

Preface

The picture on the cover of this book gives an impression of the East Central African town of Kigoma evoking its connection to a power grid and to communication infrastructure. Based on the picture, one cannot determine whether Kigoma – or its twin town Ujiji, which together are the subject of this book – is on the receiving or on the distributing end of power, communication, and connectedness. This book explains that both directions matter.

This book is also the product of myself being both on the receiving and the distributing end of knowledge about Kigoma-Ujiji and of expertise in global urban history. I interpreted the history of the town as a space of transformation between global developments and local agency, but I could not have written this book without the input and support of the people who shared their knowledge and experience, pulled me through, shared insights, gave useful feedback and advice, facilitated my research and writing in practical terms, or provided indispensable distraction along the long and winding road. It is more than appropriate that this book begins with my gratitude to these people.

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Geert Castryck
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