

FIELDWORK & 'LOCAL ACTORS'

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Conflict & Development Studies

MYTH OF THE LONESOME RESEARCHER

We all enter research collaborations in one way or another

❖ Fixer, research assistant, broker, translator, collaborator, protector, associate, connector, friend, co-researcher, partner etc.

❖ Different settings ~ collaborations

Ranging from 'remote control research' to participatory research

❖ Doing research in Africa: Setting of uneven power positions within the academic world

=> 'Local' researchers play a vital role in academic knowledge production, yet largely unrecognized

Significant *literature* on fieldwork collaboration, colonialism, etc. but little *action* Recent examples : Special Issues on Research Brokers [2014](#) & [2019](#)



CONVERSATIONS WITH RESEARCH PARTNERS

Conflict & Development Studies: fieldwork, contexts of insecurity, research industries, close collaborations ↔ “remote control” & “armchair ethnography”

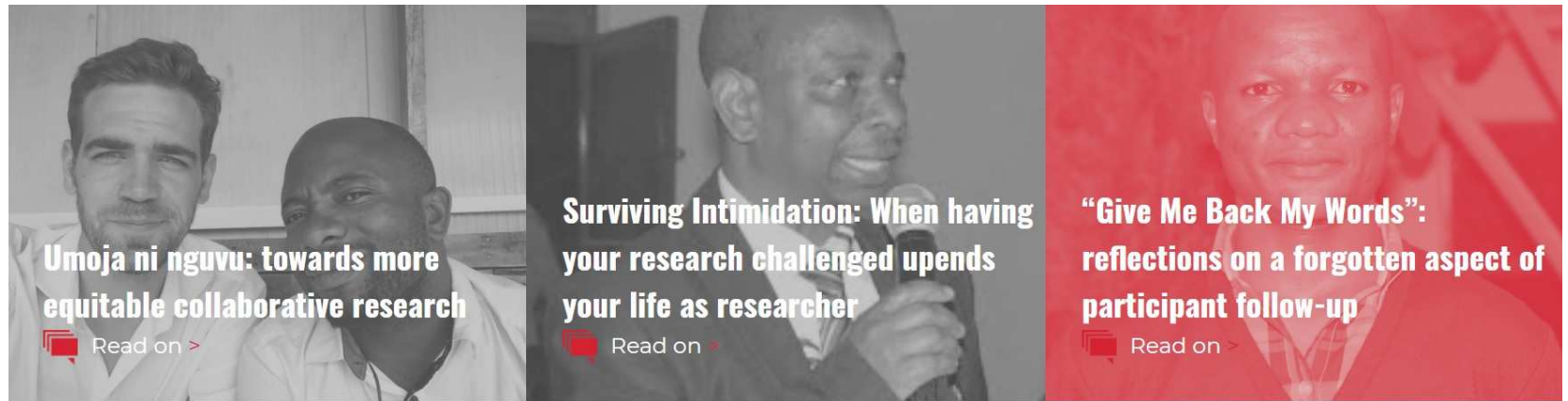
- Reflecting on how, why and with whom we engage in research partnerships
- Addressing silences, challenges, values and power relations in research collaboration
- Addressing the marginalization and invisibility of ‘local’ research partners in academic knowledge production
- Working towards more equal collaborations: to generate and share knowledge in a more collaborative fashion

**(SILENT)
VOICES
FROM
THE
FIELD

(2018)**



BUKAVU SERIES (2018-2020)



Collaboration between Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural de Bukavu, and three partners of the Governance in Conflict network: the Université Catholique de Louvain, the Groupe d'études sur les conflits-Sécurité Humanitaire, and Ghent University.



[Bukavu Series](#)

KEY TENSIONS

- **Precarious partnerships:** dealing with flexibility, arbitrary compensation, insecurities, emotional duress, vulnerability, lack of recognition as a researcher during fieldwork,...
- **Power imbalances:** authority of knowledge, recognition, documentation, research outputs,...
- **Conflicting grounds for engagement:** expectations, realizing ambitions, responsibility and accountability towards 'the field',...

TAKE AWAYS

1. Reflect on your research collaboration
2. Enter the conversation
3. How to improve the research collaboration?

Book launch “[Bukavu Series](#)” at UCL on 3rd of March, 2020

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