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# ”We make the voice of this people heard”. Trajectories of social and economic mobility among Congolese pastors in Kampala

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## Résumé

At the end of 2015, more than 70 Congolese ”Églises de réveil” were registered under the ”Communauté Chrétienne Congolaise en Ouganda”, although the president of the association estimated a presence of more than one hundred Congolese churches only in Kampala. These churches are part of the large Congolese diaspora in Uganda, especially from the Kivu region, an area that have been devastated by conflicts and violence for the last 20 years. Their congregations are mainly composed by asylum seekers and refugees, usually living in very bad conditions and with small or no assistance from international organizations or from the Ugandan state.

In this situation, the religious entrepreneurship becomes for some young Congolese a means of survival, or even an instrument of social mobility. In a ”deparentalized” community, in which the gerontocratic system does not work anymore, because most of the old people were killed or remained in the DRC, these young pastors relies on their spiritual power and on the charisma they are supposed to have to become leaders among the community of refugees. Although a number of these churches don’t survive more than few years, some are now well established, and their pastors are recognized both by the Congolese community and by the Ugandan institutions as interlocutors and mediators in case of problems and conflicts.

The Congolese ”Églises de réveil” thus become also a way to claim a social and political space for Congolese refugees, and to find a space of representation for the ”Congolese identity” in Uganda, leaving aside (at least in the self-representation they give) the divisions and conflicts among different ethnic groups.

Based on six months of research carried out between 2013 and 2015, this paper follows the trajectories of two of these young pastors (a man and a woman), in order to show how they have gained in few years, starting from a subaltern position within this subaltern community in Kampala, a reputation not only as spiritual but also as political leaders within the Congolese in Uganda.

**Mots-Clés:** Églises de réveil, Religion and displacement, Pentecostal entrepreneurship, Uganda

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