

Mémoire en science politique[BR]- Travail écrit : "Quel est l'impact du mécanisme International REDD+ sur la gouvernance forestière en République Démocratique du Congo ?"[BR]- Séminaire d'accompagnement à l'écriture

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RETRANSCRIPTION ENTRETIEN DIANNE RUSSEL

- E.L. : [Intro]

-D.R. : I got my Phd in Anthropology in 1991. (...) My first for USAID was over 30 years ago. I was hired as a social scientist and I went out and I worked in .. I worked Katanga, Bandundu (...) as an analyst trying to understand local .. local systems, local institutions and things like that. I designed a project for women farmer and It got funded and .. we were in the middle of implementing that project when the pillage started in Kinshasa in .. 1989 I guess, maybe 1990. (...) The expats where evacuated so I stopped being .. I stopped being able to work in DRC, which was a real shock because I expected to work there for the rest of my life, and actually I pretty much have but you know, for a couple of years it was impossible to go there because after the pillage there was the fall of Mobutu and then .. the war and all that.

So, I was fortunate enough when I finished my degree I got a post-doc in the International institute of tropical agriculture based in Cameroun, I wanted to continue working in what they call central African farming system that integrate sort of farm-level economic and also understanding of forest management because you know farming takes place in the forest. Forest and farming are really interrelated. And during the post-doc I kind of made the switch from agriculture to forestry and natural resource management just because you know there was all this emphasis on .. (...) you cutting down these trees just to grow casava (laugh) I mean that's just doesn't make any sense to me at all. I mean, I'm not against slash-and-burn agriculture at all (...) but just we should really be thinking about a balance here, eum so .. I switched over to conservation and forestry and then I had to come back to the State for a while again work for USAID in the State and then euh I decided that euh .. Then I took a job in biodiversity conservation, but I Asia-Pacific which was a place I've never been to Asia or the Pacific in my life but I got this job as a senior program officer with WorldWide Life Fund (WWF) euh .. a big USA-funded project on .. euh .. developing conservation enterprises. So the all premise was .. if you have an enterprise that makes money from biodiversity is that going to create incentives for conservation ? So we had 20 projects (...). And after 2 years in Manela [Phillipine] I would really rather literally slip my throat that live in here one second. That time was just absolutely a horrible place to live (laugh). So the relocated me to Fiji which was somewhat nicer. So I worked in Fiji for two years and then euh in 98, USAID went back to Congo and a friend a mine became mission-director at USAID and 1998 and I said I want to move away from Fiji and move back to Congo (laugh). He was like that's just the craziest thing I've ever heard in my life, so I said no Congo is my place that's where I want to go, so I got the job as the environmental officer in Congo. But then the war started and eum I was never able to move there, so I did .. [Coupure Skype].

[Reprise] Ok, so anyway I decided that, I've been living in biodiversity conservation but I didn't really had the academic credential for it, as an anthropologist so I wet back to school, I went to Yale school forestry and environmental study, I was 50 and eum I was the second oldest student in the class (laugh) and I got a Master in environmental management from Yale. And then again I couldn't go back to Congo the war was still on, they wouldn't live there with my daughter so I took a job at the World Agroforestry Center in Naerobi, as a team leader for market and .. so on worked on agroforestry product markets and a all bunch of other stuff at World Agroforestry Center [Coupure Skype].

[Reprise] So I did that work in eum .. the World Agroforestry Center, I was there for 4 years, and it was fun it was good to be back in the in the scientific community and I really liked research, I loved you know .. the work was really interesting (...). But you know during all this time my euh ex-husband

and I we broke up almost eum right after my daughter was born, so I was a single mom taking care of you know my daughter and we were living in Nairobi (...) and after she was gone it was just too painful I couldn't stand it anymore eum so I quiet my job in World Agroforestry Center and I took a job in USAID, and that was already gosh almost 15 years ago, in 2005.

So I took the job, and that job that I had you know up until recently was the you know senior social scientist at USAID in the forestry and biodiversity office, so eum you know I started doing research per se although I did managed a lot of applied research project I managed a lot of projects and I continued working in Congo during that time as you know since I retired last year I got a job working for the CARPE project in DRC and I'm on my second contract now with them. Eum it's a world that kind of combines development you know, international development sort of world development and poverty reduction, but trying to integrate that with conservation and have more just and more realistic and sustainable forms of conservation that really are build in what people need and want in the country euh it's .. it's .. we're getting closer to that I think but it's been .. it's been a real struggle I mean, anthropologist in general are really critical of conservation models. Now so when I'm in the anthropology world there .. you know .. they are hyper-critical of .. enforcement .. (-everything that is being done) yeah. Everything. But when I'm in the conservation world you know I also, I see how dedicated a lot of these people are and how much they care about wildlife and about ecosystems and .. they may even care about people too. Eum so I feel like I've played this sort of bridging world between those two worlds. And that's what I'm still doing. Still doing it, I've just signed my second contract today I'm .. I'll be doing it through the end of this year, at least. (...) It's just me I don't have an agency or .. company or anything I'm an individual, which I like it that way.

- E.L. : Alright, heu ok. Thank you. So, I propose I go on the second part of the interview, but we've been through it eum .. kind of last time when we were eating so it can be quite quick but I think it's interesting eum when I interview people to you know present my epistemological scope, and especially with you since you are an anthropologist and that's eum .. like .. a discipline I'm trying to adopt as much as possible for my research. So, also I think it can be nice like to present you what it involves methodologically speaking so that we can also see where it reaches its limits in the current object of study that I have eum here in Congo. So as you know it's called assemblage (...). [REDD+] (...).

- D.R. : No I'm really familiar with REDD+ I've worked in it for 6 years. Both from Washington and also in the DRC context. So I'm very familiar with REDD+.

- E.L. : Ok, so I keep going (...).

It leaves me to my first question : so, what do you think is your role in the assemblage of the community forest management in the DRC, so I mean as an anthropologist and especially in the work you do. Because in a way you produce knowledge, and this knowledge can be appropriated and translated by different actors and I might also very likely give them power of agency. So what do you think as an anthropologist and consultant is your impact in euh the assemblage ?

- D.R. : Well, my impact actually I think goes back .. interestingly, in the beginning I've been interested in the community forestry in DRC for a very long time, you know that there is community forestry in Cameroun that started maybe .. gosh, 15, 16 years ago maybe longer, and I thought .. well, if Cameroun can do it they didn't do a very good job of it but I think what not DRC you know why are we only talking about commercial forestry and protected areas. And I was instrumental in starting a all community forestry movement in Liberia, I've spent ten years working on that when I was in USAID you know in .. I thought well if I can do it in Liberia why not DRC ? At USAID, the person who was in charge of the USAID environment program there at the time was like "that would never happen in DRC" we'll never get enabling legislation for community forestry. But I was in touch with

[grape?] and resources initiative and RFUK, and they were saying yeah that's gonna happen, we're gonna get community forestry. And I kept saying to USAID "we have to be prepared for it", because this could be a really major way to you know get benefice for people from the forest. So it happened that community forestry legislation was passed and then my role was to say ok USAID you need to jump in here, and you know not only support it financially but support it intellectually because USAID has a 25 years history of supporting community forestry, I myself have worked on community forestry for .. almost 25 years, you know starting from when I lived in the Phillipines, eum 'cause we had a really big community forestry program there. So my job was to bring that intellectual history into eum .. you know .. first of all to say to the USAID you need to invest in this you know. You need to put money into it, you need to put intellectual capital into it, and then, eum, to .. to .. when we put out the call for proposals almost a year ago. I said community forestry should be one of the theme (...) so that's why we had that workshop we had some proposals come in. And then we wanted to get more and better proposals, so there my role was helping to organise that workshop, helping to get the right people on the room and to do that little presentation on lessons learned in community forestry. No I wanted to do a lot more than that but they said no we (...) we want action we don't want you to just lecture us about community forestry (laugh). So i think .. and now my anchoring role is kind of eum .. to make sure that people are taking into account what we've learned about community forestry, and to .. help find the best .. [interruption] and also to make sure that we get .. good proposals and that those proposals are .. you know moved through the system and then USAID can .. play a .. continue to play a very important role and .. helpful and a supportive role and .. for community forestry in DRC.

Eum yeah, so does that answer ?

- E.L. : Yeah, and it raised another quick question. How do you think this legislation [community forestry] is linked with REDD ? How do they interlinked in some way ?

- D.R. : Hm yeah that's a really good question. Eum I haven't been following eum .. you know financing for REDD has been difficult in DRC as you know there is the one big project in Mai Ndombe but I guess that's some private financing but, being able to finance publicly like during .. during jurisdictional REDD and money flowing trough the government (laugh) you know that's just .. that's just haven't happen. So community forestry is one way .. one way that you could have a management unit that potentially could benefit from REDD+ payments. Now, that said .. that's not going to be an easy thing to do. Eum because the all premise of REDD - and again I don't know if I should be saying this off the record or not - but the all premise of REDD is pretty flawed. Eum because I don't think paying people a few cents you know, however much they gonna get from any REDD+ scheme is going to [inaudible] the opportunity cost of clearing forest for much quicker gains and much more remunerative eum activities you know that basically evolve around agriculture, mining or whatever else. I don't just think that the incentives that REDD is going to provide are enough to .. (-to the people) yeah. I mean there .. and I never thought that and I worked in .. like I said I worked in REDD for a long time but eum I think you have to talk about much more holistic eum sort of maybe green economic development or you know holisitic approach that include commodities and .. eum you know other development objectives but, you know, giving a bunch of really really poor people in the middle of Congo a few cent to not clear the forest or to plant some trees or something, that just doesn't make aly sense at all.

- E.L. : (...) So you think the incentives are not gonna be enough if it's only focus on the forestry sector it has to .. come from an inter-sectorial holistic approach like linking energy and agriculture and so on ?

- E.L. : I do. I think there .. eum. Yeah, there are other things that need to be done, I mean the bushmeat crisis is a lot worst than [elegite?] deforestation crisis which hasn't really .. there aren't really

high levels of deforestation in DRC expect around big towns and cities. Deforestation is still relatively weak so .. euh but mushroom consumption and the loss a wildlife is a acute problem. I mean I'm not being speaking as a conservationist it's .. you know it term of food security it's a huge problem. So we have to find solutions for animal husbandry, fisheries euh you know .. farming systems that you know can incorporate more proteins options I mean whatever in Bandundun are so malnourished (...). I mean there are really serious acute problems that Trump in my view - excuse me for the word Trump but euh - exceed the problem of reducing deforestation. We have to focus on those things first. Now if a REDD project is there, and they say they're getting money, maybe they can invest that money, that would be the one you know, maybe they can invest that in .. eum .. in ways that address some of these other problems. You know community forestry concession does get money from you ..from .. you know, from REDD. Could they invest in animal husbandry and improved fishery and you know that kind of things.

- E.L. : Alright, so I'm gonna go on with another question. So this one is about ambiguity and power. So in this question I want to talk about the "vagueness" eum and the confusion that might rule when it comes to community forest management politics in the DRC. (...) And isn't this vagueness an opportunity for .. certain actors to gather power and resources around them an appropriate parts of the process in their own interests. And so what if we take the exemple of REDD+ and the land reform for exemple ?

- D.R. : Oh I think vagueness and ambiguity is pretty much eum a way of life in the Congo. Ambiguity about policies, about power, about decisions, about who is to blame, who is not to blame, who is even involved, who is not involved, I mean. You know I've lived and worked there for almost 30 years ant there .. you know a certain .. a lot of time I just thought to myself "you know what you never gonna get the answer to that question. You never gonna really know who did what, why they did it and you know who is really on top in term of power". Because those systems, those relations are constantly fluctuating and there .. and people [inaudible] for power and influence and at all the time at such a high [rate?]. It's really hard .. it's really hard to know. And that .. and that goes back to you know, how Mobutu governed, frankly he governed through juggling people around and constantly keeping people off-balance ..

- E.L. : What do you mean by off-balance ?

- D.R. : Off-balance, what really knowing what their status was, you know. Like am I really in the inner-circle or not ? you know. Am I gonna be sent to .. the middle of nowhere tomorrow or maybe forced to leave the country or whatever. That's the way he governed for almost 25 years. So people still think that way, certainly people of power and it has filtered all the way down to .. the local level.

So vagueness plays .. vagueness is really instrumental I think in how people manipulate, manoeuvre around the system. Eum vagueness about what they're doing, vagueness about what they .. they understanding of what other people are doing eum .. and yeah people do certainly manipulate that. I mean and then they also just lie outright too, you know I mean, they just say "oh yeah we're gonna do this great thing and it's gonna be super beneficial for these people and in rural areas". I mean maybe they don't know they're lying but in fact you know the benefits or .. are not gonna be anywhere near what .. you know what they've promised.

- E.R. : And in the case of REDD like who do you think would be the most likely to be benefiting from this vagueness ?

- D.R. : I would say that eum the people who put themselves sort of eum at the juncture you know the international architecture who sort of locate themselves "okay I'm a REDD expert and I'm going to be able to .. I'm going to be able to translate you know REDD finance or REDD euh you know

benefits and I'm going to be the middle-man between the international world and .. the local world". So those would be folks in Kinshasa, they might be some provincial authorities or local authorities that basically say "Ok so ..". And the one who also you you know who gonna be hired to do analyses and MRV, you monitoring, reporting and verification. I mean those are the people who are really gonna benefit, but they're gonna come out and say that like "I'm actually benefiting from this", they're gonna say "we're doing this on behalf of the country" or the people or whatever.

And I actually have to put myself in that category. .. you know .. I'm making a living now from translating international eum .. you know I'm saying to myself I'm doing it for the benefit of the people but I'm also doing a good living from it. .. the professional class.

- E.L. : Hm .. yeah it's like all the people who are working as a .. yeah like you said the middle-men in between the international level (...).

- D.R. : That said I think there are people who are genuinely you know really do work to see benefits, and they may find it hard to do that because it's hard to push money down to the levels where people are really poor and institutions are not strong enough to absorb those levels of finance eum .. and there is conflicts at local levels conflicts around land and leadership and all that, it's very hard to actually push money down. So remember I'm not blaming anybody in this (light laugh) I'm just describing you know kind of the structure. And then there are people who are frauds you know who just do it and .. what's the world in French you know "se vanter" you know. Like there you know, and they really have no intention in of .. accomplishing the development objectives they just want to get their money.

- E.L. : Alright, so I'll go on with a third question if it's ok for you. [presentation Li]. Do you think she is correct at identifying these stakes and is she right at also generalizing them to every contexts ? And how do these conflicts of interests - if they ever exists - would take place in the DRC ?

- D.R. : Yeah if you remember my talk when I talked about lessons learned in community forestry, one of the point I made is that community forestry is almost always - if not always - over-regulated by the government. And that also conservation organization try to hijack it as of just another way to conserve forest. And these are two things that have actually inhibited community forestry, because euh you know .. I mean in the context of Indonesia for sure she's right but there is a all purpose of forestry from the government perspective is whether they say or not is maintaining what they call the permanent forest estate which is a colonial era euh concept. Euh so they will do, and I .. worked quite a bit in Indonesia, they will do whatever it takes to maintain (laugh) the forest essentially the forest estate under the control of the government. And .. and they euh you know Indigenous people in Indonesia have been trying for decade you know to struggle against that, eum that all concept.

In DRC, there is no doubt in my mind just now that local officials will try to maintain control of the process (laugh). Because you know where we were talking about who's gonna pay the tax on community forest. You know they'll be looking at how do we tax it and if we can't tax it or when we can tax it how do we find people for doing something that's they not suppose to do so they'll be - I mean maybe that's a very [genuous?] view but - I'm sure there is a lot of .. you know local officials would thinking you know just the monetary dimensions of how enforcement and enrich them you know in having all kind of rigid rules and regulations.

- E.L. : And so when you say local officials you're referring to ?

- D.R. : Well the provincial officials in DRC are the one that are approving and managing community forestry. And It might go down lower than that. So there's gonna .. there's that struggle over any kind of productive investment that you make in DRC, is the people who are trying to actually do it, I think it's the people who a trying to actually parasite all of it by extracting fees and fines and taxes, illegal

taxes, you know informal taxes, formal taxes. You know so there is that constant struggle eum on that level.

So that for sure those two categories of actors, I think there is much less awareness, there is growing awareness that .. of people who have traditional claims to forest you know their own territories that these really should belong to them. It's think in some era of DRC it's pretty much understood but you know in other area it may not be.

- E.L. : Alright. (...)

- D.R. : (...) it's a power struggle, it's gonna be an ongoing power struggle. And hm .. that's why I said it's for important for community forestry concessions to unite as a federation, and to have national voice. Because if they don't they're just going to get run-over by you know the other ministries, the ministry of mines and whatever. (...) the ministry of mines is probably the most powerful ministry, maybe more powerful the ministry of finance eum for sure. Now the question is going to be really interesting now in terms of commercial forestry, what is gonna be the role of commercial forestry intersection with community forestry. In Cameroun a lot of community forests were hijacked by .. and also in Liberia .. hijacked by commercial forestry. So that's also a very common occurrence, but I wouldn't be surprised .. I mean .. for sure minimal exploitation trumps anything about ground. It's true in every country.

- E.L. : Okay well when it comes to my next question (...). [Assemblages practices/ rendering technical]. So what do you think about this and how could we illustrate this debate in the RDC context ?

- D.R. : yeah that's really interesting because one of the other .. I'm doing another consultancy in addition to the one in DRC, I'm doing one on REDD+ and the integration of REDD+ and related concepts of REDD+ with democracy rights and governance and that's another USAID little project I'm doing. So in that eum project you know I basically say that this whole REDD+ of forestry is technical you know this is a way to manipulate the process, it's the way to de-contextualize it in a way to also gain power over it. And it's also a way to fail to understand that in fact forestry or REDD+ or anything is a human process (laugh), a human process that involves human being, having incentives, making decisions, all that you know.

So let's take the case in REDD+ MRV. REDD+ is basically predicated on the fact that you'd actually reduced the rate of GHG emissions, right? So REDD+ in gonna monitor the GHG emissions from a given block of forest, and if there's significant deforestation then that accelerate the rate of - I'm simplifying here. So MRV you know you could say "ok this block of forest is committed to REDD+ either it's accelerating the rate of GHG emissions or it's making effort to not accelerating it" right? I which case the REDD payment is suppose to be tighten to that, so that's a very technical era. But in fact it's very political, you know. Where you draw the boundaries of that area, what you decide .. you know what kind of methodology you use and you can look at sort of gross deforestation eum .. from satellite remote sensing right ? But that's not gonna tell you why and who has actually done the deforestation.

So it's a very political process. So just saying "how well technical process will handle that" you know I'm questioning that I'm saying no that is a inherently political process and .. eum .. you know it doesn't really .. I mean it tells you something but it doesn't really tell you why people are doing what they're doing. Eum .. and I think from .. and also let"s say [inaudible] measuring it for 5 years, 5 years you discover that the rate of deforestation is accelerating it's too late really, because you've never tried to understand what people are doing on the ground and why are they doing it. So .. eum .. I don't know if that's answering your question.

- E.L. : It is ! You mostly agree with this conclusion that she .. that she has.

- D.R. : Yeah. I mean I think that .. all technically forestry stuff, I mean I know Tania. I mean she's of my same group of environmental-anthropologist that you know we've all worked on this kind of issues for many many years and we've .. we've all see this sort of result of the technical you know. (...) Really power relations are embedded in all of that, not only in it but in the way people talk about it and the discourse around those things. And .. it will certainly be the case in DRC.

(...) It's gonna be really interesting to see how it plays out in Congo because no donor is gonna give money to the government. (...) So that's just not gonna happen, under any scenarios that I can see in the next. I mean the United State Government we literally can't give money to the DRC government and that has been the case for many many years. That means intermediaries are automatically embedded in the system in very deep way and are gonna have to play a role in hm, and so the intermediaries eum what role they play ? Cause there's diverse ones there is WWF, WCS that conservation is their main goals, they're making money to implement REDD and .. they are gonna be quite protectionists. Then there is the RF UK, where their main things it to getting rights for .. local peoples, which is great but they .. may lack the economic perspective that rights is only part the equation you know you have to also be able to monetize your rights, otherwise you're still poor you know (laugh). Sure you have a big chug of forest so what you know you already had that anyway. Hm, so it will be really interesting to see how these intermediaries eum .. you know wheter they can really learn each other you what they're gonna do with the money ? Do the [inaudible] all off to consultancy and .. you know. You know, Whether any benefice can [trickle?] down to local level ?

- E.L. : [Some donors going trough the state?]

- D.R. : ell I mean international donor will try to do that but what leverage do they have really ? They don't have much leverage you know they can't .. because they're not providing resources to the provincial .. I mean I don't know there might be some donors maybe GIZ eum that is providing some support to government cause they're kind of embedded in the environmental ministry there, so GIZ might have a little bit .. and maybe Belgium too, cause they .. cause Belgium technical cooperation .. 'cause they work pretty strongly with [inaudible] ministry and .. so it will be interesting to see .. Norway, they wanted to you know invest directly with the government in over many years and just haven't found a way to do that. And they're the ones who have the really big bucks for REDD+. Eum .. a few years ago they wanted to invest in CAFI .. or i guess it was before CAFI but you know put up a big found, Norway and the UK, wanted to put up a big fund for REDD+, and they couldn't do it trough the government, they were gonna set up some kind structure where they's gonna give up grants or something and then they ended up giving the money to the African Development Bank that never really .. never really spent the money I think in 6 years. I only know of one project that only got any money out of that. So Norway is still thinking like we are we gonna put this money ? And they ended up giving money to the US government. [Which is working through] CARPE. The government of Norway gave money to the US government, because they had this huge fund of money for forest conservation. Now who know that might happen again ? Just because where are they gonna put large [somme?] of money ?

- E.L. : [Leadership conflicts & consideration of trust]

- D.R. : Yeah trust is the most important ingredient for any .. eum conservation and natural resources management activities where you have parties involved that have different roles, including one that has an enforcement role. (...) Trust is not something that's super in abundance in DRC (laugh). You know let's be realistic, people don't even trust their own closest relatives you know. I know this from having done a lot of fieldwork with people who have experienced very bad consequences you know

from .. betrayal of trust. So the institutions that people do trust are not not likely to be the one that are running community forestry. Eum people tend to trust customary authorities more (...). You trust the religious that you belong to, you know your church maybe. (...).

That's why I made the case of : look a where people do trust. Within a community, who do people trust ? Now if you're gonna set up a community forestry committee, consider doing the due diligence to find out who people to actually trust. And what happen is that when external actors come in they tend to you know, these committees might be formed and they have no ideas whether the people that are on the committee are people that actually are trusted. Eum and .. this is a big danger in my view. I mean it's nothing you can do about the provincial authorities, (...) but understanding .. to think about trust, to think about how you negotiate with officials, how you deal with power in elite-capture issues, this is something I think the NGO that are promoting community forestry really need to do a lot more of. Really understanding the social cohesions issues, as well as understanding potential conflicts, and like I said potential elite-capture. [local officials] That's what happen in Liberia, that's what happen in Cameroun. That can really easily happen.

(...) Getting the expertise to do that, the time and the expertise to eum .. you know to get people understanding that these are really maker-brake situation for community forestry. Then it becomes even more fraught when we're talking about people managing money.

- E.L. : Yeah that's the tough part.

- D.R. : That's the very tough part. Practically yeah. (laugh) my advice is just don't even try it 'cause.

- E.L. : Don't even try to do what ?

- D.R. : Well I mean you kow [plumb?] a big part of money down into a community and expect that there isn't gonna be huge controversy and you know .. they really have to think about other ways to handling financial benefits.

- E.L. : But so is the solution having like .. some kind of international NGO being on the field monitoring the money or ?

- D.R. : That may be .. that may be a solution. You know that might be a trusted local institution (...) that could manage money but eum just creating a committee idk they might be some communities that have learned how to handle money together .. eum [should there?] be only small amounts of money, like you do in a tag-team you know, like people "côtisé" and they .. But you had a lot more money into that it's gonna really be difficult for people to manage that. So one way is .. yeah having an international group eum .. having a decision process that people decide on investments that may be more communal than individual. Although I have some issues with that as well, cause I think people should get individual benefits too but eum ..

(...) People are very poor and you know you get a substantial some of money and .. certain people are gonna be tempted to just take off with that money. I've seen it so many times, and .. euh it's pretty hard to control that, I mean maybe you have a very very honourable and very trusted traditional chief that might work but .. that chief also have a family you know behind so.

- E.L. : Yeah, I guess that's the more difficult part of implementing development ideas on the filed.

- D.R. : Yeah I mean giving people. One of the things I've learned .. the first thing I've learned was if you have an asset then everybody is gonna want to have a piece of that asset. And you're gonna be very much pressured to share that with .. with everyone. When I was lived in Kisangani I bought a

sack of rice thinking "how that's cheaper to buy a big sack of rice and then you know it can last for long time, that thing didn't even last two days, it was gone almost immediately".