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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

AFRICAN CENTER FOR MIGRATION AND SOCIETY
(ACMS)

MANAGING THE FINAL JOURNEY HOME: EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES TO DEATH AMONG CONGOLESE MIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
BY COURSEWORK AND RESEARCH REPORT
BY

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MARCH 2013



DECLARATION

I, Darius KWIGOMBA do hereby declare: "*Managing the final journey home: exploring perceptions, experiences and responses to death among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg* as my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Forced Migration Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before in any other degree or examination at any other university.

DEDICATION

To you, my dear father, David KWIGOMBA, for your love and support.

ABSTRACT

The study explores perceptions and responses of Congolese migrants when they experience the death of other migrants. The study takes an ethnographic qualitative approach and gathers data from three Congolese ethnic groups living in Johannesburg. This is done by observing and participating in their funeral ceremonies as well as interviewing community members. The primary objective of this study is to understand the cultural changes migrants experience as a result of migration by exploring social, economic and cultural challenges migrants encounter when experiencing death of a fellow migrant. Findings of this study indicate migrants strive to observe their home culture in the hosting country. Marginalisation is the acculturation strategy that explains their ways of dealing with death in South Africa. Results further indicate migrants' perceptions of experiences and ways of dealing with death out of their places of origin are negatively annotated. This is due to difficulties in recreating elements of their own culture as well as the absence of people who are traditionally responsible for dealing with death among the migrant community. Lastly some causes of death, such as HIV/AIDS, are highly stigmatized. This study contributes to the scarce literature existent on the topic of perceptions and responses to death among migrants.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

African migrants settling in South Africa face numerous challenges. Dealing with death rituals and funeral rites in a new culture is one of the many tribulations faced by African migrants. As a consequence of the new socio cultural and economic environment, migrants encounter difficult situations which result in a myriad of challenges. These difficulties include dealing with values and practices that may seem inconsistent with traditional customs of their home countries. These differences manifest themselves for example, when in the new environment migrants have to deal with different policies and customs around the management of death. The interaction between the migrant communities and the host society around the management of death can influence patterns of acculturation.

Leaving one's homeland and migrating to another country results in change. Adjustments occur in various areas of migrants' lives. Change often presents itself through one's own culture. The more there is a continual exchange of ideas from people of one culture to another, the more changes are experienced (Adler and Graham, 1989). When migrants enter into first hand and sustained contact with the dominant culture of the foreign land, acculturation occurs, (Berry, 1997).

This research will explore the question of how migration itself impacts on the migrant's culture through their perceptions, experiences and responses to death. To understand cultural changes, I look not only at death losses but also losses of cultural practices and changes around death resulting from migration.

In this study, I explore at the acculturation strategies migrants are embarking upon through their ways of responding to death as well as the effect of these changes, I attend to their own perceptions on the matter. The study will therefore consider their beliefs in ancestors, rituals and funeral rites as well as burial practices. A study dealing with issues of death among migrants is of paramount importance especially when examining death in the African context.

Death as a rite of passage requires the performance of ceremonies and a strong adherence to cultural values. In African cultures, death involves a transformation of the physical into the spiritual (Lee and Vaughan, 2008, Asuquo, 1011). For many African communities, not performing the funeral rites in a case of death is like losing one's identity (Davies, 2002).

Asuquo (2011) adds that the ritualistic symbolism used during death ceremonies are rooted in traditional religions which have existed since immemorial times. For some it is believed the dead interact with the living as ancestors and are able to return to the earth to be reborn in Africa (Onyewuenyi, 2008; Asuquo, 2011).

Africa has a diversity of cultures and communities with their own unique customs and symbology. This study focuses upon migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), living in Johannesburg, South Africa. A study conducted by Ayiera, (2009) among Congolese migrants in Kenya, found they claim they still belong to their homeland even at the point of death.

Most of the population in DRC identify themselves through ethnic groups and each of these groups has particular traditions involved in responding to death within their communities .While traditional processes followed are unique to each culture in the DRC death management is a task for elders .as is the case in many other African communities. These procedures typically involve family and material resources. For the Congolese people, artefacts such as the banana tree as well as many other items are necessary for dealing with death.

Four hundred and twelve (412) ethnic groups exist within the DRC, speaking various languages (Amisi, 2005). In this study, I concentrated on three ethnic groups – Shi, Fuliru and Rega. My selection of these groups is based partially upon the fact I am from the same region. I have a good knowledge of the culture, the language and I have been living amongst them, as a migrant in Johannesburg, for more than a decade.

The choice of these three communities has also been motivated by the fact that they come from the eastern region of the DRC. This is a region most seriously affected by war and people have fled the country in great numbers.

Because there is no practical way to keep records, exact figures of evacuees cannot be known. The UNHCR 2013 country operation profile states more than 400,000 Congolese refugees currently live outside their own country. The above number does not include other Congolese who practice other forms of migration.

Many Congolese find refuge in South Africa and a large number of these have settled in Johannesburg. The majority of those who are in South Africa are young (Steinberg, 2011). It is said by many migrants that young people are not usually tasked with the management of death. Traditionally, it is the elders who manage death. The Congolese communities chosen

for this study have differing ways of dealing with death in the DRC. In their own country, there are social structures – such as family, traditional and religious systems – to support people through their experiences of death. The death of a family member should and must be mourned in line with their tradition. Typically, however, Communities of Congolese migrants living abroad find themselves without the resources needed to deal with death.

An analysis of death experiences coupled with the absence of traditional requirements, will allow understanding how migration shapes ways of managing death. This aspect is crucial as it serves as a lens to understand how migration impacts cultural changes and maintenance among migrant groups. It also allows for reflecting upon the broader process of change among migrant communities.

The topic of this study can make people feel uncomfortable. It may well remind participants of sad experiences of losing their own loved ones. However, in the course of this study, participants became comfortable enough to discuss the way death is dealt with in their respective communities as well as how they perceive these topics.

A matter such as dealing with death in a migration context seems to fully engage migrants. They want to talk about it. Participants expressed concern about the way their fellow countrymen are treated when they die in Johannesburg. Issues raised by migrants during the study led to discussions of other broader topics including their place in South African society.

BACKGROUNDS

DEATH AND DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

Socio-political events and environmental factors occurring in Africa lead many people to displacement and death. The World Health Organization (WHO) report of 2004 states Africans die in higher numbers as a result of lack of water sanitation. In this respect, Africa surpasses all other continents in the world. The cruelest weapons of death in Africa are hunger and human right abuses (Turton, 2003); war orchestrated by rebellions and problematic elections. The latter occurs more often than not in the many countries of the African continent (Afoaku, 2007, Kabemba, (ND).

The occurrence of such conflicts not only results in many deaths but also forces people to flee their homes (Cohen and Deng, 1998). People usually flee their countries to seek protection and better survival odds in other places (Beirens and Fontein, 2011). Currently, an estimated

30 million Africans live outside their homelands due to various conflicts on the continent (Ratha et al., 2011)

The DRC, among other African countries, has been at war since 1996. In the case of the DRC, control of natural resources is one of the primary causes of the conflict (Samset 2002). These conflicts have resulted in displacements of many people on the continent. A number of studies (Carballo and Nerukar, 2001; Avato et al., 2010; Oucho and Crush, 2010), mention that migrants' health is often at risk as they move. As a result of lack of access to medical care in hosting countries, many migrants die in the process of migration.

In the context of death resulting from conflicts, there is little or no room for culture to be practiced. To some extent, this context makes culture nonexistent due to pressure exerted by war, violence and change of environment. The importance of culture among Africans when dealing with death and burial cannot be minimized. An African laid to rest without involving the traditions of the deceased will be viewed as a "shameful burial."

It has been observed that proper burial is good not only for the current generation but even for those to come in the future (Lee and Vaughan, 2008). The lack of ritual and culture in contexts of war and displacement also brings into question consequences for the dead as well as the living. Nichols (2011) asserts: Africans strongly believe that the performance of their rituals has as much impact on the lives of the living as it does upon the afterlife of the deceased.

Culture allows the living to remain attached with their dead (Lee and Vaughan, 2008). The importance of exploring how death events are managed without cultural involvement among African communities – or the possibility of reproducing the rituals as they would do at home lies within this exploration. It provides a possibility to understand processes of cultural change and cultural retention. Additionally, along the way, how these processes are perceived by migrants.

To understand better the question underlying this study, I have opted to use cases of migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Specifically, I focus on cases of those who come from the eastern region of that country.

The eastern part of the DRC has been a conflict zone for over a decade and a continuous stream of migrants leave the region. This has been documented in various studies (Woltons, 2011; Mukwege, et al. 2010; Romkema, 20011). This war has resulted in many atrocities occurring to the population (Coghlan et al 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that a large number of people flee this area and the country altogether. Many of them, especially the

youth, enter into foreign lands like South Africa with the hope of a better life (Steinberg, 2011).

Most of those who come to South Africa are seeking better economic opportunities. As a result, most of them make their home in Johannesburg, a well-known economic node in the continent (Landau and Segatti (2009). Furthermore, Johannesburg has been a city attracting many migrants since the economic and political liberation of the country in 1994 at the end of apartheid (Landau, 2006).

Among those who have come to live in South Africa, some are refugees; others are economic migrants and still others who come to South Africa for other purposes such as education etc. There are difficulties in establishing exact numbers of migrants living in South Africa, as Landau and Segatti state "No one knows how many international migrants are in South Africa" (Landau and Segatti, 2009: 5). However there is consensus that a growing number of migrants have been arriving into South Africa. Since 1994; "South Africa; continues to receive an ever increasing flow of asylum applications and currently hosts more than 470,000 asylum seekers and refugees" (Holscher and Bozalek, 2012:1094).

The number of migrants exiting from the DRC has also increased. Citing Groot 2004, Amisi mentions that since 1994, the South African department of home affairs received 152,414 asylum seekers and the majority was from DRC (Amisi 2005:1). A survey conducted in South Africa by Steinberg, states: in 2003, a total of 75000 migrants were recognized as refugees and one third, 24000, of these were Congolese nationals, (Steinberg, 2011). This implies many Congolese migrants reside in Johannesburg but the exact number is not currently known.

Migration is defined as "the process of going from one country, region or place of residence to settle in another" (Bhugra and Becker 2005: 18). Migrating from one's own country to another, regardless of the motivation to migrate, often presents varied challenges to individuals, families, and sometimes entire communities (Pursell, 2004; Diegues, 1981:95).

Challenges migrants face are varied and may include lack of accessibility to social services, xenophobic exclusion, lack of employment opportunities, challenges with healthcare services, as well as dealing with death. It is also important to mention here, regardless of its type and form, migration is often associated with numerous challenges (Awumbila, 2007; Garcia, 2010; Lakika, 2011; Amit, 2012).

Migrants living in South Africa face challenges of xenophobic exclusion (Misago et al. 2010). The xenophobic attacks of 2008 in South Africa resulted in a death of more than 60 people. In this outburst, many people were injured and more than ten thousand people were displaced (Landau, 2010). Post-apartheid South Africa has its own economic challenges (Holcher and Bozalek, 2012). These challenges affect both the local population of South Africa and the migrants resulting in conflicts between the two groups (Holcher and Bozalek, 2012).

A number of migrants also face challenges of access to documents that can legalize their stay in South Africa and this result in a form of exclusion by some service providers toward migrants in terms of accessing employment (Holcher and Bozalek, 2012). Some studies reveal "…the poor socio-economic position and undocumented status of migrants in South Africa make them vulnerable to super-exploitation, low wages, poor working conditions and abuse" (Crush, 1999:2). It is therefore apparent in this case that migrants face financial challenges to cater for many of their needs (Hunter and Skinner, 2003).

Challenges related to medical treatment faced by migrants in South Africa cannot be the only cause of their death but this can result in many death cases among migrants. It is mentioned that international migrants are perceived as being much more than they are in the country. Additionally, they are viewed as people of poor health who come to South Africa for medical treatment Vearey (2010). While the above mentioned perception may not be true, this same perception can dictate the level of service provision to migrants in South Africa.

Studies by Meel (2003) show in South Africa, there is a higher rate of death triggered by economic challenges. Such situations may or may not be the direct cause of death among migrants but nevertheless have implications on migrants' perceptions of death. Migrants have an increased sense of vulnerability in their host countries which may, in turn, affect the ways in which they experience and deal with death (Stobbe, 2012).

As migrants move, they do not leave their culture behind; they move with it (Berry, 2009). However, as migrants face different economic and social challenges, some still make every effort to observe their traditional ways of dealing with death when there is an event requiring involvement of their culture. A recent study conducted among migrants in South Africa examined the ways such people manage death revealed migrants are concerned about social sanctions. There is a fear those dealing with death outside the home country will not proceed according to how it ought to be done at home (Nunez and Wheeler, 2012).

One of the multiple challenges migrants have to deal with in South Africa is the occurrence of death and the extent in which they can involve their culture and the financial expenses required. In addition to these monumental challenges, migrants may face restrictions on their culture arising from policies regarding the handling of death in the host society.

THE IMPACT OF THE LAW OF SOUTH AFRICA ON DEATH CUSTOMS

While there are numerous cultural aspects to death, it is important to note the legal regulations concerning how the death should be handled in South Africa.

Dealing with death in South Africa involves some bureaucracy (Pieterse et al., 2009). The environmental and the cultural settings of Congo are quite different and may be at odds with South African culture. For example, in South Africa there are policies in place dealing with the dead. These take precedence over cultural norms. They involve the interventions of legally registered professionals such as undertakers, the department of home affairs, forensic doctors (Pieterse et al. 2009). These South African policies are in direct contravention of many cultural practices of the DRC and will be explored further later.

When a Congolese dies in the DRC, the body is managed by close family members to give it respect before burial (Ayiera, 2009). There is not much in the way of bureaucracy involved in the process of dealing with death in DRC. The process of dealing with death in DRC is often conducted at the home of the deceased. If the decedent dies in a hospital, the body is taken home where the family will meet and deal with the death with involvement of culture. Family members wash the body, cloth it and perform rituals before going for burial. Few cases involve mortuaries. Mortuaries are almost non-existent in the DRC and this is especially true in the eastern region of the DRC. As well, forensic doctors are almost non-existent in the DRC.

In South Africa, the department of home affairs, undertakers, forensic doctors all play a role in bureaucratic procedures associated with death. Moreover, funeral parlours are central to providing continuity to the traditions and customs of families at home. Such practices become the new norm for the present day younger generation currently living in Johannesburg (Nunez, n/d). The legal framework guiding the approach of death issues in South Africa, often conflict with Congolese cultural practices dealing with death.

For the Congolese, funerals are conducted at the home of the deceased as a symbol of honour and respect to the deceased and to give culture proper space of being performed (Ayiera, 2009). However, South Africa is not the homeland of the Congolese. While a number of migrants strive to maintain their culture while away from home might raise fundamental questions such as: "how the dead would be ensured safe passage into the afterlife, if not buried at 'home' under the watchful eyes of the living?" Lee and Vaughan (2008:356).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of this study is to explore cultural changes. The first objective of this study is to explore migrant's responses as well as the arrangements made to deal with death of other migrants. Secondly I enquire how migration has affected traditional, religious, economic and emotional ways in which migrants experience and respond to death and examine what acculturation strategies are adopted by Congolese migrants when experiencing death in their communities.

Thirdly, I intend to identify and attempt to understand their perceptions and responses to death. I especially will explore when death is caused by external events or illnesses often associated with stigma such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis (TB).

I intend to do this by examining perceptions and responses provided by Congolese migrants in their South African communities. I focus on death rituals in situations of displacement and loss of traditional structure to understand what communities resort to when dealing with death in out of their places of origin. I inquire what the procedure is when there is a death of a sibling or their migrant counterparts based in Johannesburg. I also will inquire whether or not these migrants feel about their own possible deaths, being so far away from home. And if such concerns exist, what arrangements have they made to deal with their own possible death. In order to achieve the above aims and to respond to these questions, this study will firstly attempt to understand the social, economic and cultural challenges migrants encounter when experiencing the death of a fellow migrant.

This first chapter has presented some of the current conflicting situations occurring on the African continent influencing migration. The chapter introduced the concept of the African migrant and the challenges they face negotiating death rituals in a foreign land. Issues such as changes in traditional practices among African, economic and legal framework arising from migration after they arrive in their host countries have been discussed.

Thereafter, I will focus on contextual factors such as economic challenges, aspects of religion in dealing with death, the role of law of South Africa concerning death and the way this legal framework influences migrants' practices and perceptions around death rituals. All this will be explored among a group of Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg.

The study utilises the Acculturation theory as it is helpful in understanding people in a process of cultural contact (Becker et al., 2010). The third chapter employs ethnography which is the primary methodology used for this study. It has been argued that ethnography is a better method for understanding a society in its diversity and cultural context (Erickson, 1977). The fourth chapter presents the results of the study in a content analysis. The fifth and final chapter presents the conclusion summery based upon the content in each of the preceding chapters in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses upon existent studies around death and conflicts in Africa. This is important because it provides basic understanding of the cultural aspects of death in the context of host destinations in African societies. While there has been a great deal of academic interest in the study of migration over several decades, the question of how migrants deal with death has not been adequately studied and only recently more attention has been placed on the matter (Nunez & Wheeler 2012), This may be because of anxiety arising from the topic itself. It has been established that death is a subject most societies tend to avoid (O'Connell et al. 1977).

IS THERE AN AFRICAN WAY OF DEALING WITH DEATH?

African societies are perceived as being 'good' in dealing with issues of death (Lee and Vaughan, 2008: 341). According to Lee and Vaughan (2008: 345), "distinctions made between good and bad deaths often reflected moral concerns over the living". Death of individuals through war, disease or accidents is perceived as bad deaths (Lee and Vaughan, 2008). Furthermore, among some African communities, committing suicide is considered to be a problematic death (Lee and Vaughan, 2008). A good death offers a chance of reincarnation while a bad death brings only evil spirits and possession (Lee& Vaughan, 2008). Some African communities believe those who die as a result of good death will remain helpful in solving issues for their living family members and they call them ancestors (Ayiera, 2009; Nichols, 2011).

In addition, as Nicholson puts it: "...becoming an ancestor is the goal of most Africans" (Nichols, 2011:8). Life does not end but continues after death. Culturally, Africans believe in the importance of relating to their people who die. They live in relation to the world of the ancestors (Lee& Vaughan, 2008). Their social world comprises both the dead and the living whereby the dead are believed to remain alive and reside among different natural things such as rivers, trees, etc. (Diop, 1967; Degorce, 2010; Nichols, 2011). The dead are perceived as able to help in many of the daily situations that the living cannot manage. Thus the spirits of the dead are important to keep within their families (Ayiera, 2009).

For example, among some Africans, spirits of the dead are perceived to be a good means of security as well as other assistance for living family members (Berg, 2003; Nichols, 2011). Among many Africans, the above perceptions bring on aspirations of being an ancestor themselves (Nichols, 2011). Being an ancestor is analogous to strength and the ability to control visible and invisible things (Nichols, 2011). For that reason, some people call their ancestors through reverencing them (Fortes, 1966; Berg 2003). The process of keeping the dead among their living family requires cultural practices. In relation to the above reasons it is stated that: "the organization of death is fundamental in understanding the social fabric and belief systems of 'traditional African societies" (Lee& Vaughan, 2008: 343).

Common practices among some communities in Africa include people coming together when death occurs, to mourn and support the grieving family in various ways. During such events, a process of mourning is organized (Nichols, 2011). African societies get involved in mourning through their participation and offering support to mourners. This makes the environment a good place to generate social meanings. The mourning process among Africans is described by De Boeck (2008) as: a vital environment for the social production of meanings. This is due to the various rituals performed during these events. In many African communities, coping with death involves elders and cultural practices of the community experiencing the event of death (Nichols, 2011).

Death rituals performed are often intended to help move the deceased from a state of impurity to a state of harmony with the spirit world (Davies, 2002). It is also common practice among African communities to bury their dead in their homeland (Whyte, 2005). As reported by Whyte (2005) east African mothers ought to be buried where the children are living to reinforce the idea that the children should care for the spirits (emigu) of their dead parents.

To ensure a positive outcome of the rituals performed, human and material resources are needed. For example: the presence of elders who are assumed to have the capacity of performing the rituals. As for material resources, trees and rivers are often an important part of the ritual. When African people die outside their homelands, the performance of rituals may often be obstructed due to the absence of both human and material resources necessary for the performance of such rituals (Ayiera, 2009). Among some African communities, the absence of performed rituals, or if the deceased is buried outside their country, there is an assumption that the soul of the departed cannot rest in peace (Ayiera, 2009). In yet other communities, when a family member is buried "out of place," rituals are performed to bring

his/her soul home. This is done to fulfil the expectations of the loved one who dies (Nichols, 2011).

Rituals of cleansing are often practiced to bring the spirit of the deceased back to the family (Nichols, 2011; Sossou, 2002). In Africa, cleaning rituals often use water to fulfil the washing ceremonies as well as animals used for variety of purposes. In some communities such as the Nguni in the sub Saharan Africa, a fox is often slain. This is called "the returning ox," (Nichols, 2011). The slaying of an animal is connected ideas that an ox accompanies the dead back to the living to protect their families (Nichols, 2011).
African rituals vary across ethnic groups. However, they can be separated according to three phases: the period when the person dies, the period when the living are mourning and the period after death and mourning. The first phase begins with testament of the customs that must be observed during the mourning period. Prior to the death of a man or women, last rites are observed. Among the many communities, these vary. For instance, in Rwanda, sorghum grains and sheep's wool are placed in the hand of the deceased. Certain plants are to milk or sorghum beer and poured into the deceased's mouth. Incantations are then pronounced (Spijker, 2005). It is believed that members of the family who do not observe these rituals are at risk of danger (Ayiera, 2009).

Most African cultures make use of the mourning period for family to place themselves in social isolation (Spiker (2005). During the first couple of days a fire is kept burning and family members observe sexual abstention. The conclusion of mourning is often symbolised in the rites of purification. The formal end to the mourning period is symbolized by a family meal during which a tribute is paid to the deceased by offering beer (Spijker, 2005). As well, many other cultural practices are involved.

In some African cultures, a funeral is perceived as the main event to demonstrate wealth and family unity (Gueschiere, 2005). Celebrating a funeral involves a long process, often a weeklong ceremony (De Witte, 2003). For example, in Ghana money and death are interrelated. The funeral presentation is juxtaposed with the reality of the daily economic struggles for the basic essentials of life (De Witte, 2003).

In spite of reverence to tradition, changes in customs relating to death management have become evident. For example, a study conducted by De Boek (2008) reveals in terms of how

death is dealt with, there is an increasing cultural gap between the young and old. That gap has been the result of socio economic conditions of the country. It has also diminished the observation of culture among the youth of Kinshasa.

However, this does not necessarily mean culture is being ignored or neglected by the Congolese people. Instead, it can be seen as a result of hardships related to conflicts in the country negatively affecting their culture. In the DRC, death is ideally dealt with by elders as in other African communities. Over the past few years, however, some cultural changes have appeared in Kinshasa where young community members have had to become involved in the process of dealing with mourning and burial process (Deboek 2008).

Due to the crisis in the DRC, mourning processes have been shifted and are often used by the youth as a place of demonstrating their anger against the political and socio economic condition of the country (De Boek 2012). Nevertheless, for a large number of Congolese, the presence of elders and ritual performance is an experiential need and becomes a concern when not performed. In Kenya, Congolese migrants say that dying and being buried outside the Congo in the absence of their culture concerning death is problematic (Ayiera, 2009).

This section refers to death in Africa, relationship with the ancestors and death rituals that intervene when a death occurs among some African communities. It also explores the importance of funerals as well as cultural changes observed in the DRC. These are helpful in understanding cultural practices of sub-Saharan Africans. The following section will convey how a burial outside one's country influences perceptions of death among migrants. Comparisons with other geographical contexts reveal the centrality of home as a preferred place for burials. This is evident among various groups and is a concern not exclusive to Africans (Malkki, 1995).

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN DEALING WITH DEATH

Among Africans, traditional customs dealing with death and religious practice are often not separated. Most African communities believe their departed souls have a special place to go – such as certain lands or rivers (Nichols, 2011). This does not differ in any significant way from Western religious beliefs of going to heaven or hell when they die. For both culture and religion, death is seen to be a form of relocation; where the deceased moves from the flesh to spirit and sent to a certain place determined by his/her culture or religion.

The body is often “sent off” through the performance of rituals. For example, when a Muslim dies, the body must be taken to a place where there is no smoke. As well, there is a certain category of people – those who have not been purified – who cannot enter the place where these rituals are being performed (Nichols, 2011). In this instance, religious and traditional rituals are usually performed to have the dead transformed into ancestors. Religion and culture perform rituals for purposes of life after death.

In the context of migration, where the performance of ritual becomes difficult, religion is often used by migrants as a cover for culture. In a study conducted among Congolese refugees in Kenya, it was found that in the absence of original culture dealing with death, some Congolese refugees found comfort in involving their faith-based institutions (Ayiera, 2009). For many migrants, religion can become a universal and common ground and several religious organizations – churches or mosques – intervene in dealing with death in a variety of ways. Awolalu (1976) emphasizes that religion is a fundamental, perhaps the most important, influence upon the lives of most Africans. A significant number of Africans believe in the existence of some Higher Power (Nichols, 2011)

There is a high level of religious culture among African people (Mbiti, 1970). There are many religions but the most dominant are Christian and Muslim. Religion permiates many activities of life and can hardly be isolated among Africans. As they move in the process of migration, they also move with their religion. Mbiti asserts that “people take their religion with them wherever they go” (Mbiti, 1991:1). Wink and Scott (2005) emphasize religion plays a major role in managing the fear of death.

The majority of Congolese belong to Christianity (Mangu, 2008). This implies that when Congolese move to South Africa where they face challenges of culture, religion might have a role to play in either rejecting the hosting culture or replacing the absent culture of origin. The study also looks at the role religion plays and its influence upon the culture of Congolese migrants when dealing with death.

While Congolese communities have very specific rituals and traditions surrounding death, these processes have been limited to the context of their own country – until their migration to Johannesburg. It is therefore important to understand some of the challenges that get in the way of their ways of dealing with death.

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON DEATH CUSTOMS IN VARIUOS GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXTS

According to Mand (2006), the study of South Asian transnationalism notes migration can be a household decision so kinship and ethnic ties are maintained. This suggests the death of a migrant might not necessarily exclude the same people involved in decision making before the migration. Furthermore, familial networks span national boundaries and these ties are in a process of becoming fluid rather than being static (Mand, 2006).

Many migrants including the participants in this study maintain a culture of contact with their family members while they are outside of their home countries. When these expatriate migrants die, families of the deceased are involved whether through financial intervention or in bringing the body back home in accordance to their culture. For migrants in South Africa, this occurrence is noted in numerous studies (Hunter and Skinner, 2003; Muzumbukilwa, 2011) that they face economic difficulties. Such challenges not only affect their way of dealing with death in South Africa but can also hinder the possibility of sending bodies home for burial. Such a situation more often than not has cultural implications.

Although migration separates people, a kind of kinship based upon social capital and ethnic/cultural ties is maintained. These ties are often manifested during occasions such as funerals. Migrants living abroad often send their departed ones back home for burial (Gardner, 2002). This serves to emphasis the significance of maintaining family ties among migrants as well as the issue of the preferred cross-cultural place of burial. However, they often do not have the economic capacity to do this.

Changes occurring in a migrant's life in Johannesburg can be a barrier to the fulfillment of many of their cultural obligations in the host country when one of their fellows dies. Among migrants, there are many obstacles hindering the fulfillment of such practices and these are discussed in the next section.

Adler and Gielen (2003:9) say: "migration itself, regardless of its motives, is a challenge to human resiliency and resourcefulness from the beginning to the end". It is virtually impossible to predict what is ahead for most people in the process of migration. What is only known to these people is their previous way of life. Most people possess some elements of culture and when they relocate, their culture goes with them. It can be argued that it is easy to

carry and remember what one received from back home (Adler and Gielen, 2003). This, of course, is because what lies ahead is totally unknown to the person concerned.

Inability to provide a decent funeral for a loved one makes relatives feel unhappy or even distraught, as they believe the deceased is still one of them. It is suggested that death and funeral ritual emphasises the reaffirmation of social ties. An inability to achieve this may exacerbate feelings of isolation (Geschiere, 2005). A case in point is the Bali-Nyonga in Cameroon whose ritual around death was altered as a result of the construction of a mortuary. More families among Bali-Nyonga now use the mortuary and this has meant that burials are being delayed. The older generation do not believe it is proper to store the corpse in a mortuary as it entails spiritual risks (Page, 2007).

The previous sections of this study have dealt with issues around death customs among African people, cultural implication, economic challenges as well as the role religion plays in dealing with death. The next section presents the theoretical basis helping to conceptualise the changes taking place around death practices. These changes usually occur when migrants first encounter a new culture and society such as South Africa and later again when their residence in the new country becomes permanent.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A brief review of the literature as provided above indicate that generally there are various economic, social, cultural and psychological aspects to both migration and death. The way in which migrants deal with death in their host country therefore depends on the extent to which they adapt and cope with the challenges associated with migration.

In order to understand how migrants adapt in their host countries and communities, we will discuss acculturation, a theory commonly used for this topic. Acculturation refers to the aspects of cultural contact and resulting changes (Becker et al., 2010). In more explicit terms, it refers to the "changes in original patterns, behaviors, and values that result from continuous and direct contact between different cultures" (Becker et al., 2010; Beirens and Fontaine, 2011; Horenczyk and Munayer, 2007).

Acculturation however, does not mean migrants will fully relinquish their original cultures. According to Beirens and Fontaine (2010) adaptation to the host culture "does not preclude maintenance of one's own ethnic group culture". This suggests that although adjustments

may occur in the way migrants deal with death in response to the social, economic and cultural challenges encountered in the host country, there can still be a space to practice their ethnic cultures."

This is referred to as cultural integration which according to Beirens and Fontaine (2010) has been associated with less stress in the process of acculturation. Other acculturation strategies are assimilation, separation and marginalization. Cultural assimilation occurs if a person absorbs the host culture and abandons his culture of origin (Beirens and Fontaine, 2010; Padilla and Perez, 2003).

If the culture of origin is maintained and the host culture avoided, it is called cultural separation (Beirens and Fontaine, 2010). But if the culture of origin is lost and the person fails to connect to the host culture, it is called cultural marginalization Beirens and Fontaine (2010). Understandably, this can lead to psychological problems among migrants.

Applied to this study, these approaches can help explain how Congolese migrants in Johannesburg function. The three selected Congolese communities are acculturating themselves – and their ethnic ways of dealing with death – as they strive to survive amid new social, economic and cultural challenges they now encounter in South Africa.

Taft (1977a:121) indicates adaptation to an unfamiliar culture is a special case scenario of responding to a new environmental event, where that event is complex, enduring, social in nature and where it has a cultural context unfamiliar to the person concerned". Adaptation provides a collective framework for any form of evolutionary thought on change. In addition, to differentiation and integration (Stiward, 1955), the concept allows the possibility to examine variations resulting from adaptation. Examples of this include adjustment, reaction and withdrawal. Adaptation is a response to a new environment, where it has a complex enduring, social and cultural context unfamiliar to the migrants.

Congolese nationals who relocate to South Africa encounter an entirely new culture. Based on their historical background and their home lifestyle, the law and policies of the hosting country become a daunting challenge impeding the process of adaptation.

Terre Blanche (2006) mentions there is distinction between collective or group-level acculturation. This indicates change in the culture of the group as well as psychological acculturation results in changes in the individual's behavior. In this instance, as migrants come with different cultures from their places of origin, they can influence the host community's culture while they are learning the new culture (Rodriguez-Garcia, 2006).

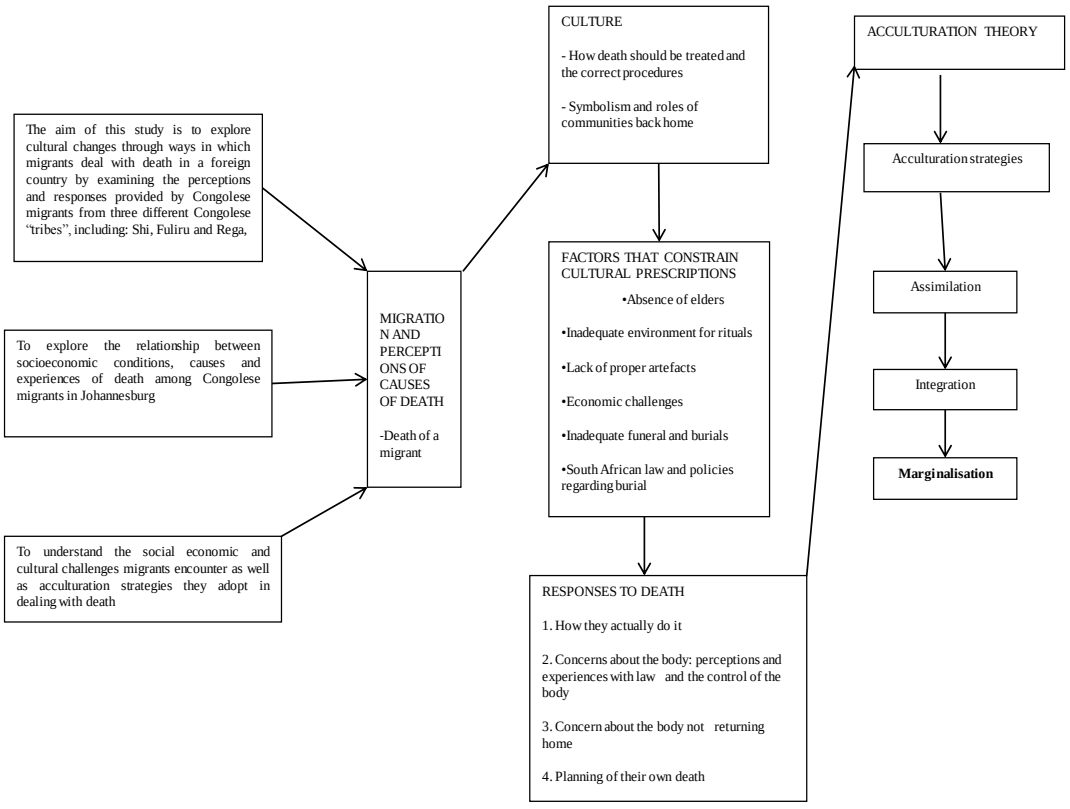
Congolese nationals who have moved to South Africa encounter the realities of a new culture. Some are refugees, others are documented and yet others are non-documented

(illegal) migrants. The fact that they come from a different culture, with a different historical background added to their cultural lifestyle creates many challenges.

When confronted with legal issues or economic challenges added to coping with a recently adopted lifestyle, adaptation – acquiring a new culture – is extremely difficult. While Congolese migrants value and maintain their culture while residing away from their homeland, (Ayiera, 2009) it is imperative they adapt to their new environment. In order to survive, migrants must become familiar with their new context.

Dealing with death involves numerous cultural and economic factors, legal issues as well as the many actors associated with the process. For many African communities, burial has to occur in their homeland. There are predetermined practices that must be followed and these are often hindered by the shift created by migration. The study of death is important and can be used as terrain to explore how migrants have acculturated through their ways of dealing with death in Johannesburg amid all the changes they have encountered.

The following schematic explains the factors involved in migrants' responses to death and how acculturation theory connect to these factors



This chapter has examined several studies related to migration and the ways in which various communities deal with death in Africa. This section examined the socioeconomic challenges

impacting the death customs of migrants. The emphasis was related to different aspects of migration and acculturation strategies associated with migrants and death. Various aspects were elaborated on in order to obtain a grounded clarification of the themes arising from the topic.

However, as there is a remarkable scarcity of the literature on how migrant populations respond to death in host countries, it was also a challenge to obtain relevant literature aligning with at least some aspects of this study. The researcher obtained material from several previous studies dealing with the death of migrants from all over the African continent. The literature presented in this study covers many aspects in relation to perceptions, experiences and responses to death, which is the topic underlying this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The social events used to generate information on cultural changes in this study are events of death among Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg. The focus includes the death, the funeral and burial as well as the memories of people who participate in these events. I have used participant observation, in depth interviews and group discussions centering on death experiences of their migrant counterparts in Johannesburg.

Participants in this study originate from the eastern region of the DRC and belong to three ethnic groups who usually label themselves as "tribes". I have selected the Fuliru, Rega, and Bashi tribes. While I am aware of the problematic usage of the term "tribe", I have decided to retain it as the term is used among Congolese for self-identification purposes. The term helps to access these groups' frontiers or sense of belonging in South Africa. It is indicated that the term seems to have a close relationship with the difficulties in accessing support from the South African government (Amisi, 2005).The term used in this context mobilizes resources and promotes a sense of unity.

The research uses a qualitative method of data gathering namely ethnography which involves participant observation, group discussion and in-depth interviews. The following section will present the methodological design of the research

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

This study uses a qualitative ethnographic method where the focus is on describing events and finding meanings associated with death, traditions and customs. Data was gathered from participant observation in funerals and burials in the Congolese community of the Shi, Rega and Fuliru tribes in Johannesburg. This was supplemented with interviews and group discussions.

Ethnography as a qualitative research method has several advantages such as flexibility and studying real life experiences. But most importantly, it allowed me to be part of the community, to participate in funerals and burials, while exploring and examining cultures relating to death as a fundamental part of human experience. Murdock (2000) stresses the ethnographer is not typically detached or an uninvolved observer, which allows the researcher to gain insight through first hand involvement with research participants. This reminds me of my first observation in the Shi community during a death event. The choice of

ethnography for this study was influenced by the fact that the researcher is a Congolese. I have been living in Johannesburg amongst the community which is part of this study for more than a decade and have a good knowledge of cultures and languages and, one who has, over that time, participated in death events occurring within the same community.

SELECTION OF PARTICPANTS

There was no random selection. Therefore, a non-probability sample was used. It is indicated non probability is suitable when "the population is so widely dispersed that cluster sampling would not be efficient" (Emmanuel, n/d: 36). The study relied upon occurrences of death among migrants. People who were part of the culture and took part in death events in their communities in various roles or capacities were selected for interviews. Some of them were relatives to deceased. Others were ordinary tribe members or community leaders who often take on active roles when there is a death. The non-probability sampling technique selects participants according to their proximity to the researcher (Bryman, 2012).

The study selected community leaders of the three tribes and other ordinary community members who had knowledge of culture in the community of study. These people were selected based on informal conversations I had with them during my participation in community activities.

Participants were asked if they had been living in Johannesburg for more than two years and had participated in funerals both in the DRC and Johannesburg. Participants were informed of the objective of the study. All participants were migrants from the three selected ethnic groups. Only one participant was a service provider, one who provides services to migrants including those related to death and funeral preparations in Johannesburg. Most participants did not contradict themselves and complemented each other on what was raised in relation to dealing with death.

The study was conducted in Johannesburg, South Africa in the area of Yeoville, Rosettenville, Berea, Bremly and Bertrams. Most of these areas have large numbers of migrants residents. Some own businesses and houses but the majority just rent apartments (Kuzituka, 2007). The cost of accommodation in Johannesburg is extremely high. Most recently arrived Congolese migrants either follow others who are already based in Johannesburg or they come with fellow countrymen who are returning to Johannesburg to work. Johannesburg attracts the majority of migrants because it is the economic hub of the country (Landau and Segatti, 2009).

PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participants' demographic information is shown in table N1. The majority of Participants are male, 31 to 52 years old. Female migrants said they did not have this kind of information to offer. In the Congolese culture, women are not expected to be involved in dealing with death and this practice seems to be replicated in South Africa. (N = 14 male and N=1female).

A total of nine participants were interviewed. Three were from the Shi tribe, three from Rega tribe two from the Fuliru tribe[1] and one service provider (N=1).

The group discussion comprised of 6 male members from the Congolese communities under study (N=6). Altogether this study collected data from 15 participants (N=15). There were observations and informal conversations conducted. Findings from these are grouped and presented in the findings chapter.

[1] See Table 1 for more information on the Interviewees selected for this study.

Table N1: **participants in the interviewees and group discussion**

Tribe	Position	Age	Place of stay	Gender	Years in SA
Shi	Nurse/NGO	44	Berea	Female	8
Shi	Driver/Elder	42	Yeoville	Male	15
Shi	Driver/Elder	42	Yeoville	Male	15
Shi	community Member	37	Bremley	Male	12
Shi	Community leader	52	Berea	Male	10
Shi	Lost family member	39	Rosettenville	Male	11
Rega	community member	37	Yeoville	Male	9
Rega	Lost family member	31	Yeoville	Male	7
Rega	Leaders/Pastor	33	Yeoville	Male	12
Rega	community member	37	Yeoville	Male	9
Rega	Leader/Pastor	33	Yeoville	Male	12
Fuliru	Advisor/Elder	52	Bertrams	Male	10
Fuliru	community member	46	Berea	Male	8
Fuliru	Lost family member	31	Rosettenville	Male	7
N/A	Service provider, (lobbying and advocacy for migrants	52	JHB CBD	Male	14

GAINING ENTRY AND ESTABLISHING RAPPORT

I gained permission through phone calls of introduction to community leaders. I requested to meet each of them at a time of their convenience. I explained to them I was a student and I was conducting research. Two of the community leaders knew me and one of them did not. I told them I needed to participate in funerals and burials and observe culture changes and

maintenance among their community members. I also told them I needed to interview them and other community members on this same topic.

Since I am, a member of the same community, it was easy to gain and establish trust. I also took time to ask about their social rules. I had an advantage of knowing some language cues spoken by young men in the community and this was important for me while I was participating in the community activities.

One of the community leaders invited me to a sport activity (soccer) organized by a church attended by these communities each Sunday morning. The teams were decided by marital status: single men against married men. The leader of the two soccer teams introduced me before the game started. He told the teams to welcome me with a hand of applause, that I was a student and community member conducting a research on culture changes around death.

It was a good time and allowed me to meet with people of the community who I did not know. Through this activity, we formed closer ties. After the soccer match, many people started approaching me with a willingness to know me better. They wanted to know what I was doing. Some community members knew me but my topic generated strange feelings in them. The most asked question coming from most people was: "*why did you choose such a topic?*" I explained to them that death events involve many elements of culture, so I was using death as a way to understand changes in the culture of migrants.

After responding the above question, I exchanged phone numbers with some community members. After people became comfortable with my topic many started invited me to death events i their families. In all, I received four phone calls inviting me to funerals so I could observe. Soon, I began participating in activities related to death among these communities. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, rapport was necessary to build over time. This involved active listening, establishing trust, displaying empathy and showing respect. Confidentiality was part of the reciprocal trust established with the community. Most of the community members at this level were from the Rega and Fulero tribes and we spoke using the Swahili language.

PROCEDURE

This research was conducted in two stages. Stage one included establishing rapport after I approached the Congolese community living in Yeoville, Rosettenville, Berea, Bremly and Bertrams. Many of the migrants I approached agreed to take part in this study although some refused due to the sensitive nature of this topic. Among eighteen members of the community

who initially agreed, only eight people finally participated. The remainder were not available to be interviewed.

At this stage I conducted seven interviews and one participant observation at a funeral conducted in Bramley. The first occurred among the Shi tribe members in Johannesburg, where a 3-year-old boy died in Johannesburg. It is also important for me to note that when I asked participants for interviews, I informed them I would have a group discussion later and requested them to participate.

The second stage was devoted to interview service providers. Though many service providers were contacted, only one provider availed himself for the interview. During this stage the interview also included one community leader who was not available in the first stage. I also conducted an observation at a funeral in Bertrams followed by a group discussion following data collection. In total, for both stages, data was collected over a three month period. For the duration of the fieldwork (between September and December) I was informed about two more funerals.

The second funeral I attended to during the second stage of data collection was with the Fuliru community where one member lost her mother in the DRC and organised mourning in Johannesburg. In this funeral, the body was in the DRC and this unusual occurrence provided data on perceptions of funeral and burial activities practiced by Congolese migrants in Johannesburg while the death and burial happen elsewhere. I used it as a landscape where I could obtain rich data on this topic through conversation with more people.

Ethical requirements were adhered to and interviews lasted up to an hour. The participants were thanked for their time and support. Outcomes of the study will be available from the researcher and will be in the form of group responses.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

CONDUCTING PARTCIPANT OBSERVATIONS

I attended two funerals and one of these included burial. In order to conduct observations, I selected focused observation methodology where one's observation is supported by interviews and the participants' insight guides the researcher's decision about what to observe. Kawulich (2005) developed an observation guide where she compiled elements to be recorded such as the physical environment, activities and interaction. She also looks at the

frequency and duration of these activities. This study made use of these techniques in analyzing the observational data source.

According to McKenzie, (2000), participant observation is suitable for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual context. I conducted participant observation of funeral and burial activities in the community through observing what happens and listening to what people were saying during funerals. I took note of salient actions, gestures and symbols members of the community used within the specified contexts. It was therefore vital to search for meaning in these symbols so as to understand what they represented to them in order to improve the quality of data and discussion. Through informal conversations, I was able to obtain meanings of some of the aspects obtained during observation. Some meanings in gestures were explained to me. At this stage, although I had a guiding question list, I prioritised informal conversations as they seemed to be more appropriate in studying sensitive topics like death.

Observations are useful in that they provide researchers with ways to determine nonverbal expression, how participants communicate and observe situations making them aware of any inaccuracies conveyed during the interviews (Marshall and Rossman, 1995). The most important factor in determining what a researcher should observe is the researcher's purpose for conducting the study.

I was invited by a community leader whom I had already interviewed to participate in the funeral which also included burial on the same day. For this community leader and other people I had already contacted for my study it was an overt action. Therefore, to some mourners, the observation was overt while for many participants it was covert.

During the funeral and burial many people were emotional. I did not have conversations with anyone I determined to be over emotional. I was involved while observing by giving chairs to mourners. This allowed me a great deal of flexibility and I had the chance to move around to further observe and listen to what people were saying.

Some mourners talked in pairs while others were in groups speaking to each other after the ceremony had concluded. I listened to what people were discussing and asked some questions. Most discussions taking place at the funeral were very interesting and relevant to this study. I was very attentive from the beginning of the funeral until the end.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In this research, an interview guide containing broad questions exploring the core research themes and objectives was used when asking community members questions. The guide was used where and when necessary – more especially during in-depth interviews and group discussions. Many writers, including Legard et al. (2003) have mentioned that interviews are important in collecting people's lived experiences.

As an interviewer, I was careful to ensure that discussions did not carry undertones of a moralizing discourse on ethics and legality. According to Mack et al. (2005); in-depth interviews are useful when the researcher seeks to obtain detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours or wants to explore new issues (Legard et al., 2003).

In-depth interviews are useful for learning about the perspectives of individuals (Boyce, 2006). In-depth interviews are an effective qualitative method for getting people to talk about their personal ideas, estimation, and experiences (Legard et al., 2003).

In-depth interviews bring opportunity for the researcher to gain insight into how people interpret events and find order in the world. One can accomplish this by being attentive to participants' causal explanations on what they have experienced and what they believe. As well, in these circumstances, the researcher may more actively probe connections and relationships linked to particular events, phenomena, and beliefs (Mack et al., 2003). In-depth interviews were carried out to obtain information from participants who had lost loved ones as well as those who were involved in dealing with death in Johannesburg and the DRC.

I worked with a schedule of questions that served as a guide and perceptions around customs were investigated. Convenient time and place for interviews with the participants were of primary consideration. Most participants were interviewed in their residences. Only the service provider was interviewed in his office. Each interview took approximately sixty minutes. During interviews, the order of questions asked was less important. Interest was primarily focused upon the topic and what the participant chose to talk about. Participants preferred to be interviewed in Swahili, which they said was their first language. I did not need an interpreter since I had the advantage of knowing the language. I interviewed all participants privately, in their homes, at a convenient time for them.

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, interviewing community members sampled in this study was very important. In-depth interviews are also appropriate for addressing sensitive topics like death and challenges brought about by death; subject people can be reluctant to

discuss in a group setting. Therefore, the in-depth interview technique was used in this study to obtain a detailed and concise exploration of how Congolese migrants deal with death in Johannesburg. A different guiding question list was formulated for each category of participants.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Group discussions are effective in eliciting data concerning cultural norms of a group. They also are excellent for generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups, assert Bender and Ewbank (1994). In this study, data collection depended on occurrences of death among the communities of study. Therefore, as researcher opportunities to collect new data were unpredictable.

Once data collection was completed, a small group of six members from the community were invited to participate in a group discussion. The group discussion was equally composed of six members of the selected "tribe". It entailed watching videos of funerals and was made up of male participants.

These videos were screened before starting discussions in order to set the tone for a focused and fruitful dialogue. Video clips used were captured during funerals and burials among the selected Congolese communities both in South Africa and in The DRC. Such video clips are typically recorded to be shared with family members and relatives not present during the funerals and burials or who do not reside in South Africa. Screening of the videos helped to demonstrate the diversity in how these communities rooted in the two places deal with death. I guided the discussion towards the research aims and managed to achieve a rich and productive data source. Participants were thanked for their assistance.

I obtained consent for the use of these videos from relatives of the deceased[2]. These video clips assisted in leading the group discussion. The two videos were viewed during the discussion and took 30 minutes each. I explained to the participants the objective of the study before the group discussion started. Of the two videos watched, one was shot in the eastern DRC and the other was recorded in Johannesburg. This stimulated the participants to provide more information for the purposes of this study.

"When videos and other media; are used with dynamic and vigorous interaction and engagement; significant learning experiences can result" (Hobbs, 2006:36). For the purpose

[2] See appendix on this study

of this study, I was the facilitator and directed the discussion to avoid digression from the topic by participants.

This technique of utilising videos was extremely useful and provided a solid background for acquiring information needed in the study. Videos are an important tool as they help to explore cultural context and stimulate discussion (Hobbs, 2006).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY OF PARTICIPANTS

The following ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure confidentiality, anonymity, integrity and professionalism of the study. A clearance certificate was obtained from the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee before field research was carried out. The certificate number is H120817[3]

Confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms. Although anonymity can be a complicated issue in providing pseudonyms is a helpful way to hide any identifiable information about the participants (Wiles et al. 2012).

However, all participants voluntarily gave permission for their names to be used for the purpose of the study. They did not see any harm in telling how they deal with death as well as the kind of challenges they encounter with regard to their culture. Still, I opted to keep participants anonymous by assigning pseudonyms as it was part of the ethics pledge and to avoid any possible issues in the future.

In the course of interviews, participants raised many concerns I had not expected to find in the field. All provided consent to use their quotes from the interviews and group discussions in the study. And, none of the participants were harmed or harassed in any way during these interactions.

The research proceeded under the guidance of my supervisor to ensure integrity, professionalism and to also to double-check important ethical issues had not been omitted.

None of the participants had a close relationship with the deceased whose funeral was depicted in the video clips viewed, as this would have caused unwarranted emotional disturbance. However, some of the participants did personally know the deceased whose

[3] View appendix in this study

video was screened. As well, some participants had been involved in funerals videoed in Johannesburg. However, only one participant knew the deceased shown in a video shot in the DRC. None of the participants were present at the funerals taking place in the DRC.

All data collected has been kept by the researcher in a safe place and after the study is completed, I will only keep the material for two years. After that time, the material will be destroyed by fire. Permission from the chosen organizations and community members was sought before conducting the interviews.

INFORMED CONSENT

Participants were fully informed of their rights, which included voluntary participation, what the purpose of the research was, its intended uses, what their participation meant, risks involved and that their participation was free from coercion. "Informed consent is a particularly important ethical issue in research involving migrants," Takabvirwa (2010). Major concerns often surround issues such as effect trauma, repeated abuse and a sustained sense of insecurity among migrants. Participation was strictly voluntary. The purpose and nature of the study was explained to people, as well as what their participation would demand. The Swahili language was used to explain all the information as the participants said it was the language they best understood.

Some participants agreed to these terms but others were not comfortable to come to a group discussion starting with video screenings of funerals. Also, among those who agreed, some later changed their minds. Some said the videos were disturbing for them to view as they would bring back unpleasant memories. Those who later declined were thanked for their time. I reminded these people that participation was strictly voluntary. All respondents signed a consent form after it was explained to them what was involved in the study[4]

NON HARM AND PROTECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

As a researcher, I was sensitive to anything that might harm the participant during the study and avoided such scenarios. Knowing and understanding the topic of this study was sensitive, participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without losing any benefit or penalty being imposed on them.

[4] View appendix

Death is an emotional experience needing to be handled with great sensitivity It sometimes has the potential to re-traumatize surviving family members, close relatives and friends of the deceased. The researcher shares a similar cultural and traditional background with the participants. Therefore, I am knowledgeable of the topic of study. Empathy and sensitivity was strictly practiced in the process of recruiting research participants as well as during the interview process. I explained some of the questions might re-traumatize participants and if they became uncomfortable with the interview, he/she could withdraw from the interviewing process without any penalty.

For the purpose of minimising distress, I avoided interviewing people who had recently lost close relatives.

This section has presented the various methods utilised in order to investigate cultural changes in dealing with death by studying Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg. Therefore, the implementation of the methods has yielded results and the presentation of these will be discussed in the following section.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study relied upon participant observation techniques and thematic content analysis to interpret the qualitative data. Conversations were transcribed and translated by the researcher. Given that accuracy can be compromised, the researcher worked in Swahili, the first language of the participants, then translated the interviews into English. Consultative discussion sessions with migrants were held when they were required to review the findings of the research.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is the tool used to analyse qualitative data (interviews and group discussion) within the present study. I searched out the underlying themes and related ideas from the interview material to categorise the most salient information into distinct units (Neuman, 1997).

Content analysis has been defined as a systematic technique for compressing many words of texts into fewer content categories based on precise rules of coding (Krippendorff, 1990; Stemler, 2001). The central idea is texts are reduced to categories consisting of words,

phrases and sets of words. It thereafter enables researchers to make inferences from these categories which can then be corroborated by other methods of analysis (Stemler, 2001). Specific words or patterns are indicative of the research question and hence, certain assumptions can be made based on the analysis.

In order to systematically analyse the data, I focused upon three fundamental steps: data reduction through the use of coding; data display and conclusion, as well as drawing on the qualitative analysis process (Klippendorff, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction is the first step in the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data appearing in the transcripts. The end result is an organized, systematic and relevant discussion (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Prior to the actual analysis, I engaged in anticipatory data reduction where decisions were made concerning the conceptual framework, research questions and data collection approaches for the study. As the data was collected, I performed additional data reduction such as writing summaries, coding, creating themes, developing categories and partitions. The process of reducing the data is necessary as it assists the researcher to organize information in such a manner that conclusions can be [more readily] drawn (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A fundamental technique developed during the reduction process is coding (Krippendorff, 1980; Stemler, 2001). Coding is very significant to the research process and can be defined as 'tags or labels' for providing meaning to the descriptive information collected during the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 56). They are attached to data such as words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs and relate to one another in a growing and coherent structure. Open coding was part of the present analysis where I established themes and labels in order to reduce the data. Themes were produced from the initial research questions and theories from the literature (Krippendorff, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The process of compiling and writing these codes into a meaningful analysis is called analytic memo writing. These memos are personal, methodological written works containing the researcher's reflections and thoughts on the various categories and themes developed during the coding process (Neuman, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Finally, I tabulated the conclusions based upon the meanings attached to the analyzed data. For instance, certain patterns were identified, regularities were noted and explanations were given (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study, I integrated the various methods of qualitative analysis – reduction, coding, data display and written conclusions – then tabulated the formulated themes and categories

into relevant information for the discussion on perceptions of death among the various Congolese cultural groups.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The present chapter is the core of this study. It presents findings from a variety of data sources. These findings were triangulated to assist in adequately responding to questions posed in this study. I will first provide an account of one of the elders, member of Congolese community in Johannesburg who has experience taking part in death rituals as practiced among the Shi tribe in the DRC. This is important information as it provides an account of what is normally done when a community member dies in the DRC. Then I will provide an ethnographic account of one funeral that took place in Johannesburg. I will then present the findings from data collected through in depth interviews and group discussions. I will then discuss them in light of the concepts presented in the theoretical framework.

According to Fide – an elder in the Shi community in Johannesburg and one of the participants interviewed for this study – Typically, when a person dies among the Shi in the DRC, the body is brought home to be prepared for burial by family members. A mourning ceremony is organized for few days where a process is strictly followed. This allows the family to mourn in accordance to their culture.

The rituals performed depend on the characteristics of person who died – male, female, adult, young, married, single, traditional leader, etc. Organized Western Religion comes into play as well as many families are affiliated to it. However, such religious beliefs do not prevent traditional culture from taking precedence when it comes to dealing with death.

During this time, men pass the night outside in the yard. They play traditional games and burn fire outside in the compound. Females remain in the house where the body is kept before burial; sitting with and comforting the grieving women of the household. During this time no close family members will bathe until "*olwokukalaba*" – bathing day," in the Shi language. Neighbors sympathize and show love to the grieving family. Some neighbors do not go to work. Instead, they support to their grieving neighbor through their physical presence, materials and finances.

The absence of a neighbor gives the perception they are bad neighbors. In some cases, it can even get to the point where absent neighbors are suspected of having a hand in the death. No member of the Shi tribe wants to be accused of having a hand in any death due to the social

sanction[5] connected with such accusations. Besides the fear of the social sanction, showing last respects to the dead is an integral part of the Shi tradition.

Fide said that according to their tradition it is assumed that male adults, who die without getting married, leave this world in anger because they did not have time to enjoy the life with a woman of their choice. For that reason, they perform particular rituals. For example when an adult male dies among the Shi before he is married, and has left no child, he is buried with a banana tree placed in his coffin. The banana tree is traditionally given to the dead as a wife so his spirit cannot hunt living women. All such cultural practices are to be performed the by elder men. From observation, it appears the majority of Congolese migrants in Johannesburg are young people. This is further verified by participant observation in this study as presented in table 1.

Fide also said when a married Shi woman dies and her bride price has never been paid, her body cannot be buried until the husband settles the bride price. If the husband dies and leaves a young woman behind, the family in law will designate a husband for the women. This is because it is traditionally assumed such a husband will look after her and the children (left behind by the deceased) without discrimination.

If it is the wife who dies, the husband will be given a younger sister of the late wife to look after her sister's children and become wife to her sister's husband. When polygamous parents die, the eldest son will marry the youngest wife left by the father. When an adult male dies, and has fathered, the first son inherits the father's responsibility.

The above mentioned traditional practices of the Shi culture dealing with death were obtained from the Shi community leader in Johannesburg. This information was confirmed through conversations with various Shi tribe participants involved in this study. It is important to make it clear most participants said there are a number of traditional Shi practices involved in dealing with death. However, the best place to observe these is the Shi homeland where elders who know traditional culture reside. Most respondents said the above mentioned practices are just a few of the many traditions existing in their culture. However, they did not have enough knowledge of tradition due to their young age and the environment in which they lived – Johannesburg.

These younger respondents said their present environment does not give them room to practice their culture. Some blame the kind of life they lead in Johannesburg in terms of place of dwelling, financial capacity and the absence of elders, of relatives and artifacts used in

[5] If one is proven guilty of having to kill a person through witch craft, poisoning or others; that person is usually sent away from the area and no one will ever talk to that person or sympathize with her or him.

rituals etc. Most things these migrants have found in South Africa appear to be new – including culture. Since many are young and live busy lives separated from their clansmen, few have time to observe their culture or even learn it. Since there are almost no elders, there is no one to teach them their traditions. Instead, they focus on other more pressing issues of daily life such as looking for work.

This observation was conducted on the morning of Saturday 3rd November, 2012 from 7: 30 until 12:45 during a funeral in Bramley. A three-year-old boy from the Shi tribe had died. He drowned in a swimming pool at his family's residence. The majority of people present at the funeral ceremony were from the Kivu province which is situated in the eastern region of DRC. I relied on people's comments and opinions to explain what is done by the Shi tribe when dealing with death in the DRC.

I arrived at the address where some mourners had already gathered at 6:45 – four men and seven women. They were family and close friends of the bereaved family. As time went on, other mourners arrived. Most of the mourners came from Yeoville, Bertrams, Rosettenville, Bez-Valley and had travelled in two or three public combis to attend the funeral while others arrived in their private vehicles.

At 8:40, the undertaker arrived and deposited the body on a stand in the yard. Before leaving, deposited a number of plastic chairs in the corner of the yard and said he would return at 10:00. I went to take a chair to sit on and one of the four males I had seen earlier asked me to kindly give chairs to whoever arrived. From this point on, I was involved in the process. I began taking chairs to mourners. One well dressed lady of the Shi tribe sat on the floor even though there were several empty chairs. I went to her and offered a chair but she refused.

Later identified a "Jin," she said: *Thanks* but *while the coffin is present here, in my culture as women, we mourn sitting down. I cannot change what we do at home, not like what other women do in South Africa".* She nodded towards other ladies who were standing on feet and others sitting on chairs.

"Some of them are ignorant" said another near-by woman.

"*It is not their fault, [they do not know],*" said Coco, a member of the Shi tribe, who sat next to Jin on the floor. In this lady's opinion, it was disrespectful to her culture for the other women from the DRC to remain standing or sit on chairs when the funeral is going on. Coco was so much more attached to her culture than many others.

I asked another of the ladies, Joana, what she thought about her culture during a process of mourning in Johannesburg. She replied: *"Culture can be respected in the DRC because the*

environment allows for cultural performance. Here, life is different. For this lady, culture is important but the fact that most of the resources involved in performing the Shi cultural traditions as they are absent in Johannesburg. She has no other choice than to accept the situation.[6]

The men and women attending the funeral sat on chairs in the yard, surrounding the covered coffin. The majority of the people were dressed in black. The reason why the undertaker brought the body home was for the family to pay their last respects before taking it to the cemetery and perform rituals on the body. But during my presence at the funeral, the only rituals I saw were religiously related through a prayer conducted by the pastor who led the ceremony.

There were no elders. Most of the people present seem to between 20 and 40 years old and few of them have slept there that day. The pastor was a Zambian nationality and a Christian from a Pentecostal church; He arrived with a white male South African pastor. Curiously, as the two came near the body, the white pastor was invited by one of the mourners to give a short religious consolation message but the invitation led to him presiding over the entire ceremony.

This pastor appeared to be unprepared as he was unsure about proceeding to each step involved in the ceremony. He spoke in English, not French, saying: "*I think now, we can* do A, B, C; D. It was obvious no program had been given to him as a guide. A conversation broke out among three people sitting next to me. They were saying to each other: "*How is it that a Zambian conducts Congolese death ceremony*? *…And this pastor is only talking in English! See? Most people can only hear Swahili and French".* The entire service was conducted in English. For this group of people, the best way of mourning their dead would have been using a language they all could understand – Swahili and/or French.

The pastor preached a message from the bible about David. He said "*because David believed in God, when he lost his child, he did not cry, instead David celebrated".* He continued: "God has allowed this child to die but God did not kill this child. … "The devil did it". He supported his point with passages from the Bible. "The devil comes to kill, steal and destroy". After the preaching, the pastor ordered the coffin to be opened for mourners to view the body. There were no neighbors who attended the funeral. This was confirmed by the man who had asked me to give chairs to the arriving mourners. He said: *"kama ilikuwa congo majirani*

[6] The situation in Johannesburg meant it was a place where there were no elders, no artifacts needed for cultural performances, etc.

wange kuya fanya hiyi kazi" meaning "*if it was in the DRC the task I gave you was to be done by neighbors".*

At this stage, people went one by one to view the body while the face space of the coffin was opened. Others stayed back. Those who did not go to view the body were women and younger people 20 to 25 years of age. "*I think it is because of a fear of viewing dead bodies"* one of the young male mourners told me as we were travelling to the cemetery. He said "Seeing *dead bodies brings fear. People view them because maybe they have no choice. But they do not feel comfortable to see them".*

After the other mourners had viewed the body, the father and mother were brought to see the body of their deceased child. Immediately, the father cried out: "*Huu mwili uli chinjwa*?" *"This body has been slaughtered!"* The authorities had not consulted him about performing an autopsy. This made the father speculate that body parts might have been taken out

"*Why*? *These people* – those who collected the body after the death occurred – *knew that the cause of death was water? Why do they still do this to my child? They have taken every part of the internal body! Now the South Africans have slaughtered you like an animal. Is this what it means to die here* (in South Africa)?"

The father next cried out loudly. "*My child, you were born here and my mother and the entire family back in DRC just heard you exist and now you have died. What will I tell them? I can't even manage to take your body home. They will continue thinking you exist. My child, I was not tired of you. You have done your choice, but to me it is a disappointment".*

Other mourners again broke into hushed discussion that was quickly silenced as the father spoke again. "*South Africans lack a sense of human being. They slaughtered the body of the boy. It is so bad to die in South Africa*".

This scenario demonstrates the concern and strong desire among Johannesburg's Congolese communities for keeping the bodies of their departed loved ones so they can perform "proper" burial through the use of culture. However, South African policy dealing with death does not allow people to have control over the body. Pieterse et al. (2009) states there are legal procedures to follow in South Africa when somebody dies. These procedures absolutely contravene the Shi migrant's culture as observed in this funeral. .In the Shi culture, the last treatment of the body involves bathing and clothing it themselves before burial. They take control of the entire ceremony including the body. In South Africa the according to the law, dead bodies are dealt with by undertakers (Pieterse et al. 2009).

The father was pulled back by other mourners as he wanted to open the coffin to see what else had happened to the body of his child. . The face of the body had become misshapen due

to the autopsy. I personally observed the change in the body's face. The father's grief escalated and it was evident he was very troubled by the fact he had not been consulted before the autopsy had been conducted on the body. He was also concerned because he was not sure if the body to be buried was complete.

In the DRC, autopsy is conducted by the family's request and this often happens in very few instances due to the financial cost due to the respect attached to the body. Generally, it is not part of the Congolese culture to engage with autopsies.

The father's words indicate, he and many other Congolese migrants are concerned about how events such as death can be shared with people still in their own country. Like him, many migrants in South Africa maintain strong ties with their families in the DRC and hold the hope to return there one day (Mand, 2006). It is evident the father is willing to go back home one day. Then he will have to explain what has happened. However for him, it is a deep regret to explain that an autopsy was performed on his son's body.

Following this, the coffin was covered again. However, the undertaker did not return for another 20 minutes. During this time, only the father and the mother were crying aloud. The mother was unable to speak due to her enormous grief. The father continued crying loudly. He told his wife how the body had been mutilated by an autopsy performed without their consent. Understandably, this made the mother grieve all the more.

While waiting for the undertaker, some mourners went into the house get a portable stereo. They then played religious songs. At this stage, it seemed as if no one knew what to do. Some mourners said that if this was happening in the DRC, this moment would have been filled by people singing. But in Johannesburg, a machine replaced people. Music continued to play but there was no one acting as leader.

While waiting for the undertaker, one of the top Congolese politicians arrived, a former chief of parliament. He bowed his head before the coffin and went to sit among the other mourners. He came with no political intentions. He was there because the grieving father is employed by him. His presence however, influenced many other people at the funeral as he came with his entourage. Finally, the undertaker arrived to take the body to the cemetery.

The mourners next went to Midrand cemetery. The majority of the people who were in attendance were from the Shi and Rega tribes. I discussed some of the issues related to the funeral with Xavier who was carrying a large picture of the deceased boy. Formerly, Xavier had worked with the grieving father. Here is our conversation:

Darius: *Why are most of the people present only from the Shi and Rega tribes?*

Xavier: *They have monthly meetings*, he replied,

But Xavier was of Rega tribe. He did not know what was discussed at the Shi meetings. However, he assumed their leader might have alerted others to come just as they do in his own Rega tribe, when one of their members dies in Johannesburg.

Xavier: *Most of the networks of the mourning family in Johannesburg are of these tribes. But the father was not active in others' death events. This could be the reason why the funeral was not coordinated by one of them but instead, a religious leader from Zambia*.

Darius: *Did you conduct any rituals on the body?*

Xavier: *No rituals happen in South Africa because the people who are supposed to conduct rituals are absent. These are the elders back home*. *...Did you see any elders here*? *By the way this is Johannesburg.* By this he meant Johannesburg is a place where everyone is fully committed to their own daily activities for survival. There is no time for traditional aspects or people who are not under your direct care. *...If you die in South Africa, there is nothing else one can do except burial*. It *is so sad to die in South Africa*.

Darius: *Why?*

Xavier: *Because home is home*. *If you die at home, they give you last respects and bury you with dignity. South Africa is a foreign land and most things you see here appear strange*.

Darius: *But the pastor said that after death, there is nothing else except waiting for God's judgment.*

Xavier: *That is religion*. *We have ancestors as well in our tradition. But I don't know how to deal with death in relation to ancestors*. *I'm young and grew up in a Christian family. If you want to know about ancestors, ask the aged people in Johannesburg, or go back in DRC.*[7]

The only service provider involved in this funeral was the undertaker. There was no stigma noticed during this observation, however there was a fear associated with coming close to the body in the coffin. Some people were afraid to look at the body. I approached Coco, a young woman, who did not want to look at the body. She said: *I don't want the dead to start visiting me in the night.* She feared if she looked at the dead body, this would result in her dreaming of the dead.

Darius: *How would that be possible*?

Coco: *This is an automatic mechanism. ...If you don't have a strong heart*, a *heart that resists spirits*. Wink and Scott (2005) affirm that people who are not affiliated to religious organizations fear death unlike those who are religious.

[7] NB: I decided to include Xavier amongst my interviewees as I determined he was good source of information for this study. Many things he said aligned with several of the questions posed in this study. Xavier also became one of my participants in the interviews.

Darius: *What religion do you belong to?*

Coco: *I do not belong to any.*

Unlike in South Africa, in DRC the body is taken in the house immediately after death for family members to have time to mourn their loved one.

John and Papy who were nearby, overheard the conversation. John had been with me in the car when we drove to the cemetery

John: *The body is prepared for burial by family members as a symbol of last love to the deceased. For example, the cause of this death was water. Such case will not require any post mortem treatment of the body back home. There are no undertakers involved in dealing with death in the DRC.*

There were no rituals performed at the place of mourning in Johannesburg. At the cemetery, while a few elders showed up, they did not act in the ceremony. Everyone was very quiet, well dressed and the majority wore black. Papy: *If you come, it means you have not necessarily come to mourn but maybe for other purposes. In the DRC, if you to a funeral well-dressed, you might be suspected as responsible of the death.* He said this referring to the new culture of life in South Africa, where people bathe before the time fixed by their tradition has expired.

Thoma: *Dressing in black to come to a funeral is a western custom. We don't do that much in the Congo. When someone is grieving, you do not have the time to think about how to dress. In the DRC, you can't even bathe during this time.*

One of the Rega participants said: in South Africa, they mourn with rationality.

Etienne*: But look the grieving father and the mother. They have been dressed well in black. Congo is less developed and everything people do there is far behind compared with South Africa.*

Darius: *Why do you say your country is behind?*

Etienne: *People come to funerals not clean because the country is not clean. Everything* (including the Congo culture of dealing with death) *there is different. You cannot compare the DRC to South Africa*.

Darius: *Don't you think it is a problem of cultural difference?*

Etienne: *If it is like that, then our culture is bad*.

Tonton heard what we were talking about and interrupted Etienne.

Tonton: *Leave this man! That is how he thinks about the country. This is because he left young and was raised in an urban area. He doesn't know anything about our culture and how important tradition is.*

Darius: *Where did you grow up?*

Tonton: *In an urban area but I was much in contact with the rural area. My parents used to send me there often, to our farms. There, funerals are conducted differently.*

Darius: *Different how?*

Tonton: *When I was your age* (talking to Papy who was between 18 and 25 years old), *I could not attend funerals because they were only for elders. But now because of being refugees even young boys can stand as parents in marriages and funerals. This is a lack of respect toward our elders and our culture. But I understand that we have no choice. Exile is very bad. ...In contrast, in the DRC, during the mourning period, people often don't bathe until "bathing day". You cannot play music especially when the dead body is still there. Any neighbor, who did not attend the funeral while the body is around, can be suspected of being responsible for the death.*

The entire funeral ceremony from the home of the decease until the cemetery was guided by a Zambian and the white South African pastor. After the pastor had read the Bible in the book of Ecclesiastes 12:7; he ordered the body to be lowered in the grave. The undertaker lifted a spade full of sand and gave it to the pastor. The pastor shoveled some dirt into the grave and said: "*You came from the sand and you must return to the sand" (talking to the body)*. Next, he gave the spade to the father and the mother and they each dropped sand into the grave. From there, the undertaker started burying the body.

After the burial but before the mourners returned to Johannesburg, a man named Janvier introduced himself as a cousin of the grieving father. He said: *I was asked by the family to tell everyone not to go back to their homes yet.*

He urged people to return to the home where they had gathered before going to the cemetery, to have a glass of drink before leaving. The man then briefly spoke about the cause of the boy's death. We left the cemetery and went back to the house. Drinks (beer and juice) were placed on the floor by the men and people were invited serve themselves. Shortly afterwards, people started leaving one by one.

I left the house at one o'clock in the afternoon saying goodbye to the grieving father. He gave me thanks for coming. For migrants from the DRC, issues such as luck, cultural rituals, absence of support from neighbors, and deep concerns about body control highly influence adopting or rejecting the South African style of dealing with death.

The next section will specifically deal with the categories and themes obtained as a result of analysis of interview data and group discussions. Various themes presented information related to perception, responses and experiences of funeral and burial actions. These include

some of the ways death is dealt with (funeral and burial practices) in the DRC and how this affects migrants living in South Africa. For example, the Congolese encounter difficulties in arranging Funeral and burial services in South Africa for a variety of reasons.

This section also addresses the major causes of death among migrants, the perception of HIV-related deaths as well as perceptions around burial and funeral practices in South Africa. The congruency and conflict between Western religion and traditional culture when it comes to funerals will be discussed as well as the symbology of representation in culture.

Themes are presented in a tabulated form. For each of the themes emerging from this study, I will first present a summary of the responses organized by categories. Issues developed around the themes are listed in the second column. Implications of the various issues are presented in the connotations column where I provide suggestions on whether those various issues have a positive or negative effect on the overall wellbeing of individuals. I will then provide an interpretation of the themes in the table. Funeral and burial practices in the DRC

Congolese people have different ways of dealing with death in their country. During a ceremony of death, depending on the cultural background of the deceased, some procedures are followed to ensure a decent burial[8]. The table below contains some of the issues involved in dealing with death in the DRC.

[8] A decent burial according to the Congolese is the one where cultural practices of the deceased are followed during the process of dealing with death.

Table 2

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
DRC's funeral/ burial practices	A married man dies. He leaves his responsibilities to the first-born son. (symbol of the spear)	+
	If not religious, the deceased must be cleansed by a person initiated by an ancestor.	+
	Bathe only after 5 days for females / 7days for males	+
	Death of husband, the wife goes home to gain a new husband	+
	Death is the symbol of a curse. Remove it by bathing in a river.	+
	Human life is sacred Dead bodies are not good to look at. Other people take financial charge of the funeral. Specialized people deal with funeral matters, A Rega cannot bury a Rega	+
	Women-husband pay bridal price	+
	Bodies are brought home to be paid last respects	+
	Hen /goat sign of respect	+
	Many people attend funerals / fire outside / men sleep outside / sing / play games	+
	Funerals are held at home	+
	Husband given younger sister of deceased wife.	+
	Autopsy is forbidden	+
	Time off for the funeral is mandatory / a week of mourning	+
	Inheritance ritual / adult male / bury him with a banana three	+
	Monetary contribution from family and community at large	+

It has been cited that while African rituals vary across tribes, they can be perceived according to three phases: the period of death, the period of mourning and the period after death and mourning (Spijker 2005). The Congolese usually follow a process of mourning involving all the above mentioned stages. When a death occurs in their community in DRC, the body is often brought home for the family to mourn. The mourning is organized; a number of rituals are performed depending on the tradition of the deceased. This first process involves neighbors, religions, elders etc. at this stage; the body is prepared for a decent burial. The second stage is the process involves burial practices and it is often conducted in the place of burial (cemetery). For example, it has been stated earlier that before burying a woman, the husband must settle the bride price if he has not settled it beforehand. The last stage involves ritual practices after death. For some of them for example to the Fulero after seven days all the close family members will go to a river and wash the death curse. To the Shi, they will gather after 40 days to remove the mourning where family members will slaughter a cow or a goat, make some incantations and call neighbors to join them and celebrate the death of their loved one. This stage indicates the end of the mourning and opens the way for family members to go back to their usual activities without fear of any harm from the deceased.

SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DEATH IN DRC

There are a number of symbols associated in death events which are part of Congolese culture in the DRC. Some of them were mentioned by participants and are presented in the below table.

TABLE 3

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
Symbolic representations of death in DRC	Dressing in black	-
	Cleansing – bucket of water at the entrance of the house of the deceased after burial.	n/a
	Burial in the land of ancestors	n/a
	Take something to the grave such as a tree or other object to calm the spirit of the dead	n/a

While some participants have said that black is a borrowed culture, a form of contradiction was raised by other participants who said that death is represented by black. "*It means a bad thing"*. As I observed during funerals, most mourners were dressed in black. Some participants confirmed it is not part of their culture to dress in black when there is death but few of them suggested it is part of what they have borrowed from South Africa.

However, the remainders of the above mentioned symbols are part of their home culture. As the literature and findings of this study indicate, death is perceived as an important social event in African culture. Death among African people is an important environment where meanings are produced (De Boek, 2008). Nichols (2011) adds that funeral rituals are an expression of the basic notion an individual's death concerns the whole family.

It is not surprising that the Congolese Roman Catholic theologian O. Bimwenyi-Kweshi (in Spijker, 2004) describes death as the heart of all popular belief and losing the funeral rites is like losing one's identity. Any situation disturbing their rituals may be not welcomed and may bring hostility because death is linked to a sense of belonging (Ayiera, 2009).

In the Congolese culture, it is a way of reminding their sons to get married before they get too old. It is also believed those who are buried out of their homeland are problematic to the future family. This finding agrees with studies where migrants claimed to be living in fear for having buried their loved one in a foreign land (Ayiera, 2009). Burial in the homeland is said to be important as it simplifies communication with ancestors (Nichols, 2011).

Community leaders interviewed in this study said each of the above symbols are important objects and part of their daily practices involved in their culture around death. It means when one faces death there is no light. Life becomes dark and the person who lost a family member becomes dirty. Due to these meanings, the occurrence of a death in a family involves washing after the funeral. For some, the washing is specifically done in a river by elders.

SOUTH AFRICA'S FUNERAL AND BURIAL PRACTICES

Questions generating these categories aim to understand what funeral and burial practices are engaged within the context of migration. This category contains several concerns raised by migrants as well as the connotations attached to each of the issues.

Table: 4

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
South Africa's funeral/ burial practices	No custom of inheritance ritual	-
	Not given time off work for a few days of mourning	-
	Inexperienced people oversee funerals	-
	Rega are more rational in South Africa than in the DRC	-
	Human life is not respected. The dead are taken to mortuaries where they are slaughtered (autopsy).	-
	Funeral arrangements are done by the grieving family	-
	Few people attend funerals	-
	No custom of respect is performed	-
	Difficult to rent a proper funeral space	-
	Cannot light a fire outside the house	-
	Congolese migrants cannot fully perform rituals	-
	People who perform rituals to remove death curses are initiated by elders	-
	The death curse is not taken away as people don't bath in a river	-
	Acculturation by religion	-/+
	Spirit of the dead cannot rest due to the absence of required traditional rituals in death events	-

As the summary table shows, dealing with death is especially difficult with for Congolese migrants living outside their own country.

Most cultural death practices of the Shi, Rega and Fuliru communities involved are often impossible to perform outside the DRC. This was mentioned by several community members who have attended Congolese funerals and burial ceremonies in South Africa. Migrants often have to deal the death of a loved one themselves and there is no time to perform rituals. Many said they are not given time off work to mourn in line with their tradition. For this reason, an impression is created that mourning is to be overlooked by community members because they

must be at work rather than attend the funeral. The majority of them work in informal settlements where the law is often not observed by employers.

Participants from the three tribes also referred to the use of mortuaries as a common practice in South Africa. For them, this is not perceived as a "decent" practice. In their culture, the body is taken home immediately after death, to be washed and clothed by family members and kept at the residence of the deceased. Almost all participants said no customary rituals were performed in Johannesburg. This was confirmed during observation of the funerals during data collection period.

As well, the environmental setting in Johannesburg is not conducive for Congolese migrants to perform most of their rituals. The majority of participants in this study said they live with neighbours from different backgrounds, sometimes in apartments sharing rooms. Such diversity cannot allow them to sing, light a fire outside the house or bring the body into the home for an extended mourning period. Some buildings in Johannesburg have management rules where tenants can only host three visitors per a day irrespective of the situation.

Many migrants also raised concerns over the use of mortuaries in South Africa, saying they suspected body parts are taken out of their loved ones' corpses. This idea expresses their issues of losing control of the deceased body which is an integral part of the culture.

In South Africa any death deemed not to be natural causes must involve forensic doctors who will conduct an autopsy on the body (Pieterse et al. 2009). While this is a legal framework of South Africa, it is in opposition to cultural practices to of Congolese migrants.

In the DRC, bodies are given specific treatment that is believed to keep the living and the deceased together. The absence of elders is evident among Congolese migrants resident in South Africa. Because of this, there are no ceremonies performed such as washing death curses from family members. The next section presents challenges Congolese migrants must face in South Africa when dealing with death and how they are perceived.

DIFFICULTIES IN ARRANGING FUNERAL AND BURIAL SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Here, the aim is to understand some of the challenges migrants must confront as discovered during the data collection period. This section explains some of the hardships migrants cope with when arranging adequate funerals in South Africa.

TABLE 5:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS.
	Resources available	-
Funeral and burial services in SA	Financial services	-
	Shipping body to DRC	+
	Joining burial societies	-/+
	Support Structures	-
	Financial means to bury in DRC	-

As shown in table 5, there is numerous social and economic challenges migrants face when dealing with a death in Johannesburg. Many interviewed raised issues of finances saying burial in South Africa is expensive and they do not have the economic resources. For the Congolese migrant, the goal is always to take body home for burial but there are many factors that make this impossible.

Infrastructure in the DRC is one major roadblock. It is difficult to send a body directly from South Africa to the eastern DRC. Connection and transport costs are extremely high. Additionally, security in that region is not good (Mukwege et al. 2010). And even if the body got this far, it would have to be accompanied by a family member or a friend. Again, this is often not possible due to the cost involved.

Migrants living in Johannesburg do not have adequate support structures to provide full financial assistance when one of their members dies. Joining a burial society is expensive and not part of their culture. As for NGOs, only one, the Refugee Aid Organisation (RAO), provides assistance in this regard. And, the one participant who had experience in getting support from them complained they do not provide enough funds to pay for a funeral. Therefore, migrants often have to rely upon their own resources.

In general based on these issues, it can be said the financial situation of migrants is not buoyant. As a result, Congolese migrants have adopted self-supporting structures where they meet monumental challenges such death. These are presented in the next section.

THE ROLE OF GATHERING AMONG TRIBE MEMBERS

When migrants leave their country, most have the tradition of identifying with their place of origin. When migrants relocate, they often encounter challenges difficult to overcome. Some of these issues can be addressed by gathering with people from the same ethnic community.

PATRICE]: *"Unity is power. If you are not with people of your tribe you are abandoned. We come together as tribe so that together we can manage to keep our culture through reminding each other that we have where we come from. We have our way of doing things in our culture in relation to birth, marriages and death*".

TABLE 6:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
The role of gathering among tribe members.	Promote culture	+
	Moral support, socialize with community leaders, advice on how to deal with issues faced in South Africa	+
	Integration into new society for newly arrived migrants / gate of entry to integrate into the South African lifestyle	+

All participants mentioned belonging to a certain structure usually named under their tribes. For the Shi it is called: *Chinyabuguma* meaning *a group of people from the same larger family"*. For the Fuliru it is called" *Buguma*", meaning "*oneness*". For the Rega it is called " *Lusu lega* meaning "*oneness of the Rega*".

All leaders of the above structures said they meet for various reasons but the most common was providing support to their members. Through meeting as tribe, migrants are better able to overcome the multi-directional challenges they may face. However, these apply only to challenges into the migration context.

For example, gathering among tribe members assists those who are still new to the country. These people must quickly learn how to survive the many challenges they will meet as

migrants. Such groups sometimes provide temporary accommodation and facilitate the integration of new arrivals within the broader society.

These findings agree with other studies investigating challenges such as lack of assistance, faced by migrants in South Africa. To address this, tribal structures have been created to provide support among migrants (Amisi, 2005).

The next section details some of the perceived causes of death of migrants in Johannesburg.

MAJOR CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG MIGRANTS

The question posed aimed to identify and understand the causes of death among Congolese migrants under study in Johannesburg. The question further seeks to understand whether the level of responses differs depending on what the cause of death was. Among the issues outlined below, some connotations are negative while others are more positive. A good or bad death depends upon the circumstances in which they occur. For instance if the death was caused by crime, where the person was a victim, that has a positive connotation. Conversely, if the deceased was a criminal and died under such circumstances, then it is a negative death.

TABLE 7:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
Major causes of death among migrants	Sickness (HIV)	-
	Accident	-/+
	Crime	-/+
	Alcohol abuse	-
	Isolation due to HIV stigma	-
	Stress caused by challenges in SA	-
	Lack of support from the South African government	-

Patrice: *In my tribe as well as other people's tribes, death is caused by many things, I cannot say that death is caused by specific diseases, but I know we do bury people who died of crime. These people are stabbed with knifes or shot dead by locals. Others are sick of HIV. But also, there are many cases of car accidents and women dying in labor and babies die due to negligence of health service providers toward migrants.*

The above reasons mentioned by almost all migrants are the most prominent in their communities; however, there were other causes of death noted by only a few of the participants. For instance:

Oscar: *The major cause of death among the Rega is stress that causes a development of illnesses due to the kind of life experiences migrants are subjected to in Johannesburg. The Rega depart from the DRC with so much expectation of boosting their life economically. After being victims of war, torture and loss of wealth, but the kind of life they find in Johannesburg is so surprising. They find they have to work hard at bad jobs that do not give enough income to support themselves here in Johannesburg. At the same time, their family in the DRC is phoning asking for money".*

These are just some of causes of death among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg according to participants responding to the question. This was again confirmed in the group discussion. Based on the above quotations, it can be seen migrants living in Johannesburg are vulnerable to everything from stress to limited access to health care, as verified in the literature. Poor access to healthcare (Vearey 2008), or accessing and other facilities such as those that can legalize their stay in the country (Amit, 2012) appear repeatedly. Situations resulting in the death of migrants are many and it is not an easy task to identify which is the major cause. One of the most prominent causes described by migrants is HIV/AIDS. The next section, details how this kind of death is perceived.

PERCEPTION OF HIV DEATH CASES

Some migrants die of HIV. Often due to the stigma around it, attendance at their funerals is small. Almost half of the participants did not want to discuss this question as they felt they did not have enough knowledge about HIV deaths in their communities. However, those who did speak on the matter were quite negative.

TABLE 8:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
Perception of HIV death cases	Taboo, work of evil spirits, shameful, hidden	-
	No judgment	n/a

The level of HIV awareness among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg is very low. The continual conflict in their country is likely the major cause hindering awareness of HIV. About six participants said HIV is perceived as a disease of sex workers or something resulting from witchcraft.

[DAVID]: *"Usually, back home, there is no ordinary death. There is always someone behind a death. If it is not evil spirits, it is witchcraft but with time there have been some changes. But few people end up accepting that a person has died of HIV. It is shameful to die of HIV in the Fuliru community – both back home and here in South Africa".*

The entire issue of dealing with death among Johannesburg-based Congolese migrants was found to be a damaging experience due to the absence of their home culture and community to adequately manage the death. It is also evident that some funerals are not attended due to the stigma associated with the cause of the death. Those who are HIV positive are stigmatized from the sickbed until they die.

The question we aim to answer is: how do migrants respond to death occurring as a result of stigmatized illnesses. Is it the same way they respond to a death occurring under other circumstances? Due to the stigma associated with HIV, there are almost no visible cases their communities. However this does not mean that there no HIV cases in the community. The prevalence of HIV within the DRC has been reported to be high (Spiegel et al., 2007; South, 2012). MSF report (2012) estimate there is more than one million and 350.000 people on anti retroviral in the DRC. However the conflict in the country does not allow a more precise figure on HIV prevalence (Spiegel, 2004).

Findings reveal there is a high level of stigma toward HIV positive people in Johannesburg and this has an impact on the attendance at funerals of HIV death cases. The majority of Congolese say people do not reveal their HIV status. They hide or isolate themselves until they die because they feel safer when they hide their status. Many participants said they consider those who are HIV positive as harmful to the society. Such people are often labelled as "*sinners*" who have ripped the fruit of their sexual seed. When such isolated people die, very few will know about their deaths or attend to their funerals.

The majority of participants said the problem starts in the DRC where the level of HIV awareness is still very low. There are problems with HIV awareness in the DRC (Olin et al., 2006). The majority of participants said perceptions of HIV among their respective communities are still traditionally oriented. Some said: "*it is a taboo to die of HIV"*. Some labelled it *"a shameful death"*, while others said "*it is witchcraft"*.

However, there were two participants who did not have any judgement toward a death resulting from HIV.

"[DOSHE]: *When a Rega dies of HIV, we do not discriminate when they die. We do not tell who dies of HIV*".

It was not my intention to delve deeply into how HIV is perceived by Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg. However, as questions were asked, it became evident the majority of participants had at least some issues around HIV/AIDS-related deaths. Few of the Congolese in Johannesburg understand the problematic outcomes of their attitudes toward HIV.

One participant said:

[PATRICE] *"I do understand the danger of lack of HIV awareness in my community. I try to do HIV awareness but in a very restricted corner."* Based on this comment, it can be seen awareness of HIV/AIDS in the Johannesburg Congolese community is still low.

[RITA] *"HIV awareness is very little especially among our migrants coming from the east of the DRC. It is one reason why those who die of HIV aids do not reveal it to any one as this will leave behind some issues of stigma especially if the person was married. We choose to hide health status because revealing it will make others disregard the partner and children by pointing them out as they did to their parents."*

PERCEPTIONS AROUND BURIAL AND FUNERAL PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Issues around burial in South Africa were given negative connotations by participants. It implies that, for the Congolese, burial "out of place" Is an issue worth understanding. The next section relates the perceptions about death among migrants in Johannesburg.

TABLE 9:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
Perceptions around burial and funeral practices in SA	Disgrace	-
	Regret of being a migrant due to death experiences	-
	Abomination of dealing with death without culture involved	-
	Isolated / removed from society	-
	Forced to adapt	-
	Don't want to be buried in SA	-

Participants' perceptions of the ways of dealing with death in South Africa express dissatisfaction and a feeling of loss of culture but also of the lack of dignity with which the deaths are treated. Their opinions revealed regret and dissatisfaction with the South African government, the social environment and local law in relation to dealing with death.

The Congolese communities experience significant changes when a death occurs in South Africa. Some participants in the group discussion said the following about the South African government:

[COCO]: *We do not believe they can protect us. …The government also does not help with anything when we are having death cases. We are self-dependent*".

A feeling of regret was expressed by one participant and related to the way death is dealt with by her community of Congolese migrants.

[PATRICE]: *"We, however, understand that we are out of our place of origin. But we regret that the way we must deal with death is not in accordance with how it is supposed to be done at home. We do the best we can, in guidance with how burial is done home."*

A young man named Luka feels that the way death is dealt with is similar to removing the deceased from the society, he said: "*As adults, we feel we are not buried here. We are just removed from the society.*

Congolese migrants do not feel satisfied with the way death is dealt with in South Africa and this causes great pain. They have the perception that their bodies are not buried but simply thrown away. According to Geschiere (2005), death and funeral rituals emphasize the reaffirmation of social ties and an inability to accomplish rituals may exacerbate feelings of isolation. Most migrants now residing in South Africa feel their culture is marginalized as they are not given room to practice their own cultural beliefs.

Some participants described the burial of a loved one in South Africa as follows:

[THOMAS]: *"Burying a migrant in South Africa is like just getting rid of rubbish"*

Most of the participants talked about the sacredness of life and how this characteristic is not respected in South Africa.

For example:

[PATRICE]:

…they (South Africans) *shoot and kill many people; …they are not like Bantu. The way South Africans perceive death is like human life has no significance to them, because they can kill easily. To us Fuliru, human life is sacred. Dead bodies are not good to see. In the past, some*

of our society members were not allowed to see dead bodies – young women, young men and children.

Tradition is a kind of protection for these people as some have related. Migrants can be shocked and develop psychological problems. They are frightened of a culture that doesn't fear death or value human life.

But the war caused changes. It was possible for everyone to see dead bodies. In contrary, the South Africans slaughter every dead body [perform autopsy] that I have seen us burying in our community. (Patrice).

Most of the interviewees stated the bodies of their loved ones have to be given a special treatment before burial. This treatment involves the family of the deceased having access to the body by taking it home. In this way, they control it and make sure it is buried well. Although the continuing conflict situation in the DRC may have caused some shifts as mentioned by De Boek (2009), this is most often taken as circumstantial. For many Congolese, taking control of the body remains one of the major concerns both in the DRC and in Johannesburg.

Most of the participants in this study expressed unhappiness about the possibility of dying and being buried away from their place of origin. The desire of reinforcing issues of body control and cultural observation remains a concern especially in Johannesburg where bodies are accessed by forensic doctors and sent to mortuaries.

These issues are just some of the factors perceived as causes of cultural marginalization among Johannesburg-based Congolese migrants in their process of acculturation. It has been stated in the literature that when a culture clashes with another, reaffirmation of traditional culture can occur (Thomasma, 1997).

The Congolese have not adopted the new culture in Johannesburg. Instead, when dealing with death, they try to accommodate what is possible for them. Their original culture is absent and the host country does not allow room for their culture to be observed. Irrespective of the absence of their own culture, the spirit of observing their culture remains. However, cultural requirements are absent.

It can be argued that the Congolese migrants in Johannesburg strive to maintain their culture due to the differences in cultural behaviors of the host population in relation their own. The lack of resources involved in the culture of death largely prevents the involvement of traditional religious practices. The next section presents some of the religious concerns voiced in Johannesburg as well as the perceptions attached to them when dealing with death.

RELIGION AND CULTURE: COMPLEMENTARILY AND CONFLICT

The table below describes the salient themes in relationship with culture and religion in dealing with death.

TABLE 10:

CATEGORIES	ISSUES	CONNOTATIONS
Religion and culture: some complementarily and conflict	Perform rituals to protect family against death consequences	n/a
	Distrustful for not involving traditional rituals	-
	Mourners talk to the dead as they believe in eschatological life (life after death)	n/a

Another aspect raised by migrants is related to the role of Western religion in dealing with death. Funerals have become a religious-oriented event in South Africa. In both funerals I attended, the presence of religion was dominant. The first funeral was led by a religious leader (pastor) from the beginning until the end and the same happened in the second. Religion has become the common practice used in times of death. Mbiti (1991) says religion penetrates in several activities of life and it can be difficult to isolate it among African populations.

During their process of migration the Congolese also move with their religion. Some migrants do not belong to an established religion and look more to their traditions to observe their culture rather than anything else (Ayiera, 2009).

Participants who were not religious were unhappy with the absence of culture and the presence of religion as the typical response to death management in South Africa. They said religion has humiliated their culture and want to make it disappear. These non-religious people perceive the presence of religion as a tool of disrespectfulness toward their ancestors and culture in general.

However a few of the participants who are not affiliated with any particular religion indicated Western religion is the only practice they found easy and available that can take on death events. However, the majority agreed religion is the practice most often involved in death events and this was the case even in the DRC.

CONCLUSION

This research used the acculturation theory to investigate the perceptions, experiences and responses to death among Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg. The study used a qualitative ethnographic method of investigation focusing upon describing events and finding meaning associated with death and customs.

Data was gathered from interviews, participant observation and group discussion. The researcher collected data from 15 participants for this study in addition to those who were spoken to during observation. Results of the study were consistent across the ethnographic observation, group discussion and interviews. The outcome of the study indicates perceptions, experiences and responses to death events among Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg are negative.

Mostly negative adjectives were used to describe their perceptions, experiences and reactions. Documented ethnographic interviews during observations and a group discussion focused on traditional death rituals of the Congolese migrants. These findings were supported by literature on African death rituals such as Nichols (2011), who suggest dealing with death among African involves cultural performances. It is also mentioned further that the absence of cultural performance may create issues of isolation (Ayiera, 2009).

The ethnographic observation, group discussion and interviews provided details on the death rituals performed by the Congolese living in Johannesburg. Some constraints imposed upon the Congolese by South Africa included the practice of autopsy and burial in public cemeteries. Less official but no less limiting were not getting time off work to attend funerals and the lack of available venues, other than mortuaries, for funerals. And since most migrants are young, inexperienced people tend to be overseeing funerals. All these obstacles prevent adherence to traditional rituals among Congolese from the Shi, Rega and Fuliru tribes. Primary challenges identified among migrants in performing traditional death rituals in South Africa are: the law of the country, the social environment and economic conditions.

The results of this research have been discussed and explained in terms of the acculturation model. The next chapter will deal specifically with the conclusion of this study through discussing the findings in relation to the conceptual framework, present the limitations and offer recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the key points drawn from the research. It discusses how this study informs a wider discussion of understanding perceptions experiences and responses to death among migrants in general and specifically among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg.

The study aims to provide understanding as to how the culture of the Congolese migrant changes or preserved in the process of migration. This was done through exploring perceptions, experiences and responses to death among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg. The report was structured in five chapters. Chapter one presented the introduction, background and presented the objectives of the study. Chapter two concentrated on reviewing the literature around the question of dealing with death in Africa, the challenges of migration and presented the framework of this study. The study adopts the acculturation theory to help identify cultural issues among migrants through responses and perceptions of death.

Culture has been defined as "systems of knowledge, concepts, rules, and practices that are learned and transmitted across generations. It includes language, religion and spirituality, family structures, life-cycle stages, ceremonial rituals, and customs, as well as moral and legal systems" (DSM: 749). This study investigates different aspects mentioned in the above definition of culture to understand what acculturation strategies migrants adopt in occurrences of death.

Berry (1987), mentions about different types of migrants that are often involved in the acculturation process. These include refugees, tourist and other groups involved in the migration movements voluntary or involuntary. As revealed by participants in this study, these migrants have forcibly left their places of origin due to atrocities such as war, crime and other human rights abuses. However these atrocities do not remove culture from them; they move with their culture.

The majority of them lives as refugees, asylum seekers and some are permanent resident in South Africa. Due to their status of migrants, and in events such as death, migrants face challenges to observe proper cultural practices. It is stated by (Ward,2008) not only the status of migrants is influential in determining the form of acculturation that migrants take but also the aspiration and the actions of individuals might have consequences for acculturating groups. One of the many aspirations of Congolese is to return back home one day.

During the interviews the Majority said they do not wish to remain in South Africa even at point of death. The actions posed in terms of culture during death events demonstrate no signs of willing to integrate in South African culture. Congolese migrants in contrast want to keep their home culture. The challenge to the above aspiration is the lifestyle migration subject Congolese to in South Africa which includes the types of works they do, the environment as well as policies around death.

See for example Oscar: "…*They find they have to work hard at bad jobs that do not give enough income to support them here in Johannesburg*". This statement implies that cultural observation among Congolese remains a felt need; however it is marginalized due to life restrictions they face in Johannesburg.

The impression migrants have is that South African culture is inconsistent and makes it not good for them to emulate. An example:

".....the South Africans slaughter every dead body [perform autopsy] that I have seen us burying in our community, in DRC we do not perform autopsy on bodies. (Patrice).

"...in DRC, we usually stay close to the dying; in hospital, however in South Africa, by law we are not allowed to guard the sick; we are just informed telephonically that the person has died; we do not get[the] last words from the deceased. (Patrice).

Irrespective of the absence of some material required to fulfill cultural practices and the presence of restricting policies around death, Congolese migrants strive to keep and observe their own culture through the use of minimal possible cultural elements. For example; putting bucket of water outside the yard for people to wash after burial; participating in tribes meetings, teaching local languages to their children who are born in Johannesburg; naming children in their own languages, etc. These symbolize a form of cultural conservation for the Congolese while they wait for their return.

Although death rituals in South Africa are a litigious topic of debate among Congolese migrants, practices involved in dealing with death can influence modifications of traditional customs practiced in one's homeland. Assimilation, integration and separation may be accountable for this development. Ward (2008); mentions that two questions often arise in the life of people during the process of cultural contact. The first question is to know if there is need for keeping their own culture and what is important for the person to change to the new culture of the hosting place. The answers obtained by the person acculturating to the above questions will lead to a model of acculturation (Ward, 2008).

Although not achieved; Congolese migrants' first choice is to maintain and observe own culture in Johannesburg during events of death. According to Berry (1980), assimilation

refers to migrants who do not maintain their cultural identity, but seek daily interaction with other cultures. In relation to dealing with death in South Africa, it can be argued Congolese migrants have not adopted this model of acculturation. Participants demonstrated no traces of assimilation and pointed out that their culture is not given space in South Africa. A service provider stated during an interview:

"....Migrants are often addressed in local languages that are new to them by many service providers; as a result migrants face difficulties to engage with the hosting culture"

Berry (1980) further states integration refers to migrants who preserve their home culture and yet become actively involved with the host culture. Some studies have mentioned that Congolese migrants have not integrated in Johannesburg (Mugisho, 2011). This is a result of a variety of factors such as xenophobia in South Africa (Nzayabino, 2011). The majority of Congolese migrants do not involve themselves in the dominant culture of South Africa. It is mentioned that when the original culture of migrants is considered to be of more significance than hosting culture, separation of culture can occur (Berry, 1992). In such cases, migrants found significance in maintaining relationship with the hosting culture; then integration or assimilation can be the options (Berry, 1992).

Interviews confirmed these accounts as well as the group discussions. The South African socio-cultural and legal environment as well as urban regulations regarding the management and disposition of dead bodies imposes changes upon the performance of cultural practices around death. Some of these restrictions include the practice of autopsy by law to establish the causes of unnatural death and burying in cemeteries as opposed to burial in family land. As well, mourners are often not given time off work. And significantly, the migrant community is mostly made up of young inexperienced people who are not acquainted with the cultural knowledge. They are the ones overseeing funerals.

There are also infrastructural limitations as migrants find it difficult to rent a proper venue for a funeral. For example, in Johannesburg, migrants often share apartments with people of different cultural backgrounds. Such an environment does not allow for particular cultural practices to be observed – such as keeping the body in the house to be engaged with, etc. It has been mentioned that acculturation is the theory suitable for understanding migrants and elements of cultural change (Berry, 1997).

Lastly, the majority of participants mentioned that Congolese migrants do not involve in the South African culture and have no room to observe their own. The marginalisation model of acculturation can be pointed in this case as it involves the rejection of the dominant culture of the host country (Barjesteh & Vaseghi, 2012). Berry et al., (2006) mention that

"Marginalisation exists when neither cultural maintenance nor interaction with others is sought" (Berry, 2006:306).

The strategy of acculturation adopted by Congolese migrants therefore is marginalisation. According to Berry (1997), it is the process of acculturation where migrants have not integrated in the host culture and are not given room to practice their own culture. In Johannesburg Congolese migrants are not given room to apply their own culture. They are faced with legal challenges as well as many inconsistencies contained in the South African culture around death. Migrants said that although they face challenges in dealing with death, they do understand that they are out of place of origin. Many of them said that they do not make any arrangement to deal with their own possible death in South Africa as this is not part of their tradition. As indicated by their culture death is not something that they should be prepared for, for that reason they do not join burial societies, a practice extended among South Africans. Other migrants pointed out that they wish to send bodies back home for proper funerals to be engaged with, however it difficult to do so. This is due to the infrastructure and security in their country of origin as well as economic restrictions they face living as migrants in South Africa.

This study focused on death events among Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg. This was done to understand changes that come as a result of migration. As migrants relocate, coming from a different cultural background, adaptation to the new dominant culture of their host country is a challenge (Berry, 2009).

This study has contributed in exploring the difficulties encountered by migrants when dealing with death. This is an area of limited documentation. Literature on migration tends to focus on the vulnerability of migrants – when they are sick or when they die. Such literature seems not to attract the interest of scholars as a component of their concern for migrants' wellbeing in host societies. However, in the context of Africa, this study has shown death goes beyond the end of physical life to include the migrants' concern about their relationship with ancestors.

The study identified the consequences that follow when an African dies out of place. These include non-decent burial which does not take into consideration the cultural background of the deceased. Also, burial out of place does not allow the soul of the deceased to rest in peace or bring blessing to the living family members. The spirit of the deceased may become a ghost and start disturbing the family by killing them or not protecting them from the invisible. Dying out of place induces a prolonged sense of loss for family members living in the place of origin. In some instances, the family of the deceased retains the expectation the dead

person will come back. This makes living migrants feel worried about their own deaths, knowing that the process of dealing with death out of place does not include their culture. Migrants do understand that dying and being buried out of place might remain an unfinished business as it does not involve the required rituals for the spirit of the deceased to rest in peace. That is why a community not able to provide proper burial is fearful their living may have dire consequences to face in the future. Such a community would have no ancestors to protect them from the invisible world.

For Congolese migrants who have family or friends die out of place, it becomes difficult to practice some of the social rules and rituals expected to take place when death occurs. Those social rules include the inheritance ceremony, where the living son takes over the father's responsibilities. In some communities, when a married woman dies and leaves children, they sometimes prefer to give the husband a wife from the same family so that she can look after her sister's children and become the wife of the sister's husband. When it is a man who dies, the brother of the deceased husband will be requested to marry his brother's widow. However, within the context of migration, there is a discontinuity of such social practices and as a consequence, many widows and orphans lose the support they would normally receive from their family members.

Any death requires the participation of family members of the deceased. When that death occurs far from the place of origin, this becomes difficult due to various issues. Transport cost for the body as well as documentation allowing another person to travel with the body are expensive. In the context of the DRC, infrastructure is problematic. The process involved in transporting a body is slow and arduous. For example, there are no direct flights from Johannesburg to the eastern region of the DRC. And the cost of such a flight would be prohibitive.

A limited participation of family members is observed in many cases when death occurs among migrants. Many migrants die and are buried by fellow migrants who are not their relatives. This has consequences because it disturbs the cultural practices of the migrants and their families back home. In addition, laws of the host country do not allow space for practicing the migrants' cultural rituals in relation to dealing with death. Instead, it marginalizes it.

From these reasons, we can conclude many migrants find it difficult to practice important rituals in dealing with death. Therefore, the perceptions, experiences and responses to death among Congolese migrants living in Johannesburg are somewhat negative due to the many challenges they encounter in this regard. Finally, Congolese migrants in Johannesburg

support one another when dealing with death. This was demonstrated through the way mourners attend funerals as well as the type of organization they create during death events regardless of the mentioned challenges. People came from various areas of Johannesburg to attend the funeral without regard of distance travelled and offered support to the mourning family.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This investigation provided information on Congolese migrants' perceptions, experiences and reactions to death. However, there were some limitations needing to be mentioned as they might have played a role in influencing the overall findings of this study.

Although an in-depth interview schedule was used, limited interviewing skills were a learning experience for me and I realized I was constrained by the way my questions were formulated. They did not allow for much flexibility. However, the existent rapport between me and the community members made up for my lack of skills

As interviews in general are perceived as a time consuming task by Valenzuela & Shrivastava (2007) and due to the amount of time needed (60 minutes in this study), it was difficult to initially gain access to willing participants. Studies by Silverman (2011), cite that time can be of the reason why a person may not want to participate in a study. In addition, due to the nature of the interviews, control over the interview process was reduced as the participant often brought in many other issues that, although, significant to the topic were not relevant to the focus of the present research.

It is mentioned that participants can influence the form of the study (Smith, 2004). However in this study, the researcher was cautious and did not consider information deemed unnecessary for this study. On many occasions during the interviews, the researcher had to guide the participant back to the topic to avoid being misled by them. It has been stated that if the researcher is not careful, he can be misled by participants views (Briggs, 1986).

Due to the use of open-ended questions and free form responses, there were many differences in the degree of the responses and the answers varied in length, detail, and quality. This increased the difficulty and complexity of categorization. A common limitation of content analysis is the involvement of human decision-making in the content analysis procedure of coding and analysis (Neuendorf, 2002). However, the content analysis process has provided excellent categories of data.

Considering the sample used was made of voluntary participants, there could be a possibility for influence volunteer bias in the research. For instance, there is evidence to suggesting

personality variables may play a role in discriminating between volunteers and non-volunteers (Thompson, 2000). Therefore, it is possible the sample maintained some biases associated with being a volunteer and this could have affected the overall results of the study.

In essence, the limitations of this study are worth mentioning as they may play a vital role in affecting the overall results produced in the current research. These findings provide an overall eclectic and multidimensional perspective into the perceptions experiences and responses of death among Congolese migrants in South Africa

Having produced the necessary results and limitations, it is pertinent to discuss the implications of these findings. Therefore, the following section will explain them and this will be a detailed discussion of the limitations of the research.

Logistical problems were related to transportation. I conducted interviews in numerous localities which required money for transportation. Financial limitation made it difficult to meet with the participants in Johannesburg.

Death is an encounter no one wishes to experience in their communities. Being a Congolese community member, I had to be extra careful while discussing such a sensitive topic for fear of upsetting anyone. Furthermore, dealing with a sensitive topic like death and supposedly waiting for a funeral in the community, during the period when data was to be collected was a gamble. It could have happened that no death occurred in the community between September and December of 2012 for personal observation. As an alternative, I considered the use of videos, in case there was not such an event. Some people did not want to participate in group discussions because they knew I would show the videos of funerals.

It was also a risk to conduct research observations while other people from the same community as mine were mourning. However, I went there and kept in mind that I was there to do the research. I knew the success of my research depended on my attitude during these events. In addition I also implemented interviews and group discussions to supplement the data collection process.

The participants were not English speaking; therefore translation into English was required after the transcription of interviews. This process was tedious and very time consuming and may have impacted the time line of the study.

Results of the study have generated certain issues worth investigating for future research.

Further studies should focus on exploring the challenges faced by Congolese migrants in performing death rituals. Such a study will aid in understanding and promoting cultural integration of migrants in hosting countries.

It is recommended further research focusing upon the role of religion and traditional customs. How do they influence cultural integration? This should be explored further among the Congolese migrants. Such a study will be important to identify some of the challenges and advantages of religion out of place, the congruencies existing between culture and religion as well as the conflicts existing between the two.

There is a need of a comparative study on the cultural practices of the three tribes in this study to understand the differences in these cultures. Such a study could be expanded to the remainder of the tribes in the DRC.

There is a need to conduct a research using other landscapes to measure acculturation. These should be other than death to understand cultural changes in migrants' life as this study only focused on death issues and areas involved. I suggest as death is an event of sadness; then further studies could focus on an event that is more of happiness among migrants to measure cultural changes on other life aspects of migrants.

Among Congolese migrants, sex is still a taboo topic no one wants to talk about as part of culture. It would be beneficial to explore how that taboo influences knowledge about HIV making migrants more vulnerable in host places.

Further studies should focus upon knowing the full cultural practices involved in dealing with death among the Bashi tribe, Rega tribe and Fulero tribe of the DRC. The same study should be expanded to the remaining the Congolese tribes in the DRC as well as other migrant communities.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the death rituals among Congolese migrants in a foreign culture. Using the acculturation theory, this research has demonstrated that integrating social norms of South African society has resulted in the adjustment of Congolese death customs, and this has had a negative impact upon the Congolese migrants. This reaffirms the findings of Taft (1977) – that for survival, one has to become familiar with the new society one is occupying. In Johannesburg, the migrants' culture is interrupted and cannot respond to death in line with their usual traditions.

However, this does not mean a culture must be completely integrated. Beirens and Fontaine (2011); state adaptation to the host culture does not put off the preserving of one's own ethnic group culture. As indicated throughout this research, death rituals are considered particularly imperative for the Congolese migrants' identity. Therefore, policies are necessary to ensure

obstacles in practicing these death customs are identified, discussed with members of the community, and reduced where possible. In this way, migrants may begin to feel a sense of belonging; less isolated, which in turn may bring positive feelings to the migrant community as a whole.

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APPENDIX:

1. Ethics clearance certificate
2. Information shit
3. Video consent
4. Audio consent
5. Questions

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)

H120817 Darius

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE — PROTOCOL NUMBER H120817

PROJECT TITLE — Managing the final journey home: Exploring perceptions, experiences, responses to death among congolese migrants in Johannesburg

INVESTIGATOR(S) — M K K Darius

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT — Africa Centre for Migration and Society

DATE CONSIDERED — 17 August 2012

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE — Approved Unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE — 31 August 2014

DATE 01 October 2012

CHAIRPERSON (Professor T Milani)

cc: L. Nunez

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.

Signature

05 / 10 / 2012
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

Participants' information sheet

Title of research project: Exploring Perceptions, experiences and Responses to death among Congolese Migrants in Johannesburg

Nature of the research:

An interview and group discussion on migration and death particularly how migrants in Johannesburg perceive and respond when death occur in their communities.

What is involved?

Your participation in this study will include an interview or a participation in a group discussion about responses to death among migrant's communities, particularly how death is dealt with in your tribe in Johannesburg.

Risks:

There are few risks in participating in this study. You may be reminded of bad memories.

Benefits:

You will not receive any direct benefit from participating in this study. But, this research will help us to make recommendations that policy makers could use in the future on issues of how migrants deal with death in Johannesburg.

Costs:

There are no direct costs associated with this research project. It will, however take up to one hour of your time.

For any queries regarding this research you may contact the under mentioned details

SUPRVISOR: Lorena Nunez

Email: nunez@wits.ac.za

Telephone:

The researcher: Darius Kasigwa Kwigomba

Email: dariuskeke@yahoo.com

Telephone: 073 221 3072

PARTICIPANT:

Printed Name of Participant	Date

Audio recording permission

Title of Study: Exploring Perceptions, experiences and Responses to death among Congolese Migrants in Johannesburg

Principal Investigator: Darius Kasigwa Kwigomba
Email Address: dariuskeke@yahoo.com

I am a student conducting a research on the above mentioned topic. Part of this research is about finding out how migrants in Johannesburg respond when death occurs in their community and how they prepare for own death. I'm conducting the research for study purposes to complete my master's degree. I request your free participation while I inform you that the topic is sensitive and could bring back bad memories.

I would like to have your permission to record the interview to allow us focus on the discussion and ease the conversation. I will transcript what i recorded latter as I don't want to miss some important part of our conversation during the interview and doing so might save time.

Name----------

Signature----------

Video Consent

Title of Study: Exploring Perceptions, experiences and Responses to death among Congolese Migrants in Johannesburg

Principal Investigator: Darius Kasigwa Kwigomba
Phone number:
Email Address:

I am a student conducting a research on the above mentioned topic. Part of this research is about finding out how migrants in Johannesburg respond when death occurs in their community and how they prepare for own death. I'm conducting the research for study purposes to complete my master's degree. Part of what the material needed to be used for this study are Videos that are usually captured during funeral events that will be watched in a group discussion of no more than 20 people. If you allow, I could use the Video shot during the funeral of your loved one.

Name----------

Signature----------

Interview Guide

Title of Study: Managing the final journey home: Exploring Perceptions, experiences and responses to death among Congolese migrants in Johannesburg

---

I will start by asking you of experiences of death in Johannesburg

1. Socio-demographic characteristics

Please tell me your name

How old are you?

How long have you been living in Johannesburg?

Do you identify yourself as being part of a tribe?

If yes, of which tribe are you?

What relationship do you have with other members of your tribe?

What (events) bring you together and why do you come together as a tribe?

2. Now I would like to discuss the issue of death.

What do you think are the major causes of death within your community, especially amongst your tribe members in Johannesburg?

3. Do think that your community experiences death in South Africa differently from your home country? Please explain

4. What procedures and rituals do you follow when a tribe member dies in Johannesburg? (*Question related to integration, acculturation and assimilation*)

5. Do your tribe members adapt to South African culture specially when dealing with death, if yes how? If no,

6. Are there different ways to responding to the death of Congolese migrant who commit suicide or dies of HIV/AIDS, TB? Do your tribe mates respond the same as they would respond to other cases of death? How do they respond?

I would like to ask you now about what people do in DRC when dealing with death

How do people in your community in DRC respond to death? (*What are the cultural, religious and economic implications involved)*

Now I want to ask you some questions about the challenges your community faces when dealing with death in Johannesburg

8. How do your tribe members deal with concerns about death and burial arrangement in South Africa.

What are economic challenges migrants faces when dealing with death?

b.) Do people in your tribe affiliate to burial societies?

c.) Is there any organization that assists you when someone dies? If yes, which form of assistance do you receive? (Material, spiritual moral, etc)

d.) Do you repatriate bodies home? If yes, what channels do you use for body repatriation? When repatriation does happen and how it happens?

3) If cases they are buried locally is there any problem in the fact that the body remains in a foreign land?

What does it mean in your community to lose a loved one in a foreign land? And what does it mean to bury a person of your tribe outside your culture?

Questions for service providers

Personal information

What is your name?

What is your nationality?

What is your age?

Which role do you play in this organization?

Questions About the study

Tell me anything about the way migrants respond to death

What form of support do migrants request from your organization when someone dies in their community?

What services/support do you offer to migrants?

What are your requirements to qualify for your services related to death?

Do you have any Congolese case among your clients?

What challenges do you face in helping for Congolese death cases?

Do you help if they are willing to repatriate the body?