

**CONGOLESE IMMIGRANT WORKERS IN PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA: A  
SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THE AGE OF MIGRATION**

by

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I Saint José Camille K.M. INAKA declare that this dissertation is my own unaided original work. Indeed any necessary efforts have been made in order to acknowledge and reference all secondary material used in this dissertation.

signature .....

April 2014

## ABSTRACT

The present dissertation explores the Congolese immigrant workers' meanings, their labour migration and their transnationalism in Pretoria through the perspective of south-south social transformation. It argues that this migration is partly an outcome and effect of various social transformations that have been occurring in Southern Africa since the end of cold war in the era of globalisation and age of mass migration. The study draws on Castles' middle range theory and the comprehensive sociology of Max Weber.

This dissertation makes use of qualitative method, based on ethnography, and corresponding techniques such as interviews.

The study shows that what drives Congolese labour migration to Pretoria are economic (wage differential or cost benefit), political issues (wars, violence against human rights, freedom of speech), cultural (the Congolese mythology of migration) and psychological reasons (prestige). These migration processes and patterns are also determined by migrants' social class position in the DRC. The latter to a large extent determines the nature and status of their employment in Pretoria. In addition, findings demonstrate that a number of structural constraints and features of Congolese qualifications, skills, and even culture contribute to Congolese immigrants negative performances in the South African labour market. Faced with numerous barriers to professional incorporation, Congolese migrants resort to any legal or illegal means to bypass these barriers. It is revealed that the Congolese conception of social and occupational mobility is mostly understood in terms of economic or income mobility. This dovetails with the socially constructed meanings that Congolese workers attach to their work.

Concerning their transnational activities, research participants are shown to be involved in political, economic and socio-cultural activities. Most of their activities are nationally-oriented. Nevertheless, the weight of the tense political situation has an influence on their transnational activities and Congolese culture and/or homeland politics leads to their economic transnationalism. For these reasons, practices of remitting are connected with transnational political activities and culture. Despite the extensive contacts 'back home' socio-cultural activities of the Congolese in Pretoria are marked by cultural hybridization between Congolese migrants and South Africans.

**Key concepts:** Congolese immigrants; meaning of work; labour migration; transnationalism; South-south international migration; social transformation; South Africa; Labour incorporation; immigrants' upward and downward mobility, Pretoria.

To my deceased father Pascal Denis INAKA. May his soul rests in peace of God.

To my friend (even brother from overseas) Joseph Trapido.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

APARECO: Alliance des Patriotes pour la Refondation du Congo

ANC: African National Congress

CEI: *Commission Électorale Indépendante* (the Congolese independent Electoral Commission).

D.A: Democratic Alliance

DRC: the Democratic Republic of Congo

EFO: *l'École de Formation des Officiers militaires* (Training School of Military Officers' a sort of the Congolese military academy).

FAZ: *Forces Armées Zaïroises* (The Zaïrians Army Forces)

HRW: Human Rights watch

ICG: International Crisis Group

IOM: International Organisation for Migration

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RCD: *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (Congolese Rally for Democracy)

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SOB: Security Officers Board

PSIRA: the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority

TOEFL: Test of English for Foreigner Learners

UDPS: *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* (Union for Democracy and Social Progress)

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissariat for refugees

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.



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# CHAPTER ONE: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation on '*Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria, South Africa: a sociological approach in the Age of Migration*' explores the various meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attach to their jobs. It also gives an overview of labour migration from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Pretoria and analyses Congolese transnational activities as well.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of Max Weber's comprehensive sociology (Halbwachs, 1929; Paquet, 2006), this study examines the meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their work through the understanding of their labour migration and their transnationalism in Pretoria. In so doing, the study also contributes to international migration studies in the global south.

In addition to Weber's theory the study is also based upon Castles' (2010) middle-range theory of migration. Castles (2010, pp.1568-1570) argued that 'theories of global migration should be based on the postulate that migration is a normal part of social relations'. Hence, the dynamics of international migration must be analysed as a part of complex and varied processes of social change (ibid.). This is because historical perspectives show that migration has been a normal aspect of social life and especially of social change throughout history. Goldin and his co-authors (2011) support Castles' viewpoint by arguing that migration is a part of human nature and is implied in the logic of recent social changes. For them, immigrants have shaped our world and define our future. This means that connectivity between people due to movement has been the cause of both positive changes (cultural, economic, technologic, political development) and negative changes (slavery, destruction of some civilisations, colonialism, imperialism and so on).

Therefore, Castles (2010, p.1568) thinks that 'theories of migration should be embedded in a broader social theory. It also means that research on any specific migration phenomenon must always include research on the societal context in which it takes place'. Finally, Castles concluded that because change usually starts at the local level, it is important to link local-level experiences of migration (either in sending or receiving countries) with other socio-

spatial levels and particularly with global processes. For this reason, Castles (2010, p.1574) suggested that ‘a middle-range theory would allow analysis of the regularities and variations in specific types of migration that share some important common characteristics: for instance flows of different types (e.g. labour migration and asylum migration)’.

Following Castles’ ideas, this dissertation posits that Congolese labour migration to Pretoria is one aspect of social transformation that the global South has experienced since the end of the cold war. The latter is marked by the escalation of professional mobility in the Southern African region. The present study is indeed embedded in the context of social change that both countries (South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo) encounter in this ‘*era of globalisation*’ (Martin, 2001) and the ‘*age of mass migration*’ (Hatton & Williamson, 1998).

Roughly speaking, South Africa has experienced an influx of Congolese non-guest immigrant workers since the end of apartheid. The presence of immigrants from the DRC (and other African countries) triggers the various social, economic, political and cultural challenges that South Africa is facing. At the same time, the DRC is undergoing the consequences of state collapse - such as public maladministration, military conflicts, corruption, pervasive poverty and various humanitarian crises. However, reasons driving Congolese labour migration to South Africa are complex and existing theories have overlooked many of them. This is the same for most of Congolese immigrants’ transnational activities in Pretoria. Moreover, the meanings which they attribute to work seem unstudied.

Practically, the study wants to fill gaps on the above-mentioned unstudied or overlooked topics. Actually, many scholars have been interested in South Africa migration before, during and after apartheid. Many scholars such as Whiteside, (1988), Jeeves, Crush and Yudelman (1991), Thompson (2001), Crush (2000), Vale (2002), Wentzel and Tlabela (2006) provided historical overviews of the international labour migration in South Africa. They showed how that labour migration started in 19<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of indentured workers from India and China and skilled workers from Europe. They also analysed what happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the waves immigrant workers from some African countries (Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, Mozambique and - few workers were from - Tanzania and Angola) until the end of apartheid.

In the present post-apartheid South Africa, scholars such as Maja & Nakanyane (2007), Adepoju (2000; 2003), Bouillon & Morris (2001), Bouillon (2001), have worked on

immigrant workers from countries which had never been suppliers of labour in South Africa before and during apartheid (such as Nigeria, the DRC, Eritrea, Senegal, Burundi, Uganda, Ghana, etc.). In fact, the existing large and growing body of literature on international migration in South Africa gives credence to Crush (2000, p.13) who asserted that: ‘the history of migration in South Africa is one of the most researched and well-documented fields in the region’.

In light of this, it is capital to recall that this dissertation is firstly interested in the Congolese immigrant workers’ meanings of work. However, it has to be clarified that an exploration of Congolese meanings of work cannot be understood independently of the determinants of their labour migration to Pretoria. In addition, as these Congolese immigrants keep ties with their country, their meanings of work cannot be comprehended without taking into consideration their transnationalism in Pretoria.

This theoretical understanding emerged from my empirical research. At the commencement of this study, I was entirely concerned with the Congolese’s meanings of work. Then, arriving at the fieldwork, I realised that informants’ meanings work were, on a regular basis, intertwined with their labour migration patterns and their transnational activities. I then decided to broaden my study by including the above mentioned aspects.

It is vital to take note that Congolese are not the only group of immigrant workers in South Africa that, in fact, little research has been done on the meanings of work, the labour migration patterns and their transnational activities of these other groups in Pretoria. Nonetheless, I have chosen the Congolese as my unit of analysis for reasons of feasibility. I am a member of the Congolese community, I am familiar with Congolese immigrant issues, and I have a good understanding of their socio-cultural realities. Therefore, I will be able to get to the bottom of a number of matters that they talk about.

To recall, this dissertation is interested in exploring meanings Congolese migrants attached to their work. In addition to that, the study wants to have a close look at the Congolese labour migration dynamics and determinants and, of course, their transnational activities in Pretoria. This might allow us to get a broader understanding of the contemporary world through South-south migration.

This remainder of the chapter has three parts: the objectives of the study; the statement of the problem; and the literature review. The first section outlines the main and specific objectives

of the study. Following the objectives, the subsequent section discusses the main problems that the study raises. Finally, existing literatures are explored in order to demonstrate gaps that this dissertation proposes to fill.

## ***1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES***

The main objective of the study is:

To comprehend meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their jobs in Pretoria.

Concerning the specific objectives and their related questions, this dissertation:

- Explores the phenomena that drive Congolese labour migration in Pretoria.
- Analyses the professions and occupations Congolese undertake and their social and economic mobility as workers in Pretoria.
- Explains strategies adopted by Congolese immigrant workers' concerning their professional integration into the South African labour market.
- Explores Congolese immigrant workers' transnational activities between the DRC and Pretoria.

## ***1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION***

The principal objective of this dissertation is to find out the meaning of actions that Congolese immigrant workers undertake in their professional lives. As I am working in theoretical model of Max Weber, this is my research question:

- What meanings do Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their work in Pretoria?
- Following that, I identify three areas that help me to break down this main question into a number of specific questions. These areas are about:
  - The causes of Congolese labour migration.
  - Features related to the employment of Congolese immigrant workers and their meanings of work. In fact, these features are related to the issues of upward and

downward mobility, professional incorporation barriers and their meanings of professional identity and their status in Pretoria.

- Transnational activities and their impacts on immigrant workers.

On the causes of the Congolese labour migration to Pretoria, it is worth reminding ourselves that there are an observable number of Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria. It appears that these Congolese immigrant workers are in almost every kind of social and professional category, especially middle class (professionals) and working class categories. Indeed, this raises a number of questions: What drives Congolese labour migration to Pretoria? Why did they choose to immigrate to South Africa, especially Pretoria? In so doing, did they get information about the South African migratory requirements and employment before they left the DRC?

Indeed, it is important to mention that on the question of push factors, almost all writings on Congolese migration identify economic factors (e.g. wage differentials) and security issues (political turmoil and wars) as principal causes of their migration to South Africa. In addition to those well-known factors, this study seeks to explore some psychological and cultural factors that appear to be another component of the push factor – especially the high social importance attributed to the fact of living or going abroad among Congolese. Questions emerging from this presupposition include the following: is it for that reason – i.e. prestige – that some former professionals in the DRC work as security guards, and cleaners in Pretoria? Why did some Congolese migrants leave their more ‘honourable jobs’ in order to be involved in illegal low-paid jobs? What do they feel about their work and/or status?

Talking about features related to the employment of Congolese immigrant workers, it is firstly important to note that a great number of studies have shown that Congolese immigrant workers – like other black African immigrants in South Africa - are mostly involved in the underemployment and in underpaid occupations in the informal sector (e.g. Adepoju, 2003, p.8; Steinberg, 2005, p.2; Amisi, 2006, p.199). For instance, Steinberg (2005, p.35) has noticed Congolese refugees in South Africa are particularly well represented among car guards.

Surprisingly, in terms of profiles, evidence has demonstrated that Congolese immigrant workers are in general skilled, young, and well-educated (e.g. Belvedere et al., 2003; Steinberg, 2005, p.26; Rugunanan & Smit, 2011, p.111). Thus many studies have indicated



that, in terms of occupational categories, Congolese immigrant workers are in the main downwardly mobile (e.g. Bouillon, 2001; Steinberg, 2005, pp.33-35).

Therefore, it is worth knowing why Congolese migrants accept occupations for which they seem to be overqualified and which seem risky and underpaid. What were their class positions and/or professions in the country of origin? This raises additional questions: Are there links or similarities between Congolese immigrants' occupations and/or class positions in the DRC and Pretoria respectively? Do they encounter upward or downward mobility in Pretoria? What do Congolese immigrant workers think about their presence, work, status, and identities?

Regarding South African immigrant labour law, labour relations and the job market, it is possible to say that the battery of laws looks very restrictive vis-à-vis immigrant workers (Crush & MacDonald, 2001, pp.1-7). Indeed, it is not only difficult to get a job permit but also to be employed. The high rate of unemployment and the natives' anti-immigrant sentiments constitute a great barrier for Congolese migrant workers' professional incorporation and allocation.

Similarly, problems of learning the host country's languages, the issue of the recognition of Congolese qualifications and skills in the Pretoria labour market and the Congolese's imported professional practices, which are often marked by ethnicity and corruption, are also relevant labour market barriers. In this context, one should ask a number of questions. First, to what extent do Congolese immigrant workers meet Pretoria's workforce demands? In other words, are the skills and/or credentials brought by Congolese immigrant workers immediately suited to Pretoria's labour market? What strategies do they adopt in their professional lives vis-à-vis the restrictive labour laws, the narrow job market, and the natives' anti-immigrant sentiments?

It has been stated that some Congolese illegal working class immigrants claim refugee status in order to get legal documents even though they are not actually threatened at home (e.g. Steinberg, 2005; Losango, 2006). It is a more surprising finding of this study that even many professionals such as doctors and engineers get refugee status in order to get a job. Plus, despite what they gain as incomes, these professionals are also involved in the informal second economy. Therefore, a detailed understanding of the uses of informality has an important place in this research.

Apropos transnational activities within the Congolese community, due to strong ethnic, political, and regional divisions in Congolese networks (Amisi & Ballard, 2005, pp.8-9), there is a marked lack of solidarity within the Congolese community which may have contributed to the aforementioned absence of their upward social and economic mobility in South Africa. Moreover, the sense of mutual assistance and protection one associates with immigrant communities is often absent (Kadima & Kalombo, 1995; Bouillon, 2001; Steinberg, 2005). These ethnic, political and regional tensions within the Congolese community are linked to political differences – especially between people from the East (supposed to be in majority pro-Kabila) and those from the West (asserted to be in majority pro-opposition) which might prevent them from being as strongly organised as some other francophone communities.

In fact, due to these Congolese transnational ethnic identity fights can happen anytime between those termed ‘*Collabos*<sup>1</sup>’ and ‘*combattants*<sup>2</sup>’. Congolese who are from the East are offensively called ‘*Collabos*’ by ‘*combattants*’, who are mostly Congolese from the West. For example, in December 2011 and January 2012, tensions caused by the outcome of presidential elections in the D.R. Congo resulted in several fights between ‘*Collabos*’ and ‘*combattants*’ in Sunnyside, Pretoria.

It is indeed crucial to understand in depth whether these conflicts prevent Congolese immigrant workers from organising for themselves a helpful structure for professional integration and protection such as that which Lliteras (2009) has noted among Senegalese Tijanis in Cape Town. The dynamics of this transnational conflict are poorly understood and have, as yet, not been looked at by social scientists. Hence there is a need to ask: what are Congolese immigrant workers’ transnational activities in Pretoria? Also, how do these transnational activities impact on their homeland and on their receiving country as well?

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<sup>1</sup> ‘*Collabos*’ is a pejorative slang from the French word ‘*collaborateurs*’ which means collaborators. This term was often used during the Second World War by French who accused some of their leader to collaborate with Germans who invaded their country. In terms of politics, it fits into a Congolese narrative about their country’s occupation by outsiders and the natives who accept to be led by foreigner political leaders. An important part of this narrative is the belief, widely held among the Congolese, that Joseph Kabila is not in fact the biological offspring of Kabila but the son of a Rwandan Tutsi (see Trapido 2011).

<sup>2</sup> In the present Congolese political popular jargon, a ‘*Combattant*’ means to be someone who combats Kabila’s regime. The term comes from the UDPS (Political Party belonging to Etienne Tshisekedi, an opponent since Mobutu era till now).

## ***1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW***

This literature review presents an overview of some main features of international and South African migration, especially focusing on Congolese immigrant workers. Broadly, the content of this review is organised around the following main topics: theoretical problems in migration studies; labour migration; the meaning of work for immigrant workers; and transnationalism.

### **1.4.1 Theoretical problems in Migration studies**

Some specialists on international migration studies have noted that there are difficulties of theory formation in this field (e.g. Gardner, 1983, p.530; Goss and Lindquist, 1995, p.325; Massey et al., 1998, p.3; Castles, 2010, p.1565). In this, Castles (2010, p.1566) argued that: ‘the quest for a general accepted theory in that field remains elusive’. This is because there are some formidable obstacles to theoretical advancement in migration studies (Castles, 2010, pp.1565-73). Five reasons have been advanced to explain this state of affairs.

The first issue in this field is linked to its interdisciplinary nature. For this reason, Castles (2010, p.1569) pointed out that: ‘it is difficult for an interdisciplinary field like migration studies to develop an agreed body of knowledge’. This is confirmed by Gardner (1983, p.530) who complained apropos of the fact that migration studies tend to use the conceptual and methodological tools of their disciplines. Therefore, international migration studies are compartmentalised on the basis of multiple disciplines’ objectives and methodologies (Castles, 2010). This disciplinary bias leads migration studies scholars to limit their researches to specific migratory issues, blocking *ipso facto* the understanding of the whole migratory process (Castles, 2010; Binaisa, 201, p.2). More than this, Castles, (2010, p.1569) caught our attention in declaring that ‘the problem of fragmentation occurs not just between but also within some disciplines’.

Second, on the level of regions, Castles (2010) puts the problems of the special and functional criteria. What he means is that regions in which international migration studies occur are dominated by the function (issues) of migration of these regions. For example, a vast majority of international migration are conducted in the global North and are focused upon migratory features in that area. As result, fewer studies have been conducted on the perspective from the South (Castles, 2010, p.1571).

Third, on the level of nation-state there is also some unease about what has been termed the ‘receiving country bias’ (Castles, 2010, p.1571). This concerns the fact that the vast majority of migratory studies focused on the migratory needs and/or challenges of destination countries. They do not therefore take into consideration features of transit and sending countries (ibid., p.1571). This is why most of ‘the existing migration theories privilege the host context over the sending context focusing on linear processes’ (Binaisa, 2011, p.2).

Four, the closeness of some scholars to political and bureaucratic agendas undermine migration studies, which often suffer from the influence of policy-driven research as some governments provide funding for empirical research on migration related to their national issues (Glick Schiller & Wimmer, 2003; Beck 2007 cited in Castles, 2010, p.1570).

Finally, the isolation of migration studies from broader trends in contemporary social theory is notable and regrettable as (Castles, 2010). According to Castles, ‘migration scholars have often found themselves marginalised within the social sciences because many social theorists do not consider migration as relevant field of research. The fact that migration studies cuts across disciplinary boundaries is one reason why it has gained little acceptance in mainstream departments’ (Castles, 2010, p.1572).

For that reason, Castles (2010) suggested that a possible solution does not lie in seeking to formulate a single (or general) theory of migration. Rather, his prospective solution is that migration researchers should seek to develop middle-range theories that can help to integrate the insights of the various social sciences to understand the regularities and variations of a range of migratory processes within a given historical and spatial context. Castles’ idea is that middle-range theory can form the basis for a conceptual framework, which takes contemporary social transformation processes as a starting point for understanding dynamics related to migration. The present dissertation attempts to use and develop just this kind of middle-range theory in order to understand the south-south migration as one of the facts of global south transformation.

### **1.4.2 Labour Migration**

Labour migration issues are among the subjects of extensive scientific and political debate. In a broad sense, some scholars like Liang (2007) and Goldin and his collaborators (2011) have argued that the history of the world is the history of human migration and settlement. That is

why an extensive literature exists on labour migration around the world and about South Africa as well.

The large body of literature on labour migration covers a great number of topics such as: ‘*causes of labour migration*’; ‘*professional lives of immigrant workers in host countries*’; ‘*migrants’ specific challenges and survival strategies*’, etc. In addition to that, other features that capture scholars’ attention are related to ‘*the meaning of work*’; ‘*exploitation and abuse of undocumented immigrants*’, ‘*brain drain*’, ‘*brain circulation*’, and ‘*brain waste*’, ‘*labour migration policy*’, ‘*transnational activities*’, ‘*question of dual identity and identity construction*’, to name a few.

Yet, for the purpose of this study, the most important topics to explore are:

- The causes, process and patterns of labour migration (determinants of labour migration).

The issues related to the employment of immigrants in their host country labour market (professional incorporation barriers) and their coping strategies for getting job. For a very long-time several explanations concerning causes of labour migration have focused on the economic perspective. It has been shown that from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until now, immigrant workers have been interested in employment, higher incomes, and business and trade opportunities (Massey et al., 1994; Hatton & Williamson, 2002; 2011; Liang, 2007; Goldin et al, 2011). Those explanations sustain the opinions of authors using a neo-classical micro-economic analysis of human migration which considers *cost benefit calculations*. They also confirm the viewpoints of those employing a macro-economic perspective that tend to emphasise on *wage differentials* (e.g. Massey et al., 1994; Liang, 2007). In subsequent chapters, findings of *this study demonstrate that the majority of informants left the DRC because of wage differentials and cost benefit*. It will be argued that they have chosen South Africa, Pretoria in particular, given the fact that they can gain or produce more than in the DRC.

Nevertheless, these economic oriented analyses need to be somewhat qualified. In fact, these economical based models show limitations of considering psychological, cultural, historical, and geographic motives related to labour migration. Because, these models cannot entirely explain cultural and psychological features that drive the Congolese labour migration to South Africa.

In this, some writings on labour migration take into consideration certain psychological, cultural, and geographic motives. For instance, some publications have shown that some Sub-Saharan African young men go to Europe in order to get a place in the social hierarchy in their home countries, which are marked by the myth of the West (e.g. Gondola, 1999; Raimundo, 2009; Trapido 2011; Sumata, 2012). This study will use this idea in order to explain that some participants emigrated from the DR Congo to South Africa because of a mythology related to migration and/or prestige of migrating to a wealthier country among Congolese (see Chapter two).

In short, it is important to note that labour migration is determined by numerous factors (Massey et al., 1993). This idea is strongly associated to the Congolese choices of Pretoria for some participants (see Chapter two). In this context, Castles' middle range theory appears well fitted into the present study because it proposes to take into consideration all factors related to a specific case of labour migration.

In terms of professional integration, a large body of literature explains that many immigrant workers, especially the undocumented, are highly exploited and abused by their employers (HRW, 1998; Vigneswaran et al. 2010). Looking at this from the point of view of social and economic mobility, some theories have shown that labour relations based exploitation, exclusion, despotic and or hegemonic control can give rise to demotivation, de-professionalization and deskilling of immigrant workers. This can have a salient negative impact on workers' identities (Phinney et al., 2011, p.501).

On the issue of the dynamics between immigrants' 'human capital'<sup>3</sup> and their participation in the host-country labour market, research has documented that immigrants who brought with them 'human capital' needed in the host country's labour market experience upward mobility (Massey & Akresh, 2006; Rooth & Ekberg, 2006). Put it differently, Massey & Akresh (ibid.

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3. Human capital is a really controversial term for sociologists who find it dehumanizing. However, some specialists of migration studies (such as Borjas, 1995; Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Castles, 2011; 2013) often explain it as a determining factor of immigrants' professional incorporation barriers. For them, it is the possession of command of the language, education, training, and work skills meeting the needs of the labour market of receiving countries. On the other hand, for classical and neo-classical economists', 'human capital' is similar to physical means of production, factories and machines, etc., into which one can invest (through education or trainings) and expect positive outcomes. This economist's conception of a human being as a commodity is source of much criticism from sociology (Scott & Marshal, 2009, p.321). Sociologists indeed consider that concept inappropriate and inhumane. In fact, this study totally agrees with sociologists. Thus, I do not use that concept in sense of economists. Technically, I use it for the lack of a better concept including all previous mentioned elements of immigrant workers profiles.

p.957) argued that: ‘for those who possess a high degree of human capital, the grass may well seem greener in other national pasturages.’ This theory will be used in chapter four to examine how some well-educated Congolese do not fit into the South African labour market.

Inversely, immigrant workers who lack immediately transferable skills encounter unemployment or downward mobility in receiving countries (e.g. Duleep, 2007; Kanas, Tubergen & Lipp, 2009, p.184; Somerville & Walsworth, 2009, pp. 147-149). These immigrants do not obtain jobs in line with the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their countries (Rooth & Ekberg, 2006, pp.60-67; Schnepf, 2007, p.508). This often occurs among immigrant professionals who face difficulties in having their degrees and work experience accepted (Boyd & Schellenberg, 2008; Chikarara, 2013, pp.125-132). In sum, Somerville and Walsworth (2009, p.151) termed this reality as the ‘skills discounting’, a term which refers to the devaluation of foreign work experience and credentials.

Moreover, literature has also shown that some receiving countries are accused by default of discriminating against immigrants via the practice of skills discounting. Sometimes, qualifications can have similar titles in both sending and receiving countries. However, the contents or programmes of these qualifications can be different. For instance, Thompson (2000 cited by Girard, Smith and Renaud 2008, p.793) noted that a title of the degree obtained from sending countries can be the same as that of Canada but, that title valuation is less. In such circumstance, it will be impossible for immigrants to perform well in the labour market of receiving countries. This study will use this Thompson’s idea to explain to what extent that some Congolese qualifications do not match up with the South Africa labour market.

On strategy employment for getting a job, research has noted that when an immigrant’s ‘human capital’ is non-valued or non-transferable in the host country workforce, she or he enters the destination country labour market as if she or he had the lowest skill level (Jasso, Rosenweiz & Smith, 2002, p.5). Then, later on they end up achieving upward mobility because they invest in improving their ‘human capital’ (e.g. Gans, 2007, 2009; Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). This is what Rooth and Ekberg (2006, p.57) call the ‘U-shaped mobility’. In all, I will pick up all these ideas later in order to explain why some highly educated informants accepted low-skilled work in Pretoria (see chapter three).

Considered from the point of view of social and economic mobility, however, Gans (2007, p.155) has noted the difference between economic mobility and social mobility among immigrants. He indicated that some immigrants face downward social mobility or occupational downgrading, while they enjoy upward economic mobility in their host country (ibid. p.155). Gans' idea will gain empirical confirmation from the fact that some informants in Pretoria in the middle and working class categories enjoy upward economic mobility while they experience downward occupational mobility (see chapters three and five).

Concerning coping strategies for getting job, authors argue that the use of ethnic communities or social networks play a significant function in immigrant workers' professional integration (e.g. Massey, 1988; Massey et al. 1993; Phinney et al, 2011). What often happens is that 'previous migrants help members of their families and communities with information on work, accommodation and official rules' Castles (2013, p.128). In this logic, Losango (2006) and Atam (2004) have diagnosed the importance of co-national networks for getting a job among Congolese immigrants in Johannesburg. I will therefore pick up these ideas and look at the key role that ethnical niches play in job incorporation among Congolese in Pretoria. (See chapter four).

After presenting a synoptic view of some features of labour migration, let us have a look at labour migration to South Africa and the case of Congolese immigrant workers.

As was said earlier, despite the fact that a sizeable body of literature exists on labour migration to South Africa, less attention has been paid to Congolese migration patterns and experiences. Much of literature has been produced under the auspices of Loren Landau at the Centre for Migration and Society in Africa (the former Forced Migrant Studies) of the University of the Witwatersrand. Other institutions also conducted and published several studies on Congolese immigrants in South Africa. Most of these studies focused on issues such as social mobility (Steinberg, 2005; Mavungu, 2006); survival strategies (Atam, 2004; Amisi, 2006; Mulopo, 2011); professional incorporation (Amisi, 2006; Rugunanan & Smit, 2011); immigrant networks (Atam, 2004; Losango, 2006; Amisi & Ballard, 2005); pull factors of their emigration to South Africa (Bouillon, 1998; Bouillon & Morris , 2001), refugee questions (Amisi & Ballard, 2005; Rugunanan & Smit, 2011), xenophobia (Morris, 1998; Kabwe, 2008).



What's more, these researches have focused on forced migrants (asylum seekers or refugees), who were in general male, and blue-collar though these studies sometimes included some female domestic workers, beauticians and street vendors. Given that they paid less attention to professional workers and elites, the present study finds it necessary also to look at Congolese who are performing well in South African labour market.

It is also important to note that in the vast majority of these previous writings failed to interrogate how Congolese labour migration, the meanings they give to work, and their transnational activities in Pretoria contribute to the transformation of the South South migration. Also, these studies did not take into consideration the issue of *the appropriateness of fit between Congolese professional profile and the needs of the South African labour market*. Most of these studies tended to emphasize the *South African anti-immigrant policy* and *anti-immigrant sentiment* as the main cause of the educated Congolese immigrants' underperformance on the labour market. They did not ask if these *Congolese skills and credentials are transferable to the South African labour market*. This study addresses this question and gives insights into why some Congolese skills and credentials are non-transferable and unfitted for the South African job market.

### **1.4.3 Meaning of work**

*The meaning of work* is one of the central topics of this dissertation. Given its significance, it is worth starting with discussions on the relation between the functions of work and its meaning. Following that our attention will be drawn to various factors influencing the meanings of work among immigrant workers.

A body of literature shows that workers' perception of the function of work influences the meanings they attribute to work. Economically speaking, many authors argue that workers consider their occupations meaningful when they allow them economic well-being, financial autonomy, and wealth (Muchinsky, 2003; Timmons & Fesko, 2004; Park, 2008). In contrast, workers judge their professions meaningless when they do not satisfy their various economic needs (Baldy et al. 2008).

Inspired by Morse and Weiss (1955), several authors argue that a job serves other functions besides economic ones (e.g. Williams, Morea & Ives, 1975; Loscocco & Kalleberg, 1988; Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Westwood & Lok, 2003; Morin, 2004). At that, Gill (1999) criticises her fellow economists for holding a narrow view, believing that the sole positive

aspect of work is the individual well-being through making money, or getting purchasing power. She thinks that work has other, non-pecuniary significances. For her, sociology, psychology, political sciences, and feminist and ethnographic scholarships perceive some of the multifaceted factors that govern the dynamics of social actions in the workplace. Hence, she advised that economists draw insights from the above-mentioned disciplines in order to identify the systemic currents that govern the allocation of resources, starting with human resources (Gill, 1999, pp. 737-738).

About the psychological and social functions of work, Johada (1982, p.59) identifies two major psychological functions of paid employment: manifest and latent. The manifest function is assigned to financial rewards of work. On the latent function, Johada (ibid.) distinguished five latent functions of work. For her, work serves to structure time, to provide shared experiences and social contact, to promote social goal, to grant status and identity, and to provide regular activities.

Following this line, several specialists have oriented their researches toward work as a source of social contacts (Ros, Schwatz & Surkiss, 1999; Morin, 2004; Rasmussen & Elverdam, 2008) and sense of community (Morse & Weiss, 1955; Morin, 2004), a source of responsibilities and purpose (Morse & Weiss, 1955; Williams, Morea, & Ives, 1975; Morin, 2004), source of security (Ros, Schwatz & Surkiss, 1999; Morin, 2004; Dale et al. 2005; ), a source of power (Freedman, & Fesko, 1996; Timmons & Fesko, 2004; Rasmussen & Elverdam, 2008), of self-realisation and esteem (Loscocco & Kalleberg, 1988; Morin, 2004; Woodward, 2008). Inspired by all these writings, the study will try to demonstrate how Congolese workers assess their occupational meanings based on economic, social, and psychological functions of work.

On the other hand, these functionalist approaches are subjects of several critiques. Critics have argued that they did not leave room for personal agency (Gill, 1999) and ignore numerous factors determining the meanings people give to work (Zhou et al., 2012). Therefore, many authors have explained the meaning of work through other factors such as culture (e.g. Messias, 2001; Bartolomei, 2010; Zhou et al., 2012), culture of immigrant ethnic community (Zhou & Nordquist, 1994; Gans, 2007; 2009; Park, 2008) time (Messias, 2001; Zhou et al., 2012), gender (Messias, 2001; Park, 2008), labour legislation, management, and Condition of work (Messias, 2001; Macllwaine et al., 2006; Park, 2008), individual values

(Zhou & Nordquist, 1994), religion (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Scott, 2002; Muchinsky, 2003).

To start with culture, researchers have argued that the framework of immigrant workers' original culture explains meanings they give to work (Macllwaine et al., 2006; Messias, 2001). In the perspective of assimilation to the host country and cultural change, authors noted that the local subculture of immigrants' ethnic community influences their definition of work (Gans, 2007; 2009; Park, 2008). This mostly occurs in contradiction to the country of origin's cultural values in the context of immigration (Gans, 2007; 2009; Park, 2008). As it is earlier said, Zhou et al., (2012, p.408) stand firm that: 'the meaning of work differs across cultures and contexts (e.g. social backgrounds, geographic regions)'. This theory will help this study to explain how the Congolese meanings of work are shaped by both South African culture and by the Congolese one.

About gender and meanings of work, Park (2008) deplores the fact that studies on the meaning of work among immigrant workers have given little attention to the gender-based nature of interpretations of work. Nevertheless, Macllwaine and others (2006) noted that male and female immigrant domestic workers in London have very different perceptions of the same job. This reality might also exist among Congolese in Pretoria. So, this study will attempt to give insights about how gender can influence informants' work meanings.

Conditions of work, job difficulties, and labour management are interlinked with the meanings of work. Messias (2001), for instance, indicated that issues of work overload, stress, and occupational health were salient factors that determine the negative meaning of immigrants' work. Similarly, Dale and others (2005) have found that the inability to socialise with colleagues and the workplace's ambiance govern meanings of work among Latino immigrant low-workers in the United State. Given these findings, I will try to scrutinise if organisational factors might influence informants' meanings of work.

Finally, individual values or drives, professional skills, and religious beliefs are also significant factors determining meanings of work among immigrant workers. In fact, Zhou, Leung and Li (2012) posit that the degree of fit between individual drives and his/her work result in a positive or negative meaning attributed to work. For instance, Muchinsky (2003) thinks that religious ideologies shape meaning that immigrants attribute to their work. That is why some individuals view their jobs as a calling rather than as work or a career (Davidson &

Caddell, 1994; Scott, 2002). In relation the aforementioned, findings of this study will show that some informants consider their occupations either as a passion or a calling.

In the light of foregoing, it should be emphasised one more time that previous studies on Congolese immigrant workers in South Africa did not pay particularly a single close attention to the meanings that they attribute to their jobs in Pretoria.

#### **1.4.4 Transnationalism**

As transnational migration studies are a new sub-field of international studies, it is therefore necessary to give a synoptic view of its evolution, definition, dimensions, and typologies.

Indeed, some authors argued the concept of ‘transnationalism’ came into international migration studies through the work of anthropologists Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton in 1990s (e.g. Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999; Itzigsohn, et al., 1999). This seems to be an exaggeration and, in fact, the concept of transnationalism is not a new one. As proof, Dinnen (2010, p. 861) highlights that ‘in the 1960s, the word transnational referred to corporations with established bases in more than one state. The word evolved to also represent ideas and political institutions that went beyond national boundaries’. The word does however seem to have acquired a new significance in international migration studies thanks to anthropologists above mentioned (Itzigsohn, et al., 1999; Portes, 2001; Dinnen, 2010).

In terms of definition, Schiller and her colleagues (1994) defined transnational as:

‘the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism, to emphasize that today many immigrants build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political – that span borders we call transmigrants’. (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1994, p.6).

Researchers distinguish three dimensions of transnationalism: (1) economic, (2) political and (3) socio-cultural (e.g. Itzigsohn, et al., 1999; Bauböck, 2003). These three dimensions will be used later in this study for exploring the Congolese’s main transnational activities in Pretoria.

First, economic transnationalism includes immigrants who are involved in formal and/or informal businesses between their countries of residence and countries of origin (e.g. Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw, 2009; Itzigsohn, et al. 1999; Portes, 1999; 2001). Itzigsohn and his co-authors (1999, p.327) sustained that: ‘broad economic transactions are those that are more or less recurrent, but do not involve regular movement or constant involvement between the two places. Perhaps the most distinct case is that of the remittances sent home by immigrants’. In point, the present study will display how the practice of remitting plays a key role in the Congolese economic transnationalism.

Second, transnational politics exist when migrants become involved in the domestic politics of their home countries and receiving societies (Bauböck, 2003). On this point of political transnationalism, I will use Bauböck’s assumption to understand details of the Congolese transmigrants’ political activities in Pretoria.

Finally, *socio-cultural transnationalism* refers to a diverse number of practices and institutions that take part in the formation of meanings, identities and values. In the case of Congolese immigrants in Brussels, Swyngedouw & Swyngedouw (2009) demonstrated the formation of multi-scale hybrid identity occurs in the Congolese diaspora community in the Matonge neighbourhood in Brussels. Inspired by their ideas, this dissertation will explain how Congolese also develop hybrid identities in Pretoria.

On transmigrant actors, authors identify two kinds of ‘transmigrant’ actors: those who conduct their transnational activities via formal institutions (such as multinational corporations, political parties, international NGOs, and states) and those who operate often informally, especially outside of formal institutions (Itzigsohn, et al., 1999; Portes 2001; Vertovec 2004; Bauböck 2003). Nevertheless, the majority of transnational activities are informal. For this reason, Portes (2001, p.186) argued that: ‘transnational activities are those initiated and sustained by non-institutional actors, be they organised groups or networks of individuals across national borders. Many of these activities take place outside the pale of state regular control’.

Talking about the typology of transnationalism, there are in general two kinds of transnationalism namely the institutionalised transnationalism and the less-institutionalised transnationalism. In this, Vertovec (2004, p.186) listed a set of concepts used by

transnationalism's theorists in order to differentiate the less institutionalised transnationalism from the institutionalised transnationalism as follow:

'theorists have formulated typologies such as: transnationalism 'from above' [...] and 'from below' (local, grassroots activity) (Smith and Guarnizo, 1998); 'narrow' [...] and 'broad' transnationalism (occasional linkages) (Itzigsohn et al., 1999); [...] 'broad' (including both regular and occasional activities) and 'strict' transnationalism (regular participation only) (Portes, 2003); 'core' [...] and 'expanded' transnational activity [...] (Levitt, 2001).' (All cited in Vertovec, 2004, p.186).

In sum, most of these studies have neglected 'south-south' transnational political activities. Also, they did not pay attention to transnational politics on the basis of extraterritorial ethnic and politic tension among transnational political actors. A particularly extraordinary and unstudied feature of the Congolese in South Africa was the vigorous electoral campaigns carried on by politicians among their compatriots in the diaspora, even though these compatriots do not have voting rights. The present study aims to cover all of these gaps in our understanding.

Alongside this, little work has been done on their economic transnational activities. For example, Kankonde's (2010) has limited his research to Congolese remittances. Likewise, Losango (2006) has focused his study on the helpful role that Congolese transnational networks play on Congolese migration patterns into South Africa. In dealing with Congolese immigrant's religious transnationalism, Nzayabino (2011) has also found an important participation of the Congolese Pentecostal church Yahweh Shammah Assembly in the church-based transnational activities. However, he limited his study on how the church helps its members to travel back and forth between South Africa and the DRC and to operate in their transnational transactions (ibid.). In general, all of these studies did not pay attention to Congolese socio-cultural transnational activities involving both Congolese and South Africans. There is therefore a need to cover this gap.

## ***1.5 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH***

As in sociological research in general, methodology is the cornerstone of the present study. Here I outline my use of qualitative methods – above all an ethnographic approach and the use of snowball sampling in order to get informants. In relation to techniques used for

collecting data, I resorted to taking notes, recording life histories, and doing in depth interviews. These were manually transcribed and thematic analysis was used for presenting the data. I also made use of a reflexive journal. In the concluding section, I explain how I respected ethical principles in this study.

### **1.5.1 Qualitative Method**

The reasons for adopting this method are twofold. First, the more important consideration concerns the philosophical orientation of the study, which is ultimately most concerned with understanding the meanings people attach to themselves and their lives. As stated at the start, this approach draws on the ideas of Max Weber, who developed the notion of ‘interpretive’ or ‘empathetic’ understanding as the crucial tool for grasping social action. Therefore, it would have been difficult to reach the main objective of this study – which is located on the framework of Weber’s tradition - by using quantitative methods.

A second reason is that quantitative methods are often inappropriate for research on migration, especially research concerning workers in illegal activities and/or undocumented immigrants. As proof, it was difficult to identify in any straightforward way whether or not an informant had legal status. This was an ever present reality for my informants – to give one example; I missed an interview with a prospective informant because he was expelled from South Africa to the DRC. As that informant was at that time a competitor for an official federation of martial arts in Pretoria, I had thought that he was a documented worker. Surprisingly, two days before the date of our appointment, the police arrested him as an undocumented immigrant. Then, they sent him home later on. Another day, I was obliged to interrupt an interview with seven members of a Congolese association. What happened was that when we had just started discussing about their association, they saw from afar agents of home affairs (wearing orange uniforms on which it is written: ‘MUNICIPAL PATROL’) with police officers. Five of them immediately left their beers and ran away. I was surprised, and I asked the two who stayed behind to explain the situation. They openly said that their comrades have many problems with their migratory documents.

These two examples convey the idea that the lack of reliable statistics on Congolese undocumented immigrants and/or unauthorised immigrants in Pretoria could not allow a quantitative study to be well grounded. Hence qualitative methods were the more practical way of gathering data, especially from undocumented immigrant workers.

### 1.5.1.1 Ethnography

Ethnography is understood, following Geertz (1973), as the activity of ‘establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on’ (Geertz, 1973, p.6). Drawing on a Weberian schema, Geertz (1973) has argued that the *locus classicus* of this interpretive understanding is ethnography. This is because for him ethnography, in intellectual terms, is something he calls ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973, p.7).

In simple words, it should be said that ‘a typical ethnography describes the history of the group, the geography of the location, kinship patterns, politics, economic systems, educational or organisational systems and the degree of contact between target culture and the mainstream culture’ (Fetterman, 1998. p.12).

In accordance with these principles, I have developed rapport with Congolese over a prolonged period before and during the fieldwork, especially from 2011 to 2013. I indeed made efforts often to be present at places where different categories of Congolese workers stay and/or frequently go: places such as churches, sporting events, pubs, restaurants, parties, Congolese national celebrations, conferences, political meetings, concerts, workplaces, home affairs, Congolese shops, funerals, and so on.

One of my advantages was the fact that I live in Sunnyside, which is the most important Congolese neighbourhood in Pretoria. Evidently, many Congolese residing in Sunnyside are working class or lower-middle class people. However, it is often possible to meet upper middle class and elites over there. I observed that the latter enjoy attending in the Mass in French at the Roman Catholic parish of Sunnyside. Others go to some Congolese Pentecostal churches. Other places that these classes go to are hair salons and Congolese shops. In addition, Sunnyside was also a battlefield for Congolese extra-territorial politics resulting to ethnical tensions. Briefly, it was a well fitted place for observations and getting accurate information from the point of view of my informants.

In order to win the confidence of informants, I did my best to make them accept me as one of them. My strategy consisted of drawing on different aspects of my personal and professional history in order to gain a rapport. To many manual workers I laid emphasis on my current status as a clothes maker/informal tailor and student. This allowed me for instance to convince female informants (one domestic worker and three restaurateurs). I also presented



my status as a Congolese public servant on leave for studying, in order to get in touch with ‘intellectuals’, middle classes and elites.

My personal nature as an outgoing and sociable person enabled me to become close to many informants and gatekeepers. This was helpful, as I accessed more important insights and experiences through informal interviews or conversations in relation to my topic than during formal interviews. In short, I believe that ‘collecting information in a variety of ways is always the best way to collect data that is ultimately reliable and valid’ (Murichison, 2010, p.104).

To recall, *ethnography allowed me not only to observe and build trust with an important number of Congolese* but also to have opportunity to discuss with them some important topics related to my research. This conforms Giarruso’s idea that ‘the ethnographic researcher usually conducts research by closely observing what people are doing, talking to them informally, and often participating in activities with them’ (Giarruso et al. 1994, p.101). As Murichison, (2010) said since its ‘beginning, starting with the work of Malinowski and others, ethnography has involved a commitment to ‘Being there’ to conduct research’. My regular contacts with research subjects allowed me to witness, hear and experience many realities relative to my research objectives. Still, one question is unanswered: how did I choose participants? The next sub-section answers to this question.

### **1.5.1.2 Snowball sampling**

The sample method chosen was the snowball sample. This is a method used by MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) when conducting their research on Congolese immigrants in Paris, a group that posed similar methodological challenges to the informants I investigated. Regarding snowball sampling, as it was clearly well-adapted for use with hidden or inaccessible populations, it appeared suited for the target population of this research. But I did not rely solely on the recommendations of informants as a ‘pure’ snowball sample would imply. I also tried to get participants representing what identified as the major different groups of Congolese immigrant workers. These major groups include religious group (pastors,), middle class - professional groups (doctors, engineers, academics, journalists, administrators), working class (security guards, beauticians, street vendors, bouncers, transporters, cleaners, artists), elites (investors), etc.

Therefore, informants *were selected by taking account of the substantial heterogeneity within Congolese immigrant workers*. I endeavoured to contact leaders and/or influential members of churches and associations so that they would recommend me to their fellows or any other interesting persons for my research. It should be said here that their recommendations not only eased my relations and/or connections with informants, but also made them feel comfortable to answer the questions of the study.

Compared to many fieldworkers embarking on a study I had several notable advantages. I speak many of the languages which my informants speak. I already had an extensive network of connections within the community, a good understanding of the political background which my informants took for granted and I was less likely seen as a police informer or spy than a non-Congolese researcher. Yet being an ‘insider’ also carried problems. At the level of methodology I can say that it was more difficult for me to stand above the heterogeneity and division which we noted above as such a feature of the Congolese community in Pretoria.

It is worth reminding ourselves here of the political and ethnic animosities among Congolese, especially between Lingala or Tshiluba speakers (from the West and the Centre) and Swahili speakers (from East). Indeed, that situation was a major source of uncertainty for me in attempting to contact some informants from the East. Although I was not personally involved in these political, ethnic and communal tensions, the very fact that I am from the west and a Lingala speaker was something of an obstacle in meeting some Swahili speakers.

As a solution, I did in fact use my contacts that had connections with Swahili speaking milieu as helpers. In this perspective, prior to commencing the fieldwork, I identified potential helpers who put me in touch with informants from the different major categories of Swahili speakers. Once in contact with these informants, I asked them to recommend me to others who could also be interesting for the research. Following that step, I begged to others to introduce me to certain others, and so on. Prior the fieldwork, I was doing my best to get some Swahili speakers by meeting them in their favourite social places: cafés, hair salon, park, etc. Actually, most of them were open toward me, although we used French as our means of communication. For instance, my barber, who is a Swahiliphone, helped me a lot in this respect. Thanks to him, a businessman from the East accepted my interview request even though his shop had been looted by some people from the West during the political and ethnic fights among Congolese in Sunnyside.

## **1.5.2 Techniques**

Throughout my fieldwork I undertook to take notes of interesting facts or events for my research. Then, I proceeded to interviewing, informally and formally, my informants through life story based, in-depth, interviews. After gathering all the data, I transcribed them and I thematically analysed them. Finally, during that process, I was always using my reflexive journal in order to appraise my development during fieldwork and compare different data from interviews and observation emerging from ethnography.

### **1.5.2.1 Taking notes**

First of all, it is important to remind ourselves that field notes are the heart of qualitative research, especially ethnography (Sanjek, 1990). Indeed, I was always taking notes during my fieldwork. This allowed me to differentiate frequent facts from occasional details while I was observing or interviewing Congolese immigrant workers. In that process, I paid close attention to details which appeared most significant for my research objectives and questions. As Murichison (2010, p.77) puts it: ‘the key is to make sure your notes allow you to address your key research questions and produce the sort of final ethnography that you want to produce’.

When I started my fieldwork, I used to wear a waist bag in which I put my notebook, pen and voice recorder. That allowed me to take notes of any important event, hearsay, and fact. However, a friend of mine, who is a night-watchman, informed me that some Congolese from the bottom of the social scale told him that they thought of me as an exhibitionist intellectual. For them, I wanted to show to people that I am doing research by taking notes everywhere, even during funeral wakes. This information led me to adopt another strategy. Hence, I decided to use my Blackberry smartphone instead of pen and notebook. I personally found the use of that cell phone better than my pen and less ‘exhibitionist’ during my observations. Moreover, people could not suspect me because it is nowadays very fashionable to use his or her cell phone, tablet, iPod to chat via social networks or generally fiddle with one’s telephone.

### **1.5.2.2 Life history**

The use of life history interviews was the main research tool for collecting data. This narrative method helped me to understand how immigrants view their own professional lives

in Pretoria. Here also, the experience from the research conducted on Congolese immigrants in Paris by Bazenguissa-Ganga and MacGaffey (2000), in which they were able to record the life histories of their Congolese informants involved in activities outside the law, gave me some interesting pointers.

In this light, I got information about informants' experiences of their labour migration trajectories from the DRC to Pretoria. Interestingly, I noticed most of informants were happy to talk about their personal histories and experiences without taboo. This was possible because my main questions were oriented to their personal experiences. Yet, with the intention of getting more information, I found it necessary to reinforce life story interviews with in-depth interviews.

### **1.5.2.3 In-depth interview**

Apart from the previously mentioned ethnography (during which I had informal conversations) and observation, I resorted to in-depth interviews. Hence, in accordance with objectives and questions, the content of my interview schedule was composed of the following topics:

- The reasons and trajectories of informants' emigration from the DRC to Pretoria.
- The informants' professional trajectories before leaving the DRC and in South Africa, especially Pretoria.
- The meaning informants gave to their jobs.
- The informants' participation in Congolese community and transnational activities.

In general, interviews happened without problems. Many informants told elaborate anecdotes expressing many relevant details of their life stories. That is why, though, most interviews lasted two hours, and many informants testified to their satisfaction vis-à-vis these interviews. For example, a recurrent last word from informants was that they were happy and satisfied as our conversations gave them the opportunity to share with me most of their concerns and experiences. In the same way, others said they had opportunities to rethink their lives in South Africa and think about what to do for their future.

Nevertheless, four informants did not answer a question relative to their strategies for regularising their migratory documents in South Africa, and two informants found my research very suspicious. In their views, the University of Pretoria used me as an informer against Congolese workers who have a monopoly in some industries in South Africa such as the private sector of security and beauty salons.

I did not come across language problems. My discussions with informants were most often in French and Lingala. In some interviews, we simultaneously used French and English. This was especially the case with intellectuals who have been living in South Africa for more than 10 years. The unique interview that happened in English was with a female street vendor who only speaks fluent Swahili and English.

In addition, although I did not encounter many risks, I was obliged to stop two interviews. The first one was with an informant who was smoking hemp during our interview. Despite the fact that we were on the porch of his building, people could see us from the street through the fences. What pushed me to stop was the car of the police that had passed while we were talking. Actually, I was scared even if they did not see us. The second one was with another informant who disputed with a South African man when he was explaining his view on the xenophobia. As we were in a quiet pub and their quarrel started attracting other persons, I felt uncomfortable so that I decided to leave that place.

It should be highlighted that the strongest difficulty I had was the lack of research funds. I conducted my research without either bursary or financial support from my family, and had to survive on the small amount of money provided by a friend. Thus it was indeed not easy to pay for cabs in order to join informants for interviews, to buy beers or food during interviews, to get credits for calling or reminding informants about interviews, to participate in Congolese events requiring money, etc. In any case, my passion for this study and sociology motivated me a lot. Hence, my motto in the fieldwork was: *'sacrifice today and enjoy tomorrow'*.

Turning now to the procedures of these interviews, I made use of Thompson's (1988, pp.196-216) tips about preparing and conducting interviews such as attitudes required for an interviewer towards informants, how to pose questions, materials to use or not, right place of interview, and capacity to reveal bias, all of which were useful for my investigations.

First and foremost, I made contact with informants and said or reminded him or her who had recommended me. Then, I explained the purpose of my research. I presented the English and French version of a letter signed by my supervisor requesting that informants give me their co-operation by agreeing to be interviewed. Here, there is a need to recognise that a presentation of that letter to informants was always more than helpful for me because its content convinced informants. One day when I presented it to one informant (engineer in mining industry) who was previously hesitating to be interviewed, he said this:

*'Eza serieux. Sik'oyo tokoki kosolosa. Avant, je ne te croyais pas. Ca ce n'est pas du n'importe quoi des Congolais. C'est U.P où moi-même j'ai étudié' (French and Lingala).*

'This is serious. Now, we can talk. I did not previously trust you. This is not the 'any old thing' of the Congolese. This is about the University of Pretoria where I myself studied'. (My translation from French and Lingala).

After presenting that letter, I asked each informant to help me in my study. At the same time, I did my best to assure their confidentiality. In that, I gave my word about their anonymity in my study and asked them to sign the informed consent sheet. Finally, I asked permission to use a voice recorder.

Eleven informants refused the use of the voice recorder. Hence, I only recorded 31 interviews out of 46 informants. I was also forced to rely on taking notes during interviews with four informants because my own voice recorder had been stolen. Luckily, I borrowed another voice recorder from the Department of Sociology that served me until the end of my fieldwork. In sum, when I noticed I had reached the threshold of saturation of relevant information, I decided to leave the fieldwork and started transcribing and analysing all data.

#### **1.5.2.4 Transcription and data analysis**

After having recorded interviews, I was firstly busy listening to and typing all of them. It was an important but tedious part of the research process (Murichison, 2010). In fact, transcribing was time consuming. However, I did my best to transcribe all of my informants' speeches and my questions as well.

In terms of data analysis, I used manual data analysis – especially thematic analysis. The main reason that motivated me to use the manual data analyses was my experience of it. Also, I did not have opportunity to master the use of the computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDA) or computer assisted data analysis software (CADAS). Although after my

fieldwork I tried to look for training or help from experts in CAQDA or CADAS, all my efforts were unsuccessful.

Therefore, the manual data analysis was indeed my best option. Still, I was also motivated by some scholars who claim the appropriateness of manual data analysis. For instance, Jones & Watt (2010, p.158) wrote that: ‘the key skills required for analysis ethnographic data are reading, reflection and interpretation (Geertz, 1984), and for these tasks computers are no substitute to human ethnographer. For that reason, most ethnographers still do manual data analyses’. Of course, since the late 1980s, the (CADAS) has been developed for analysing qualitative data by using software such as *Nvivo* and *Ethnograph* (ibid., p.158), its use rather serves to distance the research from the data, create a homogeneity in methods across the social sciences (e.g. Barry, 1998; Atkinson & Hammersley, 1995; Jones & Watt, 2010) and provide simple way of counting who said what and when (Morison & Moir, 1998 cited by Welsh, 2002).

In doing my manual analysis, I firstly started reading through my transcribed interviews, field notes and reflexive journal. At the same time, I kept on listening to all recorded interviews to the extent that I could even paraphrase some statements of interviewees. Then, I meticulously started coding or indexing all my data. This step paved the way for the thematic analysis. As the thematic analysis involves drawing out key themes from the data and then theoretically framing them, I gathered all important themes or problems relating to the Congolese’s meaning of work, their labour migration and their transnational activities.

#### **1.5.4.5 Reflexive journal**

Concerning the use of a reflexive journal, given that I was already in contact with some of my potential informants, there were grounds to keep a journal in which my experience of Congolese immigrants was written and updated regularly. It is also worth mentioning that since I have been doing research with Joseph Trapido on *Congo-Gauteng: Congolese Migration to Gauteng*, I already started to write down some information I got through informal interviews or conversations before I went into the fieldwork.

Finally, arriving at the fieldwork, I updated my journal every day. Keeping a journal was helpful because it gave not only the general information about Congolese immigrant workers, but also the opportunities to appraise my development in the field and change strategies in case of problems. In so doing, I was informing my supervisor and co-supervisors about my

process and problems. They helped me to overcome any dead ends I encountered in this study.

### **1.5.3 Research ethic**

Given that the research topic is of sensitive nature, I managed to avoid taking notes of risky details, especially concerning Congolese transnational politics and highly illegal activities. Ethically speaking, I have to protect my informants and myself as well. In fact, I did not want to appear one day in a South African or a Congolese court. This is what Murichison (2010, p. 79) advises:

‘In some cases, ethnographers have had their records subpoenaed or been called to testify in court cases based on their research. You do not want to create an ethnographic record that can be used against the people that were generous enough to serve as your teachers and participate in your research, Pseudonyms and codes or shorthand are one way to provide some protection’.

Of course, I make use of pseudonyms throughout this dissertation. However, this was entirely unworkable in some specific cases that I observed. The point is that, if I had used pseudonyms for some word of mouth or hearsay from particular Congolese, I would have disclosed their secrets. Therefore, I judged it appropriate not to write it down in this dissertation in order to protect the trust my informants toward me.

In all, all methods and techniques above-mentioned allowed this study to gather and analyse data which will be presented at subsequent chapters. Hence, let us present the outline of the dissertation.

## ***1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY STRUCTURE***

This dissertation has been divided into seven chapters. This first introductory chapter focuses on the *theoretical and methodological dimensions of the research*. It started with an account of the study’s significance, objectives and the problem area and research. This was followed by a literature review that reviewed literature on labour migration, the meaning of work and transnationalism. After that, the chapter attempted to justify methods and techniques used in order to address the research aims and problems. Finally, the ethical considerations were considered.



The second chapter on *Congolese Labour Migration to Pretoria* gives a brief overview of Congolese immigrant workers' demographic characteristics. Then it analyses different causes of Congolese emigration from the DRC to South Africa – by specifying the essential elements which contribute to the choice of Pretoria as a city of their employment. Finally, the chapter explores different strategies employed by informants in order to get into South Africa, especially how they circumvented the South Africa's ever stronger anti-migratory policies.

Chapter three: *Employment of Congolese in Pretoria* begins by exploring correlations between the Congolese participant's pre-immigration and post-immigration class positions and their occupation. Then, the chapter describes and scrutinises the main Congolese occupations in Pretoria. Finally, it explores Congolese workers' upward and downward mobility – by insisting on the interplay of cultural influence and migratory status in the understanding of the Congolese immigrant workers mobility in Pretoria.

Chapter four, which is based on *Copying strategies for professional incorporation*, discusses the labour market that Congolese face in Pretoria and how they struggle to overcome various obstacles by employing formal or informal strategies.

Chapter five, on the *Congolese meaning of work in Pretoria*, gives some insights into the way in which the different functions of work influence the meaning that Congolese immigrant workers attach to their work in Pretoria. It also demonstrates that various factors (cultural, professional, economic, etc.) have an influence on the meaning that Congolese immigrants attribute to their jobs.

Chapter six is related to '*Congolese immigrant workers' transnationalism in Pretoria*'. That chapter is concerned with all political, economic and socio-cultural activities that Congolese do in Pretoria. It emphasises the existing political dialectic of interaction amongst Congolese immigrants, their home country and their receiving country. The chapter also shows how Congolese migrants are mostly involved in informal economic transnational activities in Pretoria. It finally endeavours to explain the existing socio-cultural hybridisation amongst Congolese and some South Africans as well.

Finally, chapter seven is the conclusion of this dissertation and provides a summary of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO: CONGOLESE LABOUR MIGRATION TO PRETORIA**

### ***2.1 INTRODUCTION***

This chapter analyses the reasons that drive Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. The chapter has three parts. The first part looks at the motives why people want to leave Congo. The second part looks at the reasons why Congolese want to come to South Africa and in particular Pretoria. The last part focuses on migratory strategies Congolese use to get into South Africa.

Studies of migration have long argued that decisions to migrate can be divided into ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors – factors that cause migrants to leave their country of origin and factors that attract migrants to particular destinations (e.g. Liang, 2007; Portes & DeWind, 2007). In Sub-Saharan Africa, many migration determinants have been studied. For instance, Adepoju (2000, p.384) noted that in Sub-Saharan Africa, ‘the demographic momentum, unstable political landscapes, escalating ethnic conflicts, persistent economic decline, severe poverty and worsening ecological conditions have strongly influenced the trends and patterns of international migration in the region’. Concerning post-apartheid South Africa, Adepoju (2003) demonstrated important changes in the configuration of migration to the Republic of South Africa. He therefore concluded that South Africa is the major pole of attraction for migrants of all categories from Africa (ibid.).

Rather like Adepoju, the chapter argues that the push factors that drive Congolese labour migration to Pretoria concern: the economic situation of their country, and the frequent insecurity and violation of human rights which take place there. In addition a panoply of motives for migration can be related to cultural or symbolic factors. In all, this chapter attempts to show how the collapse of the Congolese state and the resultant economic, political and cultural consequences can be interlinked with the push factors which drive the emigration of its people.

Concerning the pull factors that send Congolese labour migration to Pretoria, this chapter has several important findings. The first is that, on the whole, the Congolese do not really want to come to South Africa and that, even within South Africa, Pretoria was not the first destination chosen by most Congolese immigrant workers. As I will demonstrate, they tend to regard

South Africa as a second choice, imposed by restrictive policies controlling migration to OECD countries.

Be it a second choice or not, Congolese come to South Africa because of economical, socio-cultural and political reasons. Once within the South Africa, they moved from other South African cities to Pretoria because of job opportunities sourced through Congolese socio-professional networks and because of the perception of greater security in Pretoria as opposed to other South African cities. Lastly, the chapter considers the practicalities of arriving in the South Africa: how a restrictive migratory policy, the lack financial means, and misinformation about South African migratory requirements lead Congolese to resort to illegal immigration in South Africa.

## ***2.2 REASONS FOR CONGOLESE EMIGRATION***

As stated above, this study has found there are three main drivers of Congolese migration to South Africa. In order of importance, these concern the economic reasons (hardship socioeconomic situation), the socio-cultural reasons (the mythology of migration; the failure of higher educational system; and family relocation), and the political reasons (repression and political instability).

### **2.2.1 Congolese hardship socioeconomic situation**

While other reasons are important, there can be no doubt that the major reason for migration of Congolese to South Africa concerns the dire economic situation back home. This situation affects different social strata in different ways, but in nearly all cases South Africa offers individuals more opportunities than are available at home. The kinds of difficulties they face at home and the sort of opportunities they are able to access in Pretoria depend on various factors, which I will investigate in subsequent chapters.

But in order to achieve a rough overview, I investigate these migration decisions by looking at various informants in terms of social class. I will commence with informants from what I term the Congolese working class (from lower class in the DRC). I then will end by studying the middle class. This is a preliminary and empirical division of phenomena; a more theoretical discussion of social class in this context will follow in the next chapter.

### 2.2.1.1 Working class

About Congolese working class, I interviewed a number of informants who came from the bottom strata of the Congolese society. Like many others, economic factors pushed them to leave their country. In fact, it is important to mention that they were informal, self-employed, manual workers who were employed on very low incomes in the DRC.

In terms of gender, it should also be said that, these Congolese popular immigrants or sub-proletarians were in general in two categories. While men were what is colloquially called '*lutteurs or débrouillards*' (strugglers or resourceful persons) because they were surviving hand to mouth, women were either domestic workers or street vendors. In this, the three following cases of informants are illustrative of how poverty drives Congolese from the bottom to immigrate to South Africa.

A barber, Ubangi decided to leave Kinshasa because of poverty. Ubangi firstly decided to immigrate to Angola. Contrary to his migratory ambition, his mother persuaded to go to South Africa. He explained his emigration from Kinshasa to South Africa as follows.

'What pushed me to move out the country is... well, my father got us from many women. We are too many children living in the same house. Truly, everyone survives as well as s/he can because of poverty. [...] As I had not possibilities to access to Europe, I planned to go to Angola. [...] In that time, someone talked to my parents about job opportunities for barbers in South Africa. To be honest, I did not like it. I wanted Angola. Then, my mum advised me by saying: "*In Angola, they kill people too much. It is better to go to South Africa*". I decided to follow my mum's idea. (My translation from Lingala.)

For the second case, a small businessman, Equateur Mambenga, decided to emigrate from Lubumbashi to South Africa because he was getting poorer although he had an informal small business in Lubumbashi. Equateur explained his decision like this:

'I left Congo one year after I got my *examen d'etat* (matric equivalent) in 2001. I did not work in Congo. But sometimes during vacations I was doing trades at Lake Moero. So, I paid for my books and my (school) uniforms and everything by myself. I was a hustler since home. I was also a *bradeur* (illegal foreign exchange dealer - from the Congolese French) in Lubumbashi. [...] As my situation was getting worse and worse in Lubumbashi, I decided to leave the DRC and come here'. (My translation from French)

Likewise, a female street vendor, Tswapa, decided to leave Lubumbashi because she could no longer stand being a poor owner of a small shop and living in harsh conditions. Tshwapa:

'The way I was poor. Eish, that poverty, oh my God! It was too much. [...] The most ridiculous thing was I was living inside my small shop. Can you imagine no wataa (her strong pronunciation of water), no toilet for a woman? For me, that was enough. People were gossiping, laughing at me, even my own relatives [...] Actually, I was hopeless in Congo. [...] Then, I started selling everything. Selling my all

stuff. So, I saved money, I save, I save, I save. After that, I just left Lubumbashi. I didn't tell to anyone'.  
(spoken in English)

It appears that a recurrent theme in these informants' testimonies is the decision to escape from poverty, and the fact that they were all informal businesspersons in Congo. This reality supports the conclusions of numerous studies of migration which consider the economic motives of emigration (e.g. Massey et al., 1993; Goss & Lindquist, 1995).

Interestingly, all of these immigrants were from the urban lumpen classes in the DRC, and thus form part of what Bouillon (1998, p.13) called 'popular immigration'. According to Bouillon (ibid., p.13-14) this 'immigration is made up from less educated and less qualified people seeking opportunities in South Africa, such as young students, work-seekers, craftsmen, and informal traders'.

Apropos of informants who left the DRC due to unemployment, my findings inform us that most of them had generally finished school, and had left Congo after losing waged employment. This reality is demonstrated by two cases presented below. These unemployed may seem to be the bottom of the social heap but in fact this is not the case. One of the peculiarities of Congo is that, with formal employment so universal, the unemployed - those who retain some expectation of finding a job or have a memory of once having carried out wage labour - are in a sense above the urban masses who are neither employed or unemployed but are involved in the kind of 'informal survivalism' I discussed above.

The first case is about a man from Kinshasa who now works in Pretoria as a night watchman. He had a good job in Kinshasa as a chauffeur for a member of the Congolese political elite. During our interview, he proclaimed himself to be an economic refugee because of unemployment in his country. Mongala told me this:

'I am a Congolese, an economic refugee but claimed political refugee. My brother, I was a personal chauffeur of Mister Butterfly who was paying me 350 U.S dollars. Unfortunately, after some months, he got position at the World Bank. I tried to find a job but it was unsuccessful. I decided to come to South Africa'. (My translation from French).

This case shows how unemployment and unsecured occupation can lead to emigration. It is almost similar to what 30 years old bar manager from Kinshasa has experienced. For him, he left his country because of unemployment. He said:

'What pushes all of us, you know it well. Firstly, it is the situation in the country. I would rather say the social situation. Life is not easy as here (Pretoria). And secondly, you are technician. You have completed

studies in Congo. But, the job is not given to anybody who wants to work. It is a must to have contacts and so forth and so on'. (My translation from French).

On the whole, these people were in a dire situation in Congo but they were far from being in the worst position, with their educational background and their history of work they are probably quite a lot better off than the sub-proletariat mentioned above. In short, many people want to leave Congo because they cannot find a job.

### **2.2.1.2 Middle class**

Among middle class, the study has also found that there are two categories: former salaried middle class and former middle class entrepreneurs. These formerly employed professionals who gave up their work and left the DRC for South Africa are in the category of Congolese which Bouillon (1998, p.14) calls 'Middle class immigration'. This stratum is comprised of doctors, teachers, engineers, middle management executives, etc. This shows that some people who emigrated from the DRC to South Africa were in professional occupations in the DRC.

My interview with a doctor from Kisangani supports this view. Doctor Steve Bolomba lives in Southern African countries since 2003. In the DRC, his survival strategy was to make unauthorised abortions - a medical procedure which is illegal in the DRC. At the start of his career he was hoping for the improvement of Congolese public administration, but eventually he abandoned hope and decided to leave his country. Doctor Steve said:

'I worked for the University's hospital. My salary was 50 U.S dollars. As I studied gynaecology, one of the ways we used to obtain extra money was through the practice of abortion. We knew that it was illegal but we were forced to do it. [...] I have told you I had twice visited this country (South Africa) in 1997 and 2002. It was a project of settling here because I had already my friends who were well-established here. But, I was hesitating because I was hoping there would be changes at home. Unfortunately, my professional situation became even worse. With all problems of poverty, underpayment, pressure from friends living here, I said to myself: well, I must leave'. (My translation from French)

Doctor Steve's account was typical of numerous conversations I have had with Congolese doctors, both in Pretoria and in Kinshasa. Nor is the doctor's account so different from the experience of the other public servants, like this English teacher I interviewed. For him, he puts causes of his emigration like this:

'I had taught in many high schools, namely high school for girls of Kimwenza, Elimo Santu, Ntinu Wene. [...] I have more than ten years' experience in education. I realised that I was going closer to my death without doing something special for my children. [...] Because of this I decided to seek a better living place as all others do in South Africa'. (My translation from French).

This example of the English teacher shows how the Congolese public administration is a disappointing and hopeless institution. For him and many Congolese public servants, to immigrate is clearly a last resort taken against the poverty provoked by the Congolese state. But while penury is clearly vital in these migration decisions there was also another constant theme, present in these interviews but which I found more widely when I talked to former public servants. In fact, they decide to leave the DRC not only because of underpayment but also due to the state of public administration which does not allow them to carry out a profession in a way that granted them any sense of self-worth or pride in their work.

Nor should one should be misled into thinking that having a job makes the migration of professionals frivolous. A wide range of professions – civil servants, school teachers, tax inspectors, etc. - should not be seen as being especially privileged. It is nowadays an insult to be called *Fonctionnaire d'État* (public servant) in the DRC. That is to say, being a public worker means to be destined to live in an eternal poverty-stricken reality. The underpayment, combined with the administrative disorder marked by ethnic cleavages, nepotism, patronage networks, and anarchy make the Congolese public administration a poor place to work (e.g. Matti 2010; Thomson, 2000).

While the benefits of corruption accrue to a few, for the majority these networks are closed (Matti 2010; Thomson, 2000). Salaries are absurdly low compared to the cost of living; public servants' salaries are generally less than 200 U.S. dollars a month and often come with several months or even years in arrears. An important group of public sector workers who migrate to South Africa for this kind of reason are publicly employed doctors who are paid more or less 250 U.S. Dollars per month – a salary on which it would be impossible to pay rent or buy food for a month in many Congolese cities.

In short, the wage differential, the anarchy within the Congolese public administration, and the lack of hope about changes in the country cause the emigration of middle class from the DRC to South Africa. As one can see, the awful state of the Congolese public administration is among the important sources of labour migration among the miserable middle classes in Congo, but it is far from being the only one.

Concerning middle-class entrepreneurs who emigrated because of economic reasons, the study reveals that, the dynamics of predation and corruption in Congolese public

administration also often pushes businesspersons to leave the DRC. I met two former businesspersons from the DRC who could not accept to be victims of what I term the predator public administration. This reality motivated their decision to leave the DRC. This is well illustrated by an interview I did with a man - Akula - who formerly owned a small road haulage business in Kinshasa – who now works in Pretoria as a welder and night watchman:

‘I had one bus. I struggled to buy the 207<sup>4</sup>: It was through my sacrifices I got into the transport business. After the seizure (by the police), they impounded it. If you go there to get it back, you will not find it at a good state. Maybe, if you had new tyres, you will find they are gone. Can you imagine? Then, because of these realities, I was feeling like I was a slave of my own belongings. Then, I was obliged to sell it (the bus). Then I decided to leave Kinshasa’ (My translation from Lingala)

For sure, it is not easy for someone to be a businessperson in the DRC if she or he does not have important contacts with Congolese authorities (Matti, 2010). The type of governance in the DRC creates a bad climate for doing business (Thomson, 2000) which has as corollary the rise of emigration of middle-class entrepreneurs.

### 2.2.2 Mythology of migration and social pressures

On the Congolese mythology of migration and social pressures, I have found that some informants were forced by their families or friends to leave the DRC because of the Congolese mythology of migration and social prestige. They came to Pretoria against their will. There is indeed one case to illustrate here.

Bolomba is a night watchman and dealer of the Congolese male traditional aphrodisiac known as ‘*Ankoro*’. Bolomba said he was forced by his grandfather to come to South Africa as he was about to get his diploma in electrical engineering. For Bolomba, he was forced because his relatives, especially his grandfather, wanted to be seen like other families which have members are abroad.

‘In reality, I did not have an ambition to come here. My grandfather told that: “*as your sister is over there, go there you will stay together*”. I asked him: ‘how about the studies that I am doing here?’ He replied: “*Studies over there are better than here. Go there. I will support your studies. [...] Living there is like being in Europe. You need to think about the family’s pride. People will respect you; respect our family when you will be there*’. Said Bolomba (My translation from Lingala)

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<sup>4</sup>207 is a sort of old second hand Kombi Mercedes of 1980s used in transportation Kinshasa as taxi-bus popularly known as an ‘*esprit de mort*’, spirit of death.



This situation of Bolomba corroborates what Chamba (2005, p.114) calls emigration based on the *'family pride'*. In his research on Nigerians and Cameroonians immigrants in Johannesburg, he reveals that some families felt respected and happy due to the fact of having some of their members' abroad (ibid.).

Another strong reason motivating the decision to migrate is the perception of migration as a prestigious thing to do. The associations between high social status and migration in the post-independence state are broad and deep. In such context, I was told in a conversation with three *'Basi ya Success'*, Congolese women, famous as sex symbols in Pretoria, that they emigrated in order to be part of the crew of the Congolese diaspora. One of them called Basankusu put it like this:

'You know yourself how they praise people who are outside of the country, especially in Western or developing countries like South Africa. I could not waste my time. I wanted to be seen like everyone. I'm a Congolese, we love *lokumu* (honour or pride)' (My translation from Lingala)

This case of Basankusu who left the DRC in order to climb in the high scale of the Congolese as an émigré is widespread because of media and popular culture (especially music) that gives a good picture of Congolese in the diaspora, associating migration with high social classes and success. This phenomenon dates to at least the 1960s, and increases year after year due to poverty, until today.

In the late 1960s, Tabu Ley, one of the Congo's most popular musicians once wrote a song in which various Congolese archetypes consider their lives at the moment of death. The rich man, at the moment of death thinks about his money, his trucks and his children whom he has sent to Europe. As this implies much of the desire to migrate seems to be connected to the imitation of elites, many of whom installed their families in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s (see Trapido 2011; Inaka and Trapido, 2014).

But from the late seventies onwards Europe was also the site of a considerable migration of non-elite people. These were the *sapeur's/ mikiliste* - young men who got into Europe, often on student visa's, but who subsequently went on to live glamorous lifestyles funded by various forms of fraud. These figures were celebrities back home, friends of musicians and lovers of famous *'basi ya ndumba'* (a kind of Congolese equivalent of the shebeen queen, though in the Congolese case they sometimes acquired real political and economic power) and added considerably to the mythologies of abroad.

Interestingly, in terms of popular perceptions, '*mikili*' - Europe, or rather the rich north in general, is still number one. Today indeed, in Congolese colloquial language, there is the use of French words '*professionnels*' and '*semi-professionnels*', to designate respectively Congolese who live in Western countries and Congolese who live in emerging countries (South Africa, China, Turkey, Brazil, etc.). In short, to be a migrant to the north puts someone in an especially high position in the Congolese society, but even the south is better than back home.

In this sense, it is often the case that being an immigrant is of itself perceived as an achievement in Congo – where members of the diaspora are perceived not only as benefactors but also often as moral exemplars, who dispense advice and are attractive to women. As will be apparent the perceptions of 'abroad' are quite unrealistic, even mythological – the colloquial Lingala word for Belgium - '*lola*' - is in reality the word for heaven. White people are termed *Bana ya Maria* (children of the Virgin Mary; meaning somehow white because Jesus, the son of Mary, was a white man). Pentecostal pastors promise blessings which will offer entry to Europe. Even where individuals do not believe in these rather fantastical accounts of abroad, they often come under considerable family pressure, from extended kin groups who do believe this kind of story.

### **2.2.3 The crumbling Congolese higher educational system**

The Congolese educational system is another factor that drives Congolese emigration. Among several reasons that push Congolese to come to study in South Africa, informants expressed the following facts:

- Lack of materials, technology, and qualified updated human resources in Congolese Universities or colleges.
- Disorganisation and mismanagement of the state higher educational system, especially postgraduate studies.
- Lack of some fields of study within the DRC.
- More job opportunities in Congo and abroad - especially in the multinational companies or public institutions - for people who studied in the English speaking countries.

Concerning the lack of materials and the delay in technology fields, many Congolese students in engineering leave their country because they cannot effectively study. That was the case of a manager of an electrical company in Pretoria. In talking about his migration to South Africa, Boscky Bozene said:

‘If I left the Congo, it was for academic purposes. I can say that in Congo there are universities. But in the technologic fields we are not really equipped. [...] But, here in South Africa, universities are more equipped’. (My translation from French)

Likely, Dongo, a watchman and masters’ student in economics expressed his concern about the Congolese higher education in saying this:

‘I was at the University of Lubumbashi, I regretted it. Almost all my professors died. All these big professors trained in the United States, in Russia, in France, in Belgium, died. You understand at least. There is a need to get professors who come from abroad. First, the government does not financially sustain it’. (My translation from French).

The last point here is about the new trend in the Congolese job Market. As English proficiency is a requirement for employment in certain well-paid institutions and because of a marked preference for graduates from English speaking countries, some Congolese indeed immigrate for studying in English speaking countries (especially South Africa and India). This is what an accountant, former member staff in the CEI did. As a response to the question on what pushed him to leave the DRC, he said:

‘To pursue my studies. Why? Because I noted, all companies that set up in Congo or multinationals were favourable to Anglophone workers who graduated in the English-speaking countries’. (My translation from French).

### **2.2.4 Family Relocation**

On the question of family re-location it seems to be mostly related to elite migration. Personally, I met several wealthy families that decided to live in Pretoria, apparently for good. This trend of the Congolese migration in the early 1990s is called by Bouillon (1998, p.13): *‘bourgeois immigration’*. In that time, Bouillon (ibid.) has pinpointed that ‘the Zairian immigration in South Africa was dominated by the ‘barons’ of the Zairian regime. [...] The majority are (were) businessmen and members of big ruling families, diamond and cobalt traffickers, import-export traders, senior managers and also highly professional qualifies doctors, engineers, professors’. Some relevant writings support this view. They approve that ‘pioneers’ among Congolese migrants to be established in South Africa were in general

persons from upper class' (e.g. Macgaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000; Mulopo, 2011). Part of this related to social distinction, pride and prestige, as discussed above.

However, another fundamental reason of family relocation of rich Zairians around earlier 1990s was the aftermath of very widespread bouts of looting which took place in 1991 and 1993. As many relatives or families of Zairians politicians and 'barons' were subject to looting and violence by soldiers and the 'little people', they decided to send their families abroad. They mostly opted for South Africa because, from the 1990's onward, Western embassies began to deny visas to Mobutu's collaborators. This was in part due to outrage at the organised killings of students in the residence of the University of Lubumbashi in 1990. It was also due to a more general waning of support for the *ancien régime* as the cold war came to an end.

Concerning links between Congolese labour migration and family relocation, Ingende, a mining consultant, who lives in South Africa since 1991, said they came to South Africa because of family relocation. He was 13 years old when his family decided to come to South Africa. Thus, he did not know the fundamental reason of his family relocation in Pretoria. Nonetheless, Ingende assumed that his father decided to bring them to South Africa because sending family to leave in the new post-apartheid South Africa was in vogue among Zairian (later Congolese) leaders.

Interestingly, the businesswoman added that, the fact of establishing family in South Africa was a sort of self-esteem and pride. Mado Makanza was saying:

'Actually, to life in South Africa around 1990s was a new trend. One should be 'classy' in order to be there. It was like living in Europa. You were respected at home' (My translation from French).

### **2.2.5 Political instability**

Talking about political instability, I would firstly say that it is true that many of those who claim asylum are actually economic migrants. However, it should be said that the situation regarding human rights in the DRC is very bad and many people come to South Africa because of a well-founded fear about what will happen to them in the DRC.

Indeed, this study has found numerous stories of Congolese who have escaped from violations of human rights. To be more exact, there are three reasons: violations of the freedom of speech, violations of political freedom, and ethnic cleansing.

### 2.2.5.1 Freedom of speech

The vast majority of information from the fieldwork points toward the fact that freedom of speech is severely restricted in the DRC. As consequence, an important number of informants who worked in media or human rights organisations ran away from the Congolese government's menaces. As illustration of the violation of freedom of expression, one female visual artist, TV presenter, and businesswoman was obliged to flee the DRC because she was denouncing the Congolese authorities' abuses of power. Bongandanga said:

'With my job of cultural presenter and journalist, it is like I was everyday creating problems against the President. As I was publicly denouncing what others hush up. This is what compelled me to decide that: *'I should leave the DRC because I was not anymore in peace'*. (My translation from French).

Basically, the existing censorship, control of media and brutal treatments and arrests of journalists in the DRC lead many Congolese to say that the DRC is a country of *liberticide*<sup>5</sup>. In this vein, Matti (2010, p.41) thinks that: 'due to the repression of opposition figures, the lack of power invested in the judiciary and the targeting of media freedom, the Kabila regimes do not meet the minimal requirements for democracy'.

### 2.2.5.2 Persecution of political activists

Apart from those linked to the press, people are also threatened because of their political affiliations and devotions. This was the case of some informants who were obliged to flee the country because they were threatened by Congolese secret agents. Moreover, it is worth noting here that all these informants were in danger during the electoral period of 2006 - a period marked and recognised by its high tensions within the DRC. The case of Lulonga, a veterinarian, is relevant indeed. Lulonga was sadly saying:

'If I left the country, it was initially a political problem linked to the familial one. It was during the 2006 elections. I was a fervent member of the UDPS. We went through a community TV channel where we demystified the camp of the current regime [i.e. analysed the Kabila regime's propaganda critically]. And, at the end of that show, it was a man hunting [i.e. the authorities hunted them]. So, when I was hiding, my father was arrested so that he could tell where I was. Because of that he died from heart attack'. (My translation from French)

### 2.2.5.3 Ethnic animosity or cleansing

As above-mentioned, Congolese also flee the ethnic cleansing and come to South Africa. This study has discovered a few informants from the West of the country who escaped from

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<sup>5</sup>'*Liberticide*' is a French word meaning a person or government that destroys freedom.

ethnic cleansing or ethnical animosity in Katanga (South East). As illustration, Doctor Lisafa from Bandundu, a province located in the South-West of the DRC, was surprised to be a victim of ethnic animosity in Katanga (South-East). Lisafa complained like this:

‘What pushed me leave the country, it was the fact that I accepted to stay at home. I decided to go to the countryside where there is no electricity. Where there is no telephone network. I worked to help the sons of my country. I was terribly disappointed in that area where I went to work. People did not accept me because I was not the son of that province. So, it was a big disappointment. [...] As I had to leave there I did not have a choice’. (My translation from French)

The case of Lisafa is similar to what previous studies have evidenced about Congolese to migrate to South Africa because of the ethnic violence.

Indeed, research has shown that during Mobutu’s era some Luba from Kasai fled to South Africa because of a violent ethnic pogrom.

Generally, the violation of human rights under the Mobutu regime was very important. In addition to attacks on the press and frequent intimidation torture and assassinations, Mobutu resorted to an extensive ‘instrumentalisation’ of ethnicity, using chaos as a weapon to wrong-foot his political opponents. For example, Mobutu entered into an alliance with autochthonous nationalist parties in the South-East province of the country, now called Katanga, though known as Shaba at that time, in order to destabilise supports of his main opponent Etienne Tshisekedi. In this, the Belgian anthropologist Cuvelier (2011, p.17) explained that: ‘in 1992, Mobutu manipulated the former Governor of Katanga, Gabriel Kyungu to take and ethnopolitical and xenophobic measures against Luba migrant workers from Kasai, in which more than 5,000 Luba were killed in 1992-1993’.

In fact, ‘Kyungu was in cahoots with Mobutu, who wanted to destroy the power base of the UDPS, Zaïre’s leading opposition party (of Etienne Tshisekedi) which was popular among people from the Kasai region who often worked in Katanga. He encouraged the ‘autochthonous’ Katangese to chase away all Kasaian immigrants from Katanga and replace them by a local bourgeoisie’ (Goossens 2000, pp.252-254 in Cuvelier, *ibid*). As result, an important number of Kasaian engineers’ fled to South Africa in the 1990s.

While anti-Tutsi sentiments have been a focus of popular politics in Congo’s extreme eastern region of Kivu for several decades, in most of the country this was not the case. After Mobutu, Kabila senior and Kabila junior’s regime came to power behind the largely Rwandan Tutsi (RPF) Rwandan Patriotic Army. Once they grew tired of acting as Rwandan

vassals, they worked to whip up an anti-Tutsi sentiment throughout the country, making no effort to differentiate ordinary people, most of who were born in Congo, from the occupying army. After Laurent Kabila had expelled members of the Rwandan army from the capital in July 1998, the head of his cabinet and subsequently vice president, Yerodia Ndobasi, said that the Tutsi are ‘*scum, vermin that must be methodically eradicated*’ (Amnesty International, "Annual Report on the Democratic Republic of Congo", 1999 cited in ICG, 2011, p.12).

Similarly, the former Congolese President, Laurent Désiré Kabila, himself made use of fascist propaganda against Tustsis in the media. Kabila literally said this: ‘take up arms, even traditional weapons - bows and arrows, spears and other things’ to kill Tutsi, ‘otherwise they will make us their slaves’ (Simmons, 1998 cited in ICG, 1999, p.14). Hence, many Tutsi throughout the Congo were arbitrarily arrested, tortured and killed (ibid.). In this horrible situation, some Congolese Tutsi fled to South Africa in order to escape from ethnic cleansing.

In short, all these findings corroborate Adekanye (1998 cited in Adepoju, 2000, p. 384) who noted that conflicts and loss of state capacities cause emigration in the Sub-Saharan African. According to Adekanye (ibid), ‘Political instability resulting from conflicts is a strong determinant of migration in the region. [...] Dictatorial regimes often target, harass and intimidate students, intellectuals and union leaders, spurring emigration of professionals and others’.

To recap succinctly, the content of this section on the Congolese emigration from the DRC to South Africa, three main causes have been analysed. There are *economic factors* caused by mismanagement of public service and unemployment; the *political factors* - based on the fear of persecutions and human rights violation; and the *socio-cultural factors* marked by the mythology of migration, the social prestige of living abroad and the Congolese collapse higher educational structures. So, why did informants chose South Africa ?

### **2.3. REASON CONGOLESE CHOSE SOUTH AFRICA**

Congolese immigrant workers are attracted by South Africa for economic, socio-cultural, and political reasons. However, despite its attractions, South Africa remains, in Congolese perceptions, a ‘developing country’ not as highly valued as the wealth countries of the north (see also Vigouroux, 2008).

### 2.3.1 Economic reasons

The study has found three main economic factors determine the Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. In general, wage differential, labour relations and labour conditions, the economic impossibility of accessing Western countries, and job opportunities in South Africa attracted informants at all levels of the social scale. Most of them recognised that they came to South Africa because of the wage differential. For instance, a watchman and welder Ignace Ingende said this:

‘What firstly attracts us is salary. If you work, you deserve your salary’. (My translation from Lingala).

In fact, looking at the bleak picture for workers in Congo it is not hard to see why South Africa seems attractive, and why, mythology aside, this is an eminently rational decision. So far, if in South Africa the unemployment is bad, it should nevertheless be apparent that the Congo represents whole different scale of badness. Skilled workers in South Africa have a realistic prospect of earning a decent living and even at the bottom of the social scale, there is at least a sizable salaried sector from which the mass of parking attendants, cigarette and peanut sellers, can hope to make a living.

On labour relations and labour conditions, many participants confirmed that they were attracted by the treatment of workers in South Africa. As proof, an experienced former English teacher in the DRC is convinced that his South Africans counterparts are well-treaded and well-paid. Boende argued in this way:

‘I thought at least teachers are respected here in South Africa. [...] In any case a teacher has a good social life. When you go to private schools or public school, you will see the car park full of cars. If you ask who owns all these cars. They belong to teachers’. (My translation from French)

Concerning the impossibility of access to western countries, results show that South Africa was not the first choice of many informants. They wanted to go to western countries, especially Western Europe. But the restricted migratory conditions obstructed their aims. As an alternative, they have chosen to come to South Africa which apparently offers quite similar possibilities as in Europa. Two testimonies support this view. The first example is of the journalist who tried and failed to get a visa from many western embassies in Kinshasa. Abuzi said:

‘Given that there was no way to leave Kinshasa and go straight to Europe this pushed me to emigrate from the Congo to South Africa in 2007’. (Translated from French).



The situation encountered by Abuzi is not far from what happened to the bar lady, Lokolela, who wasted lots of money in paying for visa application fees. Madame Lokola said:

‘We tried the process for Europe, it did not work. That is why we decided to try with South Africa’. (My translation from French).

What can be kept in mind is South Africa is the best second option after western countries for many immigrants and is also seen as the springboard to destination of their dreams (Bouillon, 1998; 2001; Vigouroux, 2008). Yet at the same time there is an extensive mythology that casts South Africa as the ‘pit of the python’ – ‘*libulu nguma*’ or ‘aquarium’ - a space into which you fall into and cannot escape from, or as the terrain of ‘*semi-professionels*’ a place of migrants whose status back home is decidedly inferior to those from *mikili*, the imagined land of plenty to the North. Many of those who do come here come as a second choice, often intending to raise capital for the journey north. Nevertheless, an increasing numbers of Congolese do seem to perceive South Africa as a destination in its own right. And here, a wide range of issues are involved, from the possibilities of getting a better paid job than at home, the reputation of South African Universities and a desire for Anglophone qualifications to the mythologies of migration and misinformation that people are given in Congo concerning the prospects of making a living here.

Concerning the good living standard, informants admitted being attracted by the South Africans’ lifestyle and the developed infrastructures: transport, housing, foods, media, telecommunication, education and access to high technologies in South Africa. They insisted on the fact that, apart from the mood of high criminality and xenophobic tendencies, South Africa is a nice place to live in. As illustration, a doctor said that he was attracted by the quality of life and the lifestyle of his counterparts in South Africa. Doctor Ikelemba said this:

‘Conditions of life and everything including salary and motivations (attracted me). You know, I am not the first person who came here. I am not the only one. There are colleagues with whom we studied or completed studies together who came earlier than me. And, they are the ones who motivated me to come. [...] This is key factor that motivated me to come here. Because everyone always looks for well-being, that’s all’. (My translation from French)

### 2.3.2 Socio-cultural reasons

In terms of socio-cultural reasons, the main reality that informants have mentioned is South African higher education. The South African higher educational system pulled many

Informants to come and pursue their studies here order to diversify their job opportunities.

This dissertation has found following facts:

1. The international reputation of South African universities is much better than Congolese ones. For this reason the economist/ nightwatchman Wallace Wapinda decided to pursue his postgraduate studies in one university in Pretoria.

‘It is because of the reputation of South African universities to compare to our universities. In terms of appraisal, the South African universities are more highly considered than Congolese universities’. (My translation from French).

2. The worth of South African degrees and their various possibilities in the job market.
3. South African universities are well organised and much cheaper than western ones. As illustration, Gustave Gbadolite said :

‘Study conditions are the same as in developed countries. And, it is favourable because at lower cost you can achieve the same objectives as in Europe’. (My translation from French)

### **2.3.3 Political reasons: Freedom and democracy in South Africa**

In general, informants who had worked in media or had been involved in political activism were attracted by the level of democratisation in South Africa. Indeed, South African democracy gives opportunities to many Congolese to freely express their opinions and do their transnational political activities (see chapter six). For example, an hotelier I talked to was absolutely convinced that South Africa has the best level of democracy of any country in Africa.

## ***2.4 THE CHOICE OF PRETORIA***

As mentioned above, informants decided to stay and work in Pretoria because of job opportunities found through Congolese friends or co-ethnic networks, or because of the safety and welcoming nature of its inhabitants. Many informants also said Pretoria was not their first choice when they came in South Africa. In general, they started working in Johannesburg. Then, because of unpleasant jobs and unemployment in the Johannesburg, they decided to migrate to Pretoria where they could get job opportunities. To illustrate, Mobeka, a waitress said she stayed two years at her friend's place in Johannesburg but she could not find a job. That is why she moved to Pretoria where she found her first job in South Africa. Mokabe:

‘But my buddy said: “*No, no, don’t go to Pretoria. There are no jobs over there*”. I stayed in Joburg for two years. Personally, I had never found a job until I came to Pretoria where I found my first job’. (My translation from French)

Mobeka’s experience revealed a widespread Congolese judgement of Pretoria as place lacking job opportunities, or even life itself. Such discourses portray Pretoria as a ‘*Ville morte. Faux mboka ezanga kop. Mboka ya school Boy*’ - Dead city, ‘false’ (i.e. bad) city lacking business/opportunity, city for ‘school boy’ (i.e. for non-important people, fictive age being an important principle of social distinction in Congo).

On safety, the majority of elite and upper middle class Congolese thought that Pretoria is the best place to live in as parents because of its safety. They said that Pretoria is safer than Johannesburg or Cape Town. A Pastor concluded that because of many public institutions, Pretoria is one of the safest cities in South Africa. He therefore described Pretoria like this:

‘As I always say to my visitors, when you get into Pretoria, there is something that will receive you: it is Unisa<sup>6</sup>, the building of Unisa. That is to say, it is the intellectuals’ world. [...] To compare to Joburg<sup>7</sup>, when you reach Pretoria, you find that is quiet. It is either to study or work somewhere. [...] I will give an example, when I was in Joburg, I was always forced to hid my cell-phone. This is because you have thieves, the phenomenon *Totsi* (muggers). But, when I came in Pretoria, I saw people freely talking with their cell -phones. You don’t have to deal with bandits at corners of streets here and there. I think that because of all embassies, minister offices, there are an important number of police officers who are deployed’. (My translation from French).

On the hospitality of inhabitants of Pretoria, it was surprising to hear from some informants, that they have decided to establish in Pretoria not only because job opportunities or business but also because they believe that Tswana people are not xenophobic like people from Cape Town or Johannesburg. For example, a street vendor, Bamanya, said that Tswana street vendors do not fight with their colleagues from abroad who sell products from their respective countries. Bamanya:

‘People from Jozy, these Zulu women, are jealous, xenophobic, very bad. You’re selling Congolese stuff to Congolese people; these women always look for fighting with you. It was scary because for anything they will come in a group, insulting you. If you make the mistake of replying, they will beat you up, even some young men can come to intervene in their side [...] No, here, it does not happen. As long as you sell Congolese stuff, they don’t care. Even if you sell some South African things, just put it in the same price like them. It is okay’. (Informant spoke in English)

This section has given an account of and the reasons for Congolese labour immigration to South African (especially Pretoria). It has thereby explained that the main features that attract

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<sup>6</sup> University of South Africa

<sup>7</sup> Johannesburg

Congolese people to Pretoria are *economic, socio-cultural, and political*. Nevertheless, it is important to ask if informants were informed about the South African job market before leaving the DRC. Also, how do they get into South Africa? These questions are answered in the next section on migratory strategies.

## **2.5 MIGRATORY STRATEGIES**

The aim of this section is to know if Congolese immigrant workers were well-prepared before immigrating to Pretoria and to discern what they adopted as migratory strategies in order to get into South Africa. In this perspective, it will be important to explain how former class positions of informants in the DRC determine their migration patterns.

### **2.5.1 Class before emigration**

Findings indicate that class position of informants to Pretoria determine their capacities to afford migratory costs and to have accurate information on the South African labour market. Indeed, immigrants who formed part of elites in the DRC were well informed about the South African migratory policy and labour market. They did not have many problems in their migratory processes and professional integration in Pretoria. On the whole, they came to Pretoria as investors in business. They actually belong to the strata that Bouillon (1998, p.13) termed ‘bourgeois’ immigration.

Similarly, the majority of those who were middle class in the DRC were more or less well-informed. Findings show, for example, that many doctors were aware of migratory conditions and the realities of professional incorporation in South Africa. Their various socio-professional networks help their counterparts (left back home) to come and get jobs in Pretoria. Conversely, the few middle class who were not well-informed had problems in their migration patterns in South Africa. Arriving in South Africa, they experienced many problems of professional integration.

Finally, those who were in the working class bracket were not at all aware of the job market in South Africa. They rather mentioned that they were objects of misinformation and/or dupery by their relatives and especially by human smugglers (communally called *tindikeurs*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The word ‘*tindikeur*’ comes from Lingala word ‘*tindika*’ which means to push or send. (see also Atam, 2004, p.31).

by Congolese). In relation to misinformation, the study has identified five main factors presented below.

In the first place, some respondents said they were victims of misinformation on job opportunities and dupery by ‘*tindikeurs*’. The latter often resort to swindling and lying as means to manipulate feelings of those Congolese who are dreaming of bettering their lives abroad. For instance, Tata Lopango, a night watchman in Pretoria but a former mechanic/driver and waiter in the DRC, was fooled by a ‘*tindikeur*’. The latter swayed him that employers will be running after him in South Africa thanks to his English and skills in car mechanic. Tata Lopango said:

‘Frankly speaking, I was disappointed. The way my friend the human smuggler was admiring my English I thought that the simple fact of well speaking English means to get a good job. He was saying “*as you are a driver is an asset. Once you arrived (in South Africa), dude, employers will be running after you*”. (My translation from Lingala and French).

Having listened to these stupendous promises, Tata Lopango emigrated from the DRC with the hope of a better life in South Africa. Unfortunately, despite of his English, he is wretched - forced by economic circumstances to do an unwanted, dangerous and low-paid job for five years. This Tata Lopango’s experience evidences what Atam (2004, p.31) noted about ‘*tindikeurs*’ who speak of South Africa as a paradise.

In the second place, many Congolese intellectuals in South Africa face downward mobility because they had emigrated from the DRC on basis of rumours. Their relatives, friends and acquaintances told them about job opportunities and bursaries for postgraduate students in South Africa. To illustrate, Bumba left his country in 2009 en route to South Africa. Arriving in Pretoria, Bumba bitterly regretted the fact that he encountered a reality totally different from his expectations. Bumba was surprised by the downward mobility among Congolese intellectuals in Pretoria. Bumba said:

‘No, no! I have never had (information). I was surprised to see that there are graduates, doctors, economists and lawyers working as parking attendants or night watchman. When I was coming here people said to me (Before to leave the DRC): “*you know, if you can enrol in the university as you have more than 60 per cent, they (university’s staff) they will grant you the scholarship*”. You see! And I applied at that time at the University of Pretoria. But, it didn’t happen as I had expected. They accepted me without funding my studies. I was obliged to stop’. (My translation from French).

It should be said that, rumours on overwhelming opportunities in South Africa are not a new phenomenon in the Congolese labour migration to South Africa. In point of fact, rumours

have been driving Congolese labour migration from the end of apartheid until today. In fact, false allegations on employment misled even those who called themselves '*the pioneers of Congolese migration*' in South Africa. For example, one of them, a Pentecostal pastor, said that he arrived in South Africa in 1991 because of disinformation about job opportunities in South Africa. Which according to what he was told were abundant for black persons from any country of Africa.

*'They had spread information like: 'very soon, the apartheid is coming an end. They look for the blacks, for every black, for the blacks who have qualifications they can work over there'. When we arrived on the spot, it was another matter. Realities were different'!* (My translation from French).

From this testimony, it appears that rumours are an ancient story in Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. They negatively contribute to problems of professional adaptation for the Congolese. As proof, in the following lines give some examples of how rumours are sources of underemployment for Congolese in South Africa.

In the third place, the rumours about English proficiency as a tool for getting a job in South Africa misled quite a few informants. That is why Businga abandoned his underpaid job as English teacher in Kinshasa and immigrated to Pretoria - where contrary to his expectations, he has never been hired as a teacher.

*'When people say that: "you who have commend of English, it is your country over there"!* Effectively, I had not problems with English, not at all. But, to find the employment is a different kettle of fish'. (My translation Lingala and French).

In the fourth place, the widespread rumours about possibility of acquiring South African citizenship deceived many informants. For instance, Mina Boyabo, a female visual artist was told that thanks to her talents she could successively get study grants, employment and South Africa citizenship. However, being motivated to live in that promised paradise; Mina was surprised to face real socio-professional difficulties in Pretoria. Mina sadly said this:

*'They had not informed me like that. When I came to South Africa, I thought that everything was going to be rose-tinted in life; everything will be good. I will study. I will get my documents (South African identity). I would to have people who will perhaps sponsor me as an artist, all and all. But when I arrived, I found another reality'. (My translation from French)*

In the last place, the study has found that some informants are actually victims of their personal illusions based on the Congolese mythologies about migration. It will be unfair to say that they were badly directed by their fellow Congolese, rather, they undergo professional

problems because of their own pipe dreams about South Africa. For instance, during several years, a security guard, Mbari, had developed an illusion to come to South Africa to be a Ju-Jitsu competitor in South Africa. He had neglected to check whether such a competition actually existed in South Africa.

'I always thought they have competitions. My idea was to come here for competing; to be a competitor. However, there is not such competition for Ju-Jitsu'. (My translation from Lingala).

Given the above findings, one can conclude that misinformation and/or dupery from *Tindikeurs*, friends, relatives, and individuals' illusions concerning job opportunities, possibilities of acquiring South African citizenship and bursaries drive Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. Still, what strategies did informants adopt to get to South Africa? The next section answers to this question.

### 2.5.2 Strategies of Getting Into South Africa

On coping strategies to get into South Africa, this study found three different strategies, namely: getting legally into South Africa; coming as asylum seeker in order to bypass South Africa's restrictive migration policy; and resorting to '*tindikeurs*' services.

First and foremost, it should be said that many informants are refugees or asylum seekers. What is surprising is that 33 out of 46 informants got into South Africa with legal visas. Many informants told me that they got visas in order to avoid annoyances at the South African border. Later on, they claimed for asylum in order to avoid being undocumented immigrants.

Concerning coming into South Africa as asylum seekers, informants who adopted this strategy said they could not afford South Africa's expensive visa's fees. Also, they did not want to, or could not, resort to the Congolese human smugglers. Therefore, they decided to come as asylum seekers in order to bypass the South African restrictive migration policy.

1. On resorting to '*tindikeurs*' to enter South Africa, this dissertation has found seven informants who adopted the strategy. In general, these informants explained five main reasons which lead them to employ '*tindikeurs*' services. An informant made it clear to me that the Congolese public administration's red tape forced him against his will to use human smuggling services. This situation is well explained by Adepoju (2006, p.4) who noted that 'some migrants left their countries of origin in irregular situations,

by failing to obtain national passports and other travel documents before commencing their journey through unofficial routes’.

2. The lack of reliable information about the South African visa requirements. Therefore, ‘*tindikeurs*’ take opportunities to deceive Congolese who could legally migrate into entering South Africa illegally. For this reason, a night watchman regretted the ignorance that drove him into the arms of a people smuggler. He said:

‘That asshole got me. He had convinced me that he could easily obtain the visa in Zimbabwe through its networks at the embassy of South Africa. But now he forced me to get into this country as an illegal immigrant’. (My translation from Lingala).

3. An increasing difficulty in obtaining visa's by following regular channels. This included the denying of South African visas on questionable pretexts which pushed some Congolese to look for the ‘*tindikeurs*’ services. To illustrate, Bijou Mawiya, a female street vendor complained thus:

‘What happens in the (South African) embassy is a really nonsense. I had all the accurate documents. But they denied (me) their visa. For this reason, I had agreement with a *Tindikeur*’. (My translation from Lingala).

Whether or not the embassy were right to deny a visa to Bijou, many people like her have been pushed to ‘*tindikeurs*’ by increasingly stringent migratory policy, something corroborated Macgaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) who had already noticed the evolution towards a tougher policy in the late 1990s. However, the restrictive migration policy does not reduce the Congolese influx into South Africa. On the contrary, it creates more irregular migrants who resort to ‘*tindikeurs*’. This reality confirms the view of the experts of the IOM (2008, p.49) who argued that: ‘human smuggling is commonly represented as one of the main causes of irregular migration; it is rather the result of increasingly restrictive migration policies’.

4. The lack of money to afford the expenses of legal migration. One man affirmed he could not pay all fees that the South African embassy asked in for getting a study permit. He was saying:

‘My man, these people think that their country is like Europe. For a simple study permit, they asked me much money. I would have paid 500 U.S dollars for the health insurance; 550 U.S dollars for the



repatriation deposit; to do health tests in CMK<sup>9</sup> almost 100 U.S dollars. I do not remember how much I should pay for the visa fees? It was very expensive. As I'm a big man, I used a shortcut (bypass legal barriers) in dealing with my friends, the *tindikeurs*' (my Translation from Lingala).

5. The geographical proximity and the emigrants' information about smuggling route encourage Congolese to deal with *tindikeurs*. It is striking to say that, three out of seven informants affirmed that they were previously well-informed about the details linked to trips between Lubumbashi to South Africa and the service of professional smugglers. Consequently, they made decision to deal with *tindikeurs* in knowing the cost, the route, and everything for the trips.

As we can see from the above, there are a surfeit of plausible explanations. For the reason of space, it is necessary to mention few important facts. To start, by definition the Article 3 of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (UNODC, 2010, p.27) considers the migrant smuggling as 'the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State party of which the person is not a national or permanent resident'.

In this light, Heckmann (2004, p.1104) has noted that 'there are various conceptual terms used for the analysis of the smuggling process such as 'migration merchants' (Kyle and Dale, 2001), 'large and well-organized transnational criminal organizations' (Kyle and Koslowski, 2001:11), 'crime that is organized' (Finckenauer, 2001: 173), 'mom-and-pop operators' (Finckenauer, 2001:183) or 'smuggling industry' (Meyers III, 1997:108), to name a few'.

Likewise, Congolese also use some specific terminologies to categorise the different kind of human smugglers. They call human smugglers by land '*tindikeurs*' whereas the term '*tata ngulu*' are used for the human smugglers who smuggle by air. However, the human smuggled are in general called '*ngulu*<sup>10</sup>'.

To run through this section, it has been shown that many informants got legally into South Africa with their visas. Others pretended to be asylum seekers in order to bypass the South

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<sup>9</sup>CMK: Centre medical de Kinshasa (Medical centre of Kinshasa) famous as the most expensive clinic in Kinshasa.

<sup>10</sup>The primary meaning of the word *ngulu* is pig. Various etymologies have been offered for this term, relating to the unpleasant condition of migrants etc. Some have even suggested that the term relates to a belief current in the 1950s that tinned meat was in fact the flesh of Africans who went to Europe.

African legal migratory restriction. Finally, '*tindikeurs*' helped few informants to arrive in South Africa.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has tried analysing the *Congolese labour migration (processes and patterns)* to Pretoria. On this account, it was shown that the RDC is challenged with *corruption, mismanagement by the state, poverty and predation of people, war and insecurity, underemployment, and underpayment*. These structural features go some way to explaining the high rate of emigration among Congolese. All of these above-mentioned features were also mentioned by informants as primary causes of their emigration from the DRC to South Africa. In addition, some of informants indicated the Congolese *mythology on migration* and social prestige as push factors.

Concerning the choice of the receiving country, we have seen that although South Africa is not a dream destination for Congolese immigrant workers, they were attracted all the same by South Africa for *economic reasons* (job opportunities, living standard, climate of business, high incomes, and level of development), the *sociocultural reasons* (higher educational system, South African credentials, etc.), and *political reasons* (freedom, security, respect of human rights, etc.).

In this chapter, important migratory strategies have been demonstrated. First of all, it has been revealed that *the capacity to migrate to South Africa and the socio-professional position to Pretoria depends upon the class origin in Congo*. In this, the great majority of informants who were working class when leaving the DRC were not well-informed about South Africa's migratory process nor about its job market. Because of the incapacity to afford regular migration and the misinformation they were subjected to, many migrants were exposed to '*Tindikeurs*' (human smugglers).

There is a clear correlation between my findings in this chapter and Castles' (2010) middle-range theory of international migration. From the end of apartheid until today South Africa has experienced social transformation with large arrivals of Francophone non-guest workers in general, and in particular of Congolese. In their turn, the Congolese's migration patterns are also changing, with a greater number choosing Pretoria as their city of employment or transit. This relation between Congolese immigrant workers and their country of employment

supports also the work of Adepoju (2000, 2003) which insists on the changing configuration of international migration in Sub Saharan Africa and South Africa since the end of apartheid. Castles (2013, p.125) who cites Adepoju (2000) adds that in the perspective of globalisation, immigrants in sub-Saharan Africa are essentially moving to more industrialised countries.

Although this chapter gave information on what drives the Congolese labour migration to Pretoria, it has not answered to the following question: what Congolese do when they arrive in Pretoria? Indeed, this question will be answered in the next chapter on the employment of Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria.

## CHAPTER THREE: EMPLOYMENT OF CONGOLESE IN PRETORIA

### *3.1 INTRODUCTION*

In the previous chapter, an effort has been invested in understanding what drives Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. After examining various motives related to that immigration, the study implies that Congolese workers are, among other things, economic immigrants seeking jobs in Pretoria. Following on from this, the focus of the current chapter is on examining the employment of Congolese and their upward and downward mobility in Pretoria.

Tracing life stories and professional trajectories of Congolese working in Pretoria, this chapter maintains that the former class positions of Congolese before immigration to South Africa influences their professional attainments and plays a key role in their downward or upward mobility in Pretoria. In that, it specifies that the vast majority of Congolese working in Pretoria experience a downward movement in terms of occupational mobility. However, in terms of economic mobility, the chapter insists on the fact that many professionals feel materially better off than they were in their country even if they undergo the occupational downgrading in Pretoria. The chapter also sustains that there is a great tendency among Congolese toward informality in economic activities marked by ethnic enclaves.

In order to examine the employment of Congolese and their social and economic mobility in Pretoria, the chapter draws on the hypothesis of Goldthorpe and Erikson (Erickson and Goldthorpe, 2012; Goldthorpe, 2013) which posits that there is a strong association between an individual's class of origin and mobility. In their view, it is better to focus analysis on the class approach in order to investigate mobility because class is systematically related to income mobility and professional attainment. This chapter also builds on the work of Gans (2009) who demonstrates that downward occupational mobility among refugees and immigrants in the United States is not necessarily associated with their downward economic mobility.

In what follows, I divide the chapter in three sections. The first section demonstrates that social class before leaving the DRC is at the heart of our understanding of socio-professional positions of Congolese in Pretoria. The section also discusses the meaning of class social and social mobility among Congolese. Then, the second section gives an overview of the main

occupations of Congolese immigrant workers. Finally, the last section deals with forces linked to their social and economic mobility in Pretoria.

### ***3.2. IMPACT OF CLASS BEFORE MIGRATION ON CLASS POSITION IN PRETORIA***

This section explores relations between social class of Congolese immigrants in their country of origin and in Pretoria. It highlights the links between occupation in the DRC before immigrating to South Africa, their employment in Pretoria, and their social positions as well. On this account, I will successively discuss social mobility among elites, middle class, and working class. However, given the meaning of social class varies from one society to another, it is useful to start by the understanding of the meaning of the social class for the Congolese.

#### **3.2.1 Conception of Social class in the DRC**

First and foremost, it is crucial to highlight that the meaning that Congolese attach to the concept of ‘social class’ is to some extent different from its western conception. As it is well known, theories of class are often grouped into two schools: Weberian approaches, which emphasise status, incomes, and political power, and Marxist approaches which emphasise the relationship to the means of production (Inaka & Trapido forthcoming). Situated between these two approaches, and in some respects most relevant to the material presented here, are the works of Veblen’s (1912) theory of the leisure class and Bourdieu (1984) distinction, which in somewhat similar fashion stress the role of conspicuous consumption in the construction of class identities.

The Congolese’s popular conception of class is mostly based upon an individual’s visible economic capital (incomes, fortune, and visible assets as such luxury cars, sumptuous houses, splendid furniture). It does not matter if someone has incomes from legal or illegal sources.

Indeed, Congolese people use many words meaning prosperous person (or belonging to the upper class) and will term some uneducated and unemployed people as ‘bourgeois’ although they live thanks to remittances or mafia. They also called them ‘*grands prêtres, Grande puissance, mogrosso*’<sup>11</sup> because they possess assets which place them in the Congolese upper

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11 In French ‘*Grand prêtres*’ means high priest (or bishop). In the Congolese colloquial, especially Kinshasa’s slang Lingala, it means someone belonging to upper class. It is the same with ‘*Grande Puissance*’ (great power)’. *Mogrosso* means someone who has big quantity of money or goods.

class. Equally, they socially hierarchized some well-known ‘gigolos’ (colloquially called ‘Mario’) as ‘*batu minene, Mopao*,’<sup>12</sup> because they drive luxury cars, wear labelled clothes, travel to and from ‘*mikili*’ (western countries) thanks to money from their multiple mistresses. Similarly, some well-known criminals like ‘*frappeurs*’ (money scammers or diamond smugglers), pimps or procurers of under-age girls, drug dealers are socially viewed as elites or middle class (‘*batu ya ba moyens*’ – people of means) thanks to their visible belongings.

Conversely, many educated and employed person, especially public workers, are termed as ‘*Batu pamba*’<sup>13</sup> because of their poverty ( Trapido, 2011, p.207). For instance, in 2009 I had myself this conversation with a Congolese honours' student in sociology who wanted to go to Europe by illegal means. While I argued that he should to stay in Kinshasa pursuing his studies and become a middle class. The student’s reply made it clear that, despite my qualifications and competence, I was in a lower class than Congolese immigrants to Europa because of my limited financial situation. That student told me this:

‘My old brother, I do respect you. You got many qualifications and knowledge. But today, as a public servant you are nobody. You go to your office by foot. You live at your parents’ house. However, Congolese workers in the west even if they are uneducated manual workers, they buy cars and houses today. [...] You see. They are in the higher social class than you’. (My translation from Lingala)

Drawing on Weber’s notions of class and status, based upon the understanding of the meaning of social action, I take into consideration the popular Congolese conception of social class - it would have been missing the point if I did not address what informants think about themselves.

A point of departure might be the Congolese historian Jean Marie Mutamba’s (1998, pp. 113-125) classification of the Congolese social class during colonisation and at independence. He argues that during colonisation there were successively: elites (in general Belgian settlers and some other Europeans), *évolués*, *classe moyenne* or ‘*Kalaka*’<sup>14</sup> (Congolese educated middle

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<sup>12</sup> In lingala, ‘*Batu minene*’ means big people - persons who are highly placed in the social hierarchy thanks to her or his fortune and assets. ‘*Mopao*’ is the street Lingala abbreviation of the French word ‘*Mon patron*’ which means by boss.

<sup>13</sup> In langala, ‘*Batu pamba*’ means an empty person - a nobody, a useless and poor rejected person.

<sup>14</sup> Etymologically said, ‘*Kalaka*’ is the mispronunciation of the French or English word clerk in Lingala.

class or white collar workers), and working class ('*mingamba*')<sup>15</sup>. Then, at the independence, some former '*évolués*' stepped up to become elites. But such occupational divisions have, I believe, become progressively less important in Congolese classifications of class, a fact which must, in part, be a function of the collapse of wage labour in the DRC.

During my fieldwork, on the question of social and economic mobility, an important number of informants expressed their views based upon the rather 'materialistic'<sup>16</sup> popular Congolese conception of social class. Conspicuous consumption, of the kind detailed by Veblen and Bourdieu (cited in Trigg, 2001) seems to be the main pillar of class consciousness here.

The above consideration can be supported by James' (1997) view of social class in South Africa. She argued that the Western/universalist conception of 'social class' is inappropriate in the Southern African context. She suggests that the local conception of social class is taken into consideration instead of this generalised western view. In this, she does not think that the concept of social class – which she argues has western connotations - is valid in the Third World (ibid. p.470).

Yet such appeals against 'western' or universalist conceptions often themselves characterise 'the other' they claim to speak for. Congolese class perceptions are not a homogenous entity. First, I noticed that quite a few informants (especially highly educated ones) understood the concept of social class more or less according to the 'western' connotation. This conveys that some Congolese do not necessarily explain the concept of class based on the Congolese 'urban' imaginary.

And I would argue that a theory of class among Congolese migrants, like everywhere else, needs to remain equally attentive to 'objective' and 'subjective' factors. A number of recent studies acknowledge the importance of social class but conclude that it is too ambiguous a phenomenon to define in entirely objectivist terms (e.g. Grawitz, 2000; Hermet, et al. 1998). Inspired by the Marxist tradition, Weber, and Bourdieu, Grawitz (2000, pp.63-65) has listed five criteria which can be used to define social class. It is about the individual's level of income, level of education, category of employment, position in the social stratification based on materialist forms of prestige, and political representation.

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<sup>15</sup> In lingala the word '*Mingamba*' is the plural of '*Mongamba*' which is a sort of derogatory term used to refer to manual workers, working class or underclass persons.

<sup>16</sup> Using materialistic here in the popular sense as relating to the consumption of material goods, rather than in the Marxist sense.

Drawing on Houle (2011, p.557), it should be understood in the case of Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria that their ‘class divisions do represent broad and at least partly objective distinctions between employers and workers, white and blue collar, those who work with their hands and those who work with their minds, and the gap in prestige, power, and economic rewards between these occupational categories’. Thus in what follows this study has taken into consideration both meanings (i.e. local Congolese and outside/sociological) of social class.

In order to categorise socio-professionally the respondents, I put forward a three-class model. The first one is the class of Congolese working class which is basically composed of unauthorised manual workers such security guards, domestic workers, female beauticians, and self-employed handymen. The second class is of Congolese middle class which contains authorised or unauthorised professionals, traders, and self-employed white-collar workers. The third class of Congolese elites is composed of wealthy businesspersons, religious leaders, and scholars.

### **3.2.2 Elites before emigration**

Right from the beginning of my research, it was not easy for me to interview informants who were elites in the DRC, and in the end I only managed to interview four persons considered as elites among Congolese. These were two informants who were (and are) business elites in the DRC. One of these was a businessman owner of an import-export and freight agency, and one was a businesswoman who was in the exportation of wood and a regular supplier of office stationary to Katanga.

During my fieldwork, the businessman was the first person I met in this class. After having unsuccessfully attempted to bump into him several times, I was tired of many postponements and missed appointments. Surprisingly, one Friday, while I was on the campus ready to have a drink with my friends, I received a call from one of his workers. The latter was saying: ‘*Saint Joe, viens vite a Barkley Square. Le boss veut te voir. Mais, il quitte dans 10 minutes*’ (Saint Joe, come quickly to Barkley Square. The boss wants to see you. But, he is about leaving in 10 minutes).

I rushed to the place of rendezvous where he was already leaving. He told me: *You are lucky. I was just leaving now*. After I explained my research, he replied: ‘*okay, we can discuss now. But, I’m going to Menlyn for shopping. So, we can go together and discuss inside my car*’.



That car was a black luxury four by four Lexus. It was what Black South Africans colloquially call a ‘big machine’ (nice expensive car).

On our way from and to Sunnyside and Menlyn, Beaudouin gave me the overview of his life and career. He described his upward mobility by saying that he had come from the bottom and reached the top.

Beaudioun said that he is from a really poor family. He dreamt of studying economics and becoming a businessman. However, he went to the army because he did not have financial means to afford University. As soldier, he had an opportunity to go to study at the EFO military academy in Kananga where he got distinctions. Thanks to that marshal Mobutu Sese Seko sent him to the United States for more training. Arriving back at home, he worked in the telecommunication service of the FAZ. In the meantime, thanks to his skill in telecommunication, he started doing his business within the country. Later, he set up an agency in Lunda (Angola) in 1989. After Lunda, around 1992-1993<sup>17</sup>, he opened agencies in many neighbouring countries of the DRC. In 1994, he opened his first office in Johannesburg. Later, he did the same thing in Durban and Cape Town. In 1998, he decided to live here in Pretoria with his family because of its quietness and safety.

Interestingly, this life history shows a relatively good correlation between his class position in the DRC and in Pretoria. In terms of work, the informant is an employer in his country and in South Africa. Also, he remains in the same occupation which he started at home.

The second case is about a businesswoman who refused to be interviewed when they recommended me to her for the first time. Then, one of my contacts advised to approach a pastor who could convince her. Arrived at that Pastor’s office, he assured me that everything will be alright. After that, he called her (talking in a regional Congolese language which I cannot speak for me). After their conversation, the pastor told me to wait for an hour because she was sending her driver to come to fetch me. As expected, the driver took me to her luxurious house. The reception was a royal one. Wine and Congolese dishes were on the table for me. Finally, she openly talked to me about her experiences in business since the RDC to South Africa. She was saying:

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<sup>17</sup>Lunda Norte is an Angolan province which was under control of Jonas Savimbi (backed by Zaire) in that time. Owing to its natural resources – especially diamonds – Zairians (military officers and civilians) took that opportunity to make money via illegal business and looting Angolan diamonds.

‘In Congo, Zaïre in that time, I started small trade when I was in the high school for girls. I was selling everything: cakes, products of beauty, underwear. [...] At university, it was the same thing. There, it was even more. [...] I got married at early age. I was 21. [...] At that time, I got shops and warehouses almost everywhere in Lubumbashi. I also did the exportation of wood with Lebanon. At the end of my studies, I got a job from the state. [...] But, that status as a public servant allowed me to start supplying office stationeries. [...] It was in 1993 that I realised to import from South Africa could be cheaper and more profitable. Since then, I am between both countries.’ (My translation from French).

It seems that the career of this lady is similar to the previous businessman's. They were both business elites in the DRC. Being former government's workers helped both of them to use their different positions to increase their incomes. As result, they had already enough assets in the DRC which facilitated them to stay in the same class positions in both countries.

It is crucial to remind that these elites had possibilities to acquire necessary resources and information before emigrating from the DRC to South Africa. This allowed them to be somewhat well-established as soon as they arrived as investors. It can be deduced here that their class position in the DRC positively influenced their class position in Pretoria.

### **3.2.3 Middle class before emigrating**

About informants who were middle class in the Congo, they were in the domains of the health (doctors), the liberal professions (lawyers, journalists, and freelancers), public or private administrative occupations (managers, accountants, clerks, education, and business). Although some of those informants worked in the private sector, they were in the majority Congolese public workers. They were in general living in difficult socioeconomic and professional situations back home. Arriving in Pretoria, many of them are still struggling to improve their situations while others are enjoying their new professional lives. This means that their previous class position in the DRC – marked by professional dissatisfaction - is still influencing their new professional career. Therefore, excepting those who were in the domain of health, many informants have been forced to change their occupations in Pretoria. Actually, many barriers to professional incorporation compel them to change their occupations.

As mentioned earlier, Doctors are often the exception to the rule. As workers in Pretoria, doctors continue to occupy the same professions that they did in the DRC. Nevertheless, their former states of pauperisation in the DRC lead to certain confusion about their class position 'back home'. For example, Arto Kenge, who was a pauperised doctor, could not himself say

what social class he belonged to in the DRC. Roughly, he identified himself as in the lower social classes.

‘When I worked in all these private clinics and hospitals, I had realised that I had gained nothing. A DOCTOR WHO WAS BELONGING IN A SOCIAL CLASS THAT IS REALLY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN. Thus, (it is) the low social ladder’. Said Arto (My translation from French).

Talking about those who were in the liberal professions, education, administration, and business in the DRC, this study has found that, it is exceptional for them to maintain their former class position (of the DRC) in Pretoria. This especially happens among new arrivals. The following cases can give insights about links between their class position from the RDC and in Pretoria.

The first example is of two former lawyers who changed their occupations in South Africa. The first one is a Congolese community journalist and the second one as a client trolley assistant (CTA). The journalist, Kwango, left his country and his former underpaid job to better his life in South Africa. Arriving in Pretoria in 2007, after having worked as parking attendant for almost three years, he changed his occupation from a lawyer to a community journalist. During interview, Kelly told me this:

‘I did private law. I am graduated (honours’) in law and became a lawyer in the Bar of Kinshasa. [...] Here (in Pretoria), I work in a media. (My translation from French)

For the CTA, thanks to his honours’ degree in law, Kiki Kikwit was a legal adviser in a private company and a freelancer in his country. In Pretoria, Kiki irregularly works as a CTA while he is doing his master’s in law somewhere in Pretoria.

‘ (I have a) degree in law. Here, they call it honours’ degree in law (he said it in English). I was a legal adviser in a Private company and freelancer. [...] My present profession is the CTA: customer trolley assistant’. (My translation from French).

Taken together, the common reality among all of these former middle class in the DRC is that they were all educated workers but suffering from either underpayment or labour relations issues. However, as most of them could not find appropriate jobs to their profile in Pretoria, they changed careers for reasons of survival.

### **3.2.4 Working class before emigration**

From the start, it is worth reminding ourselves that the previous chapter has shown that many Congolese working classes did not have enough financial means or information to emigrate

legally. Their poverty led a number of them to be involved in unlawful migration. In this context, this study has found that their class position in Pretoria is relatively interrelated to their former social class in Congo.

In Pretoria, they are still, in the majority, doing similar jobs and/or belonging to similar class positions as in the DRC. Although many of them have changed occupations, they reckon themselves that they belong to the same class. This is evidenced by the following two cases in which informants express their sense of professional identity and sense of belonging to the working class since the DRC until Pretoria.

The first case is about a barber, Kasongo Lunda, who has been working as barber in his country and in Pretoria. He expressed his sense of belonging in working class like this:

‘I’m a barber, actually barber since Congo. Since my childhood at the younger ages, around 12 years I was learning to cut the hair. [...] This is my real job. It is in my blood’. (My translation from strong street Lingala)

The second case is about a 28 years female domestic worker, Myriam, who worked in the DRC and still works as domestic for her boss in Pretoria. Myriam insisted that she was proud of her job which allowed her to legally get into South Africa via an aeroplane. Myriam seems to have a high class consciousness in the extent to which she thinks she cannot pretend to be from an upper class as some of her fellow Congolese always do. Myriam was indeed honest in saying this:

‘My profession, what I started doing from Congo until here, is always being a domestic worker. I am not ashamed of it. My Boss put me into an aeroplane from Kinshasa to here because he knows that I’m honest and proud of my job. I do not want to be ‘*Un Prince À New York*’<sup>18</sup>. I cannot say what many Congolese say they had good living standard in Kinshasa.’ (my translation from Lingala)

To sum up, one of the most obvious findings emerging from this section is about *the effects of class in the DRC on immigrant workers’ class position in Pretoria*. This is in relation with Erickson and Goldthorpe’s theory that posit that the social class of origin determines the professional attainment. As the influence of class of origin on the class position in Pretoria is understood, let us move to the occupations of informants.

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<sup>18</sup>‘*Un Prince À New York*’ is an expression mostly used among Congolese in Pretoria to qualify their fellows who pretend to have been in good life in the DRC but are suffering in South Africa. It is drawn from the title of the French version of Eddy Murphy’s movie (*Coming to America*) in which he was working as cleaner and pretending to be a shepherd from Africa while he was actually a prince in his country.

### ***3.3 OCCUPATIONS OF CONGOLESE IMMIGRANTS IN PRETORIA***

This section aims to explore the employment of Congolese immigrants in Pretoria. For that purpose, it begins with the Congolese elites' occupations in Pretoria. It will then go on to deal with the employment of the Congolese middle class. Last, it will examine the professions of Congolese working class.

#### **3.3.1 Occupations of Elites**

This sub-section commences by describing characteristics of the opulent lifestyle of Congolese elites. After that, it shows how they mix together formality and informality in their economic activities. Finally, the last point gives examples of four elites who are employers of locals and Congolese in their different sectors of activities.

Talking about their characteristics and lifestyle, all elite informants have many things in common. They all employ some South Africans but above all employ unauthorised Congolese and even other immigrants. They are all over 45 years old, married and practicing members of Congolese churches in Pretoria. They have been staying in South Africa for more than 15 years. As wealthy people, they dwell in suburbs and have luxurious cars. Their lifestyle gives them opportunities to be respected and considered by some Congolese as models of the professional success in South Africa. In short, they are identified as elite.

Most of these figures mix informality and formality in their business, the most important aspect of this mix is that their business are legalised but they are also involved in 'second economy' activities. In that economy they often hire unauthorised Congolese workers that they can exploit, often abusively. Their businesses are also marked by the 'ethnic enclave economy' as they mainly deal within the Congolese community. As it is said, they are four cases to present in the following lines. This concerns Beaudouin Bulungu (owner of a freight agency), Président Popokabaka (co-owner of a private security company), Mama Fatundu (owner of a legal removal company), and Pastor Gerry Kinzambi (mixing religious activities and business).

Beaudouin who holds a sort of transnational freight and money transfer agency whose head office is legally registered in Kinshasa. His agency, like many similar agencies in Gauteng, mixes formal and informal activities. The point is that when someone gets into these agencies, they will notice many posters announcing their services related to freight, import

and export of some goods, and mail delivering. Curiously, they advertise nothing about money transfer and exchange of foreigner currencies. Nevertheless, their Congolese clients are all aware of it. Actually, such activities represent the major source of income for the agency. It is difficult for outsiders to notice how they operate unless they are directed by Congolese who trust them. This practice is widespread in the Congolese diaspora around the world.

For example, a friend of mine, a white British anthropologist had serious problems to send money from Paris to Kinshasa via these networks. He was then obliged to come for the second time and tried convincing them in the street Lingala of Kinshasa by saying: *'naza mbilate. Nazo tinda mbongo epayi ya masta na nga na Kin'* (I'm not a cop. I'm sending money to my buddy in Kinshasa). Owing to his slang Lingala, they perceived him as an insider and he got access to that agency's secret. Surprisingly, most of these agencies are legal companies and pay their taxes in the DRC while in South Africa they always present one side of their activities<sup>19</sup>.

Apart from mixing illegal and legal businesses, Beaudouin hires some Congolese (undocumented immigrant workers) and South Africans. During our interview in his car, he was insisting on the fact that he does respect South African labour law by employing locals. However, the presence of Congolese employed in strategic posts such as receptionists and managers aroused my curiosity. In response, Beaudouin said these posts must be occupied by Congolese so that they can easily communicate with clients.

Regarding the second case, Président Popokabaka, the co-owner of a company of private security, thinks himself to be one of the Congolese's role models of professional success in Pretoria. First, he is known among Congolese security guards as someone who went up through all ranks in his profession from the bottom to the top. In his arrival in 1996, Président did his training in security guard skills. Having got his SOB certificate, he started working as a 'private security guard' in Johannesburg. Later, Président got time to combine his job with studying management in a college. In 1999, after completed his studies, he successively got promotion as a supervisor then a manager. He created his own company in 2006.

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<sup>19</sup>.It should be noted however that South African legislation does mitigate towards the proliferation of such illegal transfer agencies, for while the law is apparently unable or unwilling to contain massive capital flight by elites, it maintains capital controls which make it very difficult for non-nationals to send or receive small amounts of money via remittance agencies, even when their papers are in order.

Président was obliged to be associated with a Greek man who brought more assets. Whereas Président hires Congolese as unauthorised workers, he legally employs South Africans. It is said that Président underpays and overuses his Congolese workers. In reaction, Président told me that the anti-immigration labour legislation and the market competition impede him from treating Congolese in the same way as locals. Although he acknowledged the law forbids him to hire refugees in the private security industry, Président thinks he just helps his fellow Congolese refugees to get jobs otherwise they would become like slaves in Pretoria.

From what Président said, it is crucial to note that his sense of ‘patriotism’ vis-à-vis Congolese does not match with the difficult duties he assigns to them. He appoints most of them as night watchmen while the South Africans better-paid workers work in the day shift. Also, his appreciation towards his Congolese workers as obedient, less complaining, and hard workers shows his hidden agenda linked to the exploitation of unauthorised workers.

Concerning Mama Fatundu the owner of a removal company and import-export trade, she is said to be one of the biggest suppliers to medium and small sized Congolese traders. However, she is frequently criticised for employing only Congolese from the East like herself, or, interestingly people from Venda. In response, she told me she was innocent because when she started hiring Congolese, people from the West did not approach her. About Vendas, she declared to be surprised to have so many Venda’s which she attributes to her manager and legal counsellor who recruited them. During our interview, she disclosed to me that she mixes legal business with ‘*Kop*’<sup>20</sup>.

About Pastor Gerry Kinzambi, the pioneer francophone pastor (as he likes to introduce himself), he feels very satisfied to help either Congolese or South Africans in the work of God. Actually, he is well-known and acknowledged among Congolese of Pretoria because of his contribution in the professional integration of his followers in South Africa and in the DRC as well. With his various forms of social capital, Pastor Gerry develops an important Congolese religious professional network that allows him to boost his followers (professionally). Because of that, one can observe an important number of Congolese upper middle class and students in his church. Beside his sacerdotal profession, Pastor Gerry was

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<sup>20</sup>‘*Kop*’ is Lingala slang word. Derived from the French verb ‘*coopérer*’ to cooperate, the word has many connotations such legal or illegal business, corruption, fraud, deal, etc. It was used by the participant to signify illegal business.

also involved in illicit trade of mining products, especially at his debut in South Africa. Pastor explained his debut in Gauteng as follows.

‘We decided to do the work of God and make businesses which allow us to work for God. [...] As you are foreigner, you could see vacant positions on newspaper, but who is going to hire you? There were just natives who had qualifications who they employed. [...] Now, how to work? [...] We started selling malachite. We even came with an ingot of malachite. And after, we work as intermediaries between Congolese suppliers and buyers in the trade of malachite’. (My translation from French).

With a view to the above findings, Congolese elites are employers of Congolese (often-undocumented) immigrant workers and South Africans. In general, they legally hire South Africans in tasks that are outside of the understanding or the dismantling of their second ethnic enclave economy. Employing Congolese is helpful for twin reasons.

First, the presence of Congolese workers assures the protection of the secrecy of their underground business. Second, the unlawful statuses of their Congolese workers appear like an opportunity for these elites to exploit them mercilessly. Given that Congolese elite are employers of their compatriots and natives, it is important to analyse in the following lines the Congolese middle classes’ occupations.

### **3.3.2 Occupations of Middle classes**

Among participants who are middle class, the research has observed that they have many similarities in their socio-professional characteristics and lifestyle. They are in majority between 30 and 50 years old. They hire them either unlawfully or legally in private companies. Few of them work for the South African Government while others are self-employed. In general, they have been living in South Africa for more than five years.

Their lifestyle, in contrary to Congolese elites, does not really reflect signs of luxuriousness. Except doctors, engineers, and few academicians working for the South Africa government who live like barons, all of them are tenants dwelling in the hardscrabble areas of Sunnyside, Down Town or Arcadia. Although few of them are pedestrians, many of them have modest cars. Still, their lifestyle looks a hundred times better than those of their counterparts left back home.

Of course, regular Congolese professionals (especially doctors, pharmacists, and engineers) have lifestyles of ‘bourgeois’ - in the Congolese milieu they nickname Mercedes Benz C 220 : ‘*J’suis médecin*’ (I’m a doctor). According to a widespread rumour, it is the first car that most of the newly Congolese employed doctors buy. Most of them have bought several flats in



and around Pretoria which patients may rent while they wait for treatment in their clinics and where they may convalesce after they are discharged from hospital. The flats are also rented to visiting businessmen and Congolese students from wealthier families (Inaka & Trapido forthcoming).

As I wanted to observe how they spent their leisure time, I took a financial risk (for a student without any bursary or research funds) to go to a concert that they had organised. Nevertheless, it was worth going there because of the present research. I left Sunnyside en route to a very far suburb. Arriving at that place, entrance fees were 200 Rand. For the sake of the ethnography, I paid, albeit with a heavy heart.

Nonetheless, it was necessary to pay for that concert because I observed how these doctors were spending money by pressing banknotes on the heads of musicians and drinking expensive drinks such Champagne, palm wine – while I struggled to buy my single bottle of juice. When some South African and Congolese pretty girls came, the ambiance became better. These doctors started giving more money to girls who could dance to Congolese music, buying drinks to everyone who was around. As the leader of that band knew that I am an accomplished dancer of Congolese dances, he called me on the stage. While I was dancing, these doctors started giving me money. In total, they gave me 600 Rand and 200 Pula (currency of Botswana). Moreover, I got a lift back to Sunnyside in a Porsche Cayenne. More important, I had opportunity to discuss with some of them. I do remember, one of them told me that he is the first black African francophone to graduate (Phd) from the University of Pretoria.

Actually, their lifestyle might not be seen unusual for professionals from an administratively organised emerging country like South Africa. But such lifestyle is literally impossible for their counterparts working in the DRC. Still, their posh lifestyles can be attributable to their statutes of South African citizens or permanent residents that allow them to get similar administrative opportunities as natives. In this, an official Doctor told me that they always struggle to get South African citizenship which opens doors for them everywhere.

About employers of Congolese middle classes, findings show that ‘*Sud Af.*’<sup>21</sup>, Afrikaners, Indians, and multinational companies are their first employers. The second employer of

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<sup>21</sup>‘Sud Af’: is the abbreviation of the French word ‘*Sud Africain*’ that means South African. So, when Congolese and many francophone black Africans mention the word of ‘South African’.

Congolese professionals is the South African government which more or less accepts them in health and education. Besides, there are also self-employed middle classes. They are all owners of small or medium sized enterprises. They also mix the second economy with their legal activities. Most of their activities are oriented towards Congolese community.

### 3.3.4 Occupations of working class

Concerning working class informants, this study has discovered that they are generally less than 40 years old. In general, they have spent less than ten years in South Africa.

About their lifestyle, nearly all working class participants stay in Sunnyside. They are often sub-tenants who share rooms or dorms because they cannot afford renting flats. Despite their low incomes, some Congolese working class in Sunnyside are apparently the first Congolese who practice conspicuous consumption. It is easy to observe them dancing, drinking, and showing the labels of their clothes almost every weekend in some pubs - especially where they play Congolese music. They have even nicknamed some pubs in words inaccessible to outsiders. For example, they call a brothel located in Arcadia '*kitubu*'<sup>22</sup>; a nightclub in Sunnyside '*Songe ya Mbeli*'<sup>23</sup>, another one in down town '*infos derniers*'<sup>24</sup>, to name a few.

Most of their employers are Congolese (elites or middle class) and few South Africans. The same is true for some foreign employers (Nigerians, Greek, Jews, etc.) who hire few of them while others are struggling as working class self-employed. Many Congolese men in this class work in the private security sector. Strikingly, none of my informants had worked as night watchman or parking attendants in the DRC. Obviously, they learn these jobs once they get into South Africa as a survival strategy.

Findings show that many informants assumed that to work as private security guard is a domain of Congolese men in South Africa. More than 50 per cent of informants told me that they had worked as security guards in South Africa. Many highly educated informants avowed that working as security guards, especially as parking attendant, was their transitional profession in South Africa. Therefore, they assumed that working as parking attendants looks

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<sup>22</sup>'*Kitubu*' means a hidden place in the slang Lingala.

<sup>23</sup>*Songe ya Mbeli* (the point of the knife) is a Lingala saying which means someone or something that like the point of the knife is difficult to challenge and thus strong.

<sup>24</sup>'*Infos denier*' is actually from French words 'Dernières informations' (last news to broadcast on TV). By analogy, Congolese use that word to design that nightclub which closes later around 5 a.m in Pretoria.

to be a '*passage obligé*' (an obliged way to go through) for many Congolese men new arrivals in South Africa.

Interestingly, the study has discovered that another job undertaken by this class - the occupation of parking attendant (commonly called *car guards* or *car watchers* and *Kobeta ebende*<sup>25</sup> by Congolese) - is a *sui generis* profession marked by exceptional labour relations. What is remarkable in that job is that 'employers', i.e. owners or controllers of parking sites, do not pay Congolese parking attendants. In contrary, the latter have to pay for '*connexion*' (Bribes that Congolese have to pay) in exchange for hiring them.

Once employed, they forced to pay between daily 50 or 80 Rand to their employers. They call this practice '*mbongo ya tenue*' (meaning in Lingala to pay money for uniform). That is to say that their companies provide to them uniforms and spaces to work - for which they are daily obliged to pay. Even worse, a '*guy*' (as employers call parking attendants) unable to pay daily '*mbongo ya tenue*', as his company expects him, is fined. He thereby supposed to pay the following day the double of daily due money in addition of his regular owed '*mbongo ya tenue*'.

Moreover, if a *guy* is unable to pay that fine after three days, he will be fired. For this reason, in the Congolese parking attendants' jargon, they call that fine '*gillette*' (meaning in the Congolese French the flat razor). It is called '*gillette*' because parking attendants feel pain like someone wounded with a blade. For instance, an informant told me his sad experience of the practice of '*gillette*' as follows.

'... one day I had to pay for *gillette* of two days and *mbongo ya tenue*. Thus, it was in total 400 Rand. I mean 80 Rand multiple by four, and plus 80 for that day. My dear Saint Joe, I suffered, I suffered. I was obliged to borrow money here and there to avoid losing my job. [...] I even walked from and to Sunnyside and Atturberry by foot'. Complained a car watcher in Lingala.

One can ask how they get incomes for paying their employers. The obvious answer is that, they get money from users of parking where they work. In general, these parking users pay Congolese with coins. For this reason, Congolese call the job of parking attendant '*kobeta ebende*' (literally 'to beat iron', but here meaning to work for gaining coins).

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<sup>25</sup>*Kobenda ebende* means to work as parking attendant and be daily self-paid with coins. In simple words, parking attendants work for gaining some coins. Etymologically said, '*kobeta*' means to use, work or beat something or someone and '*ebende*' is iron.

Moreover, I noticed that many security guards meld occupations in order to obtain more. They do other jobs beside their initial work of security. This is the case of Kasangulu who works daily as a welder and at the night as security guard. Similarly, Sonabata, although he works as a night-watchman in a restaurant and guesthouse, is also highly solicited by Congolese working classes thanks to his English writing skills, while Congolese professionals and elites want him for his expertise in car repairing.

Another fact related to gender is the employment of Congolese as female domestic workers by their compatriots. This is observable among better-off Congolese in Pretoria. In this domain, it is quite difficult for Congolese who look for Congolese servants to find them. Some employers in need of Congolese servants find them through their religious. Sometimes, others go at Home affairs while many Congolese asylum seekers go to renew their papers. One day during my observations of refugees or asylum seekers at home affairs, a Congolese couple looking for a Congolese female domestic approached me as they noticed that I was discussing with many people. They wanted me to find a Congolese francophone female domestic for them.

Furthermore, there are also a small number of Congolese male domestic workers in Pretoria. Given its female connotation and the negative connotations of the domestic workers for the Congolese, they call themselves '*interior designers*'!

On the other hand, the study has found that Congolese female working classes mostly work in hair salons, and as domestic workers. It seems that the sector of hair care appears like a sort of specific domain for Congolese women. They are widespread in hair salons on streets in Sunnyside and down town. Nonetheless, few Congolese men also work in female hair salons but, again, they are victims of many Congolese social stigmas. They pejoratively qualify them as 'V.W'<sup>26</sup> (gays) because they carry out female occupations.

Actually, gays do indeed face difficulties in finding a job within the Congolese community due to pervasive forms of prejudice. For instance, one former Congolese restaurant collapsed because its Congolese clients had noticed the presence of a gay working in kitchen. The

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<sup>26</sup>. VW: By analogy with the Volkswagen Beetle, Congolese pejoratively call gays VW because of some kind of analogy between the Beetle engine being at the back and the practice of anal intercourse.

plausible explanation of that homophobic reaction is that some Congolese cultural believes assume that to eat foods cooked by a ‘gay’ is a source of misfortune<sup>27</sup>.

The study has also found that some self-employed women are illegally street vendors while men compatriots are in construction (‘handymen’, electrician, woodworkers, etc.) and servicing (computer repairer).

In conclusion, the main domains of activities for Congolese immigrants are business, security, applied arts and crafts, private administration, health, construction, media, hospitality, house working, education, servicing, shop working, and religion.

Congolese elites are employers of both Congolese unauthorised workers - who are exploited because of their illegal status - and South Africans as well. But, Congolese middle class are legally or illegally employed in private companies and legally by the South African government in health and education. Some of them prefer working as self-employed. Different from elites and middle class, Congolese working classes are in majority-unauthorised workers who face great job exploitation. The most important findings of this section are the ghettoization of some professions, the sexual division of work, the ethnic niches of the underground economy, and the use of unlawful professional practices in all Congolese social classes.

### ***3.4. UPWARD AND DOWNWARD MOBILITY***

The present study has found that the majority of informants view their mobility on the basis of economic mobility. They argued that they faced with the downward mobility in Pretoria because of their underpayment. However, a few of them think they have attained upward economic mobility because of the rise of their incomes and living standards. Still, very few informants, especially elites and professionals said to be happy to upgrade their social class positions in Pretoria.

#### **3.4.1 Upward mobility**

As mentioned earlier, there are two central aspects from data. While some informants said they changed their class position because of their high incomes, others enjoyed upward

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<sup>27</sup> However, one of the most successful street food restaurants in my home district in Kinshasa is run by a gay man. Although homosexuals are not legally recognised, homosexuality does not seem to be an offence in the DRC.

occupational mobility. Here, results show a general trend toward appreciation of upward mobility based on incomes among unauthorised middle class workers and the self-employed. In contrast, lawful middle classes regularly assessed their upward mobility according to occupational upgrading.

Informants who declared that they had risen from a low class to the highest one insisted on their professional promotions. In addition to that, they also talked about the acquisition of new competencies in Pretoria. For example, an engineer managing a private electric company and a doctor argued that their respective professional positions and experiences pushed them into the higher position in the social hierarchy.

Louis, the engineer, said his job and function as manager matches with his educational profile. What is more important for him is that he enjoys fulfilling the upward occupational mobility. Louis was saying this:

‘Yeah, what I’m doing now fits with what I did at school. That’s why, I can say it’s fine. Let’s explain that, sometimes when you are working you need to go until to the high position. You need to go forward. You know that you cannot work just like they are paying you and you say ‘I’m fine’. You need also to move and maybe reaching the level of high position. [...] I was saying maybe one day I will be a manager. I didn’t want to be an ordinary worker until until’. (Informant spoke in English)

Doctor Max thought that he climbed up the ladder in his profession as he reached the international standard level required for a doctor. His experiences and skills upgraded in South Africa helped him to feel able to work as in any developed country without feeling incompetent. In this logic, he thinks that if he remained working in the DRC, he would have never reached that level.

‘Yes, I have a big advancement in my field and in medicine that I practise. As I said, a doctor does not feel isolated, abandoned by the South African government. [...] They are areas in our country when you are in hospital at the bottom of Bandundu, Bas Congo and Kasai you are disconnected from any health system of our country. Here, even if you are in a rural hospital, the state organises training sessions which develop your skills. You are always updated [...] When I was in the Congo, I could not have dreamed that I could be a doctor in Canada, a doctor in England, a doctor in the United States, a doctor in Australia. Today, I can go and settle down in the United States, Australia, Canada and England as a doctor. I will work as a doctor’. Doctor Max. (My translation from French).

In accordance to the above quotations, it is interesting to note that the upward mobility of both informants occurred within their respective professions. What is also relevant to observe is that, on the basis of theory of the class-based analysis of social mobility, the two above participants are in the situation of *vertical upward mobility* (Goldthrope, 2008; Goldthrope & Erikson, 1993).

Moreover, it is also important to say that the doctor and the engineer's upward occupational are functions of what Sørensen calls *the structural opportunities and individual efforts of career advancement* (Sørensen (1975) cited in Hillmet, 2011, p.402). In fact, the engineer is glad of his professional promotion as result of his efforts in studies. Equally, the doctor took not only opportunities offered by the South African national health system for his occupational upgrading, but he also made his personal efforts to do a specialisation in community health at one university in South Africa. That is why he feels himself to belong in the class of international doctors.

Regarding informants who thought that their upward mobility is due to the augmentation of incomes, all of them were unauthorised middle class and working classes. It will be instructive to look at an example from each class. The first example is of a night watchman and welder, Boomer, and the second one is an illegal non-registered doctor (commonly called *locum*<sup>28</sup> by the Congolese), Mathias.

For the Night watchman and welder, Boomer considers himself happy despite his 'non-valued' work by Congolese. As his reason he cites the fact that he earns more than a reasonably high placed public servant in Congo. He also argued that his income allows him to have a purchasing power what he could never get in Congo. Although he recognised that he is suffering in South Africa, he believes that he has made progress as he earns more. Boomer put his arguments like this:

'Here in South Africa I gain 2200 Rand what is around 300 U.S. dollars. This salary can help you to organise your life [...].With 2500 Rand that they pay me as a night watchman, I really know that I have a salary. For a South African, it is nothing. But, for me as a Congolese, it is more than the salary of an office manager in Congo. [...] On the other hand, in Congo a salary like that does not exist. You see, we left the Congo although we are suffering here, but we are better to compare to a Congolese who lives in Congo. Ok, let's say, for me, I made progress at all levels especially in social and financial terms. Although this life of suffering, I gain something more compared to a Congolese living in Congo. It's a bit absurd'. (My translation from French and Lingala)

Equally, Doctor Mathias said that his income lifted up his socio-economic level above his counterparts left back in the DRC. He insisted on the fact that Congolese doctors working for the South African government have the living standard so high that they cannot envy

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<sup>28</sup> '*Locum*' is a British short form for *locum tenens*. Etymologically, *locum* is from Latin word '*locus tenere*' meaning one holding a place. In medical English, it means a temporary deputy, on acting for a doctor. In the Congolese doctors' jargon, it means a temporary and unregistered doctor working as a replacement for an absentee regular doctor.

Congolese Ministers (roughly speaking, to be a minister in the DRC is used as a shorthand for being very prosperous). Doctor Matador declared this:

‘You see the lifestyle of doctors who are in the public sector how they are. They cannot even envy a Congolese minister. I talked with an old brother who is doctor in Clinique Ngaliema (a hospital in Kinshasa), he told me his salary is 100 dollars. However, as a locum my salary can reach 1200 Rand almost 150 U.S dollars per day. A doctor, they pay him 800 Rand per month. This is what I gain per day but (in the DRC) they get it per month. He said also they receive bonus of 700 US dollars. I have worked in Lesotho. It is a small country, but they paid me 1,700 US dollars a month. [...] Here, my social level is raised up’. (My translation from French and Lingala)

Again we see that in the conception of these informants, it is the increases in incomes which triggers their upward social mobility. They insisted on the fact that working in Pretoria has upgraded their social level. Actually, I might argue that these informants experience the upward economic mobility rather than the upward social mobility as they thought. This is better explained by Gans (2007, p. 154) who defines ‘economic mobility is simply the move to a higher or lower level of income, wealth, education, employment status, and standard of living; and social mobility as the movement to a higher or lower class or status position’.

However, these informants are, in fact, experiencing downward social mobility and especially occupational downgrading. They moved from the formal employment in the DRC to the informal one in Pretoria. As proof, Doctor Mathias acknowledged not belonging to the same class as Congolese doctors employed by the South African government. This shows much clearly how his professional downward mobility occurred from a formal doctor (an academic and a specialist in gynaecology in the DRC) to Doctor ‘locum’.

For economic purposes, Doctor Mathias voluntarily accepted his downward occupational mobility in exchange to upward economic mobility. He therefore experiences what Erickson and Goldthrope (1992 cited in Houle, 2010, p.763) termed as the *voluntary downward class social mobility*.

However, one can be surprised to note that people who move from formal employment to informal one often believe that they have reached a higher social class. This can be understood by the Congolese social stratification that hierarchizes people according to their economic capital (money, fortune, assets).

Accordingly, there is a well-founded reason for these informants to think that they socially upgraded. In reality, the Congolese workers ‘downgrading occupational mobility allows them to get economic capital and improve their standing in a way that their former work in the



DRC could not do. This similar to what Akresh (2006, p. 854) noted among legal immigrants in the United States whose ‘blue-collar work found in the U.S. offers them a path to better their life than white-collar job they left behind’.

Leaving the discussion of the upward mobility to one side, there is need now to look at the downward mobility in the next subsection.

### **3.4.2 Downward mobility**

In this study nearly all respondents expressed anxiety about downward social and economic mobility in Pretoria. Their main anxieties are underemployment and underpayment.

As regard to underemployment, many educated informants felt that their professions do not fit their educational profiles. Therefore, these occupations place them near the bottom of the ladder of Congolese social stratification.

Professional deskilling is also a relevant concern for graduate immigrants. The later complained that the less they perform in their fields, the more they lose their skills. To corroborate these views, the following testimonies of informants give insights about how over-educated Congolese workers face the aftermath of underemployment.

The first case is a Customer Trolley Assistant (CTA)’s experience. This former legal counsellor (and freelancer) in Kinshasa is disconsolate about being belittled in Pretoria because of his underemployment. As a trained lawyer, he bemoaned losing his skills and aptitudes by dint of working as manual worker. Vincent was saying this:

‘I do something that does not match in my qualification. But it is only for surviving. Thus, it is really different (lower) from my skill, my background. It is totally different. Every trade has its value. But, this job makes me step backward from my skills. I lose a lot of senses, my capacity because of that job’. (My translation from French)

Likewise, a security guard who in his previous existence he was a manager of a company in Kinshasa where he considered himself to be middle class. In Pretoria, as he works as security guard, he calls his occupation an ‘odd job’ because it does not fit him.

‘I would say it is far from being similar to what I did in the DRC or what I am capable of. This is what they call ‘odd jobs’ what most of foreigners like us do. Well, what to do? We are here. We make do with lowering and professional humiliation’. Said the security guard (My translation from French).

These findings are thus largely in line with the findings of Pichler (2011) and Akresh (2006). According to Pichler (2011, p.942) ‘more often than not highly skilled immigrants find themselves in jobs for which they are either overeducated or their education is not appropriately recognized, which in turn accounts for the lower educational payoffs’. Likely, Akresh (2006, p.869) added that ‘immigrants often move to places to where employment opportunities are better, however the jobs some of them held in host countries do not accurately reflect their education level’. Consequently, many Congolese new arrivals, especially former professionals in the DRC, generally find jobs as informal menial workers.

Regarding the underpayment as cause of the Congolese’s downward economic mobility, a large number of professionals, self-employees and working class complained to gain less than they did in the DRC. For instance, two informants – one professional and one working class - after having compared their incomes they used to earn in the DRC to what they gain in Pretoria, concluded that they had been socio-economically downgraded by the move.

The first is a female visual artist and businesswoman in catering who estimates that her low incomes do not help her to face with the expensive life in Pretoria. Naturally, she is obliged, for instance, to share her flat with unknown persons so that she can pay her rent.

‘Life is very difficult in South Africa. [...] I think an artist also means a businessperson. When you are a businesswoman you can easily live like at home because life is not too expensive here. [...] The practice of sharing (room or flat), we learned it here. We live with people we do not know’. (Complained the visual artist in French).

For the second case, a barber, Guru, argued that he was gaining more in the DRC than in Pretoria. Even though he tried working in many places in order to increase his income, he is still facing downwards in Pretoria. Guru was talking to me about his misery in the street Lingala like this:

‘If I can really assess it, I was alright in Congo. In Congo, I was gaining more. Here, I’m drowned (broke) because I did cut hair in Moreleta, in Down Town around the Church Street, in Menlyn, and now Sunnyside. Honestly speaking, there is nothing to gain here (in Pretoria)’. (My translation from Lingala).

As consequences of the downward economic mobility, many participants feel hopeless and fearful about their future in South Africa. Consequently, these informants think about going to other countries - mostly - where they hope to find more opportunities for their better occupational attainment.

Such reality echoes with Gans' (2009, p.1659) view who argued that: 'downward economic and social mobility is to some degree painful for every one of its victims, because it means a reduction in standard of living, social position, and prestige'.

A few middle class and working class experienced fluctuations in their social and economic mobility. That is to say, they experience first upward social and economic mobility then downward mobility (at the time of interviews) in their time life in Pretoria. These fluctuations are due to their involuntary loss of jobs or the collapse of a business. For instance, an English teacher has unlawfully lost his well-paid and adequate position as a translator in one francophone embassy. Likewise, a businesswoman was bankrupted in her previously successful restaurant because of the Congolese ethnic propaganda linked to the elections (see chapter 6). Finally, a security guard got even poorer since his former employer's business collapsed. All these cases are further developed in subsequent chapters.

To recall, this section has shown that Congolese workers are often faced with downward social and economic mobility. It has shown that statuses of refugees and/or documented immigrants but irregular workers are key factors in Congolese social and economic mobility. This is in line with wider research on refugee populations and undocumented immigrants that has generally shown a high degree of downward mobility and low payment rate (Chiwick, Lee & Miller, 2005 cited in Akresh, 2006).

### **3.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has analysed the employment of Congolese immigrant workers and their social and economic mobility in Pretoria. It has shown that *social class on departure from the DRC impacts on the class position in Pretoria*. It has thus demonstrated that Congolese elites, middle class and working class are all affected in their professional positions in Pretoria and by their former class position the DRC. This feature echoes with Bauman's idea (1998 cited in Castles 2013, p.131) which states that the new global labour market is an expression of a global class hierarchy in which rich people have unlimited rights while poor are controlled or excluded in a variety ways.

On the main occupations of Congolese, the chapter has demonstrated that elites are in general employers of South Africans or irregular Congolese workers. Congolese middle classes, in their turn, are in the majority unauthorised workers and self-employed. Nevertheless, some of

them enjoy working for the South African government in health and education sectors. On the other hand, working class are in the vast majority undocumented or self-employed manual workers.

In their different socio-professional categories, it was displayed that *practices of illegal or informal activities exist in all these classes*. Another important issue emerging in many of the Congolese's main occupations is the stigma or gender cliché which the Congolese community gives to those doing 'female' professions occupied by men.

About social and economic mobility, it has been established that *the majority of Congolese, especially the middle class, are faced with downward social and economic mobility*. Against this general trend, a few professionals' such as unregistered doctors and few self-employed people enjoy upward income mobility. This economic performance leads them to think that they have climbed up on the Congolese social ladder.

Finally, the chapter has shown how Congolese change occupations, and class positions. Their professional and socio-economic identities are reconstructed in South Africa. These changes ascertain Castles (2010) middle-range theory that postulate that international migration shape immigrants.

## CHAPTER FOUR: COPING STRATEGIES FOR PROFESSIONAL INCORPORATION

### ***4.1 INTRODUCTION***

After examining different occupations of Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria and their social and economic mobility in the previous chapter, the purpose of the present chapter is to understand the main causes of the Congolese's professional incorporation - the barriers to such incorporation and the strategies employed by Congolese in the labour market in Pretoria.

Drawing on the strategic analysis of Michel Crozier, this chapter shows that Congolese immigrant workers are what Crozier calls '*Homo Strategicus*' (Mountousse & Renouard, 1997; Crozier & Friedber, 1992), because they employ various strategies vis-à-vis different challenges relative to their professional insertion in Pretoria.

Inspired by Max Weber, Michel Crozier argued that individuals in organisations or societies are inserted into a set of power relations. Power exists when an individual A is able to have under her or his control an individual B. In that, the individual A has a certain freedom of action - which is based on a set of rules. These rules shape and control the actions of the individual B and limit ipso facto her or his margin of manoeuvre. This feature forces the individual B to be in what Crozier calls '*la zone d'incertitudes*' (the zone of uncertainties) (Mountousse & Renouard 1997). However, as a *Homo strategicus* the individual B is rational, he or she adopts formal or informal strategies allowing her or him to increase her or his margin of manoeuvre (see also Mountousse & Renouard, 1997; Cremion, 1992; Brousselle 2004; Saoud, 2005).

The chapter has two main parts. The first part takes a look at different barriers to professional incorporation that Congolese face in Pretoria. The second part analyses the main strategies Congolese migrants adopt to overcome such barriers.

### ***4.2. PROFESSIONAL INCORPORATION BARRIERS***

This section answers to the question: what factors prevent the Congolese professional insertion in Pretoria? Broadly speaking, the main barriers are: the South African anti-immigrant labour policy, linguistic barriers, a narrow job market, xenophobia, the imported

Congolese labour culture, misjudgement or undervaluation of Congolese credentials, and the limited transferable skills of Congolese on the job market.

#### 4.2.1 Anti-immigrants labour policy

Two main legal issues hinder the Congolese professional incorporation in Pretoria: the South African anti-immigrants labour legislation, and the non-recognition of asylum seekers or refugees rights to work by some employers.

With regards to the South African anti-immigrant labour legislation, informants declared three kinds of problems, namely difficulties of getting work permits, ceaseless restrictions of the South African labour migration legislation, and problems of being legally accepted as refugees.

Touching on difficulties of getting work permit, it is firstly important to mention that ‘the most significant of the permit categories that allow employment in some form are the following: four different categories of work permit (quota<sup>29</sup>, general<sup>30</sup>, exceptional skills<sup>31</sup>, and intra-company transfer<sup>32</sup>); treaty permits; corporate permits; and business permits’ (Dodson & Crush 2004, pp.104-10).

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<sup>29</sup> A quota work permit may be issued by the Department as prescribed to a foreigner if the foreigner falls within a category determined by the Minister at least annually by notice in Gazette after consultation with the Minister of Labour and Trade and Industry and as long as the number of work permits so issued for such does not exceed the quota determined in the notice.

<sup>30</sup> A general work permit may be issue by the Department to a foreigner not falling within a category contemplated in in subsection (1) [for example quota] if the prospective employer (a) satisfies the Department in the manner prescribed that despite diligent search he or she has been unable to employ a person in the Republic with qualifications equivalent to those of the applicant; (b) produce certification form chartered accountant that the terms and conditions under which he or she intends to employ such foreigner, including salary and benefits, are not inferior to those prevailing in the relevant market segment for citizens and residents.

<sup>31</sup> An exceptional skills work permit may be issued by the Department to an individual of exceptional skills or qualifications and to those members of his or her immediate family determined by the Department under the circumstances or by regulation.

<sup>32</sup> An intra-company transfer work permit may be issued by the Department to a foreigner who is employed abroad in business operating in the Republic in a branch, subsidiary or affiliate relationship and who by reason of his or her employment is required to conduct work in the Republic for a period not exceeding two years.

In the light of these different legal conditions for getting a work permit, given that many Congolese are economic immigrants, it always appeared challenging for them to conform to these laws. In that, pastor, Ghandi Gandajika, who came in South Africa since 1991 as a student with ambition to get a job after having completed his studies, said to get the work permit was always difficult. Pastor Ghandi said this:

‘Well, there were some people who went from study permit to study permits. When we were done with the study permit, it was not easy to have directly a job here. When the studies were completed, it was question you prolong studies after studies. Even those who got chance to find jobs, we struggled to get work permit. It was almost impossible’. (My translation from French)

Also many employers avoid being involved in complicated process of getting work permits for their workers. Instead of initiating process of the acquisition of the work permits for their Congolese future workers, they ask them to show their work permits. That is another case of ‘*la zone d’incertitude*’ that prevented an engineer Derrick Dekese from being employed in several companies.

‘Many companies, if I can say it, only want you to have your work permit. They tell you that it is not the responsibility of a company to go to check if you are in order. [...] But, if you go to the Home Affairs, they will tell you different stories. They want the company to get documents for you. You see how it was complicated for me’.

What employers did to Derick is indubitably contrary to the above mentioned South African labour migration legislation. Except in the case of the exceptional skills work permit, which requires foreigners to initiate processes, all other categories of work permits necessitate employers or other South African authorities to be involved in the processes.

However, one can also assume that employers are either ignorant of requirements for hiring an immigrant worker in South Africa or refuse on purpose to implement legal principles. In this landscape, some informants missed important job opportunities. That is probably why I met with only two persons holding work permits out of 46 informants!

Moreover, the red tape at the department of Home Affairs also prevents Congolese from getting work permits. Some Congolese employers who tried getting work permits for their compatriot workers put up with a million frustrating forms of bureaucracy. To illustrate, let us look at the case of a businesswoman could not get a work permit for her worker. As her businesses are based in the Congolese community, she wanted to hire a Congolese as a representative, due to the skills required for that job. The job required the worker to know some Congolese languages and have a good understanding of Congolese people. Although

the businesswoman's worker had evidence for getting a work permit, officers of the Department of Home Affairs refused to issue the work permit. They said to the businesswoman to hire a native who has competencies for that job. According to the Businesswoman, it was unquestionably demanding to find a South African who is able to speak Lingala, Swahili, Tshiluba and French, and able to deal with Congolese in community business.

About the ceaseless restrictions of the South African labour migration legislation, informants frequently complained about the toughening of the legal conditions relative to job incorporation in some Congolese occupational niches such as the private security industry and the health sector. For instance, Illan Ilebo, a night watchman, blamed the South African labour policy for forcing him to be an unauthorised worker. He deplored how some South African training centres in private security swindle immigrants. While they are aware of legal changes in the private security industry, they are still dishonestly accepting immigrants for training. Illan complained as follow:

‘You see for getting a job as a private security guard, I got financial aid from my church which paid for my training. I got certificate. I had always an idea that I would have my SOB. But, when I completed my training I was surprised that they do not anymore issue SOB to immigrants. However, when you started the training they had told you that you will get it. Then, to get a job was a big headache. Therefore, you are now informally working in the job of security’. (My translation from Lingala).

This case of Illan demonstrates that an immigrant can have good intention to respect the law but she or he is often forced to in illegality by various South African institutions.

In the domain of health, many doctors argued that perpetual legal changes in their field complicate the professional insertion of Congolese doctors. Doctor Louison indeed said:

‘It was easier. It was required to do the test. There was a theoretical exam that you have to pass. There was another practical test that you have also to pass. Well, they did not expect too much. It was enough to get 50% in the two subjects in order to be accepted as doctor. It was quite a lot easier than today [...] Our experience from Congo was accepted even though it is no longer accepted nowadays’. (My translation from French).

In fact, since 2003, ‘the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA) has enforced the requirement that only citizens or permanent residents can access the obligatory registration process for all security-related jobs’ (Makhema, 2009, p.34).

This labour legislation reinforcement severely restricts the legal incorporation of foreigners in the sector of private security. As Congolese working in that sector are in general asylum



seekers and refugees, it can be inferred that the PSIRA requirement prevents their lawful recruitment. Whatever the intention of the law the effect of all the PSIRA's changes has been to raise the number of undocumented Congolese immigrant workers.

In respect to problems of being legally accepted as refugees, some informants said that they had remained asylum seekers for many years without gaining a refugee status. Consequently, they are forced to be undocumented immigrant workers. This is the case of a CTA who said:

‘And, because man is a really man, he will by-pass the law that makes him suffer. If they were respecting their own laws, giving someone who did five years as refugee temporary residents permit, who could look for informal employment. Me, I did seven years here. I am always in the situation of an asylum seeker. They cannot even accept me as a refugee’. (my transition from French)

From this narrative, one can note that the mediocre service delivery at Home Affairs is among the barriers to professional incorporation among the Congolese and a driver of their involvement in illegal employment.

On the subject of the non-recognition of asylum seekers or refugee's rights to work by some employers, many informants complained that employers ignore or refuse their document without justifiable cause. They also reported that several bosses are not welcoming and react in an unfriendly or amazed manner when they see the shape and colours of the asylum seekers and refugees documents. For example male Congolese community journalist was saying this:

‘The reception, when you come to do something (looking for the employment), it is not easy for us foreigners. At first, they are going to ask your documents. When you bring out A4, the paper of refugees status, you will see their reactions which hurt you’. (My translation from French)

In like manner, Logia, a female visual artist came up against a white female Afrikaner who did not know the existence of refugees' documents. Logia:

‘I remember myself that I once encountered a female Afrikaner who said: “*you are Congolese but what is this document? [...] You should have the green or red ID in order to work*”. [...] You see the papers of refugees look like copying papers (Paper size: ISO A4 paper size 210 nm x 297 mm). When you open that big paper in front of person; you see the person directly reacts: “*What is this Id though? I want the green Id or red one! How do you bring to me this Id*”? It is complicated so that they will not take you to work’. (My translation from French)

The plausible explanation of the above findings is related to the side effects of the former South African Refugee Act. According to Bikoko (2006, p.23), ‘in 1998, when the Refugee Act was published, asylum seekers could not work and study in South Africa, nor could they

open bank accounts. In reaction, the South African Human Rights Commissioner and other CSOs (Civil society organisations) dealing with FMs (Forced Migrants) challenged this clause in the court. As a result, since 2000 asylum seekers can study and work in South Africa. However, since then until today, these rights appear to be disregarded by many public or private institutions’.

From all foresaid information, it is possible to paraphrase Castles (2004; 2007 cited in Castles 2013, p.131) by arguing that the South Africa labour migration policy is ‘full of contradictions. A central contradiction is that between state and market: policy-makers seek to admit only those migrants seen by the public as economically productive and politically acceptable, while employers demand workers for all types and skill levels’. The Castles’ view approves the existing contradictions between the demand of Doctors and Security guards in the South African labour market and the above labour mentioned policy repressing these categories of immigrant workers’.

#### **4.2.2 Linguistic barriers**

The Congolese workers’ inability to speak South African languages constitutes one of the main obstacles to their professional insertion. At the same time, informants thought that natives use certain South African languages as a means to exclude them from getting jobs. However, an unexpected finding of this study is that a few informants themselves acknowledge that their language problems complicated their interactions with some officials who wanted to render them services or employers who had shown themselves willing to hire them.

On their inability to speak South African languages, several informants confessed that they often missed job opportunities because of their lack of English proficiency. For example, a handyman humbly recognised that he missed a job opportunity as a cleaner because of his deficiencies in English in the past. Carmin Kamonia said:

‘At that time, I remember we went to look for a job at WXYZ. Arriving there, I would like to say that I could not speak English very well. The first time, I failed because the test was firstly on the language. I could not speak. Thus, I missed the job opportunity’. (My translation from French)

Furthermore, to master English is a condition *sine qua non* for getting a job in the domains of health and education, even in the second economy. Doctors and Pharmacists are obliged to pass the TOEFL before taking the test of the South African Health professional Council. For

this reason, Congolese Doctors are linguistically disadvantaged in comparison to Anglophone immigrant doctors. Most Congolese Doctors had to spend several years learning English before they attempt to write the above cited test. Nevertheless, they recognised that their Anglophone counterparts do not face these language problems. Doctor Kabeya explained that disadvantage like this:

‘It is true that for taking the exam, it is a must to know English. But, there are other foreign doctors who are from countries colonised by the English, for them, it is not a big problem. For us, however, it is a double problem. During the exam, (it was necessary) to comprehend all pathologies and how to treat them in English and then to speak English’. (My translation from French.)

Additionally, Congolese are at a disadvantage against Anglophone immigrants in the domain of education. Their insufficient receiving-country language skills hinders the transferability of their skills at the Pretoria’s job market. A lecturer in mathematics at higher educational institutions in Pretoria told me that he spent almost three years without being accepted because of his poor English. He remembered how Zimbabweans and Nigerians he observed were hired quickly thanks to their English proficiency.

Regarding the use of some South African languages as a means of professional exclusion, the study has found that locals make use of South Africa Bantu languages and Afrikaans against Congolese job seekers. Here some informants said that Black South African recruiters are aware that some Congolese are naturalised South Africans. Consequently, they use the South African Bantu languages as a way of filtering out these applicants. Mimie Mweka, a holder of a degree in Tourism and Hostel Business, was saying:

‘Have you ever seen one Congolese working in firm like TUVWYZ? It is over there where I can really work. But, they have never hired a Congolese. When you go to TUVWYZ, they speak to you in isiZulu; they speak to you in isiXhosa. Before they even ask your Id, they start speaking in their mother tongues because they know that many Congolese possess the Id (South African identity documents)’. (My translation from French).

This view of Mimie echoes which findings of several researches on immigrants in South Africa. These studies indicated that some South Africans use their local languages as a means of the exclusion vis-à-vis foreigners wanting to integrate into their society (Bikoko, 2006; 2011; Amisi, 2006).

On Afrikaans, a couple of Congolese professionals faced with recruiters who denied them job opportunities as they could not communicate in Afrikaans. For example, Louvain Lwebo, a

bouncer missed a job opportunity in a call centre where they wanted someone could just speak French and English because the recruiter used Afrikaans to exclude him.

‘The interview happened without problem. They said they would call me after two weeks. But, that asshole (his Congolese competitor) started talking in Afrikaans with a lady, the receptionist. In that time, the boss was observing him. Then, he started also talking with him in Afrikaans. [...] The boss said to me something in Afrikaans. I could not answer. So, he said this: “*you don’t speak Afrikaans? I don’t speak French but I know at least how to say: bonjour, comment ca va, oh la la*”. [...] As they were not calling me, I went there to follow up after three weeks. There, I saw that evil (the Congolese competitor) was already working even wearing the uniform of that call centre’. (My translation from French and Lingala).

On the other hand, South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages. In this context, it might be very difficult to Congolese to get a job even to work where a worker is expect to communicate also in other languages on top of English. Congolese Doctors working in rural areas prove this reality because they felt obliged to learn other South African languages so that they can work well.

As regards to the Congolese language problems as a factor inhibiting persons of good will from employing Congolese, a few informants recognised that their linguistic barriers were posing problems to those who were supposed to help them. The following example of a doctor since registered since 1996 speaks for itself. Doctor Shirley said this:

‘At that time, I had the problem of language. It was me who actually was posing more problems to persons who would serve or help me’. (My translation from French).

This informant experience supports what Landau (2004 cited in Shabanza, 2011, p.14) notes concerning ‘officials in various organizations dealing with asylum seekers and refugees increasingly deplore the fact that, they have problems to render service to most prospective asylum seekers because of their problems of language’.

In whole, *the Congolese lack of proficiency languages of their city of employment affects their access to the labour market*. These findings are consistent with the arguments of many experts on immigrant studies about strong correlations between the lack of fluency in the language of the host-country and immigrants' low performance on the labour market (e.g. Chiswick & Miller, 2002; James, 2007, to name a few).

### 4.2.3 Narrow job market and unemployment in Pretoria

Findings indicate that the narrow job market, marked by the high unemployment among locals also hampers Congolese from getting jobs. Furthermore the saturation of some professions by locals limits Congolese's opportunities to perform well in the job market.

Thus, many informants said that the rarity of employment in Pretoria reduces Congolese's chances of professional insertion. They thought that as long as locals cannot find jobs, there is not room for Congolese to find suitable jobs. The difficulties in the South African job market perplex many Congolese, who find it hard to see how they relate to larger social forces. For instance, an elite businesswoman cannot understand why in South Africa the more the rate of unemployment is augmenting; the more media publish job opportunities. She thus thought that, it is very difficult for Congolese to cope. The informant's confusion can partly be explained in what Kraak (2010) noted about the slower rate of job creation proportionally to the number of new entrants moving into the labour market in South Africa. Naturally, these situations raise the bar for Congolese to get employed, like everyone else.

On the saturation of locals in some professions, informants said that it is useless to try competing with locals in certain domains where they struggle themselves to find a job. For this reason, a female graphic designer and manager in a freight agency decided to avoid competing with natives in the domain of financial management. Despite of her qualifications and professional experiences from her country in financial management, she noticed that the job market in the domain of management is saturated by locals to the extent that some graduates are unemployed or underemployed. She explained as follow.

'When I arrived here, given realities in the field, I have noticed the job market for managers was saturated. The management was very saturated. Natives do it themselves. There are some of them who are even unemployed. Then, I said it was better of changing the field to do something practical'.(My translation from French)

The view of the informant is consistent with what Moleke (2005) writes about the difficulties which South African graduates face in the labour market. According to Moleke (2005 cited in Kraak, 2010, p.92) there are 'qualification fields that do not have structured pathways into the labour market and employment, [...]. Qualification fields in this grouping include Bachelor of Arts, Commerce, Management and Public Administration degrees'.

All in all, in his theory of the unemployment of immigrant workers, Stalker (1994) considered that the unemployment of natives has a negative effect on the unemployment of

immigrant workers in a receiving country. In general, immigrant workers are more likely to be unemployed than locals in most countries, and unemployment tends to be higher for the most new arrivals (Whiteside, 1988; Stalker, 1994; Boyd & Thomas, 2001).

#### 4.2.4 Anti-immigrant sentiment: Poor Black African-phobia

On xenophobia as a professional incorporation barrier, this study has found out that working class and middle class informants were the most exposed to xenophobia in seeking for jobs. *Per contra*, elites had confirmed that they had never encountered these problems in their business because they did not come to South Africa as jobseekers but as investors. Therefore, the elites witnessed that they were more than welcome and doors were often opened for them. As illustration, the following experience of an elite businessman is relevant.

‘By the way, xenophobia... It depends on activities that one does. Sincerely, for businesspersons it is unusual to happen. First, I did not come to seek employment here. I came to invest. With regard to it, they (South Africans) were kind and welcoming. In this country they love those who bring money’. (My translation from French)

From the above experience, it can be inferred that xenophobic reactions vary according social class of immigrants. This is what Sichone noted in his anthropological research on xenophobia among East Africans in Cape Town. Sichone (2001, p.10) stated that, the ‘cultural definition of *makwerekwere* is not the main source of hatred, rather immigrants who create wealth or provide jobs are welcome, while those who are seen to take away jobs are not’. In the same manner, Neocosmos (2006, p.113) added that ‘xenophobic discourse in society, unlike it is equivalent in the state, is more concerned with economic survival rather than with exclusion’.

In contrast to elites, some middle class and several working class informants – were faced with xenophobia during their processes of job seeking. They encountered two realities: the refusal to employ them and the delay in the process organised by recruiters. As an illustration on the refusal of employment, Titi Tshilenge, a waitress said:

‘There are places where I go to look for a job, they tell me: “*you aren’t South African. We can’t take you*”. They will not even test you because you’re just not South African’. (My translation from French).

Similarly, Lois Lulua, an electrician engineer complained about the xenophobic tendencies of Black South Africans employers. Lois Said this:

‘Those who receive us in the least welcome manner are natives, the black South Africans in particular. [...] They do not even take time to look at the CV’. (My translation from French)

About the delay in the process of employment, Doctor Sacre declared this:

‘The anti-immigrant sentiment is big in this country. When we looked for work sometimes you feel it, without them showing it. Sometimes they do it openly against you, especially in institutions supposed to serve me. And, all this delayed my professional integration’. (My translation from French).

From the above quotations, one can note that, from the professional incorporation perspective it is obviously difficult to get a job in this social context of xenophobia. The case of Doctor Sacre shows that, even with the shortage of doctors in South Africa, Black African doctors face difficulties when attempting to seek employment.

About Black South African xenophobia, the opinion of engineer, Lois, quoted above, is sustained by numerous previous studies on the question. In that, Marcos (2010) noted that the rise of xenophobia toward black Africans is one of the characteristics of the post-apartheid South African society. In the same logic, much scholarship on South African xenophobia has shown that South Africans accused these black Africans of being job-stealers, working for low wages which creates unemployment for South Africans, undermining local businesses because of their cheap prices, etc. (e.g. Chamba, 2005; Neocosmos, 2006; Marcos, 2010; Dodson, 2010; Nzayabino, 2011 to name a few).

In the light of aforesaid, one can understand why poor black Africans dwelling or working in South Africa appear to be the foremost victims of xenophobia. So, it might better be termed ‘*Poor Black African-phobia*’.

#### **4.2.5 Congolese imported professional culture**

This study found that informants had missed job opportunities because of three main features related to the Congolese culture of job recruitment. They concern: corruption (paying for ‘connexion’ in order to be hired), Congolese ethnicity in the work place, and sexual harassment toward female Congolese job seekers.

About bribing in order to be hired, this phenomenon is called ‘connexion’ (connection in English). It means to bribe a job recruiter in order to get a job.) in Congolese milieu. It happens especially among security guards and beauticians. Naturally, that one who is unable to pay for ‘connexion’ cannot find a job. Many informants complained against these practices

which prevented them from being employed. For example, Kabinda, an English teacher complained bitterly about how he missed a job opportunity as a parking attendant owing to the lack of money for ‘*connexion*’. Teacher Kabinda complained like this:

‘They called it ‘*connexion*’. That is an evil to denounce. I have missed a job because of that immoral practice’. (My translation from French).

This excerpt reflects the practice in the DRC where the access to work is a puzzle for job seekers. Many Congolese think that to get a job requires having a level of connections (Mwendike et al., 2009). Nowadays, job seekers are often obliged to bribe those who can employ them. Worse still, they are often constrained to give commissions from their incomes of as much as ten or fifty per cent of their salaries or give up their bonus for a while. This is called in the Congolese professional jargon ‘*operation retour*’ (return operation), or ‘*koleyisa mpunda*’ (feed the horse). Indeed, what happens within the Congolese community in Pretoria is therefore the fruit of such practices which are widespread back home.

Talking of ethnicity, a few middle class and many working class informants stated that ethnicity impeded their access to jobs. An example, a bouncer - from Kasai - was not hired for a good position by a recruiter from Katanga because of his ethnicity. Dubois Dibaya said this:

‘Even though I had a right profile for that job, the Human Resources refused to take me because, as we say in Congo, me, I’m a ‘*Juif*’ (Jewish) and, he is an ‘*Allemand*’ (German)<sup>33</sup>. Why ethnicity even outside of Congo?’ (My translation from Lingala)

Likewise, a watchman said he could not be employed by ‘*Kinois*’ (from the West) because he is ‘*Muswahili*’ (from the East). Benz told me this:

‘When our contract was ended at XYZ, those who replaced us were mostly *Kinois*. Then, before that, it was us the Baswahili who were too many over there. But, there were also *Kinois*, *Kassaians* etc. There were no problems. When there was change, *Kinois* came, they began to chase away us: “you, *Muswahili* go away, go away!” (My translation French and Lingala.)

The difficulties which these above informants encountered are effects of the Congolese's transnational ethnic identity conflicts in Pretoria. Their experiences put over how the Congolese East-West conflict in Pretoria appears widespread in their enclave job market. Clearly the example of Benz, from the East, shows how his compatriots from the West

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<sup>33</sup> The Luba people of Kasai often consider themselves to be ‘*Juifs*’ (Jewish). At the same time people from Katanga who for complex historical reasons see themselves as rivals, have taken to identifying themselves as *Allemands* – Germans, i.e. arch rivals.



(Kinshasa), prevented him from working. This is the same with the case of Dubois, a ‘Juif from the West who missed an opportunities because of an ‘Allemand’ from the East.

All of these practices among Congolese in Pretoria reproduce the landscape of the labour incorporation and allocation’s in the DRC. According to Kwanzaka, (2011) and Kilosho, (2006) in the DRC, professional engagements, promotions, trips abroad, and other advantages are granted according to the ‘tribal’ affinities in several Congolese institutions.

Apart from this, sexual harassment is another professional practice imported from Congo to Pretoria. In fact, women face it particularly when they are employed within the Congolese community. Without doubt, women who refuse to satisfy employers or sponsors are *ipso facto* rejected. This can be supported by the following cases of a TV show presenter and a street vendor. Dina, a cultural TV presenter denounced the insatiable sexual appetite of Congolese male employers like this:

‘As cultural presenter, I came here to start a TV show. At the beginning when I arrived, I could not make it because the role of woman in African society is as an instrument. So, when I arrived, I only spent time at Congolese milieu. And, in that Congolese milieu, those who should be my sponsors wanted my body (have sex with her). As I always say, the law of jungle. This is an African jungle where the woman is the food. Do you understand? Then, I had stopped because I could not be the food of chiefs (leaders). I do not accept it. No, no!’. (My translation from French)

For the second case, a male Congolese employer sexually harassed a female informant, Mwene Ditu, when she wanted to work at his nightclub as a waitress. Mwene:

‘He intimidated me by saying: ‘Do you know how many people are looking for job? How many are going to want your place? If you do not want it (to have sex), you can leave.’ (My translation from French.)

These testimonies of female informants express another sad reality imported from the DRC labour market by the Congolese community of Pretoria. Actually, in the DRC women seem to be the chief targets of sexual harassment. For example Ngemba (2009) argues that in the DRC many women report themselves as experiencing sexual harassment at the workplace, especially when trying to get a job or to obtain other professional benefits. As proof, according to Bawatu (2012) the results of a survey conducted by the Congolese Minister of the Health in 2010 indicate that 64.3% of Congolese women workers affirmed that they had been victims of sexual harassment in the workplace.

In a nutshell if there are no jobs opportunities in the South African milieu, Congolese women will try looking within their community. Unfortunately, because of the imported Congolese

labour culture (marked by sexual harassment) what female job seekers sometimes encounter is like going out of the frying pan and into the fire.

#### 4.2.6 Undervaluation of credentials and limited transferable skills on job market

Results show that many educated Congolese are challenged by institutionalised barriers in Pretoria because some South African institutions such as the South African Qualification Association (SAQA) misjudge or undervalue their credentials. Similarly, some employers especially in informal employment do not care about Congolese qualifications. Finally, some Congolese professional skills are not transferable to the South African job market.

On the misjudgement the Congolese's credentials, some educated informants said that differences between the Congolese higher educational system and the South African one mislead local institutions which examine their qualifications. Consequently, the misjudgements of their qualifications prevent them from being accepted in the job market. For example Kat, who holds an honours degree in Economics, a degree which in Congo qualifies him as an accountant and economist as well, was not accepted as an accountant by employers in Pretoria. This is because SAQA qualifies him only as an economist.

'There is a big difference between accounting and economics here in South Africa. They split accounting and economics. But, they merge them in our country. You will find an accounting in economics. If you did economics, it means you did also accounting. Here, it is not the same'.. (Informant spoke in English).

This undervaluation of Congolese educational and professional background by employers, most often happens in the informal sector. Almost all of my informants who were unauthorised workers said that their employers do not care about their credentials. Graduate informants therefore regretted the fact that they were simply put together with their uneducated colleagues. For example, Vita, a former lawyer at the bar of Kinshasa criticised not only employers but also the unfair labour immigration policy in South Africa. Vita puts it like this:

'They do not take into consideration your skills or background. It means, here, they need a foreigner for manual work not intellectual work. First of all, I am against the South African law about the status of an asylum seeker. This is a double standard law. Because, on documents that they issue from the Home Affairs and SAQA, it is written: "*she or he can work and study*". That is in the form (in principle) but it is different in the content (practice). The law is full of hypocrisy. They should be honest'. (My translation from French).

Indeed, it is important to realise that, employers in informal sector put Congolese in what Crozier calls '*la zone d'incertitude*'.

Talking to the Congolese about issues of transferability of skills from their country to the South African job market, a few informants did recognise that the Congolese training in some programmes is obsolete and irrelevant in the South African labour market. This is particularly in fields involving new technologies. In fact, the informants revealed that they were unable to work even if their credentials were normally assessed.

This was the case of a bar manager (called Lombard). After Lombard got his degree in medical imaging (radiography), he came to Pretoria with the hope of getting a job. Luckily, SAQA recognised his degree which means he could be employed as a radiologist. Thanks to his social capital, Lombard was accepted for a trial period in a laboratory in Pretoria. Unfortunately, the first day when Lombard went to his workplace, he was unable to use at least one device within that laboratory. Being conscious of his useless educational profile for the South African job market, and without putting blame on the receiving country as many immigrants do, Lombard avowed to me this:

'With the modernisation, in Congo we are really left behind, very far behind from what we have seen here. [...]. For example, when I arrived here, I went also in a laboratory to work. ACTUALLY, THEY ARE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO GIVE US CHANCES TO WORK HERE. WE ARE LEFT BEHIND (OUT-DATED). There are apparatuses they have been shown to us back at home: "*this is a machine*". Arrived here, they told you that machine does not exist anymore. These are things what you can never use them (today). The technology has advanced. They are new up-to-date machines instead. How can you work with these machines what you have never seen (in your life). You do not even know how to start that machine'. (My translation from French)

Sociologically speaking, Lombard came across a problem of transferring skills from the country of origin to the host country's labour market (e.g. Hedberg & Tammaru, 2013). This means that the content of his education as an immigrant is less relevant to the needs of the receiving country's labour market. (e.g. Boyd & Thomas, 2001; Pichler, 2011). Briefly, some Congolese immigrants' credentials and skills got in the DRC, especially in matters involving high technology, are useless in the South African job market.

To conclude, this section has demonstrated that structural constraints, individuals' characteristics and cultural factors appear to be the main barriers acting against the professional insertion of Congolese in Pretoria. *These barriers are, among other things, the South African anti-immigrant policy, language problems, xenophobia, the Congolese imported labour culture, the non-recognition of Congolese qualifications, and, finally the*

*inappropriateness of certain skills in the South African job Market.* Faced with these challenges, they adopt different coping strategies – which are discussed in the next section.

### **4.3 STRATEGIES OF PROFESSIONAL INSERTION**

This section analyses the main coping strategies that Congolese employ for their various professional insertion processes. In general, the first step is to obtain - legally or illegally - genuine or fake migratory documents. Secondly, many Congolese wanting to get formal and secure positions decide to embark on courses of additional study such as learning English or redoing studies.

In the light of foregoing, this section has three main parts. The first one analyses Congolese strategies of obtaining required documents for working. The second part deals with strategies employed in order to get professional skills namely receiving short training courses (*Nzela mokuse*) and redoing studies (*Kosulola diplôme*). The last one focuses on where they finally find their employment.

#### **4.3.1 Obtaining required documents for working**

As was previously discussed, the lack of migratory documents is one of the biggest barriers to professional incorporation. So, getting all the required documents for working is in general the first strategy that Congolese workers employ. In this perspective, this study has identified that informants – documented immigrants or not - used four main strategies to get the documents necessary for employment. These strategies are successively the lawful adjustment of migratory status; claiming for asylum (*Ngunda strategy*), and the falsification of professional documents.

Firstly, findings show that elites and the upper middle class employed the strategy of the lawful adjustment of status. The latter is a ‘procedure whereby an alien lawfully present in a state may seek a different immigration status’ (IOM, 2005, pp.5;12). Actually, this implies that the more informants belong to the upper class, the more they resort to lawful strategies. As we saw preceding chapters, this reality has strong correlations with their class positions of origin in the DRC and the present position in Pretoria.

In fact, it is important to highlight that all informants who are elites have different status than the other two classes. They are privileged because they hold either permanent residence

permits or South African citizenship. Obviously, these rich Congolese have enough financial resources for getting these migratory statuses. For this reason, two elites – a businessman and a businesswoman – declared that they obtained these statuses through the guile of their South African lawyers.

However, some educated professionals make any necessary efforts to get work permits. For example, two informants holding work permits also solicited lawyers. In this, a woman activist of human rights said:

I paid a lawyer, (who) managed himself the rest (of the process). But in case of need, he was sending documents so that I sign'. (My translation from French)

Secondly, *Ngunda*<sup>34</sup> strategy is a coping strategy which is often adopted by lower middle classes and working classes as a means to by-pass the South African anti-immigrant labour policy. The *Ngunda* strategy helps them to get all legally required documents for working in South Africa. It is crucial to mention here that some informants said that although they were not under political threat, they felt obliged to claim for asylum. For example, Congolese doctors wanting to work in South Africa claim for asylum because of the SADC's restrictive labour legislation.

According to Doctors that I interviewed, the SADC's legislation forbids any member country from hiring immigrant doctors from other countries which are members of the SADC. In this circumstance, the coping strategy of Congolese doctors is to make use of the United Nations legal instruments as such the 'Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees'. Once Doctors get these refugee documents, they can look for employment in Pretoria.

In fact, this coping strategy employed by Congolese immigrant doctors looks somewhat similar to the strategies adopted by Turkish immigrants who used the European Union immigrant legislation in order to avoid the Dutch strict criteria for entrance and integration of spouses coming from abroad. Some Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands adopted a strategy called 'Belgium route' – which means to get married and all legal documents in Belgium. With these documents of European Union, they get rights to legally enter and stay in the Netherlands (Wal et al., 2008). Inspired by the Turkish strategy of 'Belgium route', I term the

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<sup>34</sup>*Ngunda* or '*kobuaka ngunda*', these expressions in use in colloquial Lingala come from the classical Lingala expression '*Kokota Ngonda*' which means 'to exile in a great forest'.

strategy that Congolese doctors employ to bypass the SADC's legislation as the '*Ngunda strategy*'.

Another key point is that the '*ngunda strategy*' requires resources and connections. The procedure involves a contact in Home Affairs who can ensure that an asylum claimant is given refugee status – which grants the right to work – within a reasonably short time. Informants told me that this service is arranged by corrupt lawyers or Congolese intermediaries for the Home Affairs' officers. Most of them gave access to a syndicate working within the department itself. The minimum fee was quoted as 3,500-4,500 Rand for 'normal applicants', although interestingly doctors were charged more for this service - a figure of 8,000-10,000 Rand was quoted – presumably because they are considered to have a guaranteed earning potential once they get the right to work. An informant, Hadrien Kisala-Kindeki avowed this:

'Documents that I use now, I paid (bribed) to get them. In fact, by following the normal ways, that process was taking time. (My translation from French)

Actually, numerous works on immigrants in South Africa have revealed elements of this *Ngunda* strategy. Most of authors have noted that some holders of student permits, visit permits, etc. legally or illegally try obtaining work permits or refugee status (e.g. Crush & Williams, 2001; Losango, 2006; Morris, 1998). In the same vein, it is also possible for unlawful entrants to become regularised (lawful stayers) - especially by claiming for asylum seekers (Mulopo, 2011; Amisi & Ballard, 2005; Steinberg, 2005).

Moreover, with the endemic corruption that exists within the South African public administration – in part the legacy of the previous Apartheid regime (Hyslop, 2005), some Congolese professionals commit significant sums to bribing officials because they are reasonably confident of finding a job once they obtain a refugee permit (what they call *Nkanda*<sup>35</sup>).

Finally, this study found that many male working class Congolese falsify professional documents. Informants disclosed that most security guards use falsified certificates. As many informants told me, in theory the PSIRA (Private Security Industry Regulation Authority) does not allow them to work anymore. Their response to this is to forge documents, then to

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<sup>35</sup>*Nkanda* is a slang form of the Lingala word '*mokanda*' which means paper, letter, or document. In the context of immigration, the word *Nkanda* means 'migratory documents'.

have those documents certified by the police. Didier Ndakala, a night watchman, explained to me in detail how they proceed as follow.

‘In the private security sector, for instance, foreigners were accepted to work by PSIRA in the past. Now, they do not accept them anymore. That is why, what we do is to go to internet café, they will check in the data of PSIRA. They will look at surnames, ages, and professional numbers of a registered security guard. Then, they will compare his data if they can match with your age. Otherwise, they can forge (Psira certificate) for you by using data of someone who is recorded without photo. With the identity of the same person, they forge also a fake asylum documents for you. Others go to bribe some police officers. They make copies (of their forged documents). Then, they go to deal with policemen who stamp (these documents). Finally, they certified these documents by means of corruption because they are actually falsified documents. They can therefore go to start working. Those policemen who deal with us know that (our) documents are fake’. (My translation from Lingala)

From Didier’s explanation, it is important to note that the prohibition of the employment of foreigners in the private security sector by PSIRA in 2003 contributed notably to the development of syndicates – involved in the employment of unauthorised immigrant workers - and the expansion of the forging industry.

In March 2013, for instance, the police caught an expert Congolese forger called John Kabila in Sunnyside. In Kabila’s workshop, the police found sophisticated equipment used to produce fraudulent security certificates, forms used by the police to take fingerprints, fraudulent asylum seeker documents, etc. According to the police, Kabila’s forgeries were so expertly done that it was extremely difficult to ascertain these documents were fakes (Sibiya, 2013 p.1; 3).

To sum up, Congolese immigrant workers employ various strategies in order to obtain necessary documents for finding a job. In essence, these strategies depend upon their class positions and occupations as well. So, what do they do so that they can have qualifications and skills which match Pretoria’s labour market? The next subsection answer this question

#### **4.3.2 Short training course and redoing studies**

Findings demonstrate that investing in education is a powerful way of overcoming professional barriers. In reality, the main strategies of professional insertion for many Congolese are to learn or re-learn English, to retake their final qualifications – a practice known as *kosukola diplôme*, ‘to clean the degree’, and/or to get special vocational training in colleges or training centres – practices called *Nzela Mokuse*, (Shortcut).

On learning or re-learning English, apart from an English Teacher, a security guard and a veterinarian doctor who were fluent in English since the DRC, all informants learnt or re-

learnt English (and even other languages) in South Africa. Many informants who learnt English in the DRC acknowledged that their English levels were not proficient for working in South Africa. They were therefore under pressure to re-learn it. For instance, Jules argued thus:

‘I had opportunity to learn English here in South Africa, in a library in Johannesburg. This is what allowed me to be (socially) integrated and get my first job. As they wanted me to be able to communicate with clients, I did the English class for three months. Because the English I was speaking in the Congo was not sufficient so that I can work here’. (My translation from French)

Some Congolese decided to find any provisional job in English-speaking environments so that they could have opportunities to practice. That is why Martin Bikalakasa, a videographer, decided to work in a South African environment as a sales man in a shop in order to practice his English.

Obviously the middle classes try to learn English because it offers possibility of upward mobility. It should be summarised here that the ability to communicate in English opens up possibilities in many types of occupations particularly those involving interactions with public. This feature support Pichler’s (2011, p.943) hypothesis which postulates that: ‘migrants with higher levels of language proficiency experience better labour market outcomes’.

Regarding the practice of ‘*Kosukola diplôme*’, I met four out of 46 informants (a veterinarian, a doctor, an architect, and an electrical engineer) who employed that strategy. As an example, Hubert Mbolongo, a veterinarian, got a job after he redid his graduate studies. Despite his qualifications and professional experiences as a former lecturer at a public university in the DRC, Hubert was not accepted in South Africa because the depreciation of his credentials by local employers in his domain. Hubert therefore retook his graduate studies simply to make himself eligible. Today, Hubert has a job is appropriate to his qualifications.

More ‘*kosukola diplôme*’ seems to be far the best way for Congolese to get secure and suitable jobs - leading to upward mobility in Pretoria. And in this sense it is a good metaphor. ‘*Cleaning degrees*’ implies that some Congolese qualifications obtained from their country are ‘dirty’ (incompatible or inappropriate) in the South African job market. Therefore, there is a need to clean them by redoing the final qualification.



However, spending a year or more obtaining new qualifications is expensive and of course only available to those who have significant financial resources (Inaka & Trapido forthcoming). As every cloud has a silver lining, the alternative for certain middle class or working class people are to get some less expensive but fast vocational or intensive training courses. Congolese call that strategy: '*nzela ya mokuse*'<sup>36</sup>. Actually, an important number of middle class informants confirmed that the strategy of '*nzela ya mokuse*' led them to formal positions or better, less dirty, informal jobs – mostly in changing their professional careers.

### 4.3.3 Strategies of getting job

This sub-section shows us that Congolese immigrant workers often rely on social capital while looking for employment.. According to results, Congolese adopt four main coping strategies for their professional incorporation in Pretoria. They successively resort to the Congolese co-national networks, the unwillingly acceptance of underemployment, self-employment, and to South African socio-professional networks.

On the strategy of resorting to the Congolese co-national networks, informants confirmed that they receive help from their relatives, friends and acquaintances, and various networks (professional, ethnic, religious, etc.).

In general, new-comers often get their first jobs via their relatives or friends. The latter hire them in their companies, inform them about job opportunities, and recommend them to employers. As an example, a disk jockey, Kongo got his first job as an electrical assistant in 2006 through the intervention of his brother in law.

'I work as an electrical assistant. I worked through my brother-in-law. He has his company as an electrician. He hired me to help him'. Said Kongo (My translation from French)

On socio-professional networks, friends and acquaintances strongly contribute in the engagement of Congolese - especially among middle class. All doctors told me that they found their jobs by virtue of their acquaintances, friends or former classmates' support.

In relation to the religious networks, pastors, especially of Pentecostal churches, play important roles in helping their members with regards to professional insertion. That is why pastor Moto told me that several employers solicit him when they look for personnel.

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<sup>36</sup> Nzela ya Mokuse means in Lingala short route or a shortcut.

Finally, ethnic networks make a contribution concerning the professional insertion of their members. Some informants from the East (Baswahili) avowed to have recourse to their ethnical niches. For example, some Bafulero informants from the province of South Kivu stated that they set up a rotating credit association within their ethnic association, something that is helpful for starting businesses.

The study notes that accepting underemployment is a temporary strategy for some educated informants when they were newly arrived in South Africa. For instance, Lydie, a manager of a freight agency, was compelled to be paid under the table as a maid and babysitter.

Regarding the strategy of self-employment, the dissertation considers that it is due to professional incorporation barriers caused by South African structural constraints and by the importation of the Congolese professional culture. A couple of informants said that they prefer working as self-employed in order to avoid the vexations caused by employers. The following case of a female artist illustrates this tendency.

‘I work for myself. I often decorate wedding parties. Here, I do *‘le service traiteur’*. Here, they call it catering. I’m an independent cultural TV show presenter without forgetting to mention my work as a sign writer. [...] I am my own boss’.

This study shows that using the South African socio-professional networks is one of the best options leading to good jobs and allowing Congolese workers to get beyond their ethnic enclave economy.

Here, some informants conceded that they had opportunities to make lives for themselves thanks to locals. However, most of them, who are in the field of construction (engineers) and computer servicing, pointed to racial issues. They argued that it is desirable to have professional relationships with white South Africans. The latter help a lot in finding jobs or getting business markets. The following excerpt gives an idea. Paul Mongusu, an electrical engineer defended white South Africans by stating that:

‘I’m an engineer, neeh? I know other engineers, and if I need to work I want a person who has contacts. Okay? [...] But, we, who are going to look for job our dream is to be in the hands of a white. The remark which we had made is that, a white even if he has not a job to give you, he is going to be able to listen to you, lend you his ear. But, a Black will not even give you time neither to speak nor to listen to you’.

Apart from white people, other informants got jobs through the help of Black South Africans. The following passage of the life history of Patrick Mugomboro will exemplify this point.

Patrick was working as a bouncer in a Congolese pub where he made acquaintance of a Black South African executive. After explaining his hardship to his new acquaintance in Pretoria, that South African hired him as a driver. Three months later, that businessman decided to supply South Africans goods in the DRC. Needing a helpful guide during his trip in the DRC, he took Patrick to Kinshasa in 2008. As luck would have it, Patrick was able to assist him by using his Congolese contacts. His employer was so happy and proud of Patrick to the extent to which he gave him a car when they were back in Pretoria. Unfortunately for Patrick, his boss mysteriously became bankrupt after two years. As Patrick was no longer in this bed of roses, he returned to the Congolese occupational niche: the private security.

This section has shown various coping strategies that Congolese immigrant workers employ for their professional incorporation in Pretoria. It has been emphasised that these Congolese bring lawful and/or unlawful strategies into play. Sociologically speaking, 'Anthropologists and Sociologists termed all of these kinds of strategies as 'migrant agency.' The latter happens when immigrants 'undergo processes of change and in turn act to change their conditions and practices that they encounter' (Castles, 2013, p.133).

#### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of the current chapter is to analyse the different strategies that Congolese immigrant workers adopt for their professional insertion in Pretoria. It has touched upon the different professional insertion barriers that they face in Pretoria's job market. Taken together, the chapter has shown that generally the *structural constraints, individual characteristics and the cultural factors* are the main professional insertion barriers. In particular, findings have revealed that the challenges that Congolese face in the job market are: *South African anti-immigrant policy, the language problems, xenophobia, the imported labour culture of the Congolese, job exploitation, non-recognition of Congolese qualifications, and the inappropriateness of many Congolese's educational profiles in the local job Market.*

To bypass these barriers, the chapter has shown that Congolese employ informal or formal strategies. In general, their first strategy is *to obtain the different documents required for working in South Africa. Secondly, to study is also an important strategy of Congolese's professional insertion. The first thing they do is to learn or re-learn English. Then, some of*

*them who want secure jobs retake their final qualifications ('Kosukola diplôme') or take short training courses ('nzela ya mokuse').*

Finally, concerning the ways of getting a job, it has shown that Congolese adopt four main coping strategies. First, *they rely on their social capital in their professional integration*. This explains why they have *a tendency to resort to their co-national networks*. Secondly, the majority of *newcomers or less educated Congolese accept underemployment*. Thirdly, the chapter has demonstrated that self-employment is an important strategy. As we have shown this is often a way *to escape the Congolese's own imported professional culture* but it also helps them to deal with *the wider structural constraints they find in South Africa*. The last strategy is *their use of the South African socio-professional networks*.

In all, findings of this chapter support Castles' (2010) middle-ranged theory of international migration, which stresses the importance of social transformation caused by international migration. In accordance with that theory, one can observe that South Africans are without cease strengthening their policy against immigrant workers. However, Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria adopt copying strategies to bypass the South African immigrant policy. This dichotomy between the strategies of receiving countries and those adopted by immigrant workers exhibits the transformation in South Africa resulting from the South-South migration in the age of migration.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: MEANING OF WORK**

### ***5.1 INTRODUCTION***

This Chapter tries to understand the meaning that Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria ascribe to their job. The chapter argues that individual drives (agency) and professional and extensive social environment (structure) shape the meanings that Congolese attribute to their work. Therefore, the Congolese's workers meanings are dynamic and socially constructed.

Theoretically, the chapter draws on Zhou , Leung and Li (2012, p.408) who argued that 'the individual's perception of the meaning of work is related to the reasons why people work, how people choose their occupation, and their attitude, emotions, and behaviours at work'. In addition, the study is inspired by Wrzesniecky, Dutton and Debebe (2003, pp.96-97) who conceived that work meanings are determined internally (i.e. within the individual) and externally (i.e. by the job and wider environment). In the same line, they argued that, 'meaning of work is a socially constructed product that is dynamic and fluid' (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003, p.97).

This chapter has been divided into three parts. The first part analyses connection between the function of work in Congolese workers lives and the meanings they ascribe to their occupations. The second part will explore the influences of socio-cultural factors on shaping the meanings Congolese give work. Finally, the last part will focus on the organisational factors determining the meaning of work for the Congolese.

### ***5.2 FUNCTIONS OF WORK AND WORK MEANING***

The Congolese workers' conceptions of their occupational functions influence meanings that they attribute to their work in Pretoria. Many of them think that the more their occupations play positive roles in their lives, the more they are meaningful. Contrariwise, others judge their occupations as meaningless when they do not play significant roles in their lives. In this vein, this study has identified a number of work functions. They are the economic function, the social function, and the psychological function.

On the economic function, a few informants consider that their occupations are meaningful because they are sources of money and material benefits. It goes without saying that most of them are generally satisfied with their incomes. They confirmed that they love their jobs and

hope to make a career in these financially rewarding areas. To illustrate this, a data processor and computer technician found his part time job in a hotel more meaningful than his permanent position as a manager and computer technician at an internet café. He explained it like this:

‘It is true that I love what I do here (in internet café), but I consider my job at the hotel more important in my life. I went to the hotel because the salary is very good over there. In reality, I do not work full time there. I only work on weekends. It is better than the work I’m doing here.’ (My translation from French)

Similarly, a few working class informants think that their incomes are sufficient. Most of those who confirmed that their work is financially rewarding do many occupations that allow them to earn extra money. This is the case of a night watchman and welder who is enthusiastic about his salary of 2500 Rand as a night watchman. For him this job is meaningful although he had made more money as a welder than as a night watchman. In addition, he does not spend money for renting and electricity bills because his job provides a free accommodation for him. In my view, he would have given a different meaning to his work if he were not making extra money as welder and had to pay for various bills, as his compatriots who are security guards do.

From my findings work appears meaningful for Congolese immigrant workers if it provides to them the economic well-being (Rasmussen & Elverdam, 2008; Gill, 1999) and the financial autonomy (Misumi, 1990; Timmons & Fesko, 2004; Morin, 2004).

On the other hand, the vast majority of informants see work as the cause of distresses due to underpayment and underemployment. They have these negative judgments towards jobs because of their unsatisfactory incomes. Although a few of them said they love their jobs, their derisory incomes give them a feeling of impoverishment in Pretoria. As they are immigrants of lower status and standing, their incomes primarily allow them to pay for rent and cheap groceries. They just consider their work as a survival strategy. Accordingly, an important number of them declared that they do not wish to make their careers in their demeaning jobs. For example, a female manager at a freight agency is not happy with her salary and thinks her job is useless. She said:

‘I do not like the salary. [...] What I do for now allows me to get money for rent. [...] It is not a job in which I can make my career’.

It should be understood that some Congolese workers in Pretoria consider their jobs meaningless because of their low incomes. They do their jobs due to the lack of better employment as non-guest immigrant workers in Pretoria.

A propos of the social function of work, the study has found that Congolese views on the relationship between the social functions and the meaning of work are divided into two groups namely, positive and negative social work function.

With regards to the positive social function, work is viewed as meaningful when it is a vehicle for getting positive social relations, socialization in the host society, and contributing to humanity.

Most informants think that their job is meaningful because it allows them to meet people, to widen their circle of friend and to develop close friendships. As an illustration an hotelier was proud to mention names of celebrities he met thanks to his job.

‘My work at the Hotel Apocalypse 666 allows me to meet big names from all-over the world. Hilary Clinton was here last week. I saw her. [...] Theodora Obiang Ngwema, either the father or the son, I saw them. We even talked to each other. Thus, I have plenty of pluck thanks to my work’. (Translated from French)

Some informants view work as meaningful when it plays a role as factor of integration or assimilation in the city. For instance, by working as a sign writer in townships, a female visual artist acknowledged that her job allowed her not only to make many friends among South Africans (dwelling in townships) but also have a positive attitude about them. Consequently, she gets rid of stereotypes against black South African township dwellers, people who many immigrants label as xenophobic, dangerous, and criminals.

Likewise, many Congolese doctors working in rural areas felt compelled to learn some South African Bantu languages. No one forces them to communicate in these languages but they have realised that knowledge of local languages is very important for performing their job properly.. In addition, they consider it as a positive factor in their social integration in the hosting areas. To illustrate this question, let us have look at the following extract of my conversation with Doctor Vieux.

**Doctor:** you must know the local language. Because most patients you will encounter do not speak English. So, to understand the problem of patients, you need use local languages. It is a must to master English and local languages.

**Saint José:** You have mentioned an interesting thing on the knowledge of local languages. Are you forced to speak it? If yes, which one?

**Doctor:** Well, to speak it (Tswana) fluently, not really. Well, I have made effort to understand the Tswana about 80% and speak about 40%. Because what it is important for me is – first of all; to understand the problem of a patient. Although I will not be able to explain to him or her 100% what his or her problem is, if I have 80% of understanding it will help me (to work). Therefore, Tswana is that I understand better compared to other local languages because I work in Pretoria where they speak Tswana. Well, what it is good is that the knowledge of it brought me closer (similar) to natives. (My translation from French).

Finally, the Congolese consider their work as meaningful if and when it contributes to humanity. Most interviewees highlighted this philanthropic view of work. For instance, a female human rights activist stated that her job is meaningful because it helps her to be at the service of others.

‘I can say (my job) it is a part of my life. Helping others is a part of me. I love too much my job because it helps me to be with others, to listen and help them. To be useful for others, this is what I love in my life.’ she said.

My findings match with what authors wrote on the conception of work as a means of making social contacts (Timmons & Fesko, 2004; Rasmussen & Elverdam, 2008; Woodward, 2008), social position or status (Freedman & Fesko, 1996; Westwood & Lok, 2003), and social participation (Scott, 2002; 2007; Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009).

Concerning the negative social function of work, some Congolese considered their work demeaning because they are a source of loss of social prestige and identity. In short, their occupations are socially devaluing. Here, a number of underemployed informants complained about the loss of social status and of a lack of consideration at their workplace. For example, a master’s student in law working as CTA does not like his occupation because customers and staff see him as an uneducated and unskilled worker. The CTA cannot bear how people get the wrong idea about him when they see him in his yellow green uniform. He expressed his disappointment with his job in the following terms:

‘When they see you put in that uniform, they think that you are a moron, someone who has not studied. So, you only come to look for money, for food as someone who has not been at school’.

Similarly, *Lumière des lumières*, a watchman, feels the social humiliation in his underemployed job saying:

‘There is a total lack of respect. Sometimes they associate me with people who did not study. Even though I have studied, I look almost the same to them. They think that you are all almost the same. All



this is because of this degrading job that allows people to take us as whoever because the job itself is whatever'. (My translation from French)

These two examples show that, an occupation is seen as negative when it contributes to downward social mobility, deskilling, and the annihilation of individual identities. This is perhaps particularly acute for Congolese educated people who retain a Francophone respect for the figure of the intellectual that goes beyond material considerations. Within their community, Congolese are well-known for boasting about their intellectual capacities or cultural capital - obviously, the meaning they make of their work will therefore be affected.

Although it is said that 'what you do is what you are' (Freedman & Fesko, 1996, p.57), in the above case work becomes depreciating and 'problematic when an individual cannot relate to it' (Morin, 2004, p.3). This means that, they do not feel the sense of belonging at their underemployed meaningless work. The reason is that their work does not play the role of constructing a positive personal identity (Gill, 1999; Scott, 2002; Morin, 2004; Timmons & Fesko, 2004; Rasmussen & Elverdam, 2008) and the transformation of the inner self (Woodward, 2008, p.161).

In relation to psychological functions of work, the meaning of work varies between positive and negative psychological work functions. On the positive psychological work function, informants from all social classes declared that their work is significant because it is a passion, a part of their lives, a calling, a source of power and a means of self-realisation.

Indeed, a number of informants who are still doing the same work they did in the DRC before coming to Pretoria said their work is a passion. For instance, a female artist demonstrated how a work can be a passion even reaching the level of the embodiment of a worker. She explained how her work is meaningful in her life as follows:

'It is very important for me. That is a part of me. When I make a decoration or a work of art, like what you see in this house<sup>37</sup>. All this, it is me (who made it). Then, when I do these kinds of things, I take out a part of me. I always say that the artist is a Demigod. There is only the breath that we cannot give to our works of art. However, we can imitate the creation of God. You see. Art is a passion for me. When I serve somebody to get married and I see how he or she finds his enjoyment in the *decor*, the beauty, the atmosphere, the environment that I had created for him or her, I am indeed very happy. In fact, this is a part of me. It is as if you left an impact, a sign, they will not forget you. You see. It is often said the artist never dies'. (My translation from French)

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<sup>37</sup>On the walls of her house, there were around ten paintings and four pieces of sculpture made by herself.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, religious workers defined their work as a calling. A Pastor said this:

‘In my religious career, that is where I feel good because God has called me. So, you know, when God calls you, you can even have multiple talents, several gifts, but there is one that is key among these gifts. I feel myself (as a man), when I do the work of God. Even though I do business as I said it, this must be business which help me to do easily the work of God, not to abandon the work of God for six months, one year’ (My translation from French).

For Congolese who viewed their work as a source of power, the study has found that the majority of underemployed or self-employed took a certain pride in their socially stigmatised work. This was especially the case when their work gives them possibilities to rule, command, and instruct or even to manipulate people. For example, a bouncer told me that, despite the general social view concerning his worthless occupation, it makes him happy when he can dominate any kind of person in the nightclub. Sometimes, he uses his position to assure his professional hegemony such as pushing customers to bribe him and taking vengeance against his enemies. The bouncer explained to me how he uses his power in following words:

‘You know Saint Joe, those jobs even though they’re worthless, sometimes it makes me happy to work. As you know, a meaningless thing can become a meaningful one now and then. Certain days, I drove people crazy in nightclub. I firmly decided: ‘*you (customer) are not going to get in the nightclub*’. ‘*You, go out. You’re drunk*’. Some customers bribe me in begging me to let them get in. (these customers say) ‘*Please sir, take something, let us go in*’. For example, some South African girls came to beg my pardon as they did almost three months without being accepted to enter to any nightclub in Sunnyside or Downtown because of me. These girls had been rude to me. But the police arbitrated in their favour. After that, I complained to all my fellow bouncers: Congolese, Nigerians, even South Africans. Actually, we know each other. We go to the same gym. In brief, we collaborate. Therefore, my friends denied entrance into pubs to these girls. Also, they were reminding them (girls) what they had done against me. These girls could not stand it. One day, they came to see me in the gym. You should have seen how these three girls were begging pardon to me. That problem pushed either me or other counterparts to think that our work is also meaningful’. (My translation from Lingala).

Moreover, a considerable number of informants mentioned that their work was a means of self-realisation. This means their work helps them to fulfil themselves, reach precious goals, enhance their self-esteem, and develop the sense of purpose in their lives. For this reason, the following conversation with an accountant shows how a worker expresses his sense of self-realisation in working in Pretoria.

**Accountant:** I like it; I enjoy it to do accounting.

**Saint José:** So, do you feel good yourself in what you are doing?

**Accountant:** Yes! Also, what has attracted me more is the accounting programme that I had never learnt in Kinshasa, at home country. You understand? In addition, I master the international accounting. The international standard. This must be written down in your dissertation: THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD. *ISEF.* [big laugh] (My translation from French)

It is important to bear in mind that some professionals develop their sense of self-realisation through getting a positive professional identity which they could never get in the DRC. For these professionals work is like ‘a vehicle for reaching important goals’ (Ros et al., 1999, p.60) and a source of psychological satisfactions. This echoes to Wrzesniewski et al., (2003, p.94) who argued that ‘the meaning people make of their work is tied to their attitudes about the work they do’.

One striking finding suggests that some educated lower class and middle class workers are upset about the mind-numbing effects of their underemployment. This leads them to the dehumanisation, deskilling, and alienation. They also dislike being overloaded and monotonously working in the 3Ds (difficult, dirty and dangerous jobs). In this, a security guard feels like losing his sense of manhood because of what he perceives as a female domination at his workplace which is, according to him, a violation of ‘African customs. He was unhappy about how his work affects his morale in these terms:

‘My dear, I’m not a macho. But, the way in which my boss’ acts towards me, it is like she forgets that she is an African woman. As she is married with a white person, she thinks that she becomes herself white. She hurts my heart. I feel like if I am no longer a man because of her behaviour...’ (My translation from Lingala).

To recall, the aim of this section was to explore connections between meanings of work and functions of work in the Congolese immigrant workers’ lives. Following the Zhou et al., (2012) model on the interactions between work meaning and motives of working, the study has shown *that the roles of work give rise to positive or negative meanings which Congolese make of their occupations. These functions influencing work meaning are in general three: economic, social, and psychological.* I now turn my attention to how the socio-cultural factors shape the Congolese’s meanings of work.

### **5.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS**

The divergences and convergences of work meanings between Congolese society, the Congolese community of Pretoria, and South African society shape informants’ meanings of work. Moreover, South African socio-economic and political features (structural constraints) have a strong influence on the Congolese’s work meanings.

On societal influences on meaning of work, the social perception of a work in the South African society and within the Congolese community shapes Congolese work meanings in Pretoria. Indeed, the South African's valorisation of some professions which are socially stigmatised in the DRC changes meanings of such work among Congolese in Pretoria. In the same line, Congolese consider meaningless professions which are negatively perceived by both countries. However, some low-status or stigmatised occupations in South Africa are highly valorised in some Congolese milieus of Pretoria.

Relating to the valorisation of a work in Pretoria, findings show that certain Congolese consider their professions meaningful because these professions are objects of positive appreciation from South Africans while they are somewhat stigmatised in the DRC. Therefore, the approval of the host society for some professions leads many Congolese professionals and some manual workers to change their ideas which they had about their 'meaningless' work while in the DRC. For instance, a veterinary Doctor said:

'To be a veterinarian looks ridiculous in the DRC. But, in this country where people have the culture of animal breeding, a veterinarian is among respected workers'. (My translation from French).

In the same way, a welder and night watchman argued that the Congolese society is disrespectful to manual workers. However, they get a positive social consideration in South Africa. Accordingly, he is proud of his work in Pretoria.

'In Congo, we think that manual trades are nothing. We laughed at some people. [...] But, here, the job of welding is well appreciated to the extent that I'm very proud to be a welder'. He said in Lingala.

The above experiences show that meanings of work can differ from one society to another (e.g. Baldy, et al., 2008, Zhou et al., 2012). Here, Congolese workers draw the positive meaning that they attach to their jobs from the receiving society. Pretoria therefore allows them to change their job meaning from negative to positive.

Special attention should be paid to the stigmatised jobs in both societies. Some Congolese consider their professions meaningless because they are not appreciated in the DRC nor in South Africa. In most of cases, Congolese male domestic workers and parking attendants see their jobs as utterly meaningless due to social stigma from both countries. In the following extracts, a night watchman casts light on this point. What happened is that he was the subject of mockery from his South African co-workers (cleaners) when he worked as a gardener at a

guesthouse. One day, he quarrelled with his co-workers on social stigmas attached to his work.

‘When we were on the table they (South African colleagues) started saying: “*where are you from?*” I had said: “*I am a Congolese*”. - (South African colleagues asked him): “*You have left the Congo for coming to work as a gardener. Is it normal? Who took you from the Congo until here for coming to do that dirty job?*” Me also, I asked them: “*You are also South African men, citizens of this country. Aren’t you ashamed to work like this: cleaning toilets? You do a dirty job of women while they (women) work in offices and drive cars?*”.

By the same token, my conversation with Zoe, a former parking attendant casts light on the stigmatised professions in South Africa and the DRC.

**Zoe:** When we arrive here, we Congolese, first of all, what we easily get as a first job as parking attendant. (Working as a) parking attendant allows us to afford the rent and foods for a while. I had worked as a parking attendant for a year. Then, I decided to give it up because it is not approved, a neglected job by people from here. Even in Congo, it is a job for street children. You see, it was like that history of what... of Abraham, who’s again?

**Saint José:** Of Peter Abraham<sup>38</sup>.

**Zoe:** Yes, of Peter Abraham that we learnt at school: the forced beggary. (My translation from French and Lingala).

Clearly the negative meanings towards the two above-mentioned occupations are due to social stigma attached to them. Actually, concerning the Congolese immigrants’ negative view, the main plausible explanation seems to be the underpayment in these jobs. This is similar to what MacIlwaine and his collaborators (2006) have found in their work among the low-status and low-paid migrant workers in London who considered their job meaningless.

The assumption here is that, if these jobs were financially rewarding, Congolese might have a different conception. Literature on international labour migration shows that, when underemployed immigrant workers are well-paid, they find their jobs meaningful (Stalker, 1994; Dale, et al., 2005; Massey & Durant, 2006; MacIlwaine, et al. 2006; Liang, 2007; Kelly, 2010).

It is valuable to note that some stigmatised occupations in South Africa are valorised in some Congolese milieus of Pretoria. That is to say some informants find meaningful their socially ill-considered and often unlawful occupations. By unlawful work, I mean all activities legally

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<sup>38</sup>Roughly, Peter Abraham is an author from South Africa who wrote ‘*La Mendicité Forcée*’ (the forced beggary). In the DRC, they teach that text in high school (*deuxième année secondaire*) which tells a story of a black man who was forced to beg in the white zones during apartheid in South Africa.

prohibited and/ or socio-socially unaccepted within South Africa. Conversely, some Congolese ‘criminal experts’ (such as *frappeurs*<sup>39</sup>, or *missionnaires*<sup>40</sup>) receive a high degree of admiration from their compatriots.

It should be noted that seldom will we find such ‘*frappeurs*’ in Pretoria. Johannesburg seems to be their nerve centre. For example, during a friendly football match between Congolese of Pretoria against those of Johannesburg, Congolese girls of Johannesburg were laughing at Congolese men of Pretoria characterising them as poor security guards. However, they were praising Congolese men living in Johannesburg as being better-off businesspersons (actually, *frappeurs*). In reaction, a famous female Congolese sex symbol of Pretoria reacted in saying:

‘Although our men in Pretoria are not *frappeurs*, we still love them with little money they gain.’

Despite such protests, in Pretoria such figures - Congolese intermediaries of the Home Affairs syndicates, some document forgers and *missionnaires* - are very much admired by some of their compatriots. For example, a barber who also works as a hidden *missionnaire* finds his job meaningful because Congolese respect him as a supplier of high quality clothes, cell-phones, laptops, to his different customers. Although he works as a receiver of stolen goods by crooks, he does not see his occupation as an illegitimate one because it looks normal in his Congolese milieu. Briefly, the South African society and/or the Congolese community’s thoughts on work influence the Congolese immigrant workers’ meaning of work. As I have shown, it is worth affirming that the meaning of work is a socially constructed reality.

Talking about correlations between South African socio-economic and political features and the Congolese work meaning, findings show that some social dynamics within South Africa such as multiple modifications of the South Africa labour migration policy, financial issues, and unemployment play the leading role in the changes of the Congolese’s meanings of work.

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<sup>39</sup>A *frappeur* (also known as maître) is someone who practices frappe, the French for strike. *Frappe* (and its numerous synonyms *kop*, *lubeka*, *mayuya*, etc.) indicates a semantic field roughly corresponding to the English word fraud. Typically, it would include: cheque fraud, known as *chekula*, stealing bank account details, counterfeiting money, document fraud, and so on (Inaka and Trapido, 2011).

<sup>40</sup>A *Missionnaire* is someone who practices mission. This means a dealer and receiver of stolen goods. Actually, the French word *missionnaire* means in English missionary. But, in the street Lingala, mission is all kind of deals.

For this reason, Congolese elites complained about the South African's trend of changing labour migration legislation based on anti-immigrants motives. These changes cause troubles for their businesses. They felt compelled to be always adjusted to any change otherwise their businesses become somewhat meaningless.

About South African financial issues, all people I interviewed among businesspersons, the self-employed, and working classes think that financial crisis and frequent inflations in South Africa reduce their incomes. The reason is that the South African financial issues reduced their clients' purchasing power. This therefore leads their professions to appear meaningless. A bouncer, for instance, experienced that situation. He said that, since 2007 until today his salary of 3000 Rand is unchanged while prices rise every year in Pretoria. In this circumstance, his purchasing power is reduced, something which made his job look meaningless.

One of the unexpected results of this study is the repercussion of the South Africans' unemployment on the Congolese's meaning of work. The point here is that the pervasive unemployment in South Africa leads locals to accept to work in some socially stigmatised professions (Asanda Benya, 2009) such as parking attendants, street vendors. In this, many informants, former parking attendants before 2000s, argued that, the unemployment and poverty leads South African men to accept work in domains in which Congolese had had a monopoly during the 1990s. This has in turn negatively affected such jobs for the Congolese who must compete with locals in fields where previously they felt secure. The following passage of Lucien Mandala's life history, a former parking attendant, gives idea on these changes.

**Lucien:** It was an important job. We gained lot of money, as there was a shortage (of parking attendants) in that time. It is not like today. Many guys work as car guards (today). People despised it (in the past). Especially South Africans did not want to do it. They do it today because life has become difficult. [...] It was a job of foreigners'. (My translation from French)

In this last point, it is worth recalling that the structural constraints due to the anti-immigrant policy and the hardship of the socio-economic situation in South Africa notably affect Congolese meaning of work. My finds are thus in line with Ashford and Kreiner (1999) and Zhou and his collaborators (2012) who concluded that meanings of work are a social construction. According to Ashford and Kreiner (*ibid.*, p.413) meaning of work emerges from 'the development of strong occupational cultures' while Zhou and others think (*ibid.*, p.408) that work meanings 'tend to vary across cultures and contexts'.

## 5.4 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

This section insists on how the professional environment determines the Congolese's work meanings. Informants told about migratory statuses; labour management, and job difficulties.

To start with migratory status, my findings suggest that there are links between migratory status (documented or undocumented immigrants), sector of employment (formal or informal), professional positions and the meaning of work. Clearly, regular migratory statuses offered possibilities to some informants to work in the formal sector. This *de facto* facilitated them to be in wanted or cherished jobs. Obviously, their professional and migratory situations helped them to give positive meaning to their jobs.

As one can expect, informants who are undocumented immigrants and/or unauthorised workers were generally involved in unwanted occupations that they tended to consider meaningless. For instance, an undocumented female domestic worker thinks that she is exposed to the mercy of devious employers because of the lack of regular documents. She is thereby obliged to see her job as risky and meaningless. In the same way, an undocumented barber told me that he is much annoyed by the corrupted police officers. Since the latter knew that he is an undocumented immigrant worker, he has bribed them on a weekly basis. Indeed, his unlawful migratory status affects the meaning of his work. He complained as follow.

‘These corrupt policemen use me like their farm (i.e. generative financial source). They always make plan to appear here every Saturday when customers come. So, I must spend at least 100 Rand (to bribe them. Thus, my work becomes useless.’

Truly, the exposition to the job exploitation and professional abuses - due to the inappropriate migratory status - affects the Congolese irregular immigrant workers' work meaning. Probably, if they were regular immigrants and authorised workers, they would have possibilities to denounce the job exploitation that they are faced with. Unfortunately, being undocumented immigrants makes them vulnerable workers. In this circumstance, they find their job useless. This situation is also shared to a large extent by Congolese documented immigrants who are, however unrecorded as workers. For instance, a doctor does not consider his unlawful occupation as a job although it is helpful to society. He charred his thoughts as follows:

‘What I do here is the medicine. In fact, I am a doctor. In contrary, I do not call it a work. First, it is stressful. Why is it stressful? I told you that, we know it. I know that what I do is good (as social function



of his job) but illegal. I help people. I find people who are in need, I help them. However, there is a law that says to me that: “you cannot touch them”. In this situation, I do not call it a job. This is the misery.’ (My translation from French and English).

These testimonies show correlations between the negative work meaning (of unlawful professions) and migratory statuses of Congolese. This is similar to the view of Loscocco and Kalleberg’s (1988, p.339) for who ‘the nature of people’s jobs has an important effect on their work meanings’.

On organisational factors, this study suggests that labour management and labour relations notably influence Congolese’s perception of work. I found that the more informants feel themselves to be far away from mismanagement and professional abuses, the more they consider their jobs meaningful. For this reason, most of them had positive perceptions of their occupations if they also thought that there was good management of their institutions. They have declared that the human resources management, comfortable labour conditions, and professional advantages make their jobs meaningful. A Doctor, for instance, explained that the management of the South African health system allows him to work well. Consequently, he finds his profession more meaningful than he did in his country. He expressed his happiness as follow.

‘Given the experience that I have (in Pretoria), it is grace that I left the Congo and I came here. Otherwise, I would have not practice a good medicine. South Africa is among the poor countries on the planet, considered as poor of the planet. But, in the domain of medicine, South Africa is among countries in which medicine is very advanced. Thus, the medicine is very advanced, very developed. Means that they consider here as available means; we Congolese consider them like substantial means. Moreover, the way the system works, it is a coordinated system at all hospitals which reaches the highest level of medical care. This makes the job a little bit easier and exciting’. (my translation from French)

About job difficulties, informants have cited four main features as sources of professional difficulties: the job exploitation or abuse; the social segregation; the exposure to physical risk; and the unethical or unprofessional behaviours.

Many Congolese unauthorised workers lamented that their employers take advantage of them to the extent where they suffer from underpayment, overwork, docking of salaries and an absence of job contracts. For example, a night watchman puts it as follows.

‘As your employer is aware that you hold fake documents, he won’t pay you well. A Congolese when he gets 2500 rand, this is the highest salary. You will notice that he is overloaded’. (my translation from lingala).

Another night watchman complained about the unfair cutting of salaries by Congolese employers or managers.

‘What often happens is that you had agreement about the salary of 2700 Rand. At the end of month, he gives a different salary. You will see he will start creating numerous fabricated stories against you’. (my translation from Lingala).

Similarly, a night watchman, Babin, explained how wage differential vis-à-vis South Africans had driven them to make wage claims to their superiors. Unfortunately, the employer publicly disappointed them. Balbin concluded that his job was similar to slavery.

‘We raised that problem when we started wage claims. He (the employer) clearly told us: “*You are refugees, I cannot pay you as a South African*”. Indeed, we were paid almost the half of a South Africans’ salaries. Then, he prefers hiring refugees so that he can pay less and gain more (money). Since then, I have understood that we were just slaves’. (My translation from Lingala)

In the same fashion, a lawful accountant expressed wage differential between him and his locals colleagues as follow.

**Accountant:** In terms of remuneration, it is a total dissatisfaction. The simple reason is... Papa, there are lot of features in this country when you are foreigner. We are not treated on the same way

**Saint José:** is there a sort of iniquity in the management?

**Accountant:** YES, BECAUSE I AM A FOREIGNER. YOU CANNOT GET THE SAME SALARY LIKE A SOUTH AFRICAN’. (My translation from French)

On the basis of these above narratives, it should be recalled that, many specialists in the study of international immigration have shown such practices of exploitation of undocumented immigrants by unscrupulous employers in South Africa (e.g. IOM, 2008; Dodson & Crush 2004). These awful practices concur with what Castles (2013) says about the job exploitation of undocumented immigrants. According to Castles (2013, p.131) ‘many employers actually prefer irregular migrants because they lack rights, cannot complain to authorities’.

Relating to social segregation, informants successively emphasised that xenophobia, racism, ethnicity, and the Congolese community's internal ethnic-political tensions are the principal causes of social segregation at workplaces. The latter notably affect informants’ meanings of work.

The xenophobia at workplaces drives Congolese not only to have negative feelings about their occupations but also, in extreme cases, to lose their jobs. For example, the xenophobia

affected one handyman's feeling about his former job and pushed him to step down. That informant said:

'When I had been working at XYZ, there was one of my managers; a black South African who was literally a xenophobic man. [...] when he knew that I was a foreigner, the only thing he could tell me was: "you, *I will help you to leave this place. You must go*". [...] He had everyday created problems against me. [...] Finally, I was fired.'(my translation from French)

On the subject of ethnicity, my findings reveal that Congolese dislike the strength of ethnic feelings among black South Africans in the work place. Most professionals said they feel indirectly affected by the fact that their South African colleagues mistrust each other. What's more, some informants felt annoyed when their South African colleagues try to incorporate them in their own ethnic issues at workplaces. A Congolese construction engineer shared his experience of black South Africans' ethnic mistrust in the following terms.

'One day a Zulu builder came and started saying: '*comrade, pay attention to these Xhosas and Vendas. Vendas and Sothos like stealing things. And, these Xhosas, they will one day take your place*'. After a couple of days, a Xhosa plumber approached me and he was like: '*eish ... chief, you know, eish... I mostly see you with Zulus. I'm telling you I'm a Xhosa from South Africa, these guys like too much muthi (black magic). You are not here to have problems, neeh*'? (my translation french French mixed with English)

In the matter of racism at the workplace, it is worth mentioning that none of the informants has acknowledged being a victim personally. Nevertheless, they criticised some racial practices among South African citizens at workplaces. For example, a security guard in a supermarket denounced his fellow staff to show their racist attitudes through the differential treatment between black and white shoplifters. He puts it like this:

'Another difficulty is the racism. As we work at a security service, when we catch a white who has stolen, you will see our white superiors very mad. Especially our employer, he does anything as well as he can in order to reach an amicable solution. But, when it is a black, my brother, there are giant Boer (Afrikaners) police officers who quickly land here. Imagine how these guys are brutal. It hurts to see it'. (My translation from French).

On ergonomic<sup>41</sup> issues which influence work meaning, participants said their professions expose them to various professional risks. For instance, some Congolese Doctors avowed

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<sup>41</sup>Ergonomics mean the relationship between workers efficiency in their working environment, especially the equipment they use.

that, it is somewhat risky to treat patients who have contagious disease for fear of contamination by mistake. In this, a Doctor made it clear like this:

'As a doctor, the difficulty that we have in this country is that the AIDS is among the most widespread diseases in South Africa. The difficulty is that, we cannot sometimes very well take care of our patients because we know that it is always necessary to be careful because the patient has the AIDS. You can make a mistake that can cost own your life'. (My translation from French).

In the same line, security guards seem to be the most exposed to professional diseases. They told me their occupations expose them to influenza, rheumatism, haemorrhoids, pneumonia and chronic insomnia.

With regards to the exposure to physical violence, most informants who are security guards or professionals of the media said that they are victims of attacks from various criminals and some from Congolese political fanatics as well. Naturally, those who are more exposed to the everyday risks are security guards. As an example, a former bouncer, decided to abandon his job because he had risked his life several times. The worst thing happened when his workplace was petrol bombed while he was working. He complained in these words:

'The work of bouncer has many difficulties. Someone can be drunk while he or she has a gun in his or her car.[...] People holding machetes commonly called '*panga*' were frightening us on our way going back home. [...] There was a day when they dropped a Molotov bomb. We were four persons working together. I was lucky as I was inside the night club. Friends who were outside were burnt. We took them to a hospital. The following day, a Sunday, they forced me to work alone. [...] Who will accept to work at a place where they had dropped a bomb?' (My translation from Lingala).

Another risk is that some political 'fanatics' or 'activists' try to have all the Congolese community media under their control. These activists force media professionals to broadcast their opinions of President Kabila's opponents. A community journalist complained like this:

'*Combattants* pressed me. They told me: "*you must be in the opposition, only broadcast messages insulting the president (Kabila) who is in the country*". In any case, according to our professional deontology and ethics, it was impossible to do it. I did not want. Thus, it was a threat from them'.

Touching on the unethical or unprofessional behaviours, the study lists four main causes: the professional disobedience or insubordination; the sexual harassment and abuse of authority; and the lack of professional dedication. Most Congolese employers condemned acts of disobedience and insubordination from their workers. In general, it seems difficult for Congolese elite businesspersons to cope with black South African workers. The latter are

characterised as loving to strike and always looking for protection from unions. A Congolese female employer said this:

‘We have been through some hard times with South African workers. They appear like doves (submissive persons) when they are looking for a job. They are the first one to beg: *“please mum, take me. I beg you”*. Once you have hired them, they sometimes become like lions. When there is a problem, they always say: *“I know my rights. I am from South Africa. South Africa is a country of freedom”*’.

Similarly, middle class managers, supervisors criticised their South African subalterns’ sense of insubordination. A bar manager, for instance, Sadoma was complaining like this:

‘Workers that you supervise, who used to obey you and do a good job before, because these people have relationships with your superiors (or boss), they will not any more respect you. You have no longer authority in front of them. For example, that girl shouted at me: *‘you, you are supervisor; me I go out with the boss of this place. What motherf#cker can you tell me?’* That is the problem that we face’. (My translation for French mixed with English).

With regards to sexual harassment and the related abuse of authority, Congolese female workers accuse their male compatriots and other African employers of constant sexual pressure and unprofessional behaviour. A female domestic worker indicated during an interview that to accept to work for a Congolese man means to become his sexual toy. In a similar way a waitress explained how Congolese, Cameroonian or Nigerian employers make use of sexual harassment in pubs in order to blackmail their female employees. She said:

‘Sometimes you can see the boss coming to tell you that he wants to have a (sexual) relation with you. He can start doing small things. You are an adult and you start understanding (his stratagem) as a woman. And, these small things can complicate your work. You can lose the position you have because you are unable to satisfy him’.

Finally, Congolese employers and some middle class deplored the lack of professional dedication respectively among their employees (Both Congolese and South Africans) and South African colleagues. As an illustration, a co-owner of a security private company said that people report to him that some of his Congolese workers drink alcohol and smoke hemp during work hours. For him, these conducts are unprofessional and highly risky for those who are supposed to be always vigilant.

Similarly, a registered female doctor condemned the lack of dedication of her counterparts from South Africa in saying:

‘On the level of dedication, I must tell you that the Congolese doctors are more realistic than South African doctors. In fact, let's be honest. To say things as they are. Few South African doctors have commitment that we have learned in our schools in Congo. We learned medicine with great severity. South Africans do not go to disciplined schools like ours. That is why a South African doctor may leave a patient and go to take a coffee. The majority of Congolese doctors will never do it’.

All the above-mentioned findings match with Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe (2003) assumptions. They propose that: ‘the meaning of work is composed, in part, of the evaluations conveyed by a diverse set of people encountered at work.[...] ‘work meaning is treated as an emergent feature of social scene at work’ ( *ibid*, p.129).

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to understand meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their work in Pretoria. In this perspective, *findings have shown that three main factors shape the Congolese’s work meanings, namely the functions of work, socio-cultural factors, and organisational factors.*

On the functions of work, the paper has indeed demonstrated that *when work plays significant functions in Congolese immigrant workers’ lives, they see it meaningful. By contrast, they judge the work demeaning when it does not have an important function.*

The chapter has also revealed the influences of some social factors on the Congolese workers’ occupational meanings. In that, the chapter demonstrated *how socio-cultural similarities and differences between South African society and the Congolese community of Pretoria allow Congolese to construct work meanings.*

Moreover, the chapter has also scrutinised different ways in which the labour organisation (management) and the labour relations (professional ambience) contribute to shape the Congolese workers’ work meanings. In terms of labour organisation, data have displayed that professional management and a sense of being in control, govern the valence of feelings that Congolese have vis-à-vis their professions. By the same token, the study suggested that the Congolese’s own constructions of work as positive or as demeaning are integral to any consideration of their well-being.

The research has suggested that the Congolese immigrant’s individual drivers (immigrant agency) determine their meanings of work. In addition to that, their job and social

environment (structures) also have an influence on their work meanings. The Congolese immigrant workers' meanings of work are without a doubt both socially constructed, and dynamic.

Finally, this study has scrutinised different ways in which labour organisation (management) and labour relations (professional ambiance) contribute to shape the meanings that Congolese workers give to work.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONGOLESE WORKERS’ TRANSNATIONALISM IN PRETORIA**

### ***6.1 INTRODUCTION***

As mentioned in the chapter one, this dissertation was firstly interested in Congolese immigrant workers’ meanings of work. However, in the course of fieldwork, I realised that exploration of Congolese meanings of work cannot be understood independently of transnational activities in Pretoria. Moreover, the last chapter has demonstrated that South African sociocultural, economic, and political features (structural constraints) have a strong influence on Congolese meanings of work. This influence also determines economic, political, and socio-cultural transnational ties that informants keep with the DRC.

In terms of economic transnationalism, it has been previously demonstrated that informants’ possibilities to remit to the DRC play important but variable roles in their work meanings. Hence, the present chapter will give insights about how features related to remittances have implications on homebound transnational politics. Moreover, this thesis has also previously explained that professional environments determine Congolese work meanings. In other words, South African policies (and politics) are among factors that explain the negative or positive meanings that most informants attach to their professions. This leads them to blame political activities in their homeland as well as that in South Africa for their predicament, (even though more blame is levelled at the authorities back in the Congo). Therefore, such realities also drive their transnational political participation.

On socio-cultural transnationalism, it was earlier mentioned that divergences and convergences of work meanings between Congolese society, the Congolese community of Pretoria, and South African society in general, shape informants’ meanings of work. In this context, some informant’s kept cultural ties with the DRC while at the same time internalised aspects of South African cultural in professional and everyday activities. In sum, given the influence of Congolese transnationalism on their meanings of work, I therefore deemed it necessary to explore transnational activities in the present dissertation.

The present chapter will present an overview of Congolese transnational politics, economics and culture. This chapter therefore aims to examine the link between the activities of Congolese living in Pretoria and how they impact those in the mother country (the DRC).



Regarding transnationalism, it is evident that most of their activities are broadly transnational and though this is generally in less institutionalised forms they are more or less permanent. In terms of politics, the chapter argues that there is a dialectical interaction amongst Congolese immigrants, their home country and South Africa. Economically, it maintains that remittances constitute a key aspect of the lives of Congolese in Pretoria, and this chapter explores it in further details, with particular emphasis on the motives and side-effects of the remittances on Congolese transnational economic activities. For the socio-cultural transnational activities, this chapter addresses the phenomenon of cultural hybridization between Congolese and some South Africans as well as.

Theoretically, Congolese workers' transnationalism is analysed according to the typology established by Portes et al. (1999). They distinguish three main types of transnationalism; political, economic, and socio-cultural. The chapter is also built on the theoretical framework of Itzigsohn and his collaborators (1999, p.317) who 'propose to distinguish between narrow and broad forms of transnationality as two poles along a continuum of different forms of transnational practices'.

In sum this chapter is divided into three sections; the first deals with Congolese transnationalism in politics; the second looks at their economic activities (especially remittances); and the last section focuses on transnational socio-cultural activities, with particular emphasis on cultural hybridisation and conflict within the Congolese community.

## **6.2 CONGOLESE TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS IN PRETORIA**

This section explores the escalation of Congolese transnational political activities in Pretoria around the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012. These were marked by ethnic and political conflict. Chiefly, these conflicts opposed Congolese from the East, who are in the majority Swahili speakers, pejoratively termed '*Collabos*' and generally pro-Kabila, against those from the West, in general Kikongo, Lingala and Tshiluba speakers, known as '*Combattants*', who are generally anti-Kabila's regime. Further, this section has four main parts; the first part gives the historical overview of Congolese transnational political activities in South Africa. The second part analyses the influence of South African policy on the Congolese transnational political opinions and attitudes. The third part touches on the impact that Congolese transnational politics in Pretoria has on the homeland. The last part scrutinises the influence of Congolese transnational politics on South Africa.

### 6.2.1 Synoptic view of the Congolese transnational politics in South Africa

I can roughly date the beginnings of Congolese transnational politics in Pretoria and in the rest of South Africa to the end of apartheid in the early 1990s. That time coincided with the arrival of the first wave of Congolese immigrants in South Africa. This wave included many of the ‘barons’ of Mobutu’s regime who were relocating their families to Pretoria (in majority North-Western ‘Bangala’ people like Mobutu). At the same time, the Congolese middle class became arriving in Pretoria to look for better-paid jobs (Bouillon 1998, p.13).

According to many informants, the vast majority of this Congolese middle class showed great antipathy to both Mobutu and to his close entourage living in Pretoria. One informant, a son of a dignitary of the Mobutu regime, explained to me that they were exposed to ethnic and political hatred from their middle class compatriots who were pejoratively calling them: ‘*enfants des mouvanciers*’ (children of *mouvanciers*<sup>42</sup>).

Most of the opposition to Mobutu, in the diaspora as at home, was sympathetic to the non-violent opposition of the UDPS. But during the same period, some middle class (especially *Baswahili* from the East) also clandestinely participated in the rebel insurgency that, with help from Rwanda and Uganda, ousted the Mobutu’s regime. Evidence for this important South African dimension to hidden transnational political activities is that when Kabila senior overthrew Mobutu, he appointed several South Africa-based Congolese to his government.

The most important of these transmigrant politicians was undoubtedly Augustin Katumba Mwanke. Katumba Mwanke worked in various South African corporations (e.g. Johannesburg Consolidated Investment (JCI), Bateman Minerals and Industrial Ltd, and HSBC Equator Bank of South Africa). In Contact with the rebels before their arrival in Kinshasa, A. Katumba became a counsellor to the Congolese finance minister as part of the new government when Laurent Kabila took power in 1997. In 1998, he was appointed governor of the mineral-rich province of Katanga. When Joseph Kabila succeeded his father as head of state in 2001, Katumba took his chance, becoming a minister and one of the regime’s most powerful men in the DRC until he passed away in November 2011. Congolese rumours dubbed him “*le président du gouvernement parallèle*” (‘the chairman of the parallel

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<sup>42</sup> ‘*Mouvancier*’: This is purely a Central African French word used designate members or supporters of ‘*la mouvance présidentielle*’ (the presidential camp or movement) in many country in Central African area. Around 1990s, the term of ‘*mouvancier*’ was pejoratively used against Mobutu’s ancient dignitaries or anyone suspected to be corrupted by Mobutu or in coalition with him (Tambwe, 1996, 221).

government’) and he was generally perceived as the power behind the throne (Inaka & Trapido, 2014).

After the collapse of Mobutu in 1997, certain of his former collaborators went into exile in South Africa. In their turn, they also clandestinely started political activities in South Africa strongly oriented against Kabila senior’s regime. Many of these went into informal alliances with their former adversaries (such as members of UDPS) or armed opponents of “the Kabila’s dynasty” (like the Rwandan backed rebel group the RCD-Goma).

Congolese transnational activism in Pretoria has undergone great changes. First, the study has found that since 2006 (when the DRC organised its first democratic elections) Congolese activism is no longer carried out in secret. Second, the appearance of a group of new leaders of Congolese transnational political activities from the lower strata of the migrant community, i.e. the informal working class is another striking change in the Congolese transnational opposition. This shift in the class make up of political activism is also linked to a third notable feature, which is the rising importance of violence and ideologies around ethnicity and nationalism. In such a context, the use of the language of violence and their visible activism in the field against Kabila, who they accuse to be a Rwandan, have compelled some middle class and elite politicians of the Congolese opposition to collaborate with them.

It should be highlighted that these trends which occurred in Pretoria coincide considerably with trends in the DRC itself where the intensification of ethnicity and political tensions between Congolese from the West and the East due to electoral issues of 2006 and 2011 are a marked feature of public life. Therefore, that ethnic-political animosity has transcended Congolese boundaries and reached the Congolese diaspora of Pretoria. As result, in December 2011 ‘*Collabos*’ and ‘*Combattants*’ violently fought in Sunnyside.

In analysing this data it is vital to take into consideration the fact that, Congolese in Pretoria are very often inclined to see the ethnicity as an ancient and profound cultural divide. In fact the split is rather recent, and in its present form dates to the end of the Mobutu regime. However, underlying this split is another split, which traces its origins ultimately to colonial racial theory. Versions of the ‘*Hamitic hypothesis*’ – which held that various interlacustrine peoples (especially the Tutsi and the Hema, a cattle keeping group in the East of Congo) were from a different and (in the original colonial version) superior racial category – are quite

widespread in Congolese politics (see Équipe du Projet MAPPING, 2010; Mbuyi et al. 2002; Couledry & Herson, 2010; Vangu, 2000; Prunier, 2009; ICG, 1999).

In Congolese versions of this story, honourable Bantu's are opposed to jealous Nilotic (i.e. Rwandans), who are also sometimes seen as being in league with the Americans. In this fashion Swahiliphones are often categorised either as puppets of Nilotic/Rwandan elements or even sometimes as themselves being Nilotic (see also Trapido, 2011). It is important also to note, in line with many scholars who have drawn attention to the invention of ethnicity (e.g. Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Coe, 2000; Bayart, 1989) how recent much of this is. Rwandans often came to study in the DRC until the 1990's, and, outside of the rather particular politics of the Kivu's, in the extreme east, there was no animosity shown to them. Likewise the Lingala/Swahili split which animates present divisions is, in political terms, very recent. During the 1990s perhaps the most significant ethnic political rivalry was between '*Bangala*' who were largely pro-Mobutu and 'Luba-Kasai' who were largely opposed, now these two groups are both classed as '*Westerners*' and are perceived as allies. The 'Luba' from Kasai themselves, now seen as a bastion of opposition sentiment, were at independence, fiercely divided between the Lulua from Kasai Occidental and the Luba from Kasai Oriental (e.g. Verhagaegen, 1966). This division is now, in political terms, forgotten.

After this brief synoptic view of the historical evolution of Congolese transnational activities and ethnic-political tensions in Pretoria, let us analyse how the South African policy influences these Congolese transnational political activities.

### **6.2.2 Influence of South Africa on Congolese Transnational Politics**

The findings of the research here unearthed three key facts. The first concerns exactly how South African politics shapes Congolese immigrants' political opinions and attitudes. The second explains the awaking of political consciousness among Congolese, arising from their exposure to South African politics. The third is Congolese perception of South Africa, especially its capital Pretoria, as an arena of political freedom and/or struggle.

Findings show that South African politics influences Congolese political opinions and attitudes in three ways. First, amongst some informants a first-hand experience of South African politics strengthened their animosity toward Congolese political leaders. Second, such experiences also drove some informants to change their opinions entirely about

Congolese politicians. Third, some informants wish to export the South African democratic practices to the DRC.

On the rise of the animosity toward Congolese political leaders, many informants, especially the middle and working classes, declared that their experience of living in a more democratic and well-managed country like South Africa had increased their animosity towards what they see as corrupt and inept Congolese politicians.

Perhaps the most important single fact about Congolese transitional politics is its highly nationalist colouration. Critiques of the current regime are couched in terms of an absence of patriotism by current leaders. For example, a female street vendor dislikes Congolese politicians because of her reading of South African leaders. She said:

‘Here, I understand how one country must be. You see. How a country takes care of the population. So, I always say someone must be a stupid, very mad if she is supporting any Congolese leader. I’m telling you. [...]. KABILA AND HIS OPPONENTS ARE ALL THE SAME PERSON (shouting). What these useless politicians do for us? The only thing they know is to steal money, kill people. You see. I dislike all of them. Here, even if Zuma, Julius Malema or what what are corrupt, they are still doing something for their people’. (Informant spoke in English).

Such a quote from an Informant, who has lost trust in Congolese political leaders, can also be seen in the light of the fact that familiarity with South African politics pushed them to lose sympathy for Congolese authorities that they used to support. Some go as far as saying they blame themselves for supporting the ‘Kabila dynasty’ in the past perhaps because of common ethnic affinities. As an example, a trader from Katanga (Kabila’s province) explains how South African politics changed his political orientation.

‘Considering all that I observe here in South Africa: how institutions are strong that help the population to be very well managed, who can rationally continue to support Kabila? In the past, I was making mistakes. That was because of our (common) origins. We gave him a chance. But, after more than 10 years in power, he did nothing’. (My translation from French)

Concerning the wish to export South African democracy to the DRC, some respondents, especially anti-Kabilites, said they want the export of the South African political system to the DRC in order to get rid of Congolese political actors and institutions. A doctor explained his reasoning like this:

‘It is not a shame to admit that South African leaders work for their people. They are better than ours are. We see authorities of this country being penalised. Zuma himself had lost his position as the Vice-President because of corruption. THAT IS THE DEMOCRACY!!! (shout). Thus, we must do the same in our country. We must imitate them; bring their political expertise at home. The revolution is necessary.

People like Kanambe<sup>43</sup> [i.e. Joseph Kabila] and his rabble must disappear from the political scene'. (My translation from French)

On the other hand, some pro-Kabila informants want Congolese leaders to stay running the DRC but to follow the example of South Africa. For one Pastor:

'The problem is that the President (Kabila) has several role models who he follows in the same time - Chinese, Indian, Eduardo Dos Santos, Mugabe, Zuma, Kagame, who muddle him. If I could have to talk to him, I would have told him to copy at least the 50 per cent of the South African politics [smile]'. (My translation from French)

It is quite clear from the above excerpts that the views of both respondents about the Congolese leadership are quite similar. Irrespective of their political orientation, Anti-Kabila and Pro-Kabila desire certain changes in the way their country is governed. However, they starkly differ as to the manner of effecting change; whereas the anti-Kabila's advocate for rapid and perhaps violent change of the political system, the pro-Kabila's prefer reforms that do not alter political actors.

Interestingly, they have developed their opposing views partly as a consequence of their presence in Pretoria and their observation and exposure to the South African democratic experience. This has enabled them to desire the South African political model to be replicated in the DRC. This echoes with Bauböck (2003, p.707) who argued that, the shared experience of democratic incorporation in the receiving state feeds back into transnational activities that aim at the democratising politics at home.

Regarding political awareness, a majority of informants said that exposure to South African politics has greatly boosted their political consciousness. They also argued that they now closely pay attention to the Congolese politics because of their experience of South African politics. Consequently, a number of them admitted to somehow participate in Congolese transnational political activities in Pretoria. The following extract of a barber speaks volumes.

'Despite my harsh situation in Congo, I did not really care about politics. As pastors were lulling us into a false sense of hoping to get everything from God, politics was a bad thing. But here, when I think of my miseries, it irritates me when I think of Congo. Therefore, I started getting interested in politics. If I would have to take weapons in order to liberate my country from the hands of that Rwandan Kanambe

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<sup>43</sup> According to the afore-mentioned discourse about Joseph Kabila's origins, Joseph is not Laurent's son but is really a Rwandan Tutsi called Christopher Kanambe.

[see footnote above], I will take them. It is for the noble cause of the motherland.’ (My translation from Lingala)

Besides, it is worth mentioning that there are links between political engagements in Congo prior to arriving South Africa. Some refugees, who also double as political activists in Pretoria, were active members of the Congolese opposition back in the DRC. That is why they imported the same popular political practises into Pretoria. I observed that their outdoor meetings (sometimes held under the shades of trees) in some public parks Pretoria look similar to what ‘*parlementaires debouts*’<sup>44</sup> do in Kinshasa. This is similar to what scholars in transnational studies have noted - individuals who were politically active in their home countries tend to keep on being interested or actives in politics even away from their country (Bermudez,2011; Guarnizo et al., 2003).

Furthermore, Pretoria appears to some Congolese as the space of political freedom. To some informants, the level of freedom in South Africa provides them a suitable platform to express themselves about Congolese transnational politics, something that was very difficult for a lot of them in their homeland. For example, a female journalist from Katanga, who was in danger in Lubumbashi because of her criticism of politicians, said that freedom and democracy in South Africa give her the possibility to work without problems.

It is important to note that pro and anti-Kabilaites do not have the same political freedoms within the Congolese community in Pretoria. For example, the anti-Kabila faction seem to have more opportunities for lobbying, conducting campaigns and canvassing support from various international and South African civil society organisations, as well as from the South African opposition (especially the D.A). On the contrary, pro-Kabila Congolese are somewhat deprived of an open political platform by ‘*Combattant*’s. The argument being that they get means and opportunities to support their leader in the DRC, while Anti-Kabila’s do not. Interestingly the opposite phenomenon occurs in Pretoria. Pretoria indeed appears to ‘*combattants*’ as a suitable place to take revenge on their political adversaries. The latter have

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<sup>44</sup> Roughly, this concept of ‘*parlemetaires debouts*’ can literally be translated as the Standing-up MP’s. Actually, in Kinshasa they are indefatigable readers commonly known as “Standing-up MP’s” who gather all day long to comment the news. In majority, they are members of important political parties of the Congolese opposition. In fact, the adjective standing-up, serves only to make a difference by analogy with the classical parliamentarians. The point is these standing-up MPs lack for seats, locals and therefore they discuss about various political topics standing-up, outdoors, and under trees. (Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy, 2009, p.3).

intimidated the pro-Kabila to the point where their actions can be compared to that of the fascist movements in Europe prior to the Second World War. To paraphrase Tocqueville (1990), the freedom which Pretoria offers to Congolese allows the Anti-Kabila faction to exercise their tyranny over the pro-Kabila.

### **6.2.3 Influence of Congolese Transnationalism on the DRC**

The study has found that the transnational political activities of Congolese in Pretoria influence the domestic Congolese political scene. In the fieldwork, I have found out that Congolese politicians whether they are in power or not, seek to exploit the political activities of Congolese immigrants in Pretoria. Their strategies consist of exploiting Congolese immigrants political and ethnic divergences during political events such as elections. For example, I observed that local Congolese politicians were quite involved in Congolese transnational politics during the elections of November 2011. Such interference caused some ethnic conflicts among Congolese of Pretoria.

Although Congolese in South Africa were not legally allowed to participate in local elections, the Congolese community in Pretoria was the target of some home-based politicians during the November 2011 electoral campaigns. During that period, there were delegations in Pretoria representing different segments of the Congolese politicians, who vigorously campaigned among Congolese in Pretoria even though the latter cannot vote. For example, there were people representing President Kabila, and also his opponents, particularly opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi.

For Kabila's opponents, the Congolese diaspora had the power to convince their relatives and others left back in the DRC to vote for them. In their view, the fact that Congolese immigrants send remittances back home gives them the leverage to influence folks back in the DRC. They also argued that immigrants' greater access to media, such as the internet, and their better understanding of Congolese political issues puts them in a position of influence over their relatives back home. The perceived imperative to attract support among the diaspora is illustrated by the frequent claims by opposition and government that if they win power, they will recruit more workers among those who supported them within the diaspora. In this way a mining consultant tried convincing me to join them:

'My friend it is time to participate in the combat. Do not wait until it will be too late because our leaders know us. They know how we suffer with this thing of sending money to the family with little we earn here. This must end. [...] They clearly say that, they will work with us (*'combattants'*). They cannot rely



on unfamiliar persons. For an intelligent guy like you, this is the right time (to join us). We never know.’  
(My translation from French)

In fact, pressure from home over remittance and employment problems are amongst the issues that Congolese migrants and exiles encounter in Pretoria and throughout South Africa and other places around the world. Aware of these problems, opposition politicians used appropriate language to woo their supporters in Pretoria. With their opportunistic discourses, they could harangue and galvanise Congolese to support them. As a result of this political acumen, opposition leaders, above all allies of Etienne Tshisekedi, were cherished in Pretoria. To some extent one can argue that they attained their objectives considering that ‘*Combattants*’ did indeed use multimedia to motivate Congolese back home to vote for Tshisekedi and his allies.

In terms of such popular mobilisations, President Kabila’s camp on was in an unfavourable position in Pretoria. The ‘*Combattants*’ created fear amongst their opponents. Some even went as far as openly threatening violence against any pro-Kabila that came out in the open, thereby depriving them of any platform to freely express their support to the incumbent.

Not cowed by intimidation, some went ahead and held meetings in secret locations. They also used similar tactics like mass media to broadcast pro-Kabila propaganda in the DRC that, such broadcasts were aimed at portraying President Kabila as very popular among Congolese in Pretoria.

The Pro-Kabila camp did not limit itself to Congolese engaged in trade and other professions, they also targeted students. In fact, by October 2011, Congolese students at the University of Pretoria had received a delegation of pro-Kabilaites, supposedly sent by his wife Olive Lembe Kabila. This delegation promised to offer money and jobs, to, amongst others, Congolese students in Pretoria. This delegation also handed 200 Rand to each student, which some viewed as bribes. They were also accompanied by a crew of pressmen who were busy filming the event, which was not to the liking of some students who were often keen to take the money, but did not want their images to be used in president’s propaganda campaign.

Just like the opposition, the Pro-Kabila faction also made great use of propaganda and manipulation. For example, they made fantastic promises to students, even though their real agenda was simply to portray to viewers back in the DRC that Kabila is very much loved in Pretoria, especially among the ‘high quality people’.

In the midst of this friction, I have also observed that President Kabila's regime goes to great lengths to monitor the activities of Congolese immigrants in Pretoria. This is probably done with the aim of maintaining loyal followers, and/or wooing some opponents. In this light I was informed by four '*Combattants*' that, Kabila's agents have successfully infiltrated their ranks, causing enormous friction within the movement. The consequence of this is a high level of mutual suspicion and mistrust within the group, which can sometimes turn violent. For example, on the occasion of activities to mark Congolese Independence day (July 1st 2012), I witnessed how one '*combattant*' - accused of being an informer at the service of Kabila - was severely beaten by his comrades.

In a bid to maintain loyalty amongst its supporters, I was reliably informed by some pro-Kabila people that they sometimes get to meet senior Congolese authorities who sneak into South Africa without the knowledge of '*Combattants*'. They have also created an informal organisation of Kabila supporters apparently with the sole aim of making money. This therefore demonstrates what Portes (1999, pp.466-467) said about the fact that 'governments from the sending countries seldom initiate the grass-roots transnationalism, but that governments enter into the picture, as the importance of the phenomenon becomes evident.'

Money is allegedly not only exchanged within the pro-Kabila camp, many '*Combattants*' complained that, some of their leaders have been bought by the Kabila camp. While such practices would be par for the course in domestic Congolese politics, this is however strongly disputed by the pro-Kabilas. Whilst some pro-Kabila's admitted that bribery is one of the options at their disposal in this extraterritorial political struggle, they rubbished accusations about bribing '*combattants*' of Pretoria. For example, one of Pro-Kabila said this:

'These are such small (useless) people that we cannot bribe. They are worth nothing these so-called *Combattants* of Pretoria. These are tintins, cartoons (meaning puppets) controlled by people who are in Europe. We know well those who manage them from afar. [...] All these sons of bitches like Ngbanda<sup>45</sup>, Jacques Matanda, Boketshu 1er (a folk musician of erstwhile anti-regime tendencies) look for (political) positions. They are the ones to whom we can provide jobs in the country to finish it with all these tramps of Sunnyside.' (my translation from French)

The reading of the above extract shows that Kabila's bloc is aware of the fact that '*Combattants*' in Pretoria are actually militating for the Congolese opposition leaders living

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<sup>45</sup>Honoré Ngbanda, of the same Ngbandi ethnicity as Mobutu he was the head of his security services in the 1990s. Since the fall of the regime he has been based in France from where he is associated with anti-Kabila nationalist movements in the Diaspora.

abroad or in the DRC. Hence, the position of the Kabila bloc is that if they succeed in bribing Congolese opposition leaders, the phenomenon of ‘*Combattants*’ will disappear in Pretoria.

The above paragraphs have mostly portrayed the activities of supporters of President Kabila. The proceeding pages will examine the main claims and actions of the ‘*Combattants*’.

Some justify their actions as ‘*Combattants*’ with reference to the constant need to remit at home which they see as a direct consequence the Kabila’s regime’s pauperisation of the Congolese people, whose survival is ensured thanks to *remittances* from the hard earned cash of Congolese migrants and exiles in places like Pretoria. That said the main bone of contention of the ‘*Combattants*’ is what they perceive as the foreign occupation of the country, with accusations of occupation/usurpation also being directed at the president, who, as explained earlier, is viewed as a Rwandan citizen. This implies that a form of ‘wounded’ nationalism is the main language of political contestation in Congolese politics (see also Trapido forthcoming).

Interestingly, the ‘*Combattants*’ often demonstrate a high level of political awareness, and take actions that include mass demonstrations/large-scale protests, ethno-nationalist propaganda, and intimidation against their adversaries. As they have adopted the language of violence in their extra-territorial political struggle, some even resort to physical violence against what they term ‘*collabos*’.

Regarding political awareness, ‘*Combattants*’ conduct campaigns aimed at sensitising Congolese and the international community to cases of human rights violation, dictatorship, and public mismanagement occurring in the DRC. The main aim of such campaigns is to draw the attention of the international community and to rally other Congolese to join their cause.

On demonstrations or large-scale protests and international publicity, the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012 was marked by the rise of Congolese demonstrations in Pretoria and other cities in South Africa such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. In fact, in October 2011, ‘*Combattants*’ started with the organisation of peaceful marches in front of the embassies of the USA, France, and the DRC denouncing the Congolese electoral process which they describe as biased towards Kabila. Their anger against the regime took a deadly turn in December 2011 following the re-election of Kabila. On this occasion, they sacked the

Congolese Embassy in Pretoria and assaulted a Congolese diplomat, who was killed in the process.

The rift amongst Congolese in Pretoria goes beyond political alignment. The rivalry also takes on an ethnic dimension. For example *Combattants* (generally from the West) disparage other Congolese from the East (the Baswahili) who they pejoratively label ‘*collabos*’. For them, it is abnormal for a real Congolese (a patriot) to support an oppressor like Joseph Kabila.

Thus, they consider all Kabila’s supporters (mostly from the East) as Rwandans or enemies of the DRC. In the course of this research, it emerged that some of informants from the West perceive Baswahili support for Kabila misplaced, particularly because the latter appears to be unable to protect them against armed groups. It should be noted that most of the Congolese who have died because of the wars in the East of the DRC were Baswahili. An English teacher close to the ‘*Combattants*’ was very explicit in this respect.

‘In all these troubles happening in the East, when we say what we should do, we must react, all and all. You will see there are people from the East who say: "Kabila is our Child, Kabila is the Raïs<sup>46</sup>". In everything we speak, we do not see the East-West. We see Congo at first. I believe that, there are our brothers from the East who sometimes refuse to understand. They believe that he (Kabila) is their child. It seems that Kabila is at first manhandling them, not us in Kinshasa. No! It is at first over there. We just suffer from it by compassion. They do not understand that’. (My translation from French mixed with Swahili)

Yet in reality the *Combattants* and others from the west exhibit considerable mistrust of easterners. Rumours circulate which serve to exaggerate divides. For example allegations are frequently levelled against people from the east who purported to be masters in the art of killing by poisoning. It is also alleged that President Kabila uses them as an effective weapon against his real or perceived enemies, particularly opponents and fellow Congolese from the West. Such rumours negatively impact their activities at home and abroad. A good example of this is the case of a female artist and owner of catering service whose restaurant business is said to have gone bankrupt because ‘*combattants*’ spread rumours to her South African clients that she was working for Kabila as a poisoner.

As regards intimidation and or threat of physical violence, ‘*Combattants*’ have also severely restricted the activities of Congolese musicians visiting or living in the DRC from performing

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<sup>46</sup> Raïs means in Swahili and Arab president, King. Congolese use it as a friendly nickname for Joseph Kabila.

in Pretoria. They are accused of singing the praises of President Kabila. The same treatment was also meted to some Congolese Pastors (suspected to be pro-Kabila). It is even worse for Congolese politicians (Pro-Kabila) who they threaten to inflict the punishment of ‘*mutakalisation*’<sup>47</sup>.

In the midst of this melee, it is not clear which segment of the opposition in the DRC these ‘*combattants*’ represent. Most of them often cite either of the two main opposition leaders; Honoré Ngbanda or Etienne Tshisekedi, as their head though it is not very clear if any of them has any direct control over ‘*combattants*’ activities in Pretoria. It is interesting to note that these two were implacable political opponents in the 1990’s (see above). Moreover, the ‘*combattants*’ view other opposition leaders, not entirely without justification, as being in the pay of Joseph Kabila and are often referred to as ‘*partis alimentaires*’<sup>48</sup>. Questioned on this issue, a well-known ‘*combattant*’ gave the picture of their social movement as follows.

‘In the first place, our movement does not belong to a political party. (Actually), it is a group of Congolese patriot wanting to liberate his country from the Rwandan’s occupation and the dictatorship. That is to say, we do not have leaders. Our leader is any Congolese who is ready to die for our country. We are like the deaths. The deaths do not have leaders. They are all equals. We also, we are all leaders. That is all. [...] Among us, there are people who are members of political parties. But, we do not speak in the mane of X, Y, Z party. We accept the collaboration of the nationalist parties. [...] UDPS, APARECO, Mbundu Dia Congo<sup>49</sup>, we accept them. We support them because we fight against a common enemy. But attention, we do not deal with ‘*partis alimentaires*’ pretending to be at the opposition. We powerfully combat them because they just *collabos*.’ (My translation from Lingala)

From the above excerpts, it can be discerned that *Combattants* do not identify themselves with any leader within or outside their organisation. From the look of things, they are willing to collaborate or support any Congolese (whether political leader or not) who shares a similar

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<sup>47</sup> ‘*Mutakalisation*’ is a slang Lingala word what is form of the radical of the Lingala word ‘Mutakala’ (means nudity). This means to beat up someone, then to undress her or him and finally to take his or her pictures (being unclothed) in order to publish them on media. In fact, this is a violent practice based on the humiliation and indignation of a human being.

<sup>48</sup> Literally, ‘*partis alimentaires*’ means ‘food political party’. Actually, this word - from the Congolese political jargon – means a political party which lacks base or seat but plays a clandestine role of sustaining another well-established political party. Most of these political parties exist for survivalist reasons. They are reputed to be looking for financial supports and employments from real political parties.

<sup>49</sup> A messianic religious movement based in Bas-Congo province, they, and their leader Ne Muana Nsemi, were involved in protests against the results of the 2006 elections. These protests were violently repressed by the national police with at least 100 deaths.

ideology and or ambition. Within this framework, Etienne Tshisekedi and Honore Ngbanda appeared most acceptable to them.

Generally, the findings of this study confirm Itzigsohn, Cabra, Medina and Vazquez's (1999) theory on political transnationality. According to this theory; narrow political transnationality is based on a high level of institutionalization and inconstant involvement on transnational activities. On the other hand, broad political transnationality is less institutionalised (informal) and sporadic because of the occasional personal involvement (Itzigsohn, et al. 1999, p.323).

Broadly speaking, empirical findings on political transnationality tend to concur with the above theory on a number of aspects including; first, the study has found that, despite their low degree of institutionalisation, Congolese transnational political activities in Pretoria influence policy making back home. Second, their political activism is by large circumstantial and is motivated principally by national issues or events such as the elections of November 2011.

On the other hand, the theory does not inform us about the extraterritorial ethnic and political conflicts among immigrants and the fact that they are taken advantage of by politicians back in the DRC. Moreover, the fact that politicians from a sending country would invest so much effort in electoral campaigns targeted at migrants without voting rights has so far not been discussed in previous studies. Instead, studies have shown that politicians in sending countries carry out electoral campaigns targeted at migrant compatriots who can only vote for them through proxy i.e. through absentee ballots as absentee voters (Bauböck, 2003; Itzigsohn, et al. 1999; Portes et al., 1999; Guarnizo et al., 1999).

#### **6.2.4 Influence of the Congolese transnationalism politics on South Africa**

This study has found that the array of Congolese transnational political activities in Pretoria exert an influence on South African policy. Findings suggest that the South African government's reaction towards Congolese transnational politics is mainly based on two worries. The first, being a weariness at the consequences of the importation of Congolese ethnic and political conflict into South Africa. The second one is that President Jacob Zuma's entourage is less than happy at the prospects of losing personal economic interests in the DRC if they do not protect Joseph Kabila against his political opponents in South Africa.

Regarding the fear of importing ethnic and political conflicts in South Africa, I noted that, since January 2012 local authorities have strongly reacted against Congolese political activism in Pretoria. Following several politico-ethnic clashes that occurred in December 2011 among Congolese (pro-Kabila against ‘*Combattants*’), South African authorities feared the worst. In a bid to avoid further escalation, they arrested and detained some Congolese figureheads. Moreover, at the end of December 2011, the police obliged some well-known Congolese community leaders to meet together to find solutions on the issues plaguing their community in Pretoria. A Pastor who was amongst Pretoria based Congolese contacted by the South African Police gave me the following account:

‘It is the (officer of) UNHCR that was the first to call us. Then, it was the police. I think the police had had to call Mistery A, B, C, who are listened to by *Kinois*. They also called Mistery D, E, F, who is respected by Baswahili and the old man X for Baluba. I think it was in that context that the police called me. [...] I think it was the messenger of UNHRC who helped the police. The man of the UNHRC identified leaders of opinion in the Congolese community. [...] It was in that way we got together to find out what happened between *Kinois* and *Baswahili*. [...] There was a problem, which has been lasting for years. As the politician interfered, it had crossed the borders. Thus, if we had not put out this fire (problem), Tanzanians who are here in crime were all ready to join people from East. They would say: ‘*they broke your shops because you speak Swahili, and that concerns all of us (Swahili speakers)*’. We heard (in that meeting) that even Kenyans, Burundians, all the Swahili speakers would join (Congolese ones). If it happened, it would be a disaster in Pretoria’. (My translation from French).

The pastor’s testimony demonstrates that the police’s strategy was to create a forum for Congolese to identify the root cause of the conflict and to mitigate tension, failing which Pretoria could have been the scene of unprecedented ethnic conflict between non-Swahili speaking and Swahili speaking Congolese immigrants. The South African Police’s initiative of instituting a dialogue amongst different Congolese factions in Pretoria could be seen as a laudable initiative aimed at seeking a politico-sociological solution to intra Congolese conflict and also demonstrates how Congolese transnational political activities have an impact on the authorities in Pretoria.

In relation to the issue of protection of interests in the DRC by South African politicians, the Congolese opposition in general and the *Combattants* in particular accuse the entourage of President Jacob Zuma of supporting Kabila's dictatorship because of their selfish business interests in the DRC. To them, the arrests and deportation from South Africa of some *Combattants* is a clear indication of Zuma’s bias toward the regime of Joseph Kabila in exchange for concessions to exploit Congolese natural resources particularly oil concessions in lake Albert (where Zuma’s nephew Khulubuse has been a major beneficiary) and hydroelectric power (e.g. Boisselet, 2013; Mulongo, 2013; Hosken et al., 2013; SAPA, 2012).

However, Kabila's faction rejoices over the latter's diplomatic skills that prevails on the South African authorities to clamp down on the *Combattants*.

Indeed, January 2012 witnessed a massive crackdown by the South African police on the activities of some Congolese in Sunnyside. Similar operations took place in Yeoville, in Johannesburg, with a total of more than 150 Congolese detained in these two largely Congolese neighbourhoods of Gauteng Province. Such operations led some informants to conclude that Jacob Zuma and his friends are supporting the regime of Joseph Kabila in exchange for private economic interests in the DRC.

The timeline of these events began on 06 December 2011, when *Combattants* simultaneously protested against President Zuma in three South African's cities: Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town. Interestingly, it was Mr Zuma's on the 5th December 2011 statement on the outcome of Congolese elections that ignited the fire. International observers of the Congolese elections, notably the European Union Commission, the Jimmy Carter Centre and the Congolese Catholic Church (The Carter Center, 2011; MOE-UE, 2011; L.E, 2012) sharply criticised the elections and deplored the lack of credibility and transparency (Peuchot, 2011). Against this backdrop, President Jacob Zuma was the first Head of state to congratulate Congolese for having organised successful elections (Peuchot, 2011; see The Presidency, 2011). In reaction, the anti-Kabila factions took to the streets of Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town protesting against Zuma. They carried posters saying President Jacob Zuma should stay out of Congolese affairs (Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 2011). They accused Zuma of supporting Kabila because he has financial interests in the DRC (Smillie & Serrao, 2011).

In Johannesburg, as they attempted to march on the ANC headquarters (Luthuli House), police fired rubber bullets at them (SAPA, 2011; Mukhutu & Dlamini, 2011). Some Congolese protestors stripped naked and shouted insults about Zuma, and some members of the ANC came out of their building and started fighting with them. In Cape Town, *Combattants* went in front of the office of the Premier of Cape Town Helen Zille (leader of the D. A.) where they sang and praised her for her anti Zuma and anti-Kabila stance. As an influential politician, Helen Zille made a speech saying she was wearing black clothes to show her sympathy with Congolese who left their country because of the lack of democracy and accountability (Boloali, 2011). In Pretoria, the police rapidly foiled plans to march on the Union Buildings, following the protesters earlier sacking of the Congolese embassy.



What followed these demonstrations is that the South African police also arrested a number of Congolese following clashes between expatriate supporters of Congolese President Joseph Kabila and that of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi (SAPA, 2012). Some of those arrested were expelled from South Africa to Lubumbashi; there were subsequent expulsions between January and April 2012, with over 81 people being expelled to Lubumbashi where they were imprisoned without legal proceedings (Dianzenza, 2012).

In reaction, the Congolese opposition and some Congolese NGOs accused Jacob Zuma's regime of expelling *Combattants* because of their protests over rigged elections in the DRC. They argued that because the expelled *Combattants* were sent to Lubumbashi, (a Kabila stronghold), this clearly demonstrated Zuma's bias towards Kabila. They also believed that Zuma acted in favour of Kabila because 20 of those who were expelled were freed after having signed a declaration at the public prosecutor's office prior to their departure committing that they will never return to South Africa (Dianzenza, 2012).

Meanwhile, the pro-Kabila faction went into propaganda overdrive and wrote articles praising the Congolese and the South African governments for their excellent collaboration aimed at punishing *combattants*. For example, Jean-Luc Mushi-Mpaku (2012) a journalist close to Kabila, wrote an article titled: '*RDC : Arrestation des Combattants à Johannesburg*' (DRC: arrest of Combattants in Johannesburg), which suggests that Kabila had persuaded the Zuma administration to arrest *Combattants*.

'After Paris and Brussels, it was the turn of Johannesburg to witness the putting out of the harm's way these anti-social Congolese who wrongly made use of the name of "*combattant*". Corresponding sources report the arrest of more than a hundred Congolese who were identified among the barbarians who attacked buildings, officials or other Congolese personalities in the South African capital. [...]

For that period, they sponsored and committed the attacks of vandalism, violence against representations of the DRC and the Congolese personalities who go to their country of asylum. These acts that have led to the serious damage of material and losses of human lives did not leave indifferent the Congolese authorities. After a few days, the diplomatic machine led by President Joseph Kabila was in activity throughout Europe and the country of Mandela as well. Hence, the effects did not delay to occur. A real crackdown demonstrates the willingness of the government Zuma to help the DRC to put its prodigal children on the rails'. Written by MUSHI-MPAKU (2012)

In the light of these events, it can be adduced that President Kabila's government did influence the South African authorities' decision to arrest and expel *Combattants*. This is seen in the views of both the anti and pro-Kabila media in the DRC that arrived at the same conclusion about the fact that Kabila had persuaded the South African authorities to act against his opponents based here.

Despite the lack of evidence about the content of agreements between Zuma and Kabila on the arrests of *Combattants*, this study cannot confirm the opinion of the anti-Kabila's who argue that Zuma's support for Kabila is in exchange for economic interests in the DRC. Nevertheless, there is abundant literature that demonstrates the existence of strong individual business ties between Kabila's entourage and Zuma's clan which does seem suggestive. The Congolese government has allocated important oil concessions in Lake Albert (considered as the most important oil find in Africa over 20 years) to the following companies (Caprikat and Foxwhelp) owned by the nephew of Jacob zuma, Mr. Khulubuse Zuma and his personal lawyer, Mr. Mark Hulley. It is also said that Mr Tokyo Sexwale is involved in various businesses in the DRC (see Brummer & Sole, 2010; ICG, 2012; Waal, 2013; Boisselet, 2013).

This therefore feeds into allegations that Zuma regime had perhaps reacted against *Combattants* in order to protect its business in the DRC. Such assumptions are also based on the testimonies of two Congolese who were among the 81 deported to Lubumbashi. They informed me that in April 2012 when they arrived at the airport in Lubumbashi, they were issued death threats by soldiers, police, and agents of the Congolese secret service. Some of the threats went thus:

'It is our time to deal with you guys. You were insulting Raïs (Kabila) in South Africa. You did not know that Jacob Zuma is the man of Raïs'. (My translation from Lingala)

Another one added that when they were imprisoned some of the guards were laughing at them by saying:

'Why did you choose South Africa for your so-called combat? Do you know how many trucks full of high-grade ore leave everyday Katanga to South Africa? Were you sure that their beneficiaries or South African authorities would lose all things they get here because of you'? (My transformation from Lingala)

The above excerpts therefore lend weight to the assumption that Jacob Zuma's entourage had reacted strongly against *Combattants* in order to protect their business in the DRC. In fact, this South African power elite's protectionist inclination toward the Congolese regime under Kabila gives support to Bauböck (2003, p.701) who we discussed earlier, who points out that 'migrant transnationalism affects both the institutions of the country of origin and of the receiving state as well'. However, results do not sustain Bauböck's (2003, p.708) hypothesis which states that 'a city administrations in the receiving state may become engaged in

political campaigns against authoritarian regimes from where their immigrant communities originate'. In the case of Congolese immigrants in Pretoria, there is no evidence attesting that Zuma's administration helped them in their extraterritorial struggle against the existing forms of tyranny in their country, quite the reverse.

Having analysed the Congolese immigrant workers' transnational politics in Pretoria, let us have a look at their transnational economic activities.

### ***6.3 CONGOLESE TRANSNATIONAL ECONOMICS: REMITTANCES***

I first want to point out that some aspects of Congolese transnational activities have already been discussed in preceding Chapters. To refresh our memories, it has shown that the presence of freight and illicit money transfer agencies are among main transnational business in which Congolese are involved in Pretoria. It has also been demonstrated that some elites are involved in illicit transnational trades between the DRC and South Africa while middle classes and working classes send goods to sell via Congolese freight agencies to their correspondents in the DRC. Hence, discussions in this section will focus on remittances. This is because remittances have correlations with the Congolese transnational political and socio-cultural activities in Pretoria.

In general, findings suggest that Congolese immigrant workers regularly or occasionally remit to the DRC. Sometimes such remittances provoke conflicts among recipients back home

#### **6.3.1 Congolese who remit or not**

The great majority of informants who are salaried workers, especially the middle and working classes remit on a monthly basis. They said that their salaries allow them to remit regularly whether they are undocumented workers or not. Here is the view of a doctor.

'I took a personal decision without my family does a little pressure on me. I agreed to support my wife's family and my family. That means my parents and my parents in law. Every month, we send money to them. They did not ask that. We did it because we know the situation in the Congo, the financial resources of everyone in the Congo'. (My translation from French)

It is appropriate to note that there are relations between the regularity of salaries and remittances as well. Also this excerpt shows that remittances, which are a transnational economic activity, consolidate Congolese transnational family ties.

However, findings indicate that Congolese self-employed workers do not regularly remit. Most of them said that they mostly remit on special occasions or during emergency situations, this due mostly to the fact that their incomes are not permanent. As an illustration, a videographer thinks that he cannot regularly remit because of the lack of monthly salary and his low incomes. Nevertheless, he sends significant amounts to the DRC any time he makes enough money.

Those who do not remit are mostly ‘poor’ informal self-employed workers, newcomers, low-paid workers and students. Except students and some newcomers who are somehow excused at home, all informants who do not remit said they are in the state of conflict with their families. For example, a 53 years old English teacher, Lingua Lingwala explained that his wife is angry with him and ready to divorce because of the lack of remittances. Lingua was remitting significant money to his wife when he had a position in a francophone embassy as a translator. He unfortunately lost that job. At the time of our interview, Lingua was an unpaid translator for a church that gave him only accommodation in exchange for his labour. To make ends meet, Lingua created an informal English training centre. He complained that the centre was not rewarding because there were only three students. Despite his harsh situation, his wife does not understand him, instead she thinks that Lingua has another wife in Pretoria that is why he does not remit.

Similarly, Kit Kitambo, a handyman, used to remit in the past as he had a regular paying job. However, Kit lost his former well-paying job because of a xenophobic manager (see Chapter Five). Today, Kit cannot remit and ekes out a living as a handyman. In spite of this, his family (especially his father) presses him to send money, but left with no choice, Kit decided to break contact with his family.

It appears from these two life histories that the lack of a regular salary hinders Congolese from remitting. In fact, one can note that the incapacity to remit engenders transnational family conflicts; at worst it weakens the Congolese transnational family ties.

### **6.3.2 Reasons for remitting**

Congolese immigrant workers remit for various reasons. In addition to economic and socio-cultural motives, the study had noted that psychological reasons like prestige lead some of them to remit.

To begin with economic motives, the majority of informants said they remit in order to support the families. Some of them went further to add that to remit is an obligation for them otherwise they will be guilty of not alleviating the sufferings of their family members. In this, an unregistered doctor argued that:

'My family is not rich, they need help [...] In any case, it is an obligation. There are obligations to do - help your nephews, your mother - as my father died. So, it is a must to assist the family that is in the most abject poverty. If I do not help, that is like I am not a human; I'm an evil'. (My translation from French)

Another relevant example is that of the life story of a female doctor, Yolande, who decided to remit more to her family after observing the harsh socio-economic situation of her relatives in Kinshasa. After she has been living in Pretoria for 11 years, Yolande and her European husband decided to go to visit her family, buy a house in Kinshasa, and seek opportunities to invest. Upon arrival, Yolande was surrounded by her relatives who wanted help from her. Yolande was mournful about her poor relatives to an extent to that her husband remarked that: '*I have never seen such poverty in my life. You need to help your family*'. They therefore they decided to use the money they had budgeted for buying property to help her relatives. Upon their return to Pretoria, they started remitting on a monthly basis to the DRC.

Despite the socioeconomic issues faced in Pretoria, many working class informants confirmed to sending more than the half of their monthly income to the DRC. For example, a *security worker*, Basket Basoko, said every month he sends more or less 90 per cent of his earnings to Kinshasa. Basket:

'I send a lot of money in the Congo. If I have in my bank account 10,000 Rand, note that money I sent can reach more than 40,000 Rand. Thus, more than half of my money goes to Congo. Since, my mom rents a house; my child studies in a good school; my. My young brothers and sisters, my girlfriend, everyone in the Congo finds his/her share with my little money'. (My translation from French)

These narratives therefore point to the level of poverty that immigrants' relatives face at home, and it is the motivating factor that pushes Congolese immigrant workers to send money to them. Hence, as some informants work for remitting and sacrifice themselves in Pretoria for their families in the DRC, this is what specialists on the remittance term to *remit by altruism* (Bruyn & Wets, 2006; Kankonde, 2010).

Concerning the socio-cultural motives, the study found that informants remit due to the respect of the Congolese tradition which ascribes a high status to an immigrant who takes care of the family through remittance and in return gets blessings from the family. Amongst

those who remit in accordance with this Congolese tradition, a female street vendor, Ingrid said this:

‘It’s our culture. There is no debate. That’s what happens. **It** is our ancestral tradition, you see. That one who has money is supposed to help poor people, to help her family. You see. It is normal in our culture’. (Informant spoke in English).

Moreover, I found that gender and family ascribed status of migrants motivate them to remit. In this sense, the majority of male migrants, especially the firstborn males, think that it is their duty to remit whereas female migrants, especially those who are married and the last-born do not really feel such a compulsion to remit. For example, a female beautician, Edwige (a last born) does not mind to remit.

**Edwige:** it’s not a must. I’m the last borne. A girl last born

**Saint José:** as you are the last born, you aren’t supposed to remit.

**Edwige:** Obvious, I’ve got my sisters and my brothers. They have to look after their mum. It is a must for them not for me. It’s just helping. It’s not a must. (In English)

Surely, the above narratives demonstrate how informants remit based on socio-cultural motives, especially what Bruyn & Wets (2006, p.9) remittance due to perceived obligation. With regard to psychological motives, some informants remit in order to prove their sense of belonging to Congolese society and their sense of self-realisation based on prestige. Hence, some informants said they remit because they feel able to do it. An hotelier explained to me with a lot of pride his motivations for remitting.

‘It is hard to say it but I am one of the rare Congolese, by leaving the country, which thinks of the others. With little which I gain, when there are promotions (classes), I buy T-shirts, I send to the friends’. (My translation from French)

Similarly, a waitress said that she remits to her family for validation.

‘For that, you do not even need me to speak because there is not two weeks ago I sent a packet to Congo. [...] You can see on the phone, there is a photo of a handbag that I bought for my mother. As she wanted to see it, I sent her the image... For my brother who has two children in the Congo, I brought school staff for them. [...] I sent a packet of 10 kilos. I have even receipts. I can even show you. You will see that there are not things to sell there. Anyway, my family is proud of me. In Kinshasa, they know I do not have much but I am capable’. (My translation from French).

From these narratives, it appears that prestige of getting social statuses at home pushes some informants to remit in order to satisfy themselves psychologically. This trend of being appreciated at home (even in the Congolese milieu of Pretoria) through remittance triggers a sort of hidden competition among Congolese.

In fact, I often observed Congolese showing-off receipts from money transfer agencies as proof of remittance. One day, for instance, I was at the office of Congolese videographers, I observed how some of them were criticising one of their colleagues who remits almost 80 per cent of his incomes to his ex-girlfriend. The latter is nowadays married to a rich man in Kinshasa. However, their colleague (subject of gossiping) keeps on sending money to his ex-girlfriend while he crashes in a mosque due to the lack of money for rent. According to the videographers, their colleague wants to impress her former girlfriend in Kinshasa that he lives a good life in Pretoria. In such context, one can conclude some Congolese remit because of pride and social prestige. This is similar to what De Bruyn and Wets (2006) have found among people from the Great Lakes (Burundians, Rwandans, and Congolese) do in Belgium. According to these authors (ibid. p.9), these people practices of remitting are determined by ‘pride, whereby the migrant wants to let his or her entourage in the destination country and in the country of origin know that she or he can provide financial resources’ .

### 6.3.3 After-effects of remittance

Remittance is also a source of transnational conflicts between Congolese immigrants and their siblings back in the DRC. Informants talked about two main problems caused by remittances. The first problem is enormous family’s pressure. The second one is that sharing the money remitted from Pretoria causes conflict amongst family members in the DRC.

Given that they receive enormous pressure from their relatives back home, some informants especially those in the middle class resort to cutting-off contacts with many people in the DRC. For example Doctor Ndolo Libongo decided to no longer talk with some of his relatives. Doctor Ndolo was saying:

‘From the extended family, whether you like it or not, we get a lot of pressure. Even too much, there are people who when I see their phone numbers I do not answer. [...] Everyone wants to be assisted in studies, rent, graduations, weddings, etc. Someone takes his own decision to get married on September 30; he did not tell me, he calls me on September 10 and said: “*I’m informing you that my wedding is on the 30<sup>th</sup>. So, my suit and shoes will come from you*”. But before he takes the decision he should have told me he wants suit, shoes, etc. [...] you see all these all these pressures and blackmails’. (My translation from French)

One of the most unpredicted results of this study is that *remittances can be a source of trouble among receivers in the DRC*. Three informants said that their relatives have fought over what they remit. For instance, Papou, an architect, said his two young brothers fought with his three stepbrothers in December 2008 over 1000 US dollars he remitted to them for

Christmas. Papou revealed that his young brothers wanted 700 US dollars for themselves and 300 US dollars to the stepbrothers. His stepbrothers, however, wanted an equal repartition. This resulted in a fight occasioning injuries. Unfortunately for them - as PAPOU confided to me - *'that money was used in the hospital and in paying off the police'*.

Similarly, a security worker, Dodo Dodokolo, is often forced from Pretoria to resolve conflicts between his mother, his son, and the mother of his son over the distribution of remittance.

The findings from the above data lend credence to Kankonde (2010) who demonstrated that Congolese immigrants in Johannesburg remit to avoid social death by fostering familial belonging and sustaining social status. For Kankonde (ibid. p.226), 'the socio-cultural influences and internalized stereotypes about economic effects of emigration shape migrants' awareness of their role expectations in communities of origin and exercise on them such a social pressure that migrants often feel a compelling need to be perceived as financially 'successful' as well as 'valid' and 'good' family members not only in their communities of origin but also among other migrants.'

In addition to this the present study reveals that not only *remittances can also be a source of conflicts among receivers*, but also cause of the Congolese transnational family disconnection.

#### **6.4 CONGOLESE SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSNATIONALISM**

This section is uniquely based on the socio-cultural hybridization between Congolese workers and South Africans. In fact, I found that there is a struggle between the conservation of Congolese culture and the internalisation of the South African one. Interestingly, some South Africans with very close ties to Congolese tend to adopt some aspects of the Congolese culture.

Regarding the Congolese trend to conserve their culture while they implicitly internalise South African culture, some elites and middle classes admitted that they tried conserving the Congolese culture while immersing them in the South African one. For them, it is impossible to stay and work in South Africa while at the same time acting like Congolese in the DRC. To give an example, Congolese elite said he unwillingly lives as a South Africa because of his familial and professional environments.



‘It is difficult even impossible to keep the Congolese culture with times I spent here. As my wife is a Xhosa who is at her home, it is more her culture that dominates in my house. I tried to force her to prepare the Congolese food three days per week. She did it. But, my children did not like too much. [...] For them, it is boerewors, meats and chakalaka, pup, and chicken [...] your own children, you cannot beat them up otherwise a social worker comes next day. [...] In my business, I work as South Africans. That is it. So we must follow the cadence.’ (My translation from French and Lingala)

That is why many Congolese criticise Congolese Elites and ‘rich’ middle class for irrationally imitating Black South Africans’ lifestyle. To take an illustration, after having compared Congolese and Cuban doctors’ consumption in Pretoria, Pastor Frederic considered his compatriots as blind imitators of black South Africans.

‘When I go to the rural areas, there are my doctor friends who say to me: “*you see that Cuban doctor, he said: ‘I did not come to work for the South African government and remain a slave all my life. The man works for ten years. You just use little money to eat’. He does not buy houses. He does not buy nice cars, only small second hand Fiat*”. [...] But look how Congolese are. Buying a Mercedes, how much to pay? 6000 Rand each month is to enrich the bank. [...] Congolese doctors, in their minds, they forget that they are not black South Africans that they blindly imitate.’ (My translation from French)

In my opinion, I do not think it is the fact of cultural imitation. It is rather a result of cultural transnationalism and the convergence of cultures. In fact, the lifestyle of these Congolese is not very different from that of their compatriots who earn high incomes back in the DRC. I think they live a ‘bourgeoisie’ lifestyle thanks to the opportunities afforded them by their high profile jobs in South Africa, something that is not possible back home. Thus, the importation of Congolese bourgeois’ culture combined with the South African’s one creates a de facto hybridisation of culture.

Nevertheless, all informants even those who are naturalised South Africans said they struggle to keep alive their Congolese side. They also reckoned it is compulsory to adapt to the dominant South African culture. This is observable in trends such as following the news, acquiring the latest fashion and designer wares, dances, and dramas in vogue in the DRC. At the same time, they also show interest in local TV programmes, dramas, music, and foods.

The most important fact I noticed in all categories of Congolese is the interference of South African languages on the Congolese ones. Unwillingly, Congolese, who have been living in South Africa for many years, use English and other words from the local dialects when they speak French or other Congolese languages.

In the same light, most middle class people literally force their children to speak French. This is a cause of tensions in many Congolese families between francophone parents and

Anglophone children. What is strikingly observable within these families is that parents speak good French while their children speak the broken one and vice versa. Apparently, in these families, there exists a form of dual culture though in reality it is more or less a hybrid Congolese-South African culture.

Regarding the internalisation of certain elements of the Congolese culture by South Africans, many Congolese wonder why only some Black South Africans (Particularly female prostitutes) quickly learn to communicate in Lingala or Swahili, whereas they do not learn the French.

In reality, Congolese migrants are those who are supposed to learn the native languages because they live in their country. However, the opposite is happening. This reality had aroused my curiosity. As it is widespread in Sunnyside that South African girls (especially prostitutes) prefer Nigerian men who it is alleged pay better, I posed questions to some girls who speak Lingala if they also speak Nigerian languages. They said they always speak with Nigerians in English. They said they learn quickly Congolese languages because they hang out with Congolese men who always speak Lingala or Swahili. In addition, they find that these Congolese languages have some similarities with many South African ones.

Faced with this reality, some informants, who live with local women, feel guilty to be unable to communicate in some South African Bantu languages. That is why a mechanic, Kilo, decided to learn a South African Bantu language that he could not identify himself during the interview. Kilo explained his linguistic hybridization as follows.

‘For me, I speak is Tswana. But, some of my Sotho friends say I speak a bit of Sotho with a Congolese accent. Sometimes, I put by mistake Lingala’s words when I speak. Well, I do not know what I exactly speak. Anyway, their (South Africans) languages are similar. At least, it is a plus for me as now I communicate with them in their languages’. (my translation from Lingala)

Another thing that locals (men and women) adopt from the Congolese culture is foods and popular dance. For example two Congolese female restaurateurs confirmed that their local clients love to eat some Congolese dishes like plantains, ‘*Kwanga*’ (cassava bread), ‘*Makayabu*’ (salt fish), vegetables cooked with palm oil such as ‘*mpondu*’ (cassava leaves), ‘*Matembele*’ (greens), ‘*Mfumbwa*’ (another kind of green leaf, cooked with peanut butter). A Congolese female owner of a catering company said black South Africans often ask for her service to grill or braise ‘*mpiodi*’ (mackerel) and goat meats in their various celebrations.

Considering the key aspects emerging from the above data, it should be argued that while Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria maintain transnational socio-cultural ties with their country, they also adopt cultural traits of Pretoria, their receiving city. In this context, these Congolese become hybrid transmigrant workers. Here, I can conclude in referring to Robert Holton (2000, p.140) who said: ‘the hybridization thesis argues that cultures borrow and incorporate elements from each other, creating a hybrid, or syncretic forms’.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

This Chapter has demonstrated that Congolese migrant workers in Pretoria are involved in transnational politics, economics, and socio-cultural activities. In terms of political transnational activities, it was shown the existence of mutual political influences among Congolese immigrant workers, South Africa (their receiving country) and the DRC (their homeland). The particularity of these transnational political activities is ethnic conflicts within the Congolese community. These conflicts are partly due to the importation of Congolese West-East ethnic conflict in Pretoria, not leaving out the interference of Congolese politicians and the South African authorities.

Concerning transnational economics, the chapter has focused the debate over *Congolese remittance especially its correlation with their political and socio-cultural transnationalism*. In this light, apart from the issue of whether Congolese remit or not, and the normal economic, socio-cultural and psychological motivations related to remittance, most of which have been demonstrated throughout this chapter it has also emerged that *remittance is not necessarily an uncomplicated source of happiness among receivers and can also be the cause of conflicts*.

In light of socio-cultural transnational activities, the chapter has explained the *cultural hybridization that occurs between Congolese and locals*. In this cultural exchange, although Congolese make efforts at conserving their culture, the weight of their receiving country’s culture pushes them to internalise aspects of South African culture. *It was also highlighted that some natives who are close to Congolese working class often adopt some aspects of the Congolese culture*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: GENERAL CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to comprehend in depth the meaning that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their jobs in Pretoria. To do this we identified the features that drive Congolese labour migration to Pretoria; analysed the Congolese's professions and their social and economic mobility as workers in Pretoria; explained Congolese immigrant workers' strategies adopted concerning their professional integration in the South African labour market; and explored the Congolese immigrant workers' transnational activities between the DRC and Pretoria.

Theoretically, the study has drawn on the theoretical framework of Max Weber's comprehensive sociology. This study has thus examined labour migration to Pretoria via an understanding of the meaning that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their work. As the Congolese immigrant workers have different ties with their country, it has been shown that this study also contributes to studies of migration in the global South.

The study has found it important to complement Weber's theory with a specific theory of migration, namely Castles' (2010) middle-range theory of migration. The latter posits that migration is a normal part of social relations. This means that the dynamics of international migration must be analysed as a part of a complex and varied process of social change. For Castles, as change starts usually at the local level, it is important to link local-level experiences of migration (whether in areas of origin or in receiving areas) with other socio-spatial levels and particularly with global processes, this implies the use of the 'middle-range': 'special theories' applicable to limited ranges of data - such as Congolese labour migration to Pretoria.

In this, the dissertation has considered that Congolese labour migration to Pretoria as part of one of the major social transformations that the global South has experienced since the end of cold war, especially in the Southern African region. In the light of Castles' middle-range theory, the dissertation has attempted to show that South Africa experiences transformation partly due to the afflux of Congolese non-guest immigrant workers since the end of apartheid. Indeed, their presence is one of the causes of multiple social, economic, political and cultural challenges that South Africa and the DRC are facing in this era of globalisation – marked by the age of mass migration. Moreover, inspired by Castles, the study has also considered Congolese labour mobility to South Africa as a normal part of south-south social

transformation in which Congolese try exercising their agency to improve their livelihoods in spite of structural restrictions from South African labour migration policy.

As has been emphasised, the resort to Castles middle-range theory was motivated by the fact that many scholars in international migration studies have noted the existence of difficulties related to theory formation in international migration studies. For them, a general accepted theory in their field of study remains difficult to find because of various obstacles related to the theoretical advancement in international migration studies.

In this context, the association of Weber's and Castles' theories has allowed the dissertation to try and analyse the Congolese labour migration processes and patterns, their meanings of work and their transnational activities in Pretoria in order to get a broader understanding of the contemporary world through the south-south labour migration.

On the Congolese labour migration processes and patterns, I found that corruption, mismanagement by the state, poverty and predation of people, war and insecurity, underemployment and underpayment, and the growth of informality in the DRC drive the Congolese labour migration to Pretoria. In addition to that, I also found that the Congolese mythology on migration is one of the important 'push factors explaining their labour migration to Pretoria'. In the same vein, I have found that the Congolese culture of prestige is one of the important causes of their labour emigration from their country to Pretoria. In this, the study has insisted that those psychological and cultural considerations have overlooked by several studies on international labour migration.

Concerning pull factors of the Congolese labour migration to Pretoria, I discovered that South Africa is not a dream destination for Congolese immigrant workers. Nonetheless, they were attracted all the same by South Africa for the economic reasons (job opportunities, living standard, business climate, high incomes, and level of development), the sociocultural reasons (higher educational system, South African credentials, quality of life, family reunification or relocation, etc.), and the political reasons (freedom, security, respect of human rights, etc.).

On the migratory strategies for getting into the 'fortress' of South Africa, many Congolese immigrant workers (especially former working class in the DRC) were not able to afford regular migration and not well-informed about South Africa migratory process and job market. Then, they resorted to '*tindikeurs*' (human smugglers). In contrast, the existences of

South Africa's restrictive migration policies were not a problem for the Congolese elites and posed relatively few problems for the middle classes. Here, the study has showed the existing correlations between the Congolese's class origin in Congo and their capacities to migrate to South Africa and their socio-professional position to Pretoria as well.

On the employment of Congolese immigrant workers and their social and economic mobility in Pretoria, I observed that social class on departure from Congo determines the class position in Pretoria. In fact, Congolese elites, middle class, and working class are all affected in their positions in Pretoria by their former position the DRC.

On the main occupations of Congolese, I found out that on the basis of social class that they are in general employers (elites), regular or irregular workers and self-employed (middle class) and unauthorised low employed or self-employed manual workers (working class). In all these classes, the study revealed that Congolese immigrant workers are in majority involved in illegal or informal activities.

About social and economic mobility, I observed that the majority of Congolese middle class experience downward social and economic mobility. However, a few of them enjoyed upward income mobility and they actually face with the downgrading occupational mobility. This economic performance leads them to think that they experiment social mobility. As important, I found out that the acquisition of South African citizenship allows to a minority of professionals to experience upward occupational and economic mobility. Nevertheless, most of them have experienced the U-shaped occupational and economic mobility. They have faced downgraded mobility before the acquisition of important South African documents.

This study revealed that Congolese face many challenges in the job market namely South African anti-immigrant policy, language problems, xenophobia (*poor black African-phobia*), the imported Congolese labour culture, and the discounting and/or the lack of transferability of their 'human capital' into the local job market.

In order to deal with these structural constraints, individual characteristics and the cultural factors, Congolese immigrant workers employ different informal or formal strategies for their professional insertion in Pretoria. For that, they struggle to get to obtain the different required documents for working in South Africa, mostly claiming for asylum seeker (*'ngunda strategy'*). Here, the study has demonstrated that some professionals, especially doctors, are forced to resort to the *'ngunda strategy'* due to regional labour laws (of SADC) preventing

them from working in South Africa. Some Congolese invest in their 'human capital' by learning or re-learning English and retaking their final qualifications (the strategy known by Congolese '*kosukola diplôme*') or getting training ('*nzela ya mokuse*') for getting secured and/or formal jobs.

For getting a job many Congolese rely on their social capital by resorting to their co-national networks or to South African socio-professional networks. In this, accepting to work the 3D appears the main strategy for the majority of newcomers and/or less educated Congolese. However, self-employment is also an alternative for some Congolese who would avoid undergoing job exploitation and any kind of professional abuses against Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria.

Concerning the meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attribute in their work in Pretoria, the study has shown that on the basis of work functions, when work plays a significant function in the lives of Congolese, they see it as being meaningful, and conversely they see it as demeaning when it does not. In general the study has registered diverse positive or negative economic, social and psychological functions of work that have an influence on Congolese meanings of work. The study noted that some social factors shape the occupational meanings of Congolese. In that we have noted that there are some convergences or divergences of appraisal relative to work between the South African society and the Congolese one which determine what Congolese think about their work. In this, some stigmatised professions in the DRC are seen as meaningful by Congolese workers in Pretoria as they are valued by host society. Inversely, some ill-considered jobs in South Africa appear meaningful for some Congolese as the Congolese milieu appreciates people who do these jobs – especially activities related to certain kinds of criminality. Also, I observed South African structural constraints influence the Congolese meaning of work. Moreover, labour organisation (management) and the labour relations (professional ambience) contribute to shape the Congolese workers' work meanings. Findings showed that the professional management and a sense of being in control and have an influence in the meaning that Congolese attribute to their professions. In brief, the study has argued that meanings of work are socially constructed and temporally dynamics.

Apart from their jobs, the study demonstrated that Congolese migrant workers in Pretoria are involved in transnational politics, economics, and socio-cultural issues. In political transnational activities, I observed the existence of mutual political influences among

Congolese immigrant workers, South Africa (their receiving country) and the DRC (their homeland). These transnational political activities are marked by ethnicity and conflicts within the Congolese community - namely the importation of Congolese west-east ('*Collabos*' against '*Combattants*') ethnic conflict in Pretoria. By the same token, I found out that the interference of Congolese politicians and the South African authorities plays an important part in the antagonistic transnational political activities of the Congolese's in Pretoria.

Concerning transnational economics, the study revealed the involvement of Congolese in illicit transnational business. I paid a particular attention to Congolese remittances because of its implications in their political and socio-cultural transnationalism. In this, findings have demonstrated what kind of Congolese remit and what kinds do not. I also noticed the economic, socio-cultural and psychological elements that cause some Congolese workers to remit. Just as important, I discovered that remittances are not necessary the source of happiness among receivers but are also the cause of conflicts.

On socio-cultural transnational activities, the findings demonstrated the cultural hybridization that occurs between Congolese and South Africans. In this, by trying to conserve the Congolese culture, Congolese immigrant workers feel that the weight of their receiving country's culture pushes them to internalise aspects of South African culture. Interestingly, I noticed that some locals who are close to Congolese working class often adopt some aspects of the Congolese culture.

Many aspects of this migration remain to be studied. In particular it would be interesting for further study (based on longitudinal researches) to look at the Congolese labour migration, meanings of work, social and economic mobility, and transnationalism in Pretoria. In addition to that, it would also be important to investigate at the benefits and costs of the Congolese 'brain circulation' in South Africa and the DRC. This will probably give more insights about dynamics related to these issues – issues which the present research was not able to address in depth due to temporal and financial limitations.



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## APPENDIX 1: LETTER SIGNED BY MY SUPERVISOR

Professor Jonathan Hyslop  
Sociology Department  
University of Pretoria  
2 August 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

Mr. Saint José INAKA is carrying out research towards a MA degree at the University of Pretoria.

I would like to request you to give him your co-operation by agreeing to be interviewed by him.

I wish to give to my assurance that any information that you give him will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Any information or quotations from your words in this thesis will be presented in a way which will not be traceable back to you. I give you my formal undertaking that your identity will not be disclosed to anyone. Your anonymity will be strictly protected. If you have any questions feel free to email me on [jhylop@colgate.edu](mailto:jhylop@colgate.edu)

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Hyslop

Professor of Sociology  
University of Pretoria



## **APPENDIX 2: FRENCH VERSION OF LETTER SIGNED BY MY SUPERVISOR**

**(Lettre signé par mon directeur de mémoire).**

Cher(e) Madame / Monsieur,

Monsieur Saint José INAKA est en train de mener une Recherche en vue de Master 2 à l'Université de Pretoria.

Je voudrai vous demander de lui garantir votre coopération en acceptant d'être interviewé(e) par lui.

Je souhaiterai vous donner mon assurance que toute information que vous lui donnerez sera traitée avec la plus stricte confidentialité. Toute indication ou citation provenant de vos mots sera rédigée, dans ce mémoire, d'une manière que cela ne sera pas retrouvable contre vous. Je vous donne ma solennelle promesse que votre identité ne sera révélée à qui que ce soit. Votre anonymat sera strictement protégé.

Si vous avez des questions, sentez-vous libre de m'envoyer un email sur [jhylop@colgate.edu](mailto:jhylop@colgate.edu)

Je vous prie d'agréer, Madame ou Monsieur, mes sentiments les meilleurs.

Jonathan Hyslop

Professeur de Sociologie

Université de Pretoria



## APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Sir/Madam

### RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

My name is Saint José Camille K.M. INAKA. I am student in Master's degree in Industrial Sociology and Labour Studies at the University of Pretoria. I am myself conducting a research on the Congolese labour migration in Pretoria for the fulfilment of the above mentioned Master's degree. The full title of the research is:

**Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria, South Africa: a sociological approach in the age of migration.**

In fact, the main objective of this study is to comprehend meanings that Congolese immigrant workers attribute to their jobs in Pretoria.

I would like you to participate in this research project because you are one of Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria. I hope that thanks to your experience as a worker in Pretoria you will inform me more on my research.

It is appropriate to highlight that your participation is voluntary. This means that you are free to participate or not. Also, if you accept to participate, you will be free to stop at any stage. For my data interpretations and analyses, I would like to ask your permission to tape record our interview. However, if you do not accept to be taped, I will do my best to write up our interview.

As you have read and understood the content of the letter signed by my supervisor, I like to remind you that your anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. Your participation is sincerely appreciated. You will indeed help me to reach my research objective and obtain my Master's degree in Sociology

For more information, you are more than welcome to discuss it with me or you can also contact my supervisor, Professor Jonathan Hyslop, via email on [jhylop@colgate.edu](mailto:jhylop@colgate.edu). Therefore, if you wish to participate, please sign the attached informed consent form.

Thank you very much!

S.J.C INAKA



#### APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT (FRENCH VERSION)

Cher (e) Madame /Monsieur

##### Participation à la recherche

Mon nom est Saint José Camille K.M. INAKA. Je suis étudiant en Master 2 en Sociologie Industrielle et Sciences du travail à l'Université de Pretoria. Je suis en train de mener une recherche sur des travailleurs Immigres Congolais à Pretoria. Le titre de cette recherche est : **Les travailleurs/travailleuses immigré(e)s Congolais(es) à Pretoria, Afrique du Sud : une approche sociologique a l'âge de migration.**

En effet, l'objectif principal de l'étude est de comprendre des significations de des travailleurs immigrés Congolais attribuent à leurs professions à Pretoria.

J'aimerais que vous participiez dans cette recherche parce que vous êtes l'un(e) des travailleurs/travailleuses immigré(e)s Congolais(es) à Pretoria. Sur ce, J'espère que grâce à votre expérience comme un(e) travailleur/travailleuse dans Pretoria vous m'informeriez davantage sur ma recherche.

It is appropriate to highlight that your participation is voluntary. Il sied de souligner que votre participation est volontaire. Cela veut dire que vous êtes libre de participer ou pas. De plus, si vous acceptez de participer, vous serez libre d'arrêter à n'importe quel niveau. Pour les interprétations et analyses des données, j'aimerais demander votre permission d'enregistrer notre interview. Cependant, si vous n'acceptez pas cela, je ferai de mon mieux d'écrire notre interview.

Comme vous avez lu et compris le contenu de la lettre signée par mon directeur de mémoire, j'aimerais vous rappeler que votre anonymat et confidentialité sont garantis. Donc, votre participation est sincèrement appréciée. Vous aiderez ainsi à atteindre des objectifs de ma recherche et d'obtenir mon Master 2 en Sociologie.

Pour plus d'informations, vous êtes le (la) bienvenu(e) d'en discuter avec moi ou vous pouvez également contacter mon directeur de mémoire, le Professeur Jonathan Hyslop, via email sur [jhylop@colgate.edu](mailto:jhylop@colgate.edu).

Si vous souhaitez participer, veuillez signer le ci-joint formulaire du consentement informé.

Merci beaucoup!

S.J.C INAKA



## APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, ....., have agreed to be interviewed by Mr SJCKM Inaka for the purposes of his master's research on Congolese immigrant workers in Pretoria.

I have been informed that Mr Inaka will use the interview materials in his master's dissertation, as well as in conference presentations and academic publications including journal articles, books and book chapters.

I have been informed and understand that my identity will not be revealed in any writings or publications produced by Mr Inaka.

I am aware of the fact that the interview transcripts, which will bear no sign of my actual identity, will be stored in the departmental research archive in the Department of Sociology for a period of fifteen years. The only persons who will have access to this material will be Mr Inaka and his supervisor, Professor Hyslop.

Signed by .....

Name in print .....

Date .....





UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## APPENDIX 6: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (FRENCH VERSION)

### Consentement informé

Moi,....., J'ai accepté d'être interviewé par Monsieur SJCKM INAKA pour but de sa recherche de Master II sur «Les Immigré(e)s Congolais travailleurs à Pretoria : une approche sociologique à l'âge de migration».

J'ai été informé(e) que Monsieur INAKA utilisera les données de l'interview dans son mémoire de master II, aussi bien que dans des présentations de conférences et publications scientifiques notamment des articles de revues, des livres et des chapitres de livres.

J'ai été informé(e) et j'ai compris que mon identité ne sera révélée ni en écrits, ni en publications rédigé(e)s par Monsieur INAKA.

Je suis averti(e) du fait que les transcriptions de l'interview, lesquelles ne portent aucun signe de ma vraie identité, seront bien conservées dans les archives départementales dans le département de sociologie pour une période de quinze ans. La seule personne qui aura accès à ces données sera Monsieur INAKA and son Directeur de mémoire, Professeur Hyslop.

Signé(e) par .....

Nom en majuscule .....

Date.....



## APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE

One more time, Hello!

I would like you to answer to questions of our interview which will likely take an hour. Indeed, you are entirely free to answer to any question. If you feel that you cannot answer to a given question, tell me to pass it. Moreover, do not be surprised if I pose you any questions which are not in this interview schedule. Some changes might come up while we will be talking. Nevertheless, the most important questions are present below.

### **Reasons of emigration from the DRC to Pretoria**

- Could you introduce yourself? (age, origins, professions, studies, matrimonial situation).
- What pushed you to leave the DRC?
- What did pull you to come to South Africa, especially Pretoria?
- What strategy did adopt to enter to South Africa?
- Do you have something else to say?

### **Professional integration, employment, social and/or economic mobility**

- In few words, would like to talk about your career, path or work experience both in Congo and South Africa?
- Are there similarities between your present profession in Pretoria and your previous occupation(s) in the DRC?
- Does your job fit with your profile (education, skills, professional experience...)
- Were you well-informed about job opportunities related to your profile before you left Congo?
- Did you encounter some problems related to professional integration here in South Africa, especially Pretoria?
- If you did, what strategies have you adopt in order to overcome these problems?
- Do you want to say something else?

**Meanings of work**

- Are you satisfied with your work or your professional life?
- What do think about your professional status in Pretoria?
- How do you consider your work?
- Are there some facts that positively or negatively influence meaning that you attribute to your work?
- Do have something else to add?

**The transnational activities**

- How do you consider the Congolese community in Pretoria?
- Are you member of a Congolese association, organisation, group, ?
- What do you think about ethnicity among Congolese in Pretoria?
- What can you say about the Congolese political rivalries?
- Does the Congolese local politics interest you or influence your life in Pretoria?
- Does your keep ties with your family, friends, etc. at home?
- So, what do you do for them or they do for you?
- Do you have South Africans friends, acquaintances, etc.?
- Do you think that you are adapted to South African culture?
- Do you plan to stay in South Africa for good, return to Congo, or go somewhere else?
- Do you want to say something else?

**End of the interview**

- How did you find our interview?
- Do you think that there are some missing questions in this interview?
- Do you think that I have to delete some questions that I have posed to you? which ones?
- What can you advise me for ameliorating my research?

Thank you very much!



## **APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW GUIDE (FRENCH VERSION)**

### **Guide d'entretien**

Encore une fois, Bonjour!

J'aimerais que vous répondiez aux questions de notre interview laquelle durera probablement une heure. Sur ce, vous êtes entièrement libre de répondre à toute question. Si vous sentez que vous ne pouvez pas répondre à une question donnée, dites-moi de la passer. Bien plus, ne soyez pas surpris(e) si je pose quelques qui en sont pas dans ce guide d'entretien. Certains changements pourraient advenir pendant que nous serions en train de parler. Toutefois, les plus importantes questions sont ci-dessous.

### **Les raisons de l'emigration de RDC a Pretoria.**

- Voulez-vous vous présenter vous-même? (âge, origines, professions, instructions, situation matrimoniale).
- Qu'est-ce qui vous poussé à quitter la DRC ?
- Qu'est-ce qui vous a attiré pour venir en Afrique du Sud, surtout Pretoria ?
- Quelle sont des stratégies que vous avez adoptées pour entrer en Afrique du Sud ?
- Avez-vous quelque chose de plus à dire?

### **Intégration Professionnelle, sociale et/ou économique mobilité**

- En petits mots, voudriez-vous me parler de votre carrière, trajectoire ou expérience professionnelle au Congo et en Afrique du Sud ?
- Y'a-t-il similarités entre ta présente profession dans Pretoria et ton ancienne occupation en RDC?
- Est-ce que ton emploi convient à ton profil (instruction, compétences, expérience professionnelle... ).
- Étiez-vous bien informé(e) sur les opportunités d'emploi en relation avec votre profil avant de quitter le Congo?

- Aviez-vous rencontré quelques problèmes concernant l'intégration professionnelle ici en Afrique du sud, particulièrement à Pretoria?
- Si vous aviez rencontré, quelles sont des stratégies que vous avez adoptées pour surmonter ces problèmes-là?
- Est-ce que vous avez quelque chose d'autre à dire?

### **la signification du travail**

- Êtes-vous satisfait(e) de votre profession à Pretoria?
- Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de votre statut professionnel à Pretoria ?
- Comment considérez-vous votre travail?
- Y'a-t-il des facteurs qui influencent positivement ou négativement la signification que vous attribuez à votre travail ?
- Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter?

### **Les transnationales activities**

- Comment considérez-vous la communauté congolaise de Pretoria
- Êtes-vous membre d'une association, organisation, groupe congolais...?
- Que pensez-vous de l'ethnicité parmi des Congolais dans Pretoria?
- Que pouvez-vous dire sur des rivalités politiques congolaises dans Pretoria?
- Est-ce que la politique congolaise locale vous intéresse ou influence votre vie à Pretoria ?
- Avez-vous gardé contacts avec votre famille, ami(e)s, etc. au pays ?
- Alors, que faites-vous pour eux ou que font-ils pour vous?
- Avez-vous des ami(e)s Sud-Africain(e)s, connaissances, etc. ?
- Pensez-vous que vous êtes adopté à la culture sud-africaine?
- Préconisez-vous rester en Afrique du sud pour de bon, retourner au Congo, ou partir quelque part d'autre?
- Voudriez-vous une chose de plus ?

### **La fin de interview**

- Comment avez-vous trouvé notre interview?
- Y'a-t-il des questions qui manquent?
- Do you think that I have to delete some questions that I have posed to you? which ones?
- Pensez-vous que je dois supprimer certaines questions? Lesquelles ?
- Que pouvez-vous me conseiller pour améliorer ma recherche ?

Merci infiniment!

## APPENDIX 9: PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

| occupations                      | Sex | Age       | professional status        | years in SA <sup>50</sup> | sector of occupation: | migratory statuses |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>ELITES</b>                    |     |           |                            |                           |                       |                    |
| 1.Pastor                         | M   | 48        | Employer                   | 21                        | mixing                | Naturalised SA     |
| 2.Businesswomen                  | F   | 47        | Employer                   | 18                        | Mixing                | Naturalised SA     |
| 3.Businessman/ freight           | M   | 56        | Employer                   | 17                        | mixing                | Permanent resident |
| 4.Co-owner of a company          | M   | 42        | Employer                   | 16                        | mixing                | Naturalised SA     |
| <b>MIDDLE CLASSES</b>            |     |           |                            |                           |                       |                    |
| 5.Accountant                     | M   | 40        | Employed                   | 3                         | Formal                | Work permit        |
| 6.Architect                      | M   | 46        | Employed                   | 19                        | Formal                | Permanent resident |
| 7.Bar manager                    | M   | 30        | Employed                   | 5                         | informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 8.Businessman (shop)             | M   | 32        | Self-employed              | 12                        | Formal                | Naturalised SA     |
| 9.Businesswoman/ Beautician      | F   | No answer | Employer                   | 19                        | Formal                | Permanent resident |
| 10.Doctor                        | M   | 43        | Employed                   | 9                         | Formal                | Permanent resident |
| 11.Doctor                        | F   | 50        | Employed                   | 18                        | Formal                | Naturalised SA     |
| 12.Doctor                        | M   | 40s       | Employed                   | 3                         | Formal                | Refugee            |
| 13.Doctor locum                  | M   | 51        | Employed                   | 9                         | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 14.Doctor locum                  | M   | 39        | Employed                   | 3                         | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 15.Doctor locum                  | F   | 40        | Employed                   | 2                         | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 16.Engineer Electrician          | M   | 38        | Employed                   | 4                         | mixing                | Refugee            |
| 17.Engineer/ manager             | M   | 35        | Employed                   | 11                        | Formal                | Refugee            |
| 18.Engineer consultant in mining | M   | 34        | Employed                   | 21                        | Formal                | Naturalised SA     |
| 19.Hotelier                      | M   | 31        | Employed                   | 6                         | Formal                | Refugee            |
| 20.Human rights Activist         | F   | 30s       | Self-employed              | 3                         | mixing                | Work permit        |
| 21.Journalist                    | M   | 34        | Self-employed              | 5                         | Mixing                | Asylum seeker      |
| 22.Manager of freight agency     | F   | 36        | Employed and self-employed | 6                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 23.Translator/ English teacher   | M   | 53        | Self-employed              | 5                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 24.Veterinarian                  | M   | 39        | Employed                   | 6                         | Formal                | Refugee            |
| 25.Videographer                  | M   | 26        | Self-employed              | 5                         | Formal                | Refugee            |
| 26.Visual artist /T.V presenter  | F   | 20s       | Self-employed              | 3                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| <b>WORKING CLASS</b>             |     |           |                            |                           |                       |                    |
| 27.Baber                         | M   | 34        | Employed                   | 5                         | Informal              | Undocumented       |
| 28.Beautician                    | F   | 43        | Employed                   | 8                         | Formal                | Permanent resident |
| 29.Beautician                    | F   | 32        | Employed                   | 3                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 30.Bouncer / sport fighter       | M   | 30        | Employed                   | 4                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 31.Butler/ watchman              | M   | 38        | Employed                   | 12                        | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 32.Butler/ watchman/ welder      | M   | 40        | Employed                   | 4                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 33.Computer repairman            | M   | 30s       | Self-employed              | 4                         | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 34.Customer Trolley Assistant    | M   | 34        | Employed                   | 5                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 35.Disk Joker                    | M   | 36        | Self-employed              | 6                         | Informal              | No answer          |
| 36.Domestic worker               | F   | 24        | Employed                   | 4                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 37.Domestic worker               | F   | No answer | Employed                   | 7                         | informal              | No answer          |
| 38.Handyman                      | M   | 36        | Self-employed              | 12                        | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 39.Watchman                      | M   | 38        | Employed                   | 4                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 40.Watchman /electrician         | M   | 25        | Employed                   | 2                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 41.Parking attendant             | M   | 39        | Employed                   | 8                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 42.Restaurateur                  | F   | 32        | Self-employed              | 3                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 43.Street vendor                 | F   | 48        | Self-employed              | 18                        | Informal              | Refugee            |
| 44.Street vendor                 | F   | 29        | Self-employed              | 6                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 45.Waitress                      | F   | 24        | Employed                   | 3                         | Informal              | Asylum seeker      |
| 46.Watchman                      | M   | 37        | Employed                   | 2                         | Informal              | Refugee            |

<sup>50</sup> SA: South Africa or South African

