

Curriculum Vitae
GILLIAN MATHYS

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Google Scholar Profile: <https://scholar.google.be/citations?user=g4Ny9IYAAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>

Interested in (Eastern) Congo, Rwanda and the wider Great Lakes region; pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history, and in particular *longue durée* socio-political processes; oral history; bottom-up history; representations of history within conflict; historical trajectories of space and identities; mobility; state-formation; land conflicts; decolonization; violence; local-regional-global interactions; borderlands; ‘traditional’ forms of governance; (historical) fieldwork in conflict settings

Academic qualifications and affiliations

EDUCATION

2014 PhD in History, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, History Department, Ghent University, Belgium
2005 MA African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), UK
2003 MA History, Ghent University, Belgium

CURRENT POSITIONS

2019-2023 Senior Research Fellow, Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), History Department, Ghent University, Belgium

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

2020- 2021 One of 5 expert historians in the national parliamentary commission on Belgian’s colonial past “Commission passé colonial”
2016-2019 Doctoral Assistant, History Department, Ghent University
2014- 2016 Post-doc, Centre for International Analysis and Management, Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands (0,8 FTE)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2022 Global Minds Fund – Sensitizing Events 2022, “Embroidering the past”, Ghent University, 3,000 euro
2020-2022 Post-doctoral fellow Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, c. 2,600 euro
2019-2023 Senior Research Fellow, Research Foundation Flanders, History Department, Ghent University, Belgium, c. 315,000 euro
2009-2013 PhD Fellowship, Research Foundation Flanders, History Department, Ghent University, Belgium, c. 156,000 euro
2018 Fieldwork grant Research Council-Flanders, 10,032 euro
2018 Global Minds Personal Grant, Ghent University and VLIR-UOS, project on historical songs, with Ndaro cultural centre and GEC-SH, 12,500 euro
2017 Fieldwork grant Research Council Flanders, 1650 euro
2011 Fieldwork grant Research Council Flanders, c. 4950 euro
2010 Fieldwork grant Research Council Flanders, c. 4950 euro

Publications

MONOGRAPH

Mathys, G. *Mobility and Exclusion: Making Borders and Identities in Central Africa (c. 1865-2018)* [to be resubmitted March 2022 to Cambridge University Press]

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES IN JOURNALS

- Decoene P., M. Luyckfasseel and G. Mathys, “Voices from exile: The Mpadist Mission des Noirs in

Oshwe's penal camps in the Belgian Congo (1940-1960)" *International Journal of African Historical Studies* [Accepted with minor revisions]

- Mathys, G. "Questioning territories and identities in the precolonial (nineteenth century) Lake Kivu region." *Africa*, 91(3), 2021, 493-515.
- van Leeuwen, M., G. Mathys, L. de Vries, and G. van der Haar. "From resolving land disputes to agrarian justice—dealing with the structural crisis of plantation agriculture in eastern DR Congo." *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2020): 1–26.
- Mathys, G. & K. Büscher. "Urbanizing Kitchanga: Historical trajectories of the politics of refuge in North Kivu, Eastern DR Congo", in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 12.2, 2018, 232-253.
- Büscher, K. & G. Mathys. "War, Displacement and Rural–Urban Transformation: Kivu's Boomtowns, Eastern DR Congo", in *The European Journal of Development Research*, 100.1, 2018: 1-19.
- Mathys, G. "Bringing history back in: Past, present, and conflict in Rwanda and the Eastern DRC", in: *Journal of African History*, 58.3, 2017, 465-87. (Altmetric score in the top 5% of all outputs scored.)

PEER-REVIEWED BOOK CHAPTERS

- Büscher K. & G.Mathys. "Navigating the Urban 'In-between Space': Local Livelihood and Identity Strategies in Exploiting the Goma/Gisenyi Border." In *Violence on the Margins: States, Conflict, and Borderlands*, edited by Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, 119-42. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Mathys G. "A cripple Bula Matari: A historical account of labour, migration and borders in the Rwandese-Congolese Borderland." In *Borders and Frontiers in Africa*, edited by Steven Van Wolputte, 117-50. Leipzig: Lit-Verlag, 2013.
- Mathys G. & K. Büscher. "Politique d'urbanisation, déplacement interne et conflit armé dans l'Est de la RDC: l'histoire de Kitchanga". In *Conjonctures de l'Afrique Centrale 2019*.
- Mathys G. e.a. 'Des racines historiques de l'accaparement des terres à la justice agraire dans l'est de la RD Congo (Kivu)'. In *Conjonctures de l'Afrique Centrale 2022* [Accepted with minor revisions]

POLICY WORK (published & unpublished)

- Together with Koen Vlassenroot, **peer-reviewed** policy report, "'It's not all about the land": Land disputes and conflict in the eastern Congo' for *Rift Valley Institute* [published in French and English]
- Gillian Mathys. [Unpublished] Consultancy report for international NGO ZOA: Congolese land law and interventions into land conflicts and improving access to land for peasants: Ruzizi plain and Beni- Lubero (eastern DRC)', Ghent, January 2016

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- Mathys, G., S., Van Beurden, E. M'bokolo, Z. Etambala, DOC 55 1462/002, 'premier rapport des experts pour la commission spéciale chargée d'examiner l'Etat indépendant du Congo et le passé colonial', Partie I, Histoire, 28 October 2021, 13-418. [published in French, Dutch and English]. **Own contribution (half co-authored with S. Van Beurden), ca. 100 000 words.**
- Mathys, G., & Verweijen, J. 'Why history matters in understanding conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo'. *The conversation Africa*, 28.10.2020.
- Mathys G. & E. Mestdagh, 'Wanneer 'nuance' leidt tot vergoelijking'. *De Standaard*, 17.07.2020.
- Mathys, G., Van Beurden, S., Loffman, R. A., Vanhee, H., & Goddeeris, I. (2020). 'Gebruik historici niet als excuus in de discussie over excuses aan Congo'. *De Morgen*, 16.06.2020 [also published in *Le Soir*].
- Interview with **Mo Magazine* [together with Leslie Sabakinu], 'Er is een probleem met het koloniale verleden van België', 30.06.2020.
- Vogel C., G. Mathys, J. Verweijen, A. Benton, R. Sweet, E. Marijnen, 'Clichés can kill in Congo'. Op-ed for *Foreign Policy*, 30.04.2019.
- Mathys G. (with S. Van Beurden, M. Luyckfasseel, T. Tansia) 'Renovating the AfricaMuseum. An anthology of (missed) opportunities?'. Blogpost for *Africa is a country*, 29.04.2019.
- Mathys G. & K. Büscher. 'The story of Kitchanga: Spatial politics of presence, refuge, and return in North-Kivu, Eastern DR Congo'. *LSE Blogs*, 21.01.2019
- Mathys G. 'Geen empathie zonder emotie', Brief van de dag in *De Standaard*, reaction on op-ed by Mia Doornaert about colonial heritage in the public space, 15.9.2017
- Mathys G. & K.Vlassenroot. 'The armed conflict lurking in the country-side'. Blogpost for *Africa is a country*, 29.12.2016.

- Mathys G. & K. Vlassenroot. 'Een terugkeer van oude demonen? Een blik op de Congolese crisis vanuit de marges'. Blogpost for *Mo* Magazine*, 2.1.2017.
- Bouvy A. & G.Mathys for Local Voices Project, "Nous ne sommes pas des terroristes - La Lucha"
- Gillian Mathys. 'Het wapen van de Congolese geschiedenis'. Op-ed in *De Morgen*, 13.11.2008.

REVIEWS

- 'Goma. Stories of Strength and Sorrow from Eastern Congo'. In: *Afrika Focus* 31.2, 2019.
- 'Achterblijven in Congo. Een drama voor de Congolezen?'. In: *Mededelingenblad van de Belgische Vereniging voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis (BVNG)*, 3, 2011.
- Images et Paix. Les Rwandais et les Burundais face au cinéma et à l'audiovisuel.' In: *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 31.3, 2011.
- 'Les congolais face à l'audiovisuel'. In: *Mededelingenblad van de Belgische Vereniging voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis (BVNG)*, 2, 2007.

Talks and presentations

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 2022 Invitation to present at 'Congruence, Nervosité, Impuissance et Extase: Repenser le pouvoir en Afrique centrale', organized by Florence Bernault, Mai 2022.
- 2022 Humboldt University, Germany Digitales Afrikakolloquium, 'Mobility and Exclusion: Borders and Identities in Central Africa, 19th-20th Century', 5 January, 2022.
- 2021 IMAF/EHESS, France, Séminaire Histoire Sociale de l'Afrique, 'C'est le vétérinaire qui nous a colonisé: Proximité et éloignement dans l'expérience de la colonization dans les Hauts-Plateaux de Uvira et Fizi', 11-12 October, 2021
- 2019 'Mobility and Exclusion: Making Borders and Identities in Central Africa' (19th-20th century)', University of Kent, Centre for the History of Colonialisms, 28 March 2019
- 2017 University of Leipzig, Germany 'Re(b)ordering Space: Fixing Mobility and the Territorialization of Identities in the Lake Kivu Region (19th–20th Century)', 8 May 2017.
- 2017 'Les identités ont une histoire : sur la forme historique des identités dans la région du lac Kivu et leurs manipulations contemporaines'. Conflits, mémoire & justice. Perspectives de recherche sur les Grands Lacs africains, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 9 June 2017.
- 2014 'People on the move: Frontiers, Borders, Mobility & History in Lake Kivu region', Rencontres Lille- Gand –Programme B_Congo, Université de Lille 3, 11 June 2014.
- 2013 'Borderlands and people on the move: Mobility in the Lake Kivu region 19th century-1960'. Technology and Mobility in Africa. Exploring a New Analytical Field, Leuven: KUL, 17-18 October 2013.
- 2012 'Les (im)migrations à Masisi. Point de vue de l'histoire.' During UN Habitat, Colloque Universitaire sur le foncier. La question foncière à l'Est de la RDC: Eléments d'une réforme intégrée. UN-HABITAT, Goma, 20-21 November 2012. [Conference cancelled due to security situation in Goma, research stay in Bukavu]
- 2010 [With Karen Büscher] 'No condition is permanent: changing state/border relationships along the Goma/Gisenyi border'. During Bringing the Margins back in –War Making and State Making in the Borderlands, Ghent: CRG (Conflict Research Group), Ghent University (co-funded by ABORNE), 12-14 February 2010.

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND ROUND TABLES

- 2019 Co-organizer panel ('joint research session') 'Debating the future of global history: grand narratives and local knowledge', Ghent, Annual Posthumus conference, 28-29 May 2019.
Co-organizer round-table 'Decolonizing African Studies: History in the Great Lakes region'. African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Houston, Texas, 29 November -1 December 2019.
- 2017 Co-organizer conference: "Mining in comparative perspective: trends, transformations and theories", 13-14 December 2017, Ghent University.
- 2016 Organization of 2-day workshop with local actors and local and provincial authorities on land conflicts in Kitchanga, North-Kivu in collaboration with UN Habitat, Goma, 5 & 6 October 2016 (organizer and participant).
- 2016 Organization of workshop with non-governmental actors and provincial authorities on improving

strategies for conflict resolution pertaining to land conflicts, Goma, 10 October 2016 (organizer and participant).

Panel 'Urban elites and rural property relations', During LANDac International Land Conference, Utrecht, 30 June-1 July 2016.

- 2015 Policy Debate Workshop: "Un regard foncier", Bukavu, 13 November 2015 (Organizer and chair, with UN Habitat)
- 2015 Policy Debate Workshop: "Un regard foncier", Goma, 11 November 2015 (Organizer and chair, with UN Habitat)
- 2013 GAPSYP 7: "Africa and food: Challenges, risks and opportunities", Ghent, 6 December (Scientific and organizing committee)
- 2012 GAPSYP 6: "Africa: (post-) development?" Ghent, 7 December 2012 (Scientific and organizing committee)
- 2010 GAPSYP 4: "(Un)disciplined encounters: Science as a terrain of post-colonial interaction between Africa and Europe - Past and Future), Brussels, 5-6 November 2010 (GAP, ULB, AFRICA TERVUREN, IARA, VISIONARY AFRICA) (Organizing committee)
- 2008 GAPSYP 2: "Mobilities in Africa - Africa in mobility", Ghent, 16 December 2008 (Organizing committee)
- 2007 GAPSYP 1: 'Heritage and/as reproduction in Africa: limits and outcomes', Ghent, 18 December 2007 (Organizing committee)

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

- 2018 [With Karen Büscher] 'The rise of Kitchanga: political dimensions of urbanisation in a context of conflict and displacement, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo', International Urban Conference Capetown February 1-3 2018. [Paper presented by co-author]
- 2017 'Asymmetry, contradictions and mobility: Lake Kivu's colonial border towns (Rwanda & Congo)', ECAS Urban Africa - Urban Africans: New encounters of the rural and the urban. Basel, June 29-July 1
- 2016 'Elite capture of rural land: The case of Kitchanga (Eastern DRC)', LANDac International Land Conference, Linking the rural and the urban, Utrecht, June 30-July 1 2016.
- 2015 'Why do Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) stay', ECAS Collective Mobilisations in Africa. Contestation, Resistance, Revolt, Paris, 8-10 July 2015.
- 2014 'Frontiers, borders, mobility and history in Kivu: What can the past learn us about contemporary conflicts', Ghent: CRG, Ghent University, 9 May 2014.
- 2012 'Of past and present: Mwami Rwabugiri and the conflict in Kivu', ASA Research Frontiers in the Study of Africa, Philadelphia, 29-31 November 2012.
'Of Trees, Territory and History: mwami Rwabugiri and the expansion of the Rwandan kingdom in the Lake Kivu region', Cortona, AEGIS Summerschool, 18-24 June 2012.
'The present in the past, the past in the present: Mwami Rwabugiri and the expansion of the Rwandan kingdom in the Lake Kivu region', CAS@50 Cutting Edges and Retrospectives, Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 5-8 June 2012.
- 2009 'African 'indigenous' borders'. ECAS Respacing Africa, Leipzig, 4-7 June 2009.
'Doing everything twice: Methodological and practical problems of doing borderlands research'. ABORNE third annual meeting, How is Africa Transforming Border Studies, Johannesburg, 10-14 September 2009.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- 2022 Panel debate for Museum-talks Africamuseum, 'Après la colonisation : chercher la vérité et la réparation' [with Nanette Snoep & Anne Wetsi Mpoma], online, 19 January 2022
- 2021 Discussion 'Congo commission conversation' for Black History Month Belgium [with Anne Wetsi Mpoma], Online, 16 December 2021
Lecture for Mbote-Congo webinar (University Foundation for Development, Antwerp University), online, 20 May 2021
Key-note for *Bamko Cran*'s decolonial summer school on Belgian colonial history, online, 2 March 2021
- 2020 Session in Decolonial Summer school *Bamko-Cran* on colonial history [with Leslie Sabakinu], Online, 2 September 2020.

- 2018 Advice on Studio Globo's 'Traces of colonization' ('Sporen van de kolonisatie'), for the development of a curriculum on colonialism for primary schools.
- 2017 Panel-member during debate on conflict in the DRC to launch Kris Berwout's book: 'Congo: Gewapende vrede' (EPO, 2017), Ghent, 12 October 2017.
Panel-member (with Nadia Nsayi, Emmanuel Iyamu, Kris Berwouts), in 'Is een wereld zonder kolonialisme mogelijk?', Antwerpen, 6 February 2017. Debate organized by Kif Kif, Hand in Hand, Comac en A-raad KdG-Hogeschool.
- 2015 Invited presentation for MONUSCO (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo) North Kivu (Political Affairs Division) on 'Gouvernance locale et le problème foncier à Kitchanga, Nord Kivu', Goma, 10 March 2015.
- 2013 Invited expert at round table "Promoting Integrated Border Management in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa", DG DEVCO (Directorate General for Development and Cooperation), EU Commission, Brussels, 10-11 September 2013.

Teaching & supervision

SUPERVISION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

- 2021-now Supervisor of PhD-project of Pieter Decoene, 'Histories of healing and healing objects in the Great Lakes Region'
- 2017-now 3 PhD-students as member of the doctoral supervision committee
25 MA-students as a supervisor
10 BA-papers as supervisor
- 2015-2016 Supervision of team of 4 researchers in DR Congo
- 2020-2021 Remote supervision researchers in DR Congo

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- 2011-2012 Supervising BA2 'Historical Exercises' using colonial sources.
- 2016-2017 Co-lecturer of 'Introduction to African History' (BA), African Languages & Cultures
Teaching several classes in 'Seminar African History' & 'Poverty, Development and Inequality in Modern African History' (MA), Ghent University, Belgium
- 2016-2018 Co-lecturer of 'Methods, Sources and Historiography of African History (BA), African Languages & Cultures; teaching several classes in 'Seminar African History' & 'Poverty, Development and Inequality in Modern African History' (MA)
- 2017-2018 Principal lecturer and course design, 'Research Seminar Global Studies', Erasmus Mundus Master Global Studies, Ghent University, Belgium
- 2018-2021 Principal lecturer and course design 'Themes and Regions in African History' (BA), African Languages & Cultures, Ghent University, Belgium
- 2015-2021 Several guest lectures in courses of Conflict & Development Program, Ghent University; Contribution to course 'War and politics', Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, Canada, lecturer Yolande Bouka
- 2021-2022 Co-lecturer 'Language, History and Identity in East and Central-Africa' (MA), Ghent University Belgium

ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS (SELECTION)

- 2022 Co-organizer workshop "Politique et conflits armées en Afrique", Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (financed by DFG, Point Sud, postponed to 2022 due to global pandemic)
- 2018 Organizer workshop "Lulungistes dans la société: Chansons historiques et histoire orale", Bukavu, DR Congo, together with Ndaro cultural centre and Groupe des Etudes sur les Conflits et la Sécurité Humaine, Bukavu, DR Congo
- 2017 Co-organizer "Mining in comparative perspective: trends, transformations and theories", Ghent University, Belgium (With Jeroen Cuvelier)
- 2016 Organizer of 2-day workshop with local actors and local and provincial authorities on land conflicts in Kitchanga, North-Kivu in collaboration with UN Habitat, Goma, DR Congo.
- 2016 Organizer of workshop with non-governmental actors and provincial authorities on improving strategies for conflict resolution pertaining to land conflicts, Goma, DR Congo.
- 2013 Co-organizer of "Africa and food: Challenges, risks and opportunities" (GAPSYM 7), Ghent University, Belgium, ca. 40 attendees

2010 Co-organizer “(Un)disciplined encounters: Science as a terrain of post-colonial interaction between Africa and Europe - Past and Future), Brussels, a collaboration between GAP, ULB, AFRICA TERVUREN, IARA, VISIONARY AFRICA, ca. 100 attendees

Fieldwork

2009 5 weeks qualitative data collection in Rwanda and eastern DRC
 2010 3 months qualitative data collection in eastern DRC
 2011 6 months qualitative data collection in Rwanda and eastern DRC
 2012 4 weeks qualitative data collection in eastern DRC and Rwanda
 2013 3 weeks qualitative data collection in eastern DRC and Rwanda
 2014 10 days qualitative data collection in South Sudan (Juba)
 2015 2 months & 3 weeks qualitative data collection in eastern DRC
 2016 1 month qualitative data collection in eastern DRC
 2017 7 weeks qualitative data collection in eastern DRC
 2018 6 months+ qualitative data collection in eastern DRC

Service work

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSABILITIES

2020-now Member of Committee for Development Cooperation, Ghent University, Belgium
 2018-2020 Member of the steering committee History Department, Ghent University
 2016 -2020 Member of search committee for post-doc position (three years), History Department, Ghent University, Belgium; Member of search committee for PhD-position, History Department, Ghent University, Belgium
 2018-now Member of advisory board of 3 PhD-students, Ghent University, Belgium. 2 of them have successfully defended in 2021.
 2021-now Member of board of Ghent Centre for Global Studies, Ghent University, Belgium

REVIEWING ACTIVITIES

2022 Invited to be member of PhD-Jury at Faculty of Social Sciences and Solvay Business School, VUB
 2021 Adjudicator Taylor Fraser prize for best graduate student paper, Canadian Association for African Studies;
 Member of 2 PhD jury's, Department of Architecture & African Languages and Cultures, Ghent University, Belgium
 2019-now Editor on editorial board *Canadian Journal for African Studies*, a well-respected journal in African Studies (indexed by Web of Science)
 2020-now Member of advisory board *Afrika Focus*, multidisciplinary journal dealing with Africa, Brill publishers
 2018 | Peer reviewing book manuscripts: Boydell & Brewer (James Currey)
 2016-now Reviewer for publications such as *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *Geoforum*, *Africa*, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, *African Studies*, *Critical African Studies*, *Africa*, *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, *Journal of Genocide Research*, *Revue d'Histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique*, *Ethnicities* and others

MEMBERSHIPS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

2019-now Board member of the Canadian Association for African Studies
 2017-2020 Research director of the research network 'Roots and Routes in Colonial and Global History', NW Posthumus institute, the Netherlands
 2008-now Member of the board of Ghent Africa Platform (GAP), Ghent university, Belgium
 2009-now Member of the African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE)
 2019-now Member of Central African Studies Association (CASA)

Career breaks

2020

Maternity leave (1.04.2020-31.7.2020)

Languages

Dutch: mother tongue

English: fluent written and spoken

French: fluent spoken, written intermediate

German: passive good grasp (sufficient for reading historical sources)

Swahili: basic conversational knowledge (eastern Congo variant)