Dear alumni from all over the world,

We are pleased to offer you another issue of ‘Exchange to change’. It is of course a very different kind of ‘change’ that we are experiencing today compared to the one we were aspiring in the title of our magazine. In the midst of the current COVID-19 crisis, some of the old assumptions and matters taken for granted all of sudden seem to dwindle. The very foundations of IOB, and of the possibilities to ‘Exchange’ in order to ‘change’ seem to be shaken by the sudden out of our control ‘Change’ that has befallen upon us. Who would have believed only a few weeks ago that today practically all international travel would be suspended without a clear horizon of when it could be resumed. Who would have believed that teaching and learning at our university would only be possible in a virtual online form and that we would actually be able to make this transition (albeit not perfectly) in just a few days’ time, while confined in our homes? And who would have imagined that we would all be engaged as citizen science virologists, counting hospital entries, numbers of ventilators and losses of human life to be mourned, and wondering whether the same approaches that are not all that successful in the Global North can and should be applied in the Global South? Even if there is not yet a clear end of this crisis to be discerned right now, we of course hope that when this issue reaches you, at least some of today’s dark and threatening clouds have already dissipated and the costs and grief of the current unseen crisis are ultimately not as great as we fear today.

At times like these, it is common to think that the world is never going to be the same again, and this is probably true indeed, for good or for bad. Every crisis - and certainly one of this nature- is always also an invitation and opportunity to reconsider and possibly to start anew, even when the temptation to just return to our earlier business-as-usual (or worse) is comprehensible and not entirely impossible. Of course, there have been pandemics before, but some aspects of the current crisis are specific of our current way of life and the global economic system. The ever increasing encroachment of humans upon the natural and animal world has certainly increased our exposure to dangerous viruses and our tremendously interconnected global economic model and our widespread addiction to cheap flying have certainly contributed to today’s problems and merit the thought whether more or less radical adjustments are necessary. Possibly also the IOB mode of operation is in need of overhaul. Our forced transition to online teaching -even if not immediately perfect at all- certainly shows us that a creative use of blended learning might offer opportunities to globalize our master education without necessarily increasing our climate footprint by flying students and professors around the world.

It is clear: many and new challenges will remain for us all to help solving. In order to tackle them, we will need to continue ‘exchanging to change’; folding back upon ourselves would not be the best way to address this global crisis. Take care of yourselves and all your loved ones, we keep in touch.

Johan Battiaensen
At the end of a PhD journey: Sahawal Alidou

Friday the 13th did not turn out to bring bad luck to Sahawal Alidou, one of IOB’s assistants. On that day he successfully defended his PhD thesis entitled “Essays on Household Economics in Sub-Saharan Africa”. And even though the corona measures did limit the number of persons who could attend the event, it still was a very interesting, inspiring and heart-warming event. Exchange to change wanted to learn more about Sahawal’s research and his future plans and contacted him for an interview.

E2C: Can you give us a short summary of your PhD project?
SA: My PhD thesis consists of three essays in which I empirically analyse various areas of household decisions and human development: education, health and gender equality. Essay 1 explores the causal relationship between family size and schooling in SSA. Essay 2 studies unequal parental investment in child full-immunization based on a case study from Benin and Essay 3 uncovers cross-cultural determinants of women’s autonomy in West Africa. In Essays 2 and 3, I specifically discuss how social norms and related beliefs affect household decisions and development outcomes.

E2C: During the laudatio your promotor explained that, when applying for the PhD position, you already had a full blown plan of what topic you would study and how to go about it. What or who triggered your interest in magico-religious beliefs and voucher and its impact on human development?
SA: Some very interesting lectures on Development and Institutions and Development Economics during my Master in International and Development Economics at University of Namur have certainly shaped my research interests. In fact, I was initially interested in understanding some existing social norms in Benin and West Africa, and how they affect household behaviour and human development. Then, I realized that it would be even more relevant and more interesting to explore the beliefs from which these social norms are derived, their origins and how they feed into social norms. In doing so, I wanted to contribute to the proper understanding of “how humans form their beliefs and how they learn”, which, according to Douglass North, is fundamental to a new social science.

E2C: What are the policy recommendations or advice/lessons that can be drawn from your research?
SA: In terms of policy implications, the main take-away of Essay 1 is that smaller families do not necessarily lead to more schooling for children in SSA. Therefore, the main assumption that smaller families foster human capital formation, which is at the basis of most family control programs in developing countries, might actually not be true. Essays 2 and 3 add to the existing body of evidence and further demonstrate that (magico-religious) beliefs and related socio-cultural norms are still deeply rooted in everyday life in SSA, and continue (at least partially) to dictate households’ behaviour and decisions. It would therefore be ill-advised to conceive a development process that does not take them into account. In fact, integrated into development interventions in smart way, I believe that some of them could be highly beneficial.

E2C: During your PhD public defence you were praised for your capacity to conduct high quality econometric research, while at the same time also using qualitative methods to complement your data analysis. Which methods did you combine and what was the main advantage/challenge of combining these methods?
SA: I made extensive use of applied econometrics in my doctoral research. Still, insights were taken from several other social disciplines (e.g. anthropology, ethno-ography, sociology, history), both as background information and to formulate hypotheses that are tested using various econometric techniques such as instrumental variable, difference-in-difference, multiple and fixed-effects regressions. Qualitative surveys were undertaken to complement the available background information and to enrich the econometric analysis with accounts from the field. Combining these methods was challenging as I had to significantly improve my skills in qualitative research in quite a short timeframe (there is still room for improvement anyway) but the reward is two comprehensive and well-researched essays that I am very proud of.

E2C: You’ve also been an assistant at IOB for a bit more than four years now. What are your most memorable moments at IOB so far?
SA: My assistantship at IOB is a nice experience both at a professional and personal level. I have particularly enjoyed the team building activities followed by barbecues at Agora, partying with the students after their graduation ceremony and some passionate discussions during the IOB after-works. I am also grateful for the support and the help that I received in difficult moments over the past years.

E2C: Finally, what does the future now bring for you, Sahawal?
SA: Only good things I hope. I will soon be looking for a position in academia or international organizations. Wherever I land, the most important for me is to be able to combine at least three of the following: research, policy relevance, team work and management, teaching, and social impact. On a more personal note, I will definitely spend more time with my beloved and precious ones. Exchange to change wishes you good luck with all your future endeavours!
The corona diaries

After the spring holiday break, life as we knew it suddenly changed. The first patients of Covid-19 were identified in Belgium and the awareness of the pandemic started to grow among experts, politicians and also in the public opinion. On 13 March, a series of measures were implemented to prevent the rapid spread of the virus: social distancing, working from home (except for essential services), closing bars, restaurants and shops (except essential shops like food, …), only ‘necessary’ trips are allowed; e.g. to the doctor’s or to the shops, outdoor sports only allowed with one additional friend, no travel …

The University of Antwerp and IOB were, of course, no exception. Very soon all Flemish universities decided to cancel all classes and so IOB went totally online. All classes were taught through Blackboard Collaborate, the Paris trip was cancelled, and seminars and group work assignments redesigned in an online fashion. But besides this burden of the online academic life, our IOB students who had travelled from all over the world to study at IOB, were now confined to their student room and/or house. How are our IOB students experiencing the corona situation? Get a quick glimpse inside the room and mind of three IOB students during the first week of the corona ‘lockdown light’ from these three corona diaries …

A quarantine routine

I go to the kitchen then to bed, I look at the computer and cell phone, I am moving from here to there without going anywhere.

#StaySafe

How can I deal with my devasted desires and feel that I am safe? How can I think of the future if I am not sure that I will stay alive after this? I am not talking about if I will be alive in a biological sense. I am talking about my desolated dreams and expectations. Well, it is not healthy to talk about this, ok. I understand that, and I am avoiding these kinds of thoughts. But, it is not fair that I can stay at home if several people have to continue working every day around the world, because, you know, if they do not work today, they will not eat today. As several people have said in Latin America: I know I will die; simply, I do not know which will kill me, the coronavirus or the hunger.

#StayAtHome

In social networks, in the media and kinsfolk, everyone is saying that I have to look for activities, it does not matter what kind of activities. Move it! Do something! However, I think I am a lucky person. I can see the blue sky every day from my window, and I can feel the sunlight which enters through my window in the morning while I try to pay attention to my online lecture, while at the same time I am listening to the seagulls calling. It is something.

Miguel Alejandro Saquimux Contreras

and sexual violence stay safe at home? #StayAtHome

Yet, even this quarantine is challenging for many reasons. I am spending 24 hours alone with myself, and I do not feel lonely. I know that outside, near or far away from here, there are people who take care of me, who share with me in different ways their desires and who support me giving reasons to continue studying, moving, thinking that another world is possible. Even when reality says the contrary. It is challenging to study and talk about wars, failed peace agreements and the future in the middle of a quarantine. But then I remember that Gramsci wrote his incredible work in jail. Probably, my work will never be remembered as his work is, but at least I will share with him in some way the path, to write from a specific place—a naïve thought, I know.

However, I think I am a lucky person. I can see the blue sky every day from my window, and I can feel the sunlight which enters through my window in the morning while I try to pay attention to my online lecture, while at the same time I am listening to the seagulls calling. It is something.

Miguel Alejandro Saquimux Contreras

Between painting, studying, singing, crying, sleeping, being thankful, and loving

I am here in my room following a class and, at the same time, writing down my thoughts. When I was a child, I used to write without any style, just bringing up all the things that were crossing my mind.

I have to be honest; when the quarantine started, I was relatively happy. I immediately thought, wow, I don’t have to wake up early and go to the university, and I am going to stay in my home, which I love! This, though, was in my mind for around four days. After that, I started to feel anxiety. Yes. It is something that I have only experienced in Belgium! I began to think: what about my family, how are they going to handle this crisis? How am I going to protect them if I am so far away from them? I started to imagine many things, and that led me to a shocking moment where for one day, I cried all day.

After that episode, I decided that it was time to chill out, to allow myself to do the things I enjoy, but which, because of the life between study, work, study, work and holidays, I had postponed. Then, I started to cook; I’ve already baked chip cookies, (to be honest, they did not look like the video showed, but the taste is nice). I started to paint. I wanted to give a tropical feel to my room, so I started painting a simple green leaf, and I put it on the wall. My office looks nice.

I live in Belgium with my husband; he is also at home, so now we are sharing all the house to do our stuff. I used to have my desk in the living room, but since David is at home, he also likes to be in the living room, playing games, watching series, or just reading something. Now what is happening is that he wakes up very early in the morning and prepares some delicious Colombian coffee, then he makes breakfast, and I simply wake up with the breakfast already on the table. This is just fantastic! He loves to cook, and I really love that because now, with the online classes, I spend almost the entire day in front of the computer. I do not actually like that too much because it is so tiring, and really I’ve found that I am studying more than before.

So, continuing with the story, the point is that David also loves to talk all the time, he does not consider himself a talkative person, but actually, he is when he is, and with me, well I am his love, so he talks all the time even when I am in my online classes, and he does not realize it. He just talks about food or whatever is crossing his mind. Hahaha, this is so funny because I find it very sweet and I love it also because he reminds me what I love about him, but what is stressful is that he likes to talk just at that moment when the professor is saying the most important part of the class, and I get like noooooo!!!! So, for that reason and because of the video games he loves to play, I decided to move my desk every single day from the living room to our bedroom and to put it again in the living room to have my own, mobile office during the week.

This is helping me a lot because now I do not miss any part of the class because of my lovely husband, just because of myself when I always see two birds in front of the window.

These days since the quarantine started have been bittersweet, with ups and downs, but I am trying to do what I love, relax, dance salsa on my own, spend time with David, and talk more with my family and friends. These days have been hard, but at the same time, most beautiful because of the sun and also because I can stop, take a pause, and re-create what I want to do.

Ps: Here, you can find a photo of the cookies, and of the leaf. I painted. Ahh, also, I know my neighbors now! Hahaha and I think they are so sweet, they put a Winnie the pooh in front of the window, and he always is smiling, and I love that!

Yours,

Diana Flechas
The watchman of an empty building

I remember the noise of the luggage going down the stairs, the sound of the main door being opened and closed many times during the first day. By night I was alone in an empty students’ building in Antwerp. They had gone to their parents’ houses in other cities or villages in Belgium, and I was the only international student within the building. The next day I completely cleaned the social spaces and my room, with loud music the whole day, my windows totally opened, me singing in an empty building. The third day I went to the supermarket and I did a student shop: pasta, pesto, pasta, rice, spring rolls, rum, beer, bread, eggs, vegetables. When I came back to my empty building on my bicycle, the sun was high in the sky telling me that spring had come with us.

The fourth day I woke up early, class time, prepare the computer. Is the sound good? Will you really attend a class without breakfast? No, I need some coffee. Yes, I can hear the lecture, I can hear almost three blocks away because everything is so quiet. One break and I stop, close my eyes and here I am again on the sixth day, in front of the laptop listening to the lecture. I’ve started to read the news and follow the dynamics of the spread all over the world, bad news, terrible news, disaster, catastrophe, a different world for the human species. I was wondering what’s going to happen with the French kiss, the Latino greeting kiss, the hugs between friends? Agamben says that this is not a real problem, it’s a machine of state control spreading fear, the spread all over the world, bad news, terrible news, started to read the news and follow the dynamics of the spread all over the world, bad news, terrible news, I can hear the lecture, I can hear almost three blocks away because everything is so quiet. One break and I stop, close my eyes and here I am again on the sixth day, in front of the laptop listening to the lecture. I’ve started to read the news and follow the dynamics of the spread all over the world, bad news, terrible news, disaster, catastrophe, a different world for the human species. I was wondering what’s going to happen with the French kiss, the Latino greeting kiss, the hugs between friends? Agamben says that this is not a real problem, it’s a machine of state control spreading fear, the spread all over the world, bad news, terrible news.

In 2019, several protests and manifestations took place around the world. Citizens in many countries such as Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Lebanon exerted their right to voice their concerns. However, the motives for these nationwide protests varied significantly from country to country. While some of them demanded lower fuel prices and subsidies for transportation services, others requested an effective democratic system, the eradication of corruption, and enhanced women’s rights. And although these factors may appear to be the leading causes of protests, the underlying drivers can be traced back to the countries’ ongoing social and economic inequalities.

So, what were the main drivers of these protests? After consulting a panel of experts (see box) from different regions of the world, some conventional aspects can be highlighted, including the role of media, the linkage between states and the global economic system, the political setting, and the relationship between government, policies, and citizens.

From the experts’ conclusions, we find that massive protests can be understood as the citizens’ discontent with their government’s response to their social demands. On the other hand, the experts concur in terms of the importance of social media to spread information about these global movements, which often highlight common ground among protestors, including ineffective government service delivery and the increasing cost of living, as well as lack of transparency and corruption from politicians.

Whilst true that the reasons for protests respond to the particular dynamics of the different regions, we cannot deny that there are some common triggers for the uprising of civil unrest. Globalization and neoliberal capitalism cross through those regions and they are differently embedded in their political economy and their society. States and global demands interlace in complex relationships that reach to and affect populations and their life expectations in different ways. Each country, according to its endogenous dynamics and patterns, responds to the global markets and takes part in world trade and global markets in a differentiated way.

On this interview, experts were also consulted on how these civil movements will react to the current coronavirus scenario and its effects on the social setting and the country’s economic performance.
ExChE: Which could be the underlying causes of these global phenomena of social unrest?

YNs: Social unrest can be attributed to two main factors. First, the absence of the government in addressing inequality and social justice. As governments fail to respond to their citizens’ claims, those who are the most disadvantaged begin to express their discontent, leading to an outbreak. A protest is immediately linked to the role of the mass media and the strength of its networks. This leads us to the second factor. As watchdog, the mass media provides a narrative to the ongoing protests and, through its systems, connects the dispersed narratives and conglomorate them into a single claim. Therefore, it is not surprising that the

“... For the case of Latin America, as well as many developing countries, two main aspects have a role to play on the development of these social movements: ‘political culture’ and ‘colonial domination’...”

media can help by bridging the gap between specific, context-rich issues and social unrest as large-scaled as those protesting about broad topics such as human rights or access to basic livelihoods.

MP: I distinguish two main elements in this regard: citizens and policy. Both are, therefore, interrelated in several ‘institutional’ scopes, such as political participation through elections, i.e., in every process of representative democracy. The problem then emerges when such processes and institutions are no longer enough to meet social demands. Social movements—albeit not necessarily political organizations that arise from such movements—want to expand the boundaries of what is possible, outside institutional rigidity. For the case of Latin America, as well as many developing countries, two main aspects have a role to play in the development of these social movements: ‘political culture’ and ‘colonial domination’. The latter, in particular, has a more profound effect, as this has led to underdevelopment scenarios, lack of well-being, and social inequality. Therefore, such aspects can effectively foster social unrest. Moreover, I believe that common causes of social unrest—such as political disaffection—are generally framed and interrelated with other underlying factors.

FH: The global protests of 2019 were widespread in terms of their motivations, stated goals, and local context. What explains the synchronicity is the role played by the internet and social networks, in particular in disseminating the example and inspiration of protest from one location to another more rapidly than ever before. People across the globe were inspired by demonstrations in other countries, thinking that this global political climate made their governments vulnerable and susceptible to pressure from below. In other words, the dynamics that gave rise to the Arab Spring in 2011 have now intensified and become global. Obviously, for this to work, there should also be a local context in which protest was both meaningful and possible. This did not occur in every country but did in many countries. Also, an inevitable worldwide economic slowdown cannot be ignored as a contributing factor in triggering the protests.

HMT: Several factors are contributing to social unrest globally, with many anti-government demonstrations since 2017, in which citizens have mobilized against authoritarian regimes in Asia, Latin America, and Bolivia. For this, I would point out issues such as colonial legacy, lack of service delivery, poor governance, the fight for human rights, lack of transparency, acts of repression (i.e., infringement of civil rights liberties), and an increase in prices. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the underlying causes of social unrest can be traced back to colonial history when the black majority were fighting to free themselves from the white minority’s oppression. This led to the creation of a vicious cycle. First, the newly formed government adopted some repressive laws reinforcement methods previously used by the former colonial government. This was followed by repressive authoritarian regimes from the liberation party movements, which initially freed people from their colonial masters. These regimes are currently occupied by corrupt leaders who seek self-enrichment initiatives, resulting in the deterioration of the economy, poor service delivery, higher levels of corruption, and lack of democratic space.

ExChE: If you could compare, which are the particularities of the case of Latin America, Africa, and Asia regions and which do you think are the common factors among them?

YNs: Asia has seen a large number of mobilized protests in 2019, including the seven-month unrest in Hong Kong protesting against the extradition bill allowing persecution to be conducted in mainland China, mass protests across Indonesia against the curtailment of the authority of the anti-corruption commission, and the protest of thousands in Thailand to dethrone the Future Forward Party. All three share the common feature of being led by students. This feature is becoming more noticeable in the modern politics of Southeast Asia, particularly as the youth easily ‘feed off’ reports of protests happening in neighboring countries. One cause of this is that Asia is home to a large and rapidly growing population of youth, most of whom are media-literate. Again, the media fulfills an important role, helping to “internalize” political narratives, making them easier to catch on across audiences. This may also explain why the protests have taken place in relatively similar periods in 2019.

MP: Even though many problems related to political disaffection can be triggers of social unrest, as well as several social inequalities, there are also some characteristics of Latin American societies and their culture that should be considered in this regard, including a history of rebellion against authority, and competing political projects. While the history of resistance to authority can be traced back to the discontent against colonialism, these competing political projects arise from the history of Latin America after its independence, where continually changing politics and ideas ended up imposing authoritarian forms of government, once some of them came into power. Therefore, such a culture has shaped democratic projects, from Independence onwards, by becoming more authoritarian and unequal. In this way, I assert that culture has an important—albeit not direct—impact on current inequalities and several constraints and shortcomings of our democracies. Moreover, chronic institutional helplessness, along with political elites with a low ‘governance ability’ completes a ‘perfect storm’. All of this leads Latin America into volatile social situations. Nevertheless, we should never lose hope in the expectation of major social changes, as it remains to be seen if these revolts could create a vanishing point in the cycle of authoritarianism that is still embedded in our society.
In Latin America, the target of the protests ranged from the high cost of living and inequality (Chile) to austerity (Ecuador), to a left-wing government (Bolivia). However, despite the fact that most of the countries in Latin America are experiencing persisting social and economic inequalities, some countries, such as Peru, have not shown the same impetus for civil unrest. Peru was largely characterized by an absence of protest, in part due to its particularly fragmented and disoriented social and political fabric (structure) since the 1990s, and in part due to its particular political conjuncture: the right-wing sector suffering a legitimacy crisis due to a corruption scandal, while the more left-leaning and centrist sides with a president who took a stand against judicial and congressional corruption. Also, Peru is less advanced in terms of capitalist development compared to Chile. For instance, there is a large informal sector that upholds low-income sectors. Chilean society, though, is more dependent on capital, and the high cost of living is felt more acutely. In the case of Ecuador, what we saw was an anti-austerity protest, with the participation of the historically strong indigenous movement. Bolivia saw a resurgence of protests against the left-wing Morales government of a strength that had not been seen since the early years of his rule; a certain fatigue with his long-running government, coupled with several clumsy decisions by the president, allowed the opposition to expand beyond its traditional middle- and upper-middle-class bastions, thereby facilitating a right-wing to position itself in the government and come into power. It is also important to again stress that in the cases of Chile and Ecuador, the immediate triggering factor was an economic austerity measure and/or price hike, signaling how global economic slowdown tends to trigger simultaneous, seemingly coordinated protests across the world.

HMT: In Africa, bad governance and poor or no government service delivery has resulted in wide social unrest. In Zimbabwe, protest against price increases for basic goods began as early as 1996 and increased during the hyperinflation era, from 2002 to the present. Meanwhile, South Africa records the highest number of protest actions in the world. Here, the lack of service delivery has led to the creation of other problems like xenophobia, with the local people arguing that migrants are taking their jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, and houses. However, foreigners are used as the scapegoat to protest the poor service delivery and lack of transparency by the government. Social unrest in most parts of Africa results from a lack of democratic space, with citizens taking to the streets to protest repressive laws imposed by authoritarian regimes. Most people who protest belong to the lower strata of the society, as they are the most affected by economic hardships, and therefore, demand a regime change.

FH: How do you think that the coronavirus crisis is affecting these phenomena of social unrest in LA/Asia/Africa? What new scenarios or social processes may result from this pandemic?

ExC: How do you think that the coronavirus crisis is affecting these phenomena of social unrest in LA/Asia/Africa?

1. What new scenarios or social processes may result from this pandemic?

YNs: Regarding the social unrest phenomena in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, the pandemic has evolved overnight into a socio-economic issue. This has forced some governments to immediately activate emergency funds as a consequence of locking down or implement nation-wide social restrictions to curb the immediate socio-economic impacts. For some others, however, this realization has come later rather than sooner. In the case of Indonesia, the government seems content in their opting for a large-scale social restriction. This response is intended to meet health and socio-economic concerns ‘halfway’ and is a milder alternative to a national scale lockdown. However, this has only highlighted government absence in responding appropriately. As countries like the United States and Italy are already bracing for social unrest due to lack of social aid, food, and medical supplies, so are countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Indonesia. With the fasting month of Ramadan and the celebration of the Eid around the corner, and with no end in sight to the restrictions, more are going hungry having lost jobs. This is not to mention the slow distribution of government aid to support families most affected by the socio-economic impact of the restriction. Therefore, this scenario has become a potential catalyst for social unrest.

MP: How people interact is changing. But it is a change in ‘the form’ of social ties, although this ‘formal change’ is neither new nor rare. In this regard, by observing these first weeks of lockdown in many countries of the region, I see an acceleration of several social practices that, previous to the coronavirus outbreak, were more emerging. As a matter of fact, although new communication technologies being used more extensively, greater use of them is nothing new. Instead, I have a main concern regarding privacy. A significant risk is the existence of several video conferencing platforms that help to enable human interactions. Specifically, I mean those that correspond to ‘closed source’ software, which can transfer personal information to governments, such as Zoom or Teams; unlike Jitsi or others that are ‘open source’. Additionally, I do not observe a ‘content creation of such demands in the Latin America Region. At least in the case of Chile, pro-business government actions during the coronavirus pandemic have only intensified the ‘social obligation’. Moreover, I have witnessed that social distancing measures have leveraged the ability of people to organize and to prepare the second wave of protest in Chile. This preparatory stage may be extended until a vaccine is created or “partial lockdown” implemented in Chile is lifted. I may make a political consideration: the obvious response will be more repression from Latin American governments, as a constant pattern repeating itself in the region, particularly for the Chilean Government.

FH: From this coronavirus crisis, one can conclude that a worldwide economic recession is coming. The result could be a retreat from globalization towards conservative nationalism, or it could be an increase in state surveillance and power over citizens or a turn towards greater egalitarianism and solidarity, as monstrous inequalities are exposed for everyone to see. I sense that the outcome has not yet been decided, and that it will depend on political struggle. I’m fairly sure that by next year at the latest, we will see mass protests around the world again, in response to the dislocations caused by the pandemic and by the world economic crisis. Now is the time to prepare new ideas and models as well as organizing strategies for both the struggles to come, and the management of the public health crisis itself.

HMT: The aftermath of the virus will undoubtedly result in various forms of social unrest. It is the virus consistently exposes inadequate health care systems across the globe. And I believe that we may see an increase in protest actions for a better health care system and demand for accountability from the government, particularly in developing countries.
Liliana Lizarrazo Rodríguez
DEM 1991-93 | Colombia-Belgium

Where do you work? Assistant professor and researcher at the University of Antwerp, Faculty of Law and Attorney at Law Bar of West Flanders (Belgium). I teach the course on ‘Business and Human Rights’. In addition, I mainly work in areas of international economic law.

One piece of advice for the graduating student from IOB? I would recommend keeping an open-minded attitude towards experiences and situations and keep valuing diversity in their professional and personal lives.

How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career? IOB was crucial in my life. It was an opportunity to share academic and personal experiences with people from four continents with highly diverse backgrounds. I deepened my understanding of development problems in the world and learned interdisciplinary approaches that went beyond my own background (in Law). Besides this, I made fantastic friends from various countries and we are still in frequent contact.

Eduardo Sanchez Mera
GOV 2014-15 | Argentina

Where do you work? I work as Portfolio Officer for the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). I joined UNOPS immediately after graduating from IOB. During the last 5 years I have worked supporting the implementation of environmental related projects and also funding together with partners such as UN Environment and the Green Climate Fund.

One advice for the graduating students from IOB? Enjoy the experience, learn from your classmates and professors. It will enrich you as a person and open your mind as a professional.

How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career? IOB changed my life completely. I never imagined having such an international experience would define my path as an international development practitioner far away from home. Most importantly, I made friends for life and I met my partner, Ruby, with whom I am still together after IOB.

Achalu Berecha Dhaba
GLOB 2015-16 | Ethiopia

Where do you work? Lecturer, Head Department of Economics, College of Business and Economics, Jimma University, Ethiopia

One advice for the graduating students from IOB? As you know, being at IOB is a great opportunity to gain experience and to establish an international connection; enjoy it.

How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career? My one-year experience as an IOB student has given me great opportunities to learn from respected and highly experienced professors and to gain lessons on how to interact with diversity. My IOB experience helped me both professionally as a teacher in higher institution in teaching and research; student consultation and team work; service delivery to internal and external communities; and personally as a citizen who has gained self-esteem, knowledge and awareness of the world through increased proficiency in Globalisation and Development.

If you were the director of a research fund, what is a research question that you would agree to finance? If I were a director of a research fund, I would like to support some research and development projects that can improve the livelihood of rural farmers in Africa focusing on improving agricultural sector. For instance, in Ethiopia, the agricultural sector plays a central role in the life and livelihood of most Ethiopians. Smallholder farming households (mainly in subsistence and rain-fed farming) account for about 95 percent of agricultural production and 85 percent of all employment. As the result of this traditional and subsistence farming system, Ethiopia is home to a large number of people living below the international poverty line. Therefore, focusing on the improvement of the agricultural sector is equivalent to mass poverty reduction.

Alumni panel focusing on improving agricultural sector. For instance, in Ethiopia, the agricultural sector plays a central role in the life and livelihood of most Ethiopians. Smallholder farming households (mainly in subsistence and rain-fed farming) account for about 95 percent of agricultural production and 85 percent of all employment. As the result of this traditional and subsistence farming system, Ethiopia is home to a large number of people living below the international poverty line. Therefore, focusing on the improvement of the agricultural sector is equivalent to mass poverty reduction.
Africa rising? A historical perspective?

On 24 January 2020, IOB and the Centre for Urban History of the Netherlands (CUH) organized a workshop on African industrialization with the EFC and readers. We have also had discussions with Soenoharso Ablow (SA), Sam Geens (SG) and Elie Lunanga (EL) acting as discussants during the workshop, to further enlighten us with their critical perspectives on the paper.

Brief summary of the paper

**EF:** Sub-Saharan Africa’s recent economic boom has raised hopes that the region will repeat Chinese accomplishments in combining rapid growth with accelerated poverty alleviation, based on the ‘Asian model’ of labour-intensive export-led industrialization. To analyze how realistic these expectations are, we scrutinize the promises and pitfalls of historical industrial growth and development analogies in Ghana, Japan and Britain. We have also included a few examples from Southeast Asia and Latin America, such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, or even China, are not nearly as large as the gap was between Britain and Japan around 1900. Hence, labour-intensive export-led industrialization seems harder to realize for Africa in a world where Asian manufacturing is still gaining prominence. Second, an industrialization ‘push’ does not automatically need to be a quick transition to labour-intensive industrialization?

**SA:** What is the evidence for such a transition?

**EF:** in a number of ways: (a) is it likely that the economies that have long specialized in a land- or resource-based commodity will need a quick transition to labour-intensive industrialization? (b) Is there historical evidence to assume that such transitions result in a rapid decline in poverty?

**SA:** Do the industrialization processes in Asia offer an appropriate historical precedent? First, rapid industrialization in Asia was a rapid and very high-growth process, and the labour-intensive industries were also growing rapidly. Second, the need for land scarcity or potential land scarcity has been a strong factor in the development of the Asian economies, as it has in many other cases. Third, the labour-intensive industries are also growing rapidly.

**SA:** These are important arguments. But what about the other factors that could influence the outcome of industrialization?

**EF:** The important debate on contemporary challenges, such as the interaction between economic growth and poverty. Their diachronic comparison adds a much needed long-term perspective to the discussion, but also poses a risk as it is an extremely difficult academic exercise. For instance, by using three front-runners as proxies for the development of entire continents, the paper ignores the major differences that characterized the first wave of industrialization within Europe. Indeed, while Britain was the first country on the continent to industrialize and did so in a very similar way to the British front-runner, the Netherlands and Denmark were clear laggards. Moreover, the nature of their first industrialization wave was completely different as it was primarily driven by the agricultural sector, the processing of its products, such as milk, and its export. Only from the 1950’s on, did industry employ more people than agriculture in Denmark. This diversity path of industrialization and economic growth poses an alternative model for African countries, in which the vast majority of the population still work in agriculture. Nevertheless, the article is foremost focused on the unskilled workforce dependent on wage labour. Where are the farmers, the peasants, the majority of the Sub-Saharan population?

**SA:** What about the importance of rural areas and agricultural policies?

**EF:** their diachronic comparison adds a much needed long-term perspective to the discussion, but also poses a risk as it is an extremely difficult academic exercise. For instance, by using three front-runners as proxies for the development of entire continents, the paper ignores the major differences that characterized the first wave of industrialization within Europe. Indeed, while Britain was the first country on the continent to industrialize and did so in a very similar way to the British front-runner, the Netherlands and Denmark were clear laggards. Moreover, the nature of their first industrialization wave was completely different as it was primarily driven by the agricultural sector, the processing of its products, such as milk, and its export. Only from the 1950’s on, did industry employ more people than agriculture in Denmark. This diversity path of industrialization and economic growth poses an alternative model for African countries, in which the vast majority of the population still work in agriculture. Nevertheless, the article is foremost focused on the unskilled workforce dependent on wage labour. Where are the farmers, the peasants, the majority of the Sub-Saharan population?

**SA:** How do you account for the differences in economic growth and poverty in different regions of the world?

**EF:** to analyze how realistic a model of labour-intensive export-led growth with accelerated poverty reduction is. To quote Frankema and van Waijenburg: “Sustained welfare gains associated with structural change have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups.” However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction.

**SA:** What about the importance of the interplay between economic growth and poverty reduction?

**EF:** to analyze how realistic a model of labour-intensive export-led growth with accelerated poverty reduction is. To quote Frankema and van Waijenburg: “Sustained welfare gains associated with structural change have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups.” However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employs taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction.

**SA:** What about the importance of the interplay between economic growth and poverty reduction?

**EF:** to analyze how realistic a model of labour-intensive export-led growth with accelerated poverty reduction is. To quote Frankema and van Waijenburg: “Sustained welfare gains associated with structural change have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups.” However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction. For instance, poverty rates have generally taken time to trickle down to the lower income groups. However, I find it hard to believe that it is simply a matter of time. For instance, bargaining strength of labourers vis-à-vis rent seekers in Sub-Saharan Africa might speed-up wage increase and African governments can efficiently employ taxation to reduce inequality and improve the rate of poverty reduction. Hence, additional social policies must be implemented in order to achieve poverty reduction.
cooperation between governments; which cannot be taken for granted, considering current tensions between many countries on the continent (e.g., between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan; between Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and DR Congo). Moreover, with many African countries sharing the same comparative advantages, the gains from integrating the markets are likely to be limited and the competition among them very high, without sufficient coordination and cooperation.

Finally I would like to mention that gender equality in access to land and capital, attenuation of non-fiscal trade-barriers, and also the whole power dynamics (between global corporates, between countries and between corporates and countries) surrounding the rise of Africa in the global economy are equally crucial in thinking about Africa’s path to industrialization.

EL: To further underline the challenges of domestic market integration in SSA, I want to mention that integrated markets do not necessarily imply efficient spatial allocations (Knetter & Slaughter, 1999). Well-thought reforms, effective cooperation and strategic leadership will be needed for Africa to rise. I also join Sam and Sahawal in congratulating Frankema and Waijenburg on their publication.

Closing reaction

EF: Thanks to Sam, Sahawal and Elie for their critical thoughts. I have a couple of comments in reaction. First, and on inequality reduction as a mean to accelerate poverty decline, I want to stress that the Brazilian ‘social route’ might be hard to replicate in Africa, as most countries don’t have a surplus to distribute. Second, different industrialization paths within Europe further demonstrates the importance of urban markets for an agriculture-based economic growth and more generally, the importance of the market integration which we suggest as an alternative route for African industrialization. Finally, there are major differences between China and Africa which make me very cautious about the replicability of China’s success in Africa. For instance, contrary to China which is a monolithic and strong state with a relatively high level of human capital, Africa is fragmented into weak states, with low human capital, lack of strategic leadership and insufficient coordination. Africa needs to unite if it is to achieve real political leverage against the global powers that be. Africa must also take control of its natural resources and redefine its position on the bargaining stage.

Ewout Frankema obtained a PhD in Economics from the University of Groningen in 2008 and is currently full professor and chair of the Rural and Environmental History Group at Wageningen University. His research agenda focuses on a deeper understanding of the long-term economic history of developing regions (Africa, Latin America, Asia).

Sam Geens is a PhD candidate at the Department of History of University of Antwerp. His research focuses on plague, warfare and famine and tries to explain the evolution of economic inequality and living standards during the crisis of the Late Middle Ages.

Sahawal Alidou is research and teaching assistant at IOB. He obtained a PhD in Economics from UAntwerp and KU Leuven in March 2020. His research mainly relates to household decision making and its impact on development outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Elie Lunanga is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Antwerp. His doctoral research examines the multidimensional impact (economic development, security and conservation) of rural and urban electrification in Eastern DR Congo.

Ecology and life cycle

This is not the first time that countries have been confronted with locust swarms. Desert locusts are the oldest and the most devastating migratory pest in the world. Locusts resemble grasshoppers but differ in terms of their ability to change from a solitary living form into gregarious, highly mobile adult swarms and hopper bands, as their numbers and densities increase. The desert locusts undergo three stages of life: egg, nymph and adult (Sharp, 2020). After copulation, the female lays her eggs on soft soil, where the temperature and dampness should be right. The eggs absorb moisture from the surrounding soil and have an incubation period of two weeks or longer, depending on the temperature, before hatching. The nymph stage is the second stage, also known as the hopper stage. This is similar to the larva stage in the butterfly cycle and at this stage, they are flightless. In the adult stage of life, locusts have wings. They find their few feeding grounds by following the smell of sprouting grass. Normally it takes two to four weeks for hoppers to become adults, but when the conditions are right, as they are now in the Horn of Africa, their development switches to the fast track.

As the vegetation in one place begins to run out, the winged adults release pheromones, sending message to others in the group that they must move on. When groups merge, they form a swarm (BBC Earth, 2017). An adult locust eats its entire body weight every day and a whole swarm can consume literally hundreds of tons of vegetation (FAO, 2020). The swarms travel with the wind, which is the most energy efficient way. Following the wind currents means that they’re always heading towards areas of low pressure, places where wind meets rain and vegetation starts to grow. As they fly, swarms join up with other swarms to

The living fire canvassing the recent locust invasion

In early 2020, the Horn of Africa nations, comprised of Djibouti, Somaliland, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia encountered a major threat in their fields: desert locusts that slowly spread to several other neighbouring countries and gradually into Saudi Arabia and Asia. In this article, EcS provides a deeper insight into the causes, nature and potential impact of what has proved to be the worst invasion in decades.
The locusts’ trek, a journey of millions strong

The locust invasion in Africa can be traced back to the Arabian desert, which is said to have had a couple of cyclones in 2018. The cyclones showered the area with rainfall and modified the microclimate to conditions optimal for the fast breeding of the locusts. The actual locust breeding ground from which this invasion emanated is not apparent (or not known?). Specialists, however, suppose it to be the Yemen-Saudi Arabia-Oman border region. Carried by the winds, a swarm of locusts migrated from this region in 2019, across the Saudi Arabia-Oman border region. In the meantime, Djibouti and Eritrea were also receiving swarms of locusts from the breeding grounds in the Arabian desert. A group of these ravenous creatures then proceeded from Uganda into South Sudan which was the last to be hit by the invasion in Africa. Though the invasion seems to have momentarily waned in some countries such as Uganda, according to locust watch of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the threat still lingers. The rains that fell in March are likely to give rise to a new wave of locust invasion in the already affected areas around June and July. The locust invasion is not limited to the African continent as some countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Saudi-Arabia, Yemen, Oman and India, among others, have had their own experience with the plague. Moreover, fears of locust invasion in Bangladesh, Burma and China remain real.

The impact

Desert locusts have heavily affected the Greater Horn of Africa. As per the FAO, food security and crops are greatly threatened in eight countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. The infestation has destroyed hundreds of kilometres of vegetation in Ethiopia and tens of thousands of hectares of land in Somalia. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the outbreak in Kenya is the worst in 75 years. Similarly, Ethiopia and Somalia have also faced the worst desert locust outbreak in over 25 years, where in the latter country it is estimated that 70,000 hectares of land have been infested by hopppers and breeding adults, which have already damaged crops and pasture. The current locust infestation has been devastating crops and pastureland, as well as trees and other vegetation since June 2019 in the parts of Afar, Amhara, Somali and Tigray regions.

The swarms here have produced hopper bands that have covered more than 174 square kilometres and have consumed more than 8,700 metric tons of green vegetation every day. The desert locust is among the most dangerous migratory pests in the world. A 1 km² swarm can consume the equivalent of food for 35,000 people in one day. In Kenya, some swarms are reaching the Rift Valley, one of the region’s bread baskets. There is a very high risk that swarms could appear in northeastern Uganda, southeast South Sudan and southwest Ethiopia if appropriate measures are not taken on time.

Several measures have been adopted by international agencies and governments to control the spread of the locusts. However, substantial amounts of crops have been lost in heavily affected countries like Ethiopia and Eritrea. The outbreak of desert locusts has not only affected food security in the region, but also has a direct economic and environmental impact. It is projected that this invasion could lead to a dramatic drop in agricultural production and could exacerbate malnutrition and hunger in a region where 19 million people are already severely food insecure. UNOCHA estimates that the desert locust has made the food security situation worse in East Africa. Furthermore, this organisation estimated that approximately 485,000 hectares of land have been under desert locust control in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia (Reliefweb, 2019).

Blame it on climate change?

Desert locusts are usually restricted to the semi-arid and arid deserts of Africa, the Near East and South-West Asia that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually. In normal conditions, locust numbers decrease either by natural mortality or through migration. Many studies have argued that a hotter climate damages locust swarms and wet weather conditions}

UNOCHA warns that climate change, which has led to severe weather extremes, including cyclones and unusually heavy rains, has caused locust populations to explode and the upcoming rainy season will lead to further increases in swarms unless control measures rapidly scale up.
IN THE WORLD

measures to mitigate the impacts by anticipated. While countries are taking future desert locust swarms could be the swarms if there is higher than expected rainfall events allow the desert locust to flourish (FAO, 2020).

Interventions

There are both preventive and curative measures for locust invasions. Preventive measures entail treating locust breeding sites or hotspots with broad-spectrum insecticides. When the eggs hatch, the locusts are wingless for about 2 weeks and thus more vulnerable to treatment. Such preventive measures therefore rely heavily on robust monitoring and forecasting systems in order to curb the spread of locust infestation from breeding sites. However, Zhang et al. (2019) explain that for the desert locusts, preventive measures are quite challenging since these locusts have a broad range of suitable breeding habitats often located in remote areas with limited access. Therefore, detecting the initial stages of an imminent invasion is difficult. Moreover, the civil unrest in the Yemen-Oman region where this invasion started could have further limited the locust monitoring exercise. Hence, countries were left with the curative option. Across all affected countries, the strategies which have been employed by governments are aerial spraying and on-ground spraying. For instance, in Kenya and Ethiopia, aircrafts were deployed to spray over the swarming locusts, whereas in Uganda, foot soldiers were sent to affected regions to carry out on-ground spraying. Currently, Uganda is adding to its locust-defense strategy by leasing some aircrafts from Kenya. South Sudan are preparing themselves by training people for spraying as they await the acquisition of sprayers, vehicles, aircrafts and chemicals. In most of the countries, inorganic broad-band pesticides are used and deemed effective. In Somalia however, the FAO is assisting with the use of biopesticides which consist of the spores of a fungus which produces a toxin that kills only locusts and related grasshoppers. The biopesticide, in comparison to the inorganic broad-spectrum chemicals, is very insect specific and more environmentally friendly. However, it might be ineffective if locusts have already winged and taken to flight. Away from the African continent, India’s strategy against the locust invasion is proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.

Policy implications and the way forward

The spread of the locust infestation is driven only by climatic conditions and food availability. (Inter)national borders pose no restrictions to the movement of the swarms. Neither would diplomatic barriers hinder the movement of locusts between any two conflicting states or regions within a state. For example, it is said the Al Shabaab have cut off any state response to the locust infestation in the insurgency areas in Somalia (Mohammed and Endeshaw, February 2020). If anything, these boundaries and this conflict are proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.

Policy implications and the way forward

The spread of the locust infestation is driven only by climatic conditions and food availability. (Inter)national borders pose no restrictions to the movement of the swarms. Neither would diplomatic barriers hinder the movement of locusts between any two conflicting states or regions within a state. For example, it is said the Al Shabaab have cut off any state response to the locust infestation in the insurgency areas in Somalia (Mohammed and Endeshaw, February 2020). If anything, these boundaries and this conflict are proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.

Policy implications and the way forward

The spread of the locust infestation is driven only by climatic conditions and food availability. (Inter)national borders pose no restrictions to the movement of the swarms. Neither would diplomatic barriers hinder the movement of locusts between any two conflicting states or regions within a state. For example, it is said the Al Shabaab have cut off any state response to the locust infestation in the insurgency areas in Somalia (Mohammed and Endeshaw, February 2020). If anything, these boundaries and this conflict are proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.

Policy implications and the way forward

The spread of the locust infestation is driven only by climatic conditions and food availability. (Inter)national borders pose no restrictions to the movement of the swarms. Neither would diplomatic barriers hinder the movement of locusts between any two conflicting states or regions within a state. For example, it is said the Al Shabaab have cut off any state response to the locust infestation in the insurgency areas in Somalia (Mohammed and Endeshaw, February 2020). If anything, these boundaries and this conflict are proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.

Policy implications and the way forward

The spread of the locust infestation is driven only by climatic conditions and food availability. (Inter)national borders pose no restrictions to the movement of the swarms. Neither would diplomatic barriers hinder the movement of locusts between any two conflicting states or regions within a state. For example, it is said the Al Shabaab have cut off any state response to the locust infestation in the insurgency areas in Somalia (Mohammed and Endeshaw, February 2020). If anything, these boundaries and this conflict are proving very effective as they track the swarms and destroy the beds of locust eggs before they hatch. As a result, India stands as the current barrier shielding China from experiencing the locust infestation. The fight against the locust infestation is indeed underway in the affected countries and presumably, neighboring countries which have not yet received locusts are taking proactive measures to control the infestation before it happens. These control measures are being implemented despite limitations in the supply of equipment, trained personnel and chemicals.