

FROM KANGA TO KITENGE: exploring patterns of cultural change in the Kigoma region

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Editorial

From Kanga to Kitenge: exploring patterns of cultural change in the Kigoma region.

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Caption photo Front Page: Women in Kanga selling oranges in Kigama town (Katrin Verhaegen)

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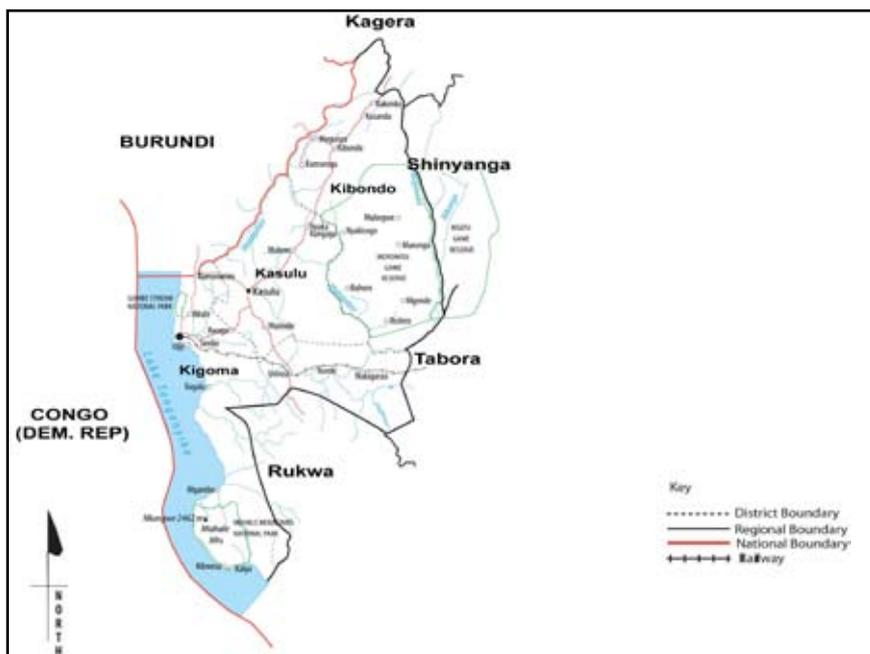
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Abstract

The article discusses the current changes occurring in Kigoma, one of the poorest regions of Tanzania. For decades, the far-western corner and the point of convergence between Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is seen as peripheral within its national state. However, the steady move away from socialism to liberalism and the relative stability in the Great Lakes Region together with the associated reduction of refugee flows led to the gradual revaluation of Kigoma as a strategically important (business) center. The case of women's wear is used to explore whether and how recent national, regional and global social and economic changes affected Kigoma's cultural set-up.



Source: US department of State, Tanzania, date of consultation: 29 April 2011 (<http://www.state.gov/p/af/ci/tz/>)



Source: Tanzania Private Sector foundation 2010, date of consultation 29 april 2011 (<http://www.tpsftz.org/mapinfo.php?region=15>)

Introduction

Kigoma, one of the poorest regions of Tanzania, is undergoing deep changes. For decades, the far-western corner and the point of convergence between Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is seen as peripheral within its national state. However, the steady move away from socialism to liberalism and the relative stability in the Great Lakes Region together with the associated reduction of refugee flows have led to the gradual revaluation of Kigoma as a strategically important (business) centre on the border with southern Burundi and the eastern part of the DRC. To illustrate the economic rise of this border town one only has to look at the plans of the Tanzanian government to attract foreign capital by installing a Special Economic Zone¹ in the area, the improvement of airport facilities and roads and other infrastructure including communication and energy projects. The purpose of this article is to explore whether and how recent national, regional and global social and economic changes have affected Kigoma's cultural set-up.

The article will commence with a historical account of the region from the pre-colonial and colonial periods up to post-colonial Tanzania. My objective is first to draw particular attention on past developments for some further understanding of the present. The second part of this article analyses developments in the period starting in the beginning of the nineties up to now. This period deserves special attention because of two main regional changes on which will be focussed and which will structure my argument. The first change consistently affecting the region of Kigoma was the massive refugee influx from the neighbouring countries during the nineties. The second big change concerns the transition from socialism to liberalism. These developments have brought about significant changes in local culture. The case of women's wear is compelling in this sense. Transformations in women's clothing can be seen as very visible expressions of changes in local culture.

Research for this paper was conducted during two months of fieldwork (October-November 2010) in the Kigoma region. Interviews were conducted with Congolese, Burundian and Tanzanian citizens living either permanently or temporarily in the region. I spoke with traders who are active in cross-border trade, vendors of tissue, women, UNHCR workers, and the staff of the Congolese consulate in Kigoma. Since, for reasons of personal security, many interviewees preferred to talk anonymously, I have decided to use pseudonyms in this article.



Women watching the fish arrive (Photo: Katrin Verhaegen).

¹ A SEZ is an economic zone where economic rules are more liberal than in the rest of the country. This means that foreign capital is attracted by reduced tax tariffs which are supposed to provide an incentive to foreign businessmen to start up a business in the given region.

1. Historical precedents for current realities: background

When taking a look back into history two possible explanations arise for the denomination of the Kigoma region. The first one articulates that Kigoma is named as such because it is the place where the original Goma (people from Goma, today in eastern DRC) landed². The second explanation holds that it is a comparatively modern derivation from the Swahili word Kikomo, denoting the end to something, in this case to the railway line built by the German colonial power³. Even though it remains unclear which of the two explanations is correct it is clear that both the movement of people and the construction of transport infrastructure to facilitate trade have been important factors in the shaping of the socio-economic and cultural set-up of the Kigoma region.

Trade between peoples of the East African coast and Tanganyika's mainland goes back to at least the first millennium AD⁴. From 1831 onwards, long-distance trade flows from Zanzibar and coastal Tanzania reached the utter western part of Tanganyika⁵. This way, people and foreign goods of which cloth constituted an important part penetrated the Kigoma region⁶. Long-distance trade coming from far away East-Africa, India and Pakistan stimulated regional trade and influenced the region's local culture and dress code. Traders coming from Goma migrated frequently, thereby entering in contact with different local habits, cultural values and also dress styles⁷.

As a result of colonial border-making and cartography, trade relations and pre-colonial economic patterns of migration were restructured⁸. The closure of borders after the Berlin Conference in 1885 led to the decline of regional trade networks and the fall of Ujiji town, a formerly very important trade centre situated in the vicinity of Kigoma. The colonial powers failed to take the already existing regional trade networks into account⁹. This did however not stop the local population from interacting with 'former' neighbours. People adapted to the new rules and regional cross-border trade became to a large extent organised unofficially¹⁰.

To establish a concrete connection within its territory, the German colonial administration undertook infrastructure projects. They constructed a harbour and a central railway linking Kigoma to eastern Tanzania. These activities were finished by 1915, shortly before the British seized control over the territory. Both exist until today, linking the inland region with the port of Dar es Salaam and thus the rest of the



Old trade road linking Ujiji with Tabora and Eastern Tanzania
(Photo: Katrin verhaegen)

² Moffett, J.P. *Handbook of Tanganyika*. Government printer Dar es Salaam, 1958, p. 280.

³ Ibid.

⁴ O'Neill, N. *Capitalism, Socialism and the development crisis in Tanzania*, Gower Pub CO, 1991, p. 2.

⁵ Iliffe, A *modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.41.

⁶ Iliffe, A *modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.46.

⁷ Mung'ong'o, C.G. Refugees, settlers and retarded development in the Tanzanian shoreline of Lake Tanganyika. In: *Tanzanian Economic Trends*, 2005, vol. 18, no.2, 26.

⁸ Iliffe, A *modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.121.

⁹ Wayne, J. & Howard, L. *Colonialism and the geography of opportunity: the Kigoma case*. In: *Taamuli*, 1974/75, vol.5, no.1, p.46.

¹⁰ Iliffe, A *modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.130.

world¹¹. Both railway and harbour have however always been under pressure, since their functioning and the associated economic flourishing of Kigoma have constantly been dependent upon the will of external trade powers such as the Belgians, the British or the Germans. In the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance, the railway led to the economic rise of the region as it was used by the neighbouring Belgian colony to transport copper from Katanga via Kigoma to Dar es Salaam. However, the Belgians developed their own railway and during the crises of the 30s, they wanted to make maximum use of their own infrastructure, which was running to the west. This again led to the decline of Kigoma as a trade centre. After the Second World War Kigoma re-flourished again since the harbour was re-equipped and the Belgians re-established trade between Katanga and Dar es Salaam¹².

The British, who took over Tanganyika territory after the First World War, generally invested in areas nearer to the Indian Ocean. In doing so, they discouraged the development of Kigoma. After all, the population of land-locked Kigoma was prevented from engaging in large-scale production for the world market. To make things worse, the British also put up custom barriers around the lake, which led to a degradation of trade between previously natural trading partners within the interlacustrine area¹³. In the colonial period Kigoma did not have many investment potential. There were almost no enterprises and neither was there any infrastructure¹⁴. So by the time of independence in 1961, Kigoma was considered to be one of the poorest regions in Tanzania¹⁵.

After Tanzania united with Zanzibar in 1964, the one party-state under guidance of the TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) emerged and promoted the socialist path to development¹⁶. President Nyerere's ujamaa¹⁷ project was aimed at achieving 'a self-reliant socialist nation' through government control of the economy.¹⁸ Agriculture became the cornerstone of Tanzania's economic policy and industrial enterprise was discouraged for fear of foreign economic domination and a potential creation of a new class of entrepreneurs that would disrupt the socialist ideal of a classless socialist society¹⁹. Nationalisation and self-reliance were the key words through which the nation would become more egalitarian²⁰.



Woman in Kanga on her way home, Kigoma town (photo: Katrin Verhaegen)

¹¹ Iliffe, *A modern history of Tanganyika*, Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.136.

¹² Moffett, J.P. *Tanganyika. A review of its resources and their development*. Government of Tanganyika, 1955, 745.

¹³ Wayne, J. & Howard, L. *Colonialism and the geography of opportunity: the Kigoma case*. In: *Taamuli*, 1974/75, vol.5, no.1, p.47.

¹⁴ Wayne, J. & Howard, L. *Colonialism and the geography of opportunity: the Kigoma case*. In: *Taamuli*, 1974/75, vol.5, no.1, p.51.

¹⁵ Planning Commission of Dar es Salaam & the Regional Commissioner's office Kigoma, *Kigoma region socio-economic profile, 1998*, p.25

¹⁶ O'Neill, N. *Capitalism, Socialism and the development crisis in Tanzania*, Gower Pub CO, 1991, p. 13.

¹⁷ Ujamaa comes from the Swahili word for extended family or familyhood

¹⁸ Ibhawoh, B. & Dibua, J.I. Deconstructing Ujamaa: the legacy of Julius Nyerere in the quest for social and economic development in Africa, in *African Journal for Political Science*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2003, p.60.

¹⁹ Askew, K.M. *Performing the nation. Swahili Music and cultural politics in Tanzania*. University of Chicago Press. 2002. p. 197.

²⁰ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 89.

The following three decades, development remained low without significant increases in gross domestic product (GDP). The contribution of Kigoma to the national GDP was only 2% per year while it covered almost 5% of mainland Tanzania. This poor performance can be attributed to unstable production in agriculture and the underdeveloped infrastructure (road and electricity)²¹. Inward-oriented policies were common during this period and political leaders failed to recognise the potential of Kigoma as a strategically important business centre²². In fact, the region was considered to be so useless that during the 70s dissident politicians or administrators were often sent to Kigoma as a punishment for their behaviour²³.

These historical precedents are worth remembering when considering current socio-economic dynamics. The facts that Kigoma was in pre-colonial times influenced by the East, that colonial borders altered the regional trade dynamics and that Kigoma became largely marginalised and stayed underdeveloped in the first decades of the post-colonial period are important for understanding the developments that took place in the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium.

²¹ Planning Commission of Dar es Salaam & the Regional Commissioner's office Kigoma, *Kigoma region socio-economic profile, 1998, p.25*

²² Ibhawoh, B. & Dibua, J.I. Deconstructing Ujamaa: the legacy of Julius Nyerere in the quest for social and economic development in Africa, in *African Journal for Political Science, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2003, p.64.*

²³ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 129.*

2. Changing times

The last two decades witnessed a number of remarkable changes in the socio-economic set-up of Kigoma. The district has grown from a poor district to an important regional business centre.

One could say that the transformations resulted from two factors. First of all, there were the migratory flows that dominated the entire Great Lakes Region during the nineties and that turned Kigoma into an area full of refugees and (international) aid workers. And second, there were the broader changes within the Tanzanian political economy. In 1985, Nyere's successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, accepted aid from the IMF and started to liberalise the economy. This led to the promotion of a free market economy and the improvement of trade relations between Tanzania and its neighbours²⁴.

2.1 Refugees

While, since Tanzanian independence, Kigoma has always been confronted with influxes of refugees fleeing unrest in neighbouring countries, the amount of refugees in Tanzania augmented drastically in the nineties with nearly 1.3 million escaping conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and eastern DRC²⁵. Mung'ong'o has shown that the spectacular population growth rates in the Kigoma region between 1988 and 2002 were probably a direct consequence of migratory flows caused by recent political upheavals in Burundi and the DRC, since birth rates remained more or less the same:

District/year	1967	1978	1988	2002
Kigoma Rural	108.804	194.520	273.390	490.816
Kigoma Urban	21.369	58.788	84.647	144.852
Kigoma Urban	207.175	58.788	84.647	144.852
Kasulu	207.175	255.651	320.518	628.677
Kibondo	135.095	139.982	176.262	414.764

Source: census reports 1967, 1978, 1988 and 2002²⁶

This refugee situation obviously significantly altered all aspects of life for people living in this corner of the country.

For politicians participating in the freshly started process of democratisation the presence of an enormous group of refugees was a factor to take into account. Investing too much money in a region hosting a large number of refugees would have meant a political deathblow for any politician²⁷. For instance in 2001, the president announced that all Burundian refugees residing in Tanzania should be repatriated at all costs. The reason for this was that he was fed up with widespread accusations that his country was hosting rebels from Burundi²⁸. Just like in Europe, politicians defending the accommodation of refugees are not likely to be the most popular.

That people in Tanzania and certainly in the Kigoma region are not always that enthusiastic about refugees is demonstrated by a document circulated by KISEDEFU²⁹. In the document the refugees are said to be a burden to the ecology, economy and politics of Kigoma. The document states, for instance, that 'negative impacts from these influxes produced adverse effects on the surrounding social, economic and political environments'³⁰.

²⁴ O'Neill, N. *Capitalism, Socialism and the development crisis in Tanzania*, Gower Pub CO, 1991, p. 16.

²⁵ Whitaker, B. E. Changing opportunities; refugees and host communities in Western Tanzania, in *New issues in refugee research, working paper, No.11, p.2*.

²⁶ Mung'ong'o, C.G. Refugees, settlers and retarded development in the Tanzanian shoreline of Lake Tanganyika. In: *Tanzanian Economic Trends, 2005, vol. 18, no. 2., p.28*.

²⁷ Confidential interviews, Kigoma, November 2011.

²⁸ Van Hoyweghen, S. Mobility, territoriality and sovereignty in post-colonial Tanzania, in *New Issues in Refugee research, working paper, 2001, No. 49, p.21*.

²⁹ KISEDEFU is an organisation created by 'Wanakigoma' (natives of Kigoma) to stimulate socio-economic growth in Tanzania. The organisation claims to be a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit making organisation.

³⁰ KISEDEFU, *The Kigoma Marshall Plan 2000-2015*, p.27. (http://www.kigomafund.org/kigoma_marshall_plan_2000_2015.pdf)

However, contrary to popular feelings, the influx of refugees has also brought various economic benefits to the Kigoma region³¹. According to Whitaker, refugees are often better at doing business than their hosts. In Kigoma, this is evidenced by the fact that the local cloth market seems to be dominated by people originating from Burundi and the DRC. The reason for this might be the relative marginalisation of refugees from agricultural activities, as they did not have fields to cultivate³². Through a range of strategies and interactions, refugees and hosts nevertheless interacted with each other, thereby establishing a sophisticated and dynamic economic network³³.

Since refugees in the Kigoma region were believed to be a burden to their hosts, humanitarian agencies with large budgets pressured the government to provide funding for social services such as hospitals, schools and infrastructure. Improvements ranged from the construction of roads and airstrips to the creation of telecommunication services. Such infrastructure upgrades made transportation cheaper and easier as vehicle traffic increased and some private businesspeople started bus services, thereby facilitating the start of other small-scale businesses³⁴.

At the time of writing most refugees have left the region. Of the eleven refugee camps that were set up during the nineties and that were still populated until 2007, only two camps remain on 1 April 2011 with a total of 99 109 refugees³⁵. As a result of the relative stability in both Burundi and the DRC, a huge campaign has started in 2007 to repatriate and resettle the remaining refugees. Apart from the people still living in the camps and the Congolese and Burundian people who - often illegally - reside in Tanzania most 'foreigners' have left. But the services and infrastructure that have come into being as a result of the neighbouring wars and the refugees continue to benefit the economy of the Kigoma region.

2.2 From socialism to liberalism

Even when faced with millions of refugees, domestic policy frameworks - past and present - and social configurations are critically important in shaping contemporary outcomes³⁶. A dynamic occurring at the time of arrival of the first big groups of refugees in the early nineties was the enforcement of liberal reforms and the city's increasing outward orientation of economic activity towards markets in the whole Great Lakes Region and Asia.

In the mid 1980s the whole country had been in a severe economic crisis. The East African Community³⁷ had collapsed and the Tanzanian economy was following close behind. Life sustenance had become increasingly difficult, as there was a lack of basic things such as food, salt and soap inside Tanzania. Together with this had come the decline in social services as they too were on the brink of collapse.

The multiple crisis finally led to the gradual liberalisation of both the economic and the political markets. In 1992, a multiparty regime was introduced and the country went through a series of economic and political reforms prescribed by the World Bank and the IMF.³⁸

³¹ According to Landau, 'many of the economic changes experienced by Kasulu residents are best explained by non-refugee-related factors'. However, my empirical observations do point out that many refugees in Kigoma region are involved in non-subsistence related economic activities, for instance cross-border textile and fish trade.

³² Whitaker B. E. Changing opportunities; refugees and host communities in Western Tanzania, in *New issues in refugee research, working paper, No.11, p.10*.

³³ Whitaker, B. E. Changing opportunities; refugees and host communities in Western Tanzania, in *New issues in refugee research, working paper, No.11, p.8*.

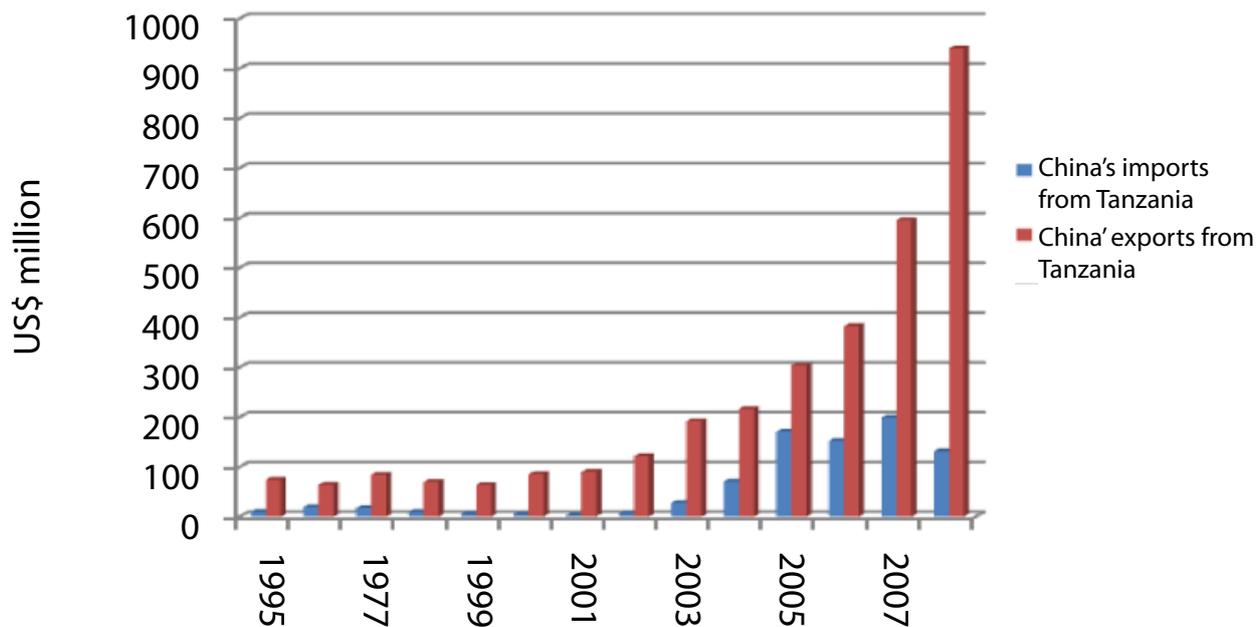
³⁴ Whitaker, B. E. Changing opportunities; refugees and host communities in Western Tanzania, in *New issues in refugee research, working paper, No.11, p.10*/ Van Hoyweghen, S. *Mobility, territoriality and sovereignty in post-colonial Tanzania*, in *New Issues in Refugee research, working paper, 2001, No. 49, p 18*.

³⁵ The two remaining camps are Nyarugusu and Mtabila with most refugees originating from the DRC and Burundi. Personal communication, *refugees, 19 April 2011 (email)*.

³⁶ Landau, L. B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 75.

³⁷ EAC or East African Community is the regional intergovernmental organisation of the Republic of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi ([source: http://www.eac.int/](http://www.eac.int/)).

³⁸ Van Hoyweghen, S. *Mobility, territoriality and sovereignty in post-colonial Tanzania*, in *New Issues in Refugee research, working paper, 2001, No. 49, p 18*. *The consequences of these liberal reforms are very tangible today*. Examples of this were given abundantly by informants during my research. People told me that upon their arrival in the beginning of the nineties, one could hardly find cold beer but nowadays beer coming from Kenya and South Africa can be found everywhere. When needing a taxi one



Source: Jansson, J., Burke, C. & Hon, T. Patterns of Chinese investment, aid and trade in Tanzania, Briefing paper by the center for Chinese studies, 2009, p.4

Sino-Tanzanian Trade

Since independence, an important player on Tanzania's economical plan has been China.³⁹ Even though trade relations between the two countries have a long history, they definitely became a lot more intense after the liberalisation of the Tanzanian economy in the nineties. Trade between China and Tanzania increased rapidly during the last two decades. Since 1995, vehicles remain the most important Chinese product entering the Tanzanian market, closely followed by cotton and other textile products⁴⁰.

Exemplary for the improving trade relations is the meeting of April 2008 between the Chinese president Hu Jintao and the Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete. During this meeting, the possibilities of Chinese investments, which could stimulate trade between the two countries and improve employment within Tanzania⁴¹ were amply discussed. As a result, two proposals were submitted to the Chinese Development Bank (CDB). One of them established a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with minimum regulation and state control in Kigoma⁴².

Following this, the Tanzanian Prime Minister's Office developed a document taking China as an example as to why foreign investments are imperative for Kigoma. The document makes a comparison between China's controlled economy and Nyerere's inward looking politics. Then it describes the importance of China's breakaway from isolationism and its current being as a worldwide economic player. This, it is said, is a lesson the Tanzanian government is supposed to learn if Kigoma - where most refugees have by now gone home - wishes to transform itself 'to be a successful International Business Hub'⁴³. The document

can always stop a pikipiki driver in the street who is most likely to drive a bike originating from China or Korea and if one feels like eating biscuits coming from Dubai one will certainly be served. When it comes to finding accommodation, there used to be only one hotel in Kigoma. Now there exist several large hotels and heaps of cheap motels which are mostly owned by 'foreigners'.

³⁹ According to Jansson, Burke & Hon, it is often argued that Tanzania is a strategically important partner for China given its location as an Indian Ocean gateway to mineral rich southern Africa.

⁴⁰ Jansson, J., Burke, C. & Hon, T. Patterns of Chinese investment, aid and trade in Tanzania, *Briefing paper by the center for Chinese studies, 2009, p.5.*

⁴¹ More Chinese imports can create new markets and expanding opportunities for businessmen in Tanzania.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ United Republic of Tanzania, Prime minister's office, regional administration and local government, *Kigoma as a special economic zone. A vehicle to economic development, 27/09/2008, p.1.*

pleads in favour of a definite breakaway from Nyerere's inward politics as it aims at establishing economic growth through the increased attraction of foreign investments⁴⁴.

The reasoning behind the establishment of a SEZ in Kigoma is its excellent position compared to other regions. Kigoma's geographical location is seen as a '*great gateway of many products in and out of inland central Africa or what is called the 'Great Lakes Region'*⁴⁵. On 30 March 2011, the search for investors in this special economic zone started. At that time, a Tanzanian newspaper 'The Citizen' reported that 'the Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA) is inviting businesses to invest in 3000 hectares in Kigoma'⁴⁶. When walking around in Kigoma today, one can nevertheless see that the airport is already being enlarged and that the roads are being upgraded by Chinese workers. It is thus rather clear that the plans of the Tanzanian government are of a new and essentially liberal nature.

In sum, as a result of the refugee presence and liberalisation, this remote area has slowly put itself on the national and international political map⁴⁷. While the western part of Tanzania was previously rather marginalised, the incoming refugees attracted the attention of high-level national and international delegations⁴⁸. As a result of the emergence of a new political establishment in Tanzania, the renewed attention on the region and the booming of the economy, Kigoma's strategic potential as a border town has become more visible.

⁴⁴ United Republic of Tanzania, Prime minister's office, regional administration and local government, *Kigoma as a special economic zone. A vehicle to economic development*, 27/09/2008, p.6.

⁴⁵ United Republic of Tanzania, Prime minister's office, regional administration and local government, *Kigoma as a special economic zone. A vehicle to economic development*, 27/09/2008, p.1

⁴⁶ Karega, V. you're welcome to invest in 3,000ha, firms urged, in: 'the citizen', 30 March 2011. (<http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/business/-/9504-youre-welcome-to-invest-in-3000ha-firms-urged>) (consulted on 19 April 2011).

⁴⁷ Van Hoyweghen, S. Mobility, territoriality and sovereignty in post-colonial Tanzania, in *New Issues in Refugee research, working paper, 2001, No. 49, p 19.*

⁴⁸ Whitaker, B. E. Changing opportunities; refugees and host communities in Western Tanzania, in *New issues in refugee research, working paper, No.11, p.10.*



Women chatting at a local market, Ujiji, November 2011 (Photo: Katrin Verhaegen).

3. Contemporary realities: dress as a barometer of cultural transformation

In order to understand which influence the two main regional changes (refugees and liberalisation) have had on local culture, I will develop a case study on women's wear. This case study is just one example of how people living in the Kigoma region reacted to changing national economic policies and to a new demographic environment. I will identify three gateways of change: interpersonal relations and trust, road infrastructure and identity formation and social class through which broad regional developments have triggered changes in the cultural set-up of Kigoma.

Before analysing these mechanisms I will introduce the 'Kanga' and the 'Kitenge'. The Kanga is a two-piece, colourful, factory printed cloth often with some Swahili proverbial wisdom printed on them⁴⁹. It was originally imported into Tanzania from Europe. Later on, India started importing them and since 1975 they are produced in several factories in Kenya and Tanzania⁵⁰. The Kanga is associated with Arab-oriented cultural practice coming from the East African Swahili coast⁵¹. However its use has been spread so thoroughly throughout the country that in 1993, in an event sponsored by the Tanzanian Media Women's association, the Kanga was voted as national dress⁵².

The Kitenge is a more expensive three-piece cloth⁵³ which was originally imported into western Africa from Europe and which later spread to Tanzania from Central and Western Africa⁵⁴. The Kitenge usually arrives in Kigoma from where it is further distributed to the rest of the country.⁵⁵ There exist Kitenge of better and lower quality, but usually the Kitenge are thicker than the Kanga. In Kigoma, the difference in quality between Kanga and Kitenge is also translated in price differences. The Kanga has a price between 3000 (2 USD) and 7000 (approx. 4.5 USD) Tanzanian shilling while the price of the Kitenge ranges from 11000 (approx. 7 USD) to 30000 (approx. 20 USD) Tanzanian shilling.

⁴⁹ Askew, K. M. 2002.,p. 65 / Zawawi, S. *Kanga: the cloth that speaks*. New York: Anzaniya Hills Press, 2005, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Beck, R.M. Aesthetics of communication: texts on textiles (Leso) from the East African coast (Swahili). *Research in African Literatures*, 2000, vol.31, no.4.,p. 105.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Askew, K.M. 2002, p.65.

⁵³ Cassara, C. Aspects économique et politiques d'un phénomène vestimentaire: la consommation du wax hollandais en Afrique de l'ouest (1990-1991). In: *Cahiers du cra no.8, 1994, p.71*.

⁵⁴ Beck, R.M. Aesthetics of communication: texts on textiles (Leso) from the East African coast. In: *research in African Litterature*, vol. 31, no. 4, p.104. /Kroese, W.T. *bThe origin of the wax block prints on the coast of West Africa*. Hengelo, 1979, p. 58.

⁵⁵ Confidential interviews, *informal trade, Kigoma, October-November 2011*.

3.1 Interpersonal relations and trust

In order to comprehend how liberalisation and the influx of refugees into the Kigoma region have had an impact on 'interpersonal relations and trust', I will discuss the stories of a Tanzanian Kitenge vendor (called M.) and a Tanzanian-Congolese smuggler of tissues coming from all over the world (L.). Generally speaking one can say that trade in Sub-Saharan Africa is to a large extent based on interpersonal relationships and trust⁵⁶. As a result of the increased presence of refugees, there are also an increasing number of people who have acquaintances on both sides of the border. Both M. and L. are capable of making business profitable as a result of relationships based on these links⁵⁷. While L. has got family and friends living across the border in eastern DRC, many people of M's family are employed by the same Congolese woman who fled the DRC in 1998.



Woman wearing the kitenge (3 pieces) (Photo: Katrin Verhaegen).

M., a Tanzanian Kitenge vendor owns his own shop on the market. But he is not the only one. His sister, niece, aunty and her husband all have a Kitenge shop in the same street. These shops are all supplied by the same Congolese woman who travels regularly to Bukavu from where she imports different types and brands of Kitenge. She particularly imports the very popular Angel wax originally made in Nigeria and Phoenix Hitarget coming from China. The woman fled the DRC and has been living in Kigoma for more than a decade. She employed M. because she and M. have been neighbours since her arrival. They know each other very well and the lady knows she can trust him⁵⁸.

Cross-border relations

L., a clothing retailer with both Tanzanian and Congolese nationality, explains how he manages to gain fairly big profits through his business. L. describes how the Hutu from RDC and the Ha from Tanzania have longstanding relations between one and other. Since the two ethnic groups are so similar they often work closely together, mix easily and they even intermarry. For L's parents, this was the case so he obtained the double nationality, which means that he does not have to pay visa costs when crossing the border. More importantly, he has got a well-developed (trade) network of relatives living in both the DRC and Tanzania. Later L. also started studying economics in Burundi. This he thinks was a very good decision because it enabled him to make many new contacts. L. furthermore works at the customs of the harbour in Kigoma. This facilitates his trade. When he has a load arriving in Kigoma by boat he makes sure that one of his friends is working. He then contacts his friend beforehand who makes sure he checks L's cargo. L. does pay taxes but he does not pay for the whole load he is carrying with him. For a small bribe, his friend is prepared to close his eyes⁵⁹.

In both M's and L's story one can find a link with Meagher's descriptions on cross-border trade. Meagher asserts that cross-border trade is enhanced by the fact that similar ethnic groups live on different sides of the national frontier thereby retaining close contacts with one and other⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ MacGaffey, J. & Bazenguissa-Ganga, R., Congo-Paris. Transnational traders on the margins of the law, Indiana James Currey & University Press, 2000, p.16.

⁵⁷ Geenen, S. *Personal relationships between small-scale miners and traders in Kamituga, South Kivu, Institute of development Policy and management, University of Antwerp, DRAFT 20/02/2011, p.14*

⁵⁸ Confidential interviews, clothes, Kigoma, October-November 2011.

⁵⁹ Confidential interviews, informal trade, Kigoma, October-November 2011.

⁶⁰ Meagher, K. The hidden economy: informal and parallel trade in Northwestern Uganda 'Review of African Political Economy', 1990, n°47: 64-83.



Example of a Kanga at Kigoma market (Photo: Xisco Fuster).

From pre-colonial times onwards there exist close cultural and linguistic connections between communities living in Kigoma and communities living in eastern DRC⁶¹ and Burundi⁶². Similarities between the Hutu and Ha come to the foreground in L.'s account and are also cited by Landau as a difficulty when it comes to the attempt to stop cross-border trade. Since the two ethnic groups are so similar and since people do not often carry their ID with them, it becomes almost impossible for the government to tell who is Tanzanian and who is not⁶³. Even though the colonial set-up and the (temporal) post-colonial border closure made the connection between the two countries more difficult, people in the border zone kept in touch with each other, they intermarried and there was regular cross-border movement⁶⁴.



People walk daily from Tanzania through the Mountains to Burundi. (Photo: Annelies Smets)

⁶¹ Mung'ong'o, C.G. Refugees, settlers and retarded development in the Tanzanian shoreline of Lake Tanganyika. In: *Tanzanian Economic Trends*, 2005, vol. 18, no. 2., p.27.

⁶² Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 128.

⁶³ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 93.

⁶⁴ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p.129.

Similar feelings about cross-border trade are observed by Titeca and de Herdt on the Ugandan border. They assert that cross-border trade should not only be understood as a result of historical antecedents but should also be seen within the national politics of a country. People living in a marginalised border area can respond to the incapacity of the state to bring development to themselves by cross-border activities⁶⁵.

Landau demonstrates that the state is not very present in the Kigoma region. She notes that the police which should be a regulatory entity remains virtually absent from rural residents' lives as a result of chronic shortages in vehicles, communication, poor management and so on⁶⁶. Even after the influx of refugees the Tanzanian administration remained incapable of implementing its own policies and efforts to control trans-border trade between for instance Tanzania and Burundi have only achieved limited success⁶⁷.

The two examples furthermore also demonstrate that relationships are not solely based on kinship but sometimes also on looser grounds⁶⁸. In the case of M., he cooperates with a woman who is his neighbour. It is only because she knows she can trust him that they work together. L. from his part counts on family in the DRC but he also succeeded in establishing a growing web of social relations since he studied in Burundi. There L. found a new network of acquaintances which reduces the risk of a breakdown of trade. This extensive web of social relations provides a guarantee of economic survival in a region where conflicts easily erupt⁶⁹. Moreover, L. counts on his colleagues at customs to reduce taxes. Bribing custom officials is, according to MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, common as it makes trans-border trade profitable⁷⁰.

We should thus conclude that cross-border trade is facilitated by interpersonal relations. These relationships are on the one hand a result of longstanding relationships between people living now on both sides of the border and on the other hand, they are a result of Kigoma's geographical position as a region lying thousands of kilometres away from the political and economical heart of Tanzania. The Kigoma region has been marginalised by the state and people have been fending for themselves for a long time by trading with neighbouring countries. As a result of a massive influx of refugees contacts over borders have been considerably increased.



People walk daily on this road from Tanzania through the Mountains to Burundi (Photo: Annelies Smets).

⁶⁵ Titeca, K. & De herdt, T. Regulation, cross-border trade and practical norms in west Nile, north-western Uganda. In: *Africa*, 2010, no.80 (4), p. 581.

⁶⁶ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 96.

⁶⁷ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania*. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 92.

⁶⁸ Geenen, S. *Personal relationships between small-scale miners and traders in Kamituga, South Kivu*, Institute of development Policy and management, University of Antwerp, DRAFT 20/02/2011, p.14

⁶⁹ Raeymaekers, T. *The power of protection. Governance and transborder trade on the Congo-Ugandan frontier. Dissertation in fulfillment of the requirement for a Ph.D.degree, 2006-2007*, p.85.

⁷⁰ MacGaffey, J. & Bazenguissa-Ganga, R., *Congo-Paris. Transnational traders on the margins of the law*, Indiana James Currey & University Press, 2000, p.96.

3.2 Road and communication infrastructure

Until the nineties, the road network of Kigoma remained mostly inexistent or at least unpaved. As a result of the refugees and the liberalisation, the road infrastructure of Kigoma has however been upgraded drastically. On the one hand, a massive humanitarian operation was set up to provide services to the refugee camps. The government acquired multilateral funding from diverse agencies, such as the UN and the EU. This funding was meant to support refugee assistance and resulted in a wide range of endeavours such as the acquisition of new vehicles, airstrip redevelopment in Kasulu (which is part of the Kigoma region) and road construction⁷¹. For instance, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) committed to fund a multi-million dollar project to help repair and improve the road between Kasulu and Kibondo⁷².

On the other hand, Tanzania also shifted its economic policies from socialism to liberalism. A report (15-17 June 2010) to the current President of Tanzania, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, describes the development of roads in the Kigoma region. Between June 2005 and October 2009, a total of 3641.7km has been constructed. In the document, the liberal stance of the government comes to the fore. The governmental aims to link Tanzania with other countries through the construction of roads that facilitate the transfer of goods to markets and the opening of employment opportunities. The Mwandiga-Manyovu road, for example, links Kigoma with Burundi and a second road links Kigoma to Zambia. A third road links the Kigoma region with inland Tabora and is built with the assistance of Korea⁷³. Moreover, Chinese engineers who were responsible for road infrastructure can be observed in the centre of Kigoma. The fact that Korea but also other countries such as China participate in the development of Kigoma shows that the region is no longer economically marginalised but that Tanzania is adopting an outward looking policy. The Kigoma region is part of what Wolf identifies as ‘*liberal globalisation*’: *the integration of economic activities via markets driven by both technological changes (advances in communication and transport) and policy changes (reliance on market forces rather than the state, to steer economic activity)*⁷⁴.

Even though not all roads are completely finished by now, they already provide opportunities to many.

P. explains that as a result of the construction of roads many people lost their land.⁷⁵ The government paid some compensation to those who had been displaced or lost land. Immediately, opportunities arose from the new roads and some of his friends even decided to cooperate and bought a daladala (minibus) to use as a taxi⁷⁶.

L. from his side is a small businessman who uses the opportunity of a new road. When he travels to the DRC he sometimes passes through Burundi taking a local bus. L. says that he always aims to travel low budget taking local busses when driving to the DRC and passing through Burundi⁷⁷.

The exploitation of new opportunities fits neatly in with the ideas of Anthony Giddens who asserts that liberalisation offers new creative possibilities and the rise of new individualism. This in turns weakens the power of the government while it strengthens individuals.⁷⁸ Giddens’ ideas are reflected by the example of P’s friends and L. who both exploit new opportunities as a result of the extension of the road infrastructure. It is only as a consequence of the new road infrastructure that small businessmen such as the friends of P. and L. are capable of trading easily with neighbouring countries.

⁷¹ Landau, L. B. The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 72.

⁷² Landau, L. B. The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 144.

⁷³ Confidential unpublished report, March 2011

⁷⁴ Wolf in Putzel, J. The political impact of globalization and liberalization: evidence emerging from crisis states research, 2004, p.2. (<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/dp/dp07.pdf>)

⁷⁵ Until today, land remains the exclusive property of the state. The state thus owns the land and can take it back whenever it needs it. Kombe 2010, p.2. (<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP822.pdf>)

⁷⁶ Confidential interviews, Kigoma town & Manyovu, October-November 2011.

⁷⁷ Confidential interviews, *informal trade, Kigoma, October-November 2011*

⁷⁸ Giddens in Putzel, 2004, p.4.



Kigoma, October 2010 (Photo: Katrin Verhaegen).

However, not everyone is capable of seizing these new opportunities. While P's friends and L. take advantage of these new opportunities, others will not immediately anticipate on these changes. When the latter lose their land, they lose their most important source of income⁷⁹, as in Kigoma subsistence farming remains the single largest source of income for a poor household. When people lose their land they lose their source of income. So while L. is able to become wealthier as a result of a well-established road infrastructure and a good trade network, an informant who was removed from his house as result of road constructions is likely to become poorer since he did not immediately reinvest the financial compensation he received from the government.

P. explains that when his father received the money, his family did not see much of the money. Instead of giving money to his wives who are responsible for the provision of food, he started going out with a certain young and beautiful girl. He offered her beer and food and since then, he often came home drunk. Moreover, this man is very active in a church group who was at the time building a new church. He thus spends at least a part of the received money on the church. Because of this, his son believes that all the received money will soon be gone together with their land⁸⁰.

As such, changes in road infrastructure, caused by refugees or liberal policies, function as a mechanism that can widen the gap between rich and poor in Kigoma. While some people use the money to invest, others will not immediately do this. As a result of this the societal stratification of identity and class can become altered.

⁷⁹ Kombe, W. Land conflicts in Dar es Salaam. Who gains? Who loses? Working paper Crisis States Research Center. 2010. p.6. (<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP822.pdf>)

⁸⁰ Confidential interview, Manyovu, Kigoma, November 2010.



Different brands of kitenge, Ujiji market (Photo: Annelies Smets).

3.3 The role of clothing in the social construction of identity and class

While my discussion of interpersonal relations and trust might have highlighted the shared characteristics between peoples on each side of the border, it should not lead to the conclusion that recent events have had no impact on residents' and refugees self-understanding. Both liberal policies and refugees have influenced local processes of identification. To put it in the terms of Vlassenroot & Büscher's work on Goma, Kigoma's *'recent history, which has been marked by conflict, contestation, migration, transborder economic interaction and processes of growing autonomy, has affected its inhabitants' self-perception and their perception of others in a particular way*⁸¹. The dynamics have changed the way people see themselves and their position within society. Differences in clothing styles indicate that people in Kigoma are very much aware of class differences and identity construction. As is explained by several authors, variations in clothing choices can serve as a subtle indicator of how different positions within society are experienced⁸². This element also came to the fore in an interview with D.

D. is a Tanzanian who has been living in Kigoma for several decades. He explains that the Kitenge has existed in Kigoma for a long time. The fabric made from Kitenge was however only used by the upper-class. During the last decade, with the coming of the refugees, this has changed. As a result of this, there are now more people in Kigoma who can afford the Kitenge. On the market, one can find a variety of types and quality of tissue. Some tissues are of lower quality than others and women are well aware of the differences. According to D., women wearing the Kanga are seen as members of the lower social classes. The reason for this is that a Kanga is cheaper and always has a proverb written on it. This proverb often represents gossip. Women who are higher up in society can dissociate from this. They do not need gossip, have an open mind and can afford better materials such as the Kitenge. D's spouse does sometimes wear the Kanga but only when she is in the house or when she goes to the local market. She will never wear this type of tissue to an official gathering⁸³.

Tanzanian women now seem to have adapted to their Burundian and Congolese counterparts. However, this does not mean that Tanzanian women have completely waved goodbye to their old clothing habits. They do however pay careful attention to what is worn. Nowadays Tanzanian women living in Kigoma still wear the cheaper Kanga at home but in public, they are more and more seen to be wearing the Kitenge. The shift in clothing style has further resulted in a negative attitude towards those women who

⁸¹ Vlassenroot, K. & Büscher, K. The city as frontier: urban development and identity processes in Goma. Working paper Crisis States Research Center.2009.p.11.

⁸² Crane, D. *Fashion and its social agendas. Class, gender and identity in clothing.* UNiversity of Chicago Press, 200, p.1./ Bickford, K.E. *The A.B.C's of cloth and politics in Côte d'Ivoire.* In : *Africa Today*, 1994, vol. 41, no.1., p.6.

⁸³ Confidential interviews, Kigoma, October-November 2011.

still wear the Kanga in public. When women wear a Kanga, people often say 'Oh you are really swahili'⁸⁴, thereby implying that those who wear this type of clothes are uncivilised, narrow minded and they tend to gossip more. The reason for this is that women who still wear the Kanga often come from the lower social classes. Awareness of social class thus functions as a mechanism of change in dress style, and more generally in local culture, in Kigoma.

In 1998 and in 2000 respectively, mama W. and mama N. arrived in Kigoma. In an interview with these two women, it became clear that clothing represented to them a very tangible way to identify themselves as Congolese women. The two women are representatives of a women's association in Kigoma with 65 members. Most of the members of the organisation are Congolese women or Tanzanian wives of Congolese men. While some of them fled war in eastern DRC, others reside legally in Kigoma for business or they are relatives of officials working for the Congolese consulate in Kigoma.

Mama N. and mama W. explain that they feel there is no place for the Congolese women in Kigoma. Tanzanians regard all of them as refugees and they are approached in a negative way. Their children for example are bullied as a result of their good background education. When women buy peanut oil at the market people laugh at them and say 'ah you are buying the oil of the refugees', since Tanzanian women tend to cook with a different type of oil. Tanzanian women also say that Congolese women do not speak Swahili as a result of their accent which is a bit different and - according to the Tanzanians - less sophisticated than that of the people of Kigoma.

When asked about whether there exist differences in clothing styles between Tanzanian and Congolese women, the two ladies respond positively. They say that it is only as a result of the Congolese coming to Kigoma that the Tanzanians are now starting to wear the Kitenge instead of the Kanga. According to them, Tanzanians like the Nigerian brand Angel wax while Congolese women prefer Hitarget. The reason for this lies in the colours. Angel mostly distributes dull, gloomy colours while Hitarget produces much clearer colours. Mama W. asserts that the colours that Congolese women wear are often pink, orange and bright red. These colours comply with how they feel. They are pungent colours that intertwine with how the Congolese people are. Mama N. elaborates on this by saying that it is not only the colours that make the Congolese women different. They also wear their clothes differently. This especially counts for the part of the Kitenge, which they wrap around their heads. While Congolese women show their elegance with obtrusive garments such as huge knots, the Tanzanian women are again very sober, tying the wrap with only a small tie⁸⁵.

The story of mama W. and mama N. is indicative in showing how, as a result of the refugees' presence and liberalisation, there is economical and cultural interaction between Tanzanians and Congolese on the one hand and the global market on the other hand. Today, when walking around the market of Kigoma, one can find tissue coming from Tanzania, DRC, Uganda, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, India, China, Dubai and so on. Most fabric does however not often come straight from their respective countries but they arrive in Tanzania via the DRC⁸⁶. Bukavu (DRC) seems to be the absolute regional capital of the Kitenge. From there, tissue wax arrives on a daily basis in Kigoma for further redistribution to the rest of Tanzania.

In the past, the Kitenge existed in Kigoma but it was simply not affordable for the common people. However in the nineties large quantities of tissue arrived in the region together with high numbers of refugees. The reason for this is that many Burundians and Congolese fled with their whole capital and later started anew in Kigoma⁸⁷. As a result of their new businesses and their connections with 'home' where the tissue was not so expensive, large imports of cloth reached Kigoma. Consequently prices for Kitenge decreased and the demand rose. The lower priced tissue now became affordable to all women, thereby altering clothing style in Kigoma.

This however did not mean that there was a sudden fusion of Congolese and Tanzanian clothing styles. Refugees fleeing neighbouring countries did also bring with them their own history, cultural practices

⁸⁴ Confidential interviews, Kigoma, October –November 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview with M. & W., Kigoma, November 2011

⁸⁶ Here further research is needed in order to find out why tissue coming from China and India arrives in Kigoma via the DRC instead of big ports in Eastern Africa such as Mombasa and Dar Es Salaam. It seems however probable that tissue arrives in Western Africa and is then traded and smuggled all the way to Kigoma.

⁸⁷ Interview with Congolese embassy, November 2011



Shoreline of Lake Tanganyika with view on the DRC (Photo:Katrin Verhaegen)

and traditions which were somewhat different from the Tanzanian. As is the case in many border regions, interaction across borders impacts upon notions of identity⁸⁸. The story of the two mamas demonstrates this by some external symbols such as education, food, language, clothing style and brand of fabric. The two women further assert that the somewhat more sober Angel wax coming from Nigeria is preferred by Tanzanians, while the Congolese women prefer to wear the brand Phoenix Hitarget originating from China. The fact that colours become a critical marker of cultural difference is also shown by the sociologist Cassara who asserts that in West-Africa, where the Kitenge as a clothing phenomenon has existed for over fifty years, a woman's nationality can be deduced from the colours she wears. For instance in the beginning of the nineties, the Nigerian women preferred the colours yellow-gold and dark blue while Ivorian ladies preferred yellow-gold and dark red on top of large surfaces of white or brown⁸⁹.

Identity formation is a fluid process, which is based upon conceptions of nationality, ethnicity, language, religion and symbols⁹⁰. The enormous influx of refugees created conditions in which people's association with the nation in contrast to the others takes on 'a timeless character'⁹¹. For mama W. and mama N. identity is constantly shaped by the others who identify themselves as pure 'Tanzanians'. For instance 'sober' versus 'piquant' works as a means to define other identities⁹². This phenomenon in which Tanzanian citizens of Kigoma seem to be much attached to their state is according to Landau typical for border regions. She states that 'the virtues associated with the Tanzanian state and nation have become ascribed to abounded geographic space coterminous with the country's formally defined political borders'⁹³.

We can then say that just like Vlassenroot & Büscher's Goma, Kigoma has '*mainly developed as a result of transborder mobility and intense contact with the other side of the border and in a context of cross-border exchange*'. They further also notes that '*the border is never totally absent and can reappear and gain importance when used as an identity marker for distinguishing one from another*'⁹⁴.

⁸⁸ Grant, A. Informal Cross-border Micro-regionalism in West Afrika: the case of the Parrot's Beak. In: F. Söderbaum & I. Taylor (eds.), *Afro-regions. The dynamic of cross-border micro-regionalism in Africa, Sweden, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2008, p. 106.*

⁸⁹ Cassara, C. Aspects économique et politiques d'un phénomène vestimentaire: la consommation du wax hollandais en Afrique de l'ouest (1990-1991). In: Cahiers du Cra no.8, 1994, p.72.

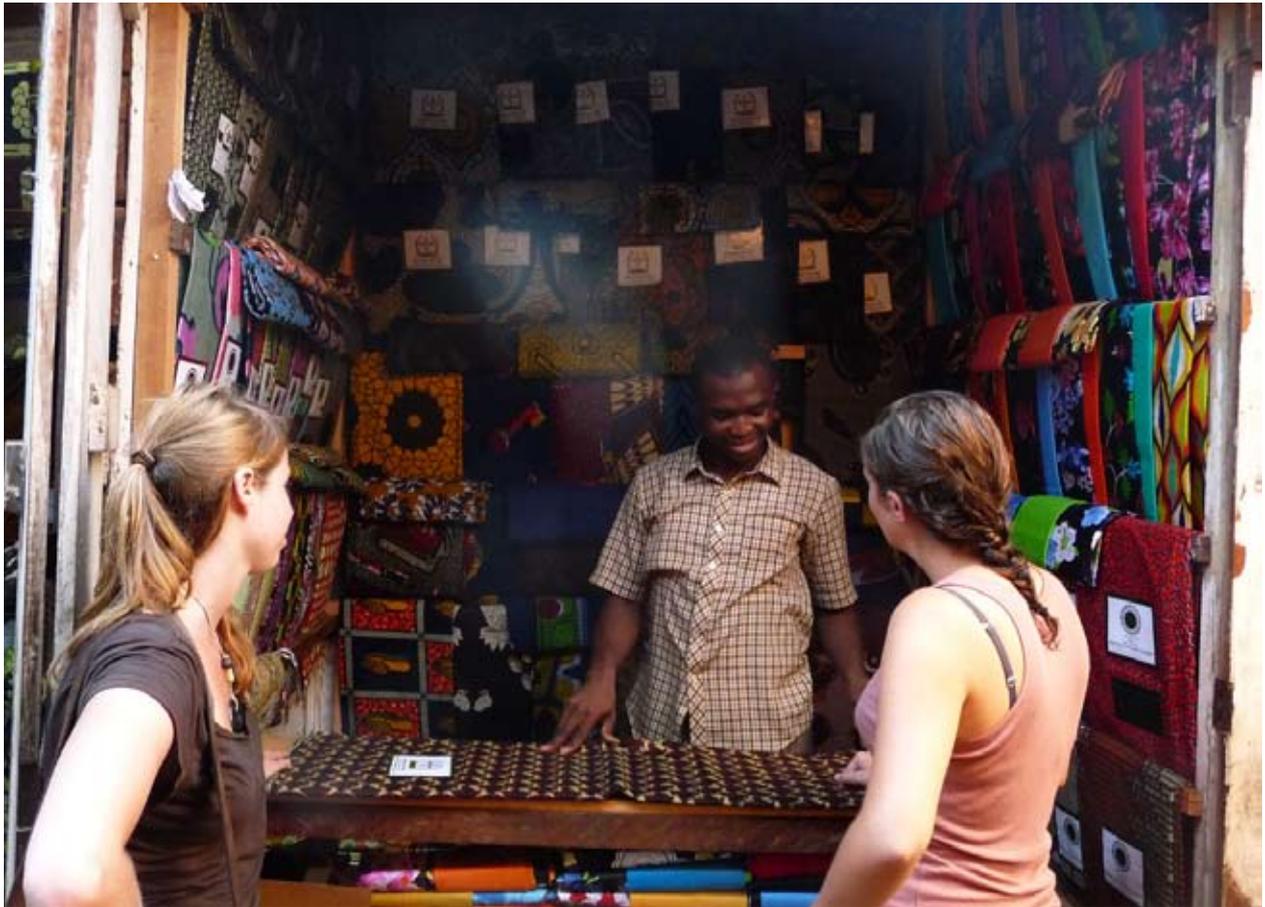
⁹⁰ Grant, A. Informal Cross-border Micro-regionalism in West Afrika: the case of the Parrot's Beak. In: F. Söderbaum & I. Taylor (eds.), *Afro-regions. The dynamic of cross-border micro-regionalism in Africa, Sweden, The Nordic Africa Institute, 2008, p. 106*

⁹¹ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 89.*

⁹² Vlassenroot, K. & Büscher, K. The city as frontier: urban development and identity processes in Goma. Working paper Crisis States Research Center.2009.p.11.

⁹³ Landau, L.B. *The humanitarian hangover. Displacement, aid and transformation in Western Tanzania. Wits University Press, 2008, p. 89.*

⁹⁴ Vlassenroot K. & Büscher, K. The city as frontier: urban development and identity processes in Goma. Working paper Crisis States Research Center.2009.p.9.



Tourists buying fabric, Kigoma market (Photo: Annelies Smets)

4. Conclusion

Civil wars in Rwanda, Burundi and in the DRC and the resulting refugee inflows have shaped the trading process in the Kigoma region. The refugees, with all their cross-border connections, have placed the well located Kigoma region back on the map as a potentially attractive regional business hub. They opened up new opportunities for business and they made products, such as tissue wax widely available. Another consequence of the refugee presence in Kigoma has been the improvement of the infrastructure network in the region. Humanitarian agencies and the government invested in it and have eased the transport of traded goods in the region.

The shift from socialism to liberalism has also stimulated initiatives in trade and has allowed new goods to arrive in the Kigoma region. Even though a good deal of trade remains unofficial, the opening up of the borders offered new opportunities and facilitated trade flows. Moreover, Kigoma has presented itself as an available market. The Kitenge is now widely accepted and worn. This shows that people are ready to pay the price for these new goods.

The refugee inflow and the economic liberalisation impacted drastically on the socio-economic and cultural set-up of Kigoma. Cloth was in this paper used as an example to demonstrate how national, regional and international changes interact with the local.

Without wanting to be too expeditious, I also wish to assert that this case study on sociological changes is not limited to Kigoma alone but should be extended to a larger area. In the region, there exist a sort of bilateral exchange of goods and cultural elements. For instance, Tanzanians have received the Kanga and the Kitenge but they have also exported their Kiswahili language everywhere in the Great Lakes Region: in Burundi, Eastern DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. This opens up opportunities for more research on this highly interesting region.