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A Heterotopic Power of the Powerless – Reformatting Religion in Congolese Borderland Services in Pietermaritzburg

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The paper presents a case study from evangelical services and practices for and among Congolese migrants in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The aim is to discuss and interpret the case study as an interesting part of what one could call borderland religion. Even if the services and the social practices chaired by evangelical pastors follow well known trajectories within these religious traditions, there are also tendencies, which take a different look. The Congolese migrants themselves seem to have a greater say in the services while they perform ethnic cultural music, clothing and other traditions. The paper analyzes this ~~from~~ from a spatial perspective, especially from the French spatial thinker Henri Lefebvre. His term “lived space” (l’*espace vécu*) is a space where symbolisms, traditions and non-expected practices play an important role. So one might see the services among the Congolese migrants as a lived space in a Lefebvrian sense. This could again lead to an interpretation of these religious practices as practices, which gives a more independent role to migrant people than to the classical evangelical ministries. Or; - paradoxically: The borderland religion among the Congolese migrant opens new specific spaces for the migrants while at the same time withdraws from traditional power structures (Foucault). It might finally be that these tendencies could be interpreted as post-colonial Protestantization tendencies.