

**Abstract:**

The focus of my dissertation is on a highly diverse group of actors who, like other groups in Africa, are difficult to associate with one particular area because of their translocal history and way of life. Originating from a vast area in eastern Congo, many have crossed Lake Tanganyika towards the Indian Ocean coast and back for varying reasons long before it actually became a territorial border (in 1890). Up to today, in Tanzania, this group is strongly identified, and identifying itself, as 'Manyema', denoting both the idea of a 'foreign' origin from eastern 'Central Africa', and of a significant degree of mobility. Being overwhelmingly Muslim, which seems to have been an important factor for Manyema identification processes, they settled mainly in urban centres along the old central route of caravan trade. To what extent have 'the' Manyema in fact continued to cross Lake Tanganyika and commute between various urban nodes during the colonial period, and why? And how have these translocal practices affected their belonging to different Muslim urban centres where they made their new homes?

The research is based on archival material from Tanzania, Great Britain, Germany and Belgium, as well as on interviews with people identifying themselves as 'Manyema' in Tanzania and the DRC. Using this evidence, I aim to trace "The Manyema Connection" in different phases of the colonial era, examine internal divides in the community as well as external views on them by colonial administrators and other actors, focusing on the towns Ujiji, Tabora, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar.