

VIOLENCE AND EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN KATANGESE AND KASAIANS: MEMORY AND ELECTIONS IN TWO KATANGA CITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Between September 1991 and June 1995, Katangese authorities committed and supported the coordination of mass violence against the non-native¹ Kasaians in Katanga province, Democratic Republic of Congo. More specifically, Baluba from North Katanga who were members of the militia of the UFERI (Union des Fédéralistes et Républicains Indépendants), a political party ruled by two Katangese leaders – Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the then governor of Katanga, and Nguz a Karl-I-Bond, the then prime minister of the country – orchestrated the systematic assault of Baluba from Eastern Kasai, their initial target, before extending attacks against all Kasaians and non-natives living in Katanga.² Violence occurred in three stages. From September 1991 to 14 August 1992, it was confined to rural areas and small towns. Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza launched a campaign known as ‘*Debout Katanga*’ (‘Arise Katanga’) under the motto ‘*Katanga yetu*’ (‘Our Katanga’ in Swahili). He held meetings in which he blamed Kasaians for the collapse of the economy of Katanga and the subsequent poverty and exploitation of Katangese, and he ordered the removal of all Kasaians from their jobs in parastatal and private companies as well as in local administration, and their replacement by Katangese. For example, in his speech for his nomination as governor of Katanga on 6 November

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¹The indigenous categorizations of autochthons and allochthons are *originaires* (natives) and *non originaires* (non-natives). The term *non originaire* refers to a regional identity: a *non originaire* is someone who is born, or whose ancestors were born, in another province than the one in which he or she lives. As they are numerous in Katanga, the name ‘Kasaians’, referring to people born, or whose ancestors were born, in the DRC provinces of Eastern Kasai and Western Kasai, is often used in place of *non originaires*. An *originaire* defines himself by his ethnic identity (i.e. in Katanga: Muluba, Lunda, Tshokwe, Musanga, etc.). He is – or he claims to be – a member of the ethnic groups located in an area before the *non originaires*: that is, before the colonial period. It is important to note that the province, territory or chieftaincy of origin is still a compulsory category in all Congolese civil registration documents based on an individual’s filiation. For instance, a person born in Kinshasa of third-generation Kasaians parents (i.e. someone born in Kinshasa but of Kasaians origin) will be registered as being originally from a specific chieftaincy in Kasai that he may never have visited. The same will apply to his children, meaning that there is no way of avoiding tribal affiliation in current Congolese civil registration.

²For more on the mass violence against Kasaians, see, for example, Bakajika Banjikila (1997), Dibwe dia Mwemba (1999) or Gorus (2000).

1991, he said: 'The Kasaians are foreigners who must not forget their status in Katanga and who steal the Katangese's jobs and wealth' (quoted in Bakajika Banjikila 1997: 132). He also imposed his control over local media (newspapers, radio and television), cracked down on the activities of the political opposition and put an embargo on trade with the two Kasai provinces. The second stage started on 15 August 1992, the day on which Etienne Tshisekedi, a Muluba of Eastern Kasai and the leader of the main opposition party, the UDPS (Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social), was appointed prime minister by the Sovereign National Conference to replace Nguz a Karl-I-Bond. Xenophobic violence and massive deportation spread to the main mining cities (Likasi, Kolwezi and Kipushi, for example). In the third stage, the hunting down of Kasaians became systematic in the mining parastatal Gécamines – the main employer in South Katanga – the civil service, schools and workers' compounds. The outbreak of this third phase started in Kolwezi in March 1993 (Modjomi 2002: 245–6). In a few days, almost all the Kasaians who lived in Kolwezi – at least 90,000 people (Africa Watch 1993: 2) – were violently evicted and driven to displaced persons' camps at the railway station and in schools. Large numbers of Kasaians³ fled Likasi and Kolwezi and settled mainly in Eastern and Western Kasai. They also settled in Lubumbashi, Katanga's provincial capital, which was spared the violence, in Kinshasa, or abroad, especially in South Africa, Europe and the United States.

Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu (2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2006) has studied the relationship between Kasaians and Katangese in the aftermath of the violence, and more specifically the ways to reharmonize their social relations and to restore peace. His interest lies in processes of 'bottom-up reconciliation', which he describes as the organization of 'spaces for negotiations and mediation', first between the people viewed as 'influential' in each community – for example, traditional chiefs, religious officials and leaders of socio-cultural associations – and then between these 'influential people' and the people they are supposed to represent. The aim of these 'spaces for negotiations and mediation' is twofold: to transform mutual stigmatizing perceptions via problem-solving workshops and to encourage the members of each community 'to reread together their common past, recognize their mistakes, mend their ways, reharmonize their relationship and restore peace in the province of Katanga'⁴ (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005b: 10). As Dibwe dia Mwembu has shown, very few 'spaces for negotiations and mediation' between Kasaians and Katangese were set up in Katanga. In his work (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005a: 128–36; 2006: 129–32), he presents a process of 'bottom-up reconciliation' established in Likasi: in 2002, the mayor of Likasi, Petwe Kapande, tasked the AFP (Association des Faiseurs de Paix/Association of Peacemakers), an association promoting bottom-up peace building, to conduct mediation that would enable Kasaiian traders to

³The lack of reliable statistics makes it difficult to assess the proportion of Kasaians in the total population of Katanga in the early 1990s or today. For example, according to the available sources, in the early 1990s, Kasaians made up between 20 per cent (Africa Watch 1993: 3) and 50 per cent (Gorus 2000: 118) of the estimated total population of 5,644,000 (according to a 1992 study by the CEPAS (Centre d'Etudes pour l'Action Sociale), quoted in Pourtier 1998: 153).

⁴Author's translation.

come back to the market of Kikula – they had fled the market following the violence of the early 1990s. The market was then renamed Amani Market (Peace Market in Swahili). Dibwe dia Mwembu's work fits in with research on 'bottom-up reconciliation' practices, based on the voluntarist implementation of a face-to-face dialogue between ordinary people.

My study of everyday social relations between Katangese and Kasaians in the aftermath of the violence of the 1990s is incorporated within a framework of ethnographic case studies, which 'note that everyday interactions between former adversaries take place not as a moral engagement with reconciliation but as part of rebuilding a sense of normality' (Eastmond 2010: 3). The violence committed against non-native Kasaians has altered the everyday lives of Katangese and Kasaians (Mehta and Chatterji 2001: 238) and the relationships between them. Since the 1990s violence, and until now, daily interactions occur within new organizational social patterns, which are based on self-censorship and avoidance. However, in specific socio-economic or political contexts leading to a 'crisis situation' (Vidal 1991), these routine practices tend to disappear. This was the case in Likasi in the early 2000s and in Kolwezi in the late 2000s, when mass returns of Kasaians caused tensions that related to Kasaians' claims for restitution of the houses they had abandoned because of the violence. In Kolwezi, the competition for jobs created by the re-launch of the mining sector in 2003 and its intensification in 2008 was another factor at the root of the crisis situation.

Based on qualitative fieldwork research conducted between November 2011 and January 2012, during which twenty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty-two Katangese and Kasaians (mainly ordinary people),⁵ this paper focuses on the third crisis situation observed since the 1990s violence: the November 2011 election period (from the campaign to the month after the announcement of the results) in Likasi and Kolwezi, two cities particularly affected by the violence. It specifically studies face-to-face interactions as defined by Erving Goffman (1982): that is to say, 'physical co-presence' between Katangese and Kasaians. In some parts of this paper, data collected during a first field trip conducted in February and March 2009 are also used for comparison purposes.

After a brief literature review highlighting the relevance of the analytical framework of autochthony to understand the 1990s violence, the paper shows that, since then, Kasaians and Katangese have tended to eschew subjects relating to the past violence in their face-to-face interactions; silence on the violence and on political topics has become an interactional norm of peaceful coexistence. However, in the context of the presidential and legislative elections of November 2011, references to violence in the form of threats and rumours were common in daily interactions, as is documented in the third section of the paper. The paper then demonstrates that the frequency of references to violence is explained by the fact that, although

⁵The interviewees talked about topics that are taboo between Katangese and Kasaians; and they justified silence on these topics by the collective view that talking about them in face-to-face interactions with members of the other community is likely to 'reawaken the conflict'. That is why I chose to keep most of them anonymous.

there was no physical violence,⁶ the election period can be seen as a crisis situation because of the candidacy of Tshisekedi; this brought back memories of the 1990s violence and led to an ethnic reading of the election. This crisis situation resulted in the simplification and polarization of ethno-regional origins: friends, neighbours or colleagues were viewed only as Kasaians or Katangese. And so the interactional norm based on silence about past violence was breached during the election period.

AUTOCHTHONY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST KASAIANS

Most studies of the conflict between Katangese and Kasaians focus on xenophobic practices and discourses in the early 1990s. These studies analyse the conflict between Katangan natives and non-natives of Kasai, either explicitly (Dibwe dia Mwembu 1999; 2005a; Pourtier 1998) or implicitly within the analytical framework of autochthony. When they do not explicitly use the concept of autochthony, scholars define the xenophobic practices and discourses against Kasaians as 'ethnic violence' or 'ethnic conflict' (Bakajika Banjikila 1997; Gorus 2000), 'Katangan nationalism' (Gorus 2000; Dibwe dia Mwembu 1999; 2005a), 'regionalism' (Kalulambi Pongo 2001), 'regionalist feeling' (Bakajika Banjikila 1997) or 'tribalist drift of the democratisation process'⁷ (Bakajika Banjikila 1997: 121).

Autochthony (as defined by Bayart *et al.* 2001) is a useful framework of analysis within which to understand the xenophobic practices and discourses against Kasaians in the early 1990s. Indeed, these were a product of the formation and the territorial division of the state during the colonial period. Before Congo's independence in 1960, the country's territorial organization had been altered six times, leading to changes in regional identity. For example, between 1923 and 1930, on average 91 per cent of the African workers recruited by the mining company UMHK (Union Minière du Haut-Katanga⁸) came from five territories in the Lomani district (Kanda-Kanda, Kabinda, Mpania Mutombo, Kisengwa and Tshofa) (Kabemba Nsuya Muteba quoted in Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005c: 11). By 1923, these territories were part of the Katanga province, and following the 1933 territorial reform, they became territories of the Kasai province. Their populations then became Kasaians; this included people born in these territories but who already worked in the mining centres of South Katanga and their children born in the Katanga province.

Katangese and Kasaiian identities were assimilated and shaped as antagonistic in the urban and industrial context of the workers' compounds built by the UMHK. In the early years of colonization, the local population of South Katanga refused to work in the mining industry or to settle in the compounds. For this reason, and because of the low population density in South Katanga

⁶Some confrontations, limited in space and time, occurred in Lubumbashi between supporters of the UDPS and supporters of the PPRD and the UNAFEC (for example, from 5 to 7 November 2011); and in Kamina, a town in the north of the Katanga province, the relations between Katangese and Kasaians were very strained during the election period (see below), probably leading to a crisis situation.

⁷Author's translation.

⁸The former name of the Gécamines.

(between 1.9 and 2.0 inhabitants per square kilometre) (Bakajika Banjikila 1997: 58), Belgian colonial authorities recruited a labour force in the neighbouring areas of Belgian Congo (Kasai, North Katanga, Eastern province and Ruanda-Urundi) and in Northern Rhodesia. Another factor could explain these recruitment campaigns outside South Katanga: to the colonial authorities, it seemed more attractive to import migrant labour to the Katangan mines, since they would be less bothered by the burden of their extended families. In December 1927, the UMHK set up a policy of African labour stabilization. This policy was adopted for two main reasons: on the one hand, in order to prevent a high death rate among African workers – 53 per cent in 1926 (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2004: 101) – and their subsequent desertion; on the other, to increase their skills level. The migrant workers were settled in workers' compounds, where they were provided with family housing, medical care, food supplies and education for their children. These compounds were built away from the *cit  indig ne*, where the local population lived. The aim of the colonial authorities was to separate the migrant workers from the local people, who were seen as 'undisciplined' (Dibwe dia Mwembu *et al.* 2002: 97, 100–1). As they formed the majority of the migrant workers,⁹ Kasaian benefited more than the other African workers from the social benefits provided by the UMHK. For example, the schooling of Kasaian children explains why most African workers hired in the mid-1940s to work in the colonial administrative services and in the administrative departments of colonial companies were Kasaian (M'Bokolo 1999: 203–4). Thus, in an urban and industrial environment, Kasaian 'became a corporate group with its own collective identity' (Gorus 2000: 108) and 'the class par excellence of intermediaries'¹⁰ (Kennes 2009: 540) between Belgian settlers and the African population.

During the colonial period, socio-cultural associations (*associations socio-culturelles*) played a major part in the emergence of the antagonism between Kasaian and Katangese. These associations were created in the 1920s in the compounds of the UMHK. At first they were responsible for integrating migrant workers, coordinating forms of social protection for co-ethnics, retaining ethnic or village traditions in the mining centres, and passing them on to generations born in the compounds of South Katanga. By the mid-1950s, since political parties were banned, some of these socio-cultural associations became political organizations. The socio-cultural association of the Luba-Kasai, the Fegebaceka (F d ration g n rale des Baluba-Central Kasai), lobbied for the group's interests, an activity that aroused the fear of Kasaian domination. The Conakat (Conf d ration des associations tribales du Katanga), a grouping of South Katangese socio-cultural associations, was created in October 1958 to prevent Kasaian political¹¹ and economic domination and to protect the interests of the 'authentic Katangese' (*'les Katangais authentiques'*) (M'Bokolo 1999: 205–20; Dibwe dia Mwembu *n.d.*: 11–18). Kasaian and Baluba of North Katanga¹²

⁹In 1936, 49 per cent of African workers at the UMHK were Kasaian; this figure was 60 per cent in 1945 (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005c: 12).

¹⁰Author's translation.

¹¹In 1957, during the first local election in Elisabethville (the former name of Lubumbashi), Kasaian won thirty-eight of fifty-six seats, while Katangese won thirteen seats.

¹²On 10 November 1959, the socio-cultural association of the Baluba of North Katanga (Balubakat) left the Conakat for two main reasons: on the one hand, the alliance between the

endured violence during the Katanga secession (1960–63), led by the Katanga provincial government, which was dominated by the Conakat.

During the Second Republic (1965–90), President Mobutu, with the support of the MPR (Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution) party state and the ideology of authenticity, promoted national unity and the end of ethnicity and tribalism. This policy was symbolized by the motto ‘region yes, regionalism no; tribe yes, tribalism no’. Consequently, ‘Mobutu’s regime facilitated not only a large-scale migration of Kasaians to Katanga, but also a strong integration of these natives of Kasai in the management of the Katangese *res publica*’¹³ (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005a: 47). Many interviewees described the Second Republic as a time when Katangese and Kasaians ‘lived in harmony’¹⁴ and people did not care about ethno-regional backgrounds. For example:

In Mobutu’s time, the problem [of tribalism] didn’t exist. We didn’t speak any more about it ... People didn’t make reference to Kasaians ... to tribalism. No, not at all ... People could never say: ‘That one is Kasaiian. That one is Katangese.’ Not at all. This question arose around 1992–1993 ... Here in Katanga, Kyungu wa Kumwanza was the one who started this question. He was the one who started this question. I, myself ... almost all my friends ... For example, when I lived in Kolwezi [in the late 1980s and the early 1990s], almost all my friends were Katangese, all of them. We were well off. We lived peacefully.¹⁵

The violence of the 1990s occurred in the context of the democratization of authoritarian regimes in sub-Saharan Africa. President Mobutu was forced to launch a process of democratization, and, on 24 April 1990, he had to accept a multiparty system. He held onto power by dividing the political opposition and the population by using regional and ethnic identities.¹⁶ It was to this end that he established a new policy entitled ‘*territoriale des originaires*’ on 14 November 1991. This policy reserved the management of provincial public administrations for ‘natives’. In Katanga, supported by the Katangese leaders of the UFERI, Mobutu deflected the criticisms directed towards his regime onto the Kasaians, using them as scapegoats. This strategy succeeded because of the economic crisis, the subsequent competition for access to economic resources (jobs, mining resources, etc.), and Kasaians’ objective socio-economic domination. At that time, Kasaians indeed occupied the majority of positions in middle and upper management. For example, in June 1992, 44.9 per cent of the Gécamines’

Conakat and the Union katangaise, the party of the Belgian settlers that promoted the autonomy of the Katanga province; on the other, the anti-Kasaiian discourses of the Conakat leaders. In January 1960, the Balubakat and two other socio-cultural associations, including the Fedeka (the federation of tribal associations from Kasai, created by the end of 1958 after the dissolution of the Fegebaceka) founded the Cartel katangais. The Cartel katangais promoted ‘the nationalist, anti-colonialist and unitary ideology embodied by Lumumba’ (M’Bokolo 1999: 217; author’s translation).

¹³Author’s translation.

¹⁴Interview with a Luba-Kasai employee in a private company, Lubumbashi, 10 March 2009.

¹⁵Interview with a Kasaiian from the Songe ethnic group, skilled worker in a private company, Likasi, 5 January 2012.

¹⁶This political use of regional and ethnic identities led to conflicts in other provinces: between the Bene Kapuya and the Bena Nshimba in Eastern Kasai; between the Banyamulenge, the Bahunde and the Banande in North Kivu; and between the Banyamulenge, the Bafulero and the Baria in South Kivu.

executives were Kasaian and 38.5 per cent were Katangese (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005c: 22). They were also in the predominant position in administration and local trade.

SILENCE AND AVOIDANCE AS AN INTERACTIONAL NORM OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

The mass flight of Kasaian and their return in the following months or years caused a spatial reorganization in Likasi and Kolwezi, and marked the end of spatial diversity. Thus, in Likasi, the Dac area, which is where most of the Kasaian who stayed in the city during the time of violence or came back in the months following their flight had settled, is a predominantly Kasaian area – in fact, it is called ‘the Kasaian’s area’. Similarly, in Kolwezi, Kasaian are in the majority in the Dilungu area in the district of Dilala,¹⁷ where they took refuge during the violence and where the few Kasaian who stayed in Kolwezi settled. In other areas, the population is predominantly Katangese. For example, Katangese are in the majority in areas where the violence was most intense, such as in Toyota and Kitabataba in the district of Likasi, and in Kanona, Kaponona and Nkolomoni in the district of Kikula in the city of Likasi. The end of spatial diversity does not imply a social distance. Katangese and Kasaian attend the same schools and the same churches, they share a drink together, and so on. However, the current social mix is different from what it was before the 1990s violence; it now takes the shape of a coexistence based on silence and avoidance.

Since the violence, and to the present day, Kasaian and Katangese have tended to eschew topics relating to violence in everyday interactions. The interviewees frequently associated silence about the past violence with forgetting. For example, when I asked a Kasaian woman whether Kasaian and Katangese talked, together or within their community, about violence, she said: ‘We don’t talk about that any more ... Nobody thinks of that ... it’s forgotten.’¹⁸ Another Kasaian, who was the only one to link forgiveness with silence and forgetting, said:

What had happened over there, we, we have decided to forgive. I especially. I have decided to forgive and to never again talk about it, because when I talk about it, it is as if I still remember. I, myself, thought I had already forgotten what had happened. Let’s turn the page and think about the future.¹⁹

For some Katangese, public references to violence made by Kasaian are a means of stigmatizing them. The following quote, from a Muluba of North Katanga, shows how referring to the violence and indicating one’s intention to resist future outbreaks are perceived by him as a way to categorize Katangese as criminals:

¹⁷The city of Kolwezi is divided into two districts: Dilala and Manika.

¹⁸Interview with a Kasaian woman, local government officer, Likasi, 18 February 2009.

¹⁹Interview with a Kasaian from the Songe ethnic group, skilled worker in a private company, Likasi, 5 January 2012.

Katangese are not nasty, contrary to what they [Kasaïans] say. They are good persons too, good persons, otherwise we would not have hosted them for such a long time [i.e. from the colonial period to the violence of the 1990s]. Even now, there was this ... this issue in 1992, when they left. And then afterwards, they came back. Katangese have forgotten; they attend to their business. Now they ... When you, you do something, 'Hey, you, no! Do you think that you will drive us out, like you did in '92? Now we are numerous.' Why is it they cannot forget that? Whereas the Katangese have already forgotten.²⁰

Pollak's work on female concentration camp survivors shows that 'silence can be easily, but wrongly, equated with forgetting'²¹ (Pollak 1986: 30) and that, if we are to understand the meaning of silence, we have to look at 'the structural constraints that are behind the silence and the functions that it performs'²² (Pollak and Heinich 1986: 12).

In Katanga, politicians and state actors have preferred to silence the past, thereby creating a strong structural constraint at the macro level. Since Kasaïans returned to Katanga from 1993,²³ and above all after Mobutu's overthrow by the AFDL (Alliance des Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo/Zaïre) and the political takeover by Laurent-Désiré Kabila in May 1997, terms such as 'natives' and 'non-natives', as well as references to the violence, have tended to be taboo in political speeches and local media. Under the presidencies of Laurent-Désiré Kabila (May 1997 to January 2001) and Joseph Kabila (from January 2001), most Katangan politicians and local authorities have tended to espouse the rhetoric of the national discourse that promotes national unity and the reconciliation of the Congolese people. However, in specific political or socio-economic contexts that are open to an ethnic reading, some Katangan leaders use the terms 'natives' and 'non-natives' and make explicit references to the violence against Kasaïans in public speeches. For example, as leader of the UNAFEC (Union des Nationalistes Fédéralistes Congolais), the party set up in 2001 by former leaders of the UFERI, Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza (a supporter of the outgoing president Joseph Kabila) gave several xenophobic speeches targeting Kasaïans before the election campaign. In a speech in Kolwezi on 25 May 2011, he ordered Kasaïans to 'go back home' in case of Kabila's defeat:

Remember one thing: on polling day, everybody knows each other, we all know each other very well. I speak to he who will not vote for Joseph Kabila ... You will not sleep, yes, you will not sleep! ... The Katangese tell you that the head of state is and will still be a Katangese. Listen to me carefully: if you say that Kabila's mandate is at an end and Kabila is the past, then it will be Sudan ... We all are Congolese, that's true. You who came to Kolwezi or Likasi to look for a job, to look for minerals, open wide your eyes and your ears: Katanga is for Joseph Kabila ... If our fervent support

²⁰Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, retired executive, Likasi, 2 January 2012.

²¹Author's translation.

²²*Ibid.*

²³The settlement of Kasaïans driven out of Katanga in Kasai led to tensions with the local populations. Before their settlement, the socio-economic conditions of local populations were rather difficult, following looting by Zairean soldiers in the autumn of 1991, and the influx of Kasaïans from Katanga put additional pressure on available resources. In addition, local populations reproached those who they called 'Bena Katanga' ('Katangan people' in Tshiluba) for not building a house or investing money in Kasai, not keeping in touch with their distant relatives living in Kasai, and not observing traditional customs (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2001: 201–32). This explains why some Kasaïans came back to Katanga in the months following their flight.

for Joseph Kabila antagonizes you, the door is wide open ... Go back home and use your knowledge over there. Here is at others' home, at Katumbi's home²⁴ ... Will you vote for 'big cheeks' [Etienne Tshisekedi] or Joseph Kabila?²⁵

Since the 1990s violence, in their face-to-face interactions, Katangese and Kasaians also avoid political topics, especially those that may be interpreted in light of the conflict between the two groups:

- Are there topics that are to be avoided with Katangese?
- Yes. Do you think that you can go anywhere and start to criticize President Kabila? But you will be killed. You, you think that you can go anywhere and start to criticize the governor?²⁶ It is not right. It is not right, is it? We are here, we hear them criticize those of theirs [the political leaders from the same ethno-regional backgrounds]. We pretend. If people say yes, it will be useless to say no. When they themselves say something is yellow, you have to see this yellow colour. In order to maintain the kind of weak relationship you still have. If needed. You will have problems, clashes for nothing; some day, people might come and threaten you.²⁷

This extract from an interview conducted with a Muluba of Eastern Kasai highlights two collective representations. Firstly, when I asked him if there are topics that are to be avoided in interactions with Katangese, he mentioned directly political topics. In interviews and informal conversations, the conflict between Katangese and Kasaians was very often described as 'a political issue', and local political leaders were seen as the cause of this political issue and its persistence. Secondly, this extract draws attention to the justifications given for silence and self-censorship in face-to-face interactions. If, in their everyday interactions, Katangese and Kasaians use practices of coexistence that are based on silence and self-censorship, it is because these routine practices facilitate expectations about how the interactions will proceed. They bring stability to interaction situations in which people have sometimes experienced a sense of insecurity since the violence of the 1990s. Thus Kasaians justify the use of silence and self-censorship by saying that it enables them to maintain their safety. On the one hand, this relates to their physical safety, as the following excerpt from the interview with the same Muluba of Eastern Kasai illustrates:

It's because of today's life, a life without safety, that people can't talk. We live ... we live a life, which is not safe. Tomorrow what will happen? Can I really claim my rights? Or ... Who will support me? And if today I claim my rights and my children ... I will be locked up or ... I could be killed, but will my ... So that is to say, I think of my children, my family ... Because nothing is ensured. So what do we have to do? We have to withdraw and close our mouth. Whatever happens.²⁸

²⁴Kyungu spoke about Moïse Katumbi, the governor of Katanga.

²⁵International Federation for Human Rights, 'Discours xénophobes et d'incitation à la haine au Katanga', 1 July 2011, <<http://www.congoone.net/xeng/index.php/actualites/532-discours-xenophobes-et-dincitation-a-la-haine-au-katanga>>, accessed 3 November 2014.

²⁶Moïse Katumbi is Mubemba – an ethnic group from South Katanga – through his mother.

²⁷Interview with a Luba-Kasai, employee in a private company, Lubumbashi, 10 March 2009.

²⁸*Ibid.*

On the other hand, it involves their social safety; they want to keep their jobs in a context of economic instability, especially since the autumn of 2008, when the global economic crisis affected the Katangan economy and increased what Miriam Di Paola calls 'the sense of precariousness' (Di Paola 2013) among both Kasaians and Katangese:

In a city like Kolwezi, I think that each one makes an effort ... not to get into trouble. Someone can think in a different way. But does he freely express what he thinks? I don't think so. Because of what the other [a member of the other community] might think. He thinks: 'When I will say that, how will it be interpreted? Will I be well seen? I, myself, came back, I need maybe to keep my job ...' He would rather protect his job, even if it means a restriction of his freedom, which is pretty serious. If I can't enjoy my freedom in order to conform to my life setting, do I really live? It's a question that needs to be addressed.²⁹

Silence on the violence of the 1990s and avoidance of political topics have thus become a norm of peaceful coexistence. Most Katangese and Kasaians think that non-compliance with this norm is likely to 'cause incidents'³⁰ or 'clashes'³¹ or 'reawaken the conflict'³² between Katangese and Kasaians.

DEALING WITH THE MEMORY OF VIOLENCE IN THE NOVEMBER 2011 ELECTION PERIOD

While silence and avoidance have prevailed since the mid-1990s, many Katangese and Kasaians did not comply with this interactional norm in the context of the presidential and legislative elections of November 2011. Threats by Katangese to their Kasaian neighbours or colleagues were made regularly, with warnings such as 'If Tshisekedi wins the election, we will drive you out again' or 'This time, you will go back home by foot' or 'If Tshisekedi wins the election, we will beat all the Kasaians and take their belongings.' These employed exactly the same kind of wording (of forceful eviction and expulsion from Katanga) that Katangese had used to threaten Kasaians in the early 1990s. For example, during the first field trip, in February and March 2009, a Kasaian woman, the widow of a Katangan worker, said that after the appointment of Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister by the Sovereign National Conference on 15 August 1992, her Katangan neighbours said every day: 'This time, the Kasaians will go back home by foot, because they have voted for Tshisekedi.'³³ In Kolwezi, a Katangese employee of the Gécamines told me that a fellow Katangese, who was both his co-worker and a neighbour, had sung songs that members of the UFERI militia had sung during the violence; this had happened

²⁹Interview with an employee at the American non-governmental organization (NGO) Pact Congo, Kolwezi, 2 March 2009.

³⁰Interview with a Kasaian from the Songe ethnic group, skilled worker in a private company, Likasi, 6 March 2009.

³¹Interview with a Luba-Kasai, employee in a private company, Lubumbashi, 10 March 2009.

³²Informal conversation with a member of the AFP, Likasi, 23 November 2011.

³³Interview with a Kasaian woman, widow of a Katangan worker, living in the Kikula district of Likasi, Likasi, 5 March 2009.

several nights before the announcement of the 2011 presidential election returns, between 9 p.m. and 1 a.m., in a predominantly Kasaian area.³⁴ Therefore while the political context was very different, the structural conditions informing daily interactions remained strongly connected to national politics and their perception as a game of ethnic domination. Interestingly, the threats pointed to a contestation of national politics at the local level and to the possible acceptance of Kasaians, provided they made their allegiance to the Katangese candidate explicit.

Some Katangese used other phrases that were sometimes less directly linked to violence, but that were interpreted in this way by the Kasaians who were targeted by them. In the early 1990s, because of violence, some Kasaians had deserted their plots of land; others had sold theirs at a low price, before leaving Likasi or Kolwezi. Since 2007, following the collapse of the MIBA (Société minière de Bakwanga) – a state-owned diamond company and the former main state employer in Eastern Kasai – and with the mining boom in South Katanga since the early 2000s, many Kasaians have returned to the mining cities in South Katanga, particularly Kolwezi, where most of the mining sector re-launch has taken place. These massive returns led to a crisis situation in Kolwezi between 2007 and 2009; this was linked to competition for jobs in the industrial and artisanal mining sectors and Kasaians' claims for restitution of their houses and plots, which were occupied by Katangese. In such a context, many Katangese expressed a sense of a new invasion:

This feeling [that the Kasaians have invaded] ... is expressed now in Kolwezi, especially in large companies like KOL [Kamoto Operated Limited] or DCP [DRC Copper and Cobalt Project SPRL] ... It seems that people feel Kasaians are easily recruited through a channel in South Africa³⁵ and hired at KOL directly to posts of responsibility. Then Katangese have the impression that it's another way to invade them again ... Some Kasaians had deserted their houses, which some Katangese have occupied, sometimes without buying them. People left; he knew it was a Kasaian's house, he went, he came, he stayed. A bit amnesic, he has forgotten that it's not his house. As always, the political situation becomes normalized. People return. 'Hey! This is my house. You must leave my house.' Then, he would rather say: 'The Kasaians start to invade us again! They come back.'³⁶

On 21 October 2007, Gabriel Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the former governor of Katanga and the current president of the Katanga provincial assembly, used this feeling in a speech in Kolwezi:

They left ten, fifteen years ago, forgetting the place where their houses were ... They come back one day and ask people to leave their so-called houses ... this matter of restitution claims must be suspended. We don't want it. Because it's a provocation. The provocation, it begins again? I ask again: it begins again? Those people will come to an arrangement

³⁴Interview with a Katangese employed at the Gécamines, Kolwezi, 3 January 2012.

³⁵Some Kasaians were recruited by South African mining companies that set up operations in South Katanga while they lived in South Africa, where they had fled because of the 1990s violence. This recruitment fuelled a rumour about a 'South African recruitment channel' that favoured hiring Kasaians at the expense of natives.

³⁶Interview with an employee at the American NGO Pact Congo, Kolwezi, 2 March 2009.

with the judge because they have the same origins.³⁷ It's not nice. Why do those people tend to ill-treat Kolwezi's sons, whereas they are at home?³⁸

During the November 2011 election period, the Kasaians' plots and houses again became an issue for some Katangese. Several of them pointed to Kasaians' houses and said aloud, 'It will be my house,'³⁹ or they enumerated the Kasaians' houses in an area: 'You will have this house, you will have this one, you will have this one...'⁴⁰

Expressions such as 'If Tshisekedi wins the election, Katanga will secede' or 'If Kabila does not win the election, then it will be secession' were also very common. As M'Bokolo noted: 'The recurrence of what is known as "Katangese separatism" seems indisputably one of the major permanent features of Zairean political life since the mid-1950s, that is to say since the time when modern political competition was introduced in what was then the Belgian Congo'⁴¹ (M'Bokolo 1999: 185). Katangese separatism and the memory of the Katangese secession (1960–63) have been recurrent themes in the speeches of many Katangese political leaders, such as those of Kyungu wa Kumwanza during the violence against Kasaians (see Kennes 2005: 204–5). Katangese leaders have tended to raise the spectre of Katangese separatism when relations between Katangese authorities and the central state are strained. Thus, 'the actual function of the memory of secession [is] to be an instrument in negotiations with the central power'⁴² (Kennes 2005: 205). However, as Kennes has shown, the memory of the Katangese secession is also linked to the exclusion of non-natives, since these are the two components of Katangese identity: 'The Katangese secession and the use of the memory of the secession are straight away linked to the exclusion of "non-natives". During the secession as under Kyungu Wa Kumwanza, the Katangese identity was first constructed against "Kasaians", thus playing two ambiguous provincial identities one against the other'⁴³ (Kennes 2005: 205). It was therefore not surprising that, during the November 2011 election period, Katangese used the memory of both the past violence against Kasaians and the secession in their face-to-face interactions with Kasaians. Another important factor is the decentralization reform; this was adopted in January 2008 but has not yet been implemented in Katanga. Discussions on decentralization have revived the view that natives do not profit from Katanga's resources, because those resources are exploited for the benefit of non-natives – either Kasaians, according to Katangese in general, or the Katangese native to North Katanga (mainly Baluba), according to the members of the South Katanga ethnic groups:

³⁷The feeling that Kasaiian magistrates favour 'their brothers' in disputes over plot ownership is widespread in Kolwezi and Likasi.

³⁸Quoted in 'Incitation à la haine tribale. Kyungu interpellé par l'Assemblée nationale', *La Conscience*, 8 November 2007: 5 (author's translation), <http://www.congovision.com/nouvelles/kabila_bush1.html>, accessed 4 November 2014.

³⁹Anecdote told by Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, History Professor at the University of Lubumbashi, in an interview conducted in Lubumbashi, 12 January 2012.

⁴⁰Anecdote told by a member of the Justice and Peace Commission in Likasi, in an interview conducted in Likasi, 19 December 2011.

⁴¹Author's translation.

⁴²*Ibid.*

⁴³*Ibid.*

- If you conduct a survey, you will see that 80 or 90 per cent of the Katangese want Katanga to be independent ...
- Today there is still this idea of separatism?
- Yes, still. Still, why? Because we see this sense of domination among the others. We see that the people coming from somewhere else live better or occupy ... As I already told you, the problem here is the posts in the Gécamines ... So the resources are here in Katanga ... But it will be the others who will benefit from these resources. No, that is not right. The resources are here in Katanga. We will find that 80 per cent⁴⁴ of the managers are people coming from somewhere else. No, that is not right.⁴⁵

In addition to this sense of deprivation to the benefit of non-natives, the central state is also perceived as being exploitative:

We have to secede. Because ... we see that Katanga is exploited too much, Katanga is exploited so much. Exploited. It is said that Zaire [*sic*] is very rich, it is rich because there is Katanga. We produce copper, we produce cobalt, and so on, we send to Kinshasa. In Kinshasa, they eat. They forget the ... the cook. It is the relationship between the cook and those who eat at a restaurant. The kitchen is Katanga, the restaurant is ... the major restaurant, is what? Kinshasa.⁴⁶

The metaphor of the kitchen and the restaurant, borrowing from the language of the ‘politics of the belly’ (Bayart 1989), shows that the legitimacy of the central government (‘Kinshasa’) is challenged (‘We have to secede’) owing to the lack of wealth redistribution (‘In Kinshasa, they eat. They forget the cook’). The interviewee also expressed the idea, shared by many Katangese, that the wealth of Congo is mainly provided by the mining resources produced in Katanga (‘the kitchen’ or ‘the cook’).⁴⁷

In all the interaction situations – reported by the interviewees or observed – where Katangese made clear reference to the 1990s violence in front of members of the other community, Kasaian again used practices based on silence and avoidance. They pretended either not to hear what Katangese said or that they were not the target of these threats. A Kasaian worker explained that he even fled such interaction situations:

They [his Katangan colleagues] said: ‘If Joseph [Kabila] does not win the election, if that one [Tshisekedi] wins, then it will be secession.’ They said that. Several times during the last few days before the vote was announced, I arrived at work, I felt ... uncomfortable, I took my stuff, and I went back home. They didn’t know why. But I didn’t want to stay in this environment. I went back home. I said to them that I didn’t feel well and I went back home. It was because I didn’t want to hear ... nonsenses and so on.⁴⁸

⁴⁴This percentage does not reflect the reality of the manager positions occupied by Kasaian since they returned to Katanga. It seems to come from the anti-Kasaian discourses of the 1990s. Those discourses stated that Kasaian occupied 80 per cent of management positions in parastatal companies.

⁴⁵Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, engineering technician and trade union representative in a private company, Likasi, 24 November 2011.

⁴⁶Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, executive in a private company, Likasi, 31 December 2011.

⁴⁷For more on the literature on economic indigenization, see Segatti, this issue.

⁴⁸Interview with a Kasaian from the Songe ethnic group, skilled worker in a private company, Likasi, 5 January 2012.

Katangese were also the target of threats referring to the violence; they reacted similarly by using silence and avoidance. During the November 2011 election period, some Kasaians warned their Katangese neighbours or colleagues that they would respond if they were attacked: 'This time, you will not drive us out. We will fight' or 'You drove our parents out. We are going to fight.'⁴⁹ During the first field trip conducted in February and March 2009, only one interviewee told me an anecdote about young Kasaians evoking overtly the past violence in front of Katangese, which he viewed as a 'provocation that could cause incidents'.⁵⁰ In the context of the 2011 elections, such sentences were common and, if Katangese and Kasaians still viewed them as provocations, they also interpreted them as 'self-defence'. In an informal conversation between a Muluba man of Eastern Kasai, his wife and his cousin, the Muluba man recalled that in 1992 he had fled Likasi, leaving all his belongings behind. However, in reference to 2011, he indicated that he had 'sharpened the machete' in the event that Katangese attacked him: 'In 1992, I left. Now, I won't leave. I have my house. I have my comfort. If they come to drive me out, it will be as if they destroy my house. I will defend myself.'⁵¹

Most of the rumours spread during the election period were linked to violence. One rumour had it that in Kitabataba, one of the areas most affected by the violence in Likasi, Katangese had drafted lists of Kasaiian plot owners, as they had done in the early 1990s. On 6 December 2011, the day when the preliminary results of the presidential election should have been announced,⁵² another rumour spread in Likasi⁵³ that, in Kamina,⁵⁴ Kasaiians had 'dressed a dog up as Kabila'⁵⁵ or 'tied a photo of Kabila around the neck of a dog, which they walked around the city'.⁵⁶ This echoed a provocation by Kasaiians in

⁴⁹At the beginning of the 1990s, some Kasaiians attempted to resist the pogrom. In some areas in Likasi (for example, in Toyota on 27 July 1992, or in the district of Kikula in August and September 1992) and Kolwezi (for example, in Luilu), Kasaiians fought members of the JUFERI (Jeunesse de l'Union des Fédéralistes et Républicains Indépendants) militia and (for example, in Kikula, on 9 September 1992) burned houses belonging to Katangese.

⁵⁰Interview with a Kasaiian from the Songe ethnic group, skilled worker in a private company, Likasi, 6 March 2009.

⁵¹Informal conversation with a Muluba of Eastern Kasai, employee at the SNCC (Société Nationale des Chemins de fer du Congo), Likasi, 4 December 2011.

⁵²The announcement of the preliminary results of the presidential election was postponed to 9 December 2011.

⁵³I do not know whether this rumour referred to a real anecdote. What interests me here is its spread.

⁵⁴Kamina is a town located in the north of the Katanga province, where relations between Katangese and Kasaiians were very strained during the election period – more so than in Likasi and Kolwezi – and forced many Kasaiians to flee to Kasai. About the situation in Kamina, see, for example: 'Après publication des résultats de la présidentielle: des actes xénophobes signalés à Kamina', *Radio Okapi*, 11 December 2011, <<http://radiookapi.net/actualite/2011/12/11/apres-publication-des-resultats-de-la-presidentielle-des-actes-xenophobes-signalés-kamina/>>, accessed 26 August 2012; Caritas Congo, 'Kasai Oriental: 943 Kasaiens venus de Kamina enregistrés à Mwene-Ditu', 19 December 2011, <http://caritasdev.cd/fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1342:retombees-des-elections-en-rdc-au-diocese-de-luiza-943-refoules-kasaiens-venus-de-kamina-au-katanga-enregistres-en-ce-lundi-19-decembre&catid=25&Itemid=48>, accessed 24 August 2013.

⁵⁵Observation, Likasi, 6 December 2011.

⁵⁶Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, retired executive, Likasi, 2 January 2012.

Lubumbashi, after the appointment of Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister on 15 August 1992: they had marched through the streets with two dogs wearing neckties to symbolize the previous prime minister, Nguz a Karl-I-Bond, and Governor Kyungu wa Kumwanza, the two Katangan leaders of the UFERI.

Similarly, Katangese and Kasaians tended to interpret any incident in light of the past violence. An almost 50 per cent increase in the price of palm oil within a week was interpreted in the following way: 'It starts like that.'⁵⁷ Another example, in mid-December 2011, was the cutting off of the water supply, an issue that is usually problematic in Likasi. In the Mission area, there is a well next to a mosque, which was being built at that time; the businessman who funded the construction of the mosque allowed people in the neighbourhood to draw water from the well, under the supervision of the watchman. For two days, there was a queue in front of the well. On the third day, the businessman ordered the watchman not to allow people to draw water, presumably to prevent the well drying up. A Kasaiian woman, who was not able to fill her cans with water, explained the decision of the businessman in the following way: 'The owner turned off the taps, because Katangese [in the queue] were insulting Kasaiians.'⁵⁸

Finally, the memory of violence was also noticeable in some practices of the activists of the UNAFEC. On 3 August 2011, the day before Tshisekedi was to hold a meeting, fifty or so men wearing red fatigues marched through Likasi.⁵⁹ This colour recalled the violence against Kasaiians, as members of the UFERI militia had worn red headbands.⁶⁰ This march was interpreted as a strategy implemented by UNAFEC activists to intimidate the supporters of the UDPS and therefore all Kasaiians, since the UDPS is seen by many Katangese as 'the Kasaiians' party'.

SIMPLIFICATION AND POLARIZATION OF IDENTITIES IN A TIME OF CRISIS

The November 2011 election period was a crisis situation that led to a process of oversimplification of ethno-regional identities, because of the competition for the presidential election between Joseph Kabila and Etienne Tshisekedi and the consequent fear of an outbreak of mass violence against Kasaiians in the event of Tshisekedi's victory.

This fear, which was shared by almost all the Kasaiians and Katangese interviewed, regardless of their social status or age, was particularly intense between the election day, on 28 November 2011, and the announcement of the presidential

⁵⁷Observation, Likasi, 10 December 2011.

⁵⁸Informal conversation with a Luba-Kasai woman who does odd jobs, Likasi, 17 December 2011.

⁵⁹Informal conversation with a member of the AFP, Likasi, 23 November 2011.

⁶⁰At the beginning of my fieldwork, before the election day in Lubumbashi, I saw a young man wearing a red headband. He was the only one I met during my two months' fieldwork. However, several of my interviewees confirmed that wearing a red headband was a practice used by some UNAFEC activists to 'intimidate' or 'scare' the supporters of the opposition candidates, especially those supporting Tshisekedi.

election returns, on 9 December 2011. During this time and in the days that followed, this fear was fuelled by information and speculation about the situation of Kasaians in Kamina and of supporters of Tshisekedi in Kinshasa, and by the numerous rumours about the alleged worsening relations between Joseph Kabila and the Katangese political leaders who supported his candidacy. The most frequent rumours related to the assassination or attempted assassination, ordered by Joseph Kabila, of Katangese leaders. For example, from 25 December 2011 until the end of my fieldwork (on 14 January 2012), almost every day I heard rumours about an attempted shooting of Kyungu wa Kumwanza or his assassination by poison. These rumours were fuelled by Kyungu's absence from the local media and the fact that in a reportage programme on Kyungu, a local television station had broadcast archive images.⁶¹

In some areas, where they felt threatened, some Kasaians fled⁶² 'as a precautionary measure'.⁶³ After Katangese miners had threatened them, Kasaiian artisanal diggers fled the Kamoto quarry in Kolwezi.⁶⁴ Likewise, in the anecdote mentioned above, the songs of the UFERI militia, sung every night by the Katangese employee of the Gécamines, led young Kasaiians who lived in the same area of Kolwezi to flee.⁶⁵ Another example of this fear was that, in Likasi, some Kasaiian children did not go to school on 6 December 2011 – the day when the announcement of the election returns was planned – or on 10 December, because they or their parents were 'afraid'⁶⁶ and 'in case there [was] trouble'.⁶⁷

Katangese, too, feared an outbreak of xenophobic violence. The following anecdote shows this mutual fear: four Kasaiian families suddenly left their houses in Kikula, a predominantly Katangese district in Likasi, and settled in the Dac area in the district of Likasi.⁶⁸ Their Katangese neighbours in Kikula became worried about this sudden move. They interpreted it as follows: 'They start to flee. It means that we are now the target in the neighbourhood. They leave because their brothers will come and attack us.'⁶⁹

⁶¹Informal conversation with a Muluba of Eastern Kasai, employee at the SNCC, Likasi, 6 January 2012; informal conversation with a Luba-Kasai woman, Lubumbashi, 13 January 2012.

⁶²Most of them went back to their houses and neighbourhoods after the Supreme Court of the Democratic Republic of Congo had confirmed the election of Joseph Kabila as president, on 16 December 2011.

⁶³Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, member of the Commission Justice et Paix et Sauvegarde de la Création de l'Eglise du Christ au Congo, Kolwezi, 3 January 2012.

⁶⁴Anecdote told by a Muluba of North Katanga, member of the Commission Justice et Paix et Sauvegarde de la Création de l'Eglise du Christ au Congo, in an interview conducted in Kolwezi, 3 January 2012.

⁶⁵Anecdote told by a Katangese employed in Gécamines and living in the same area, in an interview conducted in Kolwezi, 3 January 2012.

⁶⁶Informal conversation with a Kasaiian teenage girl living in the Mission area of Likasi district and student in a secondary school in the Kikula district, Likasi, 6 December 2011.

⁶⁷Informal conversation with a Luba-Kasai woman, her twenty-one-year-old son and her thirteen-year-old daughter, both students in secondary schools in the Kikula district, Likasi, 10 December 2011.

⁶⁸The city of Likasi is divided into four districts: Likasi, Kikula, Panda and Shituru.

⁶⁹Anecdote told by a Tshokwe of South Katanga, with administrative responsibilities in Likasi, in an interview conducted in Likasi, 29 December 2011.

During the election period, another factor worried Katangese: the phenomenon of *manseba*. Since 2008, many young Kasaians have arrived from Eastern Kasai and Western Kasai and have set up motorbike transport businesses, first around the copper and cobalt quarries in South Katanga, and then in the cities. In the context of the global economic crisis, which affected Katanga in the autumn of 2008, these young Kasaians had a higher standard of living than some natives, who were unemployed. Indeed, following the collapse of copper and cobalt prices at the end of 2008, about sixty mining companies closed down and about 300,000 diggers were unemployed. This led to tensions between the Kasaian riders and some Katangese: 'And as they are numerous in quarries, they are here, everywhere, they are here. They have even set up small income-generating businesses, and so on. Now the Katangese population find that "No, these people have come back again to dwarf us."⁷⁰ Katangese call Kasaian motorcyclists *manseba* ('maternal uncle' in Tshiluba, the Kasaians' native tongue), a term that Kasaian bikers find pejorative. After the candidacy of Etienne Tshisekedi was announced on 18 August 2010, many natives suspected Kasaian riders of 'having come [to Katanga] to sabotage the electorate of the outgoing president',⁷¹ Joseph Kabila. This collective representation that Kasaian motorbike riders came to Katanga 'to sabotage the electorate' of Kabila reflected an ethnic reading of the elections and a conflation between ethnic and provincial origins and the membership of a political party: many Katangese see the UDPS as 'the Kasaians' political party' and Tshisekedi as 'the Kasaians' leader', and they assume that each Kasaian is a UDPS supporter. According to this reading, Kasaian riders came to Katanga prior to the elections with the aim of increasing Tshisekedi's performance in Kabila's electoral stronghold. The following extract of an interview conducted with a Muluba of North Katanga, after the announcement of the legislative election returns, illustrates this interpretation of the displacement of the Kasaian riders from Kasai to the cities in South Katanga:

There are those who are called *manseba*. Did they really come to trade? No, they came for the elections, in order to strengthen those who were already here. It's because of that a Kasaian was elected [as member of the national parliament] in Likasi. He was elected by all these people.⁷²

Katangese also criticized them for 'talking in their native tongue'.⁷³

⁷⁰Interview with a Kasaian member of the AFP, Likasi, 5 December 2011.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, pensioner of the Gécamines, Likasi, 6 January 2012.

⁷³I show in my PhD thesis that since the 1990s violence, Kasaians tend to avoid talking in Tshiluba in public, in order to hide their Kasaian identity and thus escape stigmatization and discrimination. They would rather use Swahili or an ethnic language talked in Katanga. Some Kasaians, among those who first arrived in Katanga after 2007, do not use Tshiluba or Swahili, they speak with an accent that betrays their Kasaian ethnic background, and they would rather use Lingala in public. Other reasons, such as the lack of knowledge of Tshiluba in families that have lived in Katanga for generations or the fact that Tshiluba is viewed as 'the village language', explain why Tshiluba is not used in public.

The only thing we reproach them for is talking in their native tongue. That's exactly what causes trouble.⁷⁴

Instead of talking in a language which we understand, they talk among themselves ... they talk in their native tongue.⁷⁵

During the election period, not understanding what Kasaian said was perceived as a threat by Katangese. Talking in Tshiluba in public was also interpreted as a sign that Kasaian do not try to integrate themselves into Katangese society; this is one of the main stereotypes of Kasaian.⁷⁶

It is important to note that, although the socio-economic situation of the Kasaian riders aroused the feeling among some Katangese that they were 'dwarfed again', the current economic crisis affects both Katangese and Kasaian equally, and its effects are not comparable with those of the economic crisis of the early 1990s. At that time, the collapse of the mining parastatal Gécamines led to harsh competition for jobs. In that economic context, Katangese were sensitive to the exclusionary discourses of the UFERI leaders, which suggested a solution to the job issue: the deportation of Kasaian from Katanga and their replacement by Katangese in parastatals, private companies and local administration. In those discourses, Katangese also found an explanation for being socio-economically marginalized: the Kasaian's objective socio-economic domination and their tribalism – another of the main stereotypes of Kasaian. However, a reading in terms of competition between two social classes – the native unskilled workers versus the Kasaian migrants, executives or traders – is irrelevant to an understanding of the process of oversimplification of ethno-regional identities that occurred during the November 2011 elections. Indeed, since the 1990s violence, the Kasaian's socio-economic position is no longer dominant in South Katanga as many top and middle managers are 'natives'.⁷⁷ There are two main reasons for this: firstly, after Kasaian fled Katanga following the 1990s violence, the key positions in parastatals, private companies and local administration were occupied by Katangese, mainly Baluba of North Katanga. Hence, anti-North Katangan Baluba feelings increased among the South Katangan ethnic groups. The latter considered themselves to be the 'true natives' of the area and stigmatized the North Katangan Baluba as being 'too greedy and expansionist'⁷⁸ (Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005c: 42). Since 2008, because of the decentralization reform that, if implemented, would result in the division of Katanga into four provinces, the competition between the North Katangan Baluba elites and the elites from the South Katangan ethnic groups has re-emerged. South Katanga elites are encouraged

⁷⁴Interview with a member of the Commission Justice et Paix et Sauvegarde de la Création de l'Eglise du Christ au Congo, Kolwezi, 3 January 2012. In these sentences, the interviewee, who is a Muluba of North Katanga, did not talk as a member of a Katangese NGO specialized in bottom-up peace building, but expressed his own perceptions of Kasaian.

⁷⁵Interview with a leader of the North Katanga Baluba, Likasi, 2 January 2012.

⁷⁶This stereotype was used in the anti-Kasaian discourses in the early 1990s (see, for example, Dibwe dia Mwembu 2005a: 48).

⁷⁷Interview with Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, History Professor at the University of Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi, 12 January 2012.

⁷⁸Author's translation.

to claim a prominent position in the South Katanga area. For example, in Likasi in January 2009, the traditional chief of the Basanga sent a letter to President Joseph Kabila to protest against the recent appointment of two North Katangan Baluba as mayor and deputy mayor and the replacement of two Basanga with North Katangan Baluba to key positions in the university centre of Likasi. He asked Kabila to put an end to discrimination against the ‘autochthons’ – i.e. the Basanga – and threatened Baluba of North Katanga with reprisals.⁷⁹ The Basanga elites lobbied successfully: in 2011, Charles Mwanangwa Ntalasha Mungutana, a Musanga, was appointed mayor, and almost all the municipal authorities appointed at that time were also Basanga. Secondly, as Martin Kalulambi Pongo noted (2001: 171):

Yesterday and today, [Kasaïans] are viewed as potential competitors vis-à-vis the other ethnic or political groups both in Katanga and elsewhere in the country. Their strong capacity for work, their investment in trade, business, and other activities, their high mobility, and their solidarity rules, etc., could not be seen as an advantage by their compatriots, though this is applied often incorrectly to all the members of this community. Indeed, large numbers of [Kasaïans] are in precarious, even almost unbearable economic situations.⁸⁰

Most of the Kasaïans who came back or who moved for the first time to Katanga since 2007 belong to this second social category: they left Eastern Kasai after having lost their jobs because of the collapse of the MIBA. Since then, many of them have worked as artisanal miners in copper and cobalt quarries.

The belief in an outbreak of mass violence in the event of Tshisekedi’s victory explains why, after the CENI (Commission électorale nationale indépendante) had announced Kabila’s victory with 48.95 per cent of the recorded votes (against 32.33 per cent for Tshisekedi) on 9 December 2011, many Kasaïans resigned themselves to the result, although many were convinced that Kabila ‘had stolen’ Tshisekedi’s victory by ‘cheating’. The National Episcopal Conference of Congo also believed that the election results had been rigged – it issued official statements condemning the results of the presidential and legislative elections as unreliable – as did international observers, such as the Carter Center.⁸¹ Almost all Kasaïans interviewed during my fieldwork, regardless of their social status or age, were convinced that Tshisekedi had won the election and that Kabila had stolen it by massive election rigging. In interviews and informal conversations, this belief was generally matched with the opinion, which existed before the election, that Kabila was not Congolese but Rwandan. The following two quotations show this feeling of both disappointment and relief:

⁷⁹Letter from the traditional chief of the Basanga to President Joseph Kabila, Lubumbashi, 24 January 2009.

⁸⁰Author’s translation.

⁸¹See, for example, Carter Center, ‘DRC presidential election results lack credibility’, 10 December 2011, <<http://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/drc-121011.html>>, accessed 28 November 2013.

Some [Katangese] are delighted and others [Kasaians], too, are happy, because there will be peace.⁸²

It is better, because at least it will be peaceful. If it had been Tshisekedi, they would have driven us out.⁸³

Some local political leaders also used these statements about election fraud and Kabila's nationality in their speeches. For example, in Likasi, the lyrics 'Kabila, Rwandan, go back home' appeared in a propaganda song for a UDPS member standing for the parliamentary elections.

The November 2011 election period was a crisis situation because of the strong belief that a victory for Tshisekedi would result in mass violence.⁸⁴ Since the 1990s violence, 'the past is deliberately set aside' (Mehta and Chatterji 2001: 238) in daily interactions between Katangese and Kasaians, but the candidacy of Tshisekedi brought back memories of this violence, and hence the fear of further violence. Dominant in Katanga was an ethnic reading of the presidential election as an opposition between a Muluba of North Katanga – Joseph Kabila, the outgoing president and leader of the PPRD (Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie) – and a Muluba of Eastern Kasai – Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the UDPS. Thus, in Katanga, the competition between Kabila's supporters – i.e. the PPRD supporters, and the UNAFEC supporters, too, since Kyungu wa Kumwanza supported Kabila's candidacy – and Tshisekedi's supporters was seen as opposition between Katangese and Kasaians. More importantly, the resurrection of memories of the violence occurred because, following Tshisekedi's appointment as prime minister on 15 August 1992 to replace the Katangese leader Nguz a Karl-I-Bond, violence had escalated in Katanga and had started in Likasi and Kolwezi. During the November 2011 election period, it was therefore impossible to set aside memories of the violence in interaction situations.

This crisis situation led to the type of oversimplification and polarization of collective identities that Claudine Vidal (1991: 11) defines as a 'temporary passion' (*passion conjoncturelle*):

When a crisis situation upsets reasonable expectations, issues well contained until that point become central, so that aspirations and frustrations related to these issues result in the dramatic and dramatized calling into question of relationships between social categories.⁸⁵

In Likasi and Kolwezi, the mutual fear related to the electoral context led to an oversimplification of ethno-regional identities: the friend, neighbour or colleague was viewed only as a Kasaian or a Katangese. In *Épuration Ethnique en Afrique*,

⁸²Informal conversation with a Luba-Kasai woman, executive in a private company, Likasi, 9 December 2011.

⁸³Informal conversation with a Luba-Kasai young woman, law student, Likasi, 14 December 2011.

⁸⁴On the contrary, the 2006 presidential and legislative elections, which were boycotted by Tshisekedi and the UDPS, were not a crisis situation.

⁸⁵Author's translation.

Thomas Bakajika Banjikila (1997: 101) quotes the testimony of a Kasaian, which shows such a process of oversimplification of identities in the context of the Katangese secession and how the secession contributed to the assimilation of provincial identities, in this case that of Kasaians:

There was a feeling of aggressiveness against Baluba, who were then called Kasaians. I was born in Elisabethville, and I think my oldest friends came from Katanga and Kasai. But I had never felt that I was Kasaian. It was during this time that some of my friends made me feel that I was Kasaian. Especially during a rainy day, when I came home from school, I wanted to take shelter, as my friends from the secondary school Saint François de Sales did ... When I reached the place where my friends were, one of them said: 'That one, too, is a Kasaian.' I was afraid. I thought they could lynch me, and I kept walking in the rain. Since then, I have become aware that I am Kasaian.⁸⁶

During the November 2011 election period, friends belonging to the other community also tended to be seen only on the basis of their Kasaian or Katangan identity. Several interviewees said that, during this time, they did not meet their friends belonging to the other community. For example:

- Me, I have friends, they always came here [to his house]. And a friend ... I regret that. He is a pastor. Even a pastor! When he says ... I, myself, avoid him. Because when he says that, I, myself, will react. He says: 'No, no. Who is he? The Rwandan [Joseph Kabila], he has to go home.' ...
- It's difficult today to have a Kasaian friend?
- Today, it's difficult. Maybe a 'hello', only that. But you don't know what he thinks. You, you think that we have always the same affinity, but he thinks something completely different. Then we restrain ourselves ... we don't know what he might say to you. I had friends but today ... It's difficult.⁸⁷

This also altered the perception of matrimonial relationships. While in 2009 interviewees emphasized 'mixed marriages' (*mariages mixtes*) as an example of improving relations between the two communities, those unions were regarded as unthinkable and undesirable by Katangese and Kasaians alike during the 2011 election period.

As a consequence of the crisis situation, the expectations about face-to-face interaction situations with members of the other community were made more difficult, and the routine practices of coexistence based on self-censorship and avoidance tended to disappear in daily interactions. Because of the simplification and polarization of the Katangan and Kasaian identities – another consequence of the crisis situation – people considered their interactions with members of the other community in the light of various stakes, usually contained. In this specific political context, these stakes were the spectre of political and socio-economic domination by Kasaians and their claims for restitution of their houses – and the frustrations associated with this.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Interview with a Muluba of North Katanga, retired executive, Likasi, 2 January 2012.

After the November 2011 election period, silence and avoidance again became the norm in the interactions between Katangese and Kasaians, and references to the 1990s violence returned to being occasional.

CONCLUSION

The concept of a crisis situation appears relevant to the study of the process of oversimplification and polarization of the Katangan and Kasaiian identities observed during the November 2011 election period, but also in the context of the mass returns of Kasaians to Likasi in the early 2000s and to Kolwezi in the late 2000s. Taken as a crisis situation, the election period did indeed reveal how memories of the 1990s violence and an ethnic reading of the election led to an oversimplification and polarization of collective identities between Kasaians and Katangese. The Katanga perspective indicates a conflation of the national context (the competition between Kabila and Tshisekedi for the presidential election), the regional context (the fact that Kabila's candidacy was supported by Katangese political leaders, particularly Kyungu wa Kumwanza), and the local context (the socio-economic situation in Likasi and Kolwezi). The paper has thus demonstrated that any study of the processes of inclusion and exclusion at the micro level (the daily interactions between Katangese and Kasaians) should consider other scales of analysis. It has shown the influence of the macro level on these micro-level processes, but it says nothing about the influence of the meso level. There are strong indications pointing to the role played at this level by socio-cultural associations in the re-polarization of Katangese and Kasaiian identities during the elections. Further research is required both to understand the influence of these associations, by studying how, in crisis situations, their leaders mobilize their members, and to understand how, in different contexts, these associations, which cannot be reduced to a purely political role, can manufacture difference or commonality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research for this paper was funded by the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche) programme on the Politics of Xenophobic Exclusion in Africa. I would like to thank Wale Adebani, Laurent Fourchard, David Pratten and Aurelia Segatti for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper, presented in December 2013 at the closing conference of the ANR at the Centre of African Studies at the University of Cambridge. I would also like to thank the two anonymous readers for their helpful comments on a previous draft of this paper.

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ABSTRACT

Since the mass violence committed by Katangese against non-natives – mostly Kasaïans – in the early 1990s in the Katanga province (Democratic Republic of Congo), Katangese and Kasaïans have eschewed subjects relating to the past violence in their daily interactions. However, during the November 2011 presidential and legislative election period, expressions linked to the past violence, such as 'This time, you will go back home by foot' or 'This time, you will not drive us out. We will fight', were common. The paper documents and analyses how Kasaïans and Katangese dealt with the memory of the violence during this election period, in Likasi and Kolwezi, two cities particularly affected by violence. Based on qualitative fieldwork research conducted between November 2011 and January 2012, the paper understands the November 2011 election as being a crisis situation informed by the fear of a violent outbreak in the event of the victory of Etienne Tshisekedi, leader of the opposition and a Kasaïan. This crisis situation led to the simplification and polarization of collective identities: whether friend, neighbour or colleague, a person was perceived only as a Kasaïan or a Katangese. In such a context, routine practices of coexistence based on self-censorship and avoidance tended to disappear.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis les violences de masse perpétrées par des Katangais contre les non originaires – principalement les Kasaiens – au début des années 1990 au Katanga (République démocratique du Congo), les Katangais et les Kasaiens tendent à

éviter les sujets liés aux violences passées dans leurs interactions quotidiennes. Cependant, pendant la période des élections présidentielle et législatives de novembre 2011, les expressions rappelant les violences passées, telles 'Cette fois-ci, vous allez rentrer chez vous à pieds' ou 'Cette fois-ci, vous ne nous chasserez pas. Nous allons nous battre' furent fréquentes. Le papier décrit et analyse comment les Katangais et les Kasaiens ont géré la mémoire des violences pendant cette période électorale, à Likasi et Kolwezi, deux villes qui furent particulièrement touchées par les violences. En s'appuyant sur une recherche qualitative menée de novembre 2011 à janvier 2012, le papier fait l'hypothèse que les élections de novembre 2011 constituèrent une situation de crise liée à la peur de nouvelles violences en cas de victoire du leader de l'opposition et kasaien, Etienne Tshisekedi. Cette situation de crise entraîna une simplification et une polarisation des identités collectives: l'ami, le voisin ou le collègue ne fut plus perçu que comme un Kasaien ou un Katangais. Dans un tel contexte, les pratiques routinières de coexistence, qui sont fondées sur l'autocensure et l'évitement, tendirent à disparaître.