

## **CREATING Work Package 5: “Mobilities and Identities”**

### **Report on the Kigoma field training session, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Work Package 5 “Mobilities and Identities” held its field training session at Kigoma, Western Tanzania, from Saturday December 6 to Friday December 12, 2008. The Kigoma research team included four MA and one PhD student, two staff supervisors and, as observers, two technical staff from IUCEA and the CREATING management unit (see Appendix 1 – the names and affiliations of staff supervisors are highlighted).

The research theme was based on the observation that migration and mobility are key features of life and change in East Africa. Instead of looking at their causes, however, research by the training team was expected to focus on some of the consequences of movements of people, along with the goods and ideas they transport. Of particular interest was the impact of mobilities on how people affected by it are building their lives. Processes of identification, i.e. the continuous making and remaking of ideas about belonging to a group and distinguishing it from others, were considered to be one important element in building social relationships and social order. Such processes are particularly salient in situations of flux, uncertainty and aspiration for change, such as forced or voluntary mobility. A better understanding of these processes are of crucial importance for any effort towards integration, reconciliation and development in eastern Africa.

The city of Kigoma had been selected as fieldwork site because of its location on the eastern bank of Lake Tanganyika, one of the two focus areas of CREATING. This choice started from the assumption – widely confirmed during fieldwork – that far from being isolated geographical entities, the areas around Lake Tanganyika have been for a long time sites of intense interaction across a variety of borders: ecological and economical; societal and political; and language and religion. Both small and large-scale forms of mobility and migration have accompanied multiple forms of environmental, cultural, political and socio-economic change. The movement and displacement of populations has profoundly transformed the region, creating zones of translocality and transnationality. They also have had a deep impact on the ways in which ordinary people situate themselves within these zones and with regard to the wider world. Also the ways in which categories of social and spatial identity are used by outsiders such as the state were to be taken into consideration. In order to avoid reductionist approaches and a reification of “identity”, however, the starting point of research were not to be particular forms of mobility or group identity, but the ways in which the inhabitants of particular places make their lives in a broad sense. Of particular interest were places and areas in which groups of different status and identity interact through migration and mobility, such as urban centres.

Kigoma lends itself very well for this theme because it is the most important Tanzanian port city on the lake. Moreover, as the other states bordering on

the lake either have only access to its far ends (Burundi, Zambia) or are affected by instability and warfare (DR Congo, on the western shore), Kigoma can be considered the most important hub of transport and communication in the Lake Tanganyika basin. It has a particularly high number of inhabitants with a background of migration and mobility for economic, social, political and cultural reasons, who came to settle here starting from the late 19th century. Forms and problems of identity formation in the context of human movement are particularly salient and observable here.



View down Kigoma main street towards the railway station and the lake

So far, there is clearly a lack of research on the area, as social scientists and historians have tended to concentrate on more accessible parts of Tanzania, and as recent social science and humanities research on Kigoma region has largely concentrated on the adjacent rural districts, particularly on refugee camps and relief projects. The fieldwork session in Kigoma town therefore aimed at not only providing the students with practical exercise and experience, but also at establishing foundations for future, more in-depth research by European and African researchers.

The first two days of the field session were used to familiarize the team with the place and its history and to systematically explore the city. The guiding question was to identify typical forms and patterns of mobility in relation to different sites and sections of the town. The main methods used here were transect walks by sub-groups in various directions, informal talks with people met on the way, and some first resource person interviews. In addition, a joint visit of Ujiji took place, the historical nucleus of the town with an outstanding importance for precolonial long-distance trade and travels of exploration, which is today marked by memorial sites, a museum and a modest amount of tourism.



“Dr. Livingstone, I presume ?”

The “Nzimano Hotel”, run by the Kigoma Diocese and situated very conveniently near the city centre, turned out to be excellent “home base” and meeting space for the team. The services provided by the hotel and its team deserve a grateful mention.



Farewell picture of the WP 5 and Nzimano teams

According to the research plan developed during the first training session in Juja, the team was then subdivided into three sub-teams according to specific thematic interests of the students and also to combine different backgrounds of origin and disciplinary perspectives among the students. A first sub-team was formed by *Jackson Kago* (Nairobi University, Urban Planning) and *Danielle de Lame* (Royal Museum Tervuren, Social Anthropology), to deal with “*Mobilities and urban settlement: a mtaa in Kigoma*” A second sub-team, working on “*Mobilities and the urban “household: Gender strategies and representations*”, consisted of *Anne-Claire Courtois* (University of Pau, History). and *Godefroid Mudaheranwa* (University of Dar es Salaam, Development Studies). The third sub-team, finally, comprised *Henry Lubinda* (University of Hohenheim; Agricultural Economics) and *Clémence Muzard* (University of Paris I, History) and worked on “*Trade and markets: dynamics in the past and present*”. The two CREATING/IUCEA staff members present in Kigoma partly accompanied the teams and assisted their work.

The following five days of the training session were used by the sub-teams for intense fieldwork during day-time, preliminary processing of results in the afternoons, and presentation and discussion of the results in team plenaries in the evenings after supper. Some resource person interviews were conducted either jointly (as with the DC of Kigoma, strongly welcoming the group) or by the sub-teams, but were hampered by a succession of public holidays and by some reluctance on the part of some of the administrative departments. The positive effect of this was an even stronger concentration on observation and interviewing in the streets of Kigoma. Open, guideline or questionnaire structured methods were tested and experiences with these reflected upon, as well different social situations and relations arising during observations and interviews with partners local partners and within the sub-teams. Two of the sub-teams were assisted by two locally recruited students (Form IV leavers) for interpretation and other work.



Evaluating the data, with field assistant

In the process, researches became increasingly focussed on issues recognized to be of central importance, partly arising unexpectedly during field work. For instance, sub-team one identified the fishing village and busy informal port of Kibirizi, newly arising on the north side of the Kigoma bay, to be of paramount importance for business, settlement, mixing of migrants of very different origin, and identity production. Sub-Team 2 mainly came to work in the Mulole and Mwanga residential areas, exploring the domestic situation of both married and unmarried or widowed women, which is hard to capture with conventional "household" categories. Women's strategies for independence are a long-established subject of debate in Kigoma. Sub-Team 3, finally, focussed on markets and marketeers for agricultural and fishery produce at Mwanga and in other quarters, and on traders and transporters around the official port of Kigoma as compared to the one in Kibirizi. Questions of government control in the age of liberalization and in view of the proximity of several international borders were central for this sub-team.



View of the new port site of Kibirizi

Cooperation and a spirit of understanding in the sub-teams and in the team as a whole were very good from the beginning to the end. This is remarkable given the diversity of backgrounds and the fact that none of the members had been working together before. The sub-teams were therefore willing and able to compile much of the raw data from their researches into one extensive data collection site (text and picture files). Summaries of sub-team and individual results and experiences, following a joint schedule, are currently under preparation. All these documents will form the basis of an article on the Kigoma training & research which is to appear in English in the *Cahiers d'IFRA*, as well as being presented as a contribution to the Panel devoted to CREATING at the European African Studies Conference in Leipzig in June this year. Two African members of the team will travel to Leipzig and join the WP coordinator for this occasion. Parallel to this, all five student team members are busy working on their thesis projects, whose methods and themes they have adapted after the Kigoma experience. Partly as a result of this experience, at least three of the students in the team expect to conduct more fieldwork in Kigoma towards their thesis projects.



The WP 5 team in front of the Livingstone memorial of Ujiji (Kigoma)

## Appendix 1

**Fieldwork training session  
December 6<sup>th</sup> to December 12<sup>th</sup> 2008  
Kigoma, Tanzania**

### Participants

Name	Nationality	Affiliation
<b>AYOO, Philip</b>	<b>Kenyan</b>	<b>IUCEA Kampala</b>
<b>CHRETIN, Marion</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>CREATING, c/o IFRA Nairobi</b>
<b>COURTOIS, Anne-Claire</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, France</b>
<b>DE LAME, Danielle</b>	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium</b>
<b>KAGO, Jackson</b>	<b>Kenyan</b>	<b>University of Nairobi, Kenya</b>
<b>LUBINDA, Henry</b>	<b>Zambian</b>	<b>University of Hohenheim, Germany</b>
<b>MUDAHERANWA, Godefroid</b>	<b>Rwandese</b>	<b>University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</b>
<b>MUZARD, Clemence</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>Université Paris 1, France</b>
<b>VON OPPEN, Achim</b>	<b>German</b>	<b>Universität Bayreuth, Germany</b>