4.14 Summary

The field work in this research project did not progress according to the time frame initially proposed because of two major reasons. The first reason involved receiving financial support much later than I expected. I undertook field work in July 2005, after receiving funding, instead of in June 2004.Without the funding I could not have undertaken the field work.

During field-work, I faced limitations in terms of the time that I could spend in the field. As I was charged a significant amount of money for some of the interviews, I could not spend more than a month in the field. The fact that I was charged money for some of the interviews caught me by surprise. I was prepared to offer a gift as a form of thanking my research consultants once they had provided me with answers to the questionnaire.

My plan to conduct research in three locations was also affected by the time frame and financial constraints. Instead of conducting field work in two or more locations in different provinces in southern Mozambique, I worked only in one semi-urban area of Maputo city. Thus this research data only reveals aspects involving rituals performed around Maputo province. It is quite possible that the aspects of ritual performance around Maputo province are similar to or differ from those of other provinces of southern Mozambique. The answers to these questions await further investigation into musical performance in the *svikwembu* ritual.

I interviewed six traditional healers, talking to five of them in Portuguese, and in one interview relying on an interpreter interpreting from Xichangana to Portuguese. In one interview that I conducted in Portuguese, I found that two

of the traditional healers did not speak Portuguese fluently; with some resultant confusion in understanding their point clearly.

In conclusion, constraints of finances, time and language affected the field work to various degrees. I am aware that I could have collected more data than I currently have. For instance, I did not record the music to invoke Monhé spirits because of limited time, and I did not have access to provinces of southern Mozambique other than Maputo province. However, the data that have resulted from my research have yielded significant results, as can be gathered from the rest of this report.

Chapter 5

Svikwembu and musical performance

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the traditional healers with whom I worked during fieldwork. I present and discuss a detailed description of the complex of *svikwembu* practices as presented by my research consultants. In describing this, I discuss the functions of the different traditional healers in *svikwembu* today. Because there are different kinds of traditional healers and *svikwembu* practitioners, the communication between the traditional healers and their clients is also a matter of discussion in this chapter. All the above-mentioned discussions go towards to what is most relevant in this research, which is music and spirit possession.

In order to produce sounds and make music, the performers of the ritual repertoire of *svikwembu* use specific musical instruments to establish communication with the ancestors and spirits. Here I demonstrate the use of the musical instruments and their importance. I examine the relationship between music and the spirits that possess various people and the significance of music for the practitioners and participants in *svikwembu*. I also compare my current data and the previous research by Thomas Johnston into the exorcism music of *mancomane,* which I have transcribed and analysed.

Finally, this chapter discusses *svikwembu* with its complex set of ritual practices, including the musical performance of *svikwembu* and its ritual musical repertoire. Most of the data in this chapter resulted from my own field work in southern Mozambique, specifically in three semi-urban areas of Maputo province, namely Chamanculo, Maxaquene and Bairro do Jardim.

5.1.1 The research consultants

The most commonly used term to indicate people who provide researchers with information during field work is informant. It does not characterise a personal individual primarily by a function relating to me as researcher. I

consulted experts who are all traditional healers by profession and members of AMETRAMO.[31] My research consultants were:

Aurélio Mendes de Morais, a man of approximately forty-five years old, was born in the northern Mozambican province, Zambézia. He is the spokesperson of AMETRAMO, who conducts workshops and seminars on traditional healing at tertiary level institutions working with AMETRAMO.

Maria Candida Mangue Nhacota (Candinha) is a married woman of thirty-one years. She has been a friend of mine since I started my musical career in Mozambique in 1997. I did not know that Candinha was affected by *svikwembu* before she graduated from the training course for traditional healers and I undertook field work in Maputo. I was delighted to work with her on this research project, as she was very open about providing relevant information.

Carolina is woman approximately sixty years old. She lives opposite my family in Chamanculo. She reminds me of my first *svikwembu* experiences. As I explained on chapter one, one of the motivations for the study of this subject was the sound of the drums playing throughout most nights when I was a child living in Chamanculo. Carolina offers a training course from her house. In choosing my research consultants, Carolina was one of my first options.

My uncle, Elídio Magaia, introduced me to Manuel. Manuel is approximately thirty-nine years old and also lives in one of the Chamanculo neighbourhoods, about five minutes' walk from Carolina's house. Manuel is the only one amongst the traditional healers with whom I worked who hosts a different type of spirit, the Monhé.

Jorge Massavane Zunguza is about fifty-five years old and Pedro Luis Cossa is about thirty-six years old. They were introduced to me by Morais and the interviews with them were conducted in Morais's presence. I interveiwed these two men together on the second interview with Morais, therefore every

[31] See Chapter four

reference that is cited as (Morais 2005b) includes these two research consultants.

5.2 An overview of svikwembu

I describe *svikwembu* as a combination of different ritual complex practices. Each of these rituals can be distinguished according to different practices and ceremonies. The term *svikwembu* is also usually used to refer to those individuals who are affected by unexpected spirit possession and to those ceremonies held in the traditional healer's or patient's household. The word *svikwembu* is colloquially used to indicate these aspects and I use this term. There is, however, another Xichangana term to indicate the ritual and traditional healers around Maputo; Morais and Candinha used *mhamba* to refer to the ritual complex that I speak of as *svikwembu*. According to Morais, *mhamba* is a ceremony to please, welcome and communicate with the ancestors.

My research consultants and Honwana (2002) have indicated that the ritual known as *svikwembu* or "*swikwembu*" (Honwana, 1996) is mostly practiced by the Shangana Tsonga people. Based on my own experience and field work data, *svikwembu* is the term widely used to identify this set of ritual practices. The spirits that possess various people are believed to be Nguni, Ndau, *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* and Monhés without exception.[32]

The music repertoire, rhythm, melodies and instruments vary according to the type of spirit present at a particular moment during the practice or ceremony (Morais, 2005a). To invoke, please and thank a particular kind of spirit of a specific ethnic group of those indicated above, a specific style of song using the right rhythm, melody, tempo, intensity and instruments has to be performed (Morais, 2005a, & Candinha, 2005b).

[32]According to Zamporini (2000:192), Monhés is popularly used to designate various people of Indian origin who tried to behave like Europeans. The term signifies *baneanes*, the Portuguese form of *banyā*, "the north Indian word for merchant" (Barhati, 1972:42), Hindu with the majority originating from Gujarat, though the majority of Monhés in Mozambique who originated from Gujarat in west India are Muslim.

5.2.1 Who is most affected by *svikwembu*?

The people most affected by the *svikwembu* phenomenon are the Shangana Tsonga people of southern Mozambique (Manuel, 2005 & Morais, 2005b). I, however, encountered a number of exceptions. An example is Morais, a traditional healer affected by *svikwembu* who does not belong to the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group but comes from Zambézia, one of Mozambique's Northern provinces.

According to Morais, the *svikwembu* phenomenon can affect any person who has been living in southern Mozambique for a long time, provided that there has been a traditional healer in the person's family.

Thus it appears not belonging to the Shangana Tsonga ethnic group does not mean that an individual or a family cannot be affected by *svikwembu*. This is because these spirits not only trouble families to make them take revenge, which makes sense in the context of non-Tsonga people slain by Tsonga spirits, but also come in search of shelter and family (Morais, 2005b). So the phenomenon may occur in any family living in southern Mozambique, where these spirits are found. Once a particular individual or family has accepted the spirits, the spirits in turn promise to provide work for the chosen, potential traditional healer, thereby benefiting the family (Candinha, 2005b).

5.3 The phases and practices (ceremonies) of svikwembu

In making sense of *svikwembu*, I distinguish different phases and ceremonies. Based on my research consultants' information, *svikwembu* comprises three phases: the onset phase, the training course and the professional.

Each phase is marked by different experiences, ceremonies and practices. The initial phase is revealed by unexpected signs of spirit possession, the training course is characterised by different ceremonies throughout the course and the working phase is mostly marked by exorcism (*ku femba*), divination, healing of different types of infirmities through traditional medicine and—at a

later stage when he or she is more experienced— the healer may be dedicated to training novices to become traditional healers.[33]

There are three types of traditional healers in *svikwembu* practice: *nyangarhume*, *nyamussoro* and *nyanga*. These different types of traditional healers fulfil different functions, depending on the spirits embodied in their bodies.

Figure 8 presents the three phases of *svikwembu* and their characteristics, which I go on to describe below.

Phases of *Svikwembu*	**Characteristics of each phase**
Initial phase	Unexpected signs of spirit possession. The spirit desires embodiment in the medium's body.
The training course	The aim of this phase is to properly educate the spirits and teach the medium how to deal with the spirits.[34]
Professional phase	*Ku femba* exorcism, divination, healing and training course at the later stage of experience.

Figure 8: Three phases of *svikwembu*

5.3.1 The initial phase

The first phase of the *svikwembu* complex is marked by unexpected signs of spirit possession. It is when the spirits arouse the family or an individual to awareness of the *svikwembu* phenomenon in a particular person. This phase is characterised by different symptoms like various types of illness, falling to the ground, entering into trance unexpectedly (this happens because the spirits are not properly educated) and drowsiness (Candinha, 2005a). A set of manifestations similar to this occurs in the initial phase of the Shona *bira* ritual of Zimbabwe; it is believed that, if a person forgets or dishonours departed ancestors, the spirits can punish such a person's living descendants directly, by leaving him or her defenceless to the forces of harmful spirits and witches

[33] *Ku femba is a* Xichangana term denoting exorcism or treatment.
[34] I follow Rouget (1985) in using the term medium, which he uses to refer to the person through whom the spirit manifests.

(Berliner, 1978:186). In the Shona case, once trouble such as illness occurs, people consult a traditional healer, (*n'anga*).[35] An *n'anga* may prescribe herbs for an effective treatment, but if the condition of his or her patient worsens, the *n'anga* advises that the illness is not a natural one, but is caused by an ancestral spirit wishing to call attention to some personal or social problem to indicate that a spirit wishes to possess the patient's body as its host. In such a case the patient should seek assistance from a spirit medium, and the *n'anga* advises family members of the patient to arrange a traditional religious ceremony to deal with the problem (Berliner, 1978:187).

The illness which affects the future traditional healer (*nyamussoro, nyanga* or *nyangarrume*) in *svikwembu* could be represented as the fight for power between the individual and the possessed spirits for the control of the body and personality of the chosen individual (Honwana, 2002:88).[36] This is a very violent process, which implies the temporary dislocation of the soul of the possessed individual and consequently the substitution with the soul of another entity or entities (Honwana: 2002:88). In order to gain esoteric (mysterious) knowledge and access to ancestral power, the individual has to go through a period of difficulties and suffering which Honwana terms the illness of the calling.[37] According to Honwana (2002:88), the illness of the calling represents the symbolic death of the present identity of the individual leading to possible rebirth in a new dimension, with a new personality and new identity.

Once chosen by the ancestral spirits, the individual has to abandon everything and follow the calling, the "*chamamento*", lest he or she become sick for the rest of his or her life. My aunt, whom I prefer not to identify, was affected by the illness of the calling, and fell sick for many years because she would not agree to go through a course of training in order to become a traditional healer and perform the functions of a traditional healer. She only

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[35] *N'anga* is a term to indicate a traditional healer in the *bira* ritual of Zimbabwe.

[36] A doença de eleição, que affecta o futuro *nyamussoro,* pode representar uma luta de poder entre o indivíduo e os espíritos possuidores pelo controlo do corpo e da personalidade.

[37] Translation from Portuguese: *a doença de chamamento.*

got better when she received effective "treatment" by a traditional healer. I recall my uncle explaining to me that the troublesome spirits were tied in some place by the traditional healer in order to stop them bothering my aunt, a place he is unable to identify (Magaia, 2005). Later, he also explained that this healer is certain that the treatment may be effective for a lifetime. Morais also explained that he had fallen ill for a long time before he accepted the spirits and underwent the course of training (Morais, 2005b).

Rouget (1985:40) says that this kind of phase in possession traditions, which he terms the prepossession crisis, is "interpreted as the sign that a divinity desires embodiment". "Whether or not it takes the form of a fall, such a crisis constitutes in many cults a unique and decisive type of event in the life of the future adept" (Rouget, 1985:40).[38]

Morais (2005b) and Candinha (2005a) mentioned illness, falling down, unexpectedly entering into trance, and drowsiness as some of the crisis symptoms, but I am of the opinion that there might be other symptoms apart from these. It is believed that the spirits might exact revenge, causing turbulence within a family and provoking illness, bad luck, and even deaths if someone does not accept them (Morais, 2005b).

I did not come across a specific term to describe this initial phase during field work amongst my research consultants and there is no association at all with music during this period of unexpected signs of spirit possession and trance.

5.3.2 The training course (*ku tchailiwa* or *ku thwasa*)

According to Candinha (2005b), *svikwembu* is divided into different ceremonies. She did use the term 'ceremony' to indicate the practices within the training course which I translate as ceremony.

Ku tchailiwa or *ku thwasa* are the terms used to refer to the phase when the person affected by *svikwembu* undergoes a course of training to become a traditional healer and exercise his or her spiritual functions. Once somebody affected by the phenomenon accepts the spirits, it is believed that he or she has

[38] See next paragraph

to be taken through a course to "educate and prepare" the spirits to work, lest the host face greater problems and even death.[39]

The entire training course is aimed at educating the spirits, as they are considered to be like children who are not behaving in socially appropriate ways (Candinha, 2005a). It also aims to teach the afflicted individual how to deal with the spirits, their demands and inopportune behaviour, such as causing the unexpected trance and coming out at inappropriate times and places.

Another objective of this course is to produce a traditional healer who will provide work for him- or herself and his/her spirits by curing people with different types of infirmity caused by witchcraft and diseases.
Morais (2005b) referred to the course of training as *ku tchailiwa*, while Honwana (2000:81) refers to this course as initiation and says it is known by the Zulu term *ku thwasa*. The word *thwasa* means renovation, being equally used as a reference to the new moon's appearance. She says, too, that *ku thwasa* nowadays lasts for one-and-a-half to two years (Honwana, 2000:81).[40]

According to Morais, the course of training used to last for five years about twenty to thirty years ago during the colonial system because the traditional healers were also forced to do unremunerated forced labour imposed by the Portuguese colonial government while undergoing training.[41] So, in order to complete the course, the aspirant traditional healers had to share their time between forced labour and the training course for traditional healers. Adding to people's stress, *svikwembu* was banned by the colonial regime (Honwana, 2000:272-276), and so had to be practiced in secret.

The association of meanings linking initiation, the new moon and the idea of renovation symbolises the change of identity implicit in the initiation. The instructor responsible for the course of training is always a senior and well experienced traditional healer termed *b'ava* (Honwana, 2002:90). The

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[39] (Candinha 2005a).
[40] My translation: *a palavra thwasa significa renovação, sendo igualmente utilizada com referência ao primeiro aparecimento da lua nova* (Peires, 1987:53, Junod, 1927:454, cited in Honwana, 2002:81).
[41] Mozambique gained independence 31 years ago, in 1975. To my understanding, during the interview, Morais was perhaps referring to a period few years before independence.

individuals who are initiated are called *mathwasana* (those who undertake *ku thwasa*) (Honwana, 2002:90).

The initiation of the *mathwasana* takes place in the household of the instructor, *b'ava*. The *mathwasana* have to mentally prepare themselves to live in the instructor's household for the duration of the training course, which can last for up to one-and-a-half or two years. The individual or individuals (trainees or *mathwasana*) are taken to do this training course (for traditional healers) by family members. They could change from one traditional healer to another before finding an instructor who is a senior experienced traditional healer capable of dealing with the trainee's spirits. The search for the right traditional healer is occasioned by the instructor's spirits being weaker than those of the trainee, with the result that the instructor therefore cannot train them. As we will see further on, this initiation is both for the trainee and for his or her spirits, hence the importance of finding the right instructor.

According to my research consultants, music is frequently performed during the training phase. "In order to make the spirits come out and put the individual in a trance, *ku xaela* (music performance of drums and singing) and certain remedies help some spirits to develop the ability of speaking out" (Honwana, 1996:253). During the course, different styles of spiritual music are performed; in order to evoke a specific Ndau or Nguni (Zulu) spirit, a corresponding, specific style of music is performed. According to Morais (2005b), the songs are performed every morning, afternoon and night during the course. The trainees are taught to play the instruments and dance to different types of ritual music. Learning to play drums during this course of training, and playing drums during ceremonies, to wake the spirits and make them come out or emerge is called *ku xaela*.

The training course is not free; the trainee has to pay a significant amount of money or make another type of significant payment negotiated between the trainee and the senior traditional healer (Candinha, 2005a).[42] The payment could be cattle, for example. As for payment in money, I do not have information about the amount charged or negotiated between the traditional healer and the trainee.

[42] X and Y refer to the trainees as "*clientes*" in Portuguese, as they pay for their training.

Before the completion of this course, it is extremely important to hold a ceremony to evoke the spirits' *lideres* (Portuguese for leaders), referring to Tsonga spirits of the sick person(s), to let them know about the course and ask them to ensure that everything goes well throughout the process. Candinha states, "I was lucky; I did not have any problems and everything went well". This ceremony is named *ku pahla* (Candinha, 2005a).

This rite is performed most often before any ceremonial event, because it is important to make the "*lideres*" aware of such events to ensure that everything runs smoothly. When *ku pahla* is performed in secret, participants do not perform elaborate music with a full ensemble, but clap their hands as form of creating music to invoke the spirits. The hand clapping must be in a specific rhythm, an issue that will be discussed at a later stage.

Ku pahla is not limited by the training course; it is a rite performed throughout the *svikwembu* practices at different stages. It is a way of communicating with and thanking a range of ancestors. This ceremony is even performed by healthy people who otherwise do not practice *svikwembu* at all. For example, though my father does not attend, practice or believe in *svikwembu*, the family ran a *ku pahla* ceremony, thanking the ancestors by dropping white wine on the sand as a form of serving them, before celebrating the inauguration of his house about 10 years ago. Some people fry chicken, or kill a cow, etc, as there are different forms of feeding and thanking the ancestors.

Ku pahla normally happens as a "big" event amongst traditional healers at least once a year; "it is necessary to make such a big ceremony for the traditional healers annually to feed their spirits and give them strength to be able to work" (Morais, 2005a). During this big annual ceremony, all sorts of spiritual music are performed to please the Ndau and Nguni spirits and the ancestors (*mahlonga* or *tinguluve*).

Right at the beginning of the training course it is necessary to hold a ceremony termed *akhuninguenisa mwana akhunhanguen,* meaning "the child

is coming into the spiritual life", which is more like a presentation to the ancestors and vice versa" Candinha (2005a).

After a certain period, usually six months after the course starts, there is another ceremony named *khunhantsela khava humkwenhava*, which is intended to "inform the family members that the spirits embodied in the daughter or son's body are getting ready to start working and that the course may proceed" (Candinha, 2005a). *Khunhantslela khava humkwenhava* means going back home with the *tinkhosis* (leaders). This ceremony is often held at the trainee's house, because the purpose of this ceremony is to return home to fetch those spirits that may have been left behind and to take them to the course to be properly educated.

Lastly, at the end of the course, there is the "mother" ceremony named *intwaso*, which announces that the spirits are totally ready to work. That is when the pupil receives a "diploma of graduation" in an oral form, witnessed by everybody present. The celebrations, made at the traditional healer's house as a form of farewell, are named *umobhuyisa khaya*, which means "bringing back home" [referring to the *mathwasana*'s home].

There are cases where some trainees finish their course but do not get to work. It is advisable that they go back to their instructors to find out why people do not consult them. It is believed that the spirits will create work for the individual; in cases when the healer does not get to work properly, the problem might be connected to the trainee's relationship with the spirits.

5.3.3 The professional phase

The professional phase is the phase when the trainee starts applying what he or she has learnt during the course of training to assist people and to make a living. In this phase the trainee becomes a traditional healer by profession.

The professional traditional healer is mostly occupied with dispensing traditional medicine for various types of diseases, consultations, divination, courses of training for trainees, treating patients affected by witchcraft and other infirmities. The latter exorcism practice is only performed by those

traditional healers who are already experienced in the field of spiritualism, as they have to use their spirits to fight against malevolent spirits embodied in their patient's body and causing infirmity. Most of these cases are linked to witchcraft (Morais, 2005b). The exorcism practice is called *ku femba*. *Ku femba* is performed only by a specific type of traditional healer named *nyamussoro*.

In mentioning witchcraft, one has to be careful about typifying this phenomenon. A distinction between magic and witchcraft is important for the understanding of the nature of witchcraft. Parrinder (1956:142) suggests that "we must distinguish between bad magic (sorcery) and witchcraft". Parrinder further suggests that "many African people distinguish clearly between the two and for ethnological purpose we must do the same".

> Witchcraft is an imaginary offence because it is impossible. A witch cannot do what he is supposed to do and has in fact no real existence. A sorcerer, on the other hand, may make magic to kill his neighbours. The magic will not kill them, but he can and no doubt often does, make it with that intention (Parrinder, 1956:144).

He states that a witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicine. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act, and that it is debatable whether a witch possesses medicine but that it is common knowledge that the witches' activities are psychic (Parrinder, 1956:144).

According to Russel and Magliocco (1987:9768), the "term witchcraft embraces a wide variety of phenomena. Its meaning varies according to historical and cultural context". He also suggests a distinction between sorcery and witchcraft by defining sorcery as

> a system of beliefs and practices whose goal is to manipulate nature in order to bring about specific changes that benefit the sorcerer or her or his clients, and witchcraft is the belief that certain members of society are inherently able to harm others. (Russel & Magliocco, 1987:9768)

Markwick (1987:9768) looks at witchcraft in Africa as "a set of beliefs that varies region by region and has a good many consequences in everyday life". African witchcraft is similar in many aspects to those of other continents according to Russel and Magliocco (1987:9768), and most African societies, though not all, hold the fundamental belief that certain members of the

community use supernatural means for illegally destroying the interests and lives of the their fellows.

There is a widespread belief that witches, and some other people, can change themselves into a bird or animal form. I recall Morais telling a story about a particular witch who turned himself into a bird at night. "The witches' souls fly at night, while their bodies remain asleep in their houses" (Morais, 2005b).

Divination is also of great importance during this working phase as lot of clients consult traditional healers to find out about their future (Candinha, 2005b). The majority of those traditional healers who practice divination are also capable of doing consultation and curing their patients.

There are a quite a number of traditional healers who dedicate their working phase to the training course, however, it is important to note that only well experienced traditional healers can practice this function.

5.4 The spirits involved in svikwembu and their provenance

Both the literature and the research consultants with whom I worked agree that the spirits involved in *svikwembu* are mainly Nguni, Ndau, and *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* ancestral spirits of the Tsonga. One person only spoke of working with Monhé spirits, and I could not find any reference to this phenomenon in the literature.

5.4.1 Nguni spirits

The Nguni in Mozambique originated in the area known today as KwaZulu-Natal and moved to southern Mozambique in the 19th century because of the social upheaval resulting from the strife between Shaka Zulu and his rival and cousin Soshangane, also known as Manicusse.

5.4.2 Ndau spirits

The Ndau in Mozambique originally came from central Mozambique and Zimbabwe. During the period of the Gaza kingdom in southern Mozambique,

the Ndau people were considered the lowest class, and were treated as slaves and not allowed to acculturate with or marry Nguni people. Today, the spirits of the unburied Ndau are believed to be troublesome.

5.4.3 *Mahlonga* or *tinguluve* spirits

The *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* are the indigenous spirits of the ancestors of the Tsonga ethnic group. They are normally referred to by the mediums as the *vovós* (Portuguese grandparents). As mentioned before, these spirits did not emerge in a host during a state of trance before the contact between the Tsonga and Nguni people. It is believed that the Nguni and Ndau spirits have shown the *mahlonga* spirits how to occupy a medium and speak through him or her. The *mahlonga* spirits work with herbs and traditional medicine and people consult their ancestors (*mahlonga*) about their own lives with the help of a traditional healer.

5.4.4 Monhé spirits

According to Manuel (2005), there are also Muslim spirits, termed Monhé, that possess people. Manuel further states that these spirits came into existence during the trading period between Muslims and the local population of Mozambique.[43] During this period, some of the Muslim traders were killed and not properly buried. Consequently, these spirits also possess people today as a form of revenge, or in search of shelter.

I have not found a reference to Monhé spirits in the literature, and Manuel was the only traditional healer that I met who works with these spirits. As I was able to meet him only once, I could not pursue this interesting phenomenon further. According to Zamparoni (2000:193), the term Monhé was popularly used to designate various cultural groups of Indian origin. Zamparoni refers to two origins of this community in southern Mozambique:

> The first as an extension in the south, of mercantile interests established in the northern coastal area centuries ago, and the second, and numerically the most important, is associated with the involvement of the southern region in the

[43] This is a very loose periodisation requiring further investigation.

economy of the (former) British colonies and the neighbouring *boers* (2000:193).[44]

It is important to note that I did not find or hear of any traditional healers other than Manuel who hosts this type of spirit although Manuel affirmed that there were a significant number of traditional healers hosting Monhé spirits. However, it would seem that the Ndau, Nguni and *mahlonga* spirits are the most predominant amongst traditional healers.

5.5 Svikwembu in families

Family is a "controversial term in anthropology with a definition beset by difficulty and disagreement, though [...] it is often employed loosely and without precise definition" (Seymour-Smith, 1986:110). By family I mean a large group of people related through kinship. This description of family goes beyond parents and their children to include cousins, aunts, uncles and other members of the extended family.

According to my research consultant, Candinha (2005a), the *svikwembu* phenomenon passes from generation to generation within families. When the spirits choose a specific individual, there may be more than one spirit of a specific ethnic group. This is to say that an individual may have a number of spirits of a specific ethnic group. Candinha, for instance, hosts five spirits: two Nguni, two Ndau and one Tsonga or ancestor (*mahlonga or tinguluve*). That means, if an ancestor was a traditional healer in the past, his or her spirits will pass to another family member of the next generation after he or she has passed away. The spirit's choice of a family member has left me questioning, as my research consultants could not give an exact answer to the question, "Why would a spirit choose a particular individual?"

5.5.1 The *ngoma* house

Most rituals are held in a spirit house at the traditional healer's home, called *ngoma* (the spirit's house). This *ngoma* is always separated from the family's

[44] My translation. "*A presença de tal comunidade no sul de Moçambique deu se por duas vias: a primeira como uma extensão, para sul, dos interesses mercantis estabelecidos na costa norte desde há séculos, e a segunda, e numericamente mais importante, está associada a articulação de região sul a economia da colónias britânicas e boers vizinhas*" (Zamparoni, 2000:193).

house. It does not necessarily have to be a traditional hut, but could be a brick house, depending on the spirit's demands, and it is always separate from the family's main house. As a general rule, anyone who enters the *ngoma* must remove shoes and socks. This is a sign of respect to the spirits present in the *ngoma*. Similar to this, is the *bira* ritual of Zimbabwe, where "participants sometimes remove their shoes and wrist watches before entering the place of *bira*, since such symbols of modern life might offend spirits unfamiliar with the objects during their own existence in the world of the living" (Berliner, 1978:189).

Figure 9: Manuel, a traditional healer inside his brick house *ngoma*.

In *svikwembu* practice, this house is built specifically for the spirits and is the place where the traditional healers keep all the materials (clothes, objects, fabrics, traditional medicine and musical instruments) related to the practices of *svikwembu*. It is believed that the spirits live inside the *ngoma*, in a separate shelter. Within the *ngoma* there are two or more different shelters covered by fabric to represent the ethnic groups of different types of spirits (Ndau, Nguni, *mahlonga* or Monhé). For those traditional healers that host more than one spirit of a specific ethnic group, one shelter will represent that specific ethnic group. Candinha's *ngoma* house hosts five spirits in these shelters; two Ndau, two Nguni and one *mahlonga*. Each shelter represents one ethnic group.

Consultations, treatments and communication with the spirits are all held in the *ngoma*. The shelters are normally covered by a piece of fabric and in some cases take the format of a hut and in other cases could even take the format of a small house, which is the case of the Monhé spirit's shelter at Manuel's house. Unfortunately, I do not have any representation of the latter, but the first two are illustrated in the picture below by shelters covered by pieces of fabric.

Figure 10: The interior of Carolina's brick house *ngoma* with the materials for *svikwemba*. On the right are the shelters covered in fabrics representing different spirits' ethnic groups (Mazuze, 2005).

5.6 The terms and functions of traditional practitioners

According to my research consultants, a *nyamussoro* is a polyvalent practitioner who hosts three or four spirits: Nguni, Ndau, *mahlonga* and, sometimes, Monhé spirits. *Nyamussoro* are linked to the system of exorcism named *ku femba*. This practitioner is considered polyvalent because he or she has the capacity to exorcise all types of spirits. He or she cures and practices divination and exorcism (*ku femba*). His or her practice is characterised by entering into trance and locating the troublesome spirits that are embodied in a particular patient.

The traditional healer known as *nyangarhume* does not enter into trance but mainly specialises in diagnosing and working with plants in order to effectively cure the patient. *Nyangarhume* only hosts one type of spirit, the *mahlonga* spirit ancestors of the indigenous Tsonga spirit (Morais, 2005b). Apparently this type of practitioner existed before contact between the Nguni and Ndau people in southern Mozambique (Morais, 2005b). In the past, these practitioners never used to enter into trance, but it seems that the Ndau and Nguni showed the Tsonga spirits the state of trance after contact with the other ethnic groups was established (Honwana, 2002:61).

Another type of practitioner is named *nyanga*. This term has two usages: one refers to a specific group of traditional healers, and the second, used by most people, indicates any traditional healer. The *nyangas* (in the specific sense) have characteristics distinct from the *nyamussoro* and *nyangarhume*. *Nyanga* practitioners only have the *vanguni* spirits and only have the function of curing (Honwana, 2002:63).

The table below sets out the terms and functions of these traditional medicine practitioners as discussed above.

Traditional medicine practitioner	**Spirit**	**Practice**	**Gender**	**Origin**
Nyamussoro	*Tinguluve*	Healing	Male	Tsonga
	Vanguni	Divination	Female	Nguni
	Vandau	Exorcism	M / F	Ndau
Nyangarhume	*Tinguluve*	Healing	Male	Tsonga
	Tinguluve	Against witchcraft	M / F	Tsonga
	Tinguluve	Divination	M / F	Tsonga
Nyanga	*Tinguluve*	Healing	Male	Tsonga

Figure 11: Traditional medicine practitioners and related spirits and practices

5.7 Languages involved in the svikwembu ritual

There are three major languages involved in this ritual: the Xichangana, Zulu and Ndau languages. The Xichangana language derives from the Tsonga language and Nguni languages.

> The term Tsonga has been used by scholars to designate both a whole language namely Tshwa, Tsonga, Shangaan and Rongaand as one of the languages. The cross border language is referred to by the term Xitsonga in South Africa, but in Mozambique people refer to their language by the term Xichangana. They use the term Tsonga to designate the whole language group" (Sitoe, Chimbutana, Mabaso, Nkuna, Nxumalo, Hlungwani, 2003:4).

According to Junod (1932:1), "the Shangaan language which would be more scientifically called the Thonga language, is the most wide-spread of the Bantu languages of South Africa after Zulu and Sutho languages".

The Xichangana language is widely spoken in southern Mozambique, while Ndau is a language widely spoken in the centre of Mozambique from Beira province up to Manica province and in some areas of Zimbabwe. The Zulu language is a dialect cluster from the Nguni languages (Azevedo, 1991:4-6). According to Canonice (1994:2), "a standard language is made up of one or more dialect clusters. These show resemblances and differences in phonology, grammar and lexicon, and are mutually understandable to varying degrees".

Considering that the Shangana Tsonga people are the most affected by the *svikwembu,* Xichangana is the widely spoken in *svikwembu.* In consulting traditional healers, most clients use Xichangana because the majority of traditional healers are fluent Xichangana speakers. However, in those cases in which the client does not speak Xichangana, the communication can be in Portuguese if the traditional healer is able to speak Portuguese, or in the presence of an interpreter.

5.7.1 The communication with the spirits

The different types of spirit speak and communicate through different languages, depending on their ethnic origin. When a Ndau spirit manifests, the communication will be through Ndau; when a Nguni spirit manifests, the communication will be through a Nguni language, specifically Zulu, and

similarly, when the *mahlonga* spirit manifests, the communication will be through a Tsonga language, specifically Xichangana. Unfortunately, I have no data about the language that the Monhé spirits use.

Spirit type	Language spoken
Mahlonga or *tinguluve*	Tsonga
Ndau	Ndau
Nguni	Nguni

Figure 12: Spirits and corresponding languages

Svikwembu involves a trance phenomenon and the medium is unable to remember what happened during a particular moment of the ceremony when he or she was possessed by a spirit or spirits that communicate through him or her (Candinha, 2005b). There is a considerable number of traditional healers who cannot speak all the languages involved in *svikwembu*, except when they are possessed and the spirits speak through them in languages that they are unable to speak when in the normal state consciousness.

Candinha (2005b) explained that the spirits that manifest through her, speak languages that she is unable to speak when she is in a normal state. For the Ndau language—her mother can speak the language—she states that her mother and the Ndau spirits "click", meaning that they understand each other, and her mother receives the information from the Ndau spirits.

5.7.2 Communication between traditional healers and their clients

Traditional healers are mostly fluent Xichangana speakers, but in some cases they can communicate through a language other than Xichangana. Because Portuguese is the official language in Mozambique and Maputo, the capital of the country, the majority of the people in the area where I conducted field work could speak Portuguese. I was fortunate to work with traditional healers who could speak Portuguese, as my Xichangana is insufficiently fluent for detailed discussion and understanding. In those cases when patients cannot communicate in Xichangana, Portuguese is available as an optional language for communication. The feedback or messages from the spirits can be

translated by the traditional healer from Xichangana or other languages into Portuguese if the traditional healer can speak these languages.

5.8 Gender and age in svikwembu

While conducting field work I had the opportunity to work with and interview both men and women. Most of my research consultants stated that women are the most frequently affected by the *svikwembu* phenomenon. None of the traditional healers could explain the reasons for this. All of them simply answered, "Maybe it's because there are more women than men". According to Honwana (2000:63), prevailing theory suggests that possession is mostly associated with women because women, more than men, are identified with the community, household and, consequently, traditional culture; men, on the other hand, go out of the community to find work somewhere else.

Furthermore, according to Morais (2005b), some ceremonies are linked to women more frequently than to men; for instance, exorcism (*ku femba*). In fact, the different types of traditional healers are linked to specific genders. For instance the function of the "*nyamussoro* (which does not involve trance) is exercised specially by women, while the *nyangarhume* is exclusively masculine and does not involve trance" (Honwana, 2002:63).[45] This is shown in figure 11 above.

5.8.1 Gender in terms of spirit possession in *svikwembu*

Men and women may become possessed by either male or female spirits. In my experience, my aunt used to become possessed by both male and female spirits. However, it is believed that the majority of the spirits that possess people are male. The reason for this is that most of the unburied dead during the Gaza kingdom period were male soldiers (Morais, 2005a). The same men, in a spirit form after death, have the desire to "marry" young, virgin, teenage girls to take care of them (the spirits). This seems to be one of the reasons for women, in the majority, are most frequently involved in spirit possession in *svikwembu*.

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[45] My translation. The original reads: "*De facto, se se olhar para a especialização dos tipos actuais de praticantes de medicina tradicional em termos de género, constata se que a função de nyamussoro (que envolve o transe) é exercida especialmente por mulheres, enquanto a de nyangarhume é exclusivamente masculina e não envolve transe*" (Honwana, 2002:63).

5.8.2 Age

Most of the traditional healers with whom I worked became affected by the phenomenon of *svikwembu* at a very early age. Candinha, who is 30 years old, for example said that she was born with the phenomenon. The spirits had troubled her and made her suffer for 27 years until she accepted them. Manuel furthermore said that, in his experience, the spirits choose a baby in the mother's womb before it is born. In contrast to these people's experience, however, another traditional healer, Morais (2005b), said that a chosen person may be affected at any time and age: "Somebody might be 30, 40 or 60 years old and suddenly be affected by *svikwembu*".

To sum up, the majority of *svikwembu* practitioners are women and, in most cases, they are affected by the phenomenon at a very early age. The cases of people affected by this phenomenon at an older age are rare, but are acknowledged to occur.

5.8.3 Musical Instruments and gender in *svikwembu*

There are musical instruments that are associated more with women than men, for instance the *gocha* and *ntxomana*, which are mostly played by women reportedly because they are light and require less strength to play (Morais, 2005:B). The heavier drums, the different kinds of *ngoma* drums, are played by men and are considered to be violent drums (Morais, 2005b). Men often play drums because of the intensity and loudness that have to be produced during these musical performances (Morais, 2005b). There are no set rules for this, and there are exceptions: as an observer at two music performance sessions, I also saw women performing on different types of *ngoma* drums, which are said to be played mostly by men.

5.9 Musical Instruments used in the performance of svikwembu ritual

An extremely important aspect of *svikwembu* ritual music is the potential to trigger spirits, and rhythm is a crucial aspect of this music. Candinha said in conversation with me that she could enter into trance when a specific type of rhythm is played, regardless of the type of instrument played. She recalled that she would feel very uncomfortable even when she used to hear the right rhythm played by rattles or by any kind of drums. As a saxophonist by

profession and a band leader, I often perform in Maputo, Mozambique. In 2003, Candinha came to one of my concerts in Maputo and she also felt slightly uncomfortable, as if she would go into a trance, because I performed a number of traditional rhythms from Mozambique. It is important to note that, according to my research consultants, it is the rhythm that triggers the spirits and not the instruments on which the music is performed.

Of all the musical phenomena present during *svikwembu*, it is the sound of the drums that is most closely associated with spirits. The instruments frequently used in these rituals are *gocha, ngoma* and *ntxomana*. The *ngoma* and *ntxomana* drums (*batuques*) are always played with a pair of sticks.[46] Rouget (1985:73) argues that possession music can be vocal or performed on any kind of instrument, "All instruments can be used, contrary to the commonly accepted idea that drums are the major cause of possession". We find this in *svikwembu* where drums should not be played on some occasions, as in the case of a secret rite. If the singing and drumming is loud enough to trigger spirits, it may even trigger the spirits of the neighbour next door (Morais, 2005a). In secret rites, people sing and clap hands very quietly so that the neighbours' spirits will not hear and interfere with the secret rite. The quiet singing and clapping of hands are only meant to avoid interference from the other spirits that do not belong to a particular house, in that way to involve only the restricted spirits present in the secret rite. It is also possible to evoke spirits just by clapping hands, as long as the clapping produces the right rhythm. An instance is the case of *matandaro* (singular: *dandaro*) spirit possession ceremonies in Zimbabwe where in some ceremonies, a ritual form of handclapping is sufficient to bring about spirit possession without any formal performance of *mbira* music (Berliner, 1978:187).[47]

Most importantly, it is always necessary to perform the *ku pahla* ceremony to trigger or to communicate with the spirits. One may perform, play and sing

[46] *Batuques* is a plural term for the Portuguese word *batuque*. It is a word that is commonly used in Mozambique, Maputo, to indicate any type of drums or percussion instruments. *Batuque* derives from the word *batucada*, which means to play the drums.
[47] *Matandaro* are spirit possession ceremonies similar in some respect to the *bira*, but modified for compatibility with urban African lifestyles in Zimbabwe (Berliner, 1978:187).

the right songs, but if no communication has been established with the spirits through *ku pahla*, they may not 'come out' or emerge.

While the instruments referred to above are those most commonly used in *svikwembu* rituals, there are cases of other instruments being played in this rite rather than drums or percussion instruments. Morais, for example, plays an instrument named *xitende* (a musical bow) to please one of his spirits who used to be a traditional musician while alive. Morais says:

> I myself have a *xitende* in my hut which belongs to the spirit, as it is his demand to have the instrument present there. Because there are people who were musicians, before death, they continue to like music when they die (Morais 2005b).

Xitende is not a drum, but a melodic instrument, a musical bow, although it is played with a clear rhythmic technique producing an *ostinato*. Levine (2005:223) describes the *xitende* as a braced gourd made from a bent branch of the *morethloa* tree with a calabash or tin resonator attached near the centre. The string is made from the twisted fibre of the *mulala* ground palm tree or copper wire, and is divided at the centre, while the stave of the bow is made from a branch stripped of its bark, or of a cane. The instrument is grasped near the calabash, with the fingers extended to allow the player to finger either segment of the string to a higher note. The other hand strikes the string with a thin stick or reed (Levine, 2005:223). This bow is not mouth-resonated, which means that the player can and usually does sing while playing (Levine, 2005:223). The size of *xitende* is variable and sometimes may reach two metres in height (Treglia &Vilanculos, 1993:3). It is fairly easy to play, and musicians often dance while playing. The *xitende* is sometimes played by a wandering entertainer (*xilombe*). It is predominantly used in the southern region of Mozambique and has similarities with other traditional instruments like *nyakatangali*. It is likely that there are other instances where healers play instruments other than drums in *svikwembu* (,Treglia &Vilanculos 1993:3).[48]

The non-drum instruments involved in the ritual are not used to induce trance as they do not have the "power" for such an effect (Morais, 2005a).

[48] The *Nyakatangali* is a musical instrument that belongs to the family of bow instruments in the chordophone group, which produces a less intense sound with a small projection. (Treglia &Vilanculos, 1993:3).

"*Xitende* is not used for people to get in trance; its use is only to please certain demands of the spirits" (Morais, 2005a). The non-trance-triggering instruments are typically used when the medium is already in trance and the spirit asks or demands that he or she plays a particular instrument (Morais, 2005a). Nevertheless, apart from these cases, drums (*bantques*) are regarded as the most important instruments to evoke and please the spirits.

Morais argued that, during the training course for traditional healers, the only instruments that can identify and make a certain spirit emerge or 'come out' are the *ntxomana*, *gocha* and *ngoma* drums. The *ngoma* drums have different shapes and sizes but they are all known by the same name. The *gocha* also varies in shape and material used for its construction.

Figure 13: Family members and friends of Manuel performing on *ngoma* of different sizes and *gocha*

According to Morais, the *gocha* and *ngoma* are the two most important instruments, followed by the *ntxomana*. The *gocha* and *ngoma* are considered to be the most important instruments because of the intensity of the volume.

According to Candinha, the use of each of these instruments depends on the style of music performed. As an observer, I concluded that there is no general rule that a specific type of instrument has to be played in a particular style of music, as the performers mix instruments for different styles of music. Nevertheless, the *ngoma* drums are always included in any style of *svikwembu* ritual music. These drums are a major facilitating agent of spirit possession in *svikwembu*. The *ntxomana* are mostly used to play the Ndau rhythm, rather than other rhythms. According to Manuel, the *tabla* are the appropriate drums for the Monhés. If the *tabla* is not available, the *ngoma* drums—which are most often played with a pair of sticks—will replace the *tabla*; but instead of sticks they will be played with the hands to create a sound closer to that of the *tabla*. The *tabla* is a pair of tuned drums that consists of a small hand drum called *dahina* and a larger drum with a metal body called *bahina*.

> The higher pitched drum called *dahina*, is a one-skinned drum usually of wood and having the profile of two truncated ones bulging at the centre, the lower portion shorter. Skin tension is maintained by thong lacings and wooden dowels that are tapped with a hammer in retuning. It is usually tuned to the tonic, or ground note, of the raga (melodic pattern).
> The *bahina*, the left [drum], is a kettledrum, usually of copper but also of clay or wood, with a hoop and thong lacings to maintain skin tension. A disk of black tuning paste is placed on the skin of each drum to give harmonic overtones. The drums are played with the fingers and hands, the *bahina* to the player's left. (Blade, 1994:481).

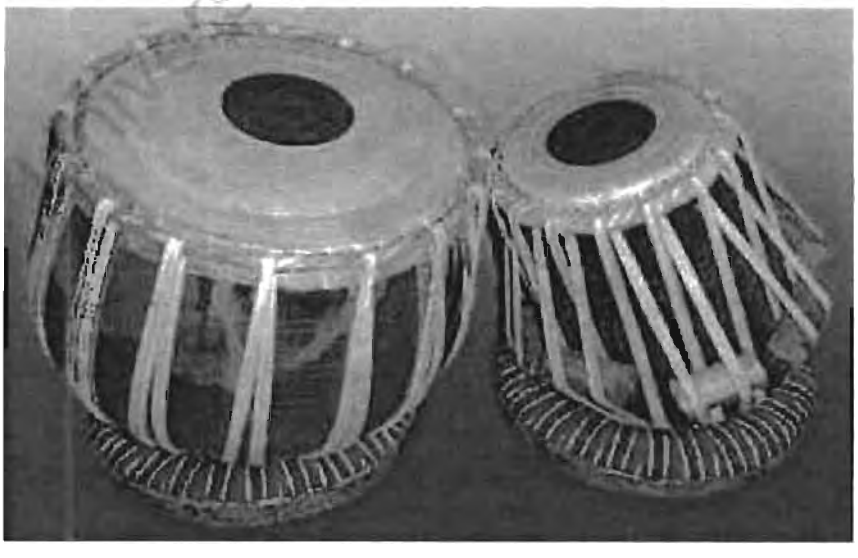

Figure 14: A pair of *tabla* drums: on the right the *dahina* and on the left the *bahina tabla*. [Online] Available:http://www.*tabla*.com/*tabla*wha.html [2006 July, 20]

Figure 15: *Tabla* players using their hands in the performance. [Online]. Available:http://www.*tabla*.com/*tabla*wha.html [2006 July, 20].

5.9.1 *Gocha*

The *Gocha* is a hand-held shaker classified as an Idiophone in the Hornbostel-Sachs classification of instruments (Myers, 1992:451). The *gocha* carries the Hornbostel-Sachs classification number of 111, indicating that "the player himself executes the movement of striking, whether by mechanical intermediate devices, beaters, keyboards or by pulling ropes" (Myers, 1992:451). It is definitive that the player can apply clearly defined individual strokes and that the instrument itself is equipped for this kind of percussion (Myers, 1992:451). The *gocha* is made of a short stick that pierces a hollow, dried shell of the fruit known as *massala*, containing small stones or seeds inside the shell. Not all *gocha* instruments today are made with dry hollow shells from fruits. Where there is a lack of this type of shell, the makers replace them with cans (Carolina, 2005). The player holds the instrument by the stick and shakes it. Performers often play two *gocha* at the same time. Serving as a rhythmic accompaniment instrument, the *gocha* is part of a group of shakers that are played in a significant number of different dances and styles of music in Mozambique. The names of these rattles vary from region to region throughout the country: (Ministério da educação e cultura, 1980:13) in the northern provinces of Zambézia, the rattle is named *sekere* or *mukotcho*, in Tete it is named *nkotcho*, in Niassa it is named *mihea*, in southern

Mozambique, Maputo and Gaza it is named *gocha* and in Inhambane it is named *nzela* (Ministério da educação e cultura, 1980:13).

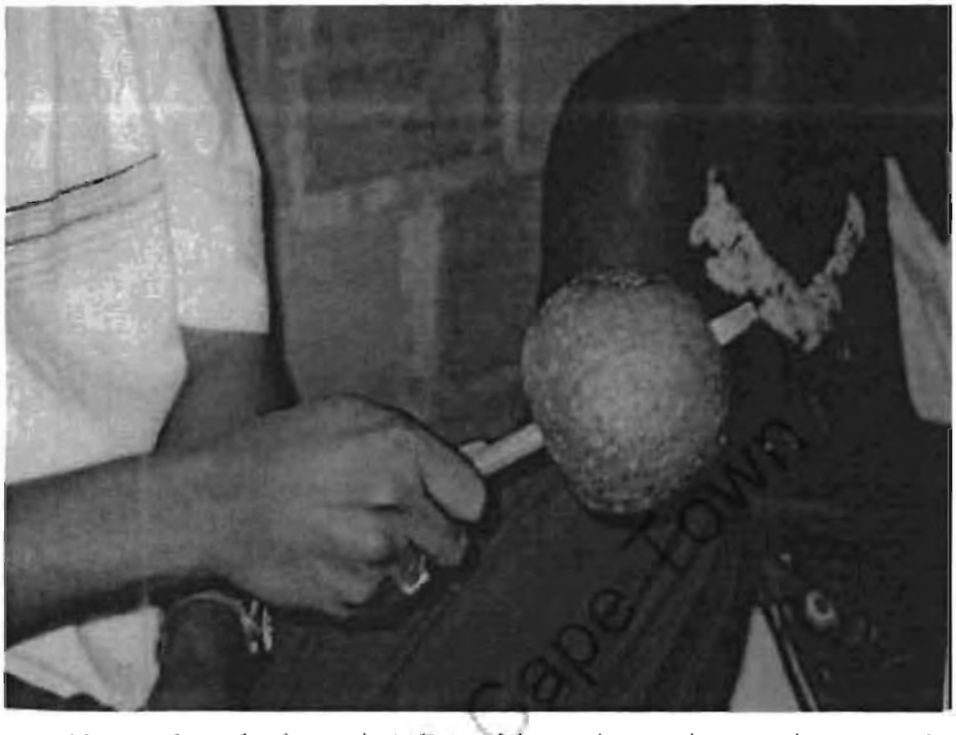

Figure 16: A *gocha* made of *massala* shell containing seeds to produce sound (Mazuze, 2005)

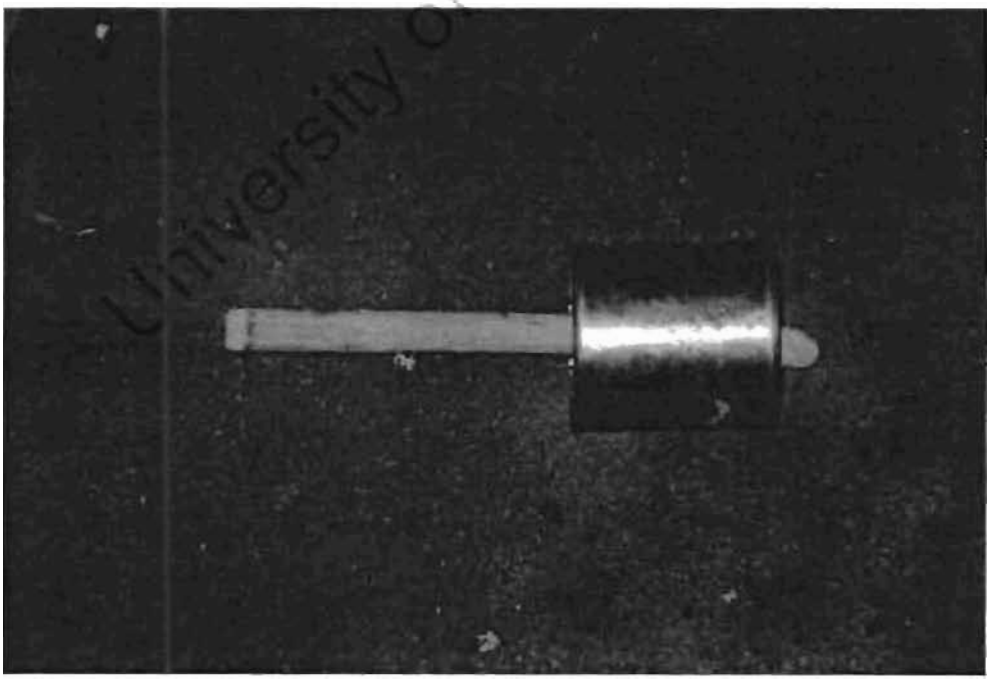

Figure 17: *Gocha* made of a can containing pebbles (Mazuze, 2005)

5.9.2 *Ngoma*

The word *ngoma* is widely used to indicate subjects or practices other than drums.

> A widespread ritual institution in central and southern Africa is often referred to, or carries the name of *ngoma*, at once the term for drum, as well as drumming or other musical instrumentation, singing, dancing, and the complex of constituent behaviour and concepts (Janzen, 1991:290).

There seems to be three sizes of *ngoma* drums (small, medium and large) in the *svikwembu* music performance. When the three sizes are available and performed together they are referred to by the family term *xingomana* (Johnston, 1972:18).[49] According to Johnston, when the three sizes are available, they are performed simultaneously to provide rhythmic accompaniment at beer-drinking dances (1972:18). The membrane is a cow's skin fastened with wooden pegs, with knots used as handles and the holes being a simple cut in the skin. Each peg is so tight that the sides of the skin become wavy by being stretched over the peg. The wooden body below the skin shows a large strip, in rigidly sculpted pattern. Figure 18, below, illustrates this type of *ngoma*.

Figure 18: *Ngoma* with wood burned patterns (Mazuze, 2005)

[49] *Xingomana* is the plural form of *ngoma*

In the musical performance of the *ngoma* in the *svikwembu* practice, the *ngoma* are always played with a pair of sticks (My own observation).

According to Hornbostel and Sachs (Myers, 1992:453), the *ngoma* forms part of the group of membranophone instruments. The sound of membranophone instruments is excited by tightly stretched membranes. The *ngoma* has the Hornbostel and Sachs number 211.211. This number is assigned to a single-skin, cylindrical drum that has only one usable membrane. According to Hornbostel and Sachs (Myers, 1992:454), "in some African drums a second skin forms part of the lacing device and is not used for beating, and hence does not count as a membrane in the present sense". This categorisation coincides with the characteristics of some *ngoma* drums, as we can see in Figure 19, below.

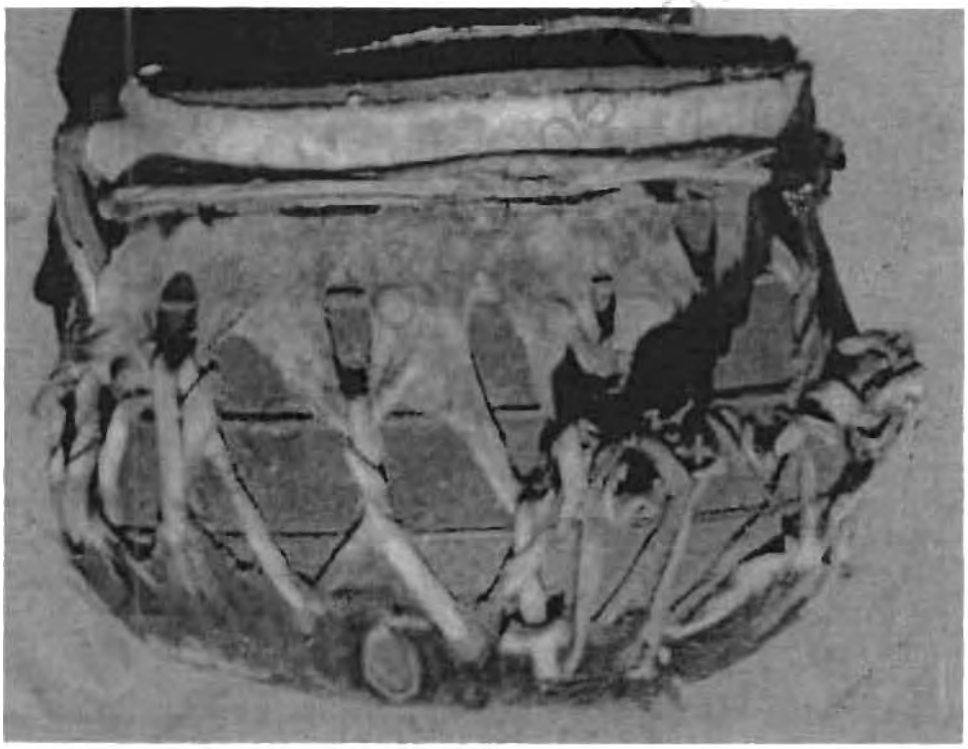

Figure 19: *Ngoma* made of a metal pot, and laced braced top membrane with bottom membrane serving to secure laces; a handle of skin is also visible (Mazuze, 2005)

Figure 20 Three *ngoma* of different sizes and three *gocha* below. When the three *ngoma* of varied sizes are available, they are referred to as *xingoma* (Mazuze, 2005)

5.9.3 *Ntxomana*

The *ntxomana* is a single-skin frame drum always played with a pair of sticks. The *Ntxomana* is also used to tilt the *ngoma* drum to a comfortable angle, as shown in Figure 20, above. This means that they will not be played at the same time and this is because they are played in different repertories, *ngoma* always for all styles and *ntxomana* mostly for Ndau. *Ntxomana* falls under the category of membranophone instruments in Hornbostel and Sachs' classification of musical instruments (Myers, 1992:454). It has the number 211.311. In Johnston's (1972:17) research into the music of the Shangana Tsonga people of Mozambique and South Africa, he states that this instrument was used exclusively in the exorcism dance and that the instrument is named *mancomane*. This could have been the case back then, because this instrument is also used in many other practices of *svikwembu* today. Its performance is often accompanied with the *ngoma* drums and it is often played by women in *svikwembu* practices.

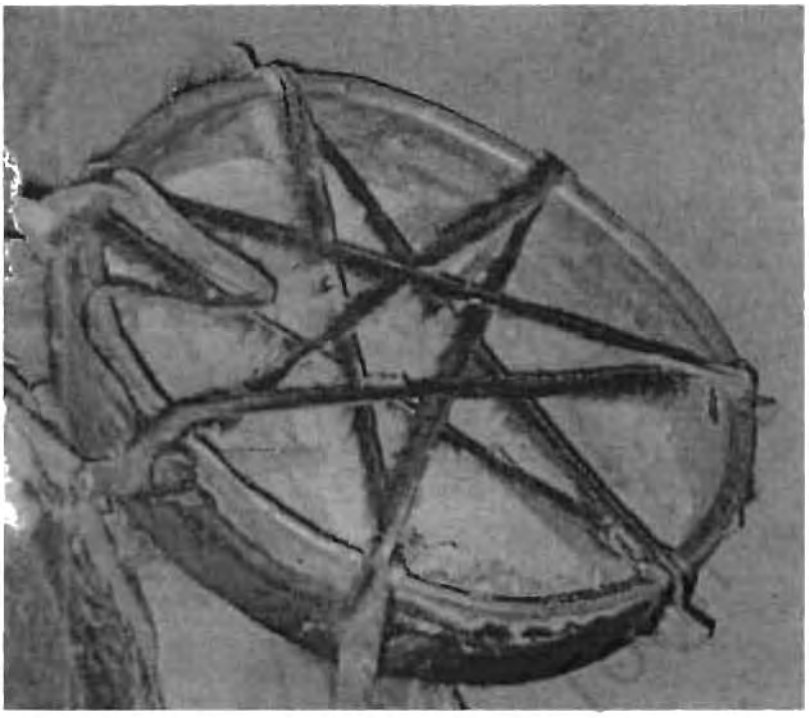

Figure 21: *Nxomana* (Mazuze, 2005)

5.9.4 The whistle

The presence of the whistle was only noticed at the introduction of a Nguni song by Manuel and once during the song. It is important to mention this as it forms part of musical instruments involved in the musical performance of *svikwembu*.

Figure 22: A friend of Manuel's blowing a whistle and playing the *ugoma* at the same time (Mazuze, 2005)

Figure 23: *Ngoma* drums are played with a pair of sticks by two traditional healers and *ntcomana* frame drums at the bottom of each *ngoma* drums create a specific sound effect. (Mazuze, 2005)

5.10 Relationship between music and the spirits

According to all my research consultants, there is a strong relationship between music and the spirits. In order to evoke or expel spirits, a specific style of rhythm and melody (scale) must be performed, depending on which spirit appears. As mentioned before, with reference to Johnston's transcriptions (1972:299-315), a *mandhlozi* song with both a pentatonic scale and foursquare rhythm, for example, is needed to expel a Zulu spirit. In order to expel a Ndau spirit, a *xidzimba* song with a heptatonic scale played in a triple rhythm on the drum is needed.

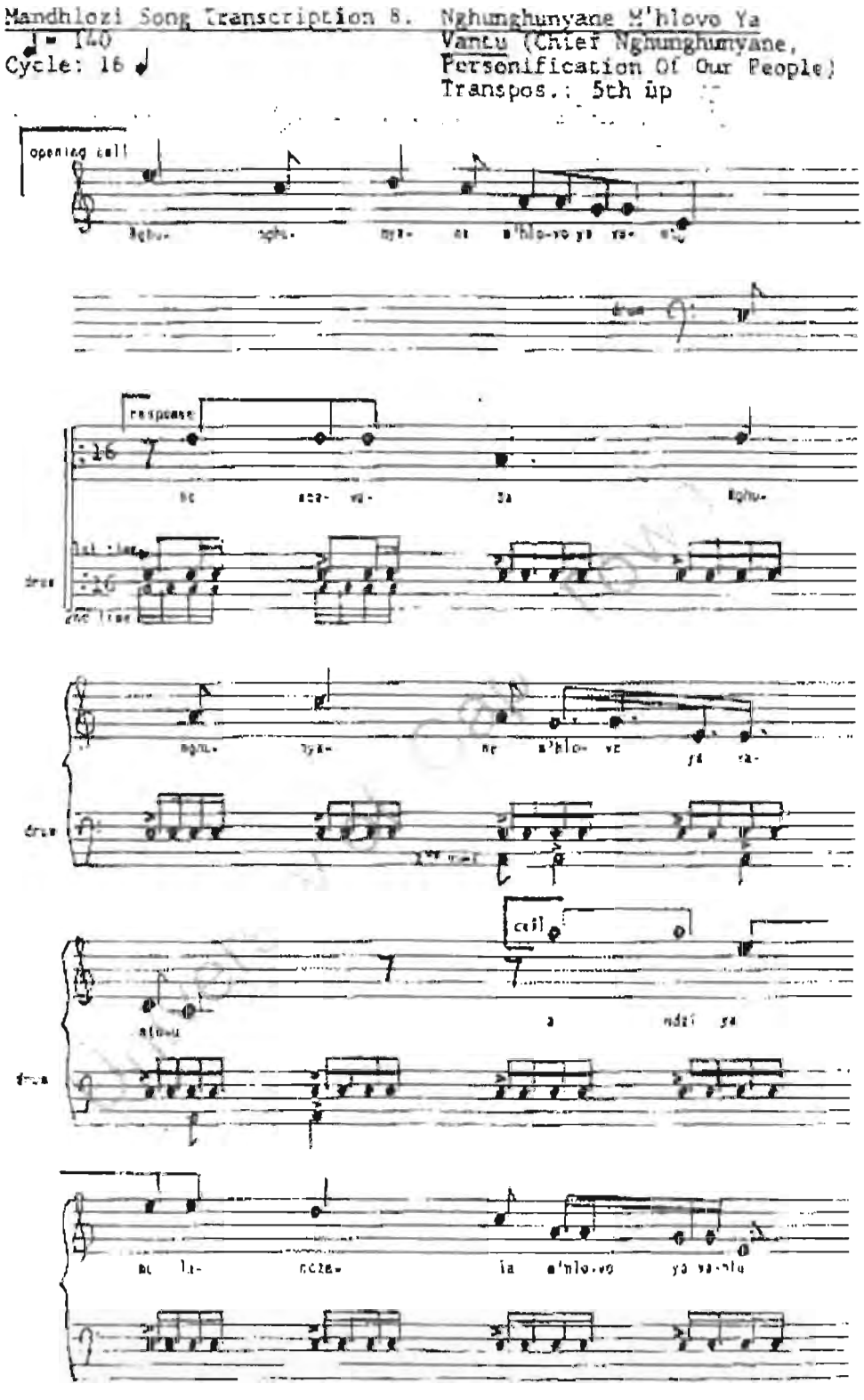

Figure 24: Johnston's transcription of a *mandhlozi* song (1972:305)

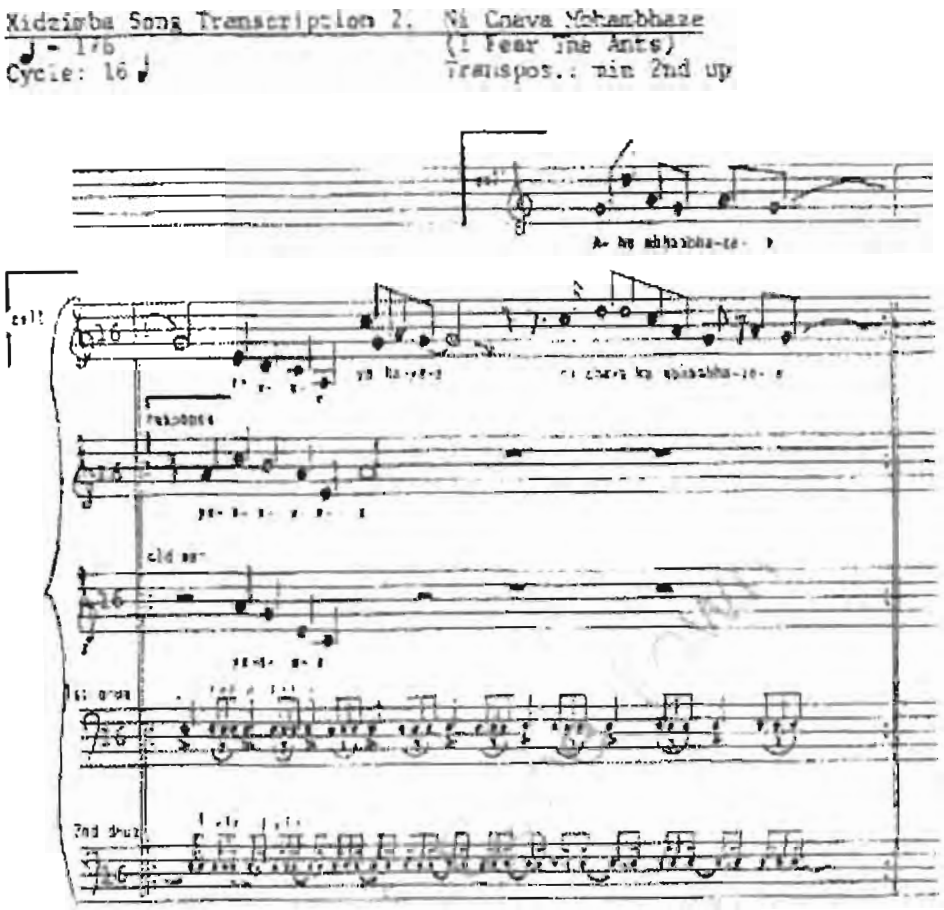

Figure 25: Johnston's transcription of a *xidzimba* song (1972:333)

5.11 Who performs the music?

In my experience, the musicians often are close relatives of the traditional healers. They are taught to play the instruments and different styles of ritual music by the traditional healer (Carolina, 2005). In some sessions that I attended in Chamanculo during my fieldwork, the traditional healers would perform, playing the instruments and singing the repertoire of the ritual which they learnt during the course of their training. The traditional healers were the lead vocalists and drummers making variations on the basic rhythm. In those songs that feature call-and-response, the traditional healer and lead vocalist sings the call while the response comes from the rest of the singers (backing vocalists) in the ensemble. The traditional healer is always the leader of the ensemble.

The traditional healer learns the musical repertoire of a ritual during the course of training. In my experience, the musicants, i.e. performers, non-

professional musicians (following Rouget 1985:103), often are close relatives of the traditional healers who also live with the traditional healer. These may include a sibling, child, spouse, or other family member. They learn to play the instruments and to interpret different styles of ritual music from the traditional healer. In some sessions at which I was present, the traditional healer would perform, playing the instruments as well as singing.

Figure 26: A family member of the traditional healer Manuel, playing *ngoma* drums with a pair of sticks (Mazuze, 2005)

Figure 27: Candinha, a friend of mine and traditional healer performing *ngoma* drums with a pair of sticks. The *ngoma* that Candinha is playing is the same drum as in Figure 19 (Mazuze, 2005).

Figure 28: Carolina's daughter, on the left, and other family members playing different sizes of *ngoma* drums, the same drums shown in Figure 23 (Mazuze, 2005)

5.12 The repertoire

According to my research consultants, the music should usually be very loud and intense in order to please the spirit(s) that are attending and to keep them present. The intensity of the music gradually increases relative to the stage that

the ritual has reached. For instance, the intensity of the music reaches its highest point when the spirit emerges and demands more intensity and volume of the performers. Most of the ritual music repertoire features call-and-response songs, as well as improvisation (variations) by the lead performer. The lead performer plays percussion, sings and varies the rhythm and the way of singing throughout the music making.

The repertoire of *svikwembu* ritual music is vast and comprehends songs and dance from three or four different styles of music: Nguni, Ndau, *mahlonga* or *tinguluve* and Monhés. Unfortunately I did not have access to the Monhé music repertoire for transcription and analysis. The Nguni, Ndau, and *mahlonga* song repertoires are mostly characterised by a call-and-response structure.

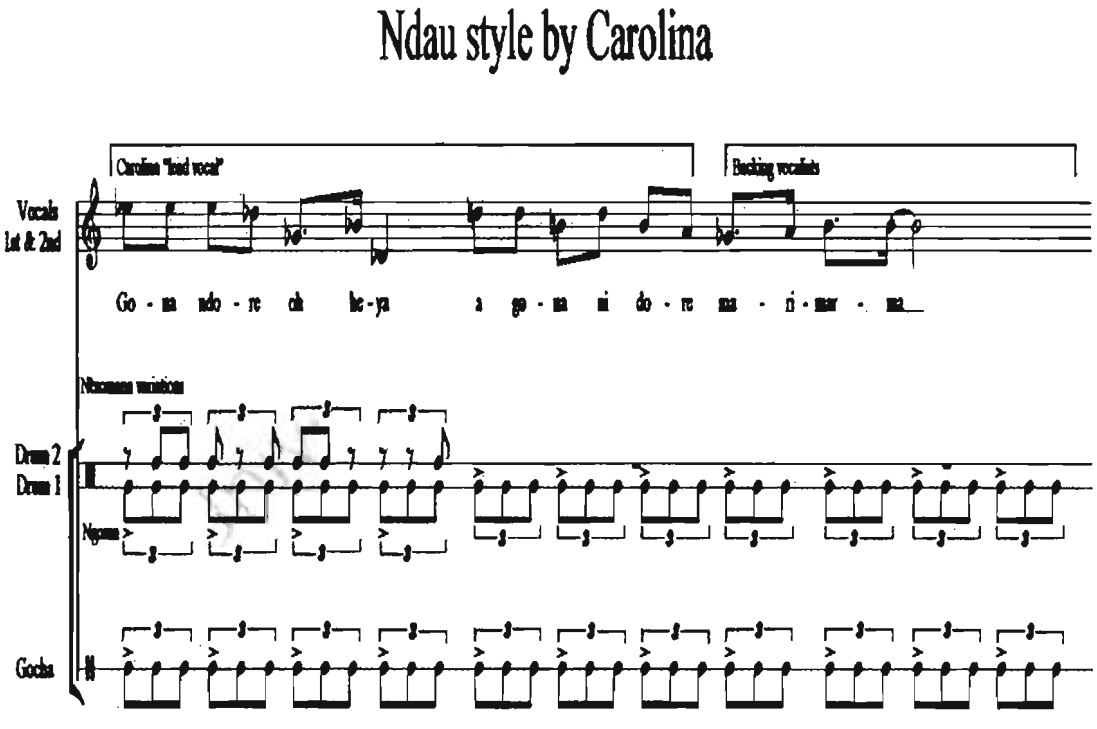

Figure 29 (track 1): A Ndau song performed by Carolina, which features call-and-response and drumming variations from the lead player (Mazuze, 2006).

There may be more than one kind of a call in a song, and in some songs the call does not include variations from the leader. The responses and the playing from the rest of ensemble are often not varied melodically or rhythmically. In Figure 30, below, we have an example of musical transcription in which the

call varies and the response remains the same, and it also includes rhythmic drumming variations from the lead drummer.

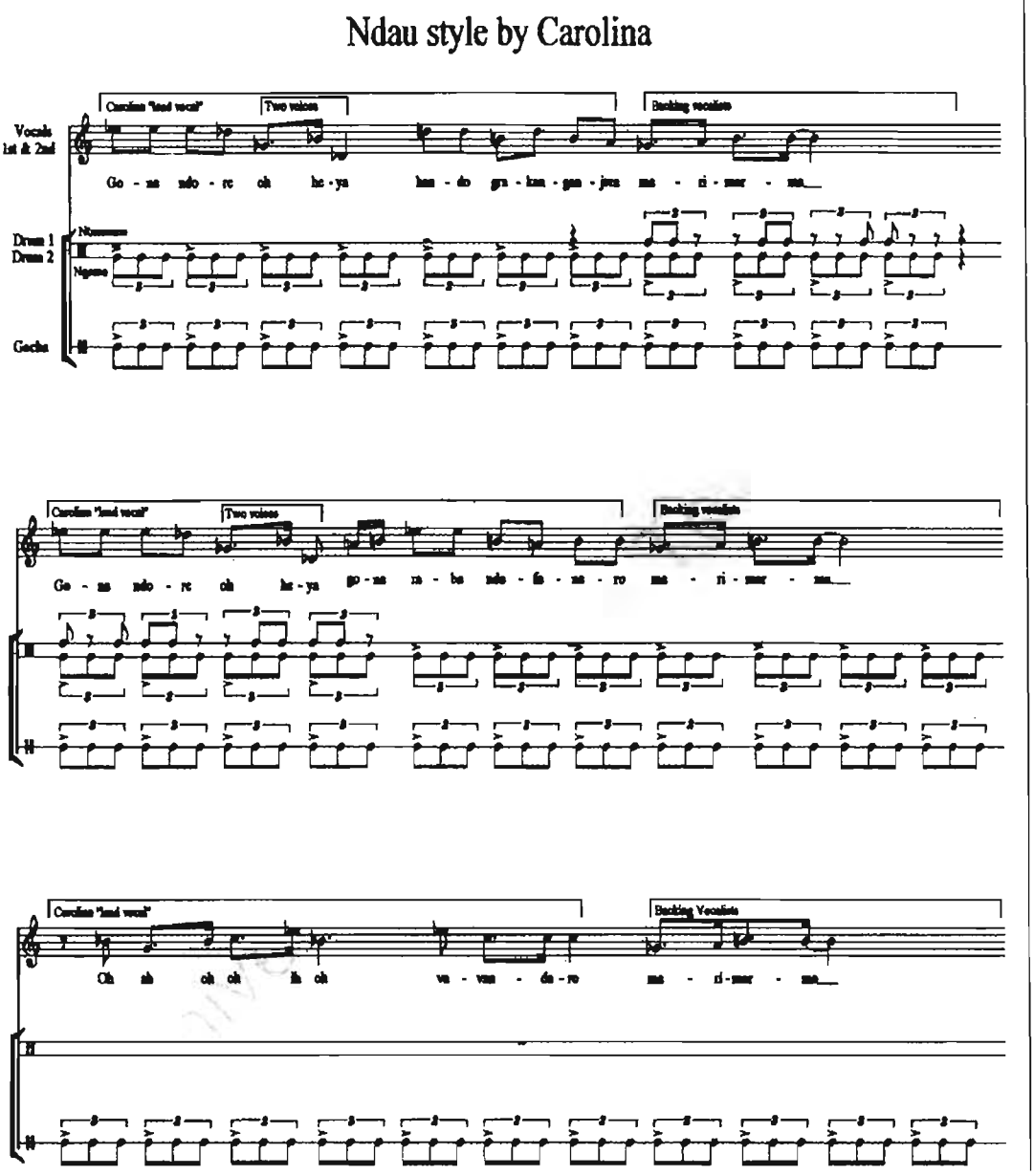

Figure 30: The Ndau style performed by Carolina and her ensemble. It features call-and-response, an emphasis on triplet drumming and variations from the lead drummer with *ntxomana* drums (Mazuze, 2006).

According to Candinha (2005b), the songs of this vast repertoire are the same from one location to another within the southern Mozambique region, but there are slight differences in terms of the rhythm and the way people play the drums, with some people changing the emphasis of the beat. I cannot verify this statement, because my field work was limited to one, fairly small

area of Maputo. I could not observe whether these similarities and differences are present, or document them.

The Ndau and Nguni music rhythms I recorded coincide with those that Johnston transcribed. Johnston's transcriptions of Ndau songs have a triple drumming rhythm while a foursquare rhythm is used for the Nguni songs, as is evident in Figures 31 and 32.

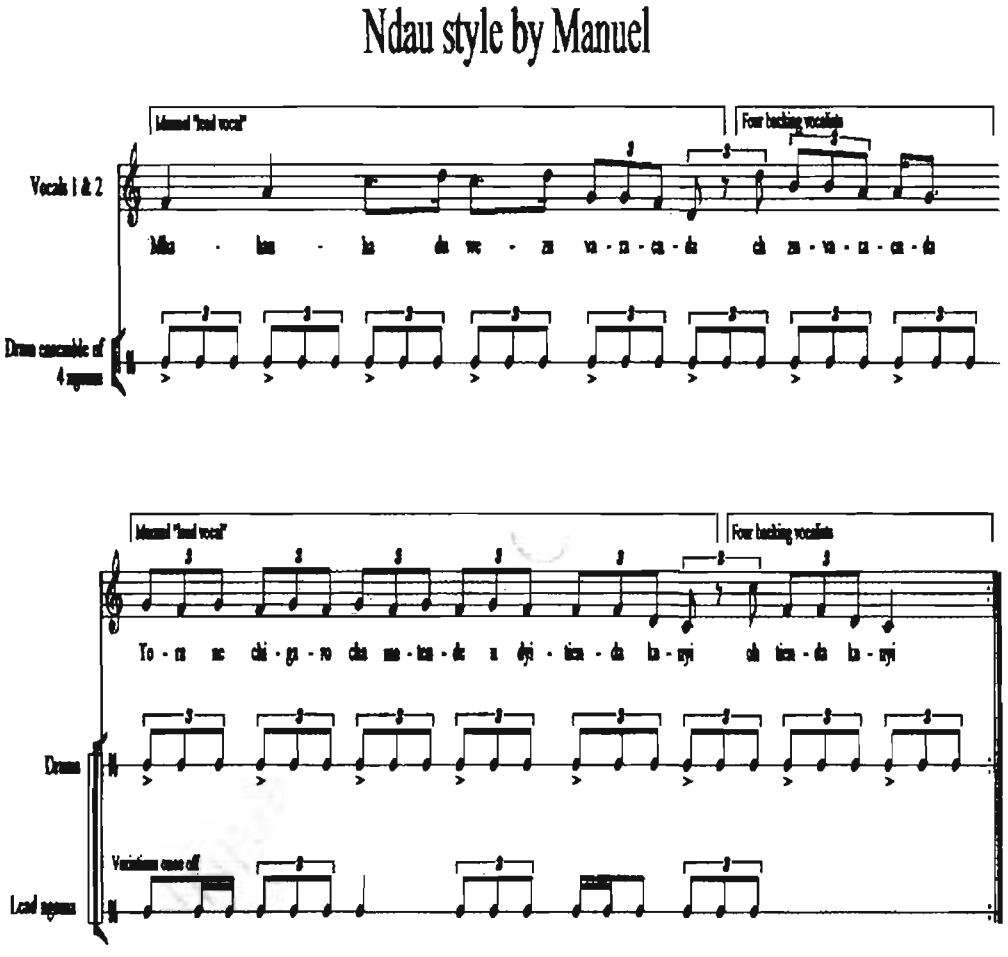

Figure 31 (track 3): A Ndau song performed by Manuel and his ensemble (Mazuze, 2006)

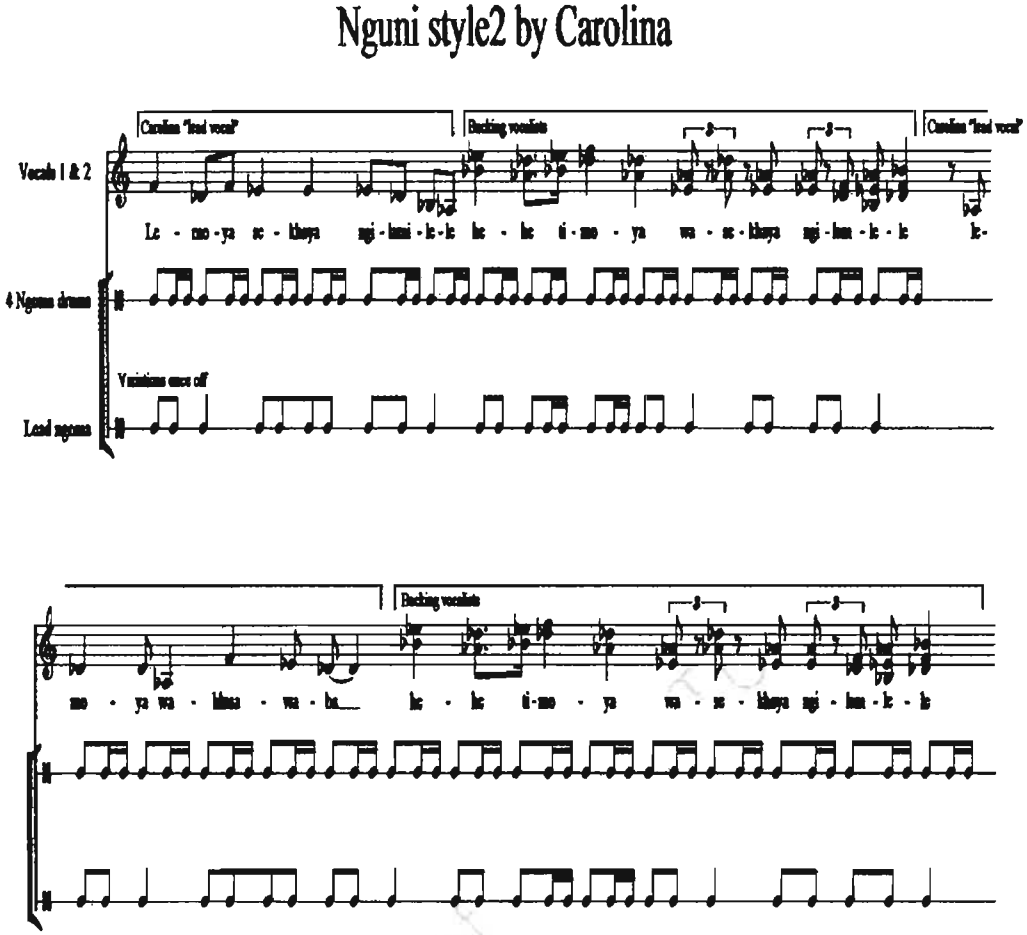

Figure 32 (track 4): A Nguni song performed by Carolina and her ensemble (Mazuze, 2006)

The rhythm for the *mahlonga* songs are mostly duple and foursquare in four time rhythm. The *mahlonga* songs are mostly used for celebrations, and are not used to trigger or call the spirits.

During the big *ku pahla* ceremonies that are performed only once or twice a year amongst traditional healers to invoke the names of the ancestors and the spirits, all styles of ritual music are performed to celebrate the moment. These celebrations may last for two to three days over weekends (Candinha, 2005b). The repertoire features intense drumming and requires lots of energy from the performers of the Nguni song repertoire which Morais (2005b) refers to as the soldier's songs. The Nguni repertoire is often performed at the beginning of the celebration ceremony because its tempo is faster than the other styles of music requiring high level of energy for performance.

The last songs to be performed are usually the Ndau songs, because they are slower than the Nguni songs (Morais, 2005b). The reason for this is because the participants are tired by the end of the celebrations and these songs

in slower tempos are suitable for tired performers at that time of the night or in the early hours of the morning (Morais, 2005b).

5.13 The meaning and significance of music amongst the practitioners of svikwembu

According to all the traditional healers who were consulted, music plays an important role in the ritual of *svikwembu*. Music has to be performed to make the spirits aware of a particular worrying problem, and to call up their presence amongst the people. Traditional healers take silence to be a bad sign, suggesting the presence of bad company around them. Traditional healers may evoke the spirits through techniques other than music, but if the spirits are hiding and do not want to emerge, the only way to resolve this situation is through music (Morais, 2005b).

Music triggers the manifestation of spirits. Music is a form of communication between spirits and human beings; and if the rhythm is strong, the presence of the spirits will be stronger (Morais, 2005b). According to Morais, "music is the only vehicle that can maintain the communication between the human being and the spirits". According to Candinha, "97% of rituals have to have music" (Candinha, 2005a).

During the training course, music making is the only activity that evokes the spirits and causes them to manifest in a particular client. A course of training cannot be concluded successfully without music (Morais, 2005b; Candinha, 2005a). Different styles of ritual music are performed during the course of training to find out which style or particular song triggers a specific spirit. If the spirit belongs to a particular ethnic group, a specific song from this ethnic group has to be discovered in order to trigger the spirit. Given the vast repertoire of each ethnic group involved in *svikwembu* and the Shangana Tsonga culture, it may take a tremendous, sustained effort to find that one song that evokes a particular spirit.

"For the traditional healers to do a big work of great responsibility the spirit's presence is needed. Music has the power to make the spirits present.

Svikwembu without music does not work" (Morais, 2005a).[50] Music is a means to honour and show respect to the spirits. Invoking the spirit's name, singing and playing the appropriate rhythm and song(s) required by a specific spirit are also ways of pleasing them. Spirits may be evoked by different ceremonies and names and still not appear; they may be close, but not react. When this happens, music is needed. In the case of *ku femba* exorcism, it is only through music that the traditional healer can evoke her or his spirits in order to fight against the client's evil spirits (Morais, 2005b).

In conclusion: my research consultants made it clear that music is an important means of communication between the practitioners of *svikwembu* and their spirits. Music making is the only activity that retains the presence of the spirits through praising showing respect, and pleasing them. The practitioners of *svikwembu* make great use of music to trigger the manifestation of spirits, and they use music as a means of thanking their forebears.

[50] My translation. *Para os médicos tradicionais fazerem um trabalho de grande responsabilidade a presença dos espíritos é necessária. Música tem o poder de fazer os espíritos aparecer. Svikwembu sem música não funciona* (Morais, 2005a).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In this final chapter I discuss the main findings of my study by drawing together the results from the previous chapters of this thesis. "It is important to show how results and conclusions relate to the literature and theory on this study" (Mouton, 2001:124).

A considerable number of ethnomusicologists have studied the subject of spirit possession and music. Although this comprehends two phenomena, that of music and of spirit possession under altered states of consciousness. It is of interest to many scholars to study the phenomenon in different cults, as different cults have the use of musical performance in spirit possession rites in common. Music plays a crucial role in trance spirit possession rituals.

The main focus of this thesis is music and trance. I have previously discussed trance as an altered state of consciousness, but Rouget (1985) prefers to distinguish between two major types of altered states of consciousness, namely trance and ecstasy. Applying this distinction, for *svikwembu* one would study trance rather than ecstasy because trance is an altered state of consciousness obtained by means of noise, music, agitation, and in the presence of the others, unlike ecstasy, which is achieved in silence and solitude and not in the company of the others. Trance is presented in a variety of forms, but I consider only two that are relevant to this study: shamanism and possession. Both forms of trance are encountered in *svikwembu* ritual practices, and it is necessary to differentiate between them. Based on Honwana's definition (2002:52), shamanism is marked by the absence of the medium's soul, which leaves his body to encounter the spirits, while the communication operates in the opposite direction in possession, with the spirits taking over the medium's soul by possessing the body to communicate and speak through the possessed person.

6.1 Music in relation to shamanism and possession trances in svikwembu

During the practice of shamanic trance in *svikwembu*, specifically in divination (which is regarded as a secret rite), music is regarded as important but is performed very quietly, with singing and handclapping but without drums. In *svikwembu* spirit possession ritual practices, on the other hand, music is performed by a full ensemble with an emphasis on loudness, because it is not regarded as a secret rite.

6.2 The role of music in different phases of svikwembu

It is important to note that there is no association at all with music when someone first begins to experience unexpected manifestations of spirit possession. This is because the spirits are making the individual and his or her family members aware of the *svikwembu* phenomenon, and are not awaiting a performance.

During the second phase, the training course, music plays an extremely important role and it is used intensively. Different styles of music are performed to identify the spirit that possesses a particular individual. Possession is said to be caused by foreign spirits, either Ndau or Nguni (Zulu). Both the Ndau and Nguni repertoires are vast and only a specific song from these repertoires will serve to identify the spirit that possesses a particular individual. In these different repertoires, the rhythms and scales of the Nguni are distinct from those of the Ndau. During the two or more years of the training period, music is performed three times a day, in the morning, afternoon and the evening.

In the third phase, which is characterised by different forms of practices, including divinatory ceremonies and exorcism, music plays an extremely important role and is used to invoke the ancestors as a form of thanking them, and to celebrate important moments like the big *ku pahla* ceremony.

6.3 The musical instruments used in the performance of svikwembu

The *svikwembu* musical performances employ three major percussion instruments as such instruments are believed to be among the major causes for triggering trance, namely the *ngoma*, *gocha* and *ntxomana*. *Ngoma* and *gocha* music is always performed in all the styles of the *svikwembu* musical repertoire, and these are considered to be the most important instruments because of their intensity and volume. The *ntxomana* are mostly played in the Ndau musical repertoire, rather than for other rhythms.

However, other musical instruments are also involved in the practices of *svikwembu*, for instance the *xitende*. Such other musical instruments are only used to satisfy the demands of the spirits. As Morais explained, *xitende* is just used to please one of his ancestors who used to be a musician while alive. He just plays *xitende* to please his ancestor spirit. This and other musical instruments besides the percussive instruments indicated above are not capable of triggering trance in *svikwembu*. Whistles are also part of the musical instruments of the *svikwembu* musical performance, but I have witnessed its performance only once in the introduction to a Nguni song and once again during the course of the same song.

6.4 Musical elements in svikwembu

The ritual music of *svikwembu* can be vocal, instrumental or both. I consider instrumental music, music which is performed during the secret rites where handclapping is the only musical element used to invoke the spirits. In the same secret rites, sometimes soft singing can be the only musical element used to communicate with the spirits which I consider vocal. The combination of both vocal and instrumental music is performed during course of training and *ku pahla* where there is emphasis on loud singing and drumming.

Specific rhythms of the *svikwembu* repertoire are essential for triggering the different types of spirits; in order to exorcize a Ndau spirit, triple meter drumming is needed, while to exorcise a Nguni spirit, foursquare rhythm is

needed. The use of these rhythmic figures coincides with Johnston's (1972) findings on the *mancomane* exorcism of the Shangana Tsonga people.

The dynamics are always related to the tempo and intensity of the songs. I discussed this in Chapter Three, where I concluded that the faster the tempo, the higher the pitch and the louder the intensity of the musical performance is. The higher the pitch, the louder the volume, and the greater the intensity of the musical performance will be. At the beginning of the *svikwembu* ceremonies, the songs slowly increase in tempo and become correspondingly louder until the spirit appears. At that stage, is important to maintain the intensity of the songs in order to maintain the spirit's presence. The third and last moment is when the spirit leaves and the songs gradually become slower and consequently softer. In general, the Nguni repertoire is faster and more intense than the Ndau songs.

The Ndau melodies are based on a heptatonic scale and Nguni melodies are based on pentatonic scales. Rouget (1985:93) argues that this may be due to the fact that Ndau music is heptatonic and Nguni music comprises melodies on pentatonic scales.

6.5 The musical performers of svikwembu

The *svikwembu* musicians always are the traditional healers and their family members or friends. The traditional healer is always the main singer and instrumentalist. When the *svikwembu* musician plays the accompaniment to songs, there are noticeable variations in the drumming patterns within the songs' basic rhythmic structures. The accompaniment varies each time a song is performed. The traditional healer, as the lead musician, initiates the musical variation or improvisation. I clearly see this as a form of improvisation because the patterns differ from the previous performance whenever the same song is performed again.

6.6 Music and its relation with the practitioners of svikwembu

Music carries significant meaning in *svikwembu*, and performers regard it as playing a very important role in *svikwembu*. Whether it is performed to invoke,

exorcise, for training, to please or to thank the spirits or ancestors, music is always a primary constituent of the ritual practices of *svikwembu*.

6.7 Results and conclusions that relate to the literature review

A number of conclusions from this research relate to similar studies by other scholars who have investigated the same subject. For instance, even though drums are the main instruments that are used for triggering trance in *svikwembu*, I am of the opinion (and in agreement with Rouget 1985) that drums are not the factor *par excellence* for triggering trance. I reached this conclusion when looking at the spirit possession ritual of the *bira* (Berliner, 1978) of Zimbabwe where the *mbira* is the main instrument for triggering trance. A variety of instruments can be used, contrary to the commonly accepted idea that drums provide the major stimulus for possession.

A further point of coincidence between my findings and those recorded in the literature has to do with the issue of gender in spirit possession; where it is widely believed that women are predominantly afflicted by spirit possession (Skultan, 1987:57).

Rouget's (1985:325) conclusion about the role of music during a spirit possession ceremony coincides with the explanation that my research consultants gave, according to which, firstly at the level of the ceremony, music creates a specific emotional climate for the medium, and, secondly, music leads the medium towards identification of the spirit possessing him or her, while, thirdly, music provides the medium with the means to identify the spirit possessing him or her.

6.8 Anomalies and deviations in the data

Regarding the musical repertoire of *svikwembu* I can not conclude that it is the same throughout the whole of southern Mozambique, because my field work research only focused on three semi urban areas of Maputo city. It is important to note that in the course of field work I did not attend a spirit possession ceremony. I rely on conversations and demonstrations. Thus there is a considerable gap in my description of *svikwembu*. I am of the opinion that, had I had the opportunity to attend a spirit possession ceremony, I would have had

far more detailed data than my research consultants were able to impart. Another gap in this research relates to the musical performance for invoking Monhé spirits. I could not record these musical performances because of the limited time available to me in the field. I hope to test my present findings and to take this research further in a future project dealing with the spirit possession music of the Shangana Tsonga people.

6.9 Value of the study

In researching this subject I intended to fill a gap in our knowledge of one of the most widespread active ritual practices of southern Mozambique. As I have explained previously, Honwana (2002), Johnston (1972) and Junod (1913) have made remarkable contributions to the description and theory of *svikwembu*. My aim is to make a further contribution in this field of music, trance and spirit possession among the Shangana Tsonga of southern Mozambique, and to say that the use of musical performance is extremely important to establish the communication between the practitioners of *svikwembu* and ancestors or spirits.

"Without music *svikwembu* does not work" (Morais, 2005b).

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Glossary

Adept - a term used by Rouget (1985), referring to a possessed person or medium.

B'ava - a senior instructor, well experienced and responsible for the *svikwembu* training course (Xichangana).

*Batuque*s - drums or percussion, a common term used in Maputo, Mozambique to indicate any drum or percussion of any kind. *Batuque* derives from the word *batucada,* which means to play the drums. (Portuguese, plural; singural. *batuque*).

Hombahomba - a term to indicate Shona diviner practitioners.

Khunhantsela khava humkwenhava - a ceremony during the training course (*ku thwasa*). It is held at the trainees's (*mathwasana*) house, with the purpose of fetching the spirits left behind (Xichangana).

Ku pahla - a ceremony to thank, please, and communicate with the ancestor spirits (Xichangana).

Ku thwasa - the training course for traditional healers. I also use the term *ku tchailiwa* as an alternative substitute *ku thwasa* (Xichangana).

Ku xaela - "playing the drums and singing to awaken the spirits and make them 'come' out and talk" (Honwana, 1996:252) (Xichangana).

Mahlonga - an indigenous Tsonga spirit. This term can also be substituted by the word *tinguluve* (Xichangana).

Mancomane - according to Johnston (1972:292) the name of exorcism amongst the Shangana Tsonga people; he says this name derives from the frame drum called *mancomane* (Xichangana).

Mandhlozi - a four-square rhythm used in *mancomane* exorcism to expel Nguni Zulu spirits (Xichangana).

Matwhasana - trainees undertaking *ku thwasa* (the training course) (Xichangana plural; singular: *mathwasa*)

Mihea - an alternative term for the *gocha* in Niassa province in northern Mozambique.

Mukotcho - an alternative term for the *gocha* in Zambézia province in northern Mozambique.

N'anga - a term to indicate a traditional healer in the *bira* ritual of Zimbabwe.

Ngoma - this term has a wide semantic range of use with many meanings beside drum. For instance, the word *sangoma* (Nguni traditional healer in South Africa) derives from the word *ngoma,* indicating a name of a ritual. In *svikwembu* ritual practice, *ngoma* also indicates a hut, a traditional healer's hut. Among Bantu-speaking peoples, the term *ngoma* has different meanings and usages (Xichangana, singular; plural: *tingoma*).

Nkotcho - an alternative name of the *gocha* in Tete province in northern Mozambique.

Nyamussoro - a polyvalent traditional healer hosting three or four different types of spirits from different clans: Tsonga, Ndau, Nguni and, sometimes, Monhé of Muslim origin (Xichangana).

Nyanga - a type of traditional healer who deals with herbal remedies. This term is also colloquially used to indicate any traditional healer in southern Mozambique, specifically in Maputo province (Xichangana, singular; plural: *tinyanga*).

Nyangarhume - a type of traditional healer who hosts Tsonga spirits (*tinguluve*) and practices divination and healing (Xichangana).

Nzela - an alternative term for the *gocha* in Inhambane province in southern Mozambique.

Oficciant - a term used by Rouget (1985) to indicate those individuals who are well experienced in spirit possession states.

Sekere - an alternative term for the *gocha* in Zambézia province in northern Mozambique.

Tinkhosis - the Tsonga spirits regarded as leaders (Xichangana).

Tinlhoko - the word means "a head" and indicates a slave or a recent captive during the Gaza Kingdom (Xichangana).

Tinyanga - plural form of *nyanga* (Xichangana).

Umobuyisa khaya - celebrations held at the traditional healer's (*b'ava*) house as a form of farewell celebration (Xichangana).

Vandau - plural form of Ndau

Vanguni - plural form of Nguni.

Vovós - grandparents (Portuguese)

Xingomana - an alternative plural of *ngoma* (Xichangana).