

Exchange
to change

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#throwback September

Dear alumni and students,

As a new academic year approached, I could feel a familiar mixture of curiosity, nervousness and anxiousness creep into my home. What would this year bring? Some years provide us with more novelties than others ... new adventures, programmes and people to meet – all of which add to the intensity of the mixture ...

The same atmosphere was palpable in the corridors of IOB. This academic year got off to quite an ‘intensive’ start, to say the least.

As usual, we said goodbye to yet another amazing batch of graduating master students who, after having defended their dissertation, got their well-deserved moment in the spotlight during the graduation ceremony.

Of course, we were blessed to welcome a new group of students too, bringing their many lived experiences and new perspectives from around the world to Antwerp.

Unlike other years, this September also brought us our very first ‘IOB partner week’. Throughout the years, IOB has had the privilege of collaborating with many different partners worldwide. During partner week, all (longstanding) partners as well as new ‘friends’ were invited to Antwerp to get to know each other better and explore new paths and possibilities for collaboration and co-creation. We hope to move beyond a more unilateral IOB-partner collaboration towards a more networked multilateral collaboration between all the partners involved. An IOB community networking event was organized to stimulate precisely this kind of interaction between our partners, but also brought staff, students, and alumni into the mix, especially the newly created North alumni chapter.

And there was even more – a dissertation benchmarking exercise was organized to partially overlap with this networking event. Academics from European and partner universities, as well as development professionals, were invited to evaluate the quality of the both the dissertations produced at IOB and the IOB’s dissertation process. This evaluation safeguards quality and provides suggestions for how improve the dissertation process and its impact on development, as well as how to better align the quality assurance cycles of IOB and its partner institutions.

Last, but certainly not least, from 19 to 22 September, IOB hosted the Human Development and Capabilities Association (HDCA) conference. This year’s conference theme focused on “Capabilities and Transformative Institutions”. Over 500 participants, in approximatively 75 parallel sessions – consisting of different thematic panels, roundtables and almost 150 paper presentations – exchanged ideas and knowledge about how to face the challenges ahead of us and build a more just and sustainable world.

If September is anything to go by ... we are in for one amazing year!

Sara Dewachter

The political ecology of conservation at a violent frontier constellation in South Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

PhD by Fergus Simpson



On 3 October 2022, Fergus Simpson successfully defended his PhD titled ‘The Political Ecology of Conservation at a Violent Frontier Constellation in South Kivu, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.’ E2C caught up with Fergus in the conversation below.

E2C: Please kindly provide a short summary of your doctoral dissertation?

FS: In my PhD thesis, I explore the implementation and effects of environmental conservation in eastern DRC’s South Kivu Province. I selected

Kahuzi-Biega National Park and Itombwe Nature Reserve as case study sites, the first of which represents a case of a militarised ‘fortress’ conservation area, the second a more consensual ‘community’ conservation area.

I conceptualise conservation as an activity taking place on a commodity frontier which links up to global capitalist networks. The conservation commodity frontier forms part of a broader ‘constellation’ of commodity frontiers, notably those concerning the extraction and trade of mineral resources. In eastern DRC, this frontier constellation

touches ground in a region where the state is not only weak or absent, but often predatory and violent. Across four empirical chapters, I demonstrate how the expansion of different commodity frontiers results in diverse responses ‘from below’, ranging from all-out resistance to attempts to secure incorporation into the benefits of frontier expansion.

In the concluding section, I reflect on the implications of my findings for broader debates in violent frontier regions: including around displacement and indigenous peoples, the militarised

enforcement of conservation areas, and community conservation and the decentralisation of regulatory responsibility. Finally, I offer some practical solutions for the future of conservation in eastern DRC and reflect on how my positionality as a researcher has changed throughout this doctoral journey.

E2C: Your PhD was funded by an FWO fellowship. What advice do you have for potential applicants for this fellowship?

FS: I can’t recommend enough that budding PhD students apply for a PhD fellowship with FWO. This fantastic fellowship allows you to work on a project of your choice for four years, with sufficient flexibility for you to change the aim and objectives as the research progresses. It is much better funded than equivalent fellowships in other countries and provides opportunities to apply for additional long- and short-stay travel grants during the PhD process. In short, this is a young researcher’s dream come true!

However, it is a highly competitive fellowship and requires significant preparation to give you a good chance of winning a grant. I would recommend beginning the application process at least a year in advance of the submission deadline. This will give you the time you need to decide on a topic, find a supervisor, and write a detailed project proposal – while also navigating the difficulties, and twists and turns you will inevitably encounter along the way. A year might sound like a lot, but if you really want to do a PhD, then it will be well worth the investment!

E2C: For your PhD fieldwork, you conducted research in different protected areas within the DRC. Can you share your reflections on conducting fieldwork and the time you spent in Congo?

FS: Over the past four years, I have spent almost ten months conducting qualitative fieldwork in eastern DRC’s South Kivu Province. As readers will probably already know, this region is no typical conservation case study. Protected areas in the Kivu Provinces

represent about the most extreme examples of ‘conservation amidst armed conflict’ available to research. These are places where control and access to land and natural resources is violently contested by a staggering number of – typically armed – state and non-state actors.

Before fieldwork, I saw myself as a swashbuckling anthropologist. With an inflated sense of self-belief, I envisioned myself fearlessly circumnavigating jungles, swamps and mountains in search of corrupt state officials, rebels and forest peoples. Alas, this story turned out to be more fiction than fact. Far from my idealised vision of Fergus ‘the fieldworker’, the research put me in contact with intense loneliness and exhaustion, boredom and anxiety – all to degrees I am still reluctant to admit. Sometimes I questioned why I ever set out on this project.

Although fieldwork is never easy, I have slowly learned how to better look after myself while working in eastern DRC. I have found keeping a journal, regular exercise, and getting professional therapeutic support helped me navigate this complex emotional landscape. These are tools I will continue (and would encourage others) to use as a conflict researcher going forward.

E2C: What triggered your interest in working on this specific topic and in this geographic area?

FS: My university education first piqued my curiosity about politics and the environment in sub-Saharan Africa. I had the opportunity to travel to the region several times during that period. I will never forget the time I spent in Tanzania’s Usambara Mountains for an overseas field course when I carried out a small-scale study on the impact of malaria on household agriculture. After completing an MSc in Environment and Development at the University of Leeds, I travelled to Rwanda in April 2014 for a personal research project to learn and write about the history of violence in this land of a thousand hills. Looking back at my over-indulgent, verbose essays from that trip, I cannot help but wince with embarrassment. Still, this experience was instrumental in my decision to pursue

PhD research later on in eastern DRC. Even before the PhD, I took a keen interest in the history of conflict in Central Africa, the Balkans and Armenia. Over the last decade, I have visited several post-conflict countries and genocide memorial sites. After visiting Rwanda in 2014, I felt an impulse to one day cross the border over into DRC where the story of conflict and violence in the Great Lakes continues to this day. That dream came true in 2015 when I visited Bukavu with the UK charity Birthlink to write about their work at the now world-famous Panzi Hospital. A year later I was in North Kivu Province, where I took a trip to Virunga National Park. I spent a week filming interviews with two friends around the park and in Goma for a DIY documentary. I had studied the social science of conservation and protected areas during my BA and MSc degrees, but Virunga was on another level – a heavily militarised conservation area in a region wracked by violence, war and volcanic eruptions. What I had witnessed in the park essentially brought together my interests in conflict and the environment. When I got back to my desk in London, I wanted nothing more than to come back to eastern Congo. It was at that time that I started to consider how to access a research grant.

E2C: What were the biggest challenges you encountered during the PhD?

FS: That’s easy: overcoming imposter syndrome! Although I’ve managed to publish a fair bit over the past four years, I still feel like I’m only pretending to know what I’m doing here at IOB.

E2C: What would you say is the most important contribution of your doctoral thesis?

FS: Some members of my final doctoral jury might disagree, but my favorite contribution by a long way is in chapter five. Based on a forthcoming article with my supervisor Lorenzo Pellegrini, this chapter questions some of the more mainstream accounts of militarised conservation, which tend to castigate its implementation and effects. The argument I present is that in contexts like eastern DRC, where violent extraction is already widespread, the organisational

agency of conservation organisations is severely constrained to the point they are left with no option other than to use some form of (military) force. While militarised conservation generates violence of its own and can marginalise certain groups, it could also serve to provide basic security, law and order at the edge of protected areas positioned at violent frontiers. Overall, its effects on wider dynamics of security are likely to be ambivalent.

E2C: You did a joint PhD between IOB and ISS. Share with us your experience of doing a joint PhD and juggling the doctoral requirements of two institutions.

FS: By doing a joint PhD I have been able to access opportunities, networks and resources that people doing a PhD with just a single institution probably would not. Once I have defended my thesis, I will also effectively be the recipient of

two PhDs – one from IOB and one from ISS – which should, I hope, be beneficial when applying for future jobs and grants. The joint PhD also demonstrates an ability to collaborate across institutes, a crucial skill for any academic moving up through their career. However, there were a number of difficulties which I would recommend other PhD students consider before submitting a joint PhD application. From the moment I submitted my initial application toward the end of my first year, it took almost two years to negotiate the joint PhD agreement between ISS and IOB. So begin your applications as early as you can! It also became quite complicated when preparing my final jury composition, given that ISS and IOB have very different requirements. Again, I would check this kind of detail early on to reduce the chance of last minute surprises.

E2C: For the next academic year, you will embark on your post-doc at IOB. What research project(s) will you be working on?

FS: As soon as I have defended my thesis, I will teach classes on structure, agency and power for Unit 2 of the Theories of Development module. After that I'll be straight into preparing an application for a junior FWO post-doctoral fellowship to start in October 2023. My project proposal will focus on expanding our understanding of conservation as comprising various 'social contracts' with case studies from Africa's Great Lakes Region. During the bridging fund year, I will also start converting my PhD manuscript into a book project, and begin writing up the findings from a mixed methods survey I carried out around Kahuzi-Biega National Park this July. ■



Global food security in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine has shaken commodity markets. Before this fully-fledged war, Ukraine and Russia accounted for 12% of all traded food calories, and were – either separately or as a pair – among the largest exporters of wheat, maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds, and sunflower oil globally (Glauber & Laborde, February 24, 2022). Moreover, Russia was the largest producer of fertiliser and an important energy exporter. In the aftermath of Russia's invasion, there has been a pronounced spike in the

the conflict in Ukraine is having, and what the European Union and other global leaders could do to alleviate food insecurity. We do this by analysing the global food insecurity situation, the role Russia and Ukraine occupied within the production and export of agricultural commodities before the conflict, and through a discussion with Tomaso Ferrando, research professor at the Faculty of Law and IOB at the University of Antwerp. Based on the data, we find that this conflict turbocharged

insecurity is a matter of productivity, hence, the focus on what it means to have two breadbaskets at war, the other argues that it is a matter of redistribution. Following this discourse, Prof. Ferrando states that the Russia-Ukraine war has increased global food insecurity beyond its actual material impact. Given the fact that global availability of food has not fallen significantly, food insecurity is driven by reduced food accessibility due to an increase in prices resulting from speculation and competing demands for

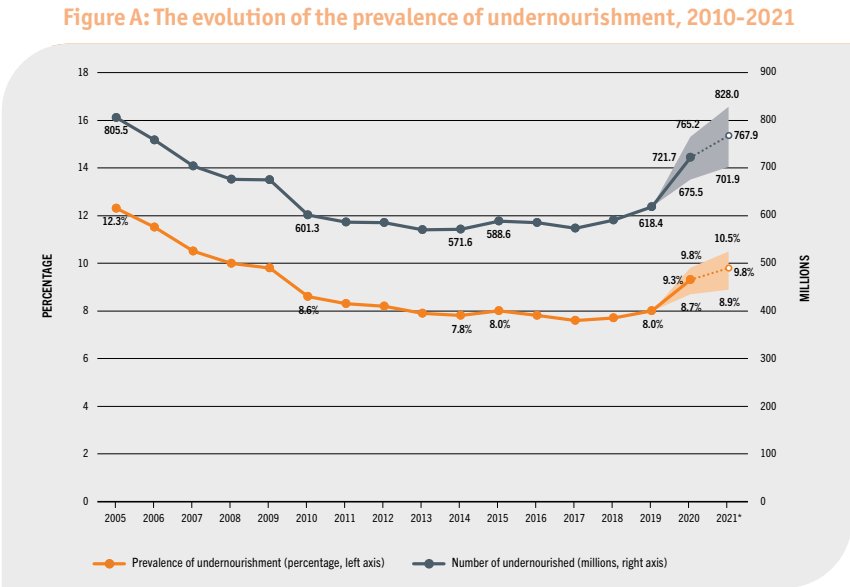


price of food, up almost 30% on the year in April, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index (FAO, n.d.). The most deprived people were caught in the crossfire and became the collateral damage in this conflict. According to FAO predictions, the war in Ukraine will increase the number of undernourished by up to 13 million this year (Bruce-Lockhart & Terazono, July 27, 2022). In this article, we aim to understand the impact on food availability and accessibility that

already existing food insecurity. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemics, droughts, specialised crop planting, and other regional and civil conflicts, food insecurity and prices were already dangerously high. Prof. Ferrando suggests adopting a more nuanced and critical understanding that begins with the origins of hunger and who profits from it. For him, it is important to distinguish between the two leading currents of thought regarding food security. While one claims that food

animal fodder and fuel. In other words, the war in Ukraine has increased the food insecurity situation by adding one extra element of stress and creating the conditions for speculative practices. A ceasefire in Ukraine will not solve food insecurity. Therefore, as well as giving earnest speeches and attempting to reconcile the warring factions in the Ukrainian conflict, European and world leaders should immediately put into place a multilateral set of solutions to alleviate the hunger risk in food-vulnerable

countries, and rethink the functioning and purposes of the global food system. of human dignity, as well as a factor that reflects the socio-economic and political



*Projected values for 2021 are illustrated by dotted lines. Shaded areas show lower and upper bounds of the estimated range. Source: FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO (2022), p. 13

Marching toward starvation

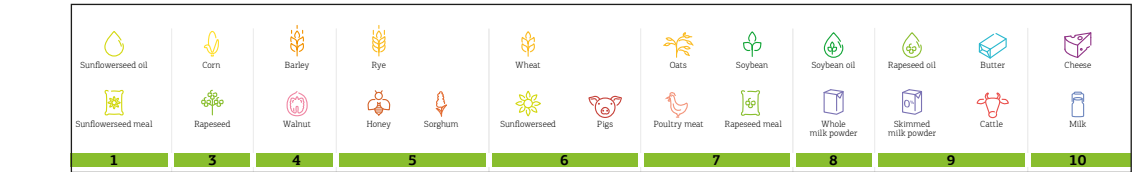
The official definition of food insecurity by FAO (2022) defines food insecurity as being when “a person lacks regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. This may be due to unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food.” This definition has been in place since 1996 and should be a political goal in establishing policies and objectives to achieve food security. According to Prof. Ferrando, food security matters because food is an essential component of life and a pillar

system of a country. If we are able to provide nutritious food – which should be categorised as an essential service – and assure the accessibility of said food for the population, the level of collective well-being increases. It provides the security necessary for the population to focus on other activities, creating space for innovation, community-building, and other important aspects of life. However, food insecurity around the world has been increasing alarmingly in the last few years. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World

Report (SOFI, 2022) (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, 2022) estimates that the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU)¹ jumped from 8% in 2019 to around 9.8% in 2021 (see figure A). According to these estimates, hunger affected between 702 and 828 million people in 2021, with a median of 768 million for the projected range. However, there are persistent regional disparities. Around 20% of the population (one in five people) in Africa faced hunger in 2021, compared to 9% in Asia, 8.6% in Latin America and the Caribbean, and less than 2.5% in North America and Europe. While Africa bears the heaviest burden in terms of magnitude, Asia is the continent with the highest number of people affected by hunger. In 2021, half of the total number of undernourished people (around 425 million) lived in Asia, one-third (278 million) in Africa, and 8% (57 million) in Latin America and the Caribbean. Increasing food insecurity coupled with soaring food, fuel and shipping prices increased the operations expenses of many humanitarian food organisations. For instance, David Beasley, executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), declared that the cost of WFP’s operations increased by \$71 million per month since the beginning of

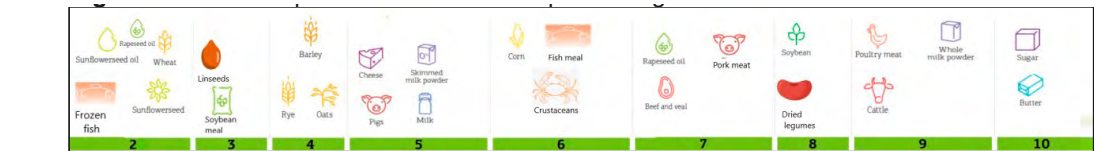
1 The prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) is an estimate of the proportion of the population whose habitual food consumption is insufficient to provide the dietary energy levels that are required to maintain a normal active and healthy life. (United Nations, n.d.)

Figure C: Ukraine’s position in world exports of agricultural commodities in 2020-2021



Source: Top Lead & LATIFUNDIST, 2021, p. 4

Figure D: Russia’s position in the world exports of agricultural commodities in 2020-2021

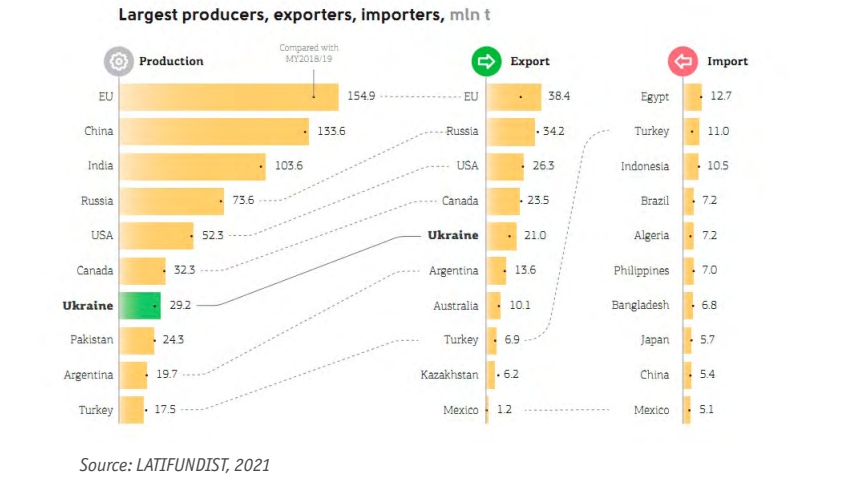


Source: USDA (2022); Simoes & Hidalgo (2011-today);

the year. This led him to declare: “Right now, we are already taking food from the hungry children to feed the starving children because we don’t have enough money and enough food” (Rachman, 26 May, 2022). The sharp increase in the number of people facing hunger since 2019 can be, at least partially, attributed to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic had a devastating impact on the world’s economy. It put global value-chains under strain, increasing fuel, shipping, and commodity prices (Economist, 2020), and imposed unprecedented restrictions on people’s ability to move, work, earn a living, and as a consequence, access food. Apart from economic shocks and downturns, COVID-19 being the most significant recently, the other two food insecurity drivers are intensified conflicts and climate change (FAO, IFPRI & WFP, 2022; FAO et al., 2021). Apart from destroying critical infrastructure, villages and farmland, and disrupting trade, weather extremes and conflicts also displace people from their homes. The displaced population is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. In 2020 for instance, the number of new displacements reached 40.5 million people; 9.8 million were displaced due to conflict, and 30.7 million due to natural disasters, the highest figures in a decade (IDMC, 2020). The grim reality, however, is that the majority of undernourished people and growth-stunted children live in countries affected by multiple drivers (FAO et al., 2021). In addition to these drivers, Prof. Ferrando adds that food insecurity is mostly driven by the lack of economic means to access food, which is the result of both inadequate social policies and competing market forces that drive up the price of food. The use of crops to feed livestock (70% of agricultural land worldwide produces grains for this purpose), diets (millions in the Global North have a meat-heavy diet and people in the Global South are catching up and consuming larger amounts of meat), the use of crops for fuel, and financial speculation are all drivers that characterise and define the global food system, and which are directly connected with the reduced capacity of individuals to feed themselves, while others profit

from the situation. Ukraine and Russia: two major breadbaskets of the world Without dismissing the social implications, such as the loss of human lives and destruction of the warring countries, wars always cause significant economic shocks that hit vulnerable regions and the most vulnerable people hardest. At first glance, the relevance of this war lies in the role both countries play as major breadbaskets within the global food system. Indeed, Ukraine’s capacity to produce and export has been massively diminished because of the war, while western sanctions have complicated payments for Russian agricultural commodities, fertiliser, and fuel, leading to uncertainties in terms of supply. However, a broader view clarifies that despite Ukraine and Russia being major exporters of agricultural commodities, fertiliser, and energy exporters, the availability of food does not diminish significantly. The inflexibility of the global food system, financial speculation, and lack of adequate policies are intensifying the impact of this war and putting at risk the lives of millions of people. We arrive at this conclusion by briefly analysing the potential impact of food insecurity

Figure E: Largest wheat producers, exporters, and importers in 2019-2020



Source: LATIFUNDIST, 2021

risks provoked by this war, and looking at the agricultural market structure and trade profile of Ukraine, Russia, and the main importers of their agricultural commodities. Global food markets are highly vulnerable

to shocks and volatility because exports originate from a relatively small number of countries (FAO, 10 June 2022). The war in Ukraine represents such a shock. The Russian Federation and Ukraine are among the most important producers and exporters of agricultural commodities in the world. Figures C and D present the position of these countries in terms of global exports of agricultural commodities. Since wheat makes up 20% of total dietary calories and proteins worldwide (Shiferaw et al, 2013), to understand the risks brought about by this war, we will take wheat as an example. Despite being the most widely cultivated cereal in the world, the majority of wheat exports come from just a handful of countries (FAO, 10 June 2022). Russia is the second largest exporter of wheat in the world while Ukraine is the fifth largest (see figure E). Together, Russia and Ukraine account for 30% of the wheat supply in the global trade market. Yet, as Prof. Ferrando notes, this accounts for less than 7% of global wheat production, a high figure but a less significant number when embedded in the broader context. Firstly, this war creates major logistical risks. Several Ukrainian ports were closed at the start of the war, blocking

August 8, 2022), their navigation is not yet safe and the risk of blocking still persists. In addition, before the war, these three ports accounted for just over half of Ukraine’s seaborne grain exports (Durisin et al., 22 July 2022). Alternative means of transportation, such as rail or river barges, cannot compensate for the loss or limitation of Ukraine’s maritime shipping capacity. Efforts to boost Ukraine’s exports through alternative pathways are constrained by the limited internal civilian road and rail infrastructure in Ukraine’s neighboring countries and conflicting rail links between Western and Eastern European

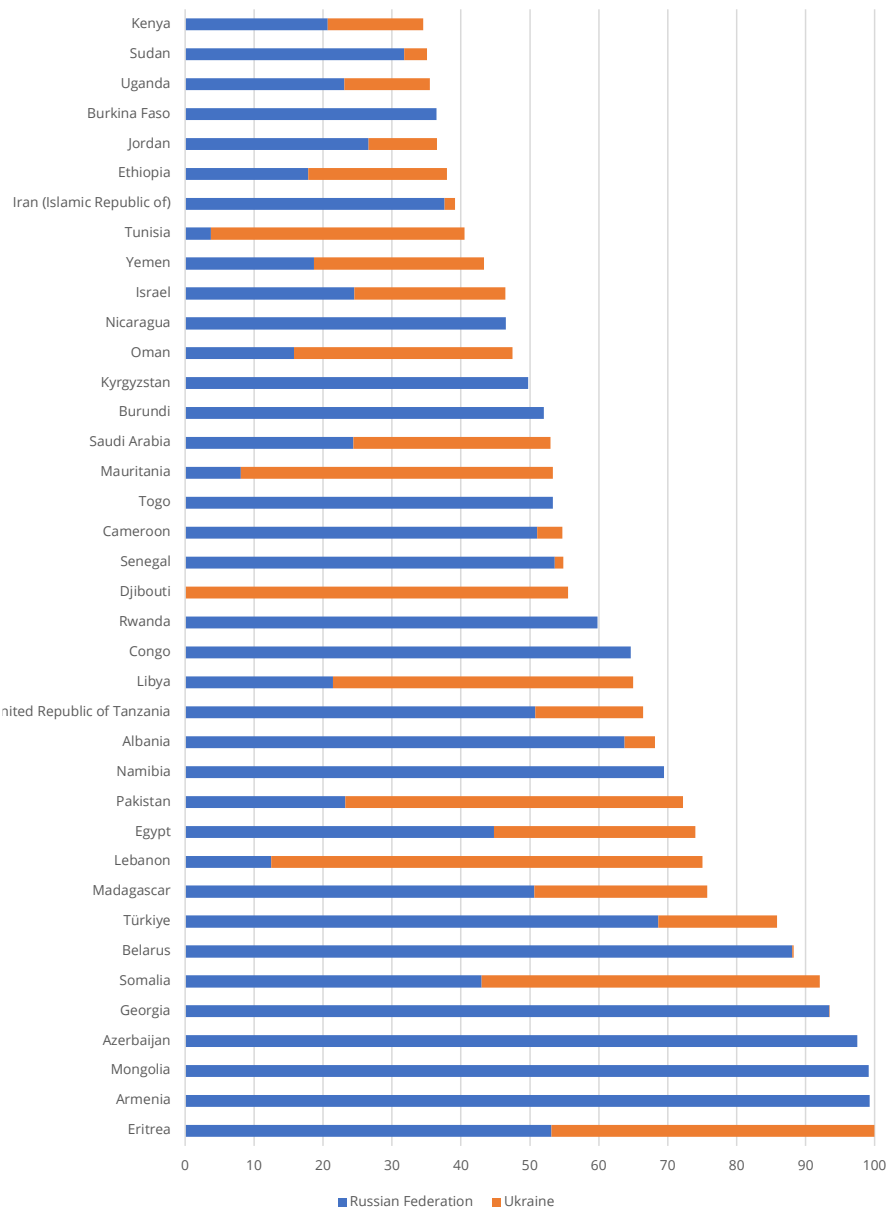
countries. Even without the war, the start of this year did not look promising. Wheat production had already fallen for the first time in four years due to the shocks brought on by climate change and the pandemic. The Russia-Ukraine war only intensified an existing decline in wheat production (Economist, 19 July 2022). Assuming that the war-related trade disruptions persist, e.g. Ukraine’s reduced access to Black Sea ports and limited alternative transportation, FAO estimates that Ukraine’s capacity to export wheat will diminish by 50% during the 2022 - 2023 marketing year

(FAO, 10 June 2022). The countries importing wheat from Ukraine may find other countries to purchase from, but it will not be easy. There are also disruptions to production in alternative producing countries, such as Australia and Argentina, that may further limit the availability of wheat on the international trade markets. Still, some countries are taking this as an opportunity to increase their market share and have stepped up their wheat production with a view to increasing their yield both this year and in the coming years. India and Brazil are examples of such countries (World Grain, 07 August 2022).

Production risks threaten the food supply too. Russia and Ukraine are currently facing labor shortages for harvesting and other agricultural operations. Moreover, Ukraine now has limited storage capacity and, in general, agricultural work is risky in a war-torn country (RFERL, 1 August 2022). Russia is also a key player in the global energy and fertilisers markets. As conventional agriculture requires a large amount of energy, directly through the use of fuel and indirectly through the use of fertilisers, any sharp price increase for these two inputs will affect agricultural output worldwide and accelerate rising food prices (FAO, 10 June 2022).

Around 25 countries receive more than 50% of their wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine, either separately or as a whole (see figure F). Most of these countries fall into the Least Developed Countries or Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries category. Eritrea is an extreme case. This country imports around 90% of its wheat, sourcing 53% of its wheat imports from the Russian Federation and 47% from Ukraine. The analysts who highlight the massive food shortage on the global market created by the Russia-Ukraine conflict would use figure F and Eritrea’s case to support their arguments (e.g. Greene, 16 May 2022). However, Prof. Ferrando characterises this analysis as superficial. He points to the fact that wheat and wheat products account for only 25% of the average total cereal consumption in Eastern Africa, thus, 75% of cereal consumption in

Figure F: Countries dependent on wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine in 2021 (%)



Source: FAO (10 June, 2022), p. 11.

Highlights of the interview with Prof. Tomaso Ferrando

Following our interview with Prof. Ferrando, and to complement our research, we have listed some highlights that he mentions are worth exploring when thinking about global food security at this time of social and climate fragility, and specifically, the role the European Union (EU) could play in leading the way towards food security, given the Union’s importance as the second largest importer of food and the largest exporter of food in the world. When asked specifically about measures that the EU could take, Prof. Ferrando stressed that the EU should:

1. Be aware of its position as a leading importing bloc. The EU’s current demand for raw materials for fuel, feed, and processed food represents an incentive to specialise in third countries and a shift towards more monocultures (i.e. soybean, wheat, corn). This affects the agricultural landscape of commodity-exporting countries and leads them to transform their diversified food matrix and food systems and become an export-oriented agricultural producer, which inevitably impacts local and regional food security and increases dependency on trade (both as a source of income and as a source of food for humans).
2. Be aware of how European agricultural policy affects competing countries. While the EU market incentivises changes in the agricultural landscape of other countries to fulfill its needs, e.g. via Free Trade Agreements that facilitate the export of raw commodities, agricultural production in Europe is highly subsidised. This provokes unfair price competition when goods are exported and has a significant impact on small-scale farmers around the world. EU policies represent a double incentive for the concentration of land, specialisation, and production of monocultures in the countries of the Global South.
3. Rethink the RED (European Renewable Energy Directive) policy. The EU Directive on Renewable Energy (RED) identifies bio-fuels (for example, fuel produced from crops like corn and sugar) as a source of renewable energy. Even when this has no impact on land use change, such policies may create an incentive for food burning rather than food consumption. In the name of lower EU carbon emissions and the green transition, more food may be burned than eaten. A solution is needed, therefore, that clarifies priorities in terms of food and fuel, but at the same time does not mean slowing down the transition away from fossil fuels.
4. Change the perspective on global food systems. Despite the calls for more liberalisation and fewer restrictions, Prof. Ferrando concludes that the ongoing situation requires taking the link between food as a globally traded commodity and people’s food and nutrition security more seriously. Food as a global commodity means long-distance trading, monoculture, loss of social and environmental biodiversity, financial markets, speculation, and an oligopolistic market where four players (the ABCD companies) control 70% of the world’s trade in food. Inevitably, this leads to concerns about accessibility – much more than availability and productivity. Recognising the link between the global trade in food as a commodity and food insecurity means rethinking the role of food, and recognising it as an essential public good, to which access should not be subordinated to the logic of the market or the financial capacity of individuals. Some measures that could be taken are, for example, prioritising regional markets, reducing the use of food for animal feed, allowing public interventions that support local farmers and local stockpiling, banning financial speculation, and facilitating the establishment of a global food bank that promptly intervenes in cases of shortage, hunger, and food insecurity, which are much more deeply rooted than exceptional circumstances linked to war.

this region is not from wheat. As Eritrea imports 90% of its wheat needs from Russia and Ukraine, this means that these two countries account for around 22% of cereal consumption in Eritrea, while in other countries this percentage is much lower. Before rushing to conclusions based on figure F, Prof. Ferrando suggests checking the percentage of wheat used in the overall diet of the country, comparing the percentage of imports versus national production, and considering how much of the imported wheat is for livestock.

In addition, despite all the above-mentioned risks and impacts of this war, there is still enough food to feed the planet. As Prof. Ferrando emphasises, the real problem is food redistribution and accessibility. The first important aspect is that most grains (i.e. wheat, corn), including grains imported by the Least Developed Countries or Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries from Ukraine and Russia, are used to feed livestock, or to produce fuel. Another important factor to consider is that around 30% of the global stock of food is wasted. Therefore, if there was the will and capacity to redirect existing stocks, privilege human consumption over other uses of the grains, and reduce food waste, current food insecurity would not be so challenging. Prof. Ferrando also points out that one of the main problems concerning the current state

of food insecurity lies with the role of the financial system and of speculative investors. As was the case in 2008, speculators with no interest in the delivery of food invested large sums of money in buying derivative products representing the future price of grains (mostly corn and wheat) and drove up global prices, thus affecting people's accessibility.

Finally, it is important to consider how small-scale farmers have been coping with the war. Prof. Ferrando mentions Foote's news article (2022), which affirms that while large monoculture farms in Ukraine are being seriously affected (i.e. wheat, sunflowers, corn) and have lost access to markets and therefore income, small-scale farmers who produce food for the regional market have actually managed to keep their farms functioning and have reclaimed land. This has meant small-scale farmers are able to continue feeding the country with much-needed food, although they have faced an increase in transportation and warehousing costs.

Conclusion and policy implications

The war in Ukraine may be intensifying global food insecurity through different channels: hampering trade, increasing the price of food, and causing logistical, production, and energy disruptions.

However, in this article we show that food insecurity was increasing even before the Russia-Ukraine war, being exacerbated by other factors such as climate change (i.e. droughts, floods), economic shocks and downturns (i.e. COVID-19, inflation, speculation), other conflicts, and harmful agricultural policies (i.e. those which support large-scale monocultures and concentration of production and export in a handful of countries). Moreover, we highlight that despite the stress being piled on global food markets, this conflict has not diminished food quantity significantly. There is still enough food to feed the planet; the problem lies in food accessibility. If we privileged human consumption over other uses of agricultural commodities and wasted less food, the impact of this war on food security would be less challenging. We have to keep in mind that in addition to bringing millions to the brink of starvation, food insecurity is a source of social unrest and geopolitical risks. Therefore, the need for an equitable and sustainable global food system is becoming more and more acute. ■

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This was the year 2021-2022



My classmates were my favorite part of the program and I hope to run into them in all corners of the world :)

Understanding multiple realities is one of the things IOB taught me

Diverse,
unforgettable,
funny

Broadened my
worldview by
bringing the world to
the classroom!

IOB's focus on localising development fascinated the most, sharpened me to think critically and pluriversally in my approach to develop as development itself is not a linear phenomenon

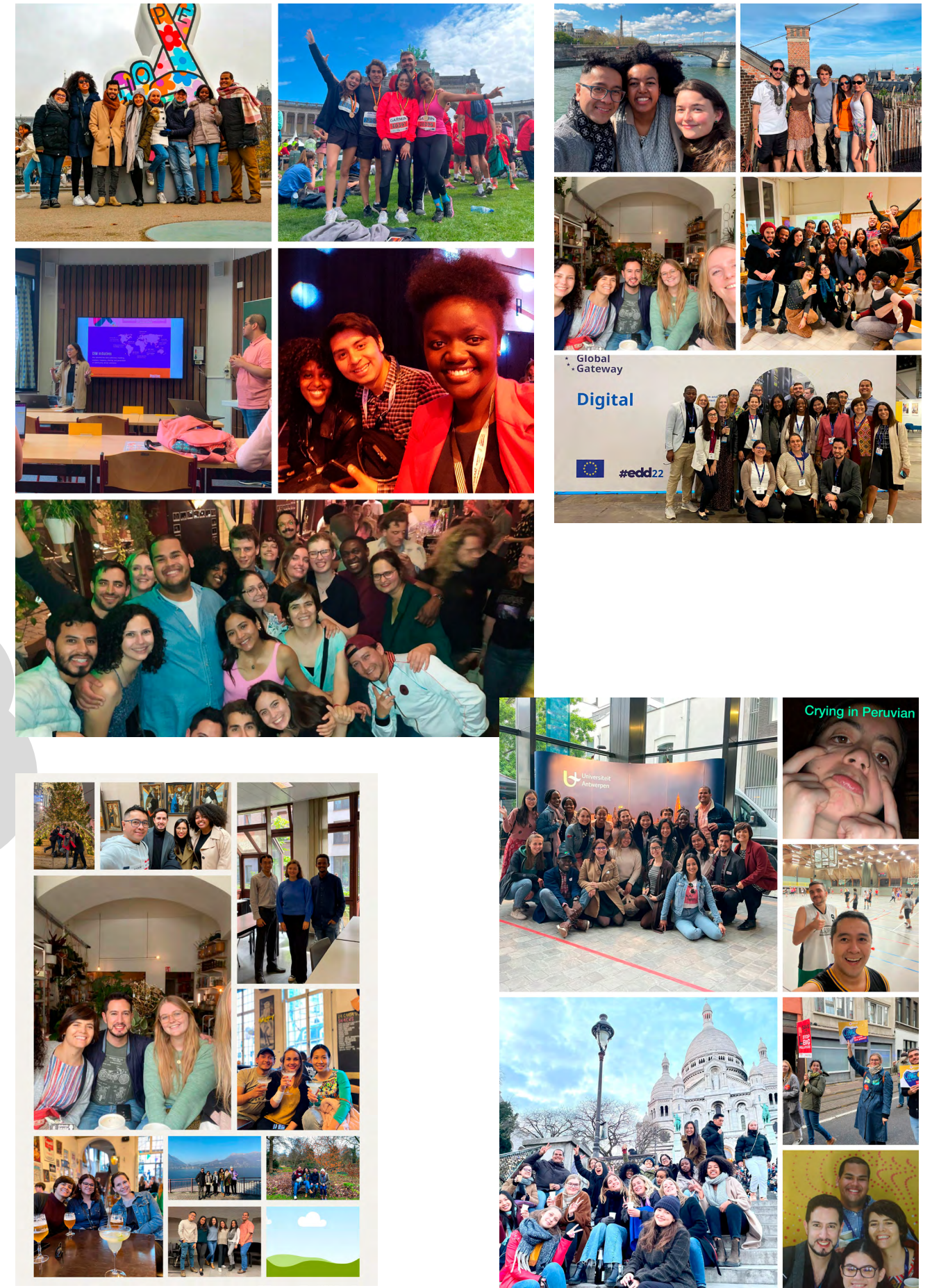
Focus,
attitude,
and excellence

The most significant change IOB triggered in my life was expanding my perspective on development, justice and conflict through the experiences of different continents

The delayed “New Years drink” where our beloved party-enhancer Josué turned the *slightly boring* reception into a real party! With traditional dances from so many parts of the world. These kinds of parties make me feel so united and happy!

IOB triggered more enthusiasm for the topics of development, peace & conflict and governance

Every day brought
new academic and
lifelong learnings



Alumni panel

Clayton Arinanye GLOB 2002 | Uganda

Where are you currently living? I am living in Kampala, Uganda.

Where do you work? I am working at the Department of Commercial Law, Makerere University. I'm a Senior Researcher in Political Settlements and Revenue Bargains in Africa - DANIDA Funded Programme.

Tell us more about one of the exciting projects/ programmes/ ideas you are currently working on?

I joined the PRSB Program in 2017 and have completed various research studies on different topics, which include, among others: agricultural policy, rural agricultural taxation, fiscal and monetary policies, and taxes on farm inputs, all in Uganda. In partnership with my program supervisor, Prof. Anne Mette Kjær of the Political Science Department, Aarhus University, Denmark, we have researched and written various articles. Our most recent research study is on "Service Provision or Tax Exemptions: Revenue Bargaining in Uganda's Agricultural Sector" and will be part of a publication called The Politics of Revenue Bargaining in Africa, to be published by Oxford University Press, UK, by the end of this year. The publication as a whole will shed light on the inside politics of bargaining and revenue settlements in Africa.

Prior to joining the research world, after leaving IOB in 2003, I was hired as the Executive Director of the Uganda Coffee Trade Federation (UCF), the organisation that brings together people working in the export, services and farming sectors. Later, I joined the Uganda Crane Creameries Cooperative Union (UCCCU) as the Chief Executive Officer, where I contributed tremendously in the areas of value addition and post-harvest reduction strategies through the installation of cold chain infrastructure among dairy farmers' cooperative societies.

An urgent blind spot in development studies/ research which should be studied extensively in the future is in my opinion...

In my opinion, this must be rural development. There



are a lot of theories and concepts regarding rural development subjected to the sub-Saharan region model of development. Over half a century, a lot of development aid and many government interventions have been directed towards rural development with negligible results or no results at all. Instead, we have seen continually increasing and unacceptable levels of poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation, as well as a lack of drinking water, drug and alcohol abuse and dissatisfied youth in most of the sub-Saharan countries. Young people are leaving rural areas for towns and cities, looking for ways to make a good living. We have seen decades of international development aid and government funded intervention programs - so the question is: what hasn't worked? In my opinion, there is a need to go back to the drawing board to carry out a clear diagnosis of the causes of rural poverty, if we are to find the cures. Of course, there are clear poor governance and management issues in otherwise well-written programs in these countries, too.

My experience in managing rural programs has taught me a lot. Since I left IOB in 2003, directly or indirectly, I have worked with various farmers groups, but particularly coffee farmers, dairy farmers, banana farmers, rice farmers, and horticultural and livestock farmers - always with the aim of improving their livelihoods through finding buyers for their produce either in local, regional or international markets. I have worked in partnership with various multinational development agencies and the government of Uganda, and proudly registered some successes.

I have since learnt that to initiate a project/program that will benefit rural farmers especially, it is important that a thorough diagnosis of the challenge is meticulously carried out, in consultation with all stakeholders and particularly the main beneficiaries; otherwise, it will come to nothing.



Maartje van der Laak GOV 2002 | Netherlands

Where are you currently living? Belgium, Lievegem (near Ghent)

Where do you work? As a historian I conduct research, and I also write texts for museums and governmental institutions on a freelance basis.

As an author, I have published children's books and young adult fiction.

Tell us more about one of the exciting projects/ programmes/ ideas you are currently working on? By writing about themes such as democratic citizenship, I hope to inspire young people, just as I was inspired during my education. Freedom and

equality are concepts that should be embedded in a national history, specific to each country. In '2031: het einde van België?' (De Eenhoorn, 2020) I explained this vision in a novel for young adults about the Belgian Constitution. Don't worry, there's nothing boring about it - it's a Dan Brown-like thriller! I wrote it with Stefan Sottiaux, a professor of Constitutional Law. Our research even led to the discovery of the long-lost original handwritten Constitution of Belgium, one of the first democratic constitutions in the world.

Judith Beatrice Oduol DEM 2001 | Kenya

Where do you work? I am currently working as Economic Affairs Officer at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa Ethiopia where we focus on policy analysis, implementation and advocacy and provide advisory services to the 54 member states in Africa on sound fiscal and macroeconomic policies that can spur economic development on the continent. Prior to joining the UN, I had a successful career in research and development spanning over 15 years, ranging from national, regional and international research organisations, with the latest being the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. While my research spanned many areas, my major focus has been on impact evaluation of research and development projects.

How did IOB experience affect your life or career? I would say that the Master's degree I obtained at IOB in Project Evaluation and Management has played a significant role in shaping my career. I landed my first job at the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research

Organisation (KARLO) in 2002 soon after returning from Belgium, thanks to the data analysis and processing course we undertook during the Master's programme, which gave me an upper hand among other competitors on the job market. My Master's thesis was on the impact of structural adjustment programmes on Food Security in Kenya, which explains why my career choices have always leaned towards impact evaluation. I have always found the skills and knowledge I gained at IOB extremely handy in my career including in my current position at the Economic Commission for Africa.



The hammer and/or the hoe?

Analysing the linkages between artisanal mining and small scale agriculture in South Kivu/Eastern DRC

PhD by Francine Iragi Mukotanyi



On Thursday 9 June 2022, Francine Iragi Mukotanyi successfully defended her PhD thesis titled ‘The hammer and/or the hoe? Analysing the linkages between artisanal mining and small scale agriculture in South Kivu/Eastern DRC’. E2C asked Dr. Mukotanyi to look back and reflect on her PhD trajectory and what her post-PhD life looks like.

E2C: Please kindly provide a short summary of your doctoral dissertation?

FIM: Based on a case study of Kalehe Territory in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, my PhD research is a mixed methods study which used both quantitative and qualitative methods, based on both secondary and primary

data. It aimed to understand the factors that drive farmers into artisanal mining, the impact of artisanal mining on their livelihoods, and the direction they could take should artisanal mining become unworkable. The results show that artisanal mining is one of the livelihood activities to which farming households turn when faced with endogenous and exogenous factors that negatively impact their farming income. It helps them to not only increase their off-farm income but also to make some investments and thus, develop other rural livelihood activities. However, for some political, technical and/or geological reasons, this livelihood already built around

artisanal mining may face shocks, leading artisanal miners to reorient themselves. The five activities that might interest them are petty trade, market activities, farming, animal husbandry and motorbike taxis. The choice of farming in this case depends on artisanal miners’ capabilities rather than on their estimates of the income or standard of living of farmers. Given that artisanal mining may be threatened by geological or political factors, policymakers should already be developing strategies to not only increase farming-based incomes but to stimulate all possible rural livelihood activities. In its conclusion, the thesis proposes some avenues of reflection for

such policies.

E2C: Your thesis focuses on artisanal mining as a livelihoods diversification strategy for agricultural farmers. How did you decide on this particular topic of interest?

FIM: The starting point was my background as a rural economist. At undergraduate and Master’s level, I took various courses on the Congolese rural and agricultural economy, which sparked my interest in the organisation of agriculture and the challenges faced by farmers. At the level of the advanced Masters in Governance and Development that I did at IOB, I also had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge on natural resources management. I learned that, with good governance, the exploitation of mineral resources creates beneficial links with other sectors of the economy and can then facilitate the emergence of these. Knowing that Congolese agriculture faces many problems and that, in addition to agricultural resources, the DRC is also well endowed with mineral resources, I was therefore curious to analyse the links between these two sectors in order to assess whether they could facilitate the emergence of the agricultural sector.

E2C: You did substantial fieldwork in the Kalehe Territory in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. How would you describe your experiences there? Any anecdotes that come to mind when you reflect on your field work there?

FIM: My experience with the fieldwork in Kalehe could be described as a continuous learning process. During the preparation of the data collection (preparing a questionnaire, interview guide, sampling etc.), you have the impression that you have mastered everything and you think you will be able to manage everything with no problems. However, while you have drawn your path as a straight line, you find yourself on a broken line in reality. And this is where the learning process starts, because you have to be able to leave this broken line and go back to the straight line you started with. I remember, for instance, when I had to visit farming households in a village on a very high mountain. Down

below, the field guide who was going to take me there said: “the village is just over that hill we are looking at”. Once we got on the road, we spent four hours climbing hill after hill. Arriving at our destination already very tired, we were only able to work for an hour before we had to return because the environment was insecure (armed groups). And as if that wasn’t enough, the rain started to fall. It took us another three hours to get to our accommodation and we were all soaked from the rain. Though I had planned to collect data over two days in this village, I could not go back the next day because of fatigue! These households were therefore replaced by those in a more accessible village!

E2C: For your research, you employed a mixed methods approach. How would you describe this process? Any challenges? Any pointers for young researchers thinking about following the same path?

FIM: The choice of mixed methods depends mainly on the topic being explored. So, if the topic allows it, the mixed-methods approach provides a middle ground between qualitative and quantitative methods and allows researchers to exploit the advantages and overcome the disadvantages associated with either one.

E2C: What do you see as the main takeaway of your research? Which finding surprised you the most?

FIM: Main lesson: despite its negative impacts, artisanal mining - like animal husbandry, wage labour and/or other rural livelihood activities - complements agricultural activities and provides rural people with additional income.

While I expected that artisanal miners would choose higher income activities as alternatives if artisanal mining became impossible, I was surprised to see that their choice is quite strongly influenced by their capabilities.

E2C: What did you find most challenging? If you could start anew, is there something you would do differently?

FIM: What was most challenging for me was the data analysis. At some point during the analysis, you realise that you

should collect more information or do things differently in terms of your data collection, but, limited by time, you have to work with what you’ve got. So, if I were asked to redo the process, I would have to be very clear about the method of analysis I would use in order to collect the best possible data.

E2C: How about doing a PhD while having a family to take care of? How did you navigate these responsibilities?

FIM: I would be a liar if I said that it is easy to do a PhD and take care of your family at the same time. Often, family obligations prevent you from fulfilling your PhD obligations and vice versa. You are therefore called upon to keep things in perspective and to be frank and clear with your supervisor(s) and your family. However, taking care of your family while doing your PhD should not be seen only in a negative sense. For me, it was always a motivation to go ahead and do it quickly in order to relieve myself of the burden of the PhD so that I could devote more time to my family.

E2C: Do you have any more words of advice for current and future PhD students?

FIM: For those who are still doing their PhDs and to all those who are considering doing it, I encourage you to see it through. At some point, things may become more difficult than you thought, you may have more reasons to give up than to continue, but don’t get discouraged. I assure you, the path is not necessarily easy, but with lots of determination, you will always make it.

E2C: What are your future plans or aspirations? What does your (professional) life look like after the PhD?

FIM: In the future, I plan to put my PhD to good use. As I am already a lecturer at the university, I plan to continue teaching and researching (writing publications). I also plan to write projects and participate in consultancies related to my field of research in order to use the expertise I have acquired through this PhD. ■

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