

Exploring the Concept of Globalization and its Effects on Women's Lives at *Kulamba* Traditional Ceremony for the Chewa Speaking People of Zambia.

by

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to explore globalisation tenets such as technology-values, space and popular culture on women's lives at the Kulamba traditional ceremony. At issue at the ceremony are gender inequalities influenced by globalization and Chewa culture exclusively developed by men. To excavate gender relations, social cultural anthropology was applied to understand Chewa people cultural patterns, in terms of how they govern and create meaning from the ceremony. Further, physical anthropology was also applied to help excavate women's lives in terms of how they adopt to the environment during the ceremony for purposes of navigating their lives and accessing proceeds of the Kulamba rituals.

The methodology adopted in the study was ethnographic which includes techniques of participant-observation and interviews. The feminist theory was used in order to excavate the challenges of gender, cultural values and globalization in Zambia, by drawing specific reference to women's stories at the Kulamba. Particular concerns by most studies on women's lives at the Kulamba ceremony are the socio-

cultural effects, since a feminist orientation offers an understanding of how the world is organised and determined by social relations. My argument in this paper is that not only socio-cultural factors perpetuate gender inequalities at the ceremony, but globalization too.

Key words. Globalization, Kulamba, Gender Inequalities, Class, Ethnicity, Race and Feminism.

Introduction

The primary argument of this article is that the *Kulamba* traditional ceremony amongst *Chewa* people of Zambia is underpinned by gender inequalities. The inequalities are in terms of power, class, prestige, ethnicity, age and race (Tamarange, 1992). Tamarange's (1992) assumptions on these issues are that women face considerable difficulties amongst the *Chewa* people because of gender differentiation in terms of class and ethnicity. But she does not mention unresolved and debatable gender issues during the ceremony. The debates are on questions such as, who does what, when is it done and who is the primary mover of issues during the ceremony? These debates helped me to expose gender inequalities among *Chewa* people. To expose these inequalities, the study divided the ceremony into two constituencies, namely *Gule wa-Mkulu* (for men) and *Chisamba* (for women).

Banda (2008) and Mchomba's (2015) arguments on this issue is that the underlying structure mystifies women as wives and mothers and that the structures expose hierarchical divisions that generate struggles within families. Banda (2008, p.57) observed that "a rough schematisation of gender relations at the

Kulamba festival is sufficient enough to provide an idea about the most dramatic events that have contributed to the women's subordination among *Chewa* people." These events reveal that gender inequalities amongst *Chewa* people are socially constructed through the *Kulamba* ritual practices. However, my argument is that such gender inequalities among *Chewa* people have been transformed and can be related to larger global socio-economic changes, in addition to the supposedly socio-cultural construction of gender. Therefore, the argument is that larger socio-economic changes, which the author calls '*globalization*', have had a profound effect on women's lives at *Mkaika* village during the ceremony.

Globalisation

Globalisation is interpreted in many ways by various scholars and researchers. For instance, Mazrui (2001) interprets globalisation in three divergent ways, namely; economic interdependency across vast distances, information availability and movement across vast distances and reduction of the world into a global village. As Shangquan (2000) observed, that economic globalization is the rapid growing significance of information in all types of productive activities and marketization. For Mazrui (2001), the main players in economic globalisation are 'Transnational and Multinational corporations' (MNCs) seeking to extend horizons of their markets. This means that there are two forms of globalisation, namely economic and cultural. In this paper, cultural globalization is the transmission of ideas, meanings and values from around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify social relations at *Kulamba*. This process is marked by the common consumption of cultures that have been diffused by the internet, mobile phones and popular songs. At *Kulamba*,

cultural globalisation contributed to the erosion of indigenous songs and *Chewa* dialects. Further, scholars such as Tomlinson (1991), Adora (2002) and Moah (2007) view globalisation as the opening up and interconnectedness of the world. From these discursive assumptions of globalisation, The author questions the view that women's subordination and inequality among *Chewa* people is rooted in the *Chewa* patriarchal system only. The author believed that the larger socio-economic global society plays a major role in it too. For instance, Crehan (1997) on this issue argued that "in recent years a number of theorists have become increasingly concerned with complex interactions between the global and the local." He further states that the world has grown smaller and even more homogenized. On one hand, the world is experiencing a growing globalisation of economics and culture. It is from Crehan's analysis of global cultural interconnectedness that influenced me to write about women's subordination at *Kulamba*. Crehan's analysis of global cultural interconnectedness also provided an opportunity to clarify the sense in which women at the ceremony are subordinated. At issue in the discourse of globalisation are matters such as, how does global capitalism destroy social bonds and all constituencies of social relations in the local? How has it created and recreated gender inequalities amongst *Chewa* people in Zambia? In order to answer these questions, the author used the *Kulamba* traditional ceremony of *Chewa* people as a discourse of analysis¹.

***Kulamba* Ceremony**

To begin with, the *Kulamba* ceremony is a thanksgiving festival to King *Kalonga Gawa Undi* of *Chewa* people of Zambia, Malawi

1 See Michel Foucault (1980), who described discourse as the symbolic order by virtue; by which the world of participants in a particular community is unlocked and opened up in a culturally and linguistically specific way.

and Mozambique. Ngobeka (2007) on the same issue explains that it is a unifying cultural practice for people of three countries beyond traditional values to include economic and social aspects of life. Ngobeka's explanation about *Kulamba* is a contested one because not everybody gains from it economically and socially. Ngobeka (2007) further states that the ceremony started way back before the colonial powers invaded Africa when *Chewa* chiefs were voluntarily offering thanksgiving gifts to their overall King *Kalonga Gawa Undi* in appreciation for the power he has to rule and take charge of the resources in their chiefdoms. In order for the ceremony to succeed, it draws upon colourful *Nyau* secret dancers. The dancers are realisations of the values of the *Chewa* tradition (Cameron, 1998). These values include taboos and norms (Serpell, 1993). Perhaps, the main theme of *Kulamba* is the initiation of men called *Chilumbwana* and women *Chinamwali*. The ceremony is secretly a celebration of potential mothers and fathers (Cameron, 1998). For example, when a girl child has physically matured, indicated by breast development, the family plans for the initiation rite to motherhood in the *Chewa* tradition. When the girl first sees her menstrual blood, she is isolated and restricted from movements until the day of the *Kulamba* ceremony. If the ceremony is many months away, the girl is regarded to be unclean, and her movements are restricted waiting for *Kulamba* rituals. As for the boys, the preparation for initiation takes place throughout the year, with many of them sleeping at the graveyard, referred to as *Kudambwe* (a sacred place in *Chewa*). Preparation for the boys' initiation includes beating of drums or *Mbalule* to signify the holding of the ceremony (Banda 2008). The beating of the drums requires masterly of skill, which is not just for 'ordinary' boys and girls, but those seen in the eyes of *Chewa* elderly people as 'real' men, translated in *Chewa* as *Akatswili*. The ceremony takes place at *Mkaika* village in King *Kalonga*

Gawa Undi's kingdom in the Katete district of Zambia, an area largely uninhabited before the turn of the 20th century (Watkins, 2004). The *Chewa* Kingdom has administrative structures called the *Chewa* Royal Establishment and the *Undi* traditional council. The majority of the chiefs in the *Chewa* kingdom are male, with a title, *Mambo* which is masculine. Therefore, almost all *Chewa* people in Zambia are under the authority of paramount King *Kalonga Gawa Undi*.

Nyau forms part of the ceremony such that without it, there would be no ceremony at all. *Nyau* has religious origins and its chief functions are to revere ancestral spirits (Taylor, 2006). The spirits are depicted in the masks that all-male *Nyau* members wear in the course of their performance which historically are conducted at events such as funerals and girls initiation rituals called '*Chinamwali*.' It is these superstitions and beliefs about *Nyau* that this paper explored in order to dispute scholarly arguments that gender relations are wholly affected by cultural practices, forgetting that globalization is also the key factor influencing the lives of women.

Problem statements

The subject of gender and development has been received with mixed feelings in Africa, because it touches on deep-rooted, historical, cultural values and practices of institutions that have, for a long time, been held with high esteem (Davies, 1993). For instance, Zambia as member of the United Nations (UN) is a signatory to the universal declaration of human rights. Human rights are viewed as universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. René Cassin in 1968 as one of the architects of the declaration for universal human rights conceived them as falling into four main concepts, namely: dignity, liberty, equality, and

brotherhood. Unfortunately, women's life experiences at the *Kulamba* ceremony are that of exclusion and inclusion from these concepts, despite Zambia being a signatory to the human right charter. In short, women face cultural, social and political marginalisation influenced by global interconnectedness at the *Kulamba*. These inequalities are related to income, health, social status and power. Of particular concern are women's servitude and safety at the ceremony. This is debatable. I argue that globalization is also the answer to understanding gender relations at *Kulamba*. For example, the UNESCO (2006), report on women's lives acknowledges notable efforts being made by Zambia to ensure the right to health, education, employment and agriculture. Nevertheless, negative realities on women's lives have persisted at the ceremony more than 45 years after gaining political independence from Britain. This gender inequality though picked by almost all the academic literature on the *Kulamba* traditional ceremony, is far from reality. Himmelstrand *et al.*, (1996) suggests that the socio-cultural system of beliefs and myths which form the socialisation process and the gendered education and training most women are exposed to, is from childhood. This means that the sex stereotype and gender segregation and allocation of roles in private and public life are primarily a product of socialisation. The reasons why this is the case could be many as cited by (Kelly, 1989), that failure by the country to offer a comprehensive policy for women's emancipation in rural and urban areas are the reasons for their marginalization. However, this does not confirm with the reasons why women are marginalized at the *Kulamba* ceremony. For instance, very little has been said about gender, traditional ceremonies and globalization in Zambia. Therefore, the focus of this paper was to explore the effect of globalization on women's lives at *Kulamba*.

Method.

The exploration of globalisation on women's lives at *Kulamba* was undertaken using ethnographic methods in terms of participant observation and interviews. Data used for the study was based on the research conducted at the *Kulamba ceremony*. The study was carried out at *Mkaika* because of it being an administrative capital for *Chewa* people. Participant-observation and interviews was the main method for primary data collection from *Kulamba* initiates, Kings, chiefs and guests. Further, secondary data was collected by analysing publications of previous ceremonies and masks used by *Nyau* dancers. The author paid particular attention to how masks perpetuate women marginalization at the *Kulamba* ceremony. While, primary data in form of fieldwork as an essential attribute of the ethnography was also conducted by participating at the ceremony as an organizer. This helped me to be immersed in the social activities of *Chewa* people. The researcher participated in singing and drum beating, interviewing women and listening to their stories at the ceremony. This helped me to understand the *Chewa* people social cultural dimensions that have taken place in postmodern era due to global connectedness. These whole cyclic interactive processes of interviewing matrons, initiates and some *Chewa* chiefs at random helped me understand how culture has evolved due to global links through music and artefacts.

Target Population

The target population for this study was the King-Kalonga Gawa Undi, three *Chewa* chiefs and newly initiated girls and boys from selected chiefdoms. Additionally, it included traditional midwives, counsellors' gender focal point persons. This shows how the researcher examined the frequency of issues that come up during discussions. For example, extensiveness in terms of

the extent to which an event occurred and how many different respondents said same things. From this, the author made a correlation analysis between two variables “Globalisation and women’s lives”. This made me to measure the degree of strength between the relationships.

Further, the researcher also observed issues of inequality and the comments made specific to the lives of women. This enabled me to collect data from two types of women namely; coloured (biracial) and black who participate at the *Kulamba* ceremony.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The genesis of data collection for this study was in the data collection itself and not after. The approach taken was participant-observation and interviews, which allowed for a broader generalisation about women experiences of *Kulamba*. This infers that it yields a deeper understanding of gender relations influenced by global culture interconnectedness. The author also focused on individual narratives and artefacts to demonstrate the ways in which women negotiate their experiences of the *Kulamba* in relation to globalization in Zambia.

Discussion of Findings

Current studies that are similar to the topic on globalization’s impact on women’s live are: gender studies in English speaking Sub-Sahara African countries (Madise *et al*, 1999), Post-partum, health among rural Zambian women (Gusfield, 1997) and the *Chewa* cosmology of the body (Kaspin, 1996). But these studies fail to analyse dominant causes of women’s subordination amongst *Chewa* people. Equally, there are numerous studies with a feminist theoretical approach on globalisation in African with a focus on poverty and development that are being conducted today. However, the theoretical approaches used by these studies

are quite general which fail to expose critical details of gender inequalities among *Chewa* people. This provided an opportunity to question the methods of investigating women's lives. The author used a critical feminist framework to explain gender relations among the *Chewa* society. The paper challenged these studies in their failure to link gender and development to the global processes of production. Marcus (1989) note that, many women's studies fail to examine the relationship between local and global processes. Most of them attempt to combine the political economy and culture perspectives. They only do so by explaining particular issues such as women's lack of access to land, and put the blame on cultural factors as the dominant causes of women's marginality. Nevertheless, the author dispute Marcus's claims that cultural factors are the dominant causes of women's marginality at *Kulamba*. This is because Marcus's study, fails to address methodological problems involving structural and frame analysis² which situates the women within the political and economic contexts and the local and the global in a disadvantaged position at *Kulamba*.

Therefore, the author used the concept of globalisation in terms of the rapid growing of information and marketization to analyse cultural dynamics of *Chewa* people and how women are affected by them. The questions are: is there a relationship between globalisation and development? If yes, what has caused more women at *Kulamba* to experience abject poverty? In order to answer these questions, the researcher linked the discourse of development and culture to globalization by mapping out Zambia's historical and political pattern of development. At the time of independence, Zambia was a relatively prosperous nation in Sub-Saharan Africa, though with inequitable income

2 Frame analysis are cultural norms values and beliefs particular to a specific group

distribution (Alexander, 1997). The structure of the economy was heavily dependent upon the mining sector and agriculture. Copper deposits were discovered in Zambia in 1932. Notable events that took place during the colonial period on women's rights to mining is that, women were not allowed to participate in mining (Muuka, 1993). It was criminal for women to participate in mining, which meant that she had to depend on agriculture for her survival (Tembo, 1992). Most women remained behind doing subsistence farming as the men worked in the mines. Until independence, women's involvement in mining activities of the country was negligible (Alexander, 1997). The legacy of British colonialism was that there were no women miners in Zambia. This marginalised women because they could not participate in Zambia's core economic activity (Kamanga, 1979). Therefore, historically, Byrne (1994) notes that existing literature on gender relations in Zambia is limited, particularly on areas such as agriculture and rural employment and not on the effects of colonial legacy to the women's right to labour production. Byrne's observation confirms my argument that there is insufficient documented literature on traditional ceremonies in Zambia that could help to clarify gender inequalities at the ceremony. This shows that gender relations in Zambia are underpinned not only by legal and institutional context whereby customary law tends to determine women's rights in different settings but also by global historical legacy of colonialism. For example, there is virtually no data on violence against women (including child abuse) before colonialism although small studies suggest that such incidences were high at *Kulamba*. Therefore, one would also argue that women's marginalization at *Kulamba* is also located in political economy tangled with the recent information transmission rather than culture alone.

Kaspin, (1996), contained that; class, ethnicity and gender are

the fundamental axis of the *Chewa* social structure. However, he never considers the impact of structural adjustment program (SAP) on gender relations at *Kulamba* as being the major social and economic hindrances to women's lives. With the introduction of SAPs in the 1990s, the ceremony has experienced social and cultural changes. For instance, the coming of Chinese nationals to Africa in the early 1990s exacerbated social transformation but also worsened women's life experiences at the ceremony (Longwe *et al*, 1998). The coming of Chinese investors to Africa has produced intimate relationships with local people especially between women and women. There are children being born out of such interracial relationships. These relationships have produced biracial or children known as coloureds in *Chewa society*. Critics would argue why I singled out Chinese nationals as though they are the only biracial relationships occurring in Africa. The differences range in the way Chinese have been integrated in the community. They live with the community, in the remotest areas of Zambia, while, Indians or Europeans usually live in peri-urban areas (Smith, 2009). The aim of this point is not to racially prescribe women's conditions but to describe how such relationships have reproduced other gender inequalities at *Kulamba*. For instance, the accessibility of resources by coloured and *Chewa* women at *Kulamba* is different from one another. From observation, those from biracial families have easy access to financial resources and political power compared to other *Chewa* women. For example, in the linguistic field, the *Chewa adjectives*, *Mai Oyela* used in song and dance is meant not only to eroticise the image of women but are emblems of sorts that give easy access to political power and resources. Priority for appointment to position as matron (*Anamkhungwi*) at *Kulamba* is not based on someone level of literacy and knowledge of healthy practices, but skin colour too. This explains why the *Chewa* society today

is characterised by ethnicity and gendered hierarchy. Crehan (1997) on this issue gives a new meaning to what has emerged in most African tribes. For instance, the presence of Chinese people results in a continuous struggle over meaning, in which *Chewa* people, for instance, try to establish what, is morally right and wrong. The Chinese presence represents a dominant group that now have a degree of hegemony over the people (Mazrui, 2001). This perpetuates the subordination and suppression of women at *Kulamba*. But on individual level, it is the women who are entangled into recognizing their own consciousness, that they are mothers or daughters, either from black or Chinese background. Through such encounters, to be called a coloured person, especially for men is to be stigmatized. Men are either socially rejected or experience internalised suppression when they are called coloureds at *Kulamba* as a result, have no easy access to resources that are expected to be distributed or shared during *Chewa* rituals. But, for women the racial slur ‘coloureds’ are held in front of them as mirrors as they tend to be appreciated, adored and recognized on a higher social status. *Chewa* adjectives such as ‘*oyela monga* ‘*muzungu*’ (meaning white) inscribed in the *Chewa* language perpetuate racial and ethnic hierarchy amongst women at *Kulamba*. But sayings also expose deep rooted stereotypes amongst *Chewa* women based on ethnicity. Furthermore, It was observed that new forms of *Chewa* nouns (dialect) that have developed over the years due to globalisation but are demeaning to coloured women only. These are; *Mu’Chyi-zungu* meaning a White-Chinese person. Before the influx of Chinese in Zambia, one was either a *Muzungu* (White) or *Wakunda* (black). But with the advent of Chinese coming to Africa, there is an infix ‘*Chyi*’ standing for China added to the noun of *Muzungu* in *Chewa* language. The problem with these *Chewa* adjectives is that they economically and socially define what it means to be a biracial

person. For instance, to the black women, it means that it is due to their ethnic background that they cannot be appointed as matrons (*Anamkhungwi*). But for the coloured women, it is their beauty which is the deciding factor of their appointment as matrons. This is because, all those women appointed as matron based on skin colour, have easy access to political power and income. This proves that scholars on gender inequalities in Africa do not consider race and ethnicity as factors facilitating marginalization of women at *Kulamba*. This shows how racial and ethnicity stratification influenced by global connectedness has reproduced different resource opportunities for families and women at *Kulamba*. Over the years, due to global interconnectedness, racial categories have been formed and transformed, creating different meanings and practices at *Kulamba* penetrating into families of the *Chewa* social fabric. Therefore, this shows the failure by the World Bank scholars on women's poverty to take note of racial and ethnicity transformation taking place in Africa over time influenced by global interconnectedness. Anyway, is it their concern to take into account such specificities? The answer is no. the author would have loved if they did because [IMF and World Bank] are the primary movers of economic transformation in Africa.

On the issue of capitalism and technological development, the author observed most women at *Kulamba* complained about it. They argued that it has created a crisis in *Chewa* tradition. It is in a crisis because people's feelings, beliefs, ideas and meanings have never been taken into consideration. In one word, Longwe (1998) confirms that the concept of development has never considered their feelings and beliefs as in *Chewa* culture. When one analyses the theories of development such as: the world systems and the new international division of labour, these help to explain how globalization is a contributing factor to the powerlessness and social marginality of women's wellbeing at *Kulamba*. The theories

assist in explaining fates and fortunes of women at *Kulamba*. For example, on world systems theory, Wallerstein (1974, 1979) states that it has been influential in the development discourse beyond Africa. My argument is that capitalism (globalization) and not world systems theories have created the world order. Capitalism has always disregarded national borders and has always been driven outwards in search of profits. But at the same time, it has generated and excluded, marginalised and dispossessed the poor in this case women at *Kulamba*. Capitalism has perpetuated all forms of social exploitation everywhere in the world (Foucault, 1988). Therefore, the world systems theory helped me to explain how the global inequalities marginalize women at *Kulamba*. For example, globalisation encompasses intercontinental travel and trade and the mixing of global cultures and populations, which have influenced women at *Kulamba* negatively. Neo-liberal policies, for instance, forced the government of Zambia to abandon the provision of social welfare responsibilities, such as the provision of monthly allowances to chiefs (Moyo, 2004). This negatively affects women chiefs more than the males ones as there are fewer women chiefs' in position of authority at *Kulamba*. The argument is that despite the growing promises about the benefits of globalisation, it has created a reality that is the opposite of its promoter's rhetoric. This is because; the traditional economy promoted by the ceremony that provided a solace to the *Chewa* people has virtually been destroyed. In short, the unleashing of violent global cultural forces of capitalism has created deep divisions among women perpetuating envy, greed and bad taste to women's consumption desires, such as tastes for mobile phones and new fashions at *Kulamba*.

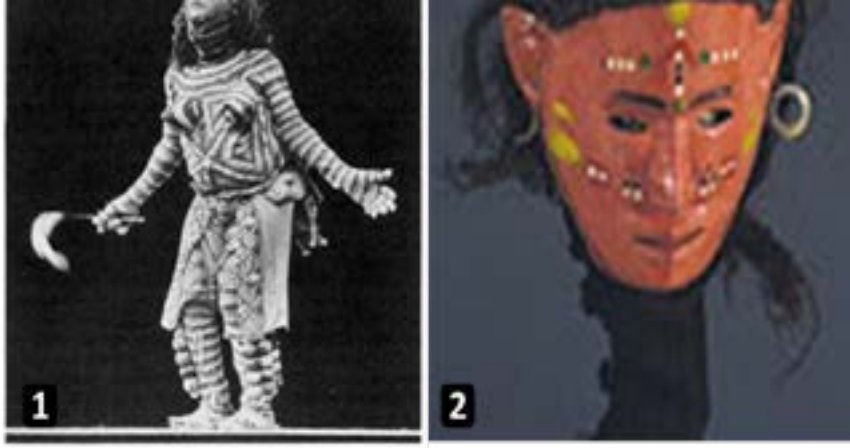
According to Chauncey (1981), the global penetration of the mass media, films, tastes and values have a powerful impact upon non-western cultures, in this case *Kulamba*. The television,

films, popular music and advertising dominated by the United States (USA) and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) has pervaded the world. These industries have transmitted a possessive individualism that fragments tightly knit communities and propagated consumer tastes that influence the dress, the languages, food and attitudes of women at *Kulamba*. It also popularises notions of sexual, gender and authority relations that collide with *Chewa* notions of virtuous behaviours. For example, technology has created a new form of communication at *Kulamba*. People are no longer relying on drums (or skills from representatives of chief *Chikuwe* [the shouter]) to communicate to different participants at *Kulamba*, but through mobile phones. The problem with mobile phones during *Kulamba* is that, it has its own dark side to women's lives. This is because on one hand, the world for women at *Kulamba* is fractured, because the cement that bonded different women together, even ethnicity into unitary imagined *Chewa* community has crumbled. More women are battered by their husbands, when found with suspicious messages from boyfriends on mobile phone screens. The phones have also created social classes to women. Those who can afford to acquire mobile phones have higher social recognition.

Another striking women's issue on the effect of globalization relates to women's health at *Kulamba*. There is available data that the influx of Europeans in Africa in late 19th century caused tremendous changes to women's health experiences (Williams, 2002). This experience is not only common at *Kulamba*, but also in the whole of Africa. Historians on this issue have recorded that the coming in contact with European obstetricians had a profound effect on women's birth practices and knowledge (Young, 1977). My observation on birth practices among *Chewa* women at *Kulamba* reveal great bias for western culture. Birth practices such as use of contraceptives are motivated and driven by western

capitalism, as being the best for women. Kate Crehan (1997) gives insights into the motive of the colonial administrators' biases against traditional practice. For example, two of the most prevalent reasons for women to use western types of information at *Kulamba* on giving birth or control are to postpone pregnancies to achieve their desired family size. At *Kulamba*, motherhood is the condition of women who inhabit or perform the role of bearing some relation to their children. On short, only biological motherhood is held in highest esteem at *Kulamba*. Nevertheless, Banda, (2002) and Cameron (1998) observed that the advent of western obstetricians in Africa is linked to colonial anxieties, which launched various campaigns aimed at stopping or controlling birth practices and reversing what they identified as the faulty mothering techniques of African women. Therefore, I would safely say that, the more significant effect of global information on birth control and practice on gender relations at *Kulamba* is the ability to reinforce sex stereotypes of motherhood.

Additionally, globalisation has facilitated a cultural transformation of masks influenced due to the global penetration of capitalist production and market driven economies amongst *Chewa* culture (Probst, 1997). For example, originally, the versions of female masks were the *Mwanapwebo* and *Amwalindembo* as shown on the picture 1 below.



Picture 1. The 'Mwenapwebo' shows a symbol of femininity. Picture 2. Source: [Available on line].

Nevertheless, picture 2 above is showing a symbol of femininity during initiation of girls at Kulamba. Sadly such masks today are worn by men, too. The masked dancers represent the dead spirits and express the solidarity of Chewa ancestors, especially with the young initiates. Masked Nyau society has not remained static, but infused other modern masks into it. In short, the above photo confirms the neo-liberal policies having profound impacts on Nyau society affecting women's social identity too. Neo-liberal policies have brought with it a sense of economic displacement and loss of control over masked dancing destiny. For example, historically, before Zambia gained her independence in 1964, Nyau secret society did not allow women to wear masks even if they were participants at Kulamba (Schoffeleers, 1972). But political economic changes influenced by neo-liberal policies have transformed this scenario to the inclusion of feminine masks into *Nyau* secret society. Therefore, the female mask version of *Nyau* dancers is fundamentally born out of global cultural influence and contact as shown on picture 2 above. The introduction of *Maliya* masked dancers is associated with processes by which people of the world are incorporated into a single society (Schoffeleers, 1973). This shows how globalisation has negatively affected

mask dancers of *Chewa* people at *Kulamba*. *Maliya* masked dancers are used in the coming-of-age rituals for girls taking a new meaning in this era of HIV/AIDS (Yoshinda, 1992). At puberty, it shows how girls are socialised differently from boys as they take different roles. The more obvious example of this sort of penetration of localities is interactions with the global media. What is at stake in such examples is the transformation in routine patterns of cultural experiences which have brought globalized influence into the core of the *Chewa* culture. Television news brings distant knowledge into the intimate space of *Kulamba*. The *Maliya* dancers have fused modern knowledge on birth practices that have become routinely mixed with domestic ones factoring in awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS at *Kulamba*. Giddens (1988) as the most influential theorist on globalisation alludes to it as the intensification of the world-wide social relations which links distinct localities in such a way that the local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away have an effect on peoples behaviours. In this case, Giddens helps us to explain the development of how *Chewa* social system has been transformed by the influence of processes of globalisation. One would also argue that intensity of social relations of the world has helped the legal processes of *Chewa* people to infuse in and incorporate modern *Nyau* masks such as *Maliya* in the above picture. It is because of liberal processes of cultural perception that *Chewa* people have realised that a new legal and social process exists. For instance, the attraction of western consumer culture ineluctably associated with both economic and democratic liberalism has transformed the masked dancing of the *Nyau* society (Cameron, 1998). Therefore, the theory of globalisation explains the current fusion of masks in *Chewa* society, in the same manner as the *Amwalindembo*, and the *Maliya* female version of the *Nyau* dancers was introduced to represent a feminine and human characteristic.

Another point to consider is the role of money during *Kulamba* celebrations. It is the medium of exchange and most treasured gift to chiefs and participants at *Kulamba*. It is the medium of exchange because of fluidity of *Chewa* society. Therefore, I argue that *Kulamba* is a monetised ceremony now. One cannot watch or attend the ceremony without money (Nyamnjoh *et al*, 2007). But the monetised ceremony has had negatively reduced women's attendance levels at *Kulamba*. It has caused a decline in the provision of goods and donations such as the disappearance of vegetable donations and all food stuffs, which were very easy contributions by women (Mtonga, 2006). The money economy has created an increase in cash incomes to *Kulamba* which is beyond women's affordability. Economic changes have also pushed the participants towards individualism with older forms of solidarity under threat (Longwe, 1998). However, women are still required to participate in the organization of *Kulamba* festivities, without money. The women take a prominent role in preparation of *the* festivals. They are both organizers and childcare givers of *Kulamba* (Mtonga, 2006). While men are busy dancing and collecting fines for those who break traditional norms, women have double roles, such as dancing as *Maliya* as well as being mothers and child care givers. *Maliya* does not collect fines for those who break the *Chewa* customs and norms thereby, disadvantaging women in income earning. My observation is that even though under the *Chewa* cultural system, there exists *Nyau* institution similar to the status markets, which further reinforces women's subordination and their economic dependence on men (Longwe *et al*, 1998), it does not racially classify women as different entities. Nevertheless, the observance of restricted *Nyau* practice is crucial to the reproduction of family status. Women often resist breaking the *Nyau* secret practice because, they are beneficiaries to it. For instance, as confirmed by Crehan (1997)

at *Kulamba*, men often use respected terms for women who are married, and those married have economic gains from the *Nyau* cultural system.

Further, I observed that the process associated with globalisation provides challenges that women face in their lives at *Kulamba* ceremony. The main argument behind the conceptual debate of gender inequalities is about particular modes of globalisation (i.e., information technology, financial capital and SAPs as global culture) which is transmitted by the mass media lays the messy reality of complex processes of societal transformation. These changes take place in different forms, times and in different places. But they have significant effects on women's lives, individuals and groups of societies participating at the ceremony. Their effects on individuals vary in line with class, gender and ethnicity. For example, the spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic is directly connected to the global processes of information dissemination and technology (Cohen and Trussel, 1996). People at the ceremony know the dangers of the disease today more than in the late 1960s. Nevertheless, Morris (1985) on the traditional birth practices of *Chewa* people argued that they do not increase the risks of spreading HIV infection. This confirms my observation that, it is the new forms of combating the HIV such as condoms use that has eroded cultural values at the ceremony. Foster (2002) on HIV topic in Malawi confirms that the use condoms were inappropriate for a regular casual partner, thereby making more women prone to contracting the HIV virus. Succinctly, information technology and material production such as condoms shows the links between women's health and the global interconnectedness.

The other main global dimension which directly affects women's wellbeing at the ceremony is the change in the distribution of income. The globalisation of production and the liberalisation of trade have impacted heavily on women's lives. Women do

not have access to incomes collected at *Kulamba* as fines and therefore, lack money. Instead, the advent of neo-liberal policies has affected women at the *Kulamba* much more as it introduced money as the medium of exchange during the ceremony. SAPs showed the important links between globalisation and women's wellbeing at *Kulamba*.

While it is also true that the shrinking of geographical space, the interconnected diversity of people has made women of *Mkaika* village relate to the world in different ways, it has also brought different challenges to their lives too. Obviously, the global interconnectedness through the media brings to the discourse of development interactions and diverse social relationships. Today, there are more social relationships that are not confined by territorial boundaries. Likewise, cultures are now easily intermingling with other cultures. Individuals are able to pick from other cultures only those pieces which suit themselves. But, it is not so easy for women at the *Kulamba*. The women at the *Kulamba* ceremony simply have no capacity to reject the global culture. It is difficult for them to disengage themselves from it. For example, in the field of health and medicine, the connection between the village and the global world brought monopolistic aspirations to the women. Like colonialism, imperialism and modernisation, medicine has a different impact on women's lives. Drug colonialism promotes the ways of thinking about health and illness to women. Medicine has been used to coerce women into overusing (the pill) and has become a danger to their lives. Western medicine often becomes separate from the knowledge and practice systems of *Chewa* traditional values. Drugs are now often used for reasons that go beyond the intentions and instructions of their manufactures which are classified as a danger to women's lives at the *Kulamba*. This shows how globalization through drugs for example, has now taken a new meaning to *Chewa* people. The drugs have tended

to cause women's death because they are misused at the ceremony. For instance, in an effort to terminate the foetus, the girls who have reached puberty would rather swallow pills such as chloroquine, than undergo vaginal inspection a common girl's cultural practice at the *Kulamba*. Therefore, it is safe to say that western medicine is now a global force fused into the local culture of *Chewa* people. The NGO's such as UNICEF have become powerful actors exerting influence on the usage of drugs and the process of social change at the *Kulamba*. It is always the women who are suffering the consequences of medical influence. Therefore, the appropriate exploration of links between globalisation and the *Chewa* society is on issues such as consumer behaviour in terms of medicine and technology.

Conclusion.

The aim of this article was to show the levels at which women have been disadvantaged by global interconnectedness (globalisation) through popular culture, information transmission, material production and neoliberal policies. To do this, I explored women's lives through a historical account of the *Kulamba* ceremony on how it is affected by global processes of production. The assumption was that women's lives at the ceremony are under increasing threat because of societal values underpinned by gender inequalities. In other words, most academic literature (i.e., Foster, 1998 and Morris, 1988) on *Chewa* cultural was found not to be the actuality to the factors facilitating gender inequality at the ceremony. Through participant observation and interviews, I observed that the notion of patriarchy system as being the dominant form of women's oppression is untrue, rather, the global interconnectedness findings; have shown women embrace the new form of consumer behaviour, because they are beneficiaries to them. In this case international capitalism that connects people on a global front of production was cited as the main factor facilitating women's

inequalities in terms of income, power, right to education and health at *Kulamba*. Simply, this article refutes the assumption that female gender inequalities among *Chewa* people is caused by the context of generalised cultural practices. Instead, I argue that it is not only the *Chewa* cultural system that relegates women to their subordinate position at the *Kulamba* ceremony. Otherwise if it was, then they would not embrace it as beneficiaries. Women are beneficiaries to *Chewa* cultural system by acceptance of male defined terms such as wives or sisters. Those who accept to be called wife or sister have gained economically from the system. Female subordination should be understood from a broader perspective of global interconnectedness with the local cultural perspective, simultaneously. Therefore, the author suggest the explanation of broader global cultural production processes as the best way towards the feminisation of development in Zambia.

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