TEACHERS’ STRUGGLE FOR INCOME IN THE CONGO (DRC)

Between Education and Remuneration

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Today’s lesson: Dear students, I have just walked for 15 km without eating, I am hungry and I am tired, please collect something for me.

The picture was purchased by the author at the local art market in Kinshasa. The artist signs as Tambwe.
Table of contents

Acknowledgements ...................................................................................................................v
Lists of figures, tables, and pictures ..........................................................................................vi
List of important terms and acronyms .......................................................................................vii
Abstract ...................................................................................................................................x
Prologue ...................................................................................................................................... 1
1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 2
  1.1 Governance and historical context ..................................................................................... 3
  1.2 Prior research and research question ............................................................................... 7
  1.3 Thesis’ structure .............................................................................................................. 9
2 Theoretical framework .......................................................................................................... 11
  2.1 Critical Realism ................................................................................................................ 11
  2.2 Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education .......................................................... 12
  2.3 Strategic-Relational Approach ....................................................................................... 13
  2.4 Real governance ............................................................................................................ 15
  2.5 Conceptual framework .................................................................................................... 18
3 Research Design .................................................................................................................. 20
  3.1 Ethics .............................................................................................................................. 20
  3.2 Data Collection .............................................................................................................. 24
  3.3 Data Analysis ................................................................................................................ 27
4 Teacher agency in relation to registration ........................................................................... 29
  4.1 Registration of schools .................................................................................................... 29
    4.1.1 Non-accredited schools ............................................................................................. 35
    4.1.2 Accredited, non-registered schools ......................................................................... 38
  4.2 Registration of teachers ................................................................................................... 41
    4.2.1 Temporary employment ........................................................................................... 43
    4.2.2 Nouvelle Unité .......................................................................................................... 44
    4.2.3 Non Payé ................................................................................................................ 45
5 Teacher agency in relation to sources of income .............................................................. 48
  5.1 Government salary .......................................................................................................... 48
    5.1.1 Composition .............................................................................................................. 49
    5.1.2 Irregularities in payroll management ........................................................................ 51
    5.1.3 Bancarisation ........................................................................................................... 52
  5.2 Motivation fee ................................................................................................................. 56
5.2.1 Negotiations around the motivation fee............................................................... 57
5.2.2 Attracting and keeping students ............................................................................ 59
5.2.3 Redistribution ......................................................................................................... 61
5.3 Corruption ..................................................................................................................... 63
5.4 Supplementary income ................................................................................................. 64

6 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 66
   6.1 Conclusions to the research question ......................................................................... 66
   6.2 Conceptual and theoretical reflections ......................................................................... 68
   6.3 Recommendations ....................................................................................................... 70
   6.4 Further research .......................................................................................................... 72

References .............................................................................................................................. xi

Appendix 1. List of interviews and focus groups................................................................. xxii
Appendix 2. Interview guide for teachers ............................................................................. xxvii
Appendix 3. Interview guide for officials ............................................................................. xxviii
Appendix 4. Poster: Education for All.................................................................................. xxix
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Lists of figures, tables, and pictures

Figure 1. Type of schools by network ................................................................. 6
Figure 2. Conceptual framework ........................................................................ 18
Figure 3. Maps of DRC ....................................................................................... 24
Figure 4. Typology of 'de facto types of schools' .............................................. 30
Figure 5. Typology of 'de facto types of teacher employment status' ............... 42

Table 1. Sub research questions .......................................................................... 9
Table 2. List of 'de facto types of schools' .......................................................... 31
Table 3. List of 'de facto teacher employment conditions' .................................. 42

Picture 2. Non-accredited primary school ............................................................. 36
Picture 3. Accredited, non-registered primary school ......................................... 39
Picture 4. Payment scheme showing "NP" ............................................................ 46
Picture 5. Example of motivation fee calculation. ............................................... 57

All photos were taken by the author or his research assistant in 2013.
List of important terms and acronyms

There are many technical terms that are used in the Congolese education system. These are now explained and when first mentioned in the text. Some terms that are difficult to translate are used in the original French way.

**Accreditation** – see agréement.

**Acte de prestation** - Certificate of rendition of services

**AFD** – Agence Francaise du Dévelopement (French National Development Agency)

**Agréement** – Process through which schools become officially registered at the Ministry of Education. The English translation used here is ‘accreditation’.

**Bancarisation** – A French term to designate the current reform to provide all public employees with individual bank accounts for salary transfers.

**Budgetisé** – Mécanisé and paid by the government

**CCPEE** – Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education

**Circular** – Policy direction, in this case from the Ministry of Education. For example a school receives a circular when it is accredited.

**Commission d’Affectation** – Document issued by the Catholic coordination for each teacher to assign him/her to a particular school.

**Convention** – Treaty signed in 1977 between the government and four religions in order to officially recognize the churches’ role in the provision of education. Religious schools are counted as public schools and are called “Ecole conventionnée” (Conventionized school).

**Catholic coordination** – The Catholic’s main geographical unit is the diocese and each diocese has a Catholic coordination that governs the school sector. The coordinator takes the most important decisions.

**DRC** – Democratic Republic of Congo

**ECC** – Ecole Conventionnée Catholique (Schools managed by the Catholic church’s school network

**FC** – Francs Congolais (Congolese currency). FC 900 ~ USD 1
Gratuité – Governmental policy that primary schooling is free. As of December 2013, there were no governmental school fees (in the schools visited) for grades 1-5. However, parents still have to pay the so called motivation fees which are much higher than the official tuition fees.

Inspection – Department of the Ministry of Education that ought to visit schools and control them in matter of administration, finance and pedagogy.

Mbudi – Part of Kinshasa after which a treaty of the year 2004 between the government and public officials was named. Included i.a. teacher’s minimum salary but has not been implemented.

Mécanisé – The status after mécanisation.

Mécanisation – For teachers: The process of receiving a matriculation number at the SECOPE (not automatically being paid). For schools: The process of receiving a matriculation number at the SECOPE and being paid. The English translation used here is registration.

Mini-Promoscolaire – “Mini school promotion”. Gathering of government and religious officials at the Sous-Proved-level to discuss matters such as the opening of new schools. It is supposed to take place annually but is in fact not organized regularly.

Motivation fee – “Prime de motivation“. Monthly fee paid by parents to teachers for each student. Synonym: top-up.

Non-agréée – See agreement

N-P – “Non Payé” (Non-Paid). Teachers who are not on the government’s pay roll.

N-U – “Nouvelle Unité” (New Unit). Teachers who have not been mécanisé by the government.

Payer les fiches – “Paying the sheets”. A practice exiged by government officials for teachers to pay significant amounts of money for filing out administrative documents that are in fact free of cost (except costs for making the copies).

Parental committees – „Comité des parents“. School-based committees that are de jure participating in several decision-making processes, especially related to the motivation fee.

Promo-Scolaire – “School promotion”. Gathering of government and religious officials at the Proved-level to discuss matters such as the opening of new schools. It is supposed to take place annually but is in fact not organized regularly.
**Proved** – Abbreviation for “Province Educationelle” (Educational Province), the Ministry of Education’s main geographical unit. In general, the Proved corresponds to the administrative entity “District”. “Proved” is also used as a synonym for the head of the Ministry’s branch in that area.

**Registration** – See mécanisation.

**SECOPE** – “Service de Contrôle et Paiement des Enseignants”. The Ministry of Education’s department for teacher payment

**Sous-Proved** – Abbreviation for “Sous-Province Educationelle” (Educational Sub-province). Cf. Proved.

**SRA** – Strategic-Relational Approach

**Tomber caduque** – “Lapsing”. Term used by teachers to refer to the phenomenon of dossiers that are not treated by the SECOPE: Supposedly, they lapse after three months. However, no such practice does exist officially.

**Upgrading** – Term I invented to refer to the upward-move in the accreditation and registration processes.

**Ventilation** – The upward flow of money from parents’ contributions to teachers and government and religious officials.
Abstract

As the ambivalent role of education for sustainable peacebuilding is gaining increasing attention in international debates, it is important to analyse the conditions under which education is taking place. The provision of education in conflict-affected and fragile countries is challenging.

The Congolese education sector is characterized by a gradual retreat of the state in the provision of education and an increasing authority and decision-making power of local actors. The predominance of uncodified practical norms cause constant negotiations between different actors. Among these, teachers have the particular role of providing education to the students. They must do so in a multi-scalar context of reconstruction agendas, inadequate payment, erroneous administration, practical norms and competition between schools for students.

Previous studies have outlined the structural impacts on teachers, but none focused on their agency. If teachers are still coping with their very basic needs due to their income situation, quality of education is not the primary or sole concern of their everyday actions. Hence, they have developed a range of strategies to exercise their agency in relation to their income. These strategies encompass the complex process of teacher and school registration and additional means of generating income. Any policies and reforms in the education sector and therefore in the broader peacebuilding environment are doomed to fail if they do not take into account teachers’ income situation.
Prologue

Richard\(^1\) has been a teacher for 30 years. He is now a principal at a Catholic primary school in a small town. Richard’s school is among those that are registered and ought to be funded by the government. In December 2013 the Catholic school coordination transferred him from one school to another. During the first six months in his current position, he did not have any problems with his salary. That is, no exceptional problems: he is used to receiving a meagre salary from the government, which is never more than USD 100 per month. Yet, he knows that he is better off than one third of Congolese teachers who receive no official salary at all. Additionally, his salary increases by USD 50 from students’ parents’ contributions.

After having worked for 20 years in total and six months at the new school, all of a sudden Richard’s name disappears from the payroll. He does not receive any salary for five months. This is due to the irregularity that his name had not been transferred to the new school’s payroll. Therefore he made use of a common mechanism and received his predecessor’s salary. But, soon after, his predecessor’s name was transferred to another school’s payroll. The government official in charge did not bother asking who replaced him and did not update the lists accordingly.

Richard lives 120 km away from the provincial capital. Being one of the few teachers with a motorbike, he needs to pay the fuel in order to meet public and religious officials to discuss his case and renew his documents. After having tried to submit his dossier anew at the provincial education office, nothing changed.

What can teachers like Richard do to improve their income situation, despite all the structural constraints? This is the main questions that this thesis intends to explore.

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\(^1\) The name has been changed to secure anonimity.
1 Introduction

„Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.“

All of the 230,000 Congolese primary school teachers can probably relate to these income-related issues in Richard’s story: meagre income, students’ parents’ financial contributions, and poor regulation (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010). Teachers in the DRC face many other difficulties: They teach in dilapidated facilities, receive little training and face an ever decreasing reputation (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006). These aspects are not detached from the overall state of the country. After over twenty years of civil war, the DRC is currently regaining stability (Herdt, Titeca, & Wagemakers, 2010; Johnson, 2009).

In such a post-conflict reconstruction, education systems can have both negative and positive contributions and implications for peacebuilding. In fact, this ambivalent role of education for peacebuilding in conflict-affected and fragile states is gaining increasing attention in international policy discourses and academic debates (Boak & Smith, 2009; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005, 2009; de Herdt, Titeca, & Wagemakers, 2012; Lopes Cardozo, 2009; Miller-Grandvaux, 2009; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008, 2012; Novelli & Smith, 2011; Shields, 2013; Smith Ellison, 2013; UNESCO. The EFA Global Monitoring team, 2011).

Education’s potentially positive impact in such contexts encompasses the reduction of inequalities that fueled conflicts, restoring a sense of normality and contributions to statebuilding (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Shields, 2013; UNICEF, 2014). Teacher remuneration is linked with education quality and providing access to schooling, two elements that can facilitate these positive impacts (Dolan et al., 2012). If teachers face a maldistribution of resources such as being poorly remunerated for their services, how are they supposed to become active proponents of peacebuilding education and critical pedagogy (Int. 11, 12, 15 & 38; Avalos & Barrett, 2013; de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, & Kuatschila Musasa, 2008; Dolan et al., 2012; Fraser, 2005; Giroux, 2002; Rose & Greeley, 2006; Verhaghe, 2006)? The drawing on this thesis’ cover alludes to this situation by showing a teacher who asks his students to collect a small sum for him because he is tired and hungry. Therefore, if education is to

\[ ^2 \text{“Food comes first, then morals.” Bertolt Brecht, The Three-penny opera, act 2, sc.3.} \]

\[ ^3 \text{For a critical discussion on ‘fragile states’ see (Grimm et al., 2014; Osaghae, 2012); regarding ‘peacebuilding’ see (Denskus, 2008).} \]

\[ ^4 \text{Both quality of education and critical pedagogy are contested concepts with various meanings (Breuing, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2013). However, it is argued that adequate remuneration and employment conditions are directly impacting all of these concepts, regardless of their exact meaning.} \]
play a positive role in peacebuilding processes, teacher remuneration is among the major challenges and prerequisites that need to be taken into consideration (Boak & Smith, 2009; Brannelly, 2012; De Herdt et al., 2012; Dolan et al., 2012; Hoffmann & Kirk, 2013; Novelli, 2011).

In other words, there is an underlying cultural political economy that constrains teachers’ ability to deliver education and to become critical pedagogues (McLaren, 1998; Novelli & Smith, 2011; Robertson & Dale, 2014). An important element of this context are international agendas, for instance around Free Primary Education and Education for All (Altinyelken, 2012). Even if their objectives are worthwhile, they can have strong unintended impacts (Altinyelken, 2012; Anon., 2012; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

Since Congolese teachers cannot take their income for granted, they must take active steps in order to reach sufficient amounts of income (Verhaghe, 2007b). This makes clear that a thorough understanding of the actual circumstances how teachers secure their income is a necessary condition for any reform in the field of peacebuilding education. This thesis sets out to contribute to this understanding.

The introduction continues as follows: First, the historical context and governance structures of the Congolese education sector are presented in order to shed light on the conflict and its relation to educational governance and the teacher remuneration system. Second, once the reader has gained an insight into these dynamics, academic debates on these issues will be presented. This will highlight the lack of focus on teachers’ practices in relation to their income. The research question follows from this gap in the debates. The introduction closes by showing how the remainder of the thesis will be structured.

1.1 Governance and historical context

In 1960, by the time of independence from Belgian colonialism, the delivery of primary education was in the hands of the churches (de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010). This situation remained until the 1970s when Dictator Mobutu initiated reforms called Zairianisation (Pearson, 2011). In the course of these reforms that aimed at decolonizing the country and stabilizing his power, he tried to bring the education system under governmental control (Titeca, Herdt, & Wagemakers, 2013). Recognizing after some years that this was an unfeasible task, he officially recognized the churches’ role in the

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5 The term “political economy of critical pedagogy” is used by McLaren to discuss globalization and neoliberal capitalism’s influence on critical pedagogy in the United States (McLaren, 1998); I propose to also understand the term in this sense.

6 In the case of the DRC, ‘decolonization’ refers for instance to the change of the country’s name to Zaire and the obligation for everyone to refer to each other as “citizens” (Johnson, 2009).
provision of education (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010). Thus, in 1977 the so-called Convention was prepared and signed between the government and four religions (cf. Titeca & De Herdt, 2011, p.8):\textsuperscript{7} The following first article of this Convention highlights the major agreement: “Article 1: The Republic trusts the management of public schools into the hands of the church who accepts this under the following conditions.”\textsuperscript{8}

This convention, which is still in use today, established a division of tasks: on the one hand, the state responsibilities include “organize” education by establishing the curriculum, arranging national exams, setup an inspection service and pay teachers as well as governmental and religious administrative staff and other school-related costs (De Herdt et al., 2012, p.690). The Ministry of Education has a special department for teacher payment, the Service de Contrôle et Paiement des Enseignants (SECOPE; Service for Teacher Control and Payment). SECOPE was established in 1985 with the support of the Belgium development cooperation (World Bank, 2008, p. 83). On the other hand, the responsibilities of the religious networks included to “manage” the schools by administering staff and providing administrative and pedagogical support (De Herdt et al., 2012, p.690).

The Catholic Church alone manages approx. 37 percent of all schools and is the most important single provider of education in the DRC (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 220f; World Bank, 2008, p. 74f). For this reason my thesis will focus on teachers in schools managed by the Catholic Church. Another important document regulating the teaching profession is the Framework law (Loi-cadre de l’enseignement national) from 1986, which sets the overall regulatory framework, e.g. for the accreditation and registration of new schools.\textsuperscript{9}

In the 1980s and 1990s, an IMF Structural Adjustment Programme, a corrupted and weakening central government and a shrinking budget for education caused teachers’ salaries to reach a historical low (Andre et al., 2010; de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010). As a result of the government’s incapacity to stabilize the country, a civil war broke out in 1996, which still continues in the east of the DRC. This conflict further destabilized the country and the government. Finally, in 2006 a new government under President Joseph Kabila was elected and the current constitution was signed (Johnson, 2009). The entire nation still recovers from twenty years of war and conflict, in a situation characterized as “neither war nor peace” (Larmer, Laudati, & Clark, 2013).

\textsuperscript{7} Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Kimbanguists. Kimbanguism is a religion based on Christianity and was founded in the beginning of the 20th century by a Congolese man, Simon Kimbangu (Johnson, 2009).

\textsuperscript{8} Own translation. The religious networks managed the majority of schools and the government took care of the remainder.

\textsuperscript{9} Both convention and framework law are substantially outmoded (World Bank, 2008, p. 75). In fact, a new framework law has been adopted in February 2014, but its implementation will take time.
In this (post-)conflict context, decisions in the education sector are not taken unilaterally by the government but are subject to a “layered system of decision-making” (De Herdt et al., 2012, p. 691). This system is characterized by a “polycentric” governance and state(hood) is “negotiated” (Andre et al., 2010; Hagmann & Péclard, 2010). Governance is “polycentric” because various actors at different scales and localities are involved in the decision-making process. State(hood) is “negotiated” because the state does not have the power and resources to unilaterally prescribe, implement or even communicate policies; other actors do not simply accept governmental decisions but try to set their own agendas and achieve their respective goals. Uncodified norms rather than actual policies strongly influence these interactions (De Herdt et al., 2012; Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2009).

Actors in the school system have shown to be extremely innovative over the last two decades, mainly through teachers’ adaptability and the local presence and partial autonomy of the religious networks and parents’ financial contributions (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Mrsic-Garac, 2009; World Bank, 2005, p. ix). In order to guarantee a functioning school system in their respective dioceses, the Catholic Church adapts and sometimes contradicts governmental rules and regulations, when they do not fit the local circumstances (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 16; Titeca et al., 2013). Initiated by the Catholic Church and the National Parental Committee, parents nowadays finance large parts of the school system via top-ups on teacher salaries as a result of the sector’s decline in the 1990’s (de Herdt, 2010, p. 35; Hofmeijer, 2011, p. 27; Pearson, 2011; Verhaghe, 2007a; Williams, 2012; World Bank, 2005).

Today, ‘parental committees’ (Comité des parents) are affiliated with their religious educational networks and are present at every school (Andre et al., 2010, p. 136). The top-ups, also called motivation fees, are still paid today and make up a large portion of teachers’ salaries. Despite this fact, the government announced gratuité (i.e. free primary education), which is linked to donor’s initiatives around free primary education (Andre et al., 2010; Ngongondu, 2013). Gratuité is anchored in the constitution, its implementation started in 2011 and official school fees have by now been abolished for the first five years of primary school (Andre et al., 2010; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012). However, since the official fees only made up a minor part of parents’ financial contributions, the agenda has become a mere “slogan” (Ngongondu, 2013, p. 41) and does not take into account local school realities.

Alongside teachers, government and religious officials and parents, other actors at various scale levels are involved in the polycentric and negotiated governance process and relevant for a

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10 The diocese is the Catholic Church’s main geographical unit.
discussion on teacher income: First, various donor organizations are involved in supporting the education sector. The French AFD and the World Bank are of particular interest for this study. Second, due to the current reform of bancarisation, which means the attribution of individual bank accounts for all public employees, the banking sector plays an important role in the provision of teacher salary. Third, school principals deserve particular attention as they are the main interlocuters for government and religious officials (Titeca & Nlandu, 2010). Fourth, teacher unions can be an effective instrument and forum for collective agency (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006). However, strongly politicized, false unions have been created, existing ones became internally fragmented to the extent that currently two people claim to be the head of SYNECAT (Union for Catholic teachers) (Int. 2, 44, 50, 53, 63, 64 and 99). Especially in rural areas their role seems to be marginal (Int. 66, 89).

Despite this polycentric governance, the examples of gratuité and bancarisation show that the state remains with agenda-setting power and survived as the central frame of reference (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 12). Teachers are still public employees and interviews clearly showed that they still hold the government accountable (Int. 8, 9, 10, 76). The cession of school management to religious network is the most important manifestation of polycentric governance. The following figure shows the manifold ways in which primary schools are managed in the DRC and gives percentages to show the distribution of this management among the different networks (Williams, 2012, p. 6).

![Figure 1. Type of schools by network](ownGraphic)

Today there are more than fifteen of religious networks that provide education (De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012). Despite the separation along networks, this thesis will show that it is also useful to distinguish schools according to their state of official accreditation and registration. Some schools
exist and function without being officially accredited or registered by the government. The affects, direct and indirect, on teachers will be discussed at a later point in this thesis.

### 1.2 Prior research and research question

Scholars engaging with the Congolese education system have provided rich empirical findings and discussed them both from a theoretical as well as an application-oriented perspective. After thorough review of the relevant literature, I concluded that there is insufficient data on how teachers cope with, respond to, reproduce and transform the illustrated negotiated and polycentric governance structure in relation to their income. This does not mean that teachers or teacher income do not play a role in these studies, but there has not been in-depth research in relation to their possibilities and active role to influence their income situation (Boak & Smith, 2009; Brannelly, 2012; de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, & Kuatshila Musasa, 2008; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012; De Herdt et al., 2012; de Herdt, Titeca, & Wagemakers, 2008; Herdt et al., 2010; Mrsic-Garac, 2009; Poncelet, André, & de Herdt, 2010; K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011; Titeca et al., 2013; Titeca & Kitshiaba, 2010; Titeca & Nlandu, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006, 2007b, 2009; Williams, 2012; World Bank, 2005).

If teachers are still struggling to meet their very basic needs due to their income situation, quality of education or peacebuilding education is not the primary or sole concern of their everyday actions. They must seek strategies to improve their income situation. The current bancarisation reform increases the necessity for further research on this topic. This study addresses this empirical gap by exploring the following research question: “How do teachers in Catholic primary schools in urban and rural ‘Province Orientale’ (DRC) exercise their agency in relation to their income in the context of a multi-scalar cultural political economy of the Congolese education sector?” This research question is made up of several elements. By discussing their meaning, I will relate them to broader debates, demarcate the focus of this research and develop sub research questions.

**How:** There are two main sides to this interrogative. First, it relates to teachers’ (strategic) actions take place in (strategically-selective) contexts. These contexts constrain as well as open up possibilities for actions.

**Teachers:** In the Congolese context, there is a distinction between enseignant debout (standing teacher – teachers in the classroom) and enseignant assis (sitting teacher – administrative staff) (Verhaghe, 2007). This study is limited to “standing” teachers. I focused on teachers in selected

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11 Strategic actor and strategically-selective contexts are concepts from the Strategic-Relational Approach that will be explained in chapter 2.3.
schools in the archdiocese of Kisangani in the Congolese province ‘Province Oriental’ (see section 3.2).

**Catholic primary schools**: The Catholic Church is the largest provider for primary education in the DRC (Titeca et al., 2013). Due to the *convention*, schools managed by the Catholic Church are called “Ecole Conventionnée Catholique” (ECC) (Conventionized schools). My study is limited to teachers in mixed (boys and girls) conventionized primary Catholic schools, encompassing grades one to six. Having an urbanization ratio of merely 35 percent in the DRC it was important to also take rural schools into account.12

**Urban and rural ‘Province Orientale’ (DRC)**: The DRC is the overall context in which both the education system and teacher agency take place. The country is embedded in multi-scalar structures from the international to the local (Dale & Robertson, 2008; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008).

**Agency**: Teachers have agency to influence structures and take autonomous decisions; they are not simple passive recipients of structural influences (Anon., 2012; Lopes Cardozo, 2011; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006, 2007). Agency here is defined as ‘room for actions made possible by the real governance of the education sector’13. Other actors and their interests need to be analysed as well. This ‘room for action’ is limited by these actors and other structures. It is therefore necessary to also look at the aspects that cannot be influenced by teachers. Teacher agency has not been the primary focus of previous research in this context.

**Exercise their agency**: As will be explained later, exercising the agency is referred to as ‘strategic action’. Since agency is a ‘room for action’, exercising this agency means taking a decision among the various possibilities that exist in this ‘room for action’ and engaging in concrete actions – or the decision against other actions. There are several strategically-selective contexts that influence teachers’ ability to exercise their agency.14 The diversity of school contexts and employment statuses, detailed in chapter four, will be one focus of this paper.

**In relation to their income**: Drawing on my interviews, I am referring to two main aspects: first, accreditation and registration of schools and teachers as a condition for government salary. Second, I focus on the sources of income. The discussion takes place in the context of the new *bancarisation* reform, which has not yet been mentioned in the latest publications on the Congolese education sector and teacher payment in DRC (Brannelly, 2012; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012; Titeca et al., 2013).

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13 This definition is formulated by the author and merges several concepts that will be explained in chapter two.

14 See footnote eleven.
Multi-scalar: Three scale levels are taken into account: the global, the national and the provincial. The main focus on this thesis lies on the relationship between the national and the provincial and the interactions between actors at the provincial level. In addition, certain important influences from the international will also be analysed.

Cultural political economy the Congolese education sector: Referring to the work by Dale & Robertson, this thesis acknowledges the importance of analysing the education sector as embedded in broader societal forces and combining the cultural lense with an analysis of the political economy. Section 2.2 will give more detailed on this perspective.

A set of research-questions can be formulated after this discussion:

Table 1. Sub research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>a) How does the registration of new schools and teachers really function?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Through which strategic actions can teachers (not) influence the registration of new schools and teachers?</td>
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<td>c) How is teachers’ income affected by school and teacher registration?</td>
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<th>Chapter 5</th>
<th>d) How do teachers exercise their agency in relation to the governmental salary provision?</th>
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<td>e) How do teachers exercise their agency in order to receive money from their students?</td>
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<td>f) How do teachers redistribute students’ money between them?</td>
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<td>g) Which other strategic actions to teachers use to obtain income?</td>
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1.3 Thesis’ structure

The structure of the thesis’ chapters follows from this table. In Chapter two, the theoretical and conceptual framework will be presented. In order to answer these questions in the Congolese environment, we first must take into account the (post-)conflict situation and lack of governmental
capacities. Thus, we cannot simply apply a Westphelian and Weberian understanding of the state, but must draw on alternative concepts. Critical realism is presented as the underlying philosophy of science. The three main analytical approaches are Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE), the Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA) and Real Governance. They set the analytical scope concerning the functioning of the state, the multi-scalar dialectics of structure and agency and the embeddedness of the education sector in the overall society. Everything will be brought together in a conceptual framework at the end of the chapter. Chapter three presents the Extended Case Method as the applied research methodology. Furthermore, methods and practices of data collection and data analysis will also be discussed at that point. The research location will also be presented in more detail and to explain the choice of focusing on ECC. Chapters four to six will answer the sub research questions as outlined above. They combine and compare secondary data from prior literature with new empirical findings. The concluding sixth chapter will provide an answer to the main research question, and furthermore discuss the usefulness of the applied theories and concepts for answering the research question. Further reflections on these concepts will also be provided, policy recommendations will be given and areas for future research will be specified.
2 Theoretical framework

This chapter first introduces the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying my research. Second, it describes the main theories and concepts that are used and show how they are linked to the research problem and research question. I intend to clarify that teachers are embedded in a multi-scalar environment characterized by little formal laws influenced both by semiotic and material aspects.

2.1 Critical Realism

At the basis of the following analysis lies a particular understanding of social reality and about the possibilities to understand or acquire knowledge about this reality. This philosophy of science foregoes each conceptual, theoretical, methodological and analytical step. The philosophy of science adopted for this research is Bhasker’s version of critical realism (Jessop, 2005; Sayer, 2000). The realist aspect of this ontology lies in the assertion that a reality exists outside of human beings, and independently of human knowledge of it. The critical aspect lies in the skepticism towards possibilities to assess this reality (Sayer, 2000). Thus already pointing to fundamental ontological and epistemological positions in its name, critical realism can be distinguished from other approaches: ontologically, critical realism is a third way between objectivism/positivism and constructivism/relativism; epistemologically it is a third way between empiricism/positivism and interpretivism/subjectivism (Sayer, 2000, p. 2f). Instead of promoting a flat ontology that reduces the world to what we can directly perceive of it, critical realism offers a stratified ontology that distinguishes three realms in the world: the real, the actual, the empirical (Jessop, 2005; Sayer, 2000, p. 11f).

The real consists of social and physical objects and their structures, processes and causal powers. Instead of a simple causality, critical realism embraces the concept of contingent causation. This means that the same structures can lead to different outcomes and that different structures can lead to the same outcome (Jessop, 2005, p. 42). Furthermore, causal power do not always have direct effects because of their contingent existence on other social and physical objects and structures. They have a potential to be activated, but this potential is not always realized (Sayer, 2000). The actual is the realm in which the structures, processes and powers are activated, independent of our observation. This means acknowledging the existence of structures, processes and powers despite our incapacity to observe them (ibid.). Finally, the empirical is everything that is subject to our observation. Further adding to the difficulty to access social reality, critical realism states that this observation is always theory-laden (Sayer, 2000, p. 11). Hence, our way to look at the world influences how and what we see of this world. In order to get access to and understand the actual and the real, criti-
cal realism offers **retroduction** as an alternative hypothesis-generation to induction and deduction: “Retroduction involves asking what the real world must be like for a specific explanandum to be actualized” (Jessop, 2005, p. 43).

Critical realism is the underlying philosophy of science for the two (meta-)theoretical and conceptual frameworks that are adopted in this research: the Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA) (Jessop, 2005), and Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE) (Robertson & Dale, 2014). The next sections will further explain these concepts and their components, and show that the research question can best be explored by adopting a critical realist stance.

### 2.2 Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education

This chapter will outline the concept called **Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education**. Cultural Political Economy is a theoretical approach based on Critical Realism and was developed by Jessop (2004) and Sayer (2001). By combining critical political economy with critical semiotic analysis, CPE allows for a more holistic analysis of social relations (Jessop, 2004). Robertson and Dale have applied this approach to education and developed a Critical Cultural Political Economy of Education (CCPEE). CCPEE is consistent with the other major theoretical framework, the Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA). Both include materiality and semiosis and allow an analysis that takes into account structure and agency in a multi-scalar context, thus doing justice to Robertson’s and Dale’s critique to go beyond “methodological nationalism” (Bonal, 2012; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Robertson & Dale, 2008).

Criticizing that traditional approaches are too “educationist” as they do not position the education system in the broader society, CCPEE and other approaches encourage researchers to acknowledge political aspects in education research (Dale, 2000; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, forthcoming; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Novelli, 2011; Robertson & Dale, 2013; Scribner, Aleman, & Maxcy, 2003). CCPEE in particular suggests looking at what Robertson & Dale (2013) call the “education ensemble”: “the outcome of sets of ideas and activities accredited over generations” with many constitutive elements that are not reducible but stand in close relation to each other in the creation of the ensemble.

In order to understand this “ensemble”, Robertson and Dale propose to look at “four analytically distinct, though not discrete, ‘moments’”. The “moment of the politics of education” looks at the “rules of the game” and “paradigmatic settings” (Robertson & Dale, 2014, p. 8). In this thesis it means analysing the ways in which the importance and delivery of teacher income was framed and determined. This includes the analysis of global agendas and civilizational projects such as “Education for All” and the capitalist inclusion of teachers into the banking sector.
The “moment of educational politics” is concerned with “issues around the relationship between policy and practice, such as ‘how and by whom are these things decided?’ and the ways in which policies around teacher income are translated (or not) into practice” (Dale, 2005, p. 141; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, forthcoming; Robertson & Dale, 2014). Emphasizing that “Limiting our view of the political to formal institutions of government generates a partial account of mechanisms and processes within an education ensemble.” (Robertson & Dale, 2014, p. 6), CCPEE is consistent with a focus on real governance (section 2.4). The “moment of educational practice” asks who is taught what and under which circumstances learning takes place (Robertson & Dale, 2014). Although learning/teaching is not at the centre of my analysis, teachers’ agency in relation to their income is an important factor to understand the circumstances in which learning takes place. Finally, the “moment of outcomes” looks at the “visible and invisible mechanisms of interplay between educational practice, educational politics, and the politics of education” (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, forthcoming, p. 1).

All in all, the moment of the politics of education and the moment of education politics are most relevant to this thesis. CCPEE is a meta-theoretical framework that encourages researchers to combine material and semiotic aspects, apply a multi-scalar framework, and acknowledge the relationship between culture, economics, politics and education. By doing so, my research acknowledges Bonal’s critique that often “context, institutions, power and culture are simply excluded from the scene” in educational research in international development (Bonal, 2012, p. 12). The following two concepts are used in order to provide analytical tools that facilitate such an analysis.

### 2.3 Strategic-Relational Approach

The research question points to the necessity of adopting a theoretical approach that allows an analysis of teacher agency as embedded in cultural, political and economic structures. Other research illustrates the multifaceted character of teacher agency e.g. in relation to reforms, globalization and neoliberal reforms (Giroux, 2002; Lasky, 2005). More importantly for this thesis, it has been shown that (post-)conflict situations present a particularly challenging context for teachers (Anon., 2012; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006). Countries are often reconstructed under the umbrella of a (tacit) ideology, and the education sector becomes a vehicle of strengthening the new regime. In such a context, and generally in reform processes, teachers run the risk of becoming objects who merely pass on curriculum content to students instead of using their specific local knowledge for more sustainable peacebuilding processes (Altinyelken, 2012; Anon., 2012; Lopes Cardozo & Hoeks, forthcoming; Lopes Cardozo, 2011; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006).
As already shown, teachers in the DRC are also faced with various reforms and national agendas. Before actively dealing with these impacts and making use of their specific knowledges, however, Congolese teachers need to exercise their agency in order to secure their income. The analysis of their agency in the multi-scalar cultural political economy of education requires a conceptual framework that takes into account their experiences as well as the various actors, structures and scale levels (Dale & Robertson, 2013; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, forthcoming; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Novelli, 2011). For this purpose, the Strategic-Relational Approach (SRA) is used (Hay, 2002; Jessop, 2005; Lopes Cardozo, 2009, 2011).

Trying to overcome the artificial distinction between agency and structures and showing their interrelatedness, Jessop combines them to end up with a conceptual duality around the two concepts strategic actors and strategically-selective structures (Jessop, 2005). In Hay’s words they are “mutually constitutive” and their distinction is seen as analytical, not ontological (Hay, 2002, p. 127). Strategically-selective structures “may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others” (Jessop, 2005, p. 48).

Actors’ ‘strategic actions’ can be defined as “intentional conduct oriented towards the environment [...] to realize certain outcomes and objectives which motivate action” (Hay, 2002, p. 129). The term ‘strategic’ implies “reflexivity”, “rationality” and “motivation” (Hay, 2002). This means that the actor is conceptualized as being able to use insights from former experiences for the future, to have a sense of autonomy and free will so as to be able to choose between different options to realize a particular outcome, and to have a desire that makes him/her pursue that outcome (Hay, 2002, p. 94f). These strategic actions can lead to a “recursive interaction” (Jessop, 2005, p. 50) between actors and structures in the form of “strategic learning for the actor” and a “partial transformation of the context” (Hay, 2002, p. 131).

Applying the SRA to the Congolese education sector, Congolese teachers are seen as embedded in several strategically-selective contexts and being able to maneuver and reach their objectives in these contexts through various strategic actions. The multi-scalar context starts at the international level at which global agendas around Education for All and Free Primary Education (Gratuité) were formulated. The national level is represented by Kinshasa, the capital city where decisions about policies, agendas, payment modalities, income levels, accreditation and registration processes are taken. At the provincial levels, actors react to and adapt these agendas and policies and act in a partial autonomy. The strategically-selective contexts thus constituted reward certain strategic actions and forms of agency stronger than others.

One of the largest limitations to reflexivity and rationality for Congolese teachers is a lack of information. A lack of information in general or vis-à-vis other actors can mean that potential agency
can be larger than an agent assumes, as the agent might be unaware of certain possible actions. The struggle and strategic actions of common teachers are not directed at large political changes or the resistance against these. Instead, it will be shown that it is mainly directed at income conditions. The structural environment leaves ample room for strategic actions as it is characterized by a real governance, a concept that will now be discussed (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011; Titeca et al., 2013; Titeca & Kitshiaba, 2010).

2.4 Real governance

In this section, first, the term governance will be discussed. Second, the concept of real governance will be introduced and specified. Finally, related conceptual vocabulary needs to be explained: practical norms, corruption, provincial and local governance, brokerage/interface, negotiated.

Governance as understood in this thesis implies a political process in which a range of state and non-state actors pursue their often conflicting goals (Pearson, 2011, p. 9; Scribner et al., 2003, p. 11; Torfing, Guy Peters, Pierre, & Sorensen, 2012). They possess different resources and their relationships are characterized asymmetric power relations (Lund, 2006). Hence, decision-taking power is not nested solely in government institutions (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

The study at-hand challenges a depoliticized use of the term as in “Good Governance” (de Sardan, 2008; Mkandawire, 2012) and responds to the call for “a more empirically grounded understanding of the state” and society (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 215). For this purpose, de Sardan introduces the notion of real governance “to refer to the manner in which public goods and services are really delivered. It includes the manner in which the State is really managed and how public policies are really implemented“(de Sardan, 2008, p. 1).15 It is argued that a Weberian conceptualisation of the state as a “goal-oriented, centralizing and unitary actor which is distinct from society” (K. Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 216) fails to understand how (especially) African states really function. Related terms such as failed, fragile, clientelism, neo-patrimonialism, informality, and corruption are contested as they do not necessarily convey a false, but an inadequate and too general comprehension (de Sardan, 2008; Grimm, Lemay-Hébert, & Nay, 2014; Hagmann & Péclard, 2010; Osaghae, 2012; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

Real governance moreover emphasizes that official, codified norms and policies exist, but are not simply applied but commonly re-interpreted and adapted to local circumstances – especially in

15 The term real is not to be confused with the real in critical realism.
contexts where the government has little capacities to enforce these policies. The product of which de Sardan calls *practical norms* (de Sardan, 2008). Norms that are very often institutionalized but not codified, that can be tacit and latent, and that do not correspond to official norms (De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012). They exist de facto but not de jure. These „practices are not associated with anomie, chaos or chance; rather, they are regulated, organised and structured“ (de Sardan, 2008, p. 7). Although it is true that people in most contexts do not exclusively follow official norms, the context under study displays a „significant divergence between the official norms that govern these institutions and the actual behaviour of their employees“ (de Sardan, 2008, p. 4). „Practical norms‘ are also useful to discuss the contested and polyvalent concept of „corruption‘, which usually covers quite different phenomena (de Sardan, 2013; Farrales & Diego, 2005; Harrison, 2006, 2007; Lazar, 2005; Polzer, 2001; Sissener, 2001). The most common definition is that corruption is the abuse of public power for private gains (cf. Farrales & Diego, 2005).

Concerning the education sector, the term *corruption* is necessary to take into account as education in DRC is strongly commoditized: teachers receive motivation fees from the parents, grade reports and diplomas are purchasable and teachers often need to bribe government officials even to obtain basic services (de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008; Mrsic-Garac, 2009; Williams, 2012). However, in one major discourse on *corruption* and teachers, the latter are stigmatized and condemned as being corrupt a priori (The World Bank, 2010). This narrow perspective does not acknowledge that teachers are embedded in a society that is rampant with corruption and are delivering services while not being adequately remunerated and supported.

The way this study is set up challenges all these shortcomings by referring to the cultural political economy of the education sector and, given the underlying ontology, by seeing the corrupt act as an empirical manifestation of larger societal forces. However, completely rejecting the term corruption risks a relativistic acceptance of pseudo culture-specific behavior, which would leave us unable to criticize and denounce the negative and unjust elements embedded in the abuse of the public office – and this holds true whether or not we agree with a simplistic or Weberian understanding of the dichotomy public/private. All in all, the use of *practical norms* contests and complements the term *corruption*, but is not a simple alternative.

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16 A range of concepts are used to refer to this situation: the state at work (Bierschenk, 2010); twilight institutions (Lund, 2006); governance without government (Raeymaekers, Menkhaus, & Vlassenroot, 2008: citing Menkhaus, 2006); polycentric local-governance arrangements (De Herdt, Titeca, & Wagemakers, 2012); negotiated nature of statehood (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011); state under construction (de Herdt et al., 2012). This underlines the importance that this study is embedded in current academic debates and contributes through its empirical evidence

17 Researching these practical norms has methodological and ethical implications that will be discussed in chapter three.
The term *real governance* will now further be substantiated by related concepts. It has been shown that the context is multi-scalar. There are governmental and religious officials who can be seen as *brokers* and who are situated at the *interface* of these scales.\(^{18}\) They enable or constrain communication and interaction between two levels, e.g. from the provincial to the national.\(^{19}\) Being embedded in *real governance*, they do not always act according to official norms and (re)produce the existing structures (Mosse & Lewis, 2006, p. 13).

Applying *real governance* to the Congolese education system, Titeca and de Herdt build strongly on the notion of “negotiated state(ness)”, which “indicates how provision of public services depends on various negotiation processes with non-state authorities, to fulfill certain governmental functions” (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 218). In that sense, negotiation is not very different from the initially defined governance. It must not be mistaken with an actual negotiation where different actors sit around a table to discuss a given matter (Titeca et al., 2013). The authors add an important temporal dimension, which displays an analogy to the “recursive conditioning” (Jessop, 2005, p. 50) of the SRA:

> of power and authority, is therefore precarious and inherently unstable, and consequently can change from one year to the next. If an arrangement is already negotiated, it is bound to be a partial and temporary arrangement.”
> (Titeca et al., 2013, p. 129)

Furthermore, Titeca’s and De Herdt’s understanding that “individual attributes only partially determine” (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 219) the negotiation process underlines the necessity to conceptualize this negotiation in a context of structure and agency. The strategic-selectivity of the context is supported by Titeca and De Herdt’s statement that negotiation “does not produce uniform results; rather, the outcomes depend on the power configurations in particular localities at particular times” (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 219). The concept of negotiation is helpful as an abstract imagination about the state, but a more focused conceptualization through the SRA will help understanding what is really going on.

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\(^{18}\) Brokerage “is viewed as an outcome of a weak state unable to impose its rationality on local areas” (Mosse & Lewis, 2006, p. 11). Brokerage is also used by de Sardan who invented the term *real governance* (Bierschenk, Chauveau, & de Sardan, 2002, p. 9).

\(^{19}\) Hence, my use of *brokers* differs from those of other authors, who mainly discuss brokers in development projects and state that brokers have “key institutional positions, albeit unscripted, informal, personalized, and highly unstable ones” (Mosse & Lewis, 2006, p. 13) and that they “expect a ‘commission’ for his role in the transmission of information” (Bierschenk et al., 2002, p. 16).
2.5 Conceptual framework

The conceptual scheme below is based on the SRA-model as presented by Hay (2002) and a version developed by Lopes Cardozo (2011). The scheme reads from left to right. The box on the left is split up in two parts: the left part portrays the multi-scalar context by outlining the three important scale levels (global, national, provincial/diocesan) as constitutive elements of the strategically-selective context. The right part of that box attributes the relevant actors around the Congolese education sector to the different scale levels. Teachers are the strategic actors who will be analysed in detail and are therefore highlighted in bold and green. In line with this, the following titles are also bold an in green. As explained in section 2.3, their agency is created by the dualistic relationship between strategic actor and strategically-selective context. The arrow representing “Teacher agency in relation to income” leads to the strategic actions. There is also a feedback loop in the SRA-model. However, the dotted lines signify that these feedback mechanisms are not analysed in much depth, as the focus is on the strategic actions.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework


In this last step, the relevance of the concepts for the research question (“How do teachers in Catholic primary schools in urban and rural ‘Province Orientale’ (DRC) exercise their agency in relation to their income in the context of a multi-scalar cultural political economy of the Congolese education sector?”) will be summarized: first, CCPEE is the meta-theoretical inspiration that helps formu-
lating the research question in a way that acknowledges the politics of education instead of adopting a too narrow “educationist” focus. Second, *SRA* is used in order to position teachers’ agency in a dualistic relationship with strategically-selective contexts, which are explained through the concept of *real governance*. Teachers have interactions with brokers at interfaces between the three scale levels. Therefore, third, *practical norms* are used to discuss the norms which teachers face when exercising their agency in relation to their income, especially regarding the interactions with other actors.
3 Research Design

In this chapter I present the research design, which encompasses several elements: a reflection on the research methodology, ethical issues, and methods of data collection as well as data analysis. The research design is consistent with the theoretical and conceptual framework and the underlying ontological and epistemological position.

As my research question pointed out, this study investigates how teachers in ECC exercise their agency in relation to their income. The overarching methodology is *critical and engaged ethnography* and a particular form of this, the extended case method (Burawoy, 1998; Lopes Cardozo, 2011; Mathers & Novelli, 2007). The extended case method makes use of “participant observation to locate everyday life in its extralocal and historical context” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 4), thus linking the observed micro-processes with macro-influences (Mathers & Novelli, 2007). The extended case method is helpful to answer “how and why” questions and thus matches my research question (Small, 2009). This allows me to answer my research question by seeing teachers as embedded in various contexts and influenced by societal forces at multiple scales. This means that I cannot limit my analysis to the empirically observable actions, but in applying critical realism I acknowledge underlying structures at the realm of the real and the actual (Jessop, 2005). In sum, this is a qualitative study in which I, the researcher, gathered data at various localities through participant observation and semi-structured and informal interviews. This methodology implies several aspects that will now be discussed.

3.1 Ethics

Research ethics mainly refer to the problems and challenges faced while conducting research and also implies questioning my role and function as a researcher. In this section, I will reflect on my role in the research field in terms of positionality, critical thinking and political or social engagement. These are ethical questions, as they are about my influences on the world I study and the desire to contribute to changes in that world through concrete action. This section is introductory for both data collection and data analysis matters, but also serves an overarching purpose of ethical reflection.

*Reflexivity*

The term reflexivity was already used in the SRA-section. The two terms are of a similar nature but ought not to be confused with each other. Here, reflexivity refers to my capacity as a researcher to think about the way I influence the world I study and thematizes the epistemological question of how I understand that world, given my different cultural background (Brewer, 2002, p. 132f; Davis, 1999; Finlay, 2002, p. 531). More specifically, in the sense used in the extended case method, it is “a
model of science that embraces not detachment but engagement as the road to knowledge.” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). The following sections on ‘positionality’ and ‘engagement’ will illustrate how I employed ‘reflexivity’.

**Positionality**

Positionality means “thematiz[ing] our participation in the world we study” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). As a researcher, I do not want to over-emphasize my position in the research. However, the researcher is an important element in this study. How does me being a White, Western, (comparatively) rich and educated researcher influence the research process (Dunbar jr., 2008; White, 2002)?

In certain moments it was helpful, e.g. when I – dressed in a suite – wandered around the National Ministry of Education to deliver the dossiers I collected from teachers. I was greeted with respect and could make my case. At other points, i.e. throughout all my school visits, being White represented wealth, which meant that at least some individuals hoped to gain material or financial benefits through my visits. At the beginning of each interview, I clarified that I had only come for research purposes, but that I would e.g. report corrupt practices faced by teachers. Of course, my background might also deter respondents from speaking openly about corruption. It also has to be mentioned that the institutional backing through my local supervisor, Prof. Mokonzi, opened many doors as well as the support from the provincial/diocesan Catholic coordination was of incredible help for the school visits. Finally, my internship at the GIZ during my time in Kinshasa did not interfere with my research.

In some cases I expect my research findings to be potentially harmful to the participants, as they might face repression from the authorities due to what they told me. Hence, I decided not to use individual names but will only give a general list about the schools I visited and people I interviewed, thus ensuring confidentiality. The participants spent a considerable amount of time with me during the interviews, which at times included coming to the locality of the interview. Admittedly, I did not decide on a clear way of how to deal with remunerations. For two schools that I visited more often, I left some money for the teachers. For the other nine schools I did not leave any money. But there were other ways of how I came to be of help. I will reflect on these in the next section. Finally, it must be said that the ongoing conflict in the DRC was not taking place in proximity of my research areas and I was at no point in time in a dangerous situation.

**Engagement**

My critical stance leads to an engagement with the stories and cases of certain teachers, to whom I thought I could be of help. Researching practical norms and corrupt practices meant becoming aware of practices that I would definitely consider as unfair and reproducing unequal societal
structures. Having people tell me about these practices and other problems, I could not pretend to be a neutral researcher and sometimes I decided to act on some of the information that was shared with me. I did so for instance by reporting corrupt practices to people I trusted and by taking teachers’ dossiers from the local level to the National Ministry of Education in the capital. Delving too deeply into structures that people more or less carefully try to hide can be very risky. Although often known to the local people, those in power and benefitting from corruption do not have an interest in a detailed account of how these processes of power (ab)use work (Harrison, 2006, p. 22f). However, I also tried to look into their motivations and points-of-views in order to avoid a simplistic portrayal of officials as culprits and teachers as victims.

My engagement does not stop after having left the DRC. I will write an accessible French version of this paper and hard copies will be distributed through my local supervisor to those people who cannot make use of an electronical version.

**Critical thinking**

Critical ethnography can be seen as “the performance of critical theory” (Lopes Cardozo, 2011, p. 41, citing Madison, 2005, p. 13). My research is critical by “problematizing the problem itself, seeking to understand and locate it as a component within a far bigger and intimately connected picture” (Mathers & Novelli, 2007). This was realized by taking into account the multi-scalar structural influences and adopting a broad cultural political economy framework. Moreover, certain concepts and ideas are not taken for granted but are also problematized. Words such as _fragile_ and _corruption_ have been discussed above and alternatives in the form of _real governance_ and _practical norms_ are offered. I seek to find out actors’ own understanding and judgment of these issues (Khondker, 2006; Lazar, 2005; Sissener, 2001; Torsello, 2011); yet, being critical can also mean to question practices that they take for granted and eventually engaging in an exchange with the concerned actors.

Overall, my research takes place in a post-colonial environment and thus carries certain implications that need to be raised. I see an overarching contradiction in carrying out this kind of research, as it reproduces century-old patterns of people from the Global North interfering with and doing research on people in the Global South (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Besides the rationales presented in the introduction, my research is motivated by two goals: providing alternative images about people who otherwise are being associated with the construction of _Africa, poverty, civil war, etc_ (Mbembe, 2001). These images objectify and attribute passivity. By analyzing their agency I (re)position them as subjects. Therefore, through sharing these results with academic, policy-related and non-academic audiences in Germany and the Netherlands, I try to contribute to a deconstruction of these images, a decolonization of the imaginations and a change in how these people are commonly _represented_.

22
Second, policy formulation in such contexts is still strongly influenced by development organisations. By doing ethnographic research, I seek to evoke the voice and agency of the “subaltern” who otherwise hardly has any advocacy and hence his/her points-of-views are disregarded at policy circles (Spivak, 1988). This point-of-view is not only intrinsically important, but also has implications to issues of redistribution and is thus also linked to income and remuneration (Fraser, 1995, 2005).

Finally, linking teachers’ struggle to my own endeavor to critically position myself in this world, ethics are not only limited to the research topic. Lilla Watson, an Aboriginal activist, reportedly coined the following phrase, which inspires me throughout my research: „If you have come here to help me, you are wasting our time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” Space does not allow me to elaborate on this quote, but it expresses my opinion that I do not consider myself as solely wanting to help teachers in the DRC, but that I am also learning and being inspired from their experiences, wisdom and knowledges.

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20 Cf. my critique of the representation of teachers in the World Bank’s corruption discourse in section 2.4.

21 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilla_Watson
3.2 Data Collection

The research took place from July until December 2013 in two regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (see red outlines in Figure 4) and was split into three phases of data collection. The first month was spent in Kisangani, the next three months in Kinshasa and the final month again in Kisangani. Kinshasa is the economic, political and cultural capital of the DRC with about 9 million inhabitants.\(^{22}\) Kisangani is the fourth biggest city of the country and has about 800,000 inhabitants (see footnote 21). It is the center of the governmental Educational Province (Proved) “Province Orientale 1” and of the archdiocese of Kisangani and thus serves as the administrative contact point for the territories surrounding it. To be more specific, the research took place in a part of the archdiocese of Kisangani, and included urban schools and schools along a road that stretched 120 km from Kisangani in the territory of Banalia (Axis Kisangani-Banalia). The timing of the first period in Kisangani was inconvenient, as I arrived during the summer holidays. Nonetheless, I managed to meet teachers and officials. Professor Gratien Mokonzi Bambanota from the Department of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Kisangani acted as local supervisor.

The following section will outline the methods used for the data collection process. It has to be said that it is difficult to clearly attribute a method to the answering of a particular sub research question. There are many overlaps and most methods contributed to every sub research question.

**Multiple-case study**

Schools were used as cases to understand the institutional variety and to get access to teachers. Multiple-case study in the way Bryman describes it means that I have selected the region under study because of specific characteristics (Bryman, 2012). These characteristics relate to the institutional variety of schools, what I call ‘de facto type of school’ (see chapter 4). I made sure to visit schools in urban and rural areas. In total, I visited two urban schools and nine rural schools. Access was facilitated by the Catholic coordinator of the Archdiocese of Kisangani. Hence I looked at three types of schools: built and run by local initiatives; accredited by the government but not receiving any money; schools that receive money from the government.

**Semi-structured interviews**

At the beginning there were key actors I envisaged to interview: the Catholic coordinator; SECOPE officials; (Sous-)Proved officials. Concerning other actors, I followed the snowballing principle to find out about other important actors (Bryman, 2012). This was especially helpful when it came to accessing government officials, as well as the private banking sector. Some key informants were interviewed more than once: the Catholic coordinator, teachers in urban schools (due to proximity) and one teacher whose dossier I submitted in Kinshasa. Drawing on the extended case method, interviews in Kinshasa were conducted with officials from the Ministry of Education, the Catholic school network, the private sector, international donors and teacher unionists. In Kisangani I also interviewed these people at the provincial and diocesan level, as well as the territorial and parish level. Principals, parents and teachers were also interviewed in Kisangani. Both cities have French as the official language. In Kinshasa, the second language is Lingala, whereas people in Kisangani have Swahili and Lingala as their mother tongue. Teachers are fluent in French. All interviews except one were held entirely in French. The one interview was translated on the spot by my local supervisor. In total I interviewed 106 people. 82 of these interviews are used for this thesis (see Appendix 1). Due to time constrains, I decided not to interview students.

My interviews with teachers were semi-structured. I prepared certain topics that I proposed for a discussion but then „follow[ed] participants down their associative trails” (Riessman, 2001, p. 2). I applied sequential interviewing, which Small (2009) explicitly links to the extended case method. This means that I gradually modified my questions and topics and narrowed them down to topics that teachers kept highlighting, while still being open to specific topics they raise. Hence, my goal
was data saturation and not representativity. In that context, triangulation is an important concept: When teachers talked about interactions with other actors, I made sure to interview these actors as well and get their point-of-view (de Herdt, 2010, p. 15). This pluralistic view on social reality is important to understand teachers’ agency and their possibilities for strategic action. In addition, these interviews were important to uncover local vocabulary and terms that is used in relation to practical norms, especially in processes of accreditation and registration (Sissener, 2001).

Regarding the analysis of structure and agency, Scott & Usher (2011, p. 125) write that “the biographical method is an attempt to overcome the divide between structure and agency”. Although I am not applying a strict biographical method, my analysis also comprehends elements from life histories (Hulme, 2003). I was especially interested in teachers’ stories about the accreditation and registration processes, as these processes usually take several years.

**Focus Groups**

Focus Groups were conducted during my second visit to Kisangani at almost every school. Sometimes I would have preferred to do both individual interviews and focus groups, but temporal and spatial constrains prevented me from doing so. The principal or the teacher’s representatives were very often the dominant people to respond. Women’s voices were also often silenced by these predominantly male actors. I tried overcoming this by directly pointing my questions to more silent participants, who then freely answered. Focus groups were particularly helpful in answering sub research questions (d)-(g).

**Multi-sited ethnographies**

In three particular cases, I followed the stories of the registration dossiers of teachers/principals from their schools to the national administration in Kinshasa. Hence, I engaged in a process referred to as multi-sided ethnographies (Marcus, 1995). Through participant observation I gained access to governmental offices in Kinshasa and Kisangani which would not have been possible without my specific mission of submitting the dossiers (Brubaker, Feischmidt, Fox, & Grancea, 2006; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Last, I did a three-month internship at the GIZ. Having my office in the Congolese Central Bank, I gained particular insight into the bancarisation reforms. Experiences from this participant observation were then included in interviews with other actors. This method was particularly helpful for the sub research question (a) and (b).

**Maps & pictures**

Two maps were used in the description of the research location. In total, five photos are used in this thesis. A complete list is provided at the beginning of the thesis. The pictures can be attributed
to the sub research questions as follows: Picture 1: (a) & (b); Picture 2 & 3: (a); Picture 4: (a)-(d); Picture 5: (e) & (f). The origins of the drawing on the cover of this thesis were explained and I will refer to the drawing several times throughout the thesis. Furthermore, I took pictures of salary schemes and official documents that I will refer to but which I did not include in the thesis due to confidentiality. All material is available upon request.

3.3 Data Analysis

Every recorded interview was transcribed and every informal interview was summarized and then entered into the qualitative data analysis software *atlas.ti*. Interviews in French were transcribed directly and quotes used in the thesis were translated by the author.

My data analysis is of a qualitative nature and is based around coding and regrouping codes around overarching themes of the interviews and field notes (Charmaz, 2006). After identifying themes, I continued the triangulation that had been used in the data collection process and compared the different respondents’ narratives about these themes (Burawoy, 1998, p. 15). Unless stated otherwise, I try not to use idiosyncratic quotes in my text that mirror specific occurrences, but quotes that resemble broader phenomena (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). Overall, the data analysis is guided by “sensitizing concepts” (Bowen, 2006), which means that the analysis and coding process was guided by theory, namely the SRA and real governance. Hence, informed by previous literature, I was specifically looking for practical norms that guide behavior in strategically-selective contexts that constrain and enable strategic actions.

I am taking into account that actors are not always aware of all the conditions surrounding them, they operate through tacit knowledge, and they may be influenced by unconscious motivation (Scott & Usher, 2011). Hence, their narratives do not represent objective facts about them and the social world. In line with retroduction and critical theory, I will ask why the story was told the way it was told, and thus consider the respondent’s position (e.g. job) and tacit interests in portraying a topic in a given way (Jessop, 2005, p. 43; Kelle, 2005, p. 12; Riessman, 2001, p. 5; Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 53). In a critical realist sense, the utterances and observable phenomena are used in order to understand the “mechanisms and structures that underpin them” (Scott & Usher, 2011, p. 54). Especially “cultural references” (Bonal, 2012, p. 12) or “local semiotics” (Sissener, 2001, p. 6), i.a. specific linguistic codes, can reveal a lot about these structures and practical norms. This is illustrated by Venkatesh (2013, p. 6) when he states that:

“In my own work, I have found that subjects are not always conscious of (and able to articulate) unwritten rules and codes of conduct. (...) The scholastic fallacy, as Bourdieu writes, would be to fail to
understand that the subject’s inability to state such rules of the game is not necessarily a measure of the nonexistence or lack of importance of such rules for the game being played.”

This insight is enormously important when it comes to researching agency and teachers’ (lack of) understanding of the structures that govern and influence their agency in relation to their income. Researching agency also means looking into aspects that are unknown to teachers or uncritically accepted, e.g. practical norms, and asking why teachers are unaware of them or have wrong/limited information about them. This circumstance challenges me as a researcher to simultaneously consider people as the experts on their own lives, but not as experts in every societal process.
4 Teacher agency in relation to registration

“Us Congolese we are specialists when it comes to applying decrees without documents.”
(Principal, Int. 83)

This first empirical and analytical chapter sets out to answer the sub research questions concerning the registration of new schools and teachers: How does registration of new schools and teachers really function? Through which strategic actions can teachers (not) influence registration of new schools and teachers? How is teachers’ income affected by school and teacher registration?

Registration of schools and teachers is a complex process and will be elucidated in more detail in chapter 4.1 and 4.2 respectively. Registration in fact needs to be split in the terms ‘accreditation’ (agreement) and ‘registration’ (mécanisation). They refer to the process through which schools and teachers receive an official matriculation number from the Ministry of Education and the SECOPE. Governmental offices are located in the city of Kisangani. Since the process is poorly regulated and de jure mechanisms are hardly respected, the three analytical lenses used in this thesis are necessary in order to describe what is really going on instead of looking only at how processes ought to function. CCPEE allows me to look at processes that govern the registration process and the gaps between policy and practice (Verhaghe, 2009). This gap is explained by looking at the real governance. My research has crystallized a more nuanced typology of schools as compared to the usual distinction between different networks. As this chapter will show, there are three ‘de facto types of school’ and five ‘de facto teacher employment statuses’ that we need to know and understand. Finally, teachers’ position in these structures can then be understood by using SRA.

4.1 Registration of schools

"In reality you can only play with the pawns."
(Former Catholic coordinator, Int. 43)

In order to be able to show the discrepancy between policy and practice (World Bank, 2008, p. 75), I am at first explaining how the registration of schools or new classrooms is supposed to function.23 However, even this is hardly possible as these procedures are ambiguously stated in policies (Verhaghe, 2007a, 2009). Overall, the term ‘registration’ needs unpacking. There are, in fact, three steps involved: first, the school becomes agréée (accredited) at the Ministry of Education. Second, it

23 At some schools, that are already registered and even supported financially by the government, the local community can decide to add a given number of classrooms, according to the needs. These will then be non-registered and the following also applies to them (Int. 25, 84).
becomes mécanisé, which is a technical term for registration at the SECOPE. Third, due to the specific circumstances of the Congolese governance, a school does not immediately become budgetisée, which means the inclusion of the school on public payroll.

New schools that are created are subject to a range of official procedures, decrees, and policies (Verhaghe, 2009). De jure, every year each Educational Province (Province Educationelle, Proved) is supposed to organize the Promo-Scolaire, an annual meeting at which all the relevant actors in the education sector participate – provincial Minister of Education, (Sous-)Proved, SECOPE, Inspection, and the Coordinations. These actors are supposed to discuss the opening of new schools, verify the SECOPE viability reports and then send these reports and decisions to Kinshasa where a decree is issued to officially register a school and attribute a matriculation number (Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010). Whether these viability reports should be produced before the Promo-Scolaire or after the circular has returned from Kinshasa and whether the SECOPE, the inspectorate or at times even the Sous-Proved should take care of these reports is very ambiguous and not clearly defined (Andre et al., 2010; Int. 39, 92, 99; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012; Verhaghe, 2009). Moreover, the Catholic coordination has created a solidarity fund with contributions from each school. A part of that fund is supposed to be used for expenses related to these processes, but some teachers are not aware of the exact role of the Catholic coordination in the registration process (Int. 90, 91).

In addition, there ought to be a map (Carte scolaire) that displays where schools can be constructed, e.g. limiting the number of schools in a given area or the minimum distance between two schools. However, this map has not been in use for several years and the minimum distances are not respected (Int. 44, 48).

In my study I visited eleven schools in total. Drawing on these visits, prior literature and interviews with other actors I developed the following typology of ‘de facto’ type of schools’ in order to show the effects of the poorly governed registration process and the actual differences between schools at the local level:

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24 However, it would be naïve to believe that this is only due to an institutional and organizational vacuum. Instead, the underlying interests and the overall cultural political economy are linked to these aspects.
Hence, there are three *de facto types of schools*:

Table 2. List of 'de facto types of schools'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1a) Not registered by the government (<em>non-agrée</em>)</th>
<th>(1b) Registered by the government and Not listed in the official budget database (<em>non-mécanisée</em>)</th>
<th>(1c) Registered by the government and Listed in the official budget database and Receiving money from the government (<em>budgetisée</em>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 4 starts on the left side. (1c: *budgetisée*) is the most desired state whereas (1a: *non-agrée*) is the least desired type of school to work in or to send your children to. The attempt to move from one type to another, i.e. towards (1c: *budgetisée*), is henceforth called *upgrading*. Two schools of type (1a: *non-agrée*)\(^{25}\) were visited. (1a: *non-agrée*) describes schools that have been constructed by actors from the Catholic network, and which does not receive any governmental money at all because it has not even officially been registered as a school. One school of type (1b: *non-mécanisée*) was included in the study. (1b: *non-mécanisée*) encompasses schools that have received this registration, but are still waiting to be enlisted in the official government budget database and thus do not receive any money either at this point. The low quantity of (1a: *non-agrée*) and (1b: *non-mécanisée*) should not suggest that they have little relevance, as all schools need to pass these stages. Eight schools of type (1c: *budgetisée*) were visited. As pointed out by De Herdt & Kasongo (2013, p. 225), SECOPE distinguishes between type (1b: *non-mécanisée*) and (1c: *budgetisée*) since

\(^{25}\) The number in parentheses is the number to refer to the particular types.
2010. Finally, (1c: budgetisée) schools are the only schools that receive government funding and at which teachers can receive salaries.

Before discussing in more depth how each type influences teachers’ agency in relation to their income, the overarching phenomenon of newly built schools will be discussed. In general, a strong growth of the number of enrolled children could be observed (Int. 15), which can be linked to the global agenda of Education for All. Private schools have an important role in this study as they are nowadays often in a competitive position towards public schools. The current situation is puzzling: Teachers in nine out of eleven schools I visited complained heavily about the construction of new schools in their surroundings: “They grow like mushrooms” was a phrase that was commonly uttered (e.g. Int. 83, 85; cf. Verhaghe, 2006, p. 10). There was no difference in teachers’ perception between the schools in urban Kisangani and those in the rural areas, over a distance of 130 kilometers. In the city the newly created schools are mainly private ones whereas the ones in the rural area belong mainly to religious networks (own observation). This seems to be a broader phenomenon in DRC (e.g. Int. 76, 78, 80; cf. Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

How can this phenomenon of newly-created schools be explained? There are three groups of actors who have been observed to construct new schools: Catholic initiative, officials from other religions and private or public entrepreneurs (Int. 44, 81, 86). Catholic initiative means that a school can be constructed by parents’ initiatives with the endorsement of Catholic coordination or that a Catholic authority, e.g. a priest, suggests the opening of a school. Officials from other religions refers to actors from non-Catholic networks who build new schools. These include for instance pentecostal churches – having recently received the national government’s permission to manage schools and using their schools for missionary purposes (De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012, p. 225). Private schools are said to be mainly opened for commercial reasons (Int. 77).

Government officials reportedly also own schools (Titeca & Nlandu, 2010; Verhaghe, 2006, p. 10; World Bank, 2008). Private schools created at the beginning of the school year 2013 do not seem to have a good quality (Int. 76; own observations). These schools sometimes function in private homes with two or three classes (Int. 76; own observations; cf. World Bank, 2008, p. 75). These large-scale openings of schools can be related to the global agenda of ‘Education for All’ – which is also visible on posters in many principals’ offices (see Appendix 4) – and the urge to provide schooling and schools for all the children. This shows that the desire to provide ‘Education for All’ can have negative side-effects (cf. de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008, p. 38f).

As mentioned above, the Promo-Scolaire should be the institution to take final decisions concerning the accreditation. One teacher stated that it is still functioning (Int. 84), but the Catholic coordinator stated that it had not functioned as an institution for school accreditation in the last years.
(Int. 99). As a matter of fact, instead of relying on the *Promo-Scolaire*, school dossiers are directly taken and submitted to the Ministry of Education in Kinshasa (Int. 99; World Bank, 2005, p. 18f). Reportedly, members of the national parliament or other politicians are key figures in this process, as they promise the opening of schools in their respective electoral zones (Int. 82, 84, 85; de Herdt, 2010, p. 48; Titeca & Kitshiaba, 2010, p. 104f). They thus circumvent the legal institutions and use this as patronage and electoral campaigning (De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012; De Herdt et al., 2012; Verhaghe, 2009, p. 4). This practice is said to increase often before elections, emphasizing the politicized nature of the Congolese education system (ibid.). Some teachers believe that anyone with the right connections can have a school registered by the government (e.g. Int. 77). As one teacher complained: “The government should have the norms respected. Money is everything that counts here. Any kind of school gets accredited.” (Int. 76). One principal told me that he urged an inspector, who was visiting his school, to go to the neighboring newly created school and check its quality. The inspector refused and told the principal not to get involved in these issues: “Even the inspector who should be the government’s ears and eyes refuses. This is a political issue, so I rather shut up as well” (Int. 84).

Inspectors and (Sous-)Proved officials at the local level receive money from each school that exists (Int. 98). Given their poor salaries, I can draw the hypothesis that this payment is a clear incentive for them to neglect the actual viability criteria and accept schools that do not conform to official standards. Why should they, given that they are poorly paid themselves, close schools, if they receive money from them (Int. 98)? But the fact that politicians are involved in this process also means that inspectors and (Sous-) Proveds might have to succumb to their authority and not question their practices.

This political economy of the creation of new schools is made even more complicated by an aspect that can be seen as belonging to the cultural: apparently, based on a Catholic ethical understanding, the coordination discourages corrupt practices and seeks to respect official procedures as much as possible (see Picture 1 below, which can be found on the walls inside of many school buildings).

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26 This is the story told by teachers and highlighted by the other authors. However, it is difficult to gather first-hand data – e.g. from a representative of the Ministry of Education – on this to support the argument.
Several principals and teachers of Catholic schools of type (1a: non-agrée) or (1b: non-mécanisée) complained about the coordination’s point-of-view (Int. 92, 99). They portray it as if the other recently created schools had a comparative advantage, as they use any shortcuts they can get to have their school registered. Three Catholic schools on the Banalia axis were not registered whereas e.g. Protestant schools – built a few years ago only – are already registered. The principal of a Protestant school did not hide the fact that personal relationships with people at the right places in government, and/or the provision of the right ‘motivation’ (cf. Mrsic-Garac, 2009), led to a fast registration of his school (based on our conversation). However, the Catholic coordination is aware that the Promo-Scolaire is not functioning and have found other ways of circumventing this institution. In principle, they make an inspector visit a newly-constructed school and receive the viability report (Int. 92, 93, 99). Then, once a year in average, the coordinator himself goes to Kinshasa to the Ministry of Education and takes the respective dossiers to the people in charge (Int. 99). All of this underlines the difficulty to distinguish practical norms and corruption. It will be shown later that not all principals and teachers are aware of the exact procedures and might take (unnecessary) action themselves to have an inspector visit their school.

This situation creates serious problems for the schools and teachers I visited. The real governance of registration creates a competitive situation in which these schools have a constant risk of losing their students to other schools and compete for the maximum number of students, or “clients” (de Herdt, 2010, p. 55); Int. 76, 77, 78, 79, 82, 84). For instance, one teacher explained that in 2012/13 he had 55 students, whereas in December 2013 he only had 28 students in his class (Int 76). This is a rather extreme example, but significant losses were observed at most schools. Although

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27 Unlike the teachers’ motivation fee, the term ‘motivation’ in this context is a term that describes the practical norm of paying government officials and disguises what could otherwise be called corruption.
causal attribution is difficult to establish, teachers clearly draw a relationship between new schools and less students. It is also important to link this situation to the (inter)national agenda of gratuité/Free Primary Education, which has shown to bring about negative impacts in other contexts as well (Kadzamira & Rose, 2003; Riddell, 2004). In reaction to this situation, most of these schools have developed several means of attracting students: first, they might not ask for enrollment fees (Int. 77). Second, they make themselves known by “radio, television, door-to-door campaigns and by inviting family members. Others say that ‘here we speak English’” (Int. 78). Third, especially private schools are known to be flexible when it comes to grade reports and might not ask to see them (informal conversations). Hence, a child who did not pass the final exam at the end of a school year, can continue with the next year at one of those private schools.

These issues are all due to real governance and lack of governmental control. Moreover, it can now clearly be seen that there is an underlying cultural political economy of school creation. Regulation is not poor because of a lack of policies, but because various actors try to benefit from the system and circumvent official mechanisms. Therefore, we ought not simply see ‘the state’ as a homogenous entity who is a benevolent provider of public goods and instead look closely at individuals’ motivations, interests and strategic actions. This real governance is omnipresent and constitutes a strategically-selective context for teachers. Teachers and principals working at type (1a: non-agrée) or (1b: non-mécanisée) schools, but also the parents whose children go to these schools, have a great interest in upgrading their schools and in defending their interests against the newly created schools. Teacher agency in relation to real governance and the cultural political economy of school creation and registration will now be discussed.

4.1.1 Non-accredited schools

Schools of type (1a: non-agrée) function without an official accreditation by the government. But this should not give the impression that they are less approved on a local level. The picture below shows an example of what such a school can look like:
How does such a school come into being? Most of the time the initiative comes from the parents or the village chiefs, at times also from the local priest. The school above was built and is maintained by parents. The government has not contributed any money to this school, neither to its functioning nor to its maintenance. The entire money, or contributions in kind such as construction material, comes from the parents. The Catholic coordination is always aware of these schools as it functions as part of the Catholic network. Yet, one principal felt that the Catholic coordination did not support them strongly: “We only wear the name “Catholic school” but there is no support from the Catholics” (Int. 94). He hands in the rapport de la rentrée scolaire (Report at the beginning of the school years) to the counselor from the Catholic coordination and waits for the coordination to take care of the accreditation process (Int. 93).

Not responding to official viability criteria in terms of construction material, the school might nonetheless pass the viability report. Teachers and parents strive to have their school accredited and eventually registered, but must do so in the above described strategically-selective context that favors certain behavior over other. In fact, they are often desperate for this to happen as they usually wait for several years. Hence, they do not have reliable information on how to act and are confronted with information asymmetries and power differentials vis-à-vis government officials. The position
of government officials as brokers who sit at the interface between teachers and the National Ministry of Education can lead to corruption demands. These situations are now described.

Since some teachers do not know whether Sous-Proved, SECOPE or inspectorate officials are responsible, they treat all of them with an overly dose of respect – hoping that they act in favor of their requests (Int. 90). Thus their strategic action might be in vain. However, they feel an urgent need for action because they fear that the longer their school stays in this condition, the bigger the chances that other schools take away their children: “When they [neighboring community] build their school, we will lack children. Probably next year. The parents were already close to giving up.” (Int. 91).

Government and religious officials who visit schools receive food and shelter during their visits and are known to ask for “transport money” (Int. 29, 39; Verhaghe, 2006). Although this is a very common form and in principle teachers do not disagree with this practice, there were nevertheless voices that were not content with this. This was mainly due to the fact that, as the teachers complained, the inspectors would receive three meals a day whereas the teachers themselves often ate once a day (Int. 82). This practice must be critically analyzed, as there is a thin line between “African hospitality” / “Bantu culture” (Int. 29, 37, 43) and an institutionalized favoritism, meaning that inspectors give good reports to those schools that treat them well (Mrsic-Garac, 2009; Verhaghe, 2006). This instrumental hospitality with reciprocal effects is a practical norm that is widely applied (de Herdt, 2010, p. 61).

Likewise, when they make someone, e.g. an inspector, come to their school for a viability report, they will try to make his stay as comfortable as possible and offer him some gifts in kind or money. Interviewer: “Will you collect money to make the inspector come here? – Principal: “We will make an effort, and at least collect a little bit for him.” (Int. 91). It has happened at other schools that several of those visits were arranged, goats were handed out as gifts, but the person who visited simply did not have the authority to engage in further steps and made promises without being able to deliver (Int. 43).

In most cases, corrupt practices – such as the above-mentioned ‘motivation of an official’ – have a reciprocal effect. That is, the corrupted official does something for the person who paid the money. The previous example exemplified that corruption occurs without comprehensible reasons or tangible benefits. The following excerpt from an interview with a principal further illustrates this.

“Interviewer: Who do you still have to pay?
Principal: With half of the school fees I buy books for the children. The other half I put into my bag. When a visitor comes and asks me for 10,000 FC [USD 11], I use that money. Because an inspector cannot leave without at least something.
Interviewer: He asks for it?
Principal: No, he doesn’t ask for it. We were here with him, he was inspecting the school. There were even documents that cost USD 30.
Research assistant: For the school?
Principal: For the principal. I filled out documents. I gave him 10.000 FC [USD 11] at first. I still had 17.000 FC [USD 18.9] and try to find a way to give him the outstanding money in January.
Interviewer: Was it the viability report?
Principal: No.

Interviewer: So what kind of document was it that cost USD 30?
Principal: For the principal. I didn’t see it, we were also wondering, because of these documents.
Research assistant: He didn’t explain?
Principal: He didn’t explain.
Interviewer: And you took that money from the school fees?
Principal: No, my own money. USD 30, I advanced 10.000 FC [USD 11]. I am looking to sell Foufou [local vegetable] so that I can pay the full amount. I will take care of my field.” (Int. 91).

This example clearly shows the lack of knowledge as well as the power differential between the government official and the principal. However, and this is an utterly important aspect, the principal does not seem to be upset. He does not blame the official. It seems as if the situation was perfectly normal to him, although he paid USD 30 for something that can be assumed to be free of cost or even unnecessary. As stated by the principal at the beginning of chapter four: “Us Congolese we are specialists when it comes to applying decrees without documents.” (Int. 83).

All in all, the practical norms that govern this strategically-selective context leave little room for teachers to act strategically in order to have their school accredited. Their agency is very limited and they might even engage in practices that do not bring them forward, but cost money and effort. This is mainly due to information and power differentials. The analysis now continues with the second type of ‘de facto schools’.

4.1.2 Accredited, non-registered schools

This second ‘de facto type of school’ has already passed the stage of not being accredited. Its dossier was introduced, and by one or the other trajectory found its way to Kinshasa where a circular for its accreditation was issued. Although these schools still do not receive any funding from the government, they can tell us a lot about the practical norms that govern the registration process, espe-
cially about the problems that teachers can face when trying to have their school accredited and registered. The following section is largely based on interviews 29, 30 and 90 and introduces a case study of such a school, which is in fact the only school of this type that I visited.

![Accredited, non-registered primary school.](image)

Having been built in 1998 by parents and the village community, this school had been non-registered for seven years. In 2005 it received its official registration letter and has been in that status ever since. At least on an annual basis, the parents reconstruct and maintain the buildings. For several years, the school community has tried to be put onto the official payroll. Not achieving this poses an existential threat and the schools are at a high risk to be closed one day.

In the endeavor of registration, not only government officials but also principals can become a burden rather than an ally. In 2010, the principal stole money that he had collected from his teachers for the registration process. Instead of using the USD 10 from each teacher to go to the city to ‘moti-

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28 The buildings are very dilapidated. Even some registered schools in the rural areas are in a similar condition. Schools built by the Belgians and the two urban schools I visited were built with cemetery and in a better condition.
vate’ the SECOPE official in charge, he took all the money as well as a radio donated by USAID and abandoned the school in December 2012.\textsuperscript{29} I later found out that the principal was excluded from the Catholic network and now lives in a small city nearby. He even asked to be reintegrated into the Catholic network, but has been refused by the Catholic coordinator. When I asked the coordinator if there were any means of bringing the principal to trial, he smiled and made clear how ineffective the judicial system really is (Int. 42).

The current principal used to be a teacher when this story took place. Nowadays, he tries to cooperate closely with the parents. The current head teacher (maître en chef) and the president of the parent’s committee have decided to accompany the principal on future journeys to SECOPE (Int. 91). The principal started anew to collect money for the registration process. Teachers paid an amount of USD 150 for the mécanisation of the seven teachers and their school. In fact, however, this process should be almost completely free. One copy ought to cost USD 0.50 and two recto-verso sheets are needed, hence a sum of USD 0.20. This practical norm is known as “payer les fiches”, i.e., “paying the sheets”. “Payer les fiches” thus becomes a locally-known linguistic code for corruption or the practical norm. In terms of practical norms, one sheet costs about USD 2 and sometimes they are asked two and sometimes three sheets. This depends on the official and “you cannot challenge this” (Int. 89).

I was told that they further ‘motivated’ the official with a small amount (Int. 29, 30). As a result, the official made certain changes in the dossier. For example, in order for the school to be registered more easily, he wrote that the school building has doors and other equipment which in reality it does not have.\textsuperscript{30} The principal knew how to assure this extra service through the right amount of ‘motivation’. Thus, the strategic action is based on the practical norm to ‘motivate’ a government official and consists of receiving a supplementary service that facilitates the registration process. The USD 150 were hence composed of the “payments for sheets” for the seven teachers and the school registration and the “motivation” for the official. Moreover, each trip to the city of Kisangani costs considerable amounts of money (USD 5 - USD 15 for one way) which must also be raised among the teachers and parents.

As of December 2013, the school and teachers were still non-registered. The Catholic coordinator was upset to hear that they paid this amount to SECOPE. He said that the Catholic coordination should communicate between the schools and the SECOPE for the mécanisation process, thus to act as a broker, and if there are any costs to be covered, these can be paid for by the solidarity scheme

\textsuperscript{29} I could see and take a picture of the dossier from 2010 because he had left it behind at his departure.

\textsuperscript{30} The principal let me take pictures of the entire dossier.
Moreover, this entire process is very ambiguous: As reported by the teachers, they hand in the exact same dossier for purposes of accreditation and registration. As can be seen, the strategically-selective context is so unregulated that due to a lack of information teachers’ formulation of strategic actions is often vague because they do not know what to expect from their counterparts. In other words, government officials are not accountable for their actions and do not clarify the purposes of their respective department in relation to registration process (Verhaghe, 2006). The absence of a functioning judicial system prevents teachers from asserting their rights even in the most obvious situation – like the one where the principal embezzled the money. Teachers’ strategic actions include accompanying the principal to the city to visit government offices, to collect money for the registration process and to ‘motivate’ government officials. As an alternative strategic action, teachers can try to change schools instead of investing time and money in the registration of their school. Changing schools inside of the Catholic network can be difficult and lengthy, but teachers can also decide to change to other networks. The fact that the amount of the motivation fee differs between schools and that teachers tend to seek the highest amount possible further corroborates this practice. For instance, in 2010, three out of six teachers left the school of type (1b: non-mécanisée), in 2011 four out of six, in 2013 three out of six. Some of them I met working at other Catholic schools (Int. 90).

4.2 Registration of teachers

The registration process of teachers shares similarities with the school registration process in that dossiers also need to be submitted in interaction with government brokers. The main difference is that the above described problem of the viability report does not exist. Teachers need to work at a school that is officially registered (types (1b: non-mécanisée) or (1c: budgetisée)) in order to be able to submit their personal dossiers. It is often mentioned that one-third of all teachers are not paid by the government. However, as pointed out by other scholars, various sub-categories among these non-paid teachers exist (Andre et al., 2010, p. 165; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012; Poncelet et al., 2010; Verhaghe, 2006). These sub-categories exist due to the fact that teachers are hired locally without necessary approval of the government and that they can be registered by the government without receiving money. The following typology shows the different ‘de facto types of teacher employment statuses.

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31 The solidarity scheme will be explained in the next chapter.
In total, there are therefore five ‘de facto types of teacher employment’:

**Table 3. List of ‘de facto teacher employment conditions’**

(2a) temporarily employed

(2b) having a long-term contract from the Catholic Coordination AND not registered at SECOPE\(^{32}\) *(Nouvelle Unité)*

(2c) having a long-term contract from the Catholic Coordination AND registered at SECOPE AND not receiving salary *(Non Payé)*

(2d) having a long-term contract from the Catholic Coordination AND registered at SECOPE AND receiving salary via bank account *(bancarisé)*

(2e) having a long-term contract from the Catholic Coordination AND registered at SECOPE AND receiving salary via Caritas *(bancarisé via Caritas)*

The number in parentheses is again used to refer to the respective type. (2d: *bancarisé*) and (2e: *bancarisé via Caritas*) are the most desired states whereas (2a: *temporally employed*) is the least desired type. The attempt to move from one type to another, i.e. towards (2d: *bancarisé*) and (2e:

\(^{32}\) Referred to under its common French abbreviation „N-U“ that means *Nouvelle unité* (New unit).
bancarisé via Caritas), is henceforth called upgrading. One-third of all teachers in the DRC are non-paid and thus belong to types (2a: temporally employed), (2b: Nouvelle Unité) or (2c: Non Payé) (Williams, 2012).\textsuperscript{33} In the two researched Sous-Proofs, the SECOPE reports that 19 out of 95 teachers in eleven primary schools in the Sous-Proof of Banalia are Non-Paid and 46 out of 309 in the Sous-Proof of Kisangani 1 are Non-Paid. This corresponds to the overall share of Non-Paid teachers in the Educational Province, in which 298 out of 2465 teachers in 204 primary schools are Non-Paid (non-published SECOPE data sheets).\textsuperscript{34}

Paid teachers, i.e. types (2d: bancarisé) and (2e: bancarisé via Caritas), can only be found in schools of type (1c: budgetisée): all other combinations of teachers and schools are possible. The following sections will analyze teachers’ attempts to move towards the more desired statuses and how these different ‘de facto types of teacher employment’ influence teachers’ agency in relation to their income.

4.2.1 Temporary employment

This is a phenomenon that I observed especially in the rural schools. There is a lack of qualified teachers in rural areas, which exists due to the fact that there are no incentives or financial support for teachers in the city to move to these areas (Int. 25). Overall, there are two types of people who receive temporary contracts: so-called under-qualified teachers and teachers with an acte de prestation (Certificate of rendition of services) (Int. 25). The first ones are most commonly secondary school students of pedagogy who are still in their studies or who have failed the final exam (Int. 24). In case of teacher shortages, parents or teachers can suggest candidates to the Catholic coordination and frequently use relatives from their village. The quote at the beginning of chapter 4.1 ("In reality you can only play with the pawns") alludes to this practice and makes clear that material realities do not always allow the coordinators to respect official regulations.

The second type is somewhat more ambiguous. Usually, teachers receive a document issued by the Catholic coordination called Commission d’Affectation that assigns a teacher to a particular school (Int. 23). Teachers of this second type, however, obtain an acte de prestation, which means that someone works at a given school as a teacher. It can be used to manage temporal teacher shortages or is issued when one teacher works at two schools, e.g. in the morning and in the afternoon:

\textsuperscript{33} Henceforth, „Non-paid” refers to types (2a), (2b) and (2c) whereas the French term Non Payé refers to (2c) in particular.

\textsuperscript{34} Although the exact numbers are subject to monthly changes and SECOPE numbers are prone to include errors, these numbers can be expected to give a good overall impression.
he/she then receives the ordinary *Commission d’Affectation* and the *acte de prestation* that does not officially bind him/her to that school but nonetheless confirms the position at the second school.

4.2.2 Nouvelle Unité

*Nouvelle Unité* corresponds to type (2b) in the typology and refers to those teachers who have not received their official matriculation number from SECOPE and who are therefore non-registered (Int. 22 & 23). Already in 2006 Verhaghe (2006) noticed that this is a recurrent “leitmotiv” when talking to teachers and officials. Non-registered can mean two things: on the one hand, teachers who recently started their careers and on the other hand certain teachers who change schools. The first group is also called *non-mécanisé*, as they have not received a matriculation number from SECOPE and appear under *Nouvelle Unité* (New Unit) on the schools’ internal documents (own observations; Williams, 2012).

When a teacher starts his/her career they often replace another teacher with the acknowledgement of the Catholic network or are recruited for newly-created and non-registered classes and schools (Verhaghe, 2009, p. 2; Williams, 2012, p. 9). The procedure to be officially registered (*mécanisé*) at the SECOPE can currently take up to several years (Int. 75; Verhaghe, 2009, p. 2). Their name does not appear on any governmental documents and they are managed by the Catholic network. For that reason they are also called “Parents’ teachers” (Int. 94) since all their salary comes from the motivation fee (see next chapter).

In one case I took a teacher’s dossier from Kisangani to SECOPE’s office in Kinshasa. The teacher who gave me the dossier had replaced a teacher who had passed away. Unfortunately, his dossier turned out to be incomplete: it lacked the death certificate of that teacher. However, this would have been in vain as the name of the teacher who passed away was not even on the official salary list anymore. The diocesan Catholic Coordination had made a mistake. What was supposed to be a means of obtaining a salary for this teacher turned out to be administrative chaos. Nothing could be done in this case.

The second meaning refers to teachers who change schools. Since it takes time to update the documents when a teacher changes schools, the Catholic Coordination might hesitate to report the replacement to SECOPE. Meanwhile, the new teacher receives his/her predecessor’s salary, under the latter’s name (Int. 89) (Verhaghe, 2007b). The on-going reform of bancarisation will eventually

35 Employing non-paid teachers suggests further difficulties. Whereas Andre et al. (2010, p. 165) state that not being registered officially “negatively influences their ability to negotiate their employment circumstances”, I would put this in perspective with the quote of a principal: “How are you supposed to demand a proper service from someone whose name on the salary scheme is followed by zero zero zero?” (Int. 84). Furthermore, non-paid teachers become demotivated at some point and a shallow atmosphere is created when they constantly ask their students for money (Int. 85).
make this procedure impossible, as teachers need to present themselves with an identity card at the bank to obtain their salary (see next chapter). Due to administrative errors or misconduct, a teacher might already be registered at SECOPE and have a matriculation number, but disappear from the public payroll and salary schemes due to the change. Or names disappear without any particular reason, adding to the opaque nature of the SECOPE (cf. De Herdt & Kasongo, 2013, p. 229). At the new school he/she might be called *Nouvelle Unité* because the name does not appear on the payroll (Int. 76). They might indeed have to hand in their dossier again at the provincial SECOPE, which will then eventually send it to Kinshasa. This was the first time I personally took the dossier from Kisangani to Kinshasa, submitted it at the National Ministry of Education and followed the process. Having established contact to leaders from teacher unions, we took the dossier to the national SECOPE office and continued for several days to inquire about the progress. The teacher regained his salary the month after.

In a different case, I observed a surprising procedure: teachers at a school, which was non-registered and who were thus non-registered teachers, had their *Commission d’Affectation*, as usual. But then additionally they had to buy an *acte de prestation* for USD 1 each. When I reported this to the Coordinator, he said that no one should ever pay anything for any document at the Catholic Coordination (Int. 99). The responsible of the Human Resources Department of the Catholic Coordination was present at that moment of the interview, and the Coordinator directed this sentence towards him. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to follow-up on this issue. Nevertheless, it is an example that sets the Catholic anti-corruption statements as presented above into perspective (Int. 79).

The major objective for non-registered teachers is to become registered at SECOPE and to receive a matriculation number, which is only possible at registered schools (World Bank, 2008, p. 76). Verhaghe reports that prior waves of registration seemed to follow random and arbitrary patterns without following “any form of rational or fair selection process” (Verhaghe, 2009, p. 15). Teachers need to submit their dossiers at the SECOPE office, personally or through intermediaries, which is a necessary but not always a sufficient condition for registration, as the next section will show.

**4.2.3 Non Payé**

*Non Payé* refers to teachers of type (2c) in the above typology. In the technical sense of the word, *Non Payé* teachers are those who already have a SECOPE matriculation number but who are not paid because of budgetary issues (Int. 23). The term *Non Payé* originated from SECOPE’s salary schemes. On these schemes the amount of the salary is usually listed after each teacher’s name. In
the case of Non Payé teachers, the amount is replaced by three zeros and followed by the sign “NP” (Non Payé). The first line on following picture shows such an example.36

![Picture 4. Payment scheme showing “NP”](image)

Displaying Non Payé teachers on the payroll is based on a decision from SECOPE and started around the year 2010. Before that, Verhaghe (2006) reports that teachers “feel anger and resentment against administration for total lack of feedback on the filing process”. Hence, SECOPE decided to be more transparent and show the teachers that their dossiers had been taken care of, but payment cannot be executed due to a lack of budget. Thus, SECOPE made the government aware of these masses of Non Payé teachers and shifted a part of the pressure and responsibility to the Ministry of Finance and Budget (Int. 103; De Herdt & Kasongo, 2012, p. 229). Teachers who are Non Payé turned out to be the major concern of the school communities as well as teacher unions.37 They are stigmatized by other people: “Our colleagues from another school make fun of us, they say that we are not real teachers, that we are N P.” (Int. 29).

There is nothing Non Payé can do to become paid, except waiting (Int. 13). After the registration process, the SECOPE already has all their relevant information and does not need further documents. Nonetheless, some teachers told me they would resubmit their dossiers, thus having to bear the travel costs to Kisangani each time they travel to the offices. When officials take a very long time to introduce the names in the database or intentionally do not introduce them at all, teachers return to redo the procedure. Is this necessary? The answer is simple as it is shocking: no, teachers should not submit their dossiers twice. However, there is a phenomenon called tomber caduque, which means lapsing (Int. 84, Int. 85, Int. 89, 97). Many teachers think that their dossiers lapse at the SECOPE office if they had not been treated in the course of three months. Not one teacher could explain why this would be the case, but they reportedly had their information from SECOPE officials.

Teachers also relate this to the Catholic coordination’s refusal to look for more pragmatic ways of registration: “The Protestants adapted to the rhythm [of corruption], the Catholics stay tight and their dossiers ‘tombent caduque’” (lapsing; see above) (Int. 97). Tomber caduque thus becomes an

36 „EINS“ stands for „enseignant“ (teacher).

37 Teacher unions played a marginal role in the schools I visited. Especially teachers in rural schools have no contact and little knowledge about them (Int. 89). Assessing their work was beyond the scope of this study. However, union leaders report that the current reclamations in and around Kisangani are mainly concerning Non Payé teachers (Int. 75).
entrance point for the practice and practical norm described in section 4.1.2 as “payer les fiches” (paying the sheets). When I talked to the provincial head of SECOPE, who had been transferred from another province one month before I met him and was tackling major problems in the administration, he told me that no dossier would ever lapse. Once they are submitted, they will be taken care of (Int. 103).

Again, teachers report that “On top of these fees you also need to motivate the official” (Int. 97), meaning that you have to pay additional money if you want your dossiers to be treated quickly, or treated at all. Instead of the recto-verso copy of USD 0.2 they are forced to pay up to nine Dollars (Int. 97). SECOPE’s provincial head told me that he had heard about this procedure. He made clear that this is an act of corruption, or – in his words – “anti-values”, and that he had forbidden this practice (Int. 103). Whether or not this has any real effects and whether or not the new head seriously tackles this problem, it exemplifies Lund’s statement when he says that “state institutions are never definitively formed, but that a constant process of formation takes place” (Lund, 2006, p. 686). It must also be added that not all teachers would take care of such procedures themselves: “There’s the hierarchy, the rectorate. If I went to SECOPE’s office it would be like deceit. There’s a principal at my school. He’s the one to take care of this” (Int. 76). Here, the role of the principal as a broker between the teacher and the government officials is clearly observable.

However, the SECOPE is not entirely and at all times corrupt. One teacher told me that he wanted to resubmit his dossier but the SECOPE told him that “Your problem has already been taken care of. We cannot open another dossier; you are already on the salary list. We are waiting for the government to send more money. You cannot open another dossier.” (Int. 85).

This section on registration of teachers has elucidated the multi-scalar strategically-selective context in which teachers are supposed to exercise their profession, but which hardly allows them to satisfy basic administrative function such as becoming registered and paid by the government. Practical norms, especially payer les fiches and tomber caduque, nourished by wrong or limited information and corroborated by administrative chaos or misconduct govern these processes. The main strategic action that teachers can take is the motivating of government officials. Furthermore, the decision to work at a school without being paid by the government is also a strategic action. The following chapter will now analyze paid teachers and practices that all teachers use to complement their income.
5 Teacher agency in relation to sources of income

“Lécon du jour: Chers élèves, je viens de faire 15 km à pied sans manger. J’ai faim et suis fatigué, cotisez-en pour moi S.V.P.”

After having discussed the difficulties of the registration process, which is a precondition for teachers to receive an official government salary, the analysis will now focus on teachers’ agency in relation to different sources of income. This chapter will examine the following sub research questions: How do teachers exercise their agency in relation to the government salary provision? How do teachers exercise their agency in order to receive money from their students? How do teachers redistribute students’ money from students between them? Which other strategic actions do teachers use to obtain income?

These questions already point to the main sources of income: government salary (incl. support by international donors), motivation fee, corruption, secondary jobs. This analysis thus broadens the scope proposed by de Herdt et al. (2010, p. 21f) who discussed teacher income by focusing on the official government salary, international aid and parents’ contributions. The applied concepts of real governance and practical norms are now also used to uncover how teachers really obtain their income. This section draws on and corroborates empirical insights suggesting that people with a small absolute income have various skills and means of managing that income (Collins, Morduch, Rutherford, & Ruthven, 2009). One result of this is that the focus shifts from the mere fact that salaries are small, to the fact that salaries are received irregularly, and that teachers develop various coping mechanisms that can be understood as strategic actions in the context of the SRA. Especially the inner-school management and redistribution of money will be of interest.

5.1 Government salary

“Not education is free, but teaching is free.” (Int. 55)

This research has highlighted several issues that are important to be analyzed when looking at teacher agency in relation to government salary: first, the composition of the government salary in terms of allowances, age benefits, promotion opportunities and pension schemes; second, the management of teacher salaries at national level that will be illustrated by two examples; third, the current bancarisation reform and the responses to the reform at the local level.

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38 Today’s lesson: Dear students, I have just walked for 15 km without eating, I am hungry and I am tired, please collect something for me. (Text from the image on the front cover.)
5.1.1 Composition

The evolution of teacher salary is linked to the conflict in the DRC. As reported by the World Bank, the government salary for teachers in 2002 was about USD 8 per month (World Bank, 2005, p. 64f). In 2004, when the country was in relative peace, the government, public and religious officials and teacher unionist signed the *Mbudi agreement* (RDC, 2004). During the civil war, teachers suffered tremendously and often went years without being paid (Int. 4 & 45). The main promise was to increase the salaries of public officials. Despite an incremental increase of teacher salaries, this agreement was not adhered to and salaries are nowadays still far from the promised amounts of USD 205 per month (De Herdt et al., 2012, p. 696).

The monthly government income today is about USD 80 (collected salary sheets and interviews). Teachers in the classroom (*enseignant debout*) receive about an eighth more than administrative staff. As witnessed in interviews, teachers shake their head when asked about *Mbudi* and deprecatorily say that it simply exists to make them believe that change will happen (Int. 7, 8, 9, 19 & 76). *Mbudi* is an important policy agenda and a good example of how the state functions as a “hope-generating machine” rather than as an effective administrative mechanism (Nuijten, 2003). Teachers receive grand portions of their salaries from parents and teachers nowadays complain that the state does not deliver on its promises. Nonetheless, they are still public employees and the state is still an important frame of reference (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 12) – if only indirectly as they blame it for not taking care of them (Int. 8, 9, 10, 12, 33 & 76).

As a teacher in the initial quote of this chapter ironically pointed out, he does not believe in the agenda of *gratuité* but rather thinks that he is teaching for free, i.e. without being paid. Salaries are so low that even qualified teachers prefer to look for other job opportunities (Int. 13; Verhaghe, 2006, p. 7). As one teacher states: “We don’t live like human beings, we live like animals” (Int. 19).

Finally, there are some reforms and international support targeting the Non-Paid. Non-Paid teachers in 2,700 schools have been paid by the World Bank program ‘PARSE’ (Int. 68 & 69). As this program runs out in the near future, the government is expected to include these teachers on the payroll. On top of that the French AFD will take up and enlarge this endeavor and finance the salaries for eventually 26,000 Non-Paid in the entire country (Int. 60, 68, 69, 76, 103).

According to official policies (e.g. Article 17-20 from the Framework Law of 1986), teachers were entitled to several allowances (family benefits, housing allowances, funeral related fees, trans-

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39 Named after the part of Kinshasa in which it was signed.

40 Statements by De Herdt et al. (2010, p. 49f), De Herdt, Wagemakers & Titeca (2012, p. 693) and Williams (2012, p. 14) might point to the fact that the *bancarisation* can be seen as a condition for AFD’s involvement.
portation fees, etc.). Currently, there are no such allowances (Int. 103): “If you don’t have your family they will bury you like an insect.” (Int. 10 & 32). At another urban school, teachers mention a form of communal agency: if a teacher dies, some teacher from surrounding schools voluntarily contribute to the funeral (Int. 32). The number of years a teacher has worked are hardly taken into account in the salary (Int. 10; cf. Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010, p. 10). I interviewed teachers who started working in 1957 and who receive only a slightly higher amount than their much younger colleagues.

Promotion opportunities are a third way of gaining a higher income. Teachers can become principals or vice-principals and thus receive a higher salary (ca. one-eighth more, as seen on different salary schemes). However, there are two sorts of criteria that play a role: on the one hand, the teacher needs to have the necessary administrative and pedagogical abilities. On the other hand, he/she needs to be a proper representative of the Catholic Church: The bishops urge teachers to become married religiously, which is a costly affair, and to participate in the catechesis (Int. 5, 15, 20, 25 & 85). This religious affiliation is an important characteristic of what is considered an adequate principal and can be valued more highly than the other skills. However, in reality these demands cannot always be respected and the coordinators have to make pragmatic choices (Int. 43). In general, teachers complain that the SECOPE does not publicly display the wage scale and that all teachers are paid more or less the same amount: “We don’t see the wage scale anymore, so that we don’t object. The wage scale is invisible. Nowadays they give a unitary salary, as if it was a gift” (Int. 88).

Finally, pensions are an immensely important issue. Reportedly, the last time teachers were retired was in 1987 (Verhaghe, 2006). Despite the high number of teachers have reached the age of retirement and the range of allowances they should receive at the end of their career (Verhaghe, 2006), there are currently no pension schemes (Int. 7, 10, 11, 16 & 89). Yet, curiously, there are lists of those teachers who are in retirement age (Int. 9, 21). They thus see their names on the government’s lists and are promised that for instance, at the beginning of the school year 2013/14 they will be able to retire. However, this never happens and seems like a particular manifestation of the state as a “hope-generating machine” (Nuijten, 2003). One teacher laughed when saying that “We are waiting for the pension that will never come” (Int. 82).

Teachers react to this structural challenge by working literally until they die working or until they lose the physical ability to continue (Int. 7 & 15). In case of severe illnesses, the principal can decide to leave the teacher on the payroll while he/she stays at home. The remaining teachers and the principal then take care of the abandoned class (Int. 15). Alternatively, Nouvelle Unité are hired and only receive the motivation fee (Int. 82). Combining three practical norms – the motivation fee,

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41 The family of the teacher who passes away is supposed to receive the salary for a period of sixth month after the death (Int. 25 & 32).
the acceptance of unpaid labor and what can be seen as an act of solidarity / communal agency between teachers – thus become an indirect and local means of retiring teachers (Int. 5 & 25).

### 5.1.2 Irregularities in payroll management

Apart from these issues, the management of teacher salaries at national level is a baffling phenomenon. Two examples illustrate this. One of the major problems, or irregularities, are errors on the payment schemes. Wrong and missing information on the payment schemes cause that some teachers are not paid according to their experience or grade (Int. 84, 88). In one of those cases I took a teacher’s dossier to the National Ministry of Education in Kinshasa. There had been a mistake – or an intentional misconduct – causing this situation. The principal’s monthly salary was lacking ca. USD 15 as he only received a regular teacher’s salary. The SECOPE official in Kinshasa recognized the mistake, but couldn’t assign the principal his due salary because the overall budget did not leave any room for this. Hence, as he explained, either the government increases the budget or a “hovering salary” is found, i.e. the salary of someone who is “paid twice by mistake, someone who left a school without being immediately replaced, someone who died” (Int. 103).

Another irregularity relates to those Non Payé who used to be paid but became Non Payé due to administrative errors – hence they fell back in the ‘de facto employment status’. In the case of Richard, whose story was introduced in the prologue, I took his dossier to the National Ministry of Education in Kinshasa and tried to have his name included on the payroll again. An interesting aspect could be observed: the SECOPE official confirmed that the dossier was complete, but that he needed further information on the principal’s predecessor and successor at his old school. That is, in order to renew one name on the public payroll and the salary scheme, he needs to renew all those names that are affect by a change – like a domino effect, or as he calls it: “Linking the two bails”. In theory, this had to be continued until reaching the two dead ends at both sides: this could be a deceased person, someone who left the sector or on the other side, someone who entered the profession. This sounded perfectly logical, and he made me aware that this procedure might take some time, pointing to the required document that had a lot of space to add the different names (Int. 60).

However, surprised as I was about this serious commitment, I was even more surprised when I returned to his office a week later and saw that he only added one name, the one who replaced the principal at his old school. He did not follow the line further and argued that this would be too complicated, and in any case, people should submit their dossiers themselves (Int. 60). As a result, the principal I took care of might have regained his salary, but someone else had probably lost his/her salary at another school. This is exactly how Richard had lost his salary in the first place. There is bitter side effect to my engagement as one salary was gained and another one was lost, but I gained the
teacher’s confidence. This turned out to be helpful when I returned to Kisangani, as he put me in contact with several government officials who all know about my engagement and talked very openly to me.

5.1.3 Bancarisation

Currently, an important agenda in the DRC that was used for the presidential campaign in 2011, is the Revolution of Modernity – there is even a ministry called “Ministry of planning and implementation of the revolution of modernity (“Ministère du Plan et suivi de la mise en oeuvre de la révolution de la modernité”). A reform that can be related to this Revolution of Modernity is the so-called bancarisation. Bancarisation is an attempt to improve salary provision for civil servants and can be defined as the „Mode of payment of public officials via banks through the opening of individual bank accounts“ (Int. 103).

The Congolese Association of Banks is the government’s main partner for the implementation (Int. 105). They offered their members to participate voluntarily (Int. 106). As one employee put it: “Teachers were not the most desired clients.” Nonetheless many banks participated (Int. 106). There is no official law about this reform, only an agreement between the government and the Congolese Association of Banks and the government (see “Protocole d’accord (01/12/2012)”).

This reform is linked to the broader process of financial inclusion, which can be broken down into establishing a banking infrastructure, the creation of saving accounts and the subsequent granting of loans. Financial inclusion is embraced by various donors such as the German organizations GIZ and KfW (own experience).

Before the bancarisation, SECOPE emphasized that „not the individuals were paid, but the posts“ (Int. 60; Verhaghe, 2007b). This means that there is a certain number of registered positions at one school and this amount was transferred. It was not bound to the individual teacher and thus allowed, in principle, a more flexible local adaptation of the payroll. Cash went through the hands of several intermediaries, until eventually the coordinators received the money from the SECOPE office and handed it to the principals who paid their teachers (Int. 5; Verhaghe, 2007b). This implied huge infrastructural challenges and left much room for embezzlement (Int. 5 & 8; Verhaghe, 2007b). Teachers hardly ever received their full salaries and frequently with long delays (Int. 105; de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010; Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010; Verhaghe, 2007b, 2009; World Bank, 2008). Already in 2008, a World Bank report raised the issue of „alternative methods to cash payment“ (World Bank, 2008, p. 95). The reform’s main promises lie in the circumvention of the many stakeholders of the old payment system. Furthermore, bancarisation ought to contribute to the management of teacher numbers and should abolish the infamous ‘fictitious teachers’ (Int. 106; informal conversations).
The implementation of the reform started in July 2012 in Kinshasa and other agglomerations such as Kisangani, and was finalized gradually in 2013 with the *bancarisation* of the “territories” (geographical unit) in May 2013 (Int. 75 & 103). Officially, the reform is a success and as of September 2013, the SECOPE claims that more than 30 percent of all public officials are paid by banks (Int. 103 & 105). In general it can be said that the *bancarisation* in urban areas is functioning properly with only little problems, but this stands in great contrast to what is going on in rural areas (Int. 7, 11, 16 & 17). *Bancarisation* is used as a symbol for modernity of the state bureaucracy but is in fact an oxymoron: it is a *bancarisation* without banks. Banks only exist in urban areas or agglomeration zones, but are absent in rural areas.

A World Bank report in 2008 already signaled that “the disparity among local situations suggests that several solutions should coexist” (World Bank, 2008, p. 95), but this was not respected in the reform’s conception. Hence, since difficulties in serving rural areas emerged, three mechanisms are used: first, the banks leave the cities and move to the territories (*mobile counters* as they are commonly called) in order to serve their newly-created clients (Int.25). Alternatively, the banks use the networks of phone companies (Vodacom, Airtel, Tigo), who are probably the private companies with the best infrastructural penetration in the country, and use them as subcontractors (Int. 61, 72, 103). Thirdly, an ad-hoc solution to use the Catholic NGO Caritas is employed (“Protocol d’accord (11/08/2011)”).

Despite its pitfalls, *bancarisation* must be looked at as an on-going reform that has a high potential and can bring many advantages in the future. In critical realist terms, we could explain the processes that led *Bancarisation* and its implementation, to a certain extent, as the realm of the real. The teacher’s name that disappears from payment schemes is at the actual and the teacher who, as a consequence, does not receive his salary is the empirical.

Before analyzing the payment modalities in urban and rural areas in more detail, one aspect concerning the local reactions to the *bancarisation* needs to be discussed. The SECOPE’s new provincial head started rearranging the salary management and could be an example of what Verhaghe (2006) calls “keen intelligence and local expertise”. In line with the on-going decentralization, the provincial SECOPE office has gained more autonomy when it comes to updating the salary lists (*la mise à jour*).

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42 *Bancarisation* does not only concern teachers but also e.g. the army and the police.

As he reported, there is always an amount left at the banks after they paid the teachers (Int. 100). "Lists come from Kinshasa with names of people who were transferred, who died etc. At the provincial level we know who left and who is still there. Instead of having a surplus at the bank for those who already left, we tell them that there are those who left and those who are working and we ask them to pay those who work." (Int. 100; cf. Int 5). He adds: "There ought not to be any money left [that is send back to Kinshasa]. All of that are salaries that are not paid." (Int. 100). In short, this means that the SECOPE officials receive digital versions of the salary lists, print them out, take pen and ruler, rectify them according to their provincial information, and pass them along to the banks (own observation).

Officially, if a teacher does not work at a given school anymore but the name still appears, the name is crossed and another teacher at the school, who appears as N-P receives the salary. If there are two or more Non Payé at that school, the one who has waited for a longer period is prioritized. If there are none, the SECOPE looks at another school (Int. 100). This could open possibilities to manipulate the lists or to favor some teachers over others. However, the new provincial head tried to establish transparency by inviting the Catholic Coordinator to his office in order to discuss these issues (Int. 99, 100). The payment procedure via banks is now discussed in the following section.

5.1.3.1 Payment in urban areas

Each teacher in Catholic primary schools in the city now has a proper bank account (Int. 8, 11, 16, 17 & 32). None of the teachers I talked to had an account prior to the bancarisation. Since these many new customers all want to receive their salaries as soon as possible, the banks schedule specific days for each school to receive their salaries (Int. 11, 17, 19, 28). The schools are informed in advance and on the scheduled day the teachers go to the bank – often abandoning their schools, which as a result might close half a day (Int. 17, 19 28, informal conversations). Teachers might have to queue for a long time to receive their money, as they do not have debit cards (cf. Mignot, 2011). Teachers could also go on another day, hence they are not restricted to the scheduled day – but most take the first opportunity (Int. 11). As many mentioned, they take on debts throughout the month and withdraw their entire salary at once to repay these debts (Int. 11, 12, 13 & 77; Verhaghe, 2006, p. 6; Mignot, 2011). Teachers in urban areas are satisfied with the bancarisation, except for the regular delays that still occur as the government sometimes transfers the money too late and then banks still have to administer the payment (Int. 7, 10, 16). This makes it difficult to calculate a monthly budget and plan the Cash Flow (Int. 11).

One main negative impact of the bancarisation is the fact that the coordinator and the principals cannot adapt the payment schemes locally anymore (Int. 21). Hence, a new teacher cannot
simply receive his predecessor’s salary as he/she has to be identified at the banks. As described above, the SECOPE’s new provincial head tries to face this problem by updating the lists at his level.

5.1.3.2 Payment in rural areas

The provider of teacher payment in the rural areas is mainly Caritas, supplemented by two other mechanisms. In 2011-12 Caritas already paid the Catholic network and has been asked again to pay all the networks in areas due to the described difficulties of banks (Int. 40 & 70; see „Protocol d’accord (11/08/2011)“). CARITAS uses the network of Catholic churches and parishes and distributes the money for all networks (Int. 35, 52).

In the archdiocese of Kisangani there are three territories with a total 120 primary schools that are served by Caritas (Int. 70). These schools are mainly located next to the main roads (axis) that run through the territories. In contrast to the banks and the phone companies, Caritas travels to the schools or at least until the nearest Catholic parish. In some cases, and in some months, they use the parish’s priest for distributing the salaries – but Caritas workers highlighted that this also depends on the trustworthiness of the priest (Int. 101). Similarly to the banks, Caritas officials complain about the poor planning and implementation of the reform: Having already served the Catholic network in 2011-12, the Caritas receives the same budget from the government to cover all the networks. However, total incurred costs are much higher for petrol and other travel-related expenses (Int. 101).

One school – and surprisingly only one school and not the others – reported that the Caritas official who delivered the salaries deduced USD 0.5 from every teacher’s salary, without specifying the reason (Int. 83). As we discussed this in the Focus Group, the principal told them that he had refused the payment and advised them not to agree the next time (Int. 83). Resigned, one teacher stated that “We are used to the bad, to the difficulties” (Int. 83). When I reported this to the Caritas official in Kisangani, as agreed upon with the teachers, he could not help me as the accused person was not in the office. But he assured me that the Caritas official mission does not foresee such a contribution. Another frustration for the teachers is the fact that the Non Payé have disappeared from the salary lists. Before, they used to appear, albeit with a salary of zero. Nonetheless, they preferred seeing their name to not seeing it at all (Int. 70, 97). One advantage of being paid via Caritas is that the Caritas mechanisms allow teachers and principals to be more flexible to reallocate the salaries among themselves at one school, e.g. that a new teacher receives the salary of a deceased one (Int. 89).

The second solution to allocate the salaries to teachers in rural areas is related to banks. Banks either send out their own employees or sub-contract phone companies, which use their vast networks to pay the teachers (Int. 28). However, banks and phone companies only move to the territori-
al capitals, which means that teachers all of the province have to travel up to 250 km to obtain their salary. In the first month of bancarisation, the rural schools I visited received their salary from Airtel, a phone company. Airtel’s salary provision is heavily criticized and teachers speak of it as a “fiasco” (Int. 70) or a “complete chaos” (Int. 75; cf. Int. 66).  

All teachers from the Banalia axis had to travel up to 90 kms to Banalia, the territory’s capital to obtain their salary. Thus, travel costs up to 20 per cent of the monthly salary incurred. The companies assumed that everyone would know how to use a phone; they did not have the time for a test period. The government is also partially to blame for this lack of test period as it left little planning time between announcement of the bancarisation and its implementation (Int. 75). Some teachers had to pay USD 0.3 for a sim card and a picture had to be taken for USD 3 (Int. 72, 83). Airtel requires a certain amount of credit on the sim card. Otherwise it will be blocked after three months (Int 72). Yet, this specific region is poorly covered by the Airtel phone network. Moreover, Airtel pays later than the banks as the money first has to be transferred from the banks to Airtel. The reason for this delayed payment is Airtel merely being sub-contracted by the banks (Int. 72). Due to the insufficient service provided by Airtel, the payment was provided by Caritas as early as June 2013.

After having analyzed teacher agency in relation to government salary, we can note that teachers have limited possibilities to influence the official salary. Due to this fact and because of the low amount of the government salary, teachers have developed a range of other activities they use in order to complement their official salary. These will now be analyzed.

### 5.2 Motivation fee

“The teacher enters the classroom. Instead of doing the cross sign – in the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit, amen – like a Catholic teacher ought to do every morning, he reaches out his hand and asks for the motivation fee.” (Catholic coordinator)

Already in 1985, a large-scale study pointed out that Congolese teachers have difficulties to ‘connect the two ends of the months’⁴⁵, meaning that they hardly reach the end of the month with their salary (Lumeka-lua-Yansenga, Roller, & Nzenge, 1985, p. 273). The motivation fee has become the main mechanism used to complement teacher income. The quote above shows how the motivation fee has been institutionalized and is now a practice at every school.

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⁴⁵“(nouer) les deux bouts du mois”, an expression that is still used by teachers today (Int. 11, 83).
The sub research question “How do teachers exercise their agency in order to receive money from their students?” will be explored in this chapter. The payment of the fee is not limited to a simple cash transaction from parents to teachers but is embedded in a complex process that leads to various strategic actions by teachers. These actions are related to negotiations around the fee, attracting and keeping students, and redistribution. Since none of this is codified in official government documents or policies, these aspects all underline the importance of looking at the real governance and practical norms that govern the education sector.

5.2.1 Negotiations around the motivation fee

“Nowadays, there are ten classes [as compared to nine in the curriculum]: The first one is: where is my money / who brought the money?” (School principal).

The opening illustration on this thesis’ cover already pointed to this practice, and Picture 5 makes clear the extent to which the motivation fee has become institutionalized (cf. Int. 11). All teachers collect the fee, every month and then calculate their proper shares.

The motivation fee is one of the most contentious factors in the current educational governance, as it exacerbates parents’ already difficult financial situation and cause an ongoing tension and struggle between school management and teachers on the one side and parents on the other (Int. 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, 32 & 33 Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p. 12): “I am not in favour of the motivation fee.
The prime tries to ridicule us, to take away our dignity, we have a low reputation in the eyes of the parents. My desire is that the government pays well and abolishes the motivation fee.” (Int. 11).

Although parents started paying the fee twenty years ago to support teachers when the government was not able to pay their salaries, it has now become an obligation instead of a voluntary contribution (Int. 15). In fact, the motivation fee is still used despite a ban declared by the government and Catholic Church, thus being a good example of the negotiated nature and real governance of the education system (Hofmeijer, 2011; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011; Verhaghe, 2006, p. 52, 2007b).

Again, gratuité is something teachers refer to: Griffith, “for the school fees, that’s okay, but for the motivation fee it was a failure. They said that from the 1st to 5th class it’s free. But the motivation fee helps us, if they say it’s free, how are we going to live?” (Int. 8; cf. Int. 13 & 15). The motivation fee is especially important for the teachers who work in schools of type (1a: non-agréée) or (1b: non-mécanisée) and who don’t receive any government salary. All in all, teachers highlight that they can survive only thanks to the motivation fee, but make clear that this practice is not desirable and they urge the government to increase the salary so that the motivation fee can be abolished (e.g. Int. 9, 10 & 11).

The amount of the motivation fee is negotiated at the beginning of the school year, or the end of the prior year, between the school’s management committee and the parental committee (Int. 15, 20 & 24; de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010; Mrsic-Garac, 2009). Comparing rural with urban areas, the fee is substantially higher and paid more regularly in urban areas; in the observed cases it ranged between USD 1.5 to USD 5 (Int. 25). Over the years it might vary due to market prices of certain goods or comparisons with other (surrounding) schools (Int. 12, 15, 17 & 23). Moreover, parents might contribute a distinct sum for the Nouvelle Unité who do not receive any government salary (Int. 23). This is sometimes called “local salary” (Int. 23).

Determining the fee is not an easy task: If the motivation fee is too low, teachers can take the strategic action to leave the school (de Herdt, 2010, p. 58). If it is too high, students will leave or fall out (Int. 11, 13 & 20). The parent’s lack of willingness or simply their lack of financial means also leads to difficult situations throughout the year: although the motivation fee has been decided on by the parents’ general assembly, many children are not able to pay their fees (Int. 11 & 18; cf. de Herdt, 2010, p. 22). Especially in rural areas, children frequently pay little by little and often do not pay the entire amount. Some respondents suggest that parents’ willingness to pay the fee depends on local and ethnic characteristics and their understanding of the importance of education (Int. 97, Conversation with local priest). De Herdt adds that children might also receive the fee from their parents but decide not to pay it but use it for other purposes (de Herdt, 2010).
Besides students who do not pay the fee, there are other factors that can lead to a diminution of the maximum motivation fee: Some schools allow their teachers and members of the Copa to send their own children to school for free. Teachers’ motivation fee and thus the income is also subject to completely external events such as the weather. In 2012 there was very little rain in the researched region, the paddy harvest was poor, and parents’ income and the overall motivation fee was consequently very low (Int. 29, 30 & 31).

One particular example of how teachers manage the fee during the school year could be observed in December: due to the Christmas holidays, teachers demanded that students pay the motivation fee at the beginning of December instead receiving it only after the holidays in January. The Catholic Coordinator responded to this practice in a letter to all schools: “For a few years, a habit concerning the reception of the motivation fee in December has become common in the Catholic schools. … I instruct you not to receive the motivation fee before Christmas” (Catholic coordination, 2013). Teachers were not content with this order, but seemed to have respected it (e.g. Int. 85).

This section has shown that the motivation fee is not simply negotiated at the beginning of the school year, but that it implies a range of other problems, practices and strategic actions. Now combining this negotiation of the motivation fee with the fierce competition between schools and the mechanisms of supply and demand (analyzed in section 4.1), allow an analysis of a range of strategic actions used by teachers (de Herdt, 2010, p. 52). There is a thorough management of students in the form of acquisition, keeping and expelling students, as the next section will show.

5.2.2 Attracting and keeping students

Due the cultural political economy of school creation and accreditation, teachers and parents, especially in non-accredited and non-registered schools, are afraid of losing their students to the surrounding school (Int. 29, 30, 31). In order to convince parents of the necessity of schooling, and probably also of the usefulness of sending their children to a Catholic school, as well as reminding them to pay the motivation fee, some members of the parental committee – who are very likely to be strongly involved in church activities – make announcements during services (Int. 92, 93). Another means of attracting students is to agree on a lower amount of motivation fee than the surrounding schools, not to charge the fee for the first month, or to avoid any enrollment fees. Frequently, these offers are then communicated in churches and through the village chief.

On a different note, teachers exercise their agency when it comes to the number of students per class. Officially, the maximum number of students per class is 55 (Int. 24). But as with all official norms, there is plenty of room for local adaptations. Thinking about the education for all agenda, a specific problem can be observed at this point: since the official norm is not respected, practical
norms mean that teachers can accept up to a 100 students in their class. Although the pedagogical effectiveness is doubtful, there is a clear rationale why teachers accept this: the more students, the higher the total motivation fee: “For us the Congolese, we are suffering, we want many students.” (Int. 79; cf. de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008, p. 40). Other teachers complain about overcrowded classes, but are also positioned in this ambivalent situation (Int. 96).

Finally, the motivation fee has led to a peculiar situation: teachers expel those students who did not manage to pay the fee (Int. 12, 13, 14, 16 & 74; cf. de Herdt, 2010, p. 51f). This is also the reason why the coordinator forbid the practice to demand the motivation fee before Christmas, as described above. Usually, students need to pay the motivation fee until the 25th of each month (Int. 10 & 23). As one principal illustrated, he even recites a sentence with his students: “Tomorrow is the 25th. Those who didn’t pay [continues in a singsong]: who does not arrive at school stays at home – okay? – oka [sic.] – Let’s go.” (Int. 22). In cities, teachers clearly described how they expel children who have not paid at the end of each month (Int. 12, 13, 15 & 16; Andre et al. 2010).

Although not every rural school acts similarly, they seem to follow a different logic than urban schools (Int. 10 & 96). Here, teachers do not seem to apply the mechanism of expelling students rigorously. As explanations, they state that “These are children from our village, it is difficult to chase them away. They are our children.” (Int. 90) or “There are some who pay and others who don’t. We don’t expel” (Int. 96). Alternative strategies reported by other scholars, on which I have no primary data, include putting students who cannot pay at the back of the classroom and not allowing them to participate in exams or to start expelling only in higher classes as students and parents then supposedly have a higher willingness to pay (de Herdt, 2010, p. 52).

Expelling students can be seen as a strategic action that is influenced by spatial selectivities and furthermore based on cultural aspects. In this case it is hard to tell whether cultural aspects of considering the students as the children of the village is a genuine reason or simply a pragmatic strategy not to risk to lose many children in the course of the year and thus preferring to collect as much money as possible. This very locally-determined phenomenon of expelling students is in stark contrast to the current agendas of modernity and bancarisation.

Teachers constantly deal with this situation and have a tension between their wish to educate the children and the necessary punishment of expelling them in order to secure their income (Int. 11, 12 & 74; de Herdt, 2010, p. 51f). This practice creates a lot of tension between parents and teachers: “Some parents whose children I expelled have become my enemies” (Int. 11). The following section will show another mechanism how teachers exercise agency in relation to their income.
5.2.3 Redistribution

The motivation fee is not only an issue between students/parents and teachers. Teachers face pressure from other stakeholders to whom they must yield a portion of the collected motivation fee. Moreover, they redistribute the collected fee among themselves. The latter can be seen as a reaction to a political system that includes little redistributive mechanisms with positive outcomes for teachers.

The external redistribution is usually referred to as ‘ventilation’: the outflow of motivation fee towards external recipients (de Herdt & Poncelet, 2010; Poncelet et al., 2010; Verhaghe, 2007a): For instance, the Sous-Prèved and the inspectors each demand the equivalent of three students’ motivation fee (Inspecteur de Pool, 2013). In at least two cases, the parental committee received a sum between USD 16 and USD 30 per month for their activities (Int. 88, 97). This sum can be interpreted as an investment, as a principal stated that they motivate other parents to pay their fees. More importantly, the Catholic coordination demands the equivalent of one teacher’s motivation fee (Int. 84; Verhaghe, 2007b, p. 17b). One part of this sum is used for the administrative staff – who does not receive any motivation fee and a smaller government salary than teachers in the classroom – and the rest is used for administrative purposes (Int. 99).

Next to this external redistribution, the internal mechanisms are highly interesting for understanding teacher agency in relation to their income. The money that is eventually received and not paid to external recipients is redistributed internally through different mechanisms: the mutual fund (‘caisse mutuelle’) (Verhaghe, 2006, p. 17f), a rotating savings and credit fund (‘ristourne’) and the internal solidary support of Non Payé (Verhaghe, 2007b, p. 30).

The mutual fund is financed through monthly contributions and performs the role of an “insurance scheme” (Verhaghe, 2006, p. 18). Teachers pay for example USD 4 or USD 5 per month (Int. 8, 76, 97). In case of emergencies, such as sicknesses, teachers can borrow money from this fund and either pay it back with usually a 20 percent interest rate or there is a fixed fee that does not need to be reimbursed (Int. 11, 32, 33 & 82). The following quote links to the picture on this thesis’ cover and shows the practical nature of such a fund: “A teacher can ask for money when he is sick, or when he’s hungry.” (Int. 22). A small part of the collected sum and interests is sometimes used to pay for the expenses of the graduation ceremony (proclamation) (Int. 82). This mutual fund is also used as a security fund for the holidays, as the collected sum plus interest is distributed among teachers before the summer holidays. This is especially relevant for Nouvelles Unités and Non Payés, as they receive no income during holidays (Int. 76). Some teachers also said they would continue savings throughout
the holidays (Int. 8). This fund has a limited financial capacity, but is regularly used and appreciated by teachers.

The rotating savings and credit fund (ristourne) is much less frequent as it requires a much higher contribution of for example USD 50 per month (Int. 82). In the schools I visited, it has been introduced only recently. Participation is not mandatory, and not everybody wants to or can afford to participate. In groups of e.g. five people each month one teacher receives the entire money, e.g. USD 250. This has enabled some teachers to make the biggest purchases in their life, e.g. a bike (Int. 83).

One main aspect of teacher agency in relation to their income is about the internal solidarity support of Non Payé. It is an example for a particular form of agency that I call ‘communal agency’. In contrast to a collective form of agency (Hay, 2002), in which several actors take strategic actions for a joint objective, communal agency highlights the circumstance that several actors work jointly to support another actor. Usually teachers put together a certain amount of the monthly collected motivation fee, redistribute it in order to support the Non Payé and divide the rest in between all teachers (e.g. Int. 12, 18 & 20). Alternatively, they calculate a certain sum they want to pay the Non Payé at the beginning of the school year and add it to the overall motivation fee (Int. 32).

Thus, Non Payé can receive the salary equivalent plus the remaining motivation fee, which thus adds up the same amount as the regularly paid teachers. However, not all schools use this mechanism and many choose different sums to be paid (e.g. USD 20 – USD 70) (Int. 20). At some schools the entire motivation fee is used to pay the Non Payé. Regular teachers in that case do not receive any motivation fee (Int. 95). Yet, this is not always the case, and seemingly arbitrarily Non Payés do not receive the motivation fee any given month: “The first month I was a victim, I didn’t receive, I received only my motivation fee.” (Int. 76). Some schools decide to exclude Nouvelle Unité who teach in newly created unregistered classrooms from this mechanism (Int. 79).

As described above, teachers frequently do not receive the entire motivation fee at once, but gradually throughout the month. That is, the entire amount is not put together and then redistributed, but teachers can take advances which are then subtracted from their due sum. As the fee is only paid for the actual days at work and sometimes only according to the students who paid, a daily amount is calculated (Int. 8). Absent days are subtracted (Int. 10, 97). In sum, paid teachers give away a considerable amount of their motivation fee to external recipients and Non Payé. There is a great notion of solidarity in this kind of interrelational agency. Thus, these practices can be linked to redistribution in debates about social justice (Fraser, 1995, 2005).
5.3 Corruption

The final section now turns towards actions that can be labelled as ‘corrupt’. Thinking in terms of critical realism, corruption is hard to be observed empirically. Moreover, distinguishing between corruption and practical norms is not easily done. For instance, the motivation fee, which is a practical norm, can lead to situation that are comparable with favouritism and corruption: “it creates incentives for teachers to reward children who pay regularly or more than the charge (if they can afford it) and to penalize children who make delayed or lower payments.” (World Bank, 2005, p. 64).

However, many authors write about it and many stories related to this practice can be heard (de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008; de Herdt, 2010, p. 32; Verhaghe, 2006). Verhaghe (2006, p. 8) makes a very clear statement about this:

“The point is, however, that corruption is now part of the system; it has been institutionalised. Teachers use it systematically to make ends meet; and parents to purchase diplomas. In many cases, teachers do not even take the first step. Rates of school failure being very high, parents constantly exploit the financial weakness of teachers to negotiate grades”

In the school context, corruption can take up various forms: selling of grades, selling of grade promotion, (partial) embezzlement of motivation fee, accepting students who do not have the necessary entry requirements, “deliberately postponing paper grading till payment of incentives, (...) purposely giving low marks and then proposing private tutoring” (Verhaghe, 2006, p. 8) to name but a few (de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008; Heyneman, 2002; International, 2013; U4, 2006).

Being asked about corrupt practices, one teacher answered: “Corruption, we don’t really have corruption. The students are not even able to pay the motivation fee, how would they be able to bribe the teacher?” (Int. 85; cf. Int. 11 &17). Other teachers put this in perspective: “I don’t have anything, and you want to give me FC 5000 or USD 5. There is no reason why I wouldn’t take that.” (Int. 79). Another teacher explains what might be accepted and what not: “When the child offers the money, the teacher takes it. But the teacher cannot ask from the child. That’s difficult for us, we cannot demand. If you are caught, that’s it. There will be no mercy.” (Int. 79; see also Int. 8, 25). Undoubtedly, however, there are teachers who demand such payments (Int. 5 & 24). In two cases a principal reported to have fired a teacher due to repeated complaints of such demands (Int. 7). The Coordinator sheds a different light on this: “Or he [a teacher] hasn’t eaten, he comes to class and

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46 Limiting the research to income matters, corruption related to sexual harassment and so-called „STP (Sexually Transmissible Points)” (informal conversations) is not discussed (cf. Verhaghe, 2006, p. 8).

says ‘I haven’t eaten, I’m hungry, buy me a piece of bread’. That’s a sort of indirect corruption” (Int. 25).

Moreover, there are reported cases of embezzlement by teachers, which have negative effects on their colleagues. At one school, a teacher only transferred the motivation fee of seven out of 37 children to the cashier, and kept the rest (Int. 88; I also had access to official documents reporting this case to the Catholic coordination). When he was asked why he did not expel those children that did not pay, he invented a lie and argued that they did not listen to him. As a practical norm, he had been accused but accepted for several years (Int. 88). His individual agency constrains other teachers’ agency, but it is still difficult to judge him given that he has been working for 56 years in a declining school system.

All in all, this research clearly supports the standpoint that corruption is an important topic when discussing education systems and teacher income, but must always be analyzed in the overall cultural political economy of education and vis-à-vis the strategically-selective contexts in which teachers maneuver. Simplistic accounts and descriptions of their actions do not do justice to their struggle and their desire to provide education despite their income situation.

5.4 Supplementary income

According to official policies, supplementary income is illegal (Verhaghe, 2006, p. 16), but in general, most teachers have secondary income-generating activities: farming, fishing, hunting, bicycle taxis and many others (Int. 5, 7, 9, 10 11, 12, 16 & 33; cf. Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007, p. xi; Mokonzi & Kadongo, 2010, p. 87; Verhaghe, 2006, p. 17). Every school either functions in the morning or afternoon. Hence, teachers have a certain amount of time each day for side-jobs or supplementary activities. This is not to say that they would not need this time for their pedagogical or administrative activities, but since their salary is so meager they necessarily have to take up further income-generating activities. In rural areas there are little other secondary job possibilities except farming (Int. 82). Parents who cannot afford the motivation fee will hardly pay for extra-classroom lessons (cf. Verhaghe, 2006).

Verhaghe points out that “virtually all teachers cultivate” in rural areas (Verhaghe, 2006, p. 17). My findings support this point, but there is one important point to add: reportedly, there is a difference between “autochthone” and “allochthone” teachers (Int. 85). Autochthone teachers claim to have difficulties to work on fields, whereas allochthone teachers have usually obtained them

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48 Interestingly, the wording in this example is very close to the text on the picture on the thesis’ cover.
through their families (Int. 43, 85, 88, 89). This could be another important point why teachers from urban areas are reluctant to move and teach in rural areas.

Finally, in some cases, teachers help each other out on the fields (Int. 82). Teachers who might miss a day because of agricultural work might not be judged by their principal, as this is practically understandable (Int. 88). Reportedly, teachers sometimes use their students to help them on the fields (Int. 25, 31). Especially in the two months of summer holidays teachers continue and intensify their secondary income-generating activities.

The analysis of teacher agency in relation to sources of income suggests that teachers do not simply succumb to their meager official income, but exercise their agency in the form of various strategic actions. The following section will give conclusions to the overall research question and provide further reflections.
6 Conclusion

Let us think back of Richard for a moment. His story was told in the prologue. Most of the problems that he encountered in his life, mirror the actual functioning of the Congolese education sector. This thesis shifted the attention from what he is lacking to a focus on how he and other teachers deal with such a situation. More particularly, it has been analyzed how teachers like Richard exercise their agency in relation to their income.

It has to be kept in mind that this question is not only relevant for teachers themselves. Implementation and succes of educational policies ultimately depend on teachers. In a post-conflict setting in which the central government does not secure a proper functioning of the education sector, they have to deal with issues that are taken for granted in other contexts. Ideas and visions around peacebuilding education and critical pedagogy are chimeras if we do not understand the circumstances under which they are taking place. This final chapter will now provide conclusions to the research question, provide conceptual and theoretical reflections, and link the findings to recommendations for policy-makers and actors in the education system. Finally, areas for further research will be pointed out.

6.1 Conclusions to the research question

I can now respond to the research question (“How do teachers in Catholic primary schools in urban and rural ‘Province Orientale’ (DRC) exercise their agency in relation to their income in the context of a multi-scalar cultural political economy of the Congolese education sector?”)

There are two main strategically-selective contexts in which teachers exercise their agency in relation to their income: the cultural political economy of registration and the cultural political economy around the sources of income. In these contexts, teachers exercise their agency through strategic actions towards two main objectives: first, to upgrade their school or their own status and second, to acquire income through different means. Hence, they are a reaction to two major characteristics of the education governance: low government salary and poor regulation. Moreover, they take place vis-à-vis the international agendas of Free Primary Education and Education for All. These can be understood as generative mechanisms that do not follow a direct path of implementation but are subject to local adaptations and reaction. In the case of the DRC, the related national agendas are bancarisation/Modernity, Mbudi and gratuité.

The strategic actions often take place in interactions with other actors, which are governed by practical norms. According to the type of interaction, the strategic actions can be attributed to different forms of agency: individual, collective, communal and/or brokered. Individual agency occurs...
when teachers are the only ones who strive for a given objective (e.g. chapter 5.4); collective means that other actors try to achieve the same goal as teachers and are therefore allies (e.g. chapter 5.2.3); communal refers to solidarity mechanisms (e.g. chapter 5.1.1); brokered agency refers to objectives that teachers can only reach through the help of a broker, mainly governmental or religious officials (e.g. chapter 4). These officials can be benevolent or have conflicting interests.

In the first strategically-selective context, i.e. the cultural political economy of registration, teachers face government officials who are brokers in the unregulated registration process. This process leads to the existence of ‘de facto types of schools’ and ‘de facto types of employment status’. Constrained by information asymmetries and the monetized practical norms of *tomber caduque, motivating officials, and payer les fiches*, teachers have the brokered agency to make use of government officials to achieve registration.

The context strategically selects for such behaviour that respects the practical norms. But norms are costly and not affordable for every teacher. Yet, there is a need for registration as their sheer existence is endangered through an increasing number of schools that is catalysed through the international agendas of Free Primary Education and Education for All. Therefore, teachers can resist through different forms of agency: first, through individual agency teachers can take strategic actions to change schools in order to arrive at a registered school or to receive a higher motivation fee. Second, they share the same goal with parents and colleagues. Through this collective agency, they contribute money for the registration process and, in certain cases, accompany the principal on his trip in order to monitor his behavior. Adding spatial selectivities, teachers in rural areas face higher obstacles in the form of substantial travel costs. Third, Catholic coordination has invented itself as a benevolent broker in the registration process and submits dossiers annually in Kinshasa.

In the second strategically-selective context, i.e. the cultural political economy around the sources of income, teachers face insufficient or inexistent government salary and national “hope-generating” (Nuijten, 2006) agendas of *Mbudi, gratuité* and the ill-planned reform of *bancarisation*. Again, teachers can resist the joined effects of these agendas and the real governance through different forms of agency: first, there is an individual agency to work until death, although this agency is strongly determined as there are no pensions. Therefore, the communal agency with colleagues who accept to take over a class of a teacher who lack the physical ability to continue is used and mitigates the negative effects. In a rare case, there is brokered agency as the Catholic coordination releases a teacher from his/her duties and pays him as staff of the coordination. These possibilities are linked to the practical norms of accepting high numbers of students in a classroom and employing *Nouvelle Unité* as replacements. Second, teachers can resist the irregular SECOPE procedures through another common form of brokered agency: the local adaptation of payrolls, which means that teachers re-
ceive their predecessor’s salary. This practice is becoming more difficult due to the bancarisation reform. Henceforth, this depends on SECOPE officials who can adapt the payment schemes – another form of relational agency. Third, there are three forms of individual agency in this context: teachers can try to be promoted, they can abandon the education sector altogether, or decide to continue working as Non Payé. Again, this last form can again be mitigated through a particular mode of communal agency: the internal support of Non Payé through redistribution. Another form of internal redistribution is mutual funds, which can be seen as a form of collective agency.

The most institutionalized practical norm is a contested form of collective agency between teachers and parents: the motivation fee. Despite government bans and the agenda of gratuité, teachers still receive the monthly motivation fee. The amount is negotiated between principals/teachers and parents and collected throughout the month. A form of collective agency can be seen in the advertisements of their schools through the help of parents. Moreover, teachers can accept a high number of students in their class, thereby jeopardizing an efficient learning atmosphere but gaining a higher total fee. Finally, teachers’ collective agency around the practical norm of expelling students is heavily contested by parents. Here, spatial selectivity is linked to material and cultural factors: teachers in rural areas claim that parents hardly pay the entire fee and teachers expel the children less frequently.

On top of this, another kind of individual agency can be found when teachers demand extra money from students or embezzle motivation fees so as not to share it with their colleagues. Finally, nearly every teacher uses his/her individual agency to allocate time onto secondary income-generating activities. Having arrived at some conclusions regarding the research question, the following section provides a reflection on this thesis’ conceptual and theoretical contributions.

6.2 Conceptual and theoretical reflections

This thesis has built upon the notion of “negotiated statehood” used by de Herdt & Titeca (2011) and other scholars to conceptualize the functioning of the Congolese state and education system. Here, teachers were conceptualized as strategic actors. This has shed light on the room for maneuvering in the “negotiated statehood” (ibid.) vis-à-vis the education sector. In total, I propose to understand the negotiation process as a result of the various strategic actions of educational actors. It takes place in interaction with other actors and inside of strategically-selective contexts, of which ‘de facto school type’ and ‘de facto teacher employment status’ were developed in this thesis. Analyzing this constant negotiation process based on these contexts might help to better understand teachers’ position in these negotiations.
This seems to be in line with the most recent thoughts of relevant scholars who wrote that “Perhaps the process of state formation resembles much less a ‘negotiation’ and more what Foucault called a process of ‘permanent provocation’ (Miller, Gordon and Burchell 1991), where each step forward invites responses from different sides, the only certainty being that the process will never come to rest. The state is permanently under construction.” (Titeca et al., 2013). This perspective is in line with the “recursive interaction” (Jessop, 2005, p. 50) of the SRA-model: teachers gain knowledge through their strategic actions and can adapt their behavior in the future; through their actions, the strategically-selective contexts are partially transformed. In this case, the transformation is limited to the upgrades in ‘de facto school type’ and ‘de facto employment status’ at the provincial/diocesan level.

In this construction, policy reforms such as the bancarisation can be understood as causing changes in strategically-selective contexts in which actors need to adapt their strategies and cannot fully rely on prior experiences; hence new information asymmetries arise. It will be a challenge to develop a conceptualization of such interactions from an empirically-informed sociological point-of-view without drifting into economic paradigms around rational choice theory and social dilemmas.

Next, the fact that Kinshasa still has a monopoly on the registration of schools puts Titeca & de Herdt’s (2011) application of the notion of the “negotiated statehood” on the education system in perspective. Moreover, it clearly shows that, despite the negotiated nature of the governance system, the government is still agenda-setting and several decisions are still taken in Kinshasa and favor people who have good access to these sources. De Herdt recognizes this fact (de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008, p. 51) and also highlights that the term “negotiated” does not necessarily capture all the relevant aspects (Titeca & de Herdt, 2011, p.16).

My proposal to think of agency in terms of relations to other strategic actors has yielded a typology of four forms of agency: individual, agency, communal agency and brokered agency. This conceptualization is preliminary, but can help to build a richer understanding of the notion of agency in SRA. It should not create the illusion that agency ought to only be understood in terms of relations to other people. In other words, it might be worthwhile to combine SRA with concepts around social capital and actor-network theory without neglecting the constant embeddedness of these networks in strategically-selective contexts. Besides, one important aspect was neglected in this thesis: the daily relations of teachers to their families, friends and colleagues in their neighborhoods and villages. Their everyday actions can be assumed to play a big role in how teachers cope with daily challenges.

Overall, the two overarching concepts, SRA and CCPEE, are evolving fields and have rarely been applied to this kind of research question. CCPEE was useful as it set the ground for an analysis that
is not “educationist” but that seeks to understand the education system in all its facets. Thereby, the local situation concerning the political economy of school constructions could be linked to the international agenda of Free Primary Education. The argument presented here is not against Free Primary Education, but underlines the importance to think about the context-specific manifestations that such an agenda can have. This also shows how material factors and semiosis are interlinked. Moreover, the “moment of the politics of education” and the “moment of education politics” opened up an analysis of the gaps between a reform’s formulation and its implementation (Mbudi, Gratuité, Bancarisation). All in all, CCPEE was not applied in its entirety but served as a meta-theory.

The analysis of practical norms as belonging to ‘the cultural’ provided empirical examples why the combination of cultural and political economy aspects can be enriching for this kind of analysis. Their existence has clear impacts on material aspects e.g. in the cultural political economy of the construction of new schools and the interactions with government officials. It has to be said that my analysis was strongly focused on the structural side of strategic actions and the cultural was largely limited to practical norms. Neither the aspects “reflexivity” and “rationality” used as conceptualizations of the actor in SRA nor emotions, feelings, and other psychological aspects were discussed. Besides, bringing together culture and political economy does not only have explanatory value, but has also become a new paradigm in discussions about social justice, through the combination of the three aspects redistribution (economic), representation (political/cultural) and recognition (cultural) (Fraser, 1995, 2005; Spivak, 1988).

This thesis has added knowledge to the understanding of teacher remuneration in conflict-affected contexts characterized by real governance. Some recommendations that take this circumstance in account are now given in the following section.

6.3 Recommendations

Policies that are based on false assumptions about the functioning of the education sector and actors’ behavior, and that neglect the cultural political economy of education, will fail to have the desired impacts and can lead to unsuccessful and counterproductive interventions, which rather corroborate current practices instead of setting incentives to change them (de Herdt, Bakafwa Tshipamba, et al., 2008; Titeca & de Herdt, 2011).

Recommendations ought not to be a simple enlisting of aspects that I consider to be improvable, but that take into account the specific local conditions. Nonetheless, in trying to combine critical thinking and a problem-solving approach I came up with a range of recommendations (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008).
Registration of schools and teachers – Catholic coordination: at the local level, the Catholic coordination is the actor that is closest to its associated schools and that has a good infrastructure and proximity through the priests who are leading the pedagogical committees. These networks could be used in order to clarify the accreditation and registration processes, to clearly explain the steps that need (not) to be undertaken and the role of the Catholic coordination in that process. Similarly, the purpose of the solidarity fund could be made more explicit, as many teachers seem to mainly associate it with sharing their income with administrative colleagues, instead of seeing the benefits it could bring them. The solidarity fund seems to be a fair and justified idea, but the sum each school has to pay should ideally be proportional to the relative motivation fee collected in one school and not be based on the current mechanism, as smaller schools pay relatively more. Creating transparency in the use of the fund would improve the reputation of the Catholic coordination.

Registration of schools and teachers – government: On the government’s side, the SECOPE head could show his good intentions by communicating in a straight-forward manner, e.g. through communication leaflets at his office, that all services are free of any costs, except material costs. This could encourage a broader debate on these practices and consequently challenge them. At the national level, the registration of schools ought to be combined with the immediate inclusion on SECOPE’s payroll. At least, the schools ought not to have to submit their dossiers again after successful registration. If this is already the case, it should be clearly communicated. Promo-scolaire is an institution that should be reestablished – although its circumvention is only a symptom of problems in the education sector and will thus probably continue. International donors could tackle these issues and lessen information asymmetries by facilitating debates on the radio, through which many teachers receive their information. Radio Okapi offers such emissions, e.g. Parole aux auditeurs, which are suitable for this purpose.

Motivation fee: The major long-term goal must be the abolition of the motivation fee, because teachers clearly express their dissatisfaction with the status quo, parents’ already difficult financial situation is exacerbated, poor students cannot go to school but will be expelled and pedagogy becomes marginalized due to the necessity of financial management at school level. However, the fee has become such a practical norm that any attempts to forbid its payment have failed. Necessarily it must be accompanied by the inclusion of the Non Payé onto the payroll and the increase of teachers’ official salary.

Bancarisation: The problems related to bancarisation must be taken care of by the government. Many teachers and teacher unionists demand that the entire payment of teachers in rural areas is handed to Caritas. As Caritas is a Catholic NGO, some teachers from other networks are not in favour of this solution (Int. 51). Hence, it might at least be implemented for Catholic schools.
**Replacements:** In case of replacing teachers, the Catholic coordination should always inform every concerned actor about its intentions. Otherwise, cases like one reported above in which I could not hand in the dossier in Kinshasa due to wrong or outdated information, will cause confusion among the teachers.

**Redistribution of motivation fee:** In relation to this thesis’ topic, the pedagogical committee at parish might be a good institution at which experiences about the management of money is dealt with at different schools. Especially experiences around innovations such as the rotating credits and savings fund could be shared at this level.

### 6.4 Further research

A multitude of issues is yet under researched. In general, there is a need to shed more light on the negative aspects of teacher agency in relation to peacebuilding and social justice. Students observe the practical norms/corruption and might take them for granted; the acceptance of corruption prioritizes students whose parents have the adequate means. Although agency is built on the basic premise that teachers have a free will and an ability to choose, it should not portray every teacher as a potential agent of peacebuilding *a priori*. This discussion can be embedded in a stronger focus on social justice around the notions of redistribution, representation and recognition (Fraser, 1995, 2005).

This study was designed in a way that did not take into account the individual “agential aspects” of teachers and find out how they influence their agency (Lopes Cardozo, 2011). Interesting aspects to start with are the role of gender and the extent to which a teacher’s affiliation to the Catholic Church influences his/her promotion opportunities. Likewise, aspects concerning the rationality and reflexivity of strategic actors could be included in the analysis.

**Bancarisation** is a reform that needs urgent and further investigation. It has led to an elimination of administrative steps in teachers’ payment, and by doing so it answered critiques and recommendations uttered by various researchers (Brannelly, 2012; Verhaghe, 2006). However, we don’t have any information about, procedures and practical norms inside of SECOPE offices, commercial banks and Caritas offices. New forms of embezzlement and corruption might appear and ought to be researched from the beginning. In line with this, an analysis that focuses on the strategic actions of other actors instead of seeing them as stakeholders, allies or opponents in teachers’ struggle in relation to their income, will further help to draw a richer conceptualization of the negotiation/governance process.

Finally, the new Framework Law for Education has recently been passed. It includes the concept of „autofinance“. This states that schools should raise even more money autonomously, for
example by selling products fabricated by students, renting its localities to external parties or selling food in its cantine.\textsuperscript{49} Although a cantine already points to a school that is properly financed and the selling of products accounts in particular for secondary schools with manual labor, it might also bring about changes for primary schools. This specific form of school-based management could have significant impacts on the school’s financial management and add to the transformation of schools form education centers into tax units and production centers, thus further marginalizing the importance of the quality of education in favor of financial issues.

In sum, if teachers continue lacking political representation, their voices, experiences and working conditions are not recognized in the formulation of policies, there will be no redistribution of resources in their favor (Fraser, 1995). As a consequence, teachers who face a low remuneration are obliged to spend time and energy on their income and cannot engage properly with their role as teachers. Any policies and reforms in the education sector, especially in the fields of Free Primary Education, Education for All, and Peacebuilding Education, are doomed to be unsuccessful if they do not take into account this cultural political economy around teachers’ income. Only by doing so will we be able to realize the enormous potential that education has as a positive driver for social justice in (post-)conflict situations.

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Appendix 1. List of interviews and focus groups

I decided not to use real names of individuals and schools. A total of 94 interviews and 12 focus groups were conducted during the fieldwork. A total of 71 interviews and 11 focus groups are used for this thesis. Interviews/ focus groups marked in red were not used explicitly in the thesis but are mentioned for reasons of transparency. Numbers in italic and bold refer to focus groups.

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<td>Chief financial operator of Caritas</td>
<td>CARITAS office</td>
<td>19.09.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
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<td>His office</td>
<td>21.09.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>National Catholic coordinator</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>26.09.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Jesuit coordinator</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>03.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Three principals from Jesuit schools</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>03.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Three teachers from Jesuit schools</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>03.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Speaker of all coordinators</td>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>04.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>04.10.2013</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>SECOPE employee</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>04.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Employee of Vodacom MPESA (mobile money)</td>
<td>VODACOM office</td>
<td>16.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Catholic coordinators</td>
<td>Office</td>
<td>17.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Catholic coordinator</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>26.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Teacher unionist (SYNECAT)</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>26.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Employee of Catholic coordination</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>29.10.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Head of UNESCO</td>
<td>UNESCO office</td>
<td>05.11.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Employee of Belgium Embassy</td>
<td>His office</td>
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<tr>
<td>68</td>
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<td>World Bank office</td>
<td>07.11.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
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**KISANGANI**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Principal from governmental school</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>02.12.2013</td>
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<td>72</td>
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<td>Airtel office</td>
<td>02.12.2013</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>Inspectorate</td>
<td>03.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Head of diocesan parent's committee</td>
<td>University of Kisan-</td>
<td>03.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gani</td>
<td></td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>Teacher unionist (SYECO)</td>
<td>His school</td>
<td>04.12.2013</td>
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<td>76</td>
<td>Two teachers of urban school 1</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>05.12.2013</td>
</tr>
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<td>77</td>
<td>Four teachers of urban school 1</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>05.12.2013</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>Two teachers of urban school 1</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>05.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Two teachers of urban school 1</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>05.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Principal of urban school 1</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>05.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Six teachers and principal of urban school 2</td>
<td>Schoolyard</td>
<td>12.06.2013</td>
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**BANALIA AXIS**

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<td>Principal's office</td>
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<td>83</td>
<td>Six teachers of rural school 3</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>09.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Principal of rural school 4</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>09.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Three teachers of rural school 4</td>
<td>Parish's yard</td>
<td>09.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Interviewee Details</td>
<td>Location Details</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
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<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>Counselor from Protestant network</td>
<td>Private home</td>
<td>10.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Principal and teachers of rural school 4</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>10.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Principal of rural school 5</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>10.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Eight teachers and principal of rural school 5</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>10.12.2013</td>
</tr>
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<td>90</td>
<td>Principal and three teachers of rural school 2</td>
<td>Hut in front of school</td>
<td>10.12.2013</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>Principal of rural school 6</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>11.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Six teachers of rural school 6</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>11.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Principal of rural school 7</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>11.12.2013</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>Principal and head of parent's committee of rural school 7</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>11.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Teacher of rural school 8</td>
<td>Schoolyard</td>
<td>12.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Principal of rural school 1</td>
<td>Principal's office; Bar</td>
<td>12.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Principal and five teachers at rural school 9</td>
<td>Principal's office</td>
<td>12.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Employees of Sous-Proved and Inspectors</td>
<td>Sous-Proved office</td>
<td>12.12.2013</td>
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**KISANGANI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Interviewee Details</th>
<th>Location Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Catholic coordinator</td>
<td>His house</td>
<td>16.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Head of SECOPE</td>
<td>SECOPE office</td>
<td>16.12.2013</td>
</tr>
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<td>101</td>
<td>Head of Caritas logistics (Kisangani)</td>
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**KINSHASA**

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<th>Location Details</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Teacher unionist</td>
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<td>18.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>SECOPE employee</td>
<td>SECOPE office</td>
<td>18.12.2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>His office</td>
<td>19.12.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Member of ACB (Congolese Association of Banks)</td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>23.12.2013</td>
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</table>
Appendix 2. Interview guide for teachers

Every interview evolved very differently, according to the teacher’s responses. Depending on the topics we discussed, I was interested in a range of aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Married?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous schools? Reasons for change?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNMENTAL SALARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Paid? Non-paid?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do you obtain it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Delais?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Problems?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Satisfied?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Size?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opinion on: Gratuité? Mbudi? Bancarisation?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION FEE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How do negotiations function?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Size of fee (over the years)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does it influence relationship with parents/students?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Internal redistribution?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECONDARY INCOME</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What? How often?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Does it interfere with school?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Mutual funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relationship with parent’s committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Management committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sanctions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher reputation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher unions?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Interview guide for officials

All interviews with government and religious were very different. Here, I provide the interview guide for interviews with the Catholic coordinator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Married?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Name of post?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Function / Responsibilities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Career?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Difference between Catholic schools and other networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is it necessary to be married to be promoted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do you think of the motivation fee? Problems?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Corruption?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pension?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Differences in urban vs rural?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Size?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Motivation fee?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opinion on: Gratuité? Mbudi? Bancarisation?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGISTRATION PROCESS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Functioning of Promo-Scolaire?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does the registration really function?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does it work when you go to Kinshasa?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Role of SECOPE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are teachers aware of this?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENDAS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Gratuité</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mbudi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bancarisation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISCELLANEOUS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Other problems / issues?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher unions?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4. Poster: Education for All

“Campaign of enrolling all children into school.” (in blue)
“Boys and girls, all to school.” (in red)
“Let’s learn in peace.” (in yellow)

Picture taken in principal’s office at rural school 1.
As the ambivalent role of education for sustainable peacebuilding is gaining increasing attention in international debates, it is important to analyze the conditions under which education is taking place. The provision of education in so-called conflict-affected and fragile countries depends on a range of factors, among which teacher remuneration plays a pivotal role.

The Congolese education sector is characterized by a gradual retreat of the state in the provision of education and an increasing authority and decision-making power of local actors. The predominance of uncodified practical norms causes constant negotiations between different actors. Among these, teachers have the particular role of providing education to the students. They must do so in a multi-scalar context of reconstruction agendas, inadequate payment, erroneous administration, practical norms and competition between schools for students.

Previous studies have outlined the structural impacts on teachers, but none focused on their agency. If teachers are still coping with their very basic needs due to their income situation, quality of education is not the primary or sole concern of their everyday actions. Hence, they have developed a range of strategies to exercise their agency in relation to their income. These strategies take place vis-à-vis complex processes of teacher and school registration and additional means of generating income. The research question that is explored in this thesis goes as follows: “How do teachers in Catholic primary schools in urban and rural ‘Province Orientale’ (DRC) exercise their agency in relation to their income in the context of a multi-scalar cultural political economy of the Congolese education sector?”

This thesis is based on a five-month qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork in the two cities of Kinshasa and Kisangani. The research design is based on the Extended Case Method and was conceived in order to allow a thorough analysis of the complex multi-scalar processes concerning the school and teacher registration system and teacher payment. Theoretical choices include the Strategic-Relational Approach and a focus on Real Governance. This made possible an analysis that is oriented towards a political economy of the education sector by taking into account the variety of actors and uncodified norms that govern the teacher salary system.
Findings show that teachers must invest time and money for different purposes in order to be registered and paid. They do so vis-à-vis governmental brokers in a corrupt environment. At other times, they have common objectives with parents with whom they cooperate. Moreover, there is not one teacher employment status, but a range of de facto statuses. For instance some teachers are only paid locally by parents and do not receive any governmental money. Necessary actions and strategies depend strongly on this de fact employment status as well as on the geographical location of the school. Overall, any policies and reforms in the education sector and therefore in the broader environment of peacebuilding education are doomed to fail if they do not take into account teachers’ income situation.