

ASC-TUFS Working Papers



ASC-TUFS

Volume 1 (2021)

African Studies Center – Tokyo University of Foreign Studies



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©March 2021 by ASC-TUFS

Printed by

Nihon Root Print & Publishing Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

ISSN 2436-1542 (Print)

ISSN 2436-1607 (Online)

Table of Contents

Foreword	01
<i>Shinichi Takeuchi</i>	
The economy of pawning: Institutionalism revisited	03
<i>Kazue Demachi</i>	
African lions on the move: Can policies, institutions, and endowments explain the growth of climbing countries?	21
<i>Christian Samen Otchia</i>	
Digital spaces and democratisation in rural Kenya: Participation, mobilisation, and claiming resources	45
<i>Kinyua Laban Kithinji</i>	
Youth displacement, peacebuilding, and ethnoregional-neopatrimonial politics: The case of post-war Sierra Leone	65
<i>Emmanuel Vincent Nelson Kallon</i>	
Ignorant snub or reasonable excuse? Young people's perspectives towards farming in Zuarungu in the Upper East Region of Ghana	95
<i>Joseph Octavius Akolgo</i>	
Constraints to adoption and scaling-up of conservation agriculture in Rwanda: Smallholder farmers' perspectives	119
<i>Kazuyuki Sasaki and Serge Muvunyi</i>	
Effects of agriculture intensification on gender relations in Rwanda: Perspectives of women farmers involved in the Land Use Consolidation programme	147
<i>Fortunee Bayisenge</i>	
People's perceptions on conservation opportunities and challenges for Nyungwe and Mukura national parks, Rwanda	163
<i>Gloriose Umuziranenge, Muhirwa Fabien, Jean Bosco Nshimiyimana, and Majyambere Methode</i>	

Bakola/Bagyelli households between precariousness and struggle for survival: Lessons learned from an indigenous community in search of well-being	187
<i>Bernard Aristide Bitouga</i>	
Challenges on the valorisation of local knowledge: Preliminary assessments in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Area (DRC)	203
<i>Lionel Bisimwa, Eric Musangu, Salomon Mampeta, Nicaise Amundala, Prosper Sabongo, and Denis Jean Sonwa</i>	
Women's land rights realities in the 'Rubi-Tele' Hunting Domain, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	217
<i>Gladys Ibanda, Emmanuel Bulonza, Prosper Sabongo, Nicaise Amundala, Salomon Mampeta, and Denis Jean Sonwa</i>	
A relational approach to Uganda's state corruption as an organised crime: Decoupling analytical misconceptions on regime consolidation	233
<i>Ian Karusigarira</i>	
Conflict-induced migration and local development: The socio-economic dynamics of a refugee-hosting area in Uganda	253
<i>Isao Murahashi</i>	
International migration dynamics in Mozambique and natural resource exploration: Gold and forest predation	273
<i>Inês Macamo Raimundo</i>	
Land titling in Mozambique: Improved tenure security for communities?	301
<i>Amélia Maisha Silas Tunzine</i>	
List of Contributors	319

Foreword to ASC-TUFS Working Papers

The African Studies Center at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (ASC-TUFS) was established in 2017 to promote African studies, with a particular focus on contemporary issues in such fields as political economy, development, the environment, and human livelihood. Since its establishment, it has organised various academic seminars and published the outcomes of their research. The following three publications have been issaaaaa every year thus far.

Kirikoshi, Hitomi, Yasuo Matsunami, Shinichi Takeuchi, and Natsuko Midorikawa, eds. 2018. *Frontiers of African Studies*. (Proceedings of the ASC-TUFS ‘Kickoff’ Symposium), Tokyo: African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, vi + 95pp.

Kirikoshi, Hitomi, Yasuo Matsunami, and Shinichi Takeuchi, eds. 2019. *ASC-TUFS Working Papers 2018: Development, Migration, and Resources in Africa*, Tokyo: African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, iv + 202pp.

Matsunami, Yasuo and Shinichi Takeuchi, eds. 2020. *ASC-TUFS Working Papers 2019: Challenges of Development and Natural Resource Governance in Africa*, Tokyo: African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, iv + 321pp.

The papers that constitute these publications were originally submitted to seminars organised by the ASC-TUFS: the Kickoff symposium in November 2017, the joint seminar at the University of Pretoria in September 2018, and the seminar at the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) in February 2020. The ASC-TUFS is committed to facilitating the virtuous cycle between organising academic seminars and publishing research outcomes.

This year, the ASC published a new yearly journal, *ASC-TUFS Working Papers*. With the cooperation of the ASC members, the journal established an editorial board as well as a peer-review system. We believe that these changes are necessary to improve the quality of papers and enhance the publication of research outcomes of the ASC. Although the ASC-TUFS is still a small, young organisation, we are determined to make every effort so that this new journal can become an academic forum for all Africanists working with us.

Shinichi Takeuchi

Director, African Studies Center - Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

The economy of pawning: Institutionalism revisited

Kazue Demachi

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Abstract

The importance of protecting individual property rights has been widely accepted. By contrast, the unequivocalness of individual land property rights, especially its role as collateral, has been widely debated. This study discusses an alternative system, land pawning, which enables people to borrow without land property rights. Based on studies on Japanese early modern period, this study argues that land pawning and credit transactions were active even without a land property system. Japanese early modern history suggests that establishing a land property right is not a prerequisite for the development of financial activities. The Japanese early modern land and taxation system also suggests a close link between land-based taxation and a land-based credit system. Institutional studies ignore the role of taxation in the land system and collateral-backed finance. There is a theoretical discrepancy between the availability of land for use as collateral and inducing industrial investment. This gap within the various institutionalist arguments needs to be closed.

Keywords: pawning, finance, property rights, institutionalism, usufruct collateral

1. Introduction

The widely accepted discussion of the ‘tragedy of commons’ represented by Hardin (1968) implanted in our minds the idea that the absence of land property ownership leads to degradation and loss of property values. It also shattered our utopian image of communal land. Associated with this view, the so-called institutionalists, represented by North and Thomas (1973) and North (1990) established the belief that institutions, especially central governments and judicial authorities that protect private property rights, are critical to enforcing the ‘rules of the game’ in the market economy. To date, their views have had a strong influence on economic analyses, international development policies, agrarian reforms and land registration programs in many countries, and even on the statistical indicators published by international organizations.

The importance of land property rights is especially significant in the development of the credit market. Given information asymmetry and incomplete contracts, lenders often demand collateral or a mortgage to secure their lending. Various studies in economics, such as De Soto (2000), highlight the necessity of establishing private property rights or land ownership to ensure the availability of collateral and enable people to lend, borrow, insure, and invest.

Still, the long history of human debt suggests that even before establishing religious systems human societies had innovated various systems to enable people to borrow money, despite the lack of well institutionalized individual property rights and the rule of law that protect them (Graeber 2011). Land registration and titling are such a complicated project that private property rights are neither a universally consolidated idea nor an ancient institution. If demand for credit is universal and permanent in human economic activities, then conversely, there must be other conventional and alternative systems that enable people to borrow money.

This paper aims to re-examine the widely believed unequivocalness of individual land property rights by reviewing some examples of alternative systems, such as land pawning and usufruct collateral, especially in the case of early modern Japan. Japan is often recognized as being equipped with institutions based on individual land property rights and the rule of law. It is also the first country in Asia to have completed agrarian reform after World War II. However, this understanding masks the fact that private land property rights in Japan are relatively new when compared with Western countries. The notion of ‘private land ownership’ first came into being after the provision of title deeds and land tax reform in the Meiji era (1873-1881), followed by the introduction of Meiji Civil Law in 1896

(Matsuo 2018). By contrast, the economy was already thriving in the Edo period, even by world standards, without the institutional system of legal individual land property rights (Okazaki 1999). How was this possible? What are the limitations of these alternative systems? Furthermore, what can we learn from these examples?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the conflicting views over the role of institutions, especially individual land property rights. Section 3 introduces historical examples of alternative financial intermediation without individual property rights. Based on this understanding, section 4 revisits and discusses the recent institutionalist views. The final section concludes with a tentative reassessment of the views on land property rights.

2. The conflicting views on the role of land property rights

The institutional economists (or new institutional economics) regard effective institutions such as the rule of law, governance, or informal norms, as ‘the rules of the game’ and thus indispensable for economic growth (Rutherford 2001). North and Thomas (1973) and North (1990) are representative of such views. Whereas these studies are based on neoclassical economic understandings, De Soto (1989, 2000), by contrast, argues that the weakness of these institutions and the absence of private property rights explain the stagnation in the economic growth of countries that are abundant with resources such as land but without sound functioning institutions. According to De Soto, abundant land and forest become assets once they are registered and protected by the legal system, which can be used as collateral for mortgages to facilitate investment (De Soto 2000).

These (though mixed) institutionalist views have become the implicit assumption of a wide range of economics studies. Agricultural economists have supported similar arguments to De Soto. One of the main reasons for promoting agrarian reforms and fostering the land market in developing countries is the belief that land titling consolidation will accelerate land transactions. Those with greater ability and productivity will gain the land to maximize land productivity, which leads to enhanced agricultural productivity on the whole. It is also suggested that the availability of land for use as collateral will promote investment in land through access to credit for agricultural input and techniques, which leads to higher land productivity (Feder *et al.* 1988, Feder and Feeny 1991, Feder and Nishio 1999).

Conversely, it is widely accepted that institutional quality matters to the functioning of the financial system, which affects economic growth or industrialization (Teranishi 1991,

King and Levine 1993, Levine 1997). In their closely related study, La Porta *et al.* (1997, 1998) argue that legal institutions, especially the differences in the origins of the legal system between Common Law and Roman Law, matter for the development of the financial market. Such views have strongly influenced the formation of the understanding that institutional quality, especially the rule of law, affects financial deepening, in turn affecting the speed of economic growth.

The introduction of *Doing Business*, a set of popular indices about the business environment first published by the World Bank in 2003, has further bolstered this view. Djankov (2016) explains that this indicator was strongly influenced by Levine's, La Porta's, and De Soto's studies. He reveals that out of five indicators in *Doing Business*, the indicator for access to credit, the strength of legal rights which encompasses the protection of borrowers and lenders by collateral and bankruptcy law, was based on an empirical study by Djankov *et al.* (2007) about the availability of private credit. Whereas the studies on financial deepening and business mainly discuss the legal functioning and quality of financial institutions, they are implicitly based on private asset security guaranteed by the rule of law.

Related to this point, Demachi (2019) discusses how the financial boom in Africa, especially in Ghana after 2011, did not lead to investment in the real economic sector, because ambiguous land property rights in African countries inevitably hampered the supply of long term credit by financial institutions. Thus there is a 'missing link' between financial market development and real economic sector growth. This argument was also based on the assumption that the availability of land or buildings as collateral is indispensable for financial intermediation by financial institutions.

Closely related to these views, a number of agrarian reforms and land registration programs have been implemented in developing countries. Binswanger and Rosenzweig (1986), for example, discuss the characteristics of various collateral types and describe land as the ideal collateral once title registration is accomplished and enforcement of the contract is guaranteed. Deininger (2003) is a comprehensive overview of land titling, representative of the World Bank's view. This study's main message is that establishment of land property rights will promote investment, poverty reduction, and better governance.

The importance of individual land property rights or enforcement of the law to protect private property seems rational, and its necessity seems obvious to economics students. However, land titling and property registration projects implemented in developing countries are often criticized. In contrast to the proponents of land titling, Boserup (1965)

mentions the possibility that land titling may lead to tenure being less secure. She also discusses litigation problems regarding land titling between the illiterate and the advantaged in former colonial countries, and points to the increase in conflicts between farmers as the population grows and fallow land becomes scarce.

Van den Brink *et al.* (2006) point out that land titling and provision of land deeds do not necessarily lead to collateral-backed lending. They suggest that title deeds will not have the supposed effect unless the institutions, such as government authorities, have the trusted capacity to guarantee the validity of deeds. It is worth noting that Fleisig *et al.* (2006) do not directly support the mere introduction of land titling. Given that in most developing countries financial institutions only take immovable property such as land and buildings as collateral, they suggest the necessity for legal reform that allows various alternative assets including movables to serve as collateral to bolster people's access to financial services.

Closely related to this point, there is also a view that access to financial services or financial inclusion is essential in terms of supporting entrepreneurship, or more generally, small and medium-sized enterprises. However, Domeher and Abdulai (2012) argue that land titling will not necessarily enhance credit access in developing countries. Lenders may put more weight on other factors such as cash flow and creditworthiness instead of land-based collateral. By contrast, borrowers refrain from using the land title as collateral for fear of losing the land, which is the foundation of their living.

While many studies question the efficacy of land registration and the establishment of individual land property rights, it is hard to dismiss society's need for credit, given the economic success of industrialized countries. Therefore, we need to ask what the alternatives to finance backed by land as collateral are.

3. Alternative systems

3.1. Pawning

Once we look past the perceived notion of the formalized legal system we are accustomed to in developed economies today, several alternative and conventional systems emerge. People finance and smooth out their consumption and expenditure, sometimes without individual legal property registration.

One such system is pawning. Pawning is still practiced today, but it functions without the formal, legal systems. Pawning, or more precisely, *pawnbroking* is distinguished from other lending schemes in that pawnbrokers take physical possession of the pledge. Thus

the pledged asset does not remain with the borrower (Skully 1994: 358). This is a clear difference from other lending based on collateral. Collateral is not physically possessed by the lender until the borrower defaults, and thus it requires legal procedures such as registration to take out a mortgage on an asset. Given this distinction, pawning usually takes movables as the pledge. Conversely, today's secured finance often takes immovable property such as lands and buildings or registered movables such as cars and airplanes as collateral.¹

In many countries, land has historically been used as a pledge for loans and in some places this practice continues today. However, in societies without a land property rights system, it is not strictly the land itself that is pawned, but rather the usufruct. In most places and times, borrowers do not 'own' the land, and the pledged land cannot be officially foreclosed.

Despite this ostensibly flawed and conflicting functioning, land or usufruct pawning was and is still practiced in a number of regions and countries, such as the Philippines (*sangla*) (Nagarajan *et al.* 1991a, Nagarajan *et al.* 1991b, Fukui 1995), India (Swaminathan 1991, Shibli 1993, Bell and Hatlebakk 2017), Bangladesh (Jabbar *et al.* 1980), Indonesia (Nurdin and Tegnan 2019), Senegal (Galvan 1997), and early modern Japan.

Most of these studies focus on agricultural land, and the analyses are closely related to the agricultural investment, productivity, and livings of rural households. At the same time, demand for credit is not an exclusive nature of farmers and rural areas but also of urban residents. One reason for the scarcity of studies about urban areas is that most people tend not to occupy land plots but only a small piece of land that is more often recognized as a part of a building.

Nakata's (1984) interesting study describes urban financing activities without individual property rights and introduces various types of conventional pawning and collateral practiced by urban residents in early modern Japan by using descriptions that appeared in the famous old literature published in the Edo period (1603-1868). In the cities, people used various things as the pawn pledge, such as clothing, family members, houses, letting and rented rooms, residential rights, land, usufruct, shares (stocks), and bills of payment. However, the following subsection's focus is restricted to pawning in village areas.

¹A notable exception is human pawning, observed, not only, but especially, in West Africa under the colonial era (Law 1994).

3.2. Land pawning in Japan

An extensive description of the Japanese land system is beyond this study's scope. However, it is widely recognized that the foundation of the modern land system was started by the nation-wide land survey by Hideyoshi Toyotomi in 1582 (*taikoh-kenchi*) (Ishii 1982). It is worth noting that even before this land survey, land transactions, including land pawning, were already practiced in medieval Japan (Takeuchi 1973).

In the following Edo period, the feudal system was consolidated, and the land was allocated by the central Tokugawa government to the feudal lords (*daimyo*). The land was associated with tax obligations measured by its agricultural productivity and fulfilled not only but mainly by rice (Yamauchi 2008). Takatsuki *et al.* (2017) mention that the tax ratio and the burden were relatively high, especially compared with those in medieval times. The feudal lords were managers rather than owners of the land, as land sales were prohibited. Within each feudal area, agricultural villages were allotted farmland with its tax obligation. From this perspective, land usage and tax obligation were communal but not individual nor household, at least at the beginning of the Edo period.

The abundant studies on the land system of the Edo period (almost exclusively in Japanese with a few exceptions such as Smith (1959)) refer to land being transacted and pawned even under the official prohibition of land sales. For example, Ishii (1982) refers to the second half of the Edo period when land pawning was active among the farmers. According to Kitajima (1975), agricultural land was leased, sold with repurchase contracts, or pawned. Under Tokugawa's rule, the first order of prohibition of permanent land sales was announced in 1642 (*denpata eitai baibai kinshirei*), and in 1722 the government also announced the prohibition of foreclosure on pawned land (*ryuchi kinshirei*). However, the latter was soon repealed (Kitajima 1975). The government prohibition of land sales and foreclosure can be seen as evidence of active land-based credit transactions. Okazaki (1999) further suggests that there were multiple announcements by the government, almost once in every twenty years in the Edo period, that the legal authority would not sit in judgment over the finance-related disputes among commoners (*aitai sumashi rei*).² This can also be understood as evidence of the increase in financial activities causing the demand for official intervention to surpass the government's administrative capacity.

There were occasional government orders for private debt relief (Okazaki 1999, Mandai *et al.* 2017). This also supports the view that financial activities in this period were profuse to the extent that they exacerbated the incidence of poverty on one hand and the accumula-

²Kitajima (1975) suggests that this order set several exceptions, including disputes of land-backed financial contracts.

tion of wealth in the hands of a small number of people, on the other, resulting in economic inequality. The economic system required periodic resetting.

Whereas land pawning was common in this period, the alienation of land usufruct to other villages was avoided in most cases. Based on the materials left by Kyugu Tanaka (1662-1739), Takatsuki *et al.* (2017) mention cases in which village land was pawned to a group within the same villages that organized ROSCAs (rotating saving and credit associations, *mujin, kou*) to avoid selling land.

Among the numerous studies on the land system in early modern Japan, Yamauchi (2008) is noteworthy in revealing the relationship between land pawning and the tax obligation. Yamauchi's study is a paleographic study based on the land and tax record of a village in Shinshu (today Nagano prefecture) from 1756 to the end of the Edo period. He introduces several cases in which villagers absconded from the village for some reason. The abandoned land (paddy field) was pawned to other villagers, sometimes even to people outside of the village. Because the abandoned land plots were associated with the tax obligation (rice production) allocated among the villagers, the obligation was not exempted even in the case of the disappearance or demise of farmers who worked on the plots. In that sense, pawning of land or usufruct was inevitable to supplement the loss of agricultural production with borrowed cash. This case reveals the possibility that land-based tax obligations accelerated the demand for credit by using land and usufruct as the pledge.

This point is compelling given that in most of human history, the top reason for debt has been taxation (Graeber 2011). If taxation is closely linked with debt, it also means that there is a close relationship between taxation and development of the credit system.

It is widely understood that, in the Edo period, the cadastre was kept and managed by the village, not the central authority (Yamauchi 2008, Takatsuki *et al.* 2017, Mandai *et al.* 2017). While Yamauchi argues that village characteristics gradually transformed from commons to administrative units through the Edo period, this also suggests that land and tax management was decentralized in early modern Japan. The resource management, both land and labor, was left in the hands of people living and working on the land.

3.3. Taxation and credit system

The examples of land pawning in rural villages in the Japanese Edo period suggest the possibility that there was a close correlation between the land-based tax system and the development of land-based credit. In the Japanese case, the rule and influence of the central authority (Edo *bakufu*) was indeed strong. However, land property rights and titling were

not based on individuals or families but rather on the regional community and villages. Tax obligations were levied on villages according to the land size and productivity, but the land and tax contribution quota was allocated within each village. The tradition of *wari-chi*, a system that rotated land allocation among the villagers to pool the risk of natural disasters and differences in productivity characterizes this point (Okuda 2004, Sato 2010). These communal village characteristics transformed gradually as the market economy developed in early modern Japan. As agricultural techniques developed and investment in each land plot increased, land transactions accelerated, and the sense of individualism and private land ownership strengthened (Miyazaki 1977).

Imposing land-based tax is equivalent to setting standard or minimum criteria for the productivity of the land. In the sense of capitalism and the market economy, land transactions promote land productivity. Those who cannot exploit the most from the land for any reason, such as a shortage in the household labor force, will sell the plot to those who will manage and use it better and meet the production criteria, or even exceed it. Under land-based tax obligations, especially in rural areas in early modern Japan, households that could not meet the tax obligation would have sold or pawned the land to a household rich in family members or other resources.

Binswanger suggests that land needs to be scarce to be valued as collateral (Binswanger and Rosenzweig 1986, Binswanger and Van den Brink 2011). Similarly, Joireman (2008) points out that in places where land value is not high, the cost of land registration is too high, which inhibits the development of the system. In terms of scarcity of resources, rural villages' situation in the Edo period can be seen as an artificially built mixed condition. Land, mostly irrigated paddy field, was scarce, but human resources were sometimes also too scarce to meet the productivity criteria because of the tax obligation. This dual scarcity promoted land transactions and the development of a land-based credit system. Importantly, based on Niwa (1962), Tanaka (1997) argues that through the Edo period the Japanese land system gradually transformed so that within the same official institutional frame, land transactions between villagers and relatively wealthy farmers increased and new landowner (*jinushi*) class emerged. This new landowner class triggered and enabled relatively smooth (despite being associated with civil wars) land-tax reform in the Meiji era after the Tokugawa rule (Keene 2002).

Japanese history clearly shows that it is not the land reform and consolidation of private land ownership, that enhanced land transactions and increased land value. The causal path was the other way around; informal land transactions within and between the

communities led to land reform. Others also share this finding. Van den Brink and others suggest that the security of land property rights is strengthened because of intensified individual investment in the land, not the other way around (Van den Brink *et al.* 2006: 9). Bardhan and Udry (1999) also mention that in rural areas in developing countries communal land use is traditionally restricted. As the population pressure increases, and as inequality in labor power and productive assets increase, the communal band and traditional restrictions loosen. This change is often associated with more active immigration and emigration from the community and increases in non-agricultural economic activities.

3.4. Taxation and institution

While taxation and credit systems seem to have a strong correlation, tax obligations evokes uprisings against the ruling authorities, especially when the tax burden is too heavy relative to the agricultural production. Fujino (2020), for example, studies the history of people's violence in the early modern Japanese villages and suggests that there were many violent revolts by villagers recorded through the Edo period to demand tax reduction and other means of poverty alleviation. The farmers' revolts were one method of appealing to the public, as there was a certain 'manner of revolt' shared by peasants in the Edo period. Fujino points out that the violence intensified in the later Edo period because of the development of the market economy and increased economic inequality and poverty in the villages. This is not to suggest that taxation and credit system development are inevitably associated with revolt and violence, but a necessity of institutional development that bolsters both the placement of obligation by the authority and people's rights to appeal through a formal process.

The influence of taxation on land productivity and its value seems to be quite large, but most of the studies that focus on institutions and land systems lack this point. The discussion by North and Thomas (1973) only briefly touch on taxation, relating to the debt of monarchs or the government, or on taxation policy influencing the distribution of landholdings in France. This topic was not a favorite of the institutionalists that followed. Kalkuhl *et al.* (2018) is one of the few studies on land taxation in developing countries. They support the introduction of land rent tax as a government revenue source and suggest that there are also positive side effects such as consolidation of land property rights, sustainable growth, increase in investment, and poverty reduction. They see land registration as a prerequisite of land taxation, based on the understanding that the cost of establishing the basic cadastral requirement is 'not prohibitive'.

A discussion of the feasibility of imposing a land-based tax system is beyond the scope of this study. Still, it is curious that most studies on land tenure systems and titling discuss only the rights but not the obligations, which should be coupled in the modern nation-state framework. It also needs to be questioned why the institution is often discussed in economics; whereas, in most cases, it includes the legal system. Faundez (2016) is a rare example that discusses law and development in terms of institutions based on North's argument. He criticizes North's regarding law and the legal system as a 'black box' and that he does not consider their importance in the formation of institutions.

This point requires further study. Whether it be urban or rural, the mere imposition of land or property tax without considering the possibility of property transactions or a property-based credit system seems to be seriously flawed. A system that enables people to hedge the risk of meeting the tax obligation is indispensable.

3.5. Limitations of the alternative systems

Whereas the early modern Japanese example suggests that one of the purposes of land-based credit was the fulfillment of tax obligations, many other studies suggest that credit was used for agricultural input and daily consumption smoothing, especially in illness, marriage, or the death of family members. This implies that such conventional credit systems only functioned to provide relatively small and short term credit, but not for large scale investment. If so, we need to ask when and how consumer credit transforms into commercial credit.

This point reflects the discrepancy among the arguments of institutionalists in that one side infers the availability of collateral backed credit for investment whereas the other deals mainly with credit as a social safety net. For example, the institutionalists' argument suggests implicitly and explicitly that unregistered assets in developing countries can become collateral in finance which can promote relatively large and long-term investment. This idea was the driving power behind the land titling projects implemented in several countries. However, we need to recognize the theoretical jump between the studies about productivity enhancement, poverty reduction in rural areas, and fostering financial activities and investment.

Studies on Japanese modern economic history suggest the possibility that the new landowner class, which gradually emerged through the Edo period, played a role in the formation of the capitalist class and became the financial supporters of industries. For example, Teranishi (2009) suggests that in the transition from the Edo to Meiji periods,

the growth rate of agricultural production declined, which encouraged the landowners to invest in stocks and other securities. However, Teranishi also suggests that the share of investment by the landowners in the capital market was relatively small, and the majority of the capital came from the former warrior class (*shizoku*), aristocrats (*kazoku*), and strong merchants. This implies that it was not financial intermediation that fostered investment in industry, but capitalists who accumulated wealth at the price of increasing economic inequality and poverty at the bottom of the society.

4. Tentative remarks

This brief review of the institutions and systems that are alternatives to individual property rights alludes to our belief in the indispensability and robustness of individual property rights, especially in terms of economic growth, being built on a naive mosaic of economic ideas.

The early modern Japanese experience confirms that the increase in productivity did not begin with the consolidation of individual land property rights, but the causality is the other way around. An economy can thrive without individual land property systems and land titling. Japanese history also suggests that the credit system using land as a pledge for pawning was closely correlated with the tax obligation. The necessity to meet the communal tax obligation and production criteria gave rural people the incentive to transact or pawn their piece of the communal land plots even though land sales were officially prohibited. It also reveals that land transactions led to the gradual accumulation of land in the hand of a small number of people, forming the landowner class and the emergence of the landless poor. This implies that establishing individual land property rights systems can never be a perfect or ideal solution to achieve inclusive growth or poverty reduction. The necessity for resetting the system may be an intrinsic characteristic of the market economy, given the fact that since the French revolution and introduction of proprietary ideology in western countries, inequality in wealth has continued to widen until today, with only the exception of a few decades after the economic and physical destruction due to the World Wars (Piketty 2014; 2020).

While this study has offered a tentative discussion of the widely accepted belief in the unequivocalness of land property rights, the following points require further investigation. First, the early modern Japanese case reviewed in this study was the practice in rural areas, but the distinction between agricultural land and urban land is necessary, and further study on the asset-based credit systems in urban areas is required. This is even more

important, because in urban areas, elements such as tax rates, changes in the land price, and interest rates need to be included in discussing the value of immovable assets. Second, even though the conventional land-based credit system can function without individual land property rights, the primary purpose of this system was consumption smoothing or supplementing tax payments. The theoretical gap between the availability of collateral and the increase in industrial investment based on the institutional view needs to be closed.

Acknowledgement

This research is financially supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP18K18248.

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**African lions on the move:
Can policies, institutions, and endowments explain the growth of
climbing countries?**

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Abstract

In this paper, we define African *climbing countries* as those that have realised increased annualised economic growth since reaching a per capita GDP of US \$500. We identified 16 countries out of 47 as climbing countries, but five of them stood out, with an average growth of 4%. We showed that *climbing countries* experienced a positive structural transformation and were still in the process of industrialising, whereas non-climbing countries experienced premature deindustrialisation. We then used Bayesian model averaging to show that growth among climbing countries occurred because of favourable trade policies and good use of natural resources.

Keywords: resource curse, economic development, institutions, growth regressions, GDP per capita

1. Introduction

Two dominant features of the sustainable development of Sub-Saharan Africa ('Africa' henceforth) are continuing concerns among policymakers, donor-aid agencies, and researchers. First, many African countries seem to remain in the natural resource trap and exhibit weak long-term growth as well as an increasing rate of poverty and inequality. Second, premature deindustrialisation has occurred in Africa despite high economic growth and increasing demand for manufactured products. While considerable attention has been paid to deindustrialisation and the natural resources curse, the success experienced by many African countries is much less well-understood. Understanding the factors behind the success of African countries is important, taking into consideration the fact that African policymakers have been proactive in developing policies and programs to foster structural change and accelerate economic growth.

In 2000, after a period of relatively unstable, poor economic performance, Africa entered a stage of high, sustained economic growth. This growth trend can be divided into two periods: the boom period (2000-2008) and the post-crisis period (2010-present). From 2000 through 2008, the real GDP of Africa rose by 5.5% per year, more than twice the pace of growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Africa grew by an average of 2.2% in the 1980s, and, in the 1990s, the growth rate was about 1.4%. The 2007-08 financial crisis had only temporary effects on Africa's growth, which picked up again in 2010. Since then, its growth has averaged 5% annually.

For years, Africa's growth has been shaped by commodity prices, but the difference between domestic reforms and ownership over development programmes explains the heterogeneous performance within the continent. Table 1 depicts the recent trends in GDP growth in Africa by classifying countries according to resource endowment. As can be seen, resource-rich (oil- and mineral-rich) countries have higher per capita GDPs, but the growth of resource-rich countries included more booms and busts during the period of analysis than that of resource-scarce countries. In addition, resource-scarce countries have experienced increasing, stable growth since the 1980s. Heterogeneity can also be observed by the type of endowment, and growth in oil-rich countries is more volatile than in mineral-rich ones.

Table 1. GDP growth in Africa, 1960-2018

	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
a. Mean GDP per capita						
Resource-rich	1655.71	2443.00	2313.63	2143.22	2947.88	3374.77
Resource-scarce	797.34	950.21	1028.21	1231.97	1427.00	1836.74

Oil-rich	1800.20	2951.45	2690.94	2573.73	3907.24	4281.83
Mineral-rich	1487.15	1849.80	1918.76	1755.76	2084.45	2558.41

b. Growth rate of GDP

Resource-rich	4.43	5.16	2.85	3.77	5.78	3.79
Resource-scarce	3.78	4.38	3.10	3.57	3.96	4.46
Oil-rich	3.78	5.78	2.91	5.61	7.12	3.03
Mineral-rich	5.19	4.43	2.79	2.11	4.57	4.48

Source: author's calculations based on World Development Indicators.

We present new empirical evidence showing that policies and endowments have driven successful growth in Africa. Our major contribution is that we have developed a simple method to identify successful countries and make use of modern econometric techniques to explain their growth in a systematic way. We define ‘climbing countries’ as those that have realised increased annualised economic growth since reaching a threshold of US \$500 compared to countries with similar per-capita GDPs. We identified a set of climbing countries (33% of our sample) whose economies grew by more than 3% annually since reaching the threshold mentioned above. Among them, five countries’ economies grew by more than 4% and can be considered ‘African lions’. These economies exhibited a positive structural change and did not experience premature deindustrialisation. We also found that climbing countries can take advantage of high commodity prices and are more resilient than non-climbing ones. Their economic growth is also driven by policy.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 documents the stylised facts that drove our analysis. Section 3 describes our methodology and data. Section 4 presents the determinants of economic growth, while Section 5 relates our findings to the literature. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2. Stylised facts

This section outlines several facts that motivate our analysis. First, we established the group of climbing countries whose economic growth stood out in the context of countries with similar per-capita GDPs. Second, we examined how climbing countries exhibited lower dependence on commodity prices, fostered positive structural changes, and avoided experiencing premature deindustrialisation.

2.1. African lions and Asian tigers

Economists have suggested that African countries should not mimic the paths, modes, or specific

policies of Asian economies, given that the latter's initial conditions differed and they followed highly unusual, distinctive paths of growth (Otchia 2015). To shed light on this issue, Figure 1 displays the evolution of real GDP per capita for African countries once they reached a per-capita GDP of US \$3,000. Only 11 countries of the 47 in our sample reached this threshold. South Korea was also included to illustrate a successful case of an East Asian economy. The figure indicates considerable variations in African countries' growth experiences, with some exhibiting small positive economic growth and others stagnating. Moreover, countries with strong positive economic growth reached the US \$3,000 threshold before the other countries, as reflected by the more extended time series included for those countries. For example, South Africa, Gabon, and the Seychelles reached a mid-level per-capita GDP of US \$3,000 in 1960, 1960, and 1964, respectively, whereas Botswana and Mauritius reached the threshold in 1987 and 1986.

In contrast, the African countries with the fastest-growing GDPs progressed poorly compared to South Korea. This contrast may indicate that African countries' poor performance was unrelated to initial conditions, an idea advanced in the literature. For instance, the difference between South Korea and African countries, such as Angola and Congo, that reached the US \$3,000 threshold in the same years is illustrative.

Overall, the picture that emerges from Figure 1 is one in which only a couple of countries (Mauritius and Botswana) grew extremely quickly after reaching a GDP of US \$3,000. Neither country emulated the East Asian miracle, however. The Seychelles' trajectory began to accelerate 40 years after reaching the threshold. Mauritius has become a successful case in Africa, exhibiting positive, stable growth in the last 25 years. Gabon and Equatorial Guinea had an initially promising trajectory. However, Figure 1 shows a downward trend in their per-capita GDPs, beginning in the tenth year for Equatorial Guinea and the seventeenth for Gabon; neither country has recovered since then. Taken together, the data show that the growth of the large African countries is slowing, and none of them shows promising growth that emulates the East Asian model.

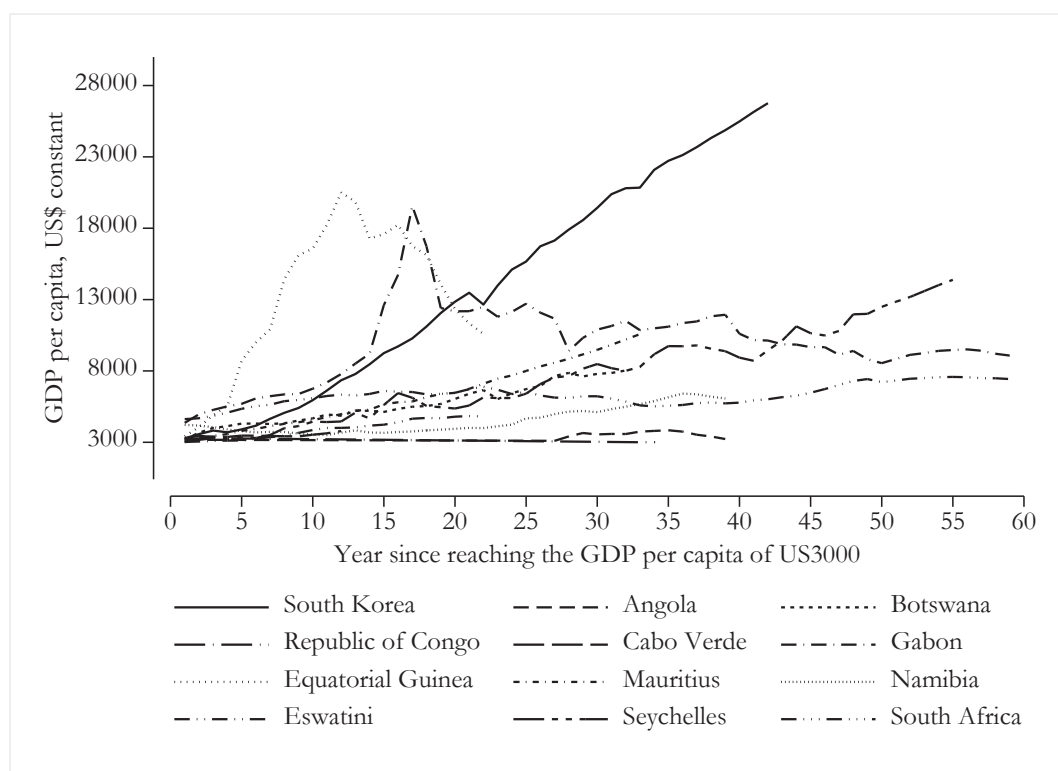


Figure 1. Cross-country comparison of African countries (countries exceeding per-capita GDP of US \$3,000)

Source: author's calculations based on World Development Indicators.

We extended this analysis to African countries that experienced per-capita GDP growth after reaching US \$500 but did not exceed US \$3,000. Among the 47 countries in our sample, it appears that 32 reached the threshold of US \$500 but not US \$3,000, while only 11 countries exceeded the latter number. This indicates that a non-negligible number of countries is still struggling to reach moderate income levels. To ensure that growth patterns were not driven by the magnitude of the GDP when the countries reached the US \$500 threshold, we computed the average growth rate between the first year and 2018, when our time series ended. Figure 2 illustrates this growth by contrasting it with the log of real per-capita GDP in 2018. This exercise reveals a clear picture of fast convergence in recent years. Lesotho, Kenya, and Soudan experienced rapid growth and more than doubled their per-capita GDPs. The GDP of Soudan has fallen since 2015 due to the devaluation of the local currency but remains high. The second group of countries experienced growth of between 50% and 100%; it included Nigeria, Tanzania, Guinea, Benin, Mauritania, and Ghana. Most of the countries in our sample experienced positive economic growth that did not exceed 50%. The last group suffered a slowdown and stagnation after reaching the US \$500 threshold. Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Malawi are stagnating. The countries experiencing a large slowdown are Madagascar, Niger, the Central African Republic, and the DRC. These countries have experienced conflict and war, but the DRC stands out with a sizeable negative

growth rate.

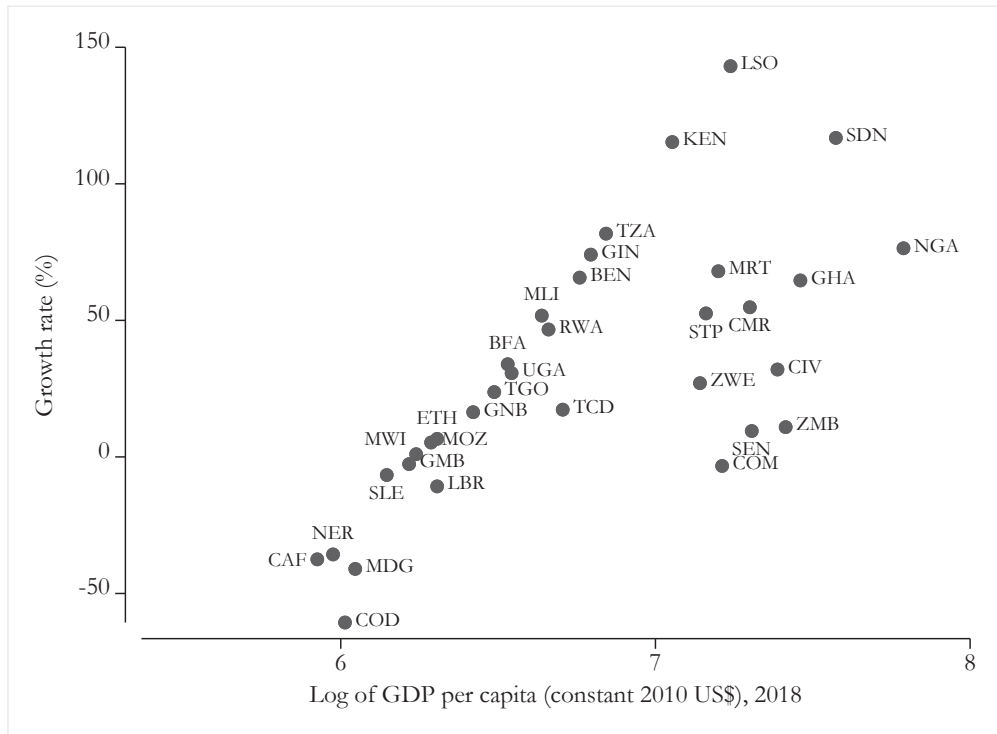


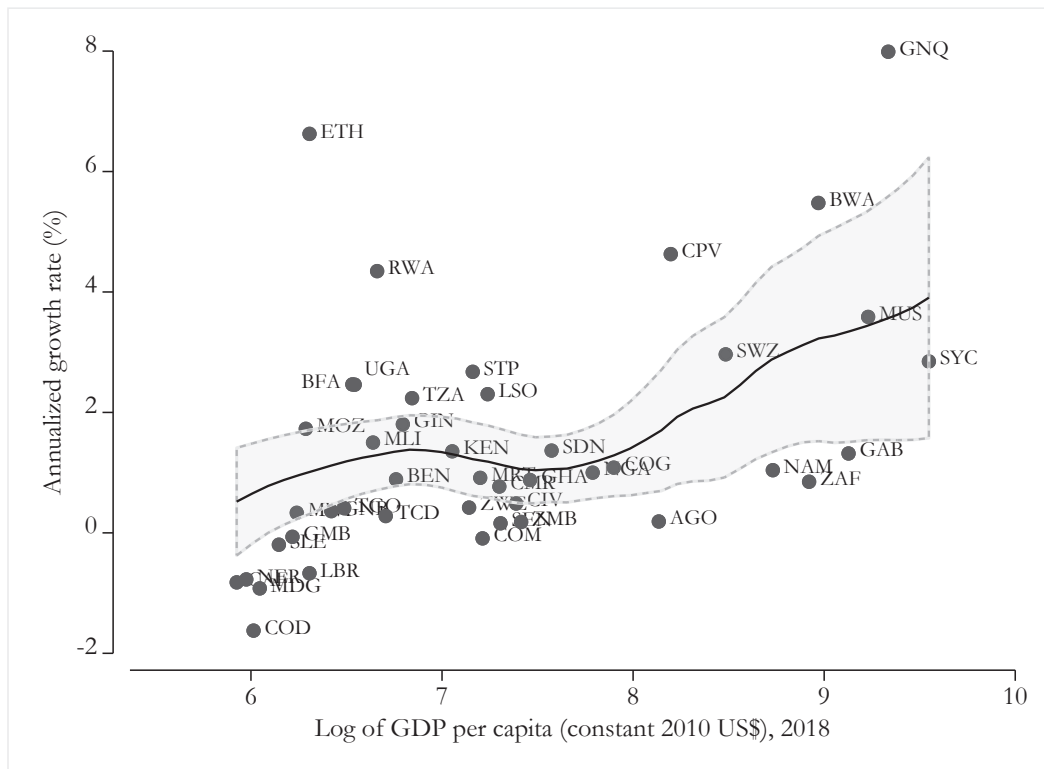
Figure 2. Cross-country comparison of African countries (per-capita GDP between US \$500 and US \$3,000)

Source: author's calculations based on World Development Indicators.

As discussed earlier, the preceding results reflected cross-sectional experiences with economic growth at specific points in time after reaching the US \$500 threshold. In the data omitted here, we saw a considerable variation in the number of years since reaching the threshold, which ranged from 2 to 60. For instance, Ethiopia reached the threshold of US \$500 in 2005, whereas Chad and Tanzania reached it in 1990. To facilitate the identification of 'African Lions' on the move, we needed to obtain comparable measures of countries' economic growth that considered the number of years that had passed since reaching the threshold. An alternative, simple way of using the data was to plot the countries' annualised economic growth rates. This alternative approach appeared to be consistent with the countries' trajectories when, for instance, we assumed that a similar number of years had passed since reaching the threshold for all the countries.

Figure 3 plots the annualised growth rates for the countries, including those above the threshold of US \$3,000 against the log GDP per capita in 2018. The figure overlays the local polynomial regression with 95% confidence intervals to emphasise these trends. Given this representation, we were able to easily assess the selected countries' growth performance above the local polynomial regression line against that of the rest of the countries, thereby indicating which countries had 'climbed the income

ladder' more than others. The set of climbing countries is represented, along with the real income distribution, by similar annualised growth rates. Countries like Ethiopia, Rwanda, Cape Verde, Botswana, and Equatorial Guinea emerge at the top, followed by Burkina Faso, São Tomé and Príncipe, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Uganda. The broad definition, which we use throughout this study, also includes countries above the local polynomial regression line, such as Kenya, Mozambique, and Guinea.



of growth in Africa is more than a resource boom, however. According to AfDB *et al.* (2013), natural resources have accounted for roughly 35 percent of Africa's GDP growth since 2000. Trade, construction, and, most importantly, domestic economic reforms implemented in early 2000 have also contributed to African development. Having identified the climbing and non-climbing countries, a natural question to ask is whether this strong historical correlation still holds true.

To provide new insights, we will present stylised facts about growth and commodity prices in Africa. Following Deaton (1999), we recalculated the price indexes from the price data of a list of 23 primary commodities from the World Bank Commodity Market. We also used the figures for per-capita GDP in constant 2010 prices from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. Figure 4 shows the relationship between, on the left-hand scale, the growth of real per-capita GDP, and, on the right-hand scale, the growth in the commodity price indexes for climbing and non-climbing countries, which are shown as three-year moving averages. Consistent with Deaton (1999), we found a strong historical correlation between GDP growth and commodity prices. However, the data split shows that the correlation between commodity prices and economic growth appears to be greater for non-climbing countries than for climbing ones. The correlation between commodity prices and the economic growth of climbing countries over the 1960-2018 period was -0.11, which was smaller in absolute value than that found in non-climbing countries (0.21).

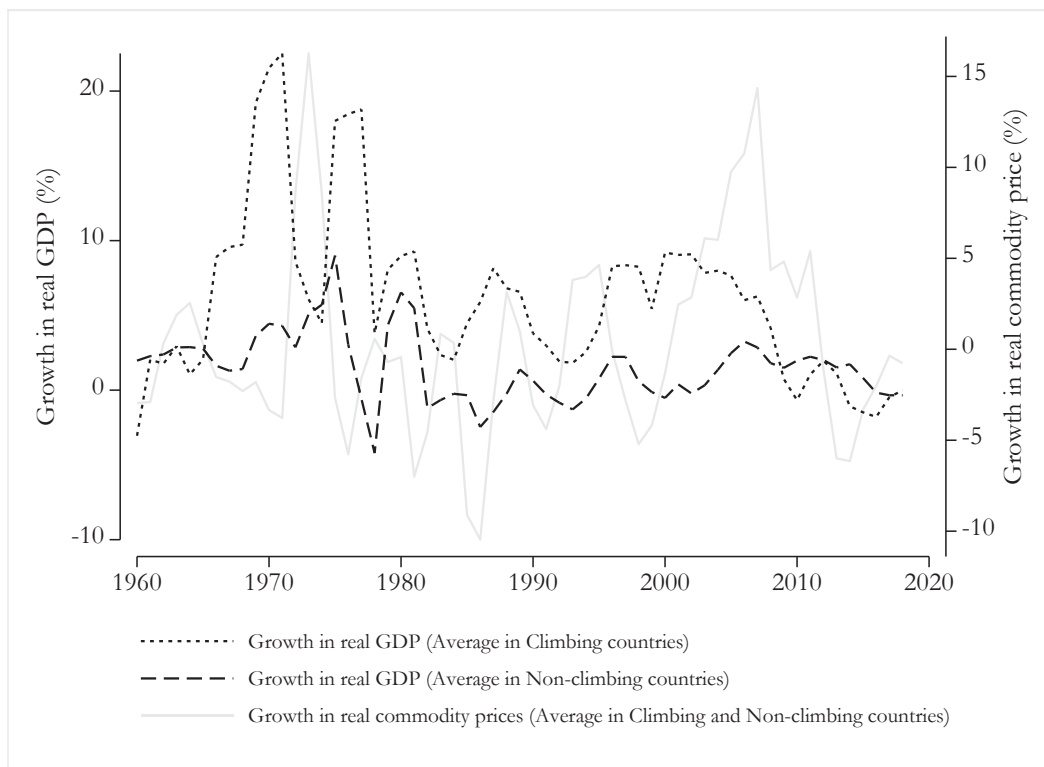


Figure 4. Economic growth and commodity prices in Africa, three-year moving averages

Source: author's calculations based on the World Development Indicators.

2.3. Structural changes

A third driving fact is structural changes, that is, the reallocation of resources and output from agriculture to industry and services. Documented as one of the key stylised features of economic development (Chenery 1960, Clark 1957, Kuznets 1966, Syrquin 1988), proponents of this theory generally state that the economic development of nations begins with a rise in industrial production and a relative decline in agriculture, followed by a decrease in the industrial sector and a sustained increase in services. The early research confirmed these structural changes for early industrialisers and predicted that other regions would follow the same development pattern. Recent studies, such as that of Otsubo and Otchia (2020), have also documented these development processes for late industrialisers. Together, these studies indicate that most African countries follow a backwards structural change by moving resources from high- to low-productive sectors.

Figure 5 compares the evolution of the average shares in each sector for climbing and non-climbing countries from 1960-2018. There is a clear difference between the two groups of countries. First, they begin with different economic structures. The climbing countries begin with the agricultural and manufacturing sectors accounting for a relatively high proportion of the GDP and the service and industry sectors making a much lower contribution to it. Second, the decline in the agriculture sector's contribution to the total output is distinct for the climbing countries compared to the non-climbing ones. Figure 5 depicts a clear downward trend in the agriculture sector's contribution for both country groups, but the decrease occurs faster in climbing countries. In both cases, the proportion of the GDP accounted for by agriculture was below 20%.

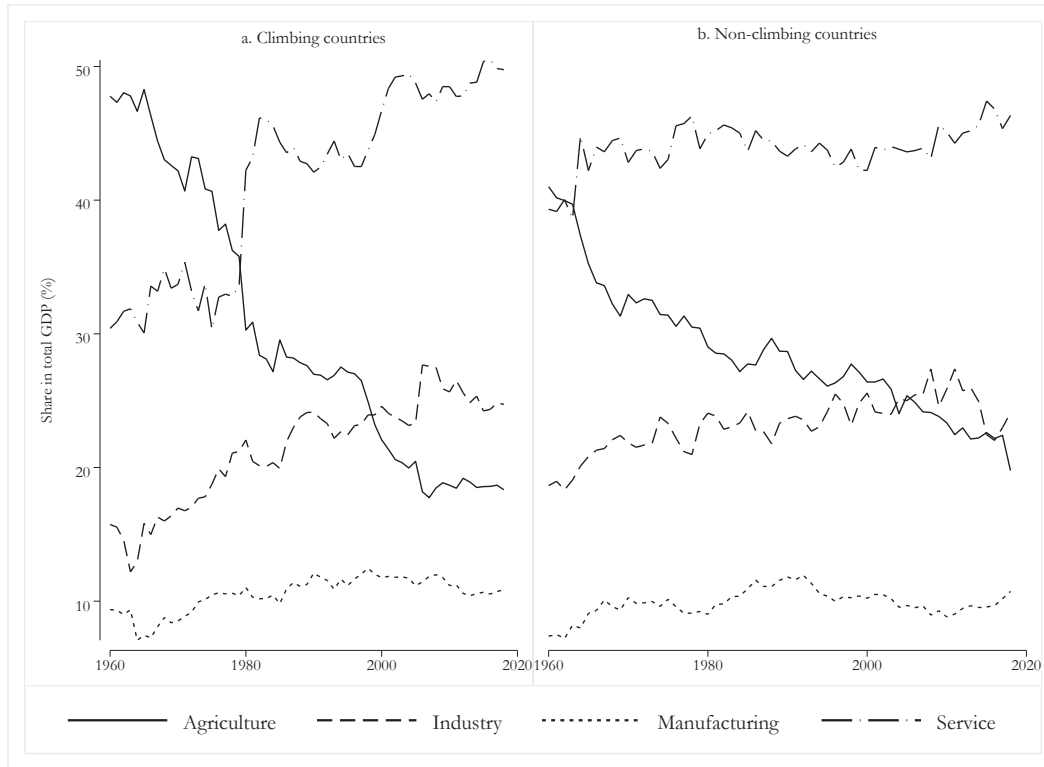


Figure 5. Structural changes in climbing and non-climbing countries

Source: author's calculations based on the World Development Indicators.

Third, there have been no significant structural changes from agriculture to industry. While we see a share of the GDP of roughly 25% (up from about 15%) for the climbing countries, the industry sector remains mostly stagnant in the non-climbing countries. The manufacturing sector has also remained static throughout the same period. Moreover, the industry sector reached its peak during the 2000s, but its recovery has been slow. The slowdown in manufacturing is a feature common to many countries. These patterns are still more strongly tied to per-capita GDP across countries than a specific year, as will be shown in the next subsection. The structural shift from agriculture to industry (mainly manufacturing) is important for the diversification of the economy, including production and exports, which are critical aspects of Africa's economic development. Indeed, according to Henn *et al.* (2020), export diversification is not only associated with lower production volatility but also with higher rates of economic growth. Diversification, including employment diversification, is associated with higher per-capita GDPs. In addition, the type and quality of export products tends to increase with production diversification (Henn *et al.* 2020).

Concerning the service sector's contribution to the GDP, a closer examination shows that the contribution of the service sector to the GDP was more significant in climbing countries. While there was substantial variation in growth rates, the structural change in the climbing countries was apparent. It is clear that service-sector growth accelerated post-1980. In non-climbing countries, we again see an

apparent turning point in 1965, but the service sector's contribution has remained virtually unchanged. Overall, it is evident that economic diversification is progressing slowly and is led by the service sector. While industry, including mining and manufacturing, is vital for the continent's development, it has been observed that the value added by services has been essential to sustaining economic growth, especially in recent years (Otsubo and Otchia 2020). One explanation for this positive outcome is that the main components of services, including those related to trade, transport, and telecommunications, are indirectly linked to mining activities, mainly those involving copper, zinc, and cobalt. Newfarmer, Page, and Tarp (2018) have argued that the future of Africa lies in the service sector because of the emergence of industries without smokestacks, such as agro-industrial and horticultural value chains, tourism, and business and trade services (including information and communications (ICT)-based services and transport and logistics). The importance of the service sector to GDP is increasingly becoming apparent in developing countries, but at lower levels of the GDP. This phenomenon is well-known and resembles premature deindustrialisation.

2.4. Premature deindustrialisation

The classic, dominant view relates industry to the manufacturing sector because of its role as an engine of economic growth (Chenery *et al.* 1986, Kaldor 1966). Historically, rapid, sustained economic growth was highly correlated with an expansion in manufacturing and the reallocation of resources to more-productive activities (McMillan and Rodrik 2011). Manufacturing has faster productivity growth than the service sector and agriculture, pays higher wages, and has strong spill over effects on other sectors. This means that a rapidly growing manufacturing sector enhances productivity growth in other sectors of the economy, leading to higher economic growth overall.

To present stylised facts on structural change and premature deindustrialisation in Africa, Figure 6 includes a comparison of the manufacturing value-added (panel A) and employment (panel B) patterns of climbing and non-climbing countries in the period from 1960-2018. The results demonstrate different patterns. The first striking observation is that climbing countries are the only group in which the share of the GDP attributed to manufacturing has been increasing over time. The trend accelerated in the 1980s but decelerated in the 2000s. In contrast, non-climbing countries have experienced falling value-added manufacturing shares at a lower level of GDP per capita without reaching the peak share of 0.4, as documented in the literature (Otsubo and Otchia 2020). The share accounted for by manufacturing increased in the 1970s for non-climbing countries and then decreased. As a result, many developing countries' manufacturing sectors have remained extremely small and inadequate for generating productive employment. Deindustrialisation has reduced the potential for overall economic growth to generate employment and reduce poverty. For instance, the share of manufacturing-sector employment in non-climbing countries has been falling over time. In contrast, in climbing countries, the share of

manufacturing-sector employment reflected a rising trend from the 1960s-1990s before steadily dropping. The premature decline of manufacturing and the subsequent growing importance of the service sector in both developed and developing countries provides ample evidence that structural transformation has occurred at the boundaries of the manufacturing industry where the service sector has expanded due to technological innovation.

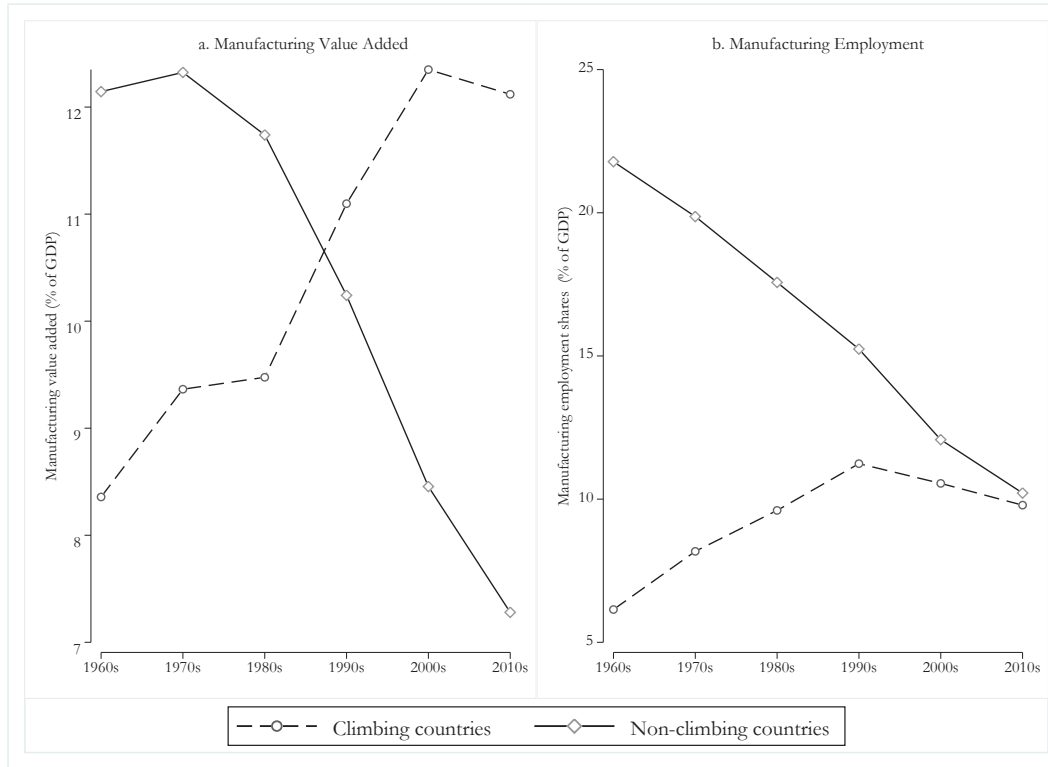


Figure 6. Premature deindustrialisation in climbing and non-climbing countries

Source: author's calculations based on the World Development Indicators.

3. Methodology and data

To identify the characteristics of climbing countries, we employed a simple specification of a standard growth equation, also known as the Barro regression (Barro 1991). Specifically, we estimated the following equation:

$$\gamma_i = \alpha + \beta X_i + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

where γ_i is either the climbing-country indicator or the growth rate of per-capita GDP since the year when each country reached the threshold of US \$500. X_i represents the growth determinants. Following the guidance of the theory, and as it is typically done in a reduced form in the empirical growth literature, we included 16 variables representing the trade structure, institutions, demography, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment and policies, and economic structure of countries in the year prior to

reaching the threshold.

Equation 1 can be estimated using the ordinary least squares method because endogeneity is not a problem, as the explanatory variables are dated before the dependent one. An important concern in using OLS is uncertainty in selecting the growth determinants (Brock and Durlauf 2001, Temple 2000). Another concern involves omitted variables because of missing observations in the data from early years. For instance, our model does not include human capital, which is recognised as a determinant of growth in several theoretical models (Lucas 1988, Mankiw *et al.* 1992).

To partially take into account these fundamental issues in cross-country growth regressions, we adopted a model-averaging estimators (Magnus *et al.* 2010) strategy. Recent empirical growth literature has recently grown around the use of these models, mainly standard Bayesian Model Averaging (BMA). The growing literature has focused on the role of institutions in general (Lenkoski, Eicher, and Raftery 2014), property rights (Eicher and Newiak 2013), trade (Eicher and Kuenzel 2016), energy consumption (Camarero *et al.* 2015), government spending and savings (Jovanovic 2017), and natural resources (Arin and Braunfels 2018), among other topics. Other researchers have tested the existing theories of growth. For instance, Lenkoski *et al.* (2014) used two-stage BMA methodology to test the findings of Rodrik *et al.* (2004) and found support for more determinants of economic growth. Magnus *et al.* (2010) re-examined the data used by Sala-i-Martin *et al.* (2004) by accounting for many models with different instruments and growth determinants. They also found that carefully addressing a model's uncertainty led to better results.

The advantage of the BMA method is that it is a data-driven model in which uncertainties are carefully addressed. All combinations of X_i are estimated and a subset of explanatory variables that maximises the predictive power of the model is selected. The unconditional BMA estimates are then computed from a weighted average of the estimates of each of the possible models in the model space, with the weights measured by the posterior model's probabilities. The weights are chosen according to the models' fitness so that models that better explain the data have a greater weight and, thus, a greater impact on the results. The BMA, therefore, produces unconditional estimates in the sense that they do not depend on a single model. Instead, the BMA relies on the evidence provided by the data. We followed the tradition of selecting the variables with a posterior inclusion probability (PIP) of 0.50 or greater as the most important ones for the interpretation of the results. In the second step, we used the parsimonious model in an OLS regression containing the selected explanatory variables.

The data and their sources are listed in Table 2. The data on the annualised growth rates of the per-capita GDPs were calculated from the first year each country reached the threshold of US \$500 until the last year available in the dataset, which was usually 2018. We constructed the institutional variable by considering the first principal components of civil liberties and political rights. The variables' demography was constructed in a similar manner by combining the fertility rate and dependence ratio.

The initial period values were used to avoid possible endogeneity issues. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the data, with the climbing countries representing 33% of our sample.

Table 2. Description of data used in the regression analysis for countries that reached the US \$500 threshold

Variables	Description	Source
Oil price	Oil price	World Bank Commodity Market
Mineral price	Mineral price	World Bank Commodity Market
Investment	Share of gross capital formation at current PPPs	Penn World Table
Foreign value added	Foreign value added	Eora MRIO
Domestic value added	Domestic value added	Eora MRIO
Colonial dependence	Colonial administrative status	Sachs and Warner (1997)
Investment price	Price level of capital formation, price level of USA GDP in 2011=1	Penn World Table
Trade openness	Openness to international trade	Penn World Table
Landlocked status	Dummy variable that is one if the country is landlocked	AfDB (2007)
Oil-rich status	Dummy variable that is one if the country is oil-rich	AfDB (2007)
Mineral-rich status	Dummy variable that is one if the country is mineral-rich	AfDB (2007)
Tropical location	Percentage of total land area in the tropics (between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer)	Gallup, Sachs, and Mellinger (1999)
Rural population growth	Rural population growth	World Development Indicators
Urban population growth	Urban population growth	World Development Indicators
Institutional status	PCA of the fertility rate and dependence ratio	Freedom House
Demography	PCA of civil liberties and political rights	World Development

		Indicators
Log GDP per capita	Log of per-capita GDP in 1960	World Development
		Indicators
Life expectancy	Life expectancy (1960)	World Development
		Indicators

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the data used in the regression analysis

Variables	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Growth rate	47	1.29	1.74	-1.6	6.6
Climbing country status	47	0.33	0.48	0	1
Oil price	47	80.89	11.10	44.7	98.9
Mineral price	47	59.38	14.32	35.9	91.7
Investment	41	0.20	0.14	0.0	0.6
Foreign value added	40	9.71	5.17	0	17.5
Domestic value added	40	11.28	5.55	0	19.0
Colonial dependence	43	0.12	0.32	0	1
Investment price	41	0.30	0.35	0.0	2.1
Trade openness	41	-0.05	0.09	-0.5	0.1
Landlocked status	47	0.31	0.47	0	1
Oil-rich status	47	0.19	0.39	0	1
Mineral-rich status	47	0.21	0.41	0	1
Tropical location	43	0.89	0.28	0	1
Rural population growth	41	1.98	0.83	0.0	4.7
Urban population growth	41	5.79	2.82	1.1	16.6
Institutional status	42	0.00	1.38	-2.8	2.0
Demography	41	0.00	1.24	-3.5	2.0
Log GDP per capita	42	6.81	0.67	6.2	8.4
Life expectancy	39	3.73	0.13	3.5	4.1

4. Results

Columns 1-2 in Table 4 include estimates of the specifications of Equation 1 using the dummy of ‘climbing countries’ as our dependent variable. Column 1 reports the posterior means, and Column 2 the PIPs. The findings reveal that mineral prices are a significant explanatory variable of growth, as their inclusion probability is the highest. The second significant determinant is the oil price. We find that

natural resource endowment, a proxy for oil- and mineral rich-countries, is a weak driver of climbing countries' status. The effect of the mineral price is positive, whereas the effect of the oil price is negative, but the magnitude of the latter is slightly higher and not statistically different from zero. Nonetheless, the fact that the price of natural resources is a significant explanatory variable of growth can be interpreted in favour of resource-dependent growth.

The effect of countries' participation in global value chains (GVCs) on their likelihood of climbing is also robust but less precisely estimated. The effect of the foreign value-added component is positive, but the domestic value-added component has a negative effect on a country's likelihood of climbing. Notably, the effect of trade is also positive, but it is not robust. Taken at face value, this finding suggests that the robust, strong positive effect of trade on growth works through backward and forward GVC participation. The negative effect of the domestic value-added component corroborates the findings of Dollar *et al.* (2019), who argued that the ratio of the domestic value-added component to the gross export value tends to fall as a developing country moves from the export of primary products to the that of manufactured goods and services via GVCs. The positive effect of the domestic value-added component on a country's likelihood of climbing implies that African countries are increasingly upgrading their technology because of increased integration into international production networks. The literature has cited China as the only country to achieve a simultaneous increase in domestic value-added exports and a high GDP growth rate due to a substantial improvement in technology and reduced trade costs. However, this is not the case in Africa, as most countries are confined to commodities-related value chains (World Bank 2020). Therefore, the presence of a negative sign seems plausible within our context, as imported intermediate inputs and services are key to encouraging value-added economic growth.

Our model also supports the relevance of initial GDP per capita and life expectancy. We found that the effects of initial GDP per capita and life expectancy were robust and precisely estimated. We found that the other variables were not robust determinants of climbing status. However, some findings are worth noting. First, we found that having a tropical location had a negative effect on climbing status, as suggested by Masters and McMillan (2001) and Hsiang and Meng (2015). Contrary to widespread beliefs, we found a positive effect of urban population growth on climbing status and a negative effect (less robust) of rural growth on it.

Columns 3-4 of Table 4 show the BMA results for the annualised GDP per-capita growth rate. If anything, the results confirm the importance of mineral prices in explaining economic growth in Africa, given that it has a posterior inclusion probability of 0.87. The other findings were qualitatively verified, but the estimates were not precise.

We will now turn our attention to parsimonious analysis by applying a regression model to the most robust determinant of climbing status and growth obtained from the BMA exercise. Since the BMA provided some data-driven intuition for the correct model, OLS regression seemed appropriate for

situations in which a small number of pre-determined variables existed. Columns 5-6 of Table 4 present the regression results when the dependent variable was climbing status. We focused on initial GDP per capita, life expectancy, oil price, mineral price, and the foreign and domestic value-added component for several reasons. By focusing on such variables, we had the ability to confidently determine that the regression model had sufficient degrees of freedom to assess the robustness of our results. Moreover, we had the ability to compare our findings to the estimates available in the literature. As expected, all the variables were statistically significant because of the robustness and flexibility of the BMA. Thus, the OLS results confirmed the previous findings that commodities prices, GVC participation, and initial conditions were likely the key drivers of climbing status. One important message communicated by this table was that the magnitude of the oil prices was much larger than that of the mineral prices. In Columns 7-8, we focused on the model estimating the annualised growth rate based on the three variables we identified from the BMA model, namely life expectancy, mineral prices, and foreign as well as domestic value-added factors in gross exports. We found that all the variables were statistically significant with the expected signs.

Table 4. Factors explaining the success of climbing countries

Dependent variable	Climbing country status		Growth rate		Climbing country status		Growth rate	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Coefficient	Posterior Inclusion Probability	Coefficient	Posterior Inclusion Probability	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Oil price	-0.0211	0.74	-0.0163	0.25	-0.030***	(0.006)		
Mineral price	0.0202	0.90	0.0621	0.87	0.023***	(0.006)	0.074***	(0.022)
Investment	0.0079	0.06	0.2832	0.12				
Foreign value added	0.0503	0.49	0.0243	0.15	0.113***	(0.023)	0.258*	(0.145)
Domestic value added	-0.0404	0.46	-0.0400	0.23	-0.093***	(0.021)	-0.297**	(0.131)
Colonial dependence	0.0094	0.10	0.0340	0.08				
Investment price	0.0121	0.10	0.1193	0.13				
Trade openness	0.0054	0.06	0.0079	0.06				
Landlocked status	0.0143	0.10	0.0676	0.11				
Oil-rich status	-0.0010	0.06	0.0394	0.08				
Mineral-rich status	0.0027	0.07	0.0067	0.06				

Dependent variable	Climbing country status		Growth rate		Climbing country status		Growth rate	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Tropical location	-0.1031	0.26	-0.0486	0.08				
Rural population								
growth	-0.0060	0.09	-0.0785	0.17				
Urban population								
growth	0.0097	0.26	0.0952	0.45				
Institutional status	0.0045	0.10	0.0017	0.06				
Demography	0.0036	0.09	-0.0296	0.12				
Log GDP per capita	-0.2543	1.00	-0.3679	1.00	-0.248*	(0.134)		
Life expectancy	1.8019	1.00	7.0055	1.00	1.825***	(0.479)	6.411***	(1.980)
Constant	-4.1862	1.00	-24.9850	1.00	-3.764***	(1.319)	-21.371***	(6.419)
Estimation method	BMA		BMA		OLS		OLS	
Observations	36		36		36		36	
R-squared					0.716		0.575	

Note: This table reports the determinants of the success of climbing countries obtained from several regressions. In columns 1, 2, 5, and 6, the dependent variable is a dummy variable that takes 1 for climbing countries and 0 for non-climbing countries. In Columns 3, 4, 7, and 8, the annualised growth rate is used as the dependent variable.

5. Relation to the literature

In sum, we can report two major findings: we found that mineral and oil prices had a high probability of explaining countries' climbing status and that the nature of participation in the GVC mattered more than simple exposure to international trade. How do our findings relate to the literature, then?

Previous research (Alexeev and Conrad 2009, Lederman and Maloney 2007, Sachs and Warner 1995) provides a theoretical and empirical analysis of the relationship between commodity prices and economic growth. However, there is an ongoing debate about the interaction between commodity prices and economic performance due to mixed empirical results. Under various hypotheses regarding the nature of a country's endowment (Akinlo and Apanisile 2010, Eggoh *et al.* 2011) and its short- or long-term prospects (Bashiri Behmiri and Pires Manso 2013, Nkomo 2006, Otchia 2019), higher commodity prices will either have a positive effect on net-exporting countries or a negative effect on net-importing ones. Starting with an analysis of oil prices, Gbatu *et al.* (2017) found that, in Liberia, increased oil prices have not been detrimental to economic growth because of the reallocation of labour and capital

into oil-intensive sectors during the price boom. Other studies conducted in net-oil-importing countries have shown positive short-term effects on growth. While there is abundant literature describing the effect of oil prices on growth, few researchers have examined the effects of oil prices on the various phases of business cycles. One study by Balcilar *et al.* (2017) showed that net importers of oil, such as South Africa, can be expected to be vulnerable to oil price shocks irrespective of the phase of the business cycle. Most of these studies used oil price data from the 1970s. Research using a longer series from the United States (Gadea *et al.* 2016) showed evidence of nonlinearity in the relationship between oil prices and economic growth. While our data do not reflect this evidence, our study makes a significant contribution to the literature, as we used price data from 1960 to explain long-term growth.

Other studies have shown the relationship between mineral prices and economic growth in Africa (Deaton 1999). Perhaps the most comparable study to ours was done by Foster-McGregor *et al.* (2018). By separating energy from non-energy prices, they found that the former had a significant long-term resource curse effect, while increased non-energy commodity prices raised the long-term GDP per capita. Our findings on the positive effect on mineral prices are important for several reasons. They provide deeper insight into the debate on whether Africa should adopt a comparative advantage-defying strategy or promote industries that correspond to its countries' current endowment structures (Lin and Chang 2009, Otchia 2015). Our findings showing that mineral prices positively affect economic growth suggest that development strategies for the continent should make natural resources more inclusive by better managing revenues from them and from exchange rates (Otchia and Asongu 2020, Sala-i-Martin and Subramanian 2013).

By analysing the foreign and domestic value-added component of exports, we have written a paper that belongs to an emerging strand of literature examining the effects of trade in value-added commodities on economic growth. For example, World Bank (2020) showed that most of the recent poverty reduction throughout the world is strongly linked to the GVC participation of a few countries (China, Vietnam, and Bangladesh). In Africa, however, the rates of inequality and poverty have increased despite increased participation in GVCs. Otsubo and Otchia (2020) pointed out that the inter-country dispersion of the impact of GVCs can be persistent because African countries are confined to the low-value-added commodities segments of value chains without much prospect for industry upgrades. This study shows that Africa can succeed in GVCs by reducing the domestic value-added component in exports and increasing foreign value-added exports through imports of sophisticated intermediate inputs.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we investigated the link between policies, institutions, and endowments and economic growth in Africa. To analyse this relationship, we proposed a simple, intuitive methodology to identify

climbing countries as those marked by sustained, high levels of economic growth compared to other countries with similar per capita GDPs. The advantages of our approach were that we could accommodate various thresholds above which we defined success and various indicators, such as manufacturing shares of GDP. We showed that 33% of countries were climbing the ladder of economic development, while the rest of the countries were either stagnant or experienced negative economic growth. The climbing countries exhibited positive structural changes and did not experience premature deindustrialisation.

We shed new light on the determinants of climbing status and sustained increases in economic growth. We found that mineral and oil prices were strong determinants of climbing status. We also found that oil prices had a negative effect on growth and that policies that fostered structural change helped mitigate these effects. We also showed that the type of participation in GVCs mattered more than simple trade-openness measures. Our results suggest that African countries can sustain high growth rates by reducing the domestic value-added component of exports and increasing the foreign value-added one. Finally, our findings supported the existing evidence on the role of initial GDP per capita and life expectancy in this phenomenon. Taken together, our findings imply that the role of policies and endowments is especially important in creating champions in Africa.

Acknowledgements

This work was based on a research project titled ‘From Resource-Led Export Booms to Pro-Poor Growth: Reformulating Industrial Policy in Africa’ (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 18K18266, Principal investigator: Otchia Christian).

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Youth displacement, peacebuilding, and ethnoregional-neopatrimonial politics: The case of post-war Sierra Leone

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Abstract

This chapter analyses how the youth in Sierra Leone were manipulated by political parties which were formed in line with *the ethnoregional-neopatrimonial* system. This chapter explains that the deeply rooted ethnoregional-neopatrimonial political system created an atmosphere of violent politicisation of these youths and culminated in their displacement within the governing political structure. This manipulation hinders the development of equal youth participation in politics and becomes an obstacle to liberal post-conflict peacebuilding.

Keywords: youths, Sierra Leone, politicisation, displacement, peacebuilding, Africa

1. Introduction

According to a 2018 United Nations report, there are 1.2 billion youths in the world population (AfDB *et al.* 2016:41, United Nations 2018). As noted in the African Economic Outlook Report, the population from ‘2000 to 2015 accelerated by 370 million from 814 million to approximately 1.2. billion’ (AfDB *et al.* 2016:41).

As indicated in these reports, this exponential rise has particularly impacted Sub-Saharan Africa, while other regions of the world have begun experiencing sharp declines in the number of youths (United Nations 2018). Fundamentally, regarding government transitions in many African countries (Seely 2009, Vengroft 1993, Wiseman 1995), youths have remained alienated from the political systems. In addition, implementation of practical and appropriate measures to better support these youths has remained a challenge, particularly within domestic countries (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi 2013). This is despite the various adopted policies in Africa at the continental level, such as the African Youth Charter, the African Youth Declaration on the post-2015 Development Agenda, and Agenda 2063.

In Sierra Leone, during the period leading to the end of the war and in the peacebuilding process, mainstream politics has treated its population of youths as insignificant (Bangura 2016, McIntyre and Thusi 2003). Instead, it has used them as an auxiliary support system. These mobilised youths are primarily composed of ex-combatants and non-combatant constituents. They become subservient for various political purposes, either as a task force, as a paramilitary security wing, or as bodyguards to political party leaders, while others remain mere spectators (Christensen and Utas 2008, Mitton 2013).

Building on this case study of post-conflict Sierra Leone, this chapter analyses how the youth were manipulated by political parties formed in line with the *ethnoregional-neopatrimonial* system (Kallon 2020). This chapter explains that the deeply rooted *ethnoregional-neopatrimonial* political system created an atmosphere of violent politicisation of these youths and culminated in their displacement within the governing political structure. This manipulation hinders the development of equal youth participation in politics and becomes an obstacle to liberal post-conflict peacebuilding.

Olaiya (2014) noted that the existence of a marginalised sect of people like the youths in West Africa has provided a veritable opportunity utilised by political party structures. This is evident in the post-conflict peacebuilding atmosphere of Sierra Leone (Enria 2015). This chapter emphasizes that *ethnoregional-neopatrimonialism* in the political system has resulted in the violent politicisation of the country’s youth through clientelism. For many citizens, particularly for youth, this practice eliminated any prospects of equal opportunity or meaningful participation within the political space. Thus, the current chapter analyses this phenomenon by exploring the patterns through which party politics in the country have mobilised youths.

The clientelistic mobilisation of youths by party politics has been an inherent and long-held pattern in the country’s political practices that became more pronounced in the post-conflict era. Such a pattern

deprives the youths of any opportunity to seek meaningful placement within the mainstream political system, other than as an instrument for the benefit of others.

Because of the country's neopatrimonialism associated with ethnicity and regionalism, which has become a vital characteristic of political practices, the mobilisation of youths within the political system has been focussed on social and cultural patterns. These post-war vulnerabilities emphasize the social mobilisation patterns of youths in Sierra Leone (Mitton 2013, Peters 2011b).

The outcome of this systemic pattern has been a struggle for survival that is institutionally layered across the country and has been marred by recurrent political clashes. These clashes have been recurrent both within and between the political parties, sometimes leading to large-scale political unrest among the youth in various parts of the country. Sierra Leone has been of this pattern, particularly evident within the political system.

In the following sections, first, the conceptual debate on the youth in African politics has been briefly summarised. This chapter then delineates the sociology of youths in Sierra Leone and their demographic composition. Next, the context within which the country's youth have been marginalised and subjected to poverty has been explained. More importantly, the chapter explains the social and cultural patterns within a neopatrimonial clientelist system, which is being used to mobilise the youth. Further, the chapter points out that mobilising these youths along party politics have created dilemmas. The implications for the successful realisation of liberal post-conflict peacebuilding in the country have also been indicated. The chapter ends with a conclusion.

2. Conceptual discussions of youths and politics in Africa

The extant literature on the participation of youth in African politics has been categorised into three argumentative scholarly perspectives. First, a wide range of scholars have focused on socially created structural barriers. Another category of scholarly work has been more attentive to the violence that is associated with the youth and its implications for African politics. Other scholarly inquiries on the participation of youths in African politics have focused on the contributions of African youth in political processes.

Perspectives on socially created structural barriers or limitations have been pronounced in discussions of the youths in Africa. For example, in contemporary African society, it is argued that politics provides the mainstream platform through which economic and social well-being can be guaranteed. Particularly for African youths, current political practices have not generated meaningful outcomes (Mengistu 2016).

In her examination of political party systems in Africa in the aftermath of the 'Third Wave', Manning (2005) noted that these political parties are different from organizations that appear to be advancing progressive democratic practices.

Conceptually, as noted by Ekman and Amnå (2012:289), political participation involves ‘actions directed towards influencing governmental decision and political outcomes’.

In addition, Teorell, Torcal, and Montero (2007:340–343) described political participation as ‘voting, party activity, consumer participation, contacting and protest activity’. These characterisations are crucial in understanding political participation and partly reflect on African youths. However, the engagements of African youths in the political process have been contested by historical and complex socio-institutional layering (Van-Gyampo and Anyidoho 2019).

Gerontocracy is a widely noted political style in the African system, which acts as a long-established barrier to youth participation in mainstream politics. Abbink (2005:13–16) referenced this perspective while discussing African youths and politics from the post-independence period to the decline of the Soviet Union. He specifically focused on the patterns of elite capture in Africa's political landscape as a long-running historical phenomenon hindering meaningful participation by the country's youth in the political system.

Similarly, Adebayo (2018) argued that the absence of youth in African politics could be understood by looking at the period after political independence. Adebayo affirmed that, in the bid to consolidate and entrench power, political actors instituted many exclusionary political practices to discourage youth participation in the political system (see also Aguilar 1998, Bangura 2018). In addition, Van-Gyampo and Anyidoho (2019) argued that African youth had been fundamentally blocked from such participation, particularly since involvement in African politics depends on strong determinant factors that are beyond their control. The authors specifically pointed out that age, education, and economy are vital in African politics, and many young Africans lack the requirements to contribute meaningfully. The authors also added that the African patriarchal structure had diminished the political participation of young African women.

In many aspects, a post-conflict peacebuilding process faces deeply rooted challenges. In Africa, these challenges are largely due to the marginalisation of the young population, as argued by McEvoy-Ley¹. In particular, she argued that the widespread unemployment among these youths is a consequence of their marginalisation. She stated that the nomenclature commonly associated with the youth diminishes the effects of their participation in the peacebuilding process. She regarded these patterns as a dilemma for peacebuilding in post-conflict states. She further argued that the political transition to peacebuilding has been full of denial. McEvoy-Ley specified that those who actively participated as front-liners during the war had been deprived of playing a meaningful role in the post-conflict transition period. McEvoy-Ley reiterated that the political power was seized by adults, and a limited viable institutional mechanism was implemented to safeguard this vulnerable group (see note 1).

¹ McEvoy-Ley, S. n/d. ‘Youth and the challenge of post-conflict Peacebuilding’. <<https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1067-youth-and-the-challenges-of-post-conflict-peacebuilding.html/>> Accessed on 5 May 2020>.

Moreover, McEvoy-Ley explained that the adults within the political class did not exhibit much zest or interest in sharing their powers with the youth. She maintained that these political class sects are not interested in incorporating ideas contributed by youths into their governance processes. In addition, young people who do appear to be within the system are merely being used to serve the interests of the well-established political class.

Discussing the transition period for African youths, Honwana (2012) employed the concept of 'waithood' to characterise Africa's structural and social dilemmas. She opined that many contemporary African youths have not transitioned to adulthood, since entering a readily available job market is not guaranteed. Thus, a large portion of the continent's young populace has struggled to obtain the symbols of adulthood, which are usually responsibility, independence, and societal acknowledgment.

Honwana also indicated that the waithood concept embodies other elements of the transition to adulthood, such as a 'civic participatory role, household formation, and education' (Honwana 2012:4). Honwana opined that youths who identify themselves as a part of the waived bracket feel somewhat like an alien within their societies, largely because they are unable to meet these socially constructed requirements.

Beyond these established notions regarding the barriers to youth participation in politics, the perpetuation of violence in the political space has been equally and widely used. One such perspective is presented by Enria (2015). Enria argued that the association between the marginalisation of labour market actors, largely youths, and the use of violence as a strategy to establish favour from political actors may exist because it leads to job opportunities. In the case of post-war Sierra Leone, Enria explained that the participation of youths in violence was merely a ploy undertaken by some of the vulnerable young populace to nurture allegiances with the political class. Enria further stated that such an act does not end after building this allegiance and is an expected part of membership within the political class that impacts the youth's prospects for employment and commitment.

Regarding youth violence in African politics, Dodo (2018) specifically cited Zimbabwe as a classic example. Through approximately three consecutive months of ethnographic research using interviews, Dodo indicated that political violence attributed to youths is largely accounted for by the 'level of resistance and psychological influence' (Dodo 2018:119).

Ojok and Acol (2017) linked African youth, especially from the 1990s to 2015, to data about sixty incidences of election-related political violence. They argued that this was caused by underlying structural factors that have remained inherent within African political systems. The authors argued that the 'demographic dominance' of the youth category has been taken for granted by elite political actors who act out of political motives. Thus, the authors argued that youths have been manipulated and used to secure these actors' political aspirations (Ojok and Acol 2017:95).

In addition, based on this data, the authors asserted that these repressed and despondent youths are attracted by election-related violence representing one of their last hopes to attain political relevance within the African political system. The authors stated that, on account of the long historical and structural neglect of African youths in politics, they have resolved to use violence to establish their political niche.

Rashid (1997) comprehensively demonstrated how the disconnect of youths in African society has tended towards the dismantling of state governance systems. Using the specific case of Sierra Leone, Rashid referenced what he called ‘Lumpen Youths’, or youths who feel a societal disconnect and whose only remaining agency is violence. In addition, Rashid noted that some of the causes of the civil war in Sierra Leone that began in 1991 were related to the displacement of these youths within society.

Rashid also argued that the emergence of Lumpen youths was due to the inability of the state political economy to cater appropriately to this large section of the populace. He stated that this resulted in a radically sensitive and politically charged group conglomeration, along with some university student caucuses. According to Rashid, this phenomenon, combined with several other factors, transformed this established group – which was aware of the barriers between its members and the political powers – and made the members dispirited with the political establishment. According to the author, this process culminated in various acts of political violence and the subsequent civil war. Political violence has severe consequences, leading to an untold number of deaths, undermining the legality of elections, scuttling the entire democratisation process, weakening the state economy, and leading to a spill-over effect into other societies (Bodea and Elbadawi 2008, Adolfo *et al.* 2012).

Viewing this subject somewhat differently, Babatunde (2015) – on the notion of a ‘youth uprising’, – discussed the contributions of youths in decades-long political reformation processes using the much reputed ‘Arab Spring’ as an example. The author stated that the uprising undertaken by these youths to demand political reform resulted in a significant democratic shift in the political superstructure of several societies. He indicated that these societies were permeated with long-held, historic political establishments. However, regarding the Arab Spring, particularly in Africa and elsewhere, he noted that it contributes to the development of democracy.

In addition, the Arab Spring served as an essential indicator that political gerontocracy could no longer be considered absolute within the continent. The author specified that youth uprising was a remarkable example of the political relevance that could be obtained, despite the forces which remained vigorously established within the African political system.

Based on this conceptual analysis, the perspectives on youth and politics in Africa are diverse. In addition, these youths have waited for a long time to meaningfully participate in politics. In post-conflict Sierra Leone, the political atmosphere has been characterised by the practices of neopatrimonialism associated with ethnicity and regionalism. This situation has unfolded through clientelistic

manipulations of these youths, along with social and cultural patterns of mobilisation, through which unequal opportunity for the youth became permeated.

3. The sociology of youths in post-conflict Sierra Leone

After eleven years of civil war, the youths in Sierra Leone occupied one of the country's largest demographic constituencies (Weekes and Bah 2017). Moreover, in the past fifteen years, this section of the nation's population has grown at an exponential rate. In addition, according to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sources mentioned in The World Factbook, the youth population in Sierra Leone has a dependency ratio of 71% (CIA 2020). Sierra Leone is among the four Mano River Union countries with the highest youth unemployment ratio. For example, the CIA through the World Factbook indicated that between the ages of 15 and 24, Sierra Leone's young population has an unemployment rate of 9.4 %, Liberia 2.3%, Guinea 1%, and Cote D'Ivoire 5.5% (CIA 2020).

This kind of upsurge should lead to an immense labour force for buoyant youths because it is a distinctive indicator of national development, as noted in other countries (Kimenyi *et al.* 2016, AfDB *et al.* 2016). In a 1973 publication, James Pickett mentioned that Africa's population increase appeared to work antithetical to population surges in the industrialised world where it typically became the catalyst for economic progression (Pickett 1973). Indeed, beyond the role of nationalism in African political independence efforts, it was widely supposed that young people were motivated by economic development that emerged within the continent. However, in the years that followed, they remained largely outside the continent's economic and political structures, an argument that is in line with James Pickett's reasoning.

In Sierra Leone, and especially in the aftermath of the civil war, a marked increase in the young population had a direct impact on the labour force. This is despite the slight reduction it caused in the fertility rates from '2008 standing at 5.8 to 5.1 in 2019' (Statistics Sierra Leone and ICF 2019:12). This perspective is significant with regard to the particular labour force that constituted this increased youth population.

Specifically, such a perspective is crucial when considering the infrastructure and political environment for these youths, especially when they are being manipulated and instrumentalized. These factors created an obstacle to the successful realisation of post-conflict liberal peacebuilding. The subsequent sub-sections elaborate on these complexities.

3.1. Overview of the composition of the post-conflict youth demography

In post-conflict Sierra Leone, youths comprise the young, energetic segment of the population within the age bracket of 15–35 years (Chipika 2012:1, Government of Sierra Leone 2003, Peeters *et al.* 2009). This age bracket entails many of those who acted as paramilitary civil defence forces and eventually

became ex-combatants and those who were young ex-military officers. The youth also comprised the majority of those who grew up before and during the war, either as victims with a plethora of lived experiences who never actively participated, or others. Many of these groups have been placed within this definition of youths, and the majority are facing the waithood dilemma (Honwana 2012). This succinct categorisation entails the post-conflict youth configuration.

Going beyond this concise outline is an approach that involves a thorough and more in-depth profiling. Within post-conflict Sierra Leone, a group of exasperated youths emerged and proliferated, who spent almost a decade of their lives in an uncertain environment in the forest waging warfare. Richards (1996) characterised this conflict as ‘Fighting for the Forest’; Kaplan (1994) described it as ‘New Barbarism’; and Gberie (2005) consciously named it ‘A Dirty War in West Africa’.

Before the civil war, a large constituency of disconnected youths already existed and was broadly categorised under the name ‘Lumpen youths’ (Abdullah 1998). ‘Lumpen’ is a label that epitomises a section of young people with largely informal education and skills, who consider themselves rejected by society. This population had disengaged from the social and economic sphere of the state apparatus and had lost all trust in the political establishment (Abdullah 1998, Peters 2011a).

Moreover, conscription was practiced and used as a weapon of the war. As a result, children and women were scouted and enrolled in belligerent movements and became part of the population segment that eventually surged in numbers and strength for the rebel movement (Coulter 2008, Denov 2010). In addition, young male children were recruited into the civil defence paramilitary force, the Kamajors. For the most part, these young children who participated in the war were never given adequate access to formal education or meaningful professional training. The only education they received was through their exposure to ‘killing, robbery, thuggery, and violent practice’ for eleven consecutive years (Betancourt *et al.* 2011, Rosen 2005:59).

Another considerable segment of the population who participated in the war were young people from rural communities who formed the ‘Civil Defense Force’. As a paramilitary institution, this group comprised many constituencies across the country to defend their local communities during the war along with a large crop of young Sierra Leone military who fought on the side of the state (Peters 2011a).

In the aftermath of the war, these huge constituencies of the country’s population, who had spent several years in combat, formed a ‘youth bulge’ of ex-combatants. This group proliferated across the country as they were confronted with numerous grim realities at the end of the war, where immediate solutions to their anticipated needs was unavailable. This situation further deteriorated their hopes, particularly in the emerging era of liberal post-conflict peacebuilding (Peeters *et al.* 2009).

Moreover, within this complicated post-conflict climate, another category of youths, comprising those at a tender age during the war—who continued in school intermittently to acquire formal education—became a part of the enlightened class. This category was challenged by the absence of

opportunities to integrate directly and meaningfully into the workforce or the political system, thereby hindering their transition into adulthood in an atmosphere of equal opportunity. In the past several years, there has been a consistent increase in the number of such youths produced by different colleges, training institutes, and universities.

In Sierra Leone, there has been an absence of impactful micro- and macroeconomic policies (African Development Bank Group 2020) or bold and practicable political responses by the state structure to address this fundamental dilemma. In addition, a viable private sector to encourage rapid development within the economy has remained unrealisable (Ganson and M'cleod 2019). As noted by Keili and Thiam, 'pervasive corruption limited the growth of the formal private sector and deprived many young people of gainful employment' (2015:236). Thus, this phenomenon has been a favourable foundation wherein the political establishment further enhanced ethnoregional-neopatrimonialism, thereby emboldening the clientelistic political lines. This provided leverage within the political system that resulted in the violent politicisation, manipulation, and mobilisation of this youth category across social and cultural patterns. It was subsequently taken for granted within the political system, further contributing to the marginalisation of youths.

Thus, these experiences of the youth in a post-conflict Sierra Leone can be equated to the initial post-independence euphoria. Post-independence euphoria that erupted generated expectations of economic transformation, development, and political stability across the continent, only to result in a mere façade of meaningful change (Duiker and Spielvogel 2008). Experiences of youth in a post-conflict Sierra Leone produced this outcome.

3.2. Post-war social integration of the youths

The Lome Peace Accord in 1999 was anticipated to be a mechanism for creating a durable and sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. As discussed in post-conflict settlements, the disarmament and reintegration of belligerents are among some of the critical characteristics of policy frameworks that help countries transition from war to peace (Patel 2009:248).

In post-conflict Sierra Leone, particularly regarding the youths during and after the war, the mechanism claimed to offer stability which was categorized into two measures. These included the framework of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) and the Youth Policy. Both were conceived as essential measures to establish a youth infrastructure that could ensure an overall stabilisation and consolidation of post-war peace. The DDR was the direct intervention as a preliminary post-conflict peacebuilding stabilisation mechanism. Therefore, both were undertaken in Sierra Leone. However, their outcomes were largely inconsequential.

3.2.1. Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration

The Lome Peace Accord was noted as a blueprint to cease hostilities towards the end of the war. In the Lome Peace Accord of 7 July 1999, Part 4 of Article XVI suggested that the government, in conjunction with international assistance, began the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) of all combatants (Government of Sierra Leone 1999), many of whom were youths.

DDR is an instrument of the contemporary peacebuilding process to encourage a return to stability. In addition, from a policy perspective, it is viewed as an institutional arrangement for providing and ensuring mitigation checks at the end of the conflict for young people who might be extremely unfamiliar with their new environment during reintegration.

DDR, as a peacebuilding infrastructure in Sierra Leone, was not exclusively limited to the collection of arms. It also served as an initial response mechanism to the issues experienced by combatants for appropriate reintegration. The combatants were mainly warring actors from all of the endogenous parties who participated in the war—particularly, the youths—and served as the initial foundation for peace. This measure led to the establishment of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (NCDDR), as purely nationally led with assistance from development partners, with a reintegration cost of ‘US\$ 100 million’ (McMullin 2013). An assistance scheme designed for all the ex-combatants was specifically attentive to the ‘mobilisation and reintegration process, and for training and employment’ (McMullin 2013, Sesay and Suma 2009).

Primarily, people within the age bracket of eighteen and above were accepted for the process and were provided US\$150 per person for what was referred to as a ‘reinsertion package’ (Govier 2006, McMullin 2013:164, Sesay and Suma 2009, World Bank 2002). In addition, reintegration benefits were paid to ex-combatants in their localities (McMullin 2013:164). This program entailed a few training sessions for different skill sets, followed by tools that the participants could bring back to their communities during resettlement (Govier 2006, Sesay and Suma 2009, World Bank 2002).

Within a short period of time in 2002, a total of approximately 51,122 ex-combatants were recorded (Sesay and Suma 2009:13). According to a World Bank document of 23 January 2002, under the ‘Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Project’, the DDR training and employment program for ex-combatants recorded the numbers indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Training and Employment Program for Ex-Combatants, 23 January 2002

Sectors	Registered	In Program
Vocational Training	14,488	2,955
Formal training	6,946	2,027
Apprenticeships	2,470	1,722

Public Work	169	407
Agriculture	5,022	3,717
Awaiting Trade Test	206	-
Total	29,301	10,828

Source: World Bank (2002)

In 2005, according to a United Nations, a total of 75,490 ex-combatants had completed disarmament. The report stated that, among these ‘75,490 ex-combatants, 6,845 were children and 4,651 were women, while it stated that 55,000 ex-combatants had reintegration benefits, and 12,000 opted for formal educational assistance’ (United Nations 2005:1). However, McMullin (2013:166) noted that the ‘projected three-year planned reintegration scheme was reduced to a six-month training and support process’.

On a broad scale, this DDR infrastructure, which intended to serve as an initial buffer for the meaningful preliminary engagement of these youths, experienced setbacks within the institutional structure. Both the DDR and the NCDDR schemes were ephemeral, which became a potential challenge.

After spending almost a decade in the jungle, living within a ‘survival of the fittest’ paradigm, these youths were provided brief and insufficient training from national state authorities. With such temporary support and training, they were told to reintegrate into a society that they had not been acclimatised to for almost a decade. There were no available and plausible job markets through which these youths could use their temporary training to seek employment and impact those reintegrated communities. Therefore, these shortcomings in the reintegration process resulted in challenges to the acceptance of the youths within local communities, as they were still viewed as a threat. This phenomenon eventually escalated large-scale rural-urban migration of these youths toward what they hoped were greener pastures.

While the DDR succeeded in removing the relative number of arms and ammunitions, the conditions of existence for former militants, particularly youths, remained challenging due to the inappropriate reintegration process.

3.2.2. National youth policy

In the aftermath of the civil war in Sierra Leone, youth-related issues gained widespread national and international attention. This necessitated a review of all of the prior youth documents culminating in the 2003 Sierra Leone National Youth Policy formulation and launch. These documents include the national youth development policy 1995, the recommendation of the national youth forum 2000, and the national youth conference 2001 (Kargbo 2014:164).

As a policy infrastructure, the 2003 Sierra Leone National Youth Policy was designed to tackle youth issues, with ‘empowerment and responsible citizenship’ as the underlying aims (Government of Sierra Leone 2003). Among its specific objectives, the policy for programmatic intervention wanted:

to mobilise youths of all ages to replace the culture of violence with a culture of peace, dialogue, and responsible citizenry.

to guarantee healthy and useful productive lives of youth through sensitisation of health issues, recreation, and anti-drug abuse.

to ensure the provision of an enabling environment with the necessary wherewithal to actualise youth potential (Government of Sierra Leone 2003:2).

Youths constitute a large pool of energetic constituents in the labour force. Kargbo (2014:164) opined that, their ‘socioeconomic and physiological aspirations was fundamentally germane to the post-war progress of the country’. As a result, the initial youth policy infrastructure was considered suitable, had the implementation adhered to its foundational core; but was merely a political rhetoric. In an attempt to show political will, a national commission for youth was created in 2011, and an independent ministry was established in 2013, exclusively for youth affairs. These institutions served as overarching infrastructures to manage the operational activities, integration processes, and job opportunities for youths (Lawrence 2014, Alemu 2016).

The review draft of the 2012 youth policy clearly stated that ‘unemployment and underemployment, and high incidence of drug and substance abuse’ were inherent challenges that were widespread within the youth constituency (Chipika 2012:1–2). This statement clearly shows that the prior policy infrastructure, which attracted huge international support for youth-related issues, yielded insignificant results. The 2014 review of the youth policy stated that the vision was to create a:

nationally conscious and patriotic youth empowered to contribute to the development of Sierra Leone, while the policy’s goal was to contribute in creating a conducive environment to ensure youth development and empowerment intervention sustainably to achieve their desired objectives... (Ministry of Youth Affairs 2014).

The reality of these youth policy interventions is that they have been deeply rooted in political deceptions. While empowerment, employment, and increased political participation across all genders have been the mantras for these policies, there is no clear political will to enact them. This, for example, is shown by the fact that approximately 60% of the country’s youth have remained unemployed or meaningfully disengaged (Keili and Thiam 2015). As noted by Keili and Thiam (2015:236),

‘employment in Sierra Leone is limited by a stagnated economy, state corruption, and lack of accountability’. In addition, attempts to develop realistic skill sets among those who are unemployable have remained insufficient.

In sum, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s post-war recommendation was that proper youth governance was needed under an appropriate policy infrastructure for peace to be sustainable (Government of Sierra Leone 2004). Despite these policy interventions, Sierra Leone has remained home to one of the most vulnerable work climates, where the minimum wage paid per month is less than US\$100 (Vamboi 2019). In addition, the youth population has remained meaningfully unengaged within the political system.

The annual budget allocations are a typical example of this inadequacy. For the financial years of 2012 to 2016, the youth ministry received one of the lowest yearly budgets compared with the other ministries (Government of Sierra Leone 2016). Thus, this institutional gap was a testament to the political rhetoric that had surrounded the so-called youth infrastructural transformation in the country. The failure to create a working youth policy framework that serves the interests of all of the country’s youths has also contributed to their marginalisation, thereby diminishing their prospects for equal opportunity. While politics are integral to institutional progress, the ethnoregional-neopatrimonial patterns within Sierra Leone have made a youth institutional building and commitment fundamentally unrealisable; instead, youth politicisation became prioritised by party politics. Such practices scuttled any meaningful infrastructure plans to advance the country’s youth between 2002 and 2018.

4. Youth migration trends and politics

Migration has been part and parcel of the youth experience in Sierra Leone, either in the form of rural-rural migration, as was evident during the boom period in the mining sector (Reno 2003), or rural-urban migration. However, the underlying incentive of these exoduses has always been the search for greener pastures. In this context, as in the case of Sierra Leone, rural-urban migration is implicitly the movement of youths from a remotely deprived and rural location to an urban centre. This was where they hoped to settle and establish a better way of life by enhancing their socio-economic and political interconnectedness. In Sierra Leone, the disparities in the circulation of both socio-economic opportunities and political power across all regions have remained deeply rooted. The possibility of their discontinuation is bleak, given the established patterns of political and social structures.

In particular, during the post-conflict attempts at development, rural communities, which were hit the hardest, were mostly abandoned. The abandonment of rural communities had a direct impact on the young population, which constituted the majority of the inhabitants. The effect has been a feeling of systemic abandonment shared by many youths across a large mass of rural communities.

Another factor is the state-wide abandonment of mechanised agricultural cultivation, where agribusiness enterprises could have retained the young populations in rural communities. Rural dwellers who have remained deeply ingrained in agricultural activities for decades, constituting approximately 57.9% of the workforce, have been mostly limited to subsistence farming and extreme poverty (World Bank 2018a, Gboku *et al.* 2017).

In Sierra Leone, attempts at general development have also been challenged by the increase in the overall population of the country. According to the Sierra Leone Statistics Report of 2015, the country recorded a population increase of about 3.2% between 2004 and 2015, much higher than what was seen from 1985 to 2004, which was 1.8% higher (Sierra Leone 2016, World Bank 2018a).

In rural areas, these challenges of abandonment, along with the over-centralisation of major social amenities, have had a direct correlation with the rural-urban migration of these youths. Most ex-combatants who spent nearly eleven years in the forest were hurriedly rushed into resettlements and reintegrated into rural settings. With insufficient and unsustainable skill sets to realise and manage their expectations, these rural locations are utterly antithetical to their contemporary lifestyles. This large group was left at urban centres to search for greener pastures.

In urban areas, the quantities of these migrated youth are mostly engaged in fleeting, self-employed menial projects for daily sustenance, such as motorcycle transportation enterprises. Others work as porters around market areas. Thus, living such a lifestyle shows the social vulnerability experienced by them in an environment where the political patterns have resulted in their marginalisation and created widespread unequal opportunities.

According to the 2018 World Bank report on Sierra Leone relating to ‘Systematic Country Diagnostic: Priorities for Sustainable Growth and Poverty Reduction’, urbanisation was on the rise. The report indicated that from ‘1967, the urbanisation rate was 27%, but the pattern accelerated to 40% in 2015’ (World Bank 2018b:3). The report also noted that the population in the capital city of ‘Freetown was 127,000 in 1963 but had increased to one million in 2015 due to urbanization’ (World Bank 2018b:3). In addition, according to a publication by Plecher (2020), since 2009, a steady migration pattern has been observed towards urban centres, as shown in Table 2. In 2009, the urbanisation trend was 38.47%, while in 2019, it increased to 42.48%.

Table 2. Sierra Leone Urbanization from 2009 to 2019

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
38.47	38.86	39.25	39.64	40.04	40.43	40.83	41.23	41.64	42.06	42.48
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Source: Plecher (2020)

5. The context of youth marginalization and poverty in Sierra Leone

Presenting one viewpoint to explain the cultural causes of poverty within society, Jefferson (2018) highlighted the importance of structural stratification. According to Jefferson, stratification occurs when the ‘status quo’ in a society is maintained and remains immutable (Jefferson 2018:10–12). This implies that when the stakeholders—mostly the political elites at the upper continuum of power—remain entrenched, it becomes cumbersome for those at the lower continuum to progress upwardly.

Moreover, in his discussion of poverty, Sachs (2005) opined that poverty, which has remained a global threat, is an outcome of poverty, implying that poverty begets poverty within society. According to Sachs, in contexts where people are already deprived of social amenities, facilities, and the economic ability to make ends meet and to invest with the expectation of future gains, poverty will prove inescapable.

Demographic factors, as proposed by Sacks (2005:64–66) and Malthus (1798), undermine a developing country’s ability to advance. Building on the ‘social organisation of society’, classical scholars Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels argued against the Malthusian theory of population growth relative to societal development (Velkoff 2015:68–70, Wiltgen 1998).

The idea of the ‘social organisation of society’ plays a substantial role in the marginalisation of youths, a perspective that can explain poverty in Sierra Leone. This perspective can also enhance understanding to indicate that the unequal opportunity and poverty in Sierra Leone are increasing, thereby becoming a social, organisational pattern. This social organisation of the country, in part, has characteristic patterns of systemic manipulation that have remained rooted and layered over time and are shaped by the political landscape.

A cursory inspection of the prehistoric political setting of Sierra Leone and the general structure of the contemporary political environment will show that the country’s youth generally have been separated from the mainstream political system. Historically, youths were mainly conceived of as errand-boys and emissaries of state security provisions under the absolute authority of local state elders, and their age was of fundamental importance in such societal stratifications (Brown 1951, Little 1965). Such patterns engendered an increased dependency level among these youths and thereby constricted their autonomous rights in the political system, wherein economic and social decision-making power was integral to society.

This phenomenon continued into the colonial and post-colonial governance systems, where youths could be banished from certain communities by local chiefs who considered their actions to be insubordinate. Political authority was firmly entrenched in the local authorities, mostly comprising elderly people holding supreme power (Acemoglu *et al.* 2014, Albrecht 2017, Little 1965).

This prehistoric societal stratification and framing of the youths in Sierra Leone affected the political and economic environment for their independence. This pattern became pervasive to the extent that they

became marginalised and estranged in the post-independence era, which scholars have noted as motivating factors for their participation in the 1991 revolution (Clapham 2003, Richards 2005).

In the 1980s, during the boom in the mining sector, particularly for diamonds, many energetic youths abandoned the agricultural sectors in search of quick wealth in these mining localities (Richards 1996). While such dreams were left unrealised, a majority of these mining migrants also found that they would be mere laborers in the mining sector, not large-scale financiers to the enterprise. This community outflow to the mining regions partly undermined agricultural productivity in the country, and many never returned to their home regions as expectations plunged, until the war broke out in 1991 (Peters 2011a, Reno 2003).

This widespread and long history of youth dislocation within the country's political and economic system perpetuated their marginalisation within the societal structure. This became glaring, especially within the political system, where economic advancement could be attained.

Therefore, in the post-conflict political system, this continued social vulnerability has led to the extensive mobilisation of youths by political parties through clientelistic political tactics. Such practice has been largely emboldened by the country's practices of politicisation and manipulation formed in line with ethnoregional-neopatrimonial systems. The manipulation of these youths was possible due to their social vulnerability and the country's cultural construction of identity, which has become embedded in Sierra Leone's political practices (Christensen and Utas 2008, Enria 2018, Kandeh 1992). The next section explains how youths have been mobilised along social and cultural clientelistic lines by party politics.

6. The mobilisation of youths by social and cultural clientelistic party politics

The pattern of social vulnerability, especially among youths, is institutionalised within the political system, which enhances the political actor's ability to establish a firm political constituency among these vulnerable youths. This practice has formed the core of the clientelist practices through which youths have been mobilised within and between the country's political parties. This practice has been taken for granted within a post-conflict political arrangement.

Since the end of the eleven-year civil war in 2002, participation as a political actor for the state has been a contested means of accessing alternative socio-economic advancement. These opportunities encompass political appointments, employment, and work in public goods provisions. Within such a pattern, survival within the political climate is only achieved through patronage participation. As noted in the World Bank research document, one of the youths interviewed in Sierra Leone recounted:

...you might be highly educated, but if you do not have money to bribe those who offer the job and do not know any member on the board or interviewing committee, your chances of gaining the employment are very minute (World Bank 2013:23–24).

Thus, for the majority of youths, mobilisation within a political party is the only means through which survival is possible within the political system. Over the years, such an opportunity has been available through the socially created asymmetrical form of relationship, imposed within the political system. Chabal and Daloz (1999:141–160) noted what they called ‘Political instrumentalisation’. The authors argued that this phenomenon has become commonplace within African politics, where political actors in a bid to amplify their wealth, resort to creating an atmosphere of ‘confusion, uncertainty and sometimes chaos’.

The post-conflict political party mobilisation of youths within the political process has been instrumentalized by their social vulnerability to the poverty structure, in which the majority of youths have remained located (Cubitt 2012). Physical violence has also become a commonplace orchestrated by these mobilised unengaged youths in support of one political party or opponents (Enria 2015; 2018). Political violence is underlined within the violent politicisation of youths by party politics. This has remained a common practice associated with the post-war political system Sierra Leone.

This pattern of social mobilisation via clientelism informed by neopatrimonialism has caused the country’s youth to be framed as mere instruments within the political environment. This pattern has not only disintegrated youth’s prospects for meaningful political participation, but also represents a conscious attempt to marginalise them. This has caused the youth category to remain at the lower end of the continuum in a political climate with a severely unequal opportunity.

For example, owing to the unequal opportunity youths within and between the political parties have remained socially and recurrently mobilised by political elites on various political inducements or pledges. Such mobilisation efforts have driven these youths to constant and repeated politically motivated violence against the opponent’s political party or actors. In addition, this pattern has caused most of these vulnerable youths to end up in correctional centres or prisons. This fact was supported by the Director of the Office of National Security, who stated during a television discussion that 90% of the inmates in detention centres across the country were youths.²

In addition, Victor, Montgomery, and Lubell (2018:3) noted that ‘politics is about relationships. Relationships form network structures that shape, enable, and constrain political actions’. This factor is significant, as it has a direct impact on behavioural patterns within a clientelistic social network. Such

² Television interview discussion with the director of the Office of National Security (ONS), 20 May 2020. Star Television, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

networks in post-conflict Sierra Leone have often led to recurrent, violent acts against political opponents.

Most importantly, the promises of employment, cash, or what is famously known in the local parlance of Sierra Leone as ‘connections or lane’, epitomise clientelistic practices within the political system. This has characterised an uncompromising political process within which opposing political adherents and youths commonly clash, leading to violence within and between the political parties.

In addition to the vulnerability felt by youths, is the abandonment of the agricultural sector by youth, a sector with vast potential for economic gain, to become associated with politics. Ward, Stovel, and Sacks (2011) argued that ‘proximity’ is fundamentally important to understanding the interactions associated with a network. The authors imply that an actor’s nearness creates greater possibilities for influencing their relationship.

In Sierra Leone, social vulnerability has made the ready availability of youths pronounced. This is especially in the case of youths without jobs who often roam around ‘Ataya Base’ (a popular place where largely unemployed and unengaged youths socially gather daily and rendezvous to drink tea from locally prepared herbs, talk, share relational feelings about politics, and form associations). Such social gathering places of diverse youths serve as epicentres of mobilisation that are close to the socially negotiated political class, and attract large segments of these unengaged youths. Across Sierra Leone, especially in districts and regional headquarters known for active political party activities, many such ‘Ataya’ base locations are established and visible.

Furthermore, a more rooted factor associated with political party politicisation and mobilisation of youths is party leadership. Unlike the general recruitment process in which youths of diverse backgrounds are recruited, famous ex-combatants are specifically targeted for recruitment or mobilisation by political party standard-bearers or presidential candidates. They are mainly used as bodyguards. This practice has become a systemic pattern in the political environment.

In March 2019, a field visit to Sierra Leone for an observational data collection conducted an open-ended interview. The interview was conducted with fifty randomly sampled youths from both the Sierra Leone People’s Party and the All People’s Congress Party at their party’s headquarters.³ In response to the question ‘How did you become associated with your party of choice?’ the majority of youths could not explain clearly what specific ideology motivated them to join their party. Instead, the majority gave responses such as ‘if mi party and candidate win, I go get better’, meaning that ‘with the victory of my political party and my candidate, my life and status will be improved’. However, during follow-up questions regarding how sure they were that such an outcome would happen, the interviewees’ answers focused on providence.

³ Interview conducted both at Sierra Leone People’s Party and the All People’s Congress Headquarters, 2019 (Interview March 2019).

Youths mobilisation within and by political parties have also been evident through cultural aspects. As opined by Young and Turner (1985:158):

...patron-client relationship is based not only on reciprocal advantage but on some principle of affinity which supplies a social logic to the network... kinship and ethnic affinity are the most frequent bases for network formation.

In post-conflict political engagements in Sierra Leone, such patterns have been reawakened, primarily where the political system uses neopatrimonial practices firmly associated with ethnicity and regionalism. A conflict more related to particularistic trends than politically transformative patterns has emerged. As a result, the majority of youths have become prey to politically manipulative patterns.

The political behaviour of the majority of the country's youth shows a continued reservation towards boundary crossing. Such social attachments to constructed identities have impacted the youth's political orientations during their selection of and participation in political party membership. Because of this deterministic particularistic pattern of the alliance, it is also important to note the emergence of 'US versus Them' politics in the country. This has been where in-growth and out-growth acts of violence have become common in body politics. In addition, survival within the political process has been contingent on what socially constructed identity one belongs within the political system.

Having become merely an economic enterprise, the country's political parties possess offices and other establishments where youth support groups mobilise and align within and between the political parties along manipulated particularistic interests. Within these networks, they propagate and advance their special interests, often resulting in menial employment opportunities as rewards. In many instances, the personal and professional relationships gained from these opportunities compromise the institutional stability of post-conflict state building processes.

7. Contemporary environment of youth in post-war Sierra Leone

In the aftermath of the civil war, poverty among the country's youth in both rural and urban areas, which was an outcome of their marginalisation within the political and societal structure, increased exponentially. A joint 2019 published report on the Sierra Leone National Multidimensional Poverty Index indicated that, as of 2017, the poverty rate among youths between the age bracket from 15 to 35 was 57.0 % across the country, 60.8% in rural areas, and 51.6% in urban areas (United Nations Development Programme 2019). In the post-conflict period, this 'employment gap' has often been considered the foundation for the poverty rates among the youth population in Sierra Leone.

Using research on youth labour markets in Sierra Leone, provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Labour Office reported that, as of 2015, only 4.2% of the total

youth population were in regular employment, including 6.3% of the males and 2.1% of the females (ILO 2017). Similarly, the report indicated that 48.5% of the total youth population had irregular employment, including 44.0% of the males and 53.2% of the females, respectively (ILO 2017:1–5).

In 2015, the Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census report by Statistics Sierra Leone on the general employment sector in the country showed that 83.9% of the population were self-employed (Statistics Sierra Leone 2016). In general, 83% of those who were self-employed relied on small engagements and were mostly locked in a daily subsistence pattern. This group was largely composed of young people whose exploitation only required strategic, politically manipulative tactics built on their ethnoregional attachments or their overt societal vulnerability with lofty promises.

The second pillar of the 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper referenced job creation for youths as an essential goal for the consolidation of the peacebuilding process. However, this document did not lead to a meaningful outcome. Similarly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendation of 2004 called for youths to have an active and meaningful role in politics. While efforts in such a direction have been made in a piecemeal implementation fashion, the majority of the country’s youth have remained mere political tools in the fifteen years of the post-conflict era.

Moreover, the World Bank report of 2009, which referenced the Sierra Leone Statistics on Population and Housing Census of 2004, classified the head of a household by age, gender, and proportionate responsibility. The report revealed that males within the youth age category who had been heads of households constituted the following percentage of the population: ‘65 %, and at age 35’ (Peeters *et al.* 2009:21–22).

8. The political mobilisation of youths and the dilemma for liberal peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

In general, with the end of the eleven years of revolution, pockets of recurrent violence have remained evident both within and outside the mainstream political environment of Sierra Leone (Enria 2018). In his summary work on Sierra Leone, De Bruijne (2019) noted violence as one of the recurrent patterns in Sierra Leone, especially 2002 onwards. From 2013 to 2014, De Bruijne indicated that the incidence of recurrent violence perpetrated by youths and mobilised youth gangs substantially increased with the societal structure. He noted that these incidences of violence were mostly associated with in-group and out-group political parties and other types of related violence. In addition, he further indicated that most of these violent acts were staged by former combatants and other political party paramilitary task forces mainly under the influence of the political actors within representative political parties (De Bruijne 2019).

Led mainly by opposing youth groups, patterns of recurrent political violence have become a characteristic of party politics. Many ex-combatants who did not undergo a proper reintegration process following the end of the war in 2002, and who have remained gainfully unengaged by the state, are often

vibrant actors. These ex-combatants, mostly youths, are now instruments, politicised and mobilised by political actors and their parties to intimidate their political opponents, often acting as paramilitary security for their party's candidates (Mitton 2008, Small Arms Survey 2010).

Political party offices have become the main bases where these mobilised youth groups are stationed to protect their offices, where they are assigned to accompany campaign rallies. The composition of these youth groups includes members who participated actively during the war and were recruited and mobilised by a party or candidates for political activities. According to the 2010 Small Arms Survey, a substantial number of youths (mainly ex-combatants) were recruited to serve as the task force for the All People's Congress party in 2007. Following its victory, those youths were awarded dividends for constituting part of the 'presidential bodyguards' (Small Arms Survey 2010).

In addition, hardcore criminals, mostly youths in their prime, have been galvanised into town cliques visible across urban locations and have also been some of the primary sources of politicisation and mobilisation through meagre political handouts. Because the political environment is characterised by violence, it has often generated political apathy, undermining fundamental liberal principles, such as participation within the political space. In this context, for example, women are considered the most vulnerable section of society. Because of the violent nature of the political system and other factors, women have found it challenging to navigate their political interests or to participate in electoral processes for fear of systemic structural and physical violence (Oxfam 2008, Denney and Ibrahim 2012). Of the 124 parliamentarians in the political cycle from 2007 to 2012, 16 were female, while out of 370 local councillors, only 86 were female (Manson and Knight 2012:28).

Given this recurrent nature of political violence, the competitive role of women and other unprotected candidates in the political system in Sierra Leone has remained remarkably minimal (Kellow 2010). This fact has undermined the United Nations Resolution 1325, a framework that advocated for the increased political representation of women in governance as an essential pillar for societal peace (United Nations 2000a). In addition to political violence, the state stratification in Sierra Leone, which has remained built on a patriarchal system, leads to structural violence and has disengaged young females from political participation (McFerson 2011).

Political violence orchestrated by political parties and related operatives has become a pattern across society, as both incumbent and opposition parties are centrally placed within the same political structures. Such activities have undermined the stability of various political processes at all levels of society. For example, a typical case in point occurred during the 2007 general elections. The massive scale of institutionalised political violence enacted by state actors, both between the opposing parties and the incumbent government, nearly resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency (Africa Research Institute 2011, Mitton 2008).

This example illustrates the magnitude of the situation because such a phenomenon could have degenerated society into unbridled violence and subsequent warfare. However, among the large segments of the political parties, similar examples have occurred in all electoral processes. These practices were especially pronounced from 2012 to 2018, leading to the displacement and physical harm of people from most of the political-administrative regions in Kono, Kailahun, and Port Loko.

According to Kaplan (2000:45), in societies marked by widespread poverty, which results from the marginalisation of youths and produces this unequal opportunity, citizens often seek deliverance through violence. In the past fifteen years, this phenomenon has become particularly common in Sierra Leone.

9. Conclusion

This chapter focused on Sierra Leone and examined how the politicisation and manipulation of youths in the political system resulted in widespread unequal opportunities within the societal political structure. This phenomenon also created a fundamental obstacle to the successful realisation of liberal post-conflict peacebuilding in the country.

This chapter has argued that the politicisation and manipulation of youth by party politics formed in line with the practice of ethnoregional-neopatrimonialism resulted in youth mobilisation. This created an atmosphere of marginalisation among the youth population, where their mobilisation culminated in their use as political instruments instead of as meaningful participants within the post-conflict political structure. As argued in this chapter, such patterns eliminated the prospects for equal opportunity within the societal structure. Given that the existence of equal opportunity is a fundamental pillar in enhancing liberal post-conflict peacebuilding, its non-existence in Sierra Leone consequently became an obstacle to liberal peacebuilding.

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Ignorant snub or reasonable excuse? Young people's perspectives towards farming in Zuarungu in the Upper East Region of Ghana

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Abstract

This paper is a segment of a larger study on landlessness, livelihoods, and youth. It begins on the note that youth unemployment is a global crisis and that land holds hope as a pathway to employment creation through agriculture. Notwithstanding the sector's potential, a common orthodoxy associates young people with apathy 'in this field of work', due to their perception of farming as antiquated, unprofitable and 'not seen as a business'. While this paper seeks to explain what accounts for young people's half-hearted attitude towards farming in the *Zuarungu* area, it argues that the commodification of land leads to competition among the rich upper class, which, combined with unceasing increases in population, results in land fragmentation at family and individual levels. Consequently, some compounds and individuals are stripped of land holdings, particularly arable lands, thus rendering them landless. This may be a critical factor in determining youth interest in land, generally, and farming, in particular. This paper contributes to existing research on the subject of the youth snubbing agriculture and contends that blanket explanations for youth disinterest in agriculture cannot suffice for all areas, even in a given country.

Keywords: young people, interest in agriculture, unemployment, farming, landlessness

1. Introduction

This paper is a segment of a larger study on landlessness, livelihoods, and the youth of agrarian societies, which seeks to contribute to an existing body of research and debates on the subject of the youth snubbing or downgrading agriculture, that is, the youth's disdain or lackadaisical attitude towards the sector. It specifically seeks to investigate reasons for young people's apathy toward farming (agriculture).

In contemporary times, the youth 'as a development category' (Sumberg *et al.* 2012:90) have become very central in the development agenda and continue to attract attention from local authorities, national governments, policy makers, academicians, international donor institutions and stakeholders such as non-governmental organisations. Among the factors for this attraction are the persistent and disproportionate unemployment manifestations and distributions across regions and their feared implications for socio-political disorder (Sumberg *et al.* 2014). This situation makes youth unemployment a serious 'crisis' which deserves the 'highest global priority' (International Labour Organization 2012) by national governments and other stakeholders.

However, there is still hope of fixing the unemployment problem through agriculture, which is considered the 'most immediate means of catalysing economic growth and employment for young people' (Filma *et al.* 2014:113). It remains a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction in our times (World Bank 2007). Relying on the prospects of the sector, the World Bank exhorts economically disadvantaged and poverty stricken societies to place their hope for survival in the destiny of the 'new agriculture' with smallholder farming as a conduit for employment creation (World Bank 2007). While the varying meanings of employment or unemployment, particularly in studies on rural populations in Africa, have been problematic, resulting from inclinations to Eurocentric definitions that are often unsuitable and inapplicable to the African situation (Baah-Boateng 2016), this study conceptualises youth employment as engagement or occupation that yields context appropriate (decent) earnings or material rewards for young persons to make them self-reliant.

Statistics show that agriculture is the principal source of generating employment opportunities and earnings for over 90% of rural men and women in Africa (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2009, Filmer and Fox *et al.* 2014). A thriving agriculture sector boosts the rural economy, soars up wages, and progressively 'eliminates the worst dimensions of absolute poverty' (Timmer 2005:5). The role of agriculture in a nation's development cannot be overemphasised, and historically, no country has been able to sustain a rapid transition out of poverty without raising productivity in its agricultural sector.

However, in spite of the sector's glowing attributes and statistically proven potential to resolve the unemployment challenge, a common orthodoxy associates young people with apathy 'in this field of work', due to perceptions of farming being antiquated, unprofitable and 'not seen as a business'. A

common refrain tag educated and ambitious young people with a stark lack of interest in farming, a notion originating from an existing perceived unattractiveness of agriculture. Global ‘mounting evidence’ strongly suggests ‘young people are increasingly uninterested in farming’, partly due to ‘the downgrading of farming and rural life’ (White 2012). This situation results in young people snubbing the sector and, either not giving it a serious consideration altogether or demonstrating half-committed will to its ‘futures’ (White 2012, Sumberg *et al.* 2014).

It is similarly argued that youth attitude to agriculture leading to the snub may also explained by sheer ‘ignorance’ as ‘many young people *know little of the opportunities and dynamism possible in farming today*’¹ (Filmer and Fox 2014:117). Other hypotheses are political, which tie youth lukewarmness towards the sector to ‘chronic government neglect of small-scale agriculture and countryside infrastructure’ and other compelling financial factors such as lack of credit (White 2012).

While these theories are tenable, other factors for the phenomenon are not exhaustively explored, particularly the scarcity of land. The importance of land for livelihoods in rural and urban Africa and other postcolonial societies is widely acknowledged (Lund 2011). The question of access is most often a problem for youth. Thus, some literature aptly attributes the youth’s poor interest in agriculture ‘for lack of access to, or control over, productive assets, especially land’ (Swarts and Aliber 2013, Moyo 2003, Amanor 2006b, 2010, White 2012, Filmer and Fox *et al.* 2014, Bezu and Holden 2014, Kidido *et al.* 2017).

The subject of access to land and land rights is a contested area, but must be examined in the context of youth interest in farming/agriculture. ‘Access’ is ‘the ability to benefit from things’ (Ribot and Peluso 2003:151). Access, then, is only possible if natural resources exist as ‘*things*’, namely ‘material objects’ and objects of value. The elements of ‘*who* does (and who does not) get to use *what*, in *what* ways, and *when*’, as explained by the Theory of Access (Ribot and Peluso 2003), are other dynamics in the access process which come into play only because ‘*things*’ exist. Similarly, ‘*use*’ explained as ‘the enjoyment of some kind of benefit or benefit stream’ (Hunt 1998) is also possible with the existence of ‘*things*’. In the Theory of Access (Ribot and Peluso 2003:151), ‘bundles of powers’, located and constituted within ‘webs of powers’ where ‘people and institutions are positioned differently’ in relation to resources at various moments and geographical scales’, are preconditioned on the possible assumption that there exist ‘*things*’ that can be used.

Hence, youth interest in or indifference to farming can largely be influenced by access to land based on the existence of some sufficient land space before the interplay of the other elements of access put forward by the Theory of Access (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Nonetheless, to examine the issue needs briefly recapitulating or historicising social change that has, in its wake, transformed the world

¹ Emphasis added.

significantly, including upsurge of global land markets in the countryside through neoliberalism, an agenda that has encouraged spiraling ‘development of indiscipline in land markets...’ (Tzikata and Yaro 2013), causing access to land to be determined by ‘market logic and individualistic norms’ (Abudulai 2002, Yaro 2010) in certain parts of Africa and particularly, Ghana.

While liberalised land markets have fuelled competition over land, demand for land is also compounded by increasing population, fast-growing urban settlements, and encroachment of agricultural land (Moyo 2003, Cotula and Neves 2007). The overall effects of these developments have ‘resulted in landlessness...’ (Kasanga and Kotey 2001:iv), which cannot be considered as non-threatening and isolated from factors that may influence young people’s turn away from or attraction to agriculture/farming.

This study primarily seeks to explore how landlessness plays a significant role in youth interest and attitude towards farming (agriculture) in the *Zuarungu* area of the Upper East Region. Other factors contributing to the snub were also explored. It also attempts to address blanket explanations for youth disinterest in agriculture mostly based on ‘common knowledge’ (Aliber 2013), which cannot suffice for all areas, even in a given country.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first section discusses the study context and methodologies adopted. The second part discusses the findings about why youth in the research area turn away from agriculture, while the third comments on the inappropriateness of blanket explanations for young people’s apathy towards farming/agriculture and provides concluding observations and remarks.

2. Research area and method

The study area is located in the savannah ecological zone of northern Ghana. The enclave is a microcosm of a bigger reflection of northern Ghana, which graduated from colonial neglect and discriminatory development policies to the post-colonial quagmire of cyclical poverty. The colonialists adjudged the area to be destitute in mineral wealth, valuable timber, rubber, kola nuts, ‘nor indeed any product of trade value’ (Bening 1990:178, Whitehead 2006, Yaro 2013, Grischew 2006, Government of Ghana 2005). Post-colonial political managers have embarked on half-hearted policy implementation tinged with unbridled corruption and incompetence, which have characterised the area’s transformational trajectory.

Specifically, the research was carried out in the *Zuarungu* area of the Upper East Region, an active agrarian cluster of communities, a few kilometres to east of the regional capital, *Bolgatanga*. The study area is wider than the name suggests, and, in reality, transcends the town, traditionally known as *Zuarungu*, and entirely covers one of Ghana’s new districts, created in March 2018 –The *Bolgatanga* East District. It has ten electoral zones that serve as conduits for mobilisation of socio-political participation and development.

The area has historically been a densely populated area (Quansah 1972). As a newly created district, its statistics are still integrated into the data of its mother municipal area, which the Ghana Statistical Service (2014) pronounces to have a youthful population of 37.0% below 15 years. In this municipality, 60% of households depend on agriculture.

Youth interest in or lukewarmness towards agriculture, which largely hinges on access to land, can be better understood if properly situated in the context of traditional land administration in northern Ghana. Prior to colonialism, land tenure was anchored on communitarian ideals, where membership from a common ancestry utilised land resources and completely depended on it for their livelihoods (Chimhowu and Woodhouse 2006, Yaro 2010). Local norms and age old trusted practices still prevail in this system, largely revolving around moral economy tenets and conventions, with very flexible negotiable opportunities to specific communities (Agbosu *et al.* 2007, Zackaria and Yaro 2013). The system had in-built usufructuary rights and tenorial obligations, which made the arrangement 'a source of social security and continuity' of the group (Kasanga 1996:89). For this reason, if not for leasing, selling land was forbidden according to customs and traditions (Cardinall 1921:62).

However, in the era of neoliberalism, this principle of communal ownership of administering land by the chiefs, family and lineage heads and the earth priests, who hold land in trust for their people, has come under intense onslaught by the forces of modernisation, which are rapidly 'transforming traditional society to a capitalist one and linked to global markets' (Yaro 2010:201). Consequently, unrestrained commercialisation of land transactions has become prevalent even in most rural areas (Zackaria and Yaro 2013), thus promoting effective land markets. The normalization of this trend has resulted in a number of outcomes with implications for the youth and women.

First 'neoliberal policies working side by side with commercialisation of land and population explosion aggravate the prevailing asymmetries of social relations, which motivates traditional leadership to reinterpret tradition in their own favour, placing the powerless majority at a disadvantage. The second, which is directly related to this paper, is the dispossessing of household/family land holdings.² Land grabbing, i.e. dispossession of a households' farmlands through transfers to middle/upper class individuals, coupled with escalating family sizes in the area and land area being fixed overtime, has led to extreme land fragmentation, and, in some situations, to complete loss of land. Consequently, young people in the area who need land for agriculture and other land related activities are rendered either completely landless or at best near-landless, as powerful and rich influential middle and upper class individuals grab land at cheaper deals, mainly for housing purposes. The subject of youth interest in farming/agriculture in the research area must be understood in this context.

² Not in the sense of ownership concentration, particularly, in the form of foreign direct investment in agriculture.

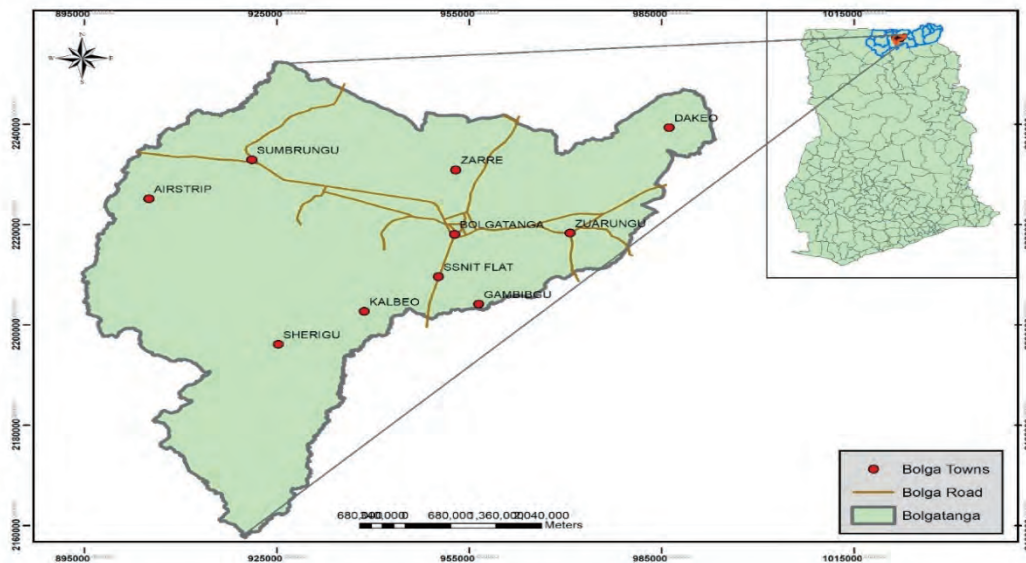


Figure 1. Map of the Study Area (still as *Bolgatanga* Municipal Area)

In terms of methodology, the study was characteristic of autoethnography.

The main sample was the youth, whose ‘age are not self-evident data but are socially constructed’ (Bourdieu 1993:95). Hence, societal expectations defining young people’s age status’ (Tyyskä and Côté 2015:582) were considered. A total of 200 young people aged 18 to 35 years were purposively sampled to investigate their perspectives on why youth are unenthusiastic about farming. Qualification was based on respondents’ engagement and experience in farming/agriculture, their residence in the area, and ability to speak about the issues of the youth not attaching critical importance to farming.

The data were collected, as part of a major study by the researcher, from May to December 2018 from all ten electoral areas of the study setting. The electoral areas were categorised under ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ using proximity to *Bolgatanga*, the regional capital, as the basis. Participants responded to a survey questionnaire in their localities, using *Gurune*, the language of area, if they could not read or write.

The data collection used mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) to amply understand youth perspectives on, and attitude to farming (agriculture), rather than using each method exclusively (Creswell 2012). Quantitative data determined the factors influencing youth interest or indifference towards agriculture, while the qualitative data teased-out in-depth explanations for the attitude. The former were analysed by means of ranking, a ‘question response format’ employed when a researcher’s interest is to establish ‘some type of priority among a set of objects’, which could be attributes, policies, individuals, or property of interest (Oldendick 2008:689). Individual and group in-depth interviews were used to find the clarifications. Some of the in-depth interviewees also participated in the quantitative data. Significant statements from respondents are captured in the text, reflecting as

precisely as possible what was said in *Gurune*.

Farming (agriculture), in the context of the study, refers to crop and livestock production in terms of subsistence and large-scale (business) activities. Respondents were mindful of both concepts in answering the question. The study on why the youth turn away from agriculture began with a 'simple' question 'are you interested in agriculture?'

3. Findings and analysis

A summary of the findings is summarised in the table below with the analysis of each factor for youth turning away from agriculture.

Table 1. Youth interest in farming (agriculture)

Are You Interested in Agriculture?

Interested in Agriculture?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	189	94.5	94.5	94.5
No	11	5.5	5.5	5.5
Total	200	100.0	100.0	100.0

The above responses may be attributable to the significance of agriculture (farming) in the research area – an integral aspect of the lives of the people, which cannot be divorced from their existence. Agriculture is the sector that provides basic subsistence in the area. Food needs, household provisions, health care provisioning, educational needs, shelter, and cultural goods are all acquired on the strength of agricultural produce. Other sources of income are subsidiary for the vast majority of people, barring a few in formal employment. Agriculture was and is still part of the socialisation of the youth and is the first occupation a male child is introduced to as soon as he is conscious of his existence and can exercise his psychomotor skills. This is illustrated by Fortes and Fortes (1936):

Even an adolescent boy may be given a small plot (sinsi'ar) on his father's compound farm to cultivate, the produce of which is his own. This is one of the ways in which a boy acquires a few chickens and lays the foundations for economic independence, which he gradually reaches in the course of years (p. 244).

The account by Fortes is ever-present and integral in the Frafra society as a socialisation process for male children. The exception today may only be among households that no longer have any land holdings. Mbah is a young man of twenty-eight from the Dubila community, married with a son. He completed senior high school but could not progress to the tertiary level. Of land and their 'eternal reliance' on agriculture, the following is a translation of what he said:

Farming is what we were born into, our fathers and their fathers before – they were all born farmers. Ku’a dela tapi lapi, nta-biya (meaning: ‘farming is a bond that is forever and ever’). We do not have work other than farming. It is true that there is government work, but not everyone can get the government work, everyone (here) can get farming to do, even if you do not attend school. You do not need a paper (certificate) before your father can give you land to farm. Even if you have a large certificate, you can still farm, farming does not reject people; it accepts all. Where else can we work, if not on the farm? The only problem now is that lands are becoming very scarce for us to be able to have ample land to farm.

With the natural attachment to farming/agriculture through socialisation, what then accounts for the youth of the area turning their backs on agriculture? The table below is a summary of the rankings of youth perspectives on why agriculture is now spurned.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Factors Determining Youth Interest in Agriculture in the Research Area

Factors considered/ Frequency in %	Extremely Considered Factor	Highly Considered Factor	Moderately Considered Factor	Low Considered Factor	Factor not Considered at All	Total
No Land	79 (39.5%)	41(20.5%)	43 (21.5%)	30 (15.5%)	6 (3.0%)	100%
No Money for Investing in Farming	47 (23.5%)	42 (21%)	56 (28%)	36 (18%)	19 (9.5%)	100%
Unreliable Weather Conditions	45 (22.5%)	38 (19%)	76 (38%)	33 (16.5%)	8 (4%)	100%
Investment Disproportionat e to Returns	12 (6%)	26 (13%)	72 (36%)	78 (39%)	12 (6%)	100%
Labour Intensive, Little Reward	12 (6%)	20 (10%)	59 (29.5%)	86 (43%)	23 (11.5%)	100%
Agriculture Takes too Long to Yield Returns	6 (3%)	24 (12%)	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	10 (5%)	100%
Farming is for Illiterates	1(0.5%)	17 (8.5%)	6 (3%)	54 (27%)	122 (61%)	100%

3.1. No land factors

From the rankings of factors accounting for the youth’s poor interest in farming, the most common factor that accounted for the phenomenon was ‘no land’. Of the respondents, 39% considered no land as an ‘extremely considered factor’, which was the overall influencing interest in agriculture. The ‘no

land factor' was also ranked overall second with 20% and was the lowest among the less considered factors with 15%. Only 3% felt that it was a 'factor not considered at all'.

The 'no land factor' was also examined in terms of the urban-rural divide to determine the differences the factor may play out in urban and rural areas and the result are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Urban-Rural Divide Analysis of No Land Factor

		Residence		Total	
		Urban	Rural		
No land	Extremely considered factor				
	% within Residence	44.8%	34.6%	(79)	39.5%
	Highly considered factor				
	% within Residence	21.9%	19.2%	(41)	20.5%
	Moderately considered factor				
	% within Residence	19.8%	23.1%	(43)	21.5%
	Low considered factor				
	% within Residence	9.4%	21.2%	(31)	15.5%
	Factor not considered at all				
	% within Residence	4.2%	1.9%	(6)	3.0%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	(200)	100.0%

The data showed that youth in urban areas were those whose interest in agriculture was more affected by 'no land factors'. Of the respondents from urban areas, 44% said it was an 'extremely considered factor'; 21.9% ranked it as 'highly considered factor' while 19.8% said it was a 'moderately considered factor'. 9.4% and 4.2% ranked it as 'low considered factor' and a 'factor not considered at all', respectively. Among those residing in the rural communities, 34% ranked it as an 'extremely considered factor'; 19.2% ranked it as a 'highly considered factor', while 23.1% felt that it was a 'moderately considered factor'. In these communities, 21.2% respondents ranked it as a 'low considered factor', while 1.9% thought that it was a 'factor not considered at all'. The statistics are 'normal' and confirm the fact that land scarcity for agriculture and even for putting up residential accommodation is often more acute in urban or peri-urban communities.

The 'no land factor' conforms to lack of access to land as confirmed by previous research (e.g. Bezu and Holden 2014). The explanations are not unanimous. Different factors are often named including the high cost of accessing land, unwillingness of the elders to release land, and increasing scarcity of productive family land' (Kidido *et al.* 2017). Other factors include 'limited potential' to obtain agricultural land; insignificant inherited land space for farming, local gerontocratic and 'intimate exclusions' (White 2012). Issues such as discrimination against certain groups such as women and sister's child³ are critical in terms of access to land in the research area.

³ Sister's child, a male child born out of wedlock, is not customarily entitled to his biological father's family land

Specifically, the increasing scarcity of productive land and sales of family lands primarily accounts for ‘no land’ in this area to enable the youth to access reasonable agricultural activities. In urban communities, such as Kombosigo, and some sections of Dulugu, Yarigabisi, and Puulgo, lands had been sold; family lands dwindled drastically, thus depriving the youth access.

Land sales through neoliberal land policies confirms Amanor’s (2009) argument that such policies which are often ‘heralded as successful examples of equitable development’ have a ‘dark and disturbing side’. First, land sales lead to a rising inadequacy of productive family lands (Amanor 2010). Second, it excludes participation of small-holder farmers in agriculture with such groups ‘falling into an underclass with an extremely uncertain future’ (Amanor 2009:12). Youth and women are shorn of the opportunity to realise any agricultural dreams. Finally, the practice culminates in a considerable shrinking of physical land space, which affects the construction of housing infrastructure. In fact, the net effect of land sales climaxes into landlessness; land sales become common and lead to the ill-fate of some communities in the research area.

Another reason may be the population increase that impacts land availability for farming and housing. For these reasons, most youth in the area face enormous difficulties in accessing land. It may also account for land being an ‘extremely considered factor’ in determining youth interest in agriculture. Mbabila summarises the frustration of the youth when he asked rhetorically: *‘Ho sam pum bota kua, hu yeti hu ko la zinzaka bii?’* This translated as: *‘Even if you have affection for farming, will you farm in your courtyard?’*

3.2. No money to invest in agriculture

Another factor that most youth considered in determining their interest in agriculture was the availability of or access to investment capital. The sector has two categories: subsistence and large-scale commercial agriculture. While the former requires some ‘basic’ resource for investments, the latter requires significant financial outlay and logistical base. One of the critical factors identified as a hindrance to youth engagement in agriculture is ‘limited access to affordable credit’ (Filmer and Fox 2014). Access to affordable credit is a very common problem among African youth as established by a number of studies (e.g. Bezu and Holden 2014, Kidido *et al.* 2017). This was similarly confirmed among the youth in the study area.

Money plays a crucial role in both subsistence and large-scale agriculture. In the case of the former, ploughing the field by bullocks is a common practice in the research area. A young person who obtains a parcel of land for his private farm, if he is lucky to have such a space, faces difficulties in raising

nor his maternal grandfather’s land, except in rare cases. In the case of the latter, it could be the family’s decision to have the woman give birth out of wedlock in order to produce a male child for the family. The child’s grandfather has to provide him land.

money for bullock services. *Mbabila* in the *Dubila* community explains:

Dubila, however, is scarce. If you really want to farm, then you have to go to the bush; the bush is not nearby; our plots are very small because you have to share it with your brother or brothers. If there was money, I could have gone to *Tilli*, *Nangodi*,⁴ or any place I could get enough land to farm, but standing here penniless ‘*with my ten fingers, ten toes*’, where will I get money to do farming that will make me the person I want to be?

Another young person, Fred *Atua*, 33, a senior high school graduate, from the neighbouring *Dakio* community said something similar:

We, young people, our generation is unfortunate. Many things are not there, if you want to farm, the lands are not there, if you must farm, real farming, you have to go somewhere far to get land. But who will give you the money to go and cultivate such a farm? Who has even the money in the community? If I have to go to the bank, what (collateral) will I use to get the money? Even if I got a loan and did not get good yield from the farm, how would I pay back the loan? Those of us who want to go into farming are keeping our dreams in our bosoms because there is nowhere and no one to turn (to).

The statements captured above explain why most of the respondents ranked no money as one of the key factors considered in determining youth interest in farming. Advocates for youth financial capacity urge financial service providers such as formal banking institutions, and others, to advance credit to the youth to bolster their interest in agriculture. However, ‘providing financial services in rural areas is considered a typically high risk venture due to the unique characteristics of agriculture: i.e. dependence on natural resources and seasonality; long production cycles; and vulnerability to variable weather’ (Filmer and Fox 2014:34), which are some of the factors financial institutions consider before advancing credit to farmers. This situation justifies the youth’s lack of interest in agriculture due to a lack of financial resources to invest in the sector.

3.3. Unreliable weather conditions

The study area lies in the natural vegetation of the savannah woodland, where the climate is characterised by one rainy season, with usual erratic rainfall. Successful agricultural activities depend largely on weather and climatic conditions. However, variable, unpredictable climates and climate

⁴ These two communities are in different districts, which border the research area.

change have emerged as the greatest threats to human populations (Eldridge and Beecham 2018:293). Climate variability arises mainly from global warming and other human activities. The World Bank in its *World Development Report 2008* warned that ‘global warming is one of the areas of greatest uncertainty for agriculture’ (World Bank 2007:64). The variability of weather conditions has serious implications for agricultural activities in the research area and other parts of the country. Therefore, the weather question has been an important variable link factor for the youth to consider before committing their futures to the agriculture sector.

From the data, 22.5% ranked weather as an extremely considered factor for pledging future agriculture. This occupies the third position in the ‘extremely considered factor’ scale, after no land and no money for investment factors. Of the respondents, 19% ranked it as a ‘highly considered factor’, 38% as a ‘low considered factor’, and 4% as a ‘factor not considered at all’.

Seasons have changed over time such that it has become difficult to determine when the wet season actually begins. In the mid-1930s, according to Fortes and Fortes (1936), the first planting rain usually fell in late March, and early millet with some cowpeas were planted. Rain again fell in mid-April, which enabled most people to plant early millet. With all routine husbandry activities carried out within the stipulated time based on the farming season, early millet was harvested in July and August, late millet, ground nuts, and other subsidiary crops were harvested in September. In contemporary times, however, rains could set in as late as June to plant the early millet. It may also stop abruptly before the first sowing is completed. Rainfalls have become very erratic in recent times, often causing losses for farmers.

Unpredictable weather is a grave threat to the youth interest in agriculture. Weather shocks have been responsible for tragic deaths and farmers abdicating agricultural ventures. The media reported management of the Defunct Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) took steps to write off a GH¢21.8 million loan (the equivalence of US\$4,628,450.11) to farmers after the legal option to retrieve the money was shelved. This came after defaulting farmers ‘gave evidence of the destruction of their farms caused by harsh weather conditions and a subsequent poor harvest’.⁵

Another aspect of unpredictable weather conditions surfacing in some parts of the Upper East Region is ‘annual flooding’ during the months of August and September that has occurred each year since 2007. Even though flooding is normally attributed to the Burkinabe authorities spilling excess water from the Bagri Dam in that country, this explanation does not appear comprehensive, as some areas that are not directly in the spillage zone downstream are also often flooded. Communities such as Puulgo, parts of Gambibigo, and the western parts of Kombosigo are in lowland areas, located near the Abeerivose River and are perennially threatened during flooding. Consequently, agricultural activities are often affected.

⁵ Story adopted by Today’s Newspaper (online) from Joy FM, (a popular Ghanaian radio station based in Accra): SADA writes off millions in loans over poor harvest, bad weather 21 June 2018 edition. SADA was instituted to fast-track and propel northern development to close the gap between the poor north and developed south of Ghana.

A member of the Yarigabisi-Puulogo FGD recounted his experience a few years ⁶ ago. The translation of his flashback is as follows:

I cannot remember the exact year. Anytime the incident comes back to memory I feel like God does not exist, our ancestors forsook us. I cultivated rice. My *susu*⁷ group came to help in weeding and I managed to get fertiliser to apply. After the weeding, the rice was very green, and I felt that the harvest would be good. Then, a rain, a heavy rain, came. I think about two or three days, it rained and stopped for a while, rained and stopped, and rained stopped. After sometime, the place was flooded, houses were all soaked, and some collapsed, people's clothes, money, and property were lost. My rice was washed away. It was so terrible, unbearable, and unforgettable. After that, I swore never to use money to farm. *Ti bo? Hu gerege la wani?* (to wit: Why? How foolhardy are you (to waste your energy and resources on farming?))

Another member also explains his experience after investing his 'little resources' into farming:

Some of us like farming, truly, some of us like it because it is in our blood. But sometimes, you have to reflect deeply (*sey to ho behe ho zuo sunga* ⁸). The weather patterns are a serious factor to consider before farming here. The rains may stop right at the time you needed it most urgently, as if your enemy has switched it off. So, when you are investing in agriculture, it is '*allah, allah*' (God, God). You ask yourself: is it wise to invest (in farming) or keep your little savings for something else?

Unpredictable weather patterns are a critical determining factor for youth interest in agriculture, and the evidence from narratives is overwhelming.

3.4. Investment and labour input not commensurate with returns

Two common thematic variables were put together: investing without compensatory commensurate returns and intensive investment of resources and labour with little reward. Agriculture requires a lot of

⁶ The participant could not mention the specific year but from somewhere around 2007 there have been annual flooding in some parts of the entire Upper East Region normally attributed to the spillage of the Bagri Dam in Burkina Faso to the north of the country. Some parts of Puulogo and Gambibigo lie very close to the Aberivose River.

⁷ *Susu* is a communal arrangement where members take turns to carry out an activity for members of a group, especially in cases of farming in the research area. This term also connotes financial contributions where members contribute to a common fund and access the contributions in turns.

⁸ This directly translates as 'you have to look at your head (very) well, thus you have to consider issues very carefully'.

investment in terms of labour, that is, fulfilling all the husbandry procedures that include clearing the land, planting, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest protocols. At the subsistence level, all these activities are undertaken by household members and the burden lies heavily on young people in the research area, particularly if the parents are incapacitated due to their age. At the subsistence level, the youth could still devote both resources and intensive labour in agriculture because, as stated previously, farming is inextricably linked to community life.

At the level of commercial farming, work could involve either human labour, services delivered by livestock, or machinery. Logistical requirements, including money to pay for labour, insecticides, machinery and equipment, and technical support, among others, are essential. When raising livestock, the producer has to feed and tend the animals regularly, and ensure that they are vaccinated timeously. When products are to be sent to the market, they must be properly and meticulously processed. All of these processes and others constitute the basic investments and labour inputs into farming.

The practicality of obtaining proper agricultural benefits/rewards requires heavy investments in terms of both labour and logistics. However, unpredictability is characteristic of African agriculture. Agricultural potential, especially that of ‘rain-fed agriculture, is highly sensitive to soil quality, temperature, and rainfall’ (World Bank 2007:54). The report expresses further caution:

Agriculture is one of the riskiest sectors of economic activity, and effective risk-reducing instruments are severely lacking in rural areas. Negative shocks can deplete assets ... It can take a very long time for households to recover from such losses. (ibid.89).

Additionally, there are issues of market access and price fluctuations. Two outcomes emerge from the unpredictability mentioned above. First, after intensive labour has been put into production, disasters such as flooding or bush fires could strike and everything would be lost after the drudgery and toil. A media report said a farmer in the Upper East Region sold his cattle and invested in tomato farming the year before was said to have committed suicide after his investment went bad due to lack of market – a situation that made it difficult to take care of his family.⁹ Second, the produce may be delayed or perish while in transit to the market due to many factors including poor road network, glut, or competition from other areas, resulting in all investments being wasted. Justifiably, these factors are critical and play an important role in determining youth interest in agriculture.

The survey results reveal that both variables were correspondingly ranked 6% for ‘extremely considered factor’ for determining youth interest in agriculture. In terms of agriculture being considered a labour-intensive factor, 10% and 29.5% of the respondents ranked it ‘highly considered’ and

⁹ Story adopted by Today’s Newspaper (online) from Joy FM: SADA writes off millions in loans over poor harvest, bad weather 21 June 2018 edition (Accessed on 25 January 2019).

‘moderately considered’ factors, respectively. For its associated variable – investment not being commensurate with returns – in the same scale, 13% and 36% ranked it as ‘highly considered’ and ‘moderately considered’ factors. These rankings may be explained by the theory of motivation.

Psychologists argue that how an individual thinks about or reacts to a choice of (alternative) goal-directed behaviour(s) depends on the rewards or punishments associated with each of the alternative behaviours (Sinding and Waldstrom 2014:188). Experiences or narratives of catastrophes of countless manners and magnitudes inform youth decisions on their interest in agriculture. For instance, in 2015, it was reported that tomato-farmers in the Upper East Region had abandoned tomato cultivation due to a lack of guaranteed markets and one of them committed suicide.¹⁰ This story and other similar experiences could be reason enough for their rankings. Such an experience should guide a rational person committing to a future in a chosen sector of the economy.

‘Agriculture as labour intensive but with little reward’ was ranked 43% and 11.5%, respectively, for ‘low considered factor’ and ‘factors not considered at all’. This ranking could suggest that most youth did not consider being indebted to anybody while working hard to invest in the required labour. The results reveal no fears of investing in farming. This is in synchrony with youth values in this area, where hard work is the most cherished. The ranking was different for ‘Investment not commensurate with returns’: 39% of respondents judged it as a ‘low considered factor’ while 6% ranked the variable as a factor ‘not a considered at all’. This ranking could also mean that there was apprehension about investment losses rather than labour-intensive losses because the former requires direct borrowing or collateralised action to receive either cash or kind from external agencies, while the former is a self-generated effort.

Agriculture takes too long to yield returns

A key reason for individuals to go into productive ventures or seeking employment is economic survival, including provisioning for individual and family needs. Individuals seek to accumulate wealth for ‘self-serving reasons, particularly for economic population density and reproductive advantage’ (Prentiss *et al.* 2012). The length of time a venture yields returns can be a motivator to engage or abstain from such an undertaking. Agriculture is not an industry that typically yields an immediate turnaround. It has a long gestation period, marked with unpredictability. Even when farming is not rain fed, there may be unforeseen interventions in terms of pests and other vulnerabilities.

The youth currently reside in a world driven by neo-liberal market ideals, which are characterised by quick returns. In the logic of neo-liberal free markets, human relationships are increasingly monetised and depersonalised, and the practical realities of a free market society can be summarised as

¹⁰ See <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/upper-east-farmers-abandon-tomato-cultivation-due-to-lack-of-guaranteed-market.html> (Accessed on 25 January 2019).

‘fend for thyself’ (Adejumobi 2011:2). It therefore means that an individual going into a venture must ponder on what the enterprise may yield instantaneously before seriously considering it.

The data does not present ‘Agriculture takes too long to yield Returns’ as a critical factor influencing the youth’s interest in agriculture, although it plays a role. Cumulatively, 55% of respondents considered it as an ‘extremely considered factor’ to ‘moderately considered factor’ in determining their interest in agriculture. Only 5% of the population ranked it as a ‘factor not considered at all’ while 40% saw it as ‘low considered factor’.

The youth probably compare themselves to others who amass wealth and other resources within a relatively shorter time. In the agriculture sector, they may have to remain on the sidelines for a little longer to harvest benefits from investments. A respondent, Abagene, is a 34-year-old from Nyonkoko, a rural community. He completed primary level education and was married with two children. Speaking in *Gurune*, he said the following about agriculture’s long gestation period and waiting for fruits of his labour:

Nan nan wa tega dela aze’zo
Kua, de la aba’a vo’
Ho san yeti ho kɔ, samana ka bo’e
sey to ho kige ten zaa’re ta ko
Ho taaba ka kɔɔ’re, ge tara
Ane an nya wa nyange gura aba’vo diya?

This translates directly as:

These days, the world is grab and vanish¹¹
 Farming (agriculture) is a futuristic activity
 If you want to farm, there are no lands
 Except you travel to distant places with land (abundance)
 Your peers have not farmed, but they possess many priceless things
 Who would like to wait for future food (wealth)?

This reasoning reflects the view of how a young person’s position among his peers arouses ‘a comparison process’, with the experience of disadvantage stemming from an interpersonal contrast between the individual and others who are well off and ahead of him (Greitemeyer and Sagioglou 2017).

¹¹ The description seems to convey the theoretical ‘state of nature’, where everyone is fending for himself and none seems to have a moral sense of being concerned about the survival of others.

This feeling could then propel young people to develop an interest in certain employment opportunities while ruling out others. The responses from this study suggest that due to the long gestation period of agriculture, the youth of the area, amidst the factors discussed above, are demotivated to commit to it as a functional livelihood option in contemporary times.

Farming is for illiterates

For some time now, formal education has been seen by both parents and wards 'as framing their fields of social possibilities'. These fields of social possibilities include the license to pursue a career in public service or some other white collar job. Farming (agriculture) was reserved for people with no formal education. These perceptions were widely prevalent after independence in most African countries. The rise of higher education similarly compounds the problem in recent times as the level of education seems to alienate the youth from their culture and economic endeavours derived from their environment.

Agriculture is often treated as an unbecoming sector for persons who have attended school. A website¹² presented fifteen reasons why the youth are disinclined towards farming. Among other reasons that are very important, two stand out in terms of why agriculture is rarely considered as an option for employment. They are related to the objectives of education and the imageries people have about dream areas of employment. While the whole article is worth reading, the following two are illustrative here:

When one talks about agriculture or farming, in the minds of young people, they think of someone far down in a village living in a shack, who wakes up very early every morning to go dig, returning home at sunset. This farmer in their minds, is so far away detached from civilisation, wears barely no clothes, and is the typical person who lives on less than a dollar a week.

The other reason is:

In Africa, parents always encourage their children to study to become doctors, accountants, and other words professionals in white-collar jobs. From the onset, farming or a career in agriculture is frowned upon as a poor man's business.

The images mentioned above give the impression of agriculture being the occupation of 'somebody'

¹² Please see the major reasons why youth do not like farming (<http://www.youthinfarming.org/2011/12/15-major-reasons-youth-in-africa-do-not.html>) (Accessed on 14 February 2019).

who is low class and ‘uncivilised’ or ‘uneducated’. The fact that farmers want their children to belong to other occupations shows how Western education has alienated African youth from their cultural environment. It also demonstrates that farmers themselves have accepted farming as inferior to other professions.

The data shows that 0.5% ranked this variable as an ‘extremely considered factor’ influencing interest in Agriculture, for ‘highly considered factor’ scale, 8.5% ranked it as the influencing reason for their interest in agriculture, 3% as a ‘moderately considered factor’, 27% as a ‘low considered factor’, while a whopping 61% did not consider it as a factor at all. The rankings confirm that all categories of youth in the research area engage in agriculture and do not link it with illiteracy. In earlier sections, a respondents indicated that once one was a citizen of the research area, farming (agriculture) was a lifelong enterprise that one remained committed to until death.

Wholesale diagnoses of the youth and agriculture problem

Some observations highlight the blanket reasons assigned to youth turning away from the agriculture sector. For instance, Moses Abukari¹³, IFAD’s Country Programme Manager and Youth Focal Point for West and Central Africa, argues that:

Young people are usually not interested in this field of work, in large part due to their perception of farming being antiquated and unprofitable. Traditionally, the image of agriculture has been more about subsistence; you produce enough for you to eat. It is not seen as a business.

Narratives such as these have been espoused by policy advocates, policy-makers, and development planners, among others, and are most often reflected in policy documents and public pronouncements (Aliber 2013). However, blanket explanations or diagnoses for the phenomenon are not sufficient for all areas in Africa or even in a given country that seeks to holistically address youth apathy in agriculture. The findings of Sumberg *et al.* (2017) bring to light a classic case in which students’ perspectives on reasons for youth attitude towards farming vary on two key research questions: ‘What explains young people’s attitude toward farming?’ and ‘What should be done about rural young people and farming?’ (Sumberg *et al.* 2017). This could partly be due to the location of the two schools involved in the research: one in southern and one in northern Ghana.

Again, while there are clear differences between the methodology and rationale of Sumberg *et al.*

¹³ Youth Agribusiness, Leadership, and Entrepreneurship Summit on Innovation (YALESI 2016), Held in Dakar, Senegal from 29 to 31 in March. <<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2016/04/why-are-rural-youth-leaving-farming/> Accessed on 13 October 2018>.

(2017) and youth perspectives towards farming/agriculture in the *Zuarungu* area, the field of this study, there are clear differences in attitude from the former and the latter towards farming/agriculture generally. While respondents in Sumberg *et al.*'s study (2017) have a relatively 'negative' attitude towards farming/agriculture in perceptions of the sector, 95% of respondents in the *Zuarungu* study responded 'yes' to 'are you interested in farming?' but only then explained the factors that stand between their interest and the sector. This means that location and context matter. Therefore, while designing interventions to address youth interest in farming/agriculture, 'segregating and targeting' are needed based on context and location, even if there is a general policy framework. It would also be interesting to explore why different motivations towards farming exist between groups from different cultural backgrounds.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that the youth turn away from agriculture/farming, confirming previous research on this subject. Each study context has specific factors explaining the youth's lukewarm attitude towards agriculture. The youth of *Zuarungu*, as the rankings show, explains landlessness, lack funds for investments, and unfavourable climatic conditions among others as influencing factors in their decision to commit full-heartedly to agriculture/farming. As a typical agrarian community, educational attainment does not affect one's decision to commit or not to commit to farming/agriculture among the youth who participated in this study.

In conclusion, a few observations are significant. The World Bank has argued that land markets can play an important role by ensuring access to land by productive but landless persons, and that commoditisation of land also facilitates exchange of land as collateral to market credits (Deininger 2003). With an agenda to liberalise land holdings from 1975, the World Bank facilitated land reform policies in several countries with the aim of 'changing the structure of land holdings, improve land productivity, and broaden the distribution of benefits...' (World Bank 1975:5).

However, it does appear that the World Bank's appraisal of the situation was not comprehensive, considering the profiles of all sections of society. For instance, liberalisation, instead of broadening the distribution of profits, has led to wealthy people in some societies grabbing land at the expense of vulnerable groups such as women and youth, thus creating a wide gap in the social structure. Second, the phenomenon has created landlessness in communities with smaller holdings, which account for youth lukewarmness towards agriculture/farming.

Today, the youth seem to be the only actors in the discourse of the youth and their snubbing of agriculture. They are the ones identified as 'losers' or 'uncommitted' in not taking up the opportunities farming present. However, the youth and agriculture nexus cannot exclusively be the concern of young people or national governments. The critical political angle that has not been deeply explored is the role

of the World Bank. In the 2008 World Development Report, agriculture was identified as the sector that could be relied upon to facilitate poverty reduction, create employment, and ultimately, development. While the strength of agriculture was touted as the best possible solution for the youth unemployment quagmire, “the youth – the appropriate agency to facilitate the delivery of the promise – were not directly targeted to take on this responsibility. Even though the report is emphatic that the sector is the panacea to the youth employment/unemployment crises, no deliberate efforts were made to tease the youth to aggregate interest in agriculture. This delay deepened youth disinterest in the sector, thus making young people’s turn away from agriculture an unquestionable ‘fact’.

The responsibility of the World Bank and other donor institutions to impress upon national governments to raise youth interest in agriculture should not be underemphasised. This is a critical point because the World Bank spearheaded liberalising land holding reforms arguing that ‘changing the structure of land holdings, (could) improve land productivity and broaden the distribution of benefits...’ (World Bank 1975:5). It is now imperative for the World Bank to be enthusiastic about creating youth interest in farming by prompting or pushing national governments to instigate youth interest in agriculture. After all, as a powerful political actor, the World Bank has operated through diverse approaches, ‘in the interface between the political, economic, and intellectual fields on an international scale, in function of its singular condition as lender, policy formulator, and inductor of ideas and prescription about what to do in questions of development’ (Pereira 2016). Youth interest in agriculture has the potential to whittle down the upsurge of youth unemployment, which is a threat to political stability in many countries.

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Constraints to adoption and scaling-up of conservation agriculture in Rwanda: Smallholder farmers' perspectives

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Abstract

In the face of the formidable challenges posed by climate change, there is growing concern that the goal of food security for all must be pursued in a climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable manner. Conservation agriculture (CA) has been drawing increasing recognition as a climate-smart farming system that addresses the interconnected challenges of food security and climate change. Drawing from a case study of smallholder CA practices conducted in four different areas in eastern and southern provinces of Rwanda, this paper discusses key constraints to the adoption and scaling-up of CA as perceived by smallholder farmers in these areas. These constraints range from those stemming from farmers' limited access to agricultural resources and services necessary for productive CA, to those posed by the government's programme for agricultural intensification and commercialisation that considerably limits farmers' choices with regard to the farming system and methods they may adopt. This paper proposes the allocation of considerable resources to address resource and service-related constraints suffered by smallholder farmers. It also calls for attention to be paid to the limitations caused by government policies. Together, these proposals encourage continuous effort to be made in policymaking and implementation to give smallholder farmers more space and increased support for experimenting, adopting, and expanding a farming system with greater productivity and climate resilience.

Keywords: agricultural intensification, climate change, adaptation and mitigation, conservation agriculture, climate smart agriculture, smallholder farmers, Rwanda

1. Introduction

In the face of the formidable challenges posed by climate change, there is growing concern that the goal of food security for all must be pursued in a climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable manner. Revolving around three core principles of minimising soil tillage, covering soil with organic materials, and diversifying crops in time and space, conservation agriculture (CA) has been drawing increasing attention as a sustainable farming system that addresses the interconnected challenges of food security and climate change. The government of Rwanda acknowledges the potential importance of CA, as evidenced by the recent establishment of the Rwandan Institute of Conservation Agriculture (RICA) as well as the official recognition of CA as a form of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in the most recent strategic plan for agricultural transformation published in June 2018 (MINAGRI 2018). However, in reality, it is in its early stages of adoption and has primarily been promoted through relatively small-scale initiatives carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In recognising the significance of CA for resolving food insecurity issues experienced by smallholder farmers in the face of increasing climate variability in Rwanda, this paper presents and discusses key findings from a case study of smallholder CA farmers who are participants in NGO-led CA focused food security projects. The case study was conducted from September 2019 to February 2020 in four rural areas in the eastern and southern provinces of Rwanda in order to address two primary questions:

- To what extent and in what particular form has CA been adopted by smallholder farmers in the study areas?
- What are, from the perspective of CA farmers, the major constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA, specifically in the context of smallholder farming in Rwanda?

Our fieldwork yielded eight themes that smallholder CA farmers in the study areas perceived as significant factors in preventing CA from being more widely adopted and scaled up in the context of smallholder farming in Rwanda. The first six themes are closely linked to smallholder farmers' limited access to agricultural resources and services that are necessary for productive CA. The last two themes stem from the government programme for agricultural intensification and commercialisation under the Crop Intensification Programme (CIP), which considerably limits farmers' choice regarding the farming system and methods they may adopt.

Based on the findings of the case study and, specifically, the eight themes that our fieldwork yielded, this paper proposes that the government and other organisations concerned with the agricultural sector should allocate considerable resources to address the constraints smallholder farmers face due to their limited access to agricultural resources and services necessary for productive CA. It goes on to emphasise the necessity of addressing the constraints stemming from government policies so that continuous effort will be made, both in policy making and implementation, to give smallholder farmers greater space and increased support for experimenting, adopting, and expanding a farming system with

greater productivity and climate resilience in years to come.

2. Rwanda's agricultural reform and the interconnected challenges of food security and climate change

2.1. The Crop Intensification Programme as the centrepiece of agricultural reform

As one of the most densely populated countries in Africa, Rwanda faces interrelated problems of increasing land scarcity, rural poverty, and food insecurity. Over 70% of the Rwandan population engages in subsistence or semi-subsistence agriculture, in which smallholder farmers, with an average landholding of 0.6 ha, produce diverse food crops (NISR 2016). In 2008, the government of Rwanda launched a Crop Intensification Programme (CIP) as the centrepiece of its policy for transforming traditional subsistence farming into a modern, market-oriented type of farming. The CIP has two principal aims: 1) increasing agricultural productivity through the use of purchased inputs, and 2) achieving economies of scale through the production of single commercial crops, determined by the government, on larger consolidated land plots. The type of farming system promoted under the CIP is characterised by a monoculture of market-oriented crops with increased use of improved seeds, mineral fertilisers, and crop protection chemicals (Cantore 2011).

More than ten years have passed since the introduction of the CIP, and the government emphasises its positive contributions towards increased agricultural productivity, improved food security, and reduced poverty. The implementation of the CIP in the first few years, from 2008 to 2011, resulted in a sharp rise in the production of priority crops. Maize production increased five-fold, wheat and cassava three-fold, Irish potatoes, soybeans, and beans by about two-fold, and rice by 30% (Kathiresan 2011:16). Between 2008 and 2016, the average annual food crop growth rate was 5.65% (MINAGRI 2018). The sharp rise in food production induced by the CIP and related agricultural reforms in the agricultural sector is believed to have significantly contributed towards poverty reduction and enhanced food security. This occurred not only through increased food availability in the local markets and increased incomes from higher food crop sales but also through increased off-farm employment opportunities in rural areas (Kathiresan 2011:17).

2.2. Conservation agriculture as a response to the interconnected challenges of food security and climate change

Despite the remarkable gains in food production, food security remains a serious problem in Rwanda, particularly in its rural areas. In 2015, a national survey revealed that 38% of children under five years of age had stunted growth, and 2% suffered from acute malnutrition (Cioffo 2018:1–2). The existing food insecurity can be partly attributed to the heavy dependence on rainfed agriculture in Rwanda. This makes the sector highly vulnerable to increasing climate variability exacerbated by climate change. The

inter-annual and seasonal variability of rainfall patterns (e.g. rainfall onset and cessation, rainfall amount, frequency, and intensity) and periodic floods and droughts are common features of Rwanda's climate and are expected to have even more adverse impacts on agricultural production and food security in the future (MINAGRI 2018:21).

In response to the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change, Rwanda's Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation 2018–24, known as PSTA Phase 4 (hereafter, PSTA 4), identifies 'productivity and resilience' as a priority area, alongside 'innovation and extension', 'inclusive markets and value addition', and 'enabling environment and responsive institutions' (MINAGRI 2018). PSTA 4 places a new and strong emphasis on 'the need for increased climate resilience and vulnerability management' in order to 'ensure that productivity increases are resilient, with sustainable soil and water management, and to start preparing for future climate change' (ibid.44). The expected outcome of this priority area is stated as 'increased productivity, nutritional value, and resilience through sustainable, diversified, and integrated crop, livestock, and fish production systems' (ibid.45).

In line with the 'productivity and resilience' priority area and its outcome, PSTA 4 promotes a range of practices that received little emphasis in previous PSTAs: 'climate smart practices' for 'sustainable land husbandry and crop production intensification' (ibid.), which include those relating to soil and water-conservation measures (e.g. tree belts, grass strips, planting grasses or perennial vegetation on contours or bunds/ridges), various agroforestry practices, minimum tillage, mulching or crop residue retention, use of cover crops, crop rotation, intercropping, increased use of organic fertilisers, and natural pest control (ibid.46–47). Importantly, many of these climate smart practices promoted in PSTA 4 are key elements of an *agroecological* approach to farming: an approach that aims to increase productivity of farming and minimise its adverse effects on the environment by enhancing ecological processes. These practices are highlighted as measures that will address the threefold goals of increasing agricultural productivity, building resilience to climate variability, and mitigating climate change (ibid. 46).

Conservation agriculture (CA) is an approach to agriculture that revolves around three key principles: 1) minimising soil tillage, 2) covering soil with organic mulches or cover crops, and 3) diversification of crops in time (crop rotation) and space (crop association mainly in the forms of intercropping or mixed cropping¹). Following the adoption of non-tillage farming in the United States in the 1960s, CA became widely adopted in the 1980s and 90s, primarily by large-scale farmers throughout North America and then in South America and Australia (Kassam *et al.* 2019:3–5). The rapid expansion of CA

¹ In this paper, mixed cropping refers to the form of crop association in which two or more plants or crops are planted simultaneously in the same piece of land without following clear-cut planting pattern, whereas intercropping refers to the form of crop association in which two or more plants or crops are planted simultaneously in the same piece of land in a specific row pattern.

in Brazil and other South American countries in the 1990s led to development agencies and international research organisations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), to allocate significant amounts of financial resources to research projects on the applicability of CA to other contexts, including Africa (ibid.4). By the early 2000s, FAO officially incorporated CA as a ‘core element’ of its worldwide strategy for sustainable agricultural intensification (Bot and Benite 2001). Since 2010, with a growing global awareness of the need to address climate change, CA has been portrayed as a form of climate-smart agriculture (CSA), making a significant contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation (Lipper and Zilberman 2018, Pretty and Bharucha 2014 cited in Giller *et al.* 2015:2).

Strong support from the FAO and other international development agencies over the last two decades has meant that CA has gained increasing popularity in several African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Kenya. These countries have adopted it as a key element of their agricultural policies (Giller *et al.* 2015:2, Fredrich *et al.* 2012). In Rwanda, CA is often referred to as ‘*bunga bunga ubutaka*’, which literally means ‘care for the soil’ in Kinyarwanda, Rwanda’s national language. Despite the government acknowledging the potential of CA, as evidenced by the recent establishment of RICA in 2019 and its identification as a CSA practice in PSTA 4 (MINAGRI 2018:46), CA is currently still in the early stage of its adoption and is primarily promoted through relatively small-scale initiatives carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

2.3. Challenges to adopting and scaling-up CA

As CA has gained popularity, various challenges have been recognised with regard to its application in the context of resource-poor smallholder farming (Giller *et al.* 2015, Mango *et al.* 2017). The rate of CA adoption by smallholder farmers remains extremely limited. CA covers only 0.3% of the total arable land (Giller *et al.* 2015:2). This suggests a limited impact of CA on the agricultural sector in sub-Saharan Africa, where smallholder farms make up 80% of the total farmland (Wiggins and Keats 2013). Accordingly, FAO and other agencies advocating for CA consider the increase of CA adoption by smallholder farmers and the scaling-up of CA practices critical for food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

While the scale of farmland using CA is one indicator of the extent to which CA is being adopted by smallholder farmers, some studies point to the importance of the *quality* of CA adoption (Giller *et al.* 2015:2, Corbeels *et al.* 2014). Due to various resource and institutional constraints, smallholder farmers often adopt the CA principles only partially. Several studies have revealed that smallholder farmers often practice no or minimum tillage in the absence of organic soil cover and crop diversification. This can have serious negative effects, such as decreased crop yields (Mango, *et al.* 2017, Pittelkow *et al.* 2015 cited in Giller *et al.* 2015:4) and accelerated soil erosion (Baudron *et al.* 2012 cited in Giller *et al.*

2015:7).

3. Methodology

This study draws on a descriptive case study conducted in four different geographical areas in the eastern and southern provinces of Rwanda, namely, the Gahara and Mahama sectors of the Kirehe district, Juru sector of Bugesera district, and Mbuye sector of Ruhango district.² The case study included ten CA-practicing smallholder farmers (see Table 1) as well as focus groups with CA farmers in the four areas. The farmers in the Mahama and Gahara sectors are participants of a CA-focused food security project implemented by the Association des Eglise Baptistes au Rwanda (Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda), while those in the Juru and Mbuye sectors are participants of a CA-focused food security project implemented by Friends Peace House (FPH) and MJCI-Shalom (Mission des Jeunes pour Christ Internationale-Shalom), respectively.

3.1. Selection of study areas

For our case study, we purposely chose four geographical areas that are considered severely or moderately drought-prone with very low or moderately low annual rainfall by Rwandan standards. The decision to select drought-prone areas was based on an understanding that CA is likely to have greater positive effects on agricultural productivity in drier and drought-prone regions than those with higher annual rainfall. The Mahama and Gahara sectors are located in Kirehe district, with an average annual rainfall of 898 mm and a relatively low population density of 290 people per km². The Juru sector is located in Bugesera district, with an average annual rainfall of 900 mm and a relatively low population density of 282 people per km². The Mbuye sector is located in Ruhango district, with an average annual rainfall of 1,170 mm and a relatively higher population density of 510 people per km². We visited these areas in November 2019 and January-February 2020 to observe smallholder farmers' CA practices during Season A, one of the two major crop-producing seasons in Rwanda³ that starts in September and ends in January of the following year.

3.2. Data collection

The data collection methods used in this study consisted of individual interviews with CA farmers, government officials in charge of agriculture, and NGO workers in charge of CA projects implemented in the four sectors. NGOs recommended these farmers as they were considered well experienced in CA.

Individual interviews with case study farmers were accompanied by field observations of their CA

² Rwanda was divided into 4 provinces and Kigali City, which were further divided into 30 districts, 416 sectors, 2,148 cells and 14,837 villages at the lower levels of its territorial administration.

³ Rwanda has two major crop-producing seasons: Season A from September to January of the following year and Season B from March to July of the same year.

practices during Season A of 2019–2020. Focus groups were conducted with groups of CA farmers in all four study areas to gain an understanding of their perspectives on constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA. Focus groups in each study area involved all the case study farmers from that particular sector as well as two to five additional CA farmers from that sector. Progress reports obtained from NGOs implementing CA projects were also reviewed.

3.3. Profiles of case study farmers

Table 1 shows the profiles of the farmers involved in this case study. As stated previously, they were all participants of existing CA-focused food security projects implemented by the three different NGOs in the four study areas (Mahama, Gahara, Juru, and Mbuye). In total, ten farmers participated in our case study, seven men and three women with ages ranging from 29 to 63 years. The time at which farmers started to implement CA ranged from September 2013 to February 2019. At the time of our fieldwork, eight of them had been practicing CA for less than three years, while farmers with the longest and the second-longest experience with CA had been practicing it for six and a half years and four years, respectively. All participants were smallholder farmers with household landholding ranging from 0.11 to 1.45 ha. One of the farmers, MA3, a farmer who held the largest landholding among the farmers, rented out one quarter of his farmland during Season A of 2019–2020. Two farmers, MA1 and JU2, grew crops on both their own land and land they rented. The main crops that these farmers grew during Season A of 2019–2020 were maize, cassava, and bananas. Two farmers in Mbuye were coffee farmers and one farmer in Gahara grew Irish potatoes intercropped with maize in the same field.

Table 1. Case study of CA farmers

Sector	CA project holder	Farmer code	Sex	Age	Time of CA adoption	Size of own household's farmland (ha)	Size of total farmland in season A of 2019–2020 (ha)	Main crops grown in season A of 2019–2020
Mahama	AEBR	MA1	M	53	Sep. 2017	0.45	0.75	maize, banana, cassava
		MA2	F	44	Sep. 2018	0.35	0.35	maize, cassava, banana
		MA3	M	63	Sep. 2013	1.45	1.07	maize, cassava
Gahara	AEBR	GA1	M	43	Feb. 2018	1.30	1.30	maize, cassava
		GA2	M	45	Feb. 2015	0.16	0.16	maize, Irish potatoes

Juru	FPH	JU1	M	29	Feb. 2017	0.24	0.24	banana, maize
		JU2	M	51	Feb. 2018	0.44	0.64	maize, banana, cassava
Mbuye	MJCI-Shalom	MB1	M	38	Feb. 2019	0.11	0.11	maize
		MB2	F	32	Feb. 2018	0.50	0.50	coffee, maize
		MB3	F	31	Feb. 2019	0.45	0.45	coffee, maize

4. Findings and discussion

In this section, we present and discuss key findings with regard to the two research questions presented in the introduction: 1) to what extent and in what particular form has CA been adopted by smallholder farmers in the study areas; and 2) what are, from the perspective of CA farmers, the major constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA, specifically in the context of smallholder farming in Rwanda?

4.1. CA adoption by smallholder farmers

With regard to the first question, our fieldwork yielded four major findings: 1) limitations in the extent to which the farmers in our case study had adopted CA; 2) their partial adoption of CA principles; 3) varied forms of CA practised on a continuum of agroecology; 4) contrasting attitudes among CA farmers towards the policy to boost the use of mineral fertilisers; and 5) contrasting attitudes among CA farmers towards the policy to enforce monoculture farming of priority crops.

4.1.1. Limited extent of CA adoption

Table 2 shows the CA adoption rate of the ten farmers during Season A of 2019–2020. The adoption rate of the farmers varied significantly, ranging between 20 and 100% of their total farmland area. Six out of the ten farmers practised CA on less than 30% of their farmland. Apart from GA2 in Gahara, all the farmers identified a severe shortage of mulching materials as the principal reason why they could not implement CA on all the farmland on which they had planted crops in Season A of 2019–2020.

Table 2. CA adoption rate of case study farmers (Season A of 2019–2020)

Sector	Farmer code	Total farmland area (ha)	Total farmland area under CA (ha)	Percentage of farmland area under CA (%)
Mahama	MA1	0.75	0.45	60.0

	MA2	0.35	0.08	22.8
	MA3	1.07	0.47	43.9
Gahara	GA1	1.30	0.30	23.1
	GA2	0.16	0.16	100.0
Juru	JU1	0.24	0.18	75.0
	JU2	0.64	0.16	25.0
Mbuye	MB1	0.11	0.03	27.3
	MB2	0.50	0.10	20.0
	MB3	0.45	0.09	20.0

4.1.2. Partial adoption of CA principles

Through direct observations and interviews, we attempted to determine the degree to which they had adopted each of the three CA principles on their CA fields: minimum-tillage, organic soil cover (mulching and/or cover crops), and crop diversification (crop rotation and intercropping or mixed cropping). Each CA farmer was assessed on the extent to which they practised individual CA principles for Season A of 2019–2020. Table 3 shows the assessment criteria of each principle.

Table 3. CA principle assessment criteria

Degree of adoption	CA principle
	Minimum tillage
Well	Less than 25% of the cropped area disturbed
Moderate	More than 25% but less than 80% of the cropped area disturbed
Poor	More than 80% of the cropped area disturbed
	Organic soil cover
Well	More than 30% of the cropped area covered
Moderate	More than 20% but less than 30% of the cropped area covered
Poor	Less than 20% of the cropped area covered
	Crop diversification
Well	Both crop rotation and crop association practised
Moderate	Either crop rotation or crop association practised
Poor	Neither crop rotation nor crop association practised

Table 4 shows the results of our assessment based on direct field observations and individual interviews. Minimum tillage was practised well by all CA farmers in the four study areas. Crop rotation was also commonly practised by CA farmers who planted maize or Irish potatoes in Season A of 2019–

2020 after harvesting legume crops, such as bush beans or ground nuts, that had been grown during Season B of 2018–2019 (March–July 2019). Crop association in the form of intercropping or mixed cropping was also practised by eight out of the ten case study farmers in all four study areas, while two farmers in Mbuye practised monocropping of maize or cassava on their CA fields.

Permanent organic soil cover through mulching or growing green manure cover crops (GMCCs) was found to be the least adopted CA principle, especially in the Mbuye and Gahara sectors. Difficulties in obtaining sufficient organic mulching materials such as crop residues or forest and marshland grasses was the biggest challenge they experienced in practising CA during Season A of 2019–2020. This is discussed in further detail in the section on the constraints on adopting and scaling-up CA below. All of the case study farmers paid significant amounts, ranging from 8,000 to 100,000 Rwandan francs (US \$8.6 to \$107.5) to buy various mulching materials. During Season A of 2019–2020, the amount spent on mulching materials was equivalent to the cost of employing agricultural labour for 10–125 days. This shows that farmers make a significant investment in their CA fields. In all four study areas, crop residues and grasses have become an increasingly valuable resource due to competition for livestock feed, soil mulching, and compost production. In particular, farmers in Mbuye faced a serious shortage of mulching materials caused by local coffee plantations that require large amounts of mulch.

Agroforestry was implemented by some of the case study farmers to mitigate the shortage of mulching materials in Mahama, Gahara, and Juru (MA1, MA2, MA3, GA1, GA2, and JU2). For example, branches and leaves of pigeon peas and *Leucaena* (*Leucaena leucocephala*) planted in or on the edges of their CA fields were used for mulching.

Table 4. Level to which individual CA principles were practised

Sector	Farmer code	Minimum-tillage	Organic soil cover	Crop diversification
Mahama	MA1	Well	Well	Well
	MA2	Well	Moderate	Well
	MA3	Well	Well	Well
Gahara	GA1	Well	Moderate	Well
	GA2	Well	Moderate	Well
Juru	JU1	Well	Well	Well
	JU2	Well	Well	Well
Mbuye	MB1	Well	Poor	Moderate
	MB2	Well	Poor	Moderate
	MB3	Well	Moderate	Well

Eight of the ten case study farmers used GMCCs such as Mucuna, cowpeas, and Lablab as one solution to the scarcity of mulching materials. However, during our field visits, only two of the ten case study farmers had adequate levels of soil cover by GMCCs in their CA fields (MA1 planting cowpeas in a maize plot and JU2 planted Mucuna in a banana plantation). Five other farmers (MA2, MA3, GA1, MB2, and MB3) planted cowpeas in or on the edge of their maize fields, but these GMCCs provided only scant cover for the soil.

4.1.3. Varied forms of CA on a continuum of agroecology

Interviews with the ten farmers to obtain detailed information about their farming practices and direct field observations allowed us to locate them on what we call an agroecological continuum. The agroecological continuum refers to the degree to which various agroecological management practices are adopted. Table 5 shows a summary of the data concerning the degree to which six agroecological practices—mulching, GMCC, compost, intercropping or mixed cropping, agroforestry, and natural pest control—were adopted by the case study farmers. All of these practices are well recognised in the literature of the agroecological approach to agriculture (Wezl *et al.* 2014, Rosset and Artieri 2017). We did not include minimum tillage and crop rotation in the table since, as discussed above, both of them were agroecological practices commonly adopted by all case study farmers. The purpose of this table is to illustrate that the CA farmers in Mahama and Gahara are at the higher end of an agroecological continuum, with higher total scores, whereas those in Mbuye and Juru are at the lower end, with lower total scores.

The use of compost and agroforestry is the most prominent factor that separates the farmers of Mahama and Gahara at the higher end of the continuum and those of Juru and Mbuye at the lower end of the continuum. The difference in the adoption of compost seems to be attributable, to some extent, to the fact that AEBR, the organisation implementing the CA project in Mahama and Gahara, had distributed pigs or goats to its project participants. This significantly increased participant farmers' access to manure, whereas FPH and MJCI-Shalom, the organisations implementing the CA projects in Juru and Mbuye, did not provide such livestock to their project participants. The difference in the adoption of agroforestry seems to also be attributed to a stronger emphasis AEBR had placed on agroforestry, as compared to FPH and MJCI-Shalom.

The relative absence of intercropping, mixed cropping, and mulching are the key factors that push farmers in Mbuye towards the lower end of the agroecological continuum. We confirmed, in both individual interviews and the focus group we conducted in Mbuye, that they preferred a monoculture farming system over a polyculture system. This preference was based first on their belief that the former is a more productive system, and second, on their limited understanding of the various advantages of crop association. As noted above, the fact that two farmers in Mubuye had poor mulching practices in

their CA fields is attributable to the serious shortage of mulching materials in the local area due to the competition for organic materials that are mostly directed to existing coffee plantations. In addition, the absence of agroforestry practices contributed to the relative absence of mulching in Mbuye. Most CA farmers in other areas (MA1, MA2, MA3, GA1, GA2, and JU2) used branches and leaves from agroforestry species for both fodder and mulch.

Notably, natural pest control was found to be the least adopted agroecological management practice across the four study areas. The practice was only confirmed on the CA field of one farmer in Gahara (GA2). In 2018, he planted *Desmodiua* (a perennial fodder crop that can be used as a repellent against moths that lay armyworm eggs) in strips surrounding his maize field to protect the maize plants during Season A of 2019–2020. During our field visit in January 2020, he testified that in the field surrounded by *Desmodiua*, the maize plants had not been attacked by any armyworm.

Table 5. Adoption of agroecological management practices by the case study farmers

Agroecological Continuum												
Lower ← Higher												
	Mbuye			Juru			Gahara			Mahama		
	Farmer code	Gender	Age	Mulching	GMCC	Compost	Intercropping or mixed cropping	Agro-forestry	Natural pest control	Total Score /12		
	MA1	M	53	Well	Mod	Well	Well	Well	Poor	9		
	MA2	F	44	Mod	Mod	Well	Well	Well	Poor	8		
	MA3	M	63	Well	Well	Well	Well	Well	Poor	10		
	GA1	M	43	Mod	Mod	Well	Well	Mod	Poor	7		
	GA2	M	45	Mod	Poor	Well	Well	Well	Mod	8		
	JU1	M	29	Well	Poor	Poor	Well	Poor	Poor	4		
	JU2	M	51	Well	Well	Poor	Well	Mod	Poor	7		
	MB1	M	38	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	0		
MB2	F	32	Poor	Mod	Poor	Mod	Poor	Poor	2			
MB3	F	31	Mod	Mod	Poor	Well	Poor	Poor	4			

Scoring system:

Well = 2 points Mod = 1 point Poor = 0 point Maximum score = 12 / Minimum score = 0
(moderate)

4.1.4. Contrasting CA farmers' attitudes towards the policy to boost the use of mineral fertilisers

The focus groups and individual interviews we conducted in the four study areas yielded noteworthy observations about the contrasting attitudes towards the policy to boost the use of mineral fertilisers under the CIP. Remarkably, even though all the case study farmers self-identified as farmers practicing CA, they had significantly different attitudes towards the use of mineral fertilisers for their crop production. We identified the following three types of attitudes, which largely correspond to CA farmers' position on the agroecological continuum discussed above.

Showing antipathy towards mineral fertilisers

The views of the farmers in Mahama, the farmers located at the highest end of the agroecological continuum represent an antipathetic attitude towards the use of mineral fertilisers in their CA practice. All of them expressed a strong preference for organic soil fertilisation methods through the use of compost, manure from livestock, green manure from agroforestry species, or GMCCs. They also expressed a preference for the integration of legume crops in their farming systems through intercropping, mixed cropping, and crop rotation.

The Mahama farmers' antipathetic attitude towards mineral fertilisers was grounded in specific negative experiences that local farmers had with mineral fertilisers in the past. They shared three types of negative experiences. First, they testified that the harmful effects mineral fertilisers had on soil structure and fertility by killing what Rwandan farmers call *inshuti y'umuhinzi*, literally meaning 'friends of a farmer', or soil organisms that play a vital role in maintaining soil fertility. Farmlands in many parts of Mahama are characterised by sandy soil with very low nutrient and organic matter content. Farmers believe that the application of mineral fertilisers on such soil for consecutive years may make it barren unless a large amount of organic fertiliser is used at once.

Second, another negative experience with the use of mineral fertilisers is associated with Striga (*Striga hermonthica* and *Striga asiatica*), a parasitic weed that is abhorred by local farmers for its devastating effects on crop production. This highly destructive pest sucks out nutrients from the roots of the host cereal crops such as maize, sorghum, and millet, thereby seriously hampering their growth.⁴ One male participant in the focus group told us that DAP (diammonium phosphate) used on his maize field attracted Striga, which destroyed all his maize plants in Season A of 2018–2019. Emphatically dismissing any possibility of ever using DAP again in his field, he said, 'Even if the agronomist leaves a sack of DAP on my doorstep, I would not use but sell it at the market' (focus group with CA farmers at Mahama, 22 January 2020).

Third, many farmers in Mahama and adjacent areas have experienced difficulties in repaying the loan

⁴ Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) (2009:48) identifies it as 'a major pest of agricultural intensification, associated with increased cropping intensity and declining soil fertility'.

they took to buy agricultural inputs, especially mineral fertilisers. During the focus group, MA2, a female CA farmer and her husband, told us that in 2017, they received a loan of 52,000 Rwandan francs (approximately US \$ 56) for mineral fertilisers, but they could not pay it back because their maize crops failed due to a drought that hit the whole region. They only managed to pay back 25,000 Rwandan francs. The government then cancelled the remaining amount due to drought, which affected many people in the region that year. According to the participants of the focus group, many farmers failed to pay back their loans. Consequently, their land titles are still kept by the supplier of inputs called TUBURA programme, which is run by One Acre Fund, a US-based NGO that imports and supplies subsidised mineral fertilisers to local farmers as a part of the CIP framework.

The CA farmers in Mahama openly shared their negative feelings about the government's vigorous campaign for mineral fertilisers, which they considered an unwelcome imposition of government policy. Fully convinced that his organic way of producing crops is more productive than with mineral fertilisers, MA3, a 63-year old male farmer with more than six years of CA experience declared his determination not to use any mineral fertiliser on their farmland: 'If the government forces us to use it, I will refuse it' (focus group at Mahama, 22 January 2020).

Accepting a mixture of mineral fertilisers with organic ones

Compared to the attitude of the farmers in Mahama, a more moderate attitude was identified among the farmers in Gahara and Juru who participated in separate focus groups. They generally supported the use of mineral fertilisers in combination with organic fertilisers. However, they specified that they would not need to use mineral fertilisers if they had enough organic fertiliser. They were also aware of the harmful effects mineral fertilisers may have on soil structure and fertility, as their counterparts in Mahama described. However, unlike the farmers in Mahama, they did not show antipathy towards the use of mineral fertilisers.

Supporting the increased use of mineral fertilisers

On the other hand, farmers who took part in a focus group in Mbuye, who were also at the lowest end of the agroecological continuum, emphasised the importance of the increased use of mineral fertilisers for optimal soil fertilisation management. In their view, while they understand the importance of mixing organic fertilisers with mineral fertilisers, they believe that the use of mineral fertilisers is necessary for more productive farming. When we shared our observation that the CA farmers in Mahama were very productive organic farmers, they insisted that the Mahama farmers should be taught the importance of mineral fertilisers so that they could become more productive. The farmers in Mbuye were not overly concerned about the harmful effects of agro-chemicals on the soil, plants, and humans.

4.1.5. Contrasting CA farmers' attitudes towards the policy to enforce monoculture farming

As discussed above, since the introduction of CIP in 2007, monoculture farming of market-oriented priority crops determined by the government has been vigorously promoted as a productive farming system. This system is especially encouraged in government-owned marshlands and privately owned lands that are under the Land Use Consolidation (LUC) programme. However, in all the areas we conducted our fieldwork, different forms of crop association were widely practised by smallholder farmers on their privately owned lands, both inside and outside the LUC area. We identified the following three types of attitudes, which largely correspond to CA farmers' positions on the agroecological continuum.

Crop diversification as a right for smallholder farmers

The CA farmers in Mahama, whom we located at the highest end of the agroecological continuum, expressed that crop diversification through different methods of crop association, such as intercropping, mixed cropping, and planting fruit and fodder trees on and around fields, is their right as well as being essential for their subsistence. They are aware that the government has been urging them to practice monoculture farming by planting a single crop of high commercial value in their fields, especially if a given field falls within the area designated for the LUC programme. However, they firmly believe that practicing various methods of crop association in their fields is necessary to reduce the risk of total crop failure due to adverse climatic conditions or pests and diseases. By doing this, they believe they will achieve higher net production.

Participants of the focus group in Mahama, including all three CA farmers in our case study, were of the view that implementing a monocropping system on all their farmland would be too risky, especially because their region is very dry and highly susceptible to droughts. They also expressed the view that their risk-averting strategies through various crop diversification methods are becoming more important than before due to increasing climate variability in recent years. Accordingly, they said they would continue to practice polyculture farming even in fields that are within the LUC area.

Accommodating the government's instructions around monoculture farming

The CA farmers in Gahara and Juru showed a rather accommodating attitude toward the subject of the monoculture farming system promoted by the government. All of the CA farmers interviewed, and others involved in the focus groups in the two study areas acknowledged the need for planting multiple kinds of crops in their small fields as a strategy of risk aversion and maximising productivity per unit area; however, they chose to avoid confrontation with government authorities. This led them to accept the government instruction of monocropping in the area under the LUC programme. However, they still continued to plant multiple crops in their fields near their homesteads or on fields in locations not easily

viewed. They chose not to speak out openly about their preference for polyculture, but they stated that they would continue practicing various methods of crop diversification so long as they are tolerated by government authorities.

Accepting monoculture farming as the way forward

The CA farmers in Mbuye, whom we observed as the least agroecological in this study, showed a remarkably different attitude towards the monoculture vs. polyculture debate. All of the three CA farmers we individually interviewed and those involved in the focus group in Mbuye unambiguously indicated their belief that monoculture farming is more productive than polyculture farming. When we asked GA2, one of the female CA farmers we interviewed, why she did not practice any form of crop association, she said firmly, 'The government is telling people not to mix crops in the same field, so as a lead farmer, I cannot do that as I have to tell others not to do that' (interview on 5 February 2020 Mbuye). She then stated that she and her fellow farmers' practices must be in line with the government's instructions, including the adoption of monoculture farming. We also asked another female CA farmer, GA3, for her view of polyculture farming after visiting her remarkably biodiverse CA field on which pineapples, bananas, and cowpeas were intercropped with well-grown maize plants. Contrary to our expectation, she did not feel proud of the way multiple crops were planted in her field. She told us that she would transform it into a monoculture farm in the future because she was convinced that a monoculture would yield higher productivity than a polyculture. In her view, planting multiple kinds of crops in the same field may have advantages only for those who are farming very small plots of land. Participants of the focus group in Mahama unanimously confirmed that monoculture is the way forward for Rwandan farmers.

4.2. Constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA by smallholder farmers

In seeking answers to the second research question, 'What are, from the perspective of CA farmers, the major constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA, specifically in the context of smallholder farming in Rwanda?', eight themes emerged from the fieldwork. These themes are discussed in this section. Some of the themes relate to challenges faced by smallholder farmers, specifically in relation to their CA practice. Other themes relate to the key challenges smallholder farmers in Rwanda face more generally. These more general challenges may also hamper CA farmers' attempts to scale up their CA practices. The first six themes are linked to smallholder farmers' limited access to agricultural resources and services necessary for productive CA, whereas the last two themes are linked to government policies for agricultural intensification and commercialisation under the CIP. These policies considerably limit farmers' choice regarding the farming system and methods they may adopt.

4.2.1. Shortage of mulching materials

The CA farmers across all four study areas identified the shortage of organic mulching materials as the most severe constraint to their current CA practice as well as to the possible expansion of CA fields. Organic materials such as crop residues and grasses from various sources are becoming increasingly scarce, and therefore more valuable because of competition for organic material used as livestock feed, compost production, and soil mulching for food crops and coffee plantations.

A large majority of the case study farmers we visited considered the shortage of mulching materials to be a major factor limiting the extent to which organic soil coverage was practised. In addition to the general scarcity of organic materials for mulching, some of them also testified that they had faced other problems during Season A in 2019–2020, such as theft of mulches from their fields and serious damage to mulches caused by termites. As reported in section 4.1.2, most of them spent a significant amount of money buying mulching materials, despite the fact that the amount they could afford was far less than the amount required to cover the soil adequately.

All CA farmers considered GMCCs as a potential solution to the shortage of mulching materials. As indicated in section 4.1.2, however, only two of them were found to have established adequate levels of soil coverage by GMCCs at the time of the field visit.

4.2.2. Shortage of manure for organic soil fertilisation

Case study farmers across all four study areas expressed concern over the limited availability of manure and identified it as a major constraint to adopting and scaling-up their CA practice. For the large majority of farming households that engage in mixed farming in Rwanda (NISR 2018),⁵ it is common knowledge that the application of manure from livestock is essential for maintaining soil health and productivity. As the depletion of soil nutrients due to over-cultivation is pervasive across Rwanda, the demand for manure has been increasing. Despite this, the supply of manure has not matched the demand due to a combination of factors, including a lack of purchasing power, limited access to fodder and water, and unavailability of affordable animal healthcare services.

Even though the shortage of manure was unanimously identified as a major limiting factor to productive CA practice, its impact varied among the case study farmers we visited. On one hand, all the case study farmers in Mbuye and Juru spent a significant amount of money buying manure during Season A of 2019–2020. These farmers either owned no animals or too few to produce enough manure. On the other hand, the case study farmers in Mahama and Gahara were found to be less reliant on

⁵ In this paper mixed farming refers to a farming system which involves the growing of crops as well as the raising of livestock. According to the Agricultural Household Survey conducted by National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR) in 2017, the percentage of households raising different types of livestock during the 2017 agricultural year was 61%, 53.6%, 33.7%, 30.6% and 18.1% respectively for cattle, goats, hens, pigs, and sheep (NISR 2018).

purchased manure partly because of the pigs and goats provided by AEHR's food security project, as reported in section 4.1.3. Using manure produced by these animals, these farmers were able to produce compost that helped them increase crop yield in their CA fields. However, they also clearly expressed that they would face a shortage of manure if they increase the size of their CA fields in the future.

4.2.3. Lack of means to transport organic fertilisers and mulching materials

Lack of means to transport manure or compost and organic mulching materials was identified as a potential constraint to adopting and scaling-up CA in the context of smallholder farmers in two study areas, Juru and Mahama. As noted earlier, according to the majority of case study farmers, manure or compost and organic mulching materials, such as crop residues and grasses, are two critically important inputs for CA, without which good crop production cannot be expected.

For Season A of 2019–2020, all CA case study farmers had different ways of making organic materials available for their fields. First, to transport manure or compost, many of them carried it by themselves or had their temporary workers carry it from their homestead, where they kept livestock, to their field. Second, those who bought a fairly large amount of manure arranged a truck to transport it to a location near their fields. Third, some CA farmers set up compost piles near the fields to minimise the labour required for transport. To supply mulching materials to their fields, the first option was to maintain crop residues in the field after harvest. They also carried crop residues manually from nearby places themselves, and temporary workers carried purchased grasses from the forest or marshland.

Since the size of their CA fields was fairly small, CA farmers in the study areas were able to supply manure and/or compost and mulching materials to their fields by these means. They said that it would be difficult for them to practice CA in larger fields unless tools for carrying the materials, such as a wheelbarrow and a hay cart, were made available.

4.2.4. High labour requirements

A high level of labour required for mulching and organic fertility management through manure or compost was identified as another critical factor that may hamper the scaling-up of CA in the future. This issue was raised during focus groups and interviews only by CA farmers in Mahama, Gahara, and Juru, who considered mulching materials and organic fertilisers as the two essential inputs for practicing CA in a productive way. It is not surprising that the CA farmers in Mbuye did not identify this issue as a constraint because they adopted the CA principle of organic soil cover only to a very limited extent (see Table 4). Moreover, they did not use much manure or compost, as they relied on mineral fertilisers more than CA farmers in other study areas (see section 4.1.4).

CA has been portrayed by its advocates as a labour-saving form of agriculture (Montt and Luu 2018: 3). FAO (2011) maintains that, compared to conventional farming based on extensive tillage, CA

significantly reduces labour requirements for land preparation and weeding primarily due to its practices of minimum tillage and permanent soil coverage. At the same time, it acknowledges the need for extra labour for manure application, weeding, and other early tasks required until the CA system has established itself. However, additional labour requirements due to increased weed growth induced by the elimination or reduction of tillage as a weed control method have also been reported, especially when permanent soil cover is not adequately practised and/or herbicides⁶ are not used (Lee and Thierfelder 2017). A recent study analysing data from five Sub-Saharan African countries suggests that CA can result in increased labour requirements. This is if the effects of various CA aspects (not only minimum tillage and permanent soil cover) on labour requirements at different production stages (e.g. land preparation, weeding, harvesting, and threshing) are taken into consideration (Montt and Luu 2018).

According to most of the case study farmers who applied mulching and organic soil fertilisation, the labour-saving effects of minimum tillage, and prevention of weeds by mulching cannot offset the extra labour requirements incurred through the introduction of the CA system. Therefore, it is likely that labour shortages will be a serious constraint to the scaling-up of CA in the future, unless certain labour-saving technologies and practices are effectively incorporated in the CA system.

4.2.5. Small landholding

Small landholding was also identified as a significant constraint to adopting and scaling-up CA. In Rwanda, landholdings are small and fragmented. The average landholding of 0.6 ha is often divided into even smaller three to four sub-plots; approximately 50% of farming households produce crops on less than 0.35 ha of land (NSIR 2016). As indicated in Table 1, the landholding of eight out of ten case study farmers, ranging from 0.11 to 0.50 ha, was much less than the national average landholding, whereas the landholdings of the remaining two case study farmers were 1.45 and 1.3 ha.

During Season A of 2019–2020, two case study farmers, MA1 and JU2, rented land for farming. They grew maize on the rented land using conventional methods: extensive tillage, no soil cover with mulches, and reliance on mineral fertilisers. These farmers pointed out that CA cannot be practised on rented land. This is due to the concern that the considerable investment in mulches and organic fertilisers required for CA would be wasted once the landowner asks them to return the land.

While the CA farmers in this case study identified it as a serious constraint, small landholding generally does not seem to be the most important factor preventing CA farmers in the study areas from expanding the size of their CA fields. This is corroborated by the fact that six out of ten farmers in this

⁶ While herbicide use could greatly reduce labour requirements for weed control as shown in some studies conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa (Umar *et al.* 2011, Muoni *et al.* 2013), none of the CA farmers we interacted with during the fieldwork pointed to herbicides as a potential solution to address the challenge of CA's high labour requirements. This was probably because herbicides are not well known to smallholder farmers and their availability at the markets is very limited.

case study adopted CA on less than 30% of their total farmland (see Table 2). As discussed above, the shortage of mulching materials seems to be the most important factor determining smallholder farmers' ability to practise CA on their land.

4.2.6. Lack of effective pest and disease control

The lack of effective pest and disease control was another constraint to scaling-up CA and was frequently raised in the interviews and focus groups. As reported in section 4.1.3, all but one of the case study farmers relied entirely on chemical pesticides during Season A of 2019–2020, despite the fact that they did not achieve satisfactory results. While the farmers we visited in Mbuye did not hesitate to use chemical pesticides, the farmers we visited in other sectors were all aware of their adverse effects on beneficial organisms and human health. To our surprise, however, there was an apparent lack of knowledge regarding organic pest and disease control methods among the case study farmers. There was an exception for the farmer in Gahara, who intercropped *Desmodium* plants over two crop-producing seasons on his maize plot as an effective biological pest management method (see section 4.1.3).

4.2.7. Conflict with the government policy to boost the use of mineral fertilisers

The fieldwork led us to discern tension between government efforts under the CIP to transform traditional subsistence farming into a modern, market-oriented farming, and CA farmers' efforts to enhance food security and resilience through agroecological farming practices. As discussed earlier, the type of farming system promoted by the CIP has two major features: 1) increased use of purchased inputs such as mineral fertilisers and improved seeds; and 2) a monoculture of a market-oriented priority crop in the area under LUC. Even though PSTA 4, the most recent strategic plan for agricultural transformation in Rwanda, shows a new policy direction and associated measures, in line with agroecological, sustainable farming practices, the government's vigorous pursuit of the CIP objectives remained apparent at the time of our fieldwork. We confirmed that specific quantified CIP-related targets, such as the number of hectares consolidated for growing priority crops and the quantity (kg) of subsidised fertilisers bought by farmers, featured at the top of annual targets set by the local government authorities from the district down to sector and cell levels.

The first theme that emerged as a potential constraint to scaling-up CA relates to the government's vigorous campaign to increase the use of mineral fertilisers. As reported in section 4.1.4, the CA farmers in Mahama, who were found to be at the highest end of the agroecological continuum (Table 5), opposed the use of mineral fertilisers. Their reasoning was that using mineral fertilisers was incongruous with their sustainable soil fertility management through the use of compost, mulching, and organic inputs from agroforestry trees. In the years during which the monocropping of maize was introduced to their

district, the government authorities, according to the farmers' perspectives, forcibly imposed the use of chemical fertilisers on local farmers. With this past experience, they expressed fear that the government could increase its pressure on them to use mineral fertilisers in the future in order to achieve its annual target. This annual target is specified in a performance contract (locally known as *imihigo*) signed by the mayor of every district across Rwanda.⁷ Thus, in their view, considerable scaling-up of CA (CA with a strong emphasis on agroecological principles) might not be tolerated by the government because it is seemingly in conflict with the policy objective of increasing the use of mineral fertilisers.

In sharp contrast to the CA farmers in Mahama, the farmers in Mbuye, who were found to be at the lowest end of the agroecological continuum (Table 5), did not see the government's push to use mineral fertilisers as a constraint because they considered the increased use of mineral fertiliser necessary for enhancing their CA productivity. Farmers in Gahara and Juru, who were located in the middle of the agroecological continuum (Table 5), indicated their view that mineral fertilisers can be mixed with organic fertilisers if a sufficient amount of organic fertilisers is not available.

There were varied attitudes towards the use of mineral fertilisers among CA farmers in the different study areas. This suggests that the constraining factor on scaling-up CA caused by the policy to boost the use of mineral fertilisers depends largely on which version of CA will be promoted in Rwanda in years to come, either one that is inclined towards agroecology or one that is not.

4.2.8. Imposition of monoculture against smallholder farmers' preference of polyculture

The second theme that emerged as a potential constraint to scaling-up CA concerns the other aim of CIP: promoting monocultures of market-oriented crops through the combination of regional crop specialisation and land use consolidation (LUC). One of the key CA principles is diversifying crops in time and space through various forms of crop rotation and association. This has been widely practised by smallholder farmers in Rwanda to reduce the risk of crop failures, manage soil fertility, and maximise agricultural productivity per unit area on their small fragmented fields (Isaacs *et al.* 2016).

As reported earlier, various forms of crop diversification, namely crop rotation, mixed cropping, intercropping, and planting fruit and fodder trees on and around the field, were seen in the fields of the CA farmers in this case study (see sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3). The particular forms of crop diversification that are seemingly in conflict with the government's vigorous promotion of monoculture farming under the CIP are intercropping and mixed cropping.

Since the introduction of the CIP, the policy of monoculture farming has been enforced across the country, especially if a given land falls in the area designated for LUC programme (Huggins 2017). Well aware of the potential disadvantages of monoculture farming, many of the CA farmers in this case study

⁷ For this management system exercised by the Rwandan government based on a performance contract locally known as *imihigo*, see Gatwa and Uwimbabazi (2019).

showed a preference for polyculture farming, especially on small, fragmented plots of land. Only CA farmers in Mbuye, who possessed limited knowledge about agroecological farming, expressed their preference for monoculture farming.

In focus groups, we sought to capture their views about the potential future escalation of tension between the monoculture farming policy under the CIP and their preference for polyculture farming practices in their CA fields. We asked them whether they think that polyculture farming in CA fields would still be tolerated by government authorities even after scaling-up CA in the area. We expected an affirmative answer to this question from many of the CA farmers we talked with, especially those of Mahama who clearly demonstrated their critical view of monoculture farming (and a strong preference for polyculture farming). Contrary to our expectations, none of the CA farmers expressed much worry about a possible situation in which the promotion of monoculture farming by the government constrains polyculture farming practices in their CA fields.

The fact that the CA farmers did not see their polyculture farming in conflict with the promotion of monoculture farming by the government can possibly be attributed to a welcome change in policy direction and measures set out in PSTA 4 in response to 'the need for increased climate resilience and vulnerability management' (MINAGRI 2018:44). As already noted, intercropping and the use of cover crops are, in fact, among the climate-smart practices stipulated in PSTA 4 (ibid.45–46). During the fieldwork, we confirmed that the government agronomist working for the Mahama sector recognised the advantages of intercropping or mixed cropping for smallholder farmers. The advantages recognised included the maximisation of productivity per unit area and enhanced resilience to climate variability, particularly in food-insecure, drought-prone regions including Mahama. However, in his view, the practice of intercropping or mixed cropping should be limited to small-scale farms that are unirrigated and located in dry, drought-prone areas. We therefore suggest that the tension highlighted in this section can be considered a potential constraint to the scaling-up of CA by smallholder farmers.

5. Conclusion

We have discussed key findings from a case study of smallholder farmers practising CA in four different geographical areas in the eastern and southern provinces of Rwanda during Season A of 2019–2020 (September 2019 to January 2020). The first set of findings emerged from an analysis of the specific ways in which the ten case study farmers practised CA. First, many of the case study farmers adopted CA on a small portion of their total farmland; six out of ten farmers practised CA on less than 30% of their farmland for Season A of 2019–2020. This implies that conventional farming with extensive tillage remains a dominant farming method. Second, many of the case study farmers adopted the CA principles only partially. While minimum-tillage was commonly adopted, organic soil cover was found to be the least adopted CA principle due to a serious shortage of organic mulching materials as well as

unsuccessful attempts to use GMCCs as an alternative to mulches of crop residues and grasses. The degree to which crop diversification was adopted varied significantly. Third, a detailed examination of their farming practices revealed that even though they use the same name *bunga bunga ubutaka* ('care for the soil') for CA practice, their approach to agriculture varied significantly in their application of agroecological principles. This realisation led us to place CA farmers at different positions on what we call the agroecological continuum. Fourth, these case study farmers held contrasting views towards the use of mineral fertilisers as well as the monoculture farming system promoted by the government. These approaches largely corresponded to their position on the agroecological continuum. Farmers at the higher end of the continuum showed negative feelings towards the use of mineral fertilisers and monoculture farming, whereas those at the lower end of the continuum supported them.

The second set of findings emerged from focus groups and individual interviews with CA farmers in the four study areas. These interviews focused on various factors that farmers perceived as constraints to adopting and scaling-up CA. Most of the constraints identified in this study, for example, a shortage of mulching materials, shortage of manure for organic soil fertilisation, lack of means to transport organic fertilisers and mulching materials, high labour requirements, small landholding, and lack of effective pest and disease control, stem from smallholder farmers' limited access to agricultural resources and services necessary for productive CA. Other themes emerged as potential constraints. Conflict with the policy to boost mineral fertiliser use and the imposition of monoculture farming under the CIP stem from tensions between government policies around agricultural intensification and commercialisation, and smallholder farmers' strategies for enhancing household food security and resilience in the face of increasing climate variability. These potential constraints were especially identified by CA farmers who believe that the application of agroecological principles should be the hallmark of CA.

Currently, efforts to promote CA in Rwanda seem to be gaining momentum due to the official recognition it is given as a form of climate smart agriculture (CSA) in PSTA 4. This plan proposes a new policy direction and associated measures in response to the need for 'increased climate resilience and vulnerability management'. The findings we present in this paper point to the need to address constraints stemming from smallholder farmers' limited access to various resources and services necessary for productive CA. This requires considerable allocations of resources from the government, international agencies, and NGOs. The findings concerning the tensions between government policies for agricultural transformation under the CIP and smallholder farmers' agroecological practices that are geared toward household food security and resilience should draw attention from policymakers and other stakeholders in the efforts to build sustainable, climate resilient agriculture in Rwanda. These policy-related constraints must be acknowledged and discussed so that continuous efforts can be made in policymaking and implementation to give smallholder farmers more space and increased support for

experimenting, adopting, and expanding a farming system with greater productivity and climate resilience in the future.

Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) for the financial support provided for this study within the framework of the KAKENHI project 'Resource Management and Political Power in Rural Africa'. We also express special thanks to AEBR, FPH, and MJCI-Shalom and their food security project participants for kindly allowing us to conduct our fieldwork for this study. We are also grateful to Jean Twilingiyumukiza of Tearfund and Brain Neza of Peace and Development Network for providing us with valuable information about CA initiatives in Rwanda and connecting us with various stakeholders.

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Effects of agriculture intensification on gender relations in Rwanda: Perspectives of women farmers involved in the Land Use Consolidation programme

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Abstract

Over the last decade, international development agencies have highlighted agricultural intensification as a strategy to boost economic growth and reduce poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. Rwanda has adopted the Crops Intensification Programme (CIP) since 2007. The implementation of this program involved the initiation of other programs and strategies, including the Land Use Consolidation (LUC) programme as its main pillar. The CIP-LUC programme aims to transform small-scale and subsistence farming into large-scale and market-oriented agriculture, to enhance productivity and improve the wellbeing of those involved in agriculture, who are mostly poor. Drawing from the experience of women farmers involved in farmer's cooperatives in the Huye and Gisagara Districts of southern Rwanda, this paper aims to understand the effects of agricultural intensification on gender relations and women's daily lives. Using interviews and focus group discussions, the present findings demonstrate that the change from subsistence farming to capitalist agricultural production affected gender relations, as farm households are required to intensify labour and capital. Consequently, women's labour is proletarianised, as it is considered as 'free family labour'. Moreover, it is worth noting that the interaction of gender, class, and government interventionism underpins women's subordination and exploitation under this capitalist agrarian model.

Keywords: agriculture intensification, gender relations, women farmers, land use consolidation

1. Introduction

Over the last decade, agricultural intensification has been regarded as an alternative strategy for agriculture transformation and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2007, FAO 2011). The assumption underlying this change is that ‘transforming subsistence smallholdings into large scale commercial farming would be a strategy to increase yields, to ensure food security, and to increase income for a highly increasing population in Africa’ (World Bank 2007). Accordingly, the post-genocide Rwandan Government implemented agricultural intensification policies, known as ‘green revolution policies’ (Cioffo *et al.* 2016), aiming to transform smallholding-subsistence farming into large-scale and market agriculture (GoR 2009; 2011). These policies are implemented under the umbrella of the Crops Intensification Program (CIP). To achieve effective implementation of CIP, the government had to adopt the Land Use Consolidation (LUC) programme, as a policy strategy to accelerate the transformation of smallholding farming into large-scale capitalist agricultural production (Musahara *et al.* 2014).

The Land Use Consolidation programme has been implemented since 2008, as a main pillar of the CIP. Throughout this paper, CIP-LUC is used as an abbreviation to refer to the agricultural intensification programme implemented by the Government of Rwanda. The Organic Land Law No. 08/2005 of 14 July 2005, revised in 2013, defines land consolidation as ‘a procedure of putting together individual small plots of land in order to make them more productive and reduce the adverse effects of fragmentation’ (GoR 2005, Cioffo *et al.* 2016). The assumption behind the CIP-LUC programme is that joining individual small plots of land together to farm as a single unit would enhance economies of scale in the acquisition of inputs (improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and other required technologies), processing, and marketing, and would improve access to extension services (GoR 2008, Mbonigaba and Dusengemungu 2013). The implementation of CIP-LUC in Rwanda has been criticised for its use of a top-down approach, whereby farmers are regarded as passive recipients of the policy process (Ansoms 2007, Huggins 2013). At the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture develops a technical plan for the implementation of the policy through its main agency, the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), and the main stakeholder, the Ministry of Local Government. At the local government level, the responsibility rests with district- and cell-level local administrative authorities, who are in charge of ensuring and enforcing the mobilisation of farmers to have them join cooperatives and grow the selected priority crops in a consolidated fashion. Based on the agro-ecological potential and the land area available, target figures are agreed upon and captured in the performance contracts of the respective districts to enhance consistent achievements by farmers’ cooperatives (Huggins 2013, Mbonigaba and Dusengemungu 2013).

Since its implementation, official assessments have affirmed this programme’s success with regard to increase in yields of selected crops and land consolidation, as well as its impact on poverty (Kathiresan

2012, Mbonigaba and Dusengemungu 2013, Musahara *et al.* 2014, Ndushabandi 2017). However, despite consistent efforts by the government in promoting women's status and in achieving gender equality across all sectors, gender inequality persists in the agriculture sector. Women constitute the majority of those involved in agriculture; they carry out almost the entire work in farming activities and receive less from the agricultural output (GoR 2010, Kathiresan 2011). According to the Rwanda Integrated Household Living Condition Survey (EICV 4) conducted in 2013–2014, as compared to 41% of men, more than 70% of women are engaged in farming activities, and agriculture is their main source of income. Furthermore, 85% of female-headed households work in farming, while only 61% of male-headed households were involved in farming in 2013–14 (NISR 2015). In addition to the time spent on domestic work, women work longer hours in agriculture than do men, and they are more likely than men to be dependent on income from their farm. Furthermore, women are primarily responsible for producing food for the household, and for domestic work and caring for children and elderly relatives (GoR 2010, 2013). Several factors have been regarded as the root causes of gender imbalances in Rwandan agriculture, including women's low access and control over productive resources such as land and related property, agricultural inputs, and agricultural market and credit; low educational status; and high illiteracy rates (GoR 2010, Randell and McCloskey 2014, NISR 2015).

Studies on the post genocide Rwandan agrarian change have assessed its effectiveness in relation to productivity, food security, and poverty reduction (Ansoms 2008; 2011, Mbonigaba and Dusengemungu 2013, Huggins 2014, Musahara *et al.* 2014, Bizoza and Havugimana 2016, Cioffo *et al.* 2016, Dawson *et al.* 2016, Ansoms *et al.* 2017, Ndushabandi 2017), but they have not examined its social effects. Despite the important role of women in agriculture and in the daily livelihoods of rural households, evidence shows that their living conditions are poor as compared to their male counterparts. For instance, more than 90% of those who derive their livelihoods from agriculture in Rwanda are poor, and 70% of them are women (Twesigye-Bakwatsa 2010, NISR 2015). The poverty incidence report published in the EICV4 quoted above demonstrates that, in 2013–14, 44% of female-headed households were poor as compared to 37% of male-headed households (GoR 2015).

In the new Rwandan Constitution of 2003 and its 2017 amendment, women have been guaranteed 30% of all seats in political institutions. Following strong feminist pressure, as expressed in the Beijing 'Platform for Action' of 1995, the post-genocide government adopted this policy with the assumption that women's political representation will address gender inequalities at all levels. As a result, Rwanda now has the highest number of women in Parliament in the world (GoR 2013, World Economic Forum 2014). However, as the idea behind women's representation is that elected women will influence policy change considering women's interests, the potentiality of such a system in the context of historically embedded practices of patriarchy in Rwanda is critical.

In this context, this paper aims to contribute to the existing literature on agrarian reform in post

genocide Rwanda and fill in the research gap on gender and agriculture. To this end, the study drew from the perspectives of women farmers involved in the CIP-LUC programme to understand its effects on gender relations and on women's daily lives. To achieve this objective, the following questions guided the research process:

- ✓ What changes have occurred in the farming system following the implementation of intensification programs?
- ✓ How have these changes influenced intra-household gender relations and women's daily lives?

2. Delineating structure and agency to understand the effects of agriculture intensification programmes on gender relations

As noted above, agricultural intensification involves the process of transforming traditional farming into market-oriented or capitalist agricultural production (Kusz 2014). By doing this, it assumes a fundamental transformation of the modes of production in agriculture and the relationship between different actors of the agrarian economy, such as the state, market, and the community (De Janvry 1981). In countries where agriculture is less developed, modernising or intensifying agriculture has been regarded as a strategy for boosting the economy and development. This was observed in some countries in Asia and Latin-America in the 1960–90s, where the implementation of green revolution policies generated unprecedented growth. Therefore, African countries have been advised to follow the same measures to achieve development (Dawson *et al.* 2016). The strategy is known as an ensemble of different techniques designed to increase yields per hectare, to increase cropping intensity per unit of land or other inputs, and to change land use from low-value crops or commodities to those that receive higher market prices (Pretty *et al.* 2011). However, as argued by Shivji (2009), this process of capitalising agriculture requires the state to engage in neoliberal policies, with a high risk of facilitating dispossession of different groups of small-scale farmers and causing capitalist accumulation. Herein, the intensification of monoculture agriculture for export has been known to be the basis of such conditions, yet it is the most recommended and supported model of agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa (Shivji 2009:172). In order to understand the effects of LUC-CIP on gender relations and women farmers in Rwanda, one needs to analyse the structural factors underpinning this agrarian change and to identify how they shape or are shaped by the social relations of gender. Indeed, the concepts of structure and agency are essential analytical tools that would explain these issues.

Anthony Giddens defined the concept of structures as a set of 'rules and resources', one presupposing the other. For him, structures involve 'both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems' (Giddens 1979:27). Drawing from this definition, Sewell (1992) argued that

agency is a constituent of structure, which means that structures shape people's practices, which in turn constitute or reproduce structures. In this sense, human agency and structure presuppose each other. While discussing the process of women's empowerment, Kabeer (1999) stated that structures influence individual resources, agency, outcome, or achievements. Similarly, Amartya Sen underlined this interconnection between agency and structure while discussing women's agency and social change. He argued that agency can play an important role 'in removing the iniquities that depress the well-being of women' (Sen 1999:191). For Sen, women's well-being is strongly influenced by different aspects or variables such as their ability to earn an independent income, their economic role outside the family, literacy and education, property rights, and participation in decisions within and outside the family (Sen 1999). Petesch *et al.* (2005:4) discussed the concepts of agency and structure as follows: 'structure evolves the broader institutional, social and political context of formal and informal rules and norms within which actors pursue their interests; while agency is the capacity of actors to take purposeful action, a function of both individual and collective assets and capabilities'. These authors argue that, for an effective investment in poor people's development, there is a need to remove formal and informal institutional barriers that prevent the poor from taking effective action and which limit their choice. In other words, it implies the need for changes in social and political structures that perpetuate unequal power relations (ibid.6).

As noted earlier, poor women and men farmers in Rwanda have limited abilities and opportunities to act and follow their own interests (Randell and McCloskey 2014). This inequality of agency plays a role in perpetuating inequality in development outcomes. Within the context of inequality, they need not only access and control of assets and capabilities to negotiate with other actors in agriculture, but also the removal of structured barriers that hinder them from enjoying open opportunities, including those caused by the agrarian change. To understand this, the present paper draws from the above discussion and uses the conceptual framework of agency and structure, as summarised below:

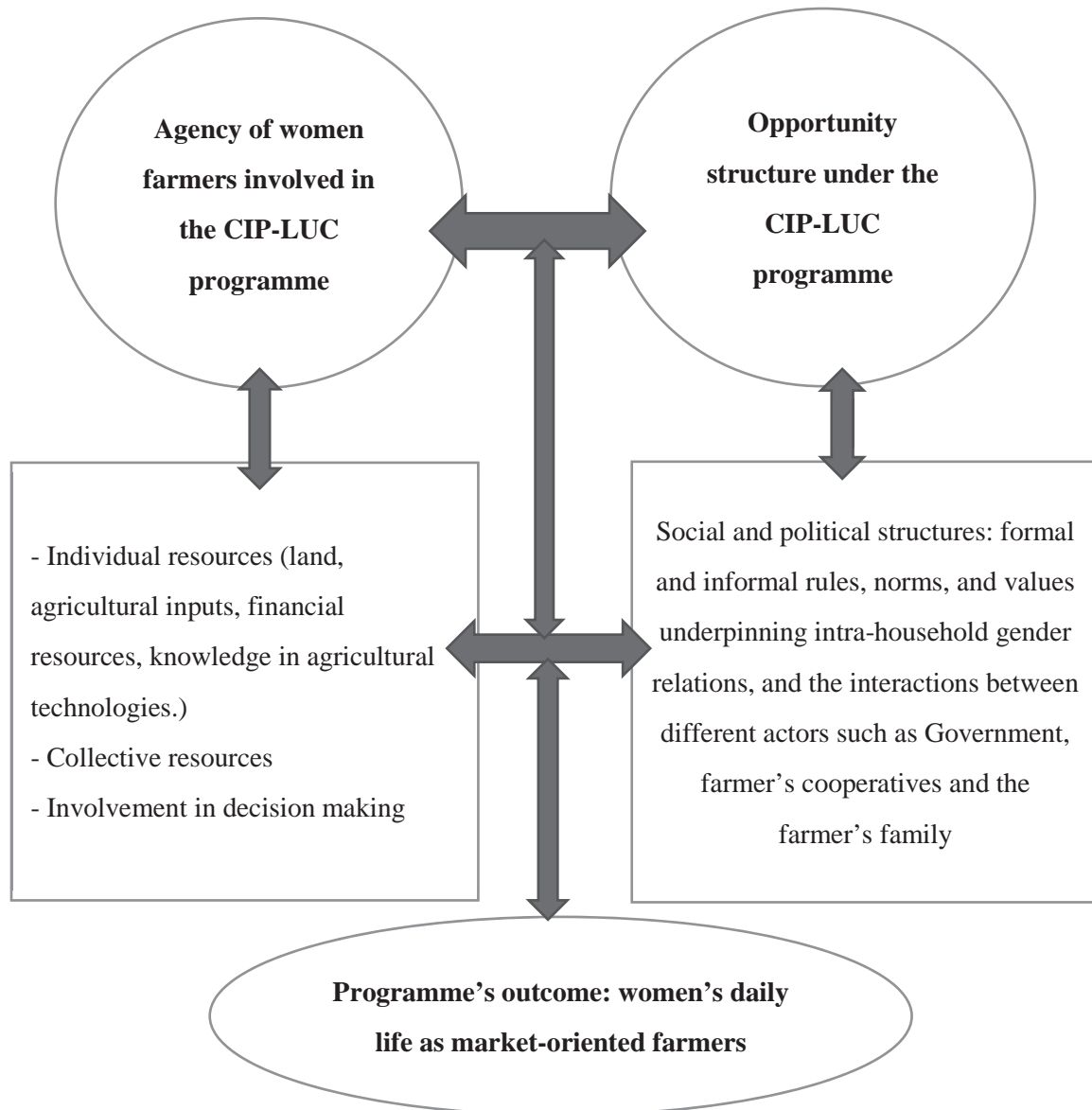


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Methods used for collecting and analysing data

3.1. Selecting respondents

The study drew from the lived experience of women farmers involved in CIP-LUC programme in the Gisagara and Huye Districts of the Southern Province in Rwanda. The study used a qualitative approach characterised by an emerging and flexible ethnographic research design. To obtain relevant and complete information, multiple yet complementing data collection techniques were used, including interviews, observation, and data extraction from documentation.

It was deemed appropriate to interview members of maize cooperatives, as maize is one of the selected crops under the CIP-LUC, and since the implementation of the latter, it is no longer regarded as a food crop but rather as a cash crop. The study purposively selected two cooperatives, one in each District, to enable comparisons between rural and urban areas. Specifically, the KOABIDU (Koperative

y'Abahinzi b'Ibgori muri Duwani), which means literally 'Cooperative of farmers of maize in Duwani marshland' in Kibirizi Sector, Gisagara District, and KOAGIMPA (Koperative y'Abahinzi mu Gishanga cya Mpazi, or Cooperative of farmers of maize in the Mpazi marshland) in Tumba Sector, Huye District were selected.

Although categories of respondents were selected purposively, individual women participants in interviews and focus groups were selected randomly. Here, it is worth noting that, as women farmers are not a homogeneous group, it was necessary for the study to consider the differences among them, and therefore, to use several criteria to select individual participants. These included age, level of education, marital status, productive activity that is the main source of income, geographical location, and size of land holding under the CIP- LUC programme. Moreover, the study interviewed few men to avoid monolithic view especially regarding intra-household gender relation.

3.2. Data collection techniques

As mentioned above, the study used qualitative approaches to gather all research materials. For this regard, the following techniques were used to collect primary and secondary data:

- **Focus group discussions:** As the study aimed to draw from women's experiences and perspectives, this technique was initially used to enable them to share their views. However, after organising two focus groups, the researcher realised that participants could not speak easily. As the topic was quite sensitive, a group could be influenced by one dominant view. To deal with this issue, individual interviews were conducted instead of focus groups. Twelve women farmers participated in two focus groups.
- **Interviews:** This technique was used to offer individual women farmers the opportunity to express their views freely (different from focus groups). Since this study was exploratory, sixteen interviews were conducted, with seven female and five male farmers, two leaders of cooperatives, and two district officials in charge of agriculture. In total, 28 individuals participated in this study.
- **Field observation:** The study used field observation whereby the researcher attended two meetings of farmers' cooperatives organised by the government. During these meetings, the researcher managed to take note of different issues regarding the relationship between the cooperative or farmers, the government, and agro-dealers, especially regarding decision making on the use of land and the market.
- **Documentation:** This technique was used to complement the primary data with secondary data. This involved reviewing the existing literature, reports, policy documents, and other relevant materials on agriculture modernisation and gender in the context of land use consolidation.

3.3. Data analysis methods

The study used thematic and intersectionality approaches to analyse empirical data after organising them into manageable and understandable patterns following each category of respondents as well as research questions. As a feminist method, intersectionality is used to critically analyse the multiplicity of exclusions and inequalities that operate in any given context (Yuivil-Davis 2007, Davis 2008). It was used to identify different identities among women farmers involved in the CIP, and to analyse how these identities shaped and or were shaped by the effects of agrarian change on gender relations.

4. Understanding the effects of agriculture intensification programs on gender relations and women farmers

This section presents and discusses the research findings as reflected mainly by the perspectives of women farmers involved in the CIP-LUC programme in the Gisagara and Huye Districts of the Southern Province of Rwanda. Aligning with research objectives and questions, the findings have been presented with respect to the following themes: who are the female farmers involved in the LUC programme (social and economic characteristics), agricultural change caused by the implementation of the LUC programme, effect of this change on intra-household gender relations and women's daily lives.

4.1. Gender and class as determinants of the effects of CIP-LUC programme on gender relations

Although all the female participants had joined the CIP-LUC programme, they had different social and economic backgrounds. These differences could shape or reduce women's capabilities to be active agents in the LUC programme. Therefore, analysing such differences was a starting point for this paper to understand the effects of the CIP-LUC programme on gender relations and women farmers in particular. To develop a clear picture of the social and economic situation of women farmers involved in the CIP-LUC programme, six aspects were explored, including level of education, age, social status, economic activity or main source of income, and the size of land holding under the CIP- LUC programme. With regard to age, majority of the participants were middle-aged, that is, between 35 and 50 years old. Youth represented a small number; 7 out of the 25 participants were aged below 35 years, which shows that the category of youth is less interested by the agriculture. According to the Rwandan Government, a youth is anyone who is aged between 18 and 35 years. Further, 4 out of the 25 participants were of advanced age, that is between 50–60 years. Regarding social status, the study was interested in marital status (married or living as a couple, single, or widowed). Majority of the participants were married (18 out of the 25 participants), 7 were widowed, and nobody was single. With regard to education, only one woman had attended secondary school and one had completed university education. Seven did not go to school, and majority had completed primary schooling. Although all participants were farmers and were involved in the LUC programme, 11 out of the 25 participants were wage

labourers engaged in farming activities. Finally, these farmers possessed between two and seven parcels of land, that is, between 0.20 hectare and 0.75 hectare in marshlands where the LUC programme has mostly been implemented.

The data presented above demonstrates that women farmers live in different conditions, which determine their capability to actively cope, benefit, or resist from the agricultural change. In other words, the nature of the effects of agricultural change on women farmers is, to some extent, conditioned by their living conditions. As illustrated by participants in a focus group discussion, for example, if an old woman is also a widower who did not attend school and has a small plot of land, it will be very difficult for her to get an off-farm job or to find an alternative means for surviving during the six-month period before harvesting:

‘...as you can see, us who are getting old, it is very difficult to survive during the period when we are waiting for maize to grow; others can move from here to the city to find jobs or do small business, but for us it is not possible! Even if I can manage to get there, no one can give me that job. They prefer young people or men who are strong’ (focus group discussion, January 2019).

Furthermore, for young mothers with small children, the programme increased their work burden as they had several responsibilities related to reproductive work, such as taking care of small children. Since they are required to follow a specific time frame for farming activities, they sometimes need to take their babies to the farm and hold them on their backs while engaging in cultivation.

As noted above, female farmers are not a homogeneous group; they belong to different classes as a result of their socioeconomic conditions. Hence, agricultural intensification programs affect them differently. While those in poor conditions struggled to cope with this agricultural change, others with a different status viewed the CIP-LUC programme as a good opportunity for development. One woman illustrated this as follows:

‘Although every change brings challenges, my experience with the LUC programme is good. I didn’t know that maize can generate money..., I cultivate everything and when I get a problem, I take a loan from local saving and credit cooperative... I have five plots under the LUC programme and another land on the hillside...the programme has been an economic opportunity for me’ (interview, February 2020).

4.2. Scoping the change in the farming system owing to the implementation of the CIP-LUC programme

First, it was important to investigate the type of agricultural change caused by the implementation of the CIP-LUC programme. As described by the participants, the introduction of the CIP-LUC programme led to several changes within agricultural production since it aimed to transform traditional small-scale subsistence farming to large-scale commercial agriculture. This change was therefore related to the farming system and decision making in the programme. With regard to the farming system, farmers are required to consolidate the use of land, that is, join individual small plots and farm them as a single unit. This did not change the size of individual farms, and at the end, one would produce crops on his/her own land. Moreover, all farmers in the same location have to plant one crop for each agricultural season, as selected and instructed by government authorities. They also have to use modern techniques such as planting on lines and following instructions regarding the use of fertilisers and improved seeds, whereby they have to mix chemical fertilisers with organic manure. Instructions about the quality, quantity, and price of these fertilisers and modern seeds, and how to use them are provided to farmers by government officials in charge of agriculture, at the beginning of every farming season.

As pointed out by women farmers who participated in this study, such a change in the farming system requires the intensification of labour for farmers to fit into the farming time frame, and this placed substantial demands on their means of production:

‘Before the LUC programme, farming was not too demanding; we used to cultivate many crops together, using organic manure without measuring the quantity, then harvesting and taking the crops home. However, now, we have to join cooperatives, we need both organic and chemical fertilisers. We need intensive labour to catch up with the farming season. Briefly, we need many things’ (focus group discussion, January 2020).

Evidently, the new farming model requires smallholder farmers to invest capital, human resources, and skills in agricultural production systems to cope with this change. However, if farmers do not have such means to pay for the additional labour and the required seeds and fertilisers, women need to bear the burden as they have to achieve the same in addition to household work. In addition, under the CIP-LUC programme, farmers work on performance contracts: at the beginning of the farming season, the cooperative signs the contract on behalf of farmers, which specifies the quantity of crops they will produce or supply to the market, and this quantity is distributed among individual farmers respectively to the land holding. Nevertheless, if a farmer cannot afford the required inputs, he/she is at a risk of not achieving the expected quantity, and consequently, he/she is penalised by the cooperative, including the loss of membership. Effectively, the farming family is obliged to work hard to avoid such a situation.

For doing so, men (here understood as husbands) have to either supplement farm labour themselves or by hiring additional labour to ensure progress and success. Here, it is worth noting that, if a farming family is headed by a female, old, and widowed individual, she would have to struggle more to farm the given plot under the CIP-LUC programme.

Another important change regarding the farming system reported by the participants is the shift from farming for consumption to that for contributing to the market:

‘...the difference between farming under the CIP-LUC programme and the way we used to farm is that after harvesting we have to take the production to the cooperative from where business companies buy it. It is not allowed to take the harvest home’ (interview, January 2020).

In fact, as per the Rwandan tradition, women have been regarded as responsible for providing food within the household, and by this, they could decide or choose about what, how, and when to eat. With the new production system, however, it looks like they lose control of this, yet they are required to retain this role as they are in charge of household work, which includes cooking and feeding children. Consequently, this situation may reinforce the oppression of women in case of married couples, since men or ‘husbands’ are the head of the household and they have total control of the money or the income derived from agricultural production. Women suffer from oppression of both the government and men (their husband).

Moreover, under the CIP-LUC programme, farmers have in general lost their power to make decisions or control their land and agricultural production. As illustrated by the participants in this research, through cooperatives, government officials inform farmers about the crops they are required to grow in each agricultural season (for example, they can grow maize in Season A, beans in Season B, and vegetables in Season C, and so on). They also inform them about when to start farming activities and when to harvest. Regarding production, in collaboration with the executive committee of the cooperative, the government sets the price of maize for each agricultural season and selects a business company that will buy the produce from every cooperative. Such procedures or regulations undermine the farmer’s power in decision making about the use of their land and agricultural production, and limit their property rights. As noted by Razavi (2003) and Tsikata (2015), this change in the agricultural system shapes gender relations with the possibility of making them more contentious, especially because the gender interests of men and women are different, and the programme cannot respond to them equally.

Hence, capitalisation of small-scale agriculture shapes the social relation of gender because farmers are required to intensify their labour and capital to cope with the new system. Further, in most cases, women bear the burden of these intensifications as men have to migrate to find off-farm jobs to substitute

the household's economic means or prefer to do activities other than farming.

4.3. Proletarianisation of women's labour under the CIP-LUC programme

As noted above, shifting from traditional subsistence farming to agricultural intensification involved important changes in farming activities, whereby farmers have to plant on line, and use both organic and chemical fertilisers and improved seeds within a limited time frame. Such changes require farm households to reorganise the gender division of labour, and the latter is determined by the social and economic conditions of each farming household. In this study, we identified three possible variations in this regard. First, in some households, both men and women, and possibly children, participate equitably in farming activities (here, children must be grown up and not attending school). In other cases, the family is capable of hiring wage labourers to supplement the family labour. The last category is where the family is not capable of hiring labour, and men (the husband) have to find an off-farm job, leaving the women to take care of farming activities alone. Evidently, in all these cases, women are the main labour for farming activities, as they mostly have to be close to their home to accomplish their household responsibilities. Consequently, if the farming family is poor, women farmers endure substantial burden/suffering as compared to males since they have to deal with household work (including reproductive) and farming responsibilities.

During the interview, one woman expressed this as follows:

‘...the farming period is very tough, I feel I can run away because it requires so many activities, I can't talk much about it!!! As women, we are so much more tired than men because besides the land activities we still have household activities like cooking for children, while my husband takes a break after farming, walks around, and comes back late in the evening...’ (interview, January 2020).

This quote demonstrates the extent to which women have to sacrifice in terms of labour for the farming family to survive under the pressure of this capitalist agricultural system. Nevertheless, as pointed out by different scholars, this labour relationship between women and men in capitalist agriculture, and its effects on women's daily lives has been overlooked by different actors in the development process (Razavi 2003, Tsikata 2015). Although under this model men have exhibited substantial interest in agricultural production, especially because it is more cash oriented, the system reinforces the control of women's labour by men. Hence, this social relationship of agricultural production becomes an opportunity for capitalist accumulation. In other words, this free and intensified labour by women is exploited under the label of ‘unpaid family labour’ (Beneria and Sen 1981).

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study allude to a Rwandan proverb ‘*imbuto z’umugisha zisoromwa kugiti cy’umuruho*’, which literally means that ‘the fruits of blessing are gathered from the tree of sorrow’. This ‘sorrow’ pertains to the effects of the CIP-LUC programme on gender relations and women farmers in the Gisagara and Huye Districts of Rwanda. As discussed above, the agricultural intensification programme has engendered several changes both in the farming system and in the decision making or property rights of farmers. Such changes have affected intra-household gender relations and women farmers in particular. In fact, the programme has changed the nature of farming activities and the rhythm or time frame for engaging in such activities. Indeed, to cope with this change, farmers are required to intensify their labour. Although some farming families can hire additional labour, and in some others, men get involved in farming activities, in any case, women remain the principal source of labour. Further, their contribution is considered as ‘free family labour’. In addition, the programme requires farmers to use chemical fertilisers, improved seeds, and higher amounts of organic manure per unit of production (here understood as parcel). This requirement has revealed the need for additional knowledge about the use of this technology, as well as substantial capital to fund these changes. Although the government provides subsidies for these inputs, farmers expressed challenges in accessing them. Furthermore, the present study showed that farmers are not involved in the decision making regarding the selection of the crop to grow, where and when to cultivate or harvest it, and at which market and price to sell their products. This government interventionism not only undermines the agency of farmers but also affects their social roles. In this regard, women have traditionally been regarded as responsible for food provision in the family (she has to decide what to eat, and therefore, what to cultivate, in which land, and so on, especially for food crops), and men have to decide about the management of the production.

As highlighted in this paper, the intersection between gender and class of farmers determines the effects of the new agrarian model on female farmers. Although the programme has influenced gender roles and intra-household gender relations, households with low means are the most affected by these changes. This paper demonstrates how the transformation of the traditional subsistence farming system into capitalist agricultural production engenders the proletarianisation of poor women’s labour.

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People's perceptions on conservation opportunities and challenges for Nyungwe and Mukura national parks, Rwanda

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Abstract

This study assesses people's perceptions of conservation opportunities and challenges. Research was conducted in Nyungwe and Mukura-Gishwati national parks, Rwanda. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions, and observational methods. Participants were selected purposively based on their living experience, societal role, and experience in conservation programs, and the data was analysed using qualitative methods. The findings indicate that the management of Nyungwe National Park has improved relationships between the local community and the Park. This is through the accommodation of local needs such as infrastructure (schools, health centres, and communal water tanks), and provision of income-generating activities. Also, there has been increased awareness in terms of park protection through a tourism revenue sharing scheme introduced in 2005. However, some cases of human-wildlife conflict, fire, deforestation, agricultural expansion, and wildlife hunting in Nyungwe National Park threatened conservation efforts. The relationship between Gishwati-Mukura National Park and the local communities has yet to be shaped; local communities currently receive no income or direct benefit from the Park. Threats such as mining activities, fodder cutting, firewood collection, and grazing were prevailing threats for Gishwati-Mukura National Park. To address these challenges, researchers recommend decision-makers increase initiatives that economically empower local communities and therefore reduce poverty as a critical indirect threat that hinders better conservation outcomes.

Keywords: community conservation, local people, conservation challenges, opportunities

1. Introduction

This study is focused on people's perceptions of conservation opportunities and challenges for Nyungwe and Mukura national parks. This paper introduces the study in three parts. First, the background of the study is described in Section 1.1, followed by an overview of related problems will in Section 1.2, by reflecting on the objectives of the study. Third, Section 1.3 illustrates and explains the conceptual framework.

1.1. Study background

Over the past 50 years, the loss of biodiversity and related environmental changes has become more prominent and frequent than ever before in human history. Many animal and plant populations have declined in either abundance, geographical distribution, or both (Dirzo and Raven 2003, MEA 2005, Jackson and Sax 2010). Although species extinction is considered a natural part of the Earth's history, current losses are the result of various human actions. Such losses have been exacerbated in many regions of the world through a burgeoning human population, leading to increased exploitation of natural resources including forest resources; this makes environmental conservation a critical and complex issue (Vitousek *et al.* 1997, Haddad *et al.* 2015, Nibeza 2015).

The population in the Albertine Rift mountains, where Rwanda is located, has significantly higher population densities than other parts of Africa (Burgess *et al.* 2007). This high population density has increased deforestation activities and, as a result, reduced the area of forests and natural ecosystems. These impacts have resulted in soil erosion, landslides, flooding, relocation of local people around natural forests, and high biodiversity loss due to changes in ecosystems (Armenteras *et al.* 2006, Andrew and Masozera 2010, Lambin and Meyfroidt 2011, Kideghesho *et al.* 2013, Kakuru *et al.* 2014).

Studies indicate that current rapid human population growth has increased the demand and competition for natural resources through over-exploitation at the highest level beyond the capacity of available resources. As the human population continues to expand, there is an increasing demand for agricultural land and other natural resources for industry in terms of land settlements, cultivation, and livestock grazing, wood and timber, and water resources for livestock and domestic needs. In conjunction with these demands there has also been increased contact with wildlife, resulting in human-wildlife conflicts such as crop raiding and wildlife attacks (Campbell *et al.* 2001, Loibooki *et al.* 2002, Kideghesho *et al.* 2005).

Conservation approaches had begun with “fortress conservation”, which excluded local populations from the use of natural resources and did not share power with local communities or institutions (Siurua 2006, Doolittle 2007).

Blomley *et al.* (2010) reported that a new conservation approach known as integrated conservation and development (ICD) was introduced in the 1980s. The premise of the approach was that conservation

should be community-based to achieve community development. This would help minimise conservation challenges and ensure the socio-economic development of local communities.

Numerous studies have indicated that among ICD approaches, park management sharing the benefits of tourism with the local community has consistently been considered a unique method for community participation in natural resource conservation (Timothy 1999, Tosun 2000, Adams and Hulme 2001, Archabald and Naughton-Treves 2001, Li 2004, 2005, Cole 2006, Zacarias and Loyola 2017). Tourism revenue sharing (TRS) programs promote tourism development and ensure that local communities enjoy tangible benefits whilst participating in wildlife conservation. It is considered a way of reconciling conservation and development by ensuring that local community interests and knowledge are considered. Community involvement in tourism development leads to obtaining local community support for conservation initiatives, and also acts as a crucial component in achieving sustainable development of the industry.

Some researchers have also determined factors that lead individuals to become involved in illegal activities despite conservation efforts. For instance, Bulte *et al.* (2003) showed that some aspects of wildlife resemble the characteristics of a public good that the local community is interested utilising. The authors highlight the issue appropriate incentives from conservation to capture the full benefits from the required investments; however, these incentives continue to be elusive. In addition, other researchers have found that if protected areas act as a mechanism that generates hostility among local populations, some local people have gone to greater effort to utilise conserved lands illegally. This has required Park managers to implement the near-impossible job of enforcement in order to accomplish protection objectives. McGrath *et al.* (2018) illustrates how informal and unequal revenue benefit-sharing (money and/or information) may mediate jealousy and tension between communities living around protected areas.

1.2. Problem statement

The government of Rwanda through the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), has initiated efforts to improve socio-economic conditions for local communities, whilst concurrently achieving conservation goals; these efforts include TRS with local communities. Since 2005, when this policy was initiated, more than \$5.8 million was invested in 647 development projects around Virunga, Akagera, and Nyungwe national parks. TRS financed a variety of projects, and community cooperatives were supported; from 2005 to 2017 approximately, 1 133 195 986 Frw was invested in 152 different developmental projects for local communities in districts adjacent to Nyungwe National Park (Imanishimwe *et al.* 2018).

However, negative anthropogenic activities are persistent and involve a full suite of direct drivers that cause biodiversity loss in protected areas (Imanishimwe *et al.* 2018). In terms of poaching activities,

683 snares were removed for each kilometre in central Nyungwe National Park, corresponding to an average of 0.65 snares/km (RDB 2015, Imanishimwe *et al.* 2018). Cutting trees and illegal mining are also dominant illegal activities threatening Nyungwe National Park, and similar cases were found in Gishwati-Mukura National Park, which has been highly degraded by human activities in recent history (REMA 2015). This study seeks to understand the benefits and challenges associated with conservation activities in Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks. The study seeks to elucidate the reasons underpinning the persistence of illegal activities and conservation challenges in Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks, despite the establishment of conservation initiatives and opportunities to conserve these national parks. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

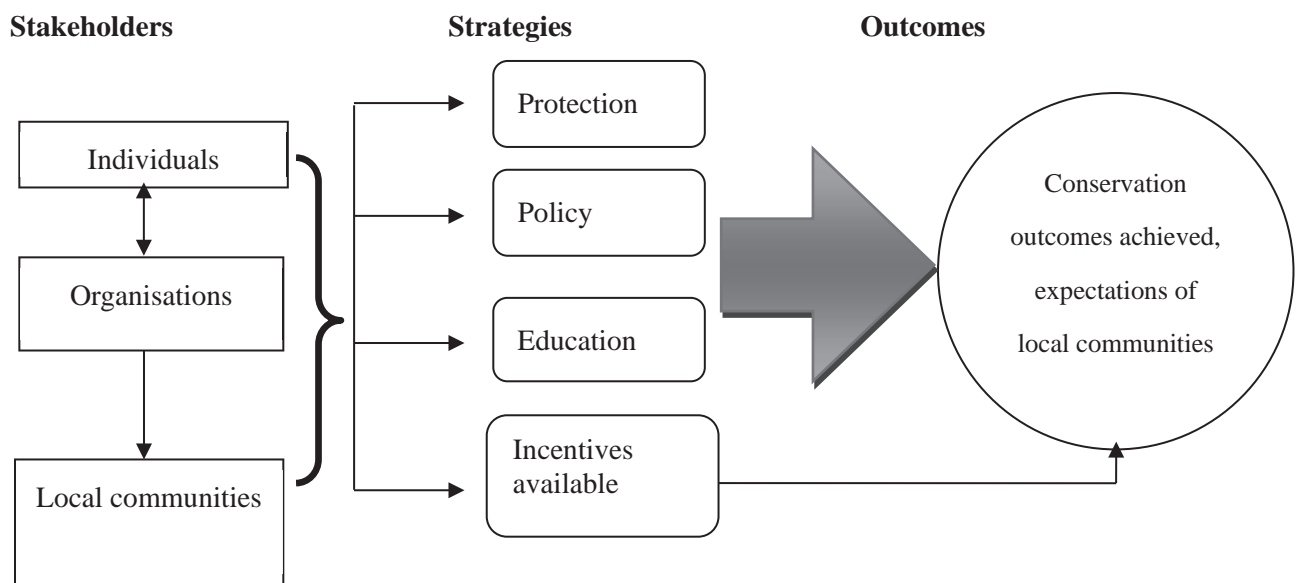


Figure 1. Conceptual framework based on a generalised conservation model from Salafsky *et al.* (2002)

To achieve better conservation goals, there is a need for clear collaboration between individuals who value conservation, and are equipped with the skills and knowledge for conservation efforts to be successful. Individuals involved in conservation take account of resource users, field practitioners, program managers, researchers, donors, and policymakers. On the other hand, individuals are generally associated with organisations that include non-profits, government agencies, universities, local communities, and research institutions. During the conservation process, all stakeholders are involved in the early stages of project initiation for the design stage, and the implementation, management, monitoring, and analysis phases. This requires a full understanding of the process and all stakeholders must have knowledge, administration, and communication skills and be equipped with conservation skills.

This model shows that during the conservation process, there must be clear strategies, or actions to

achieve better conservation outcomes, and these must be adopted by everyone in the process. In the past, conservationists used one broad approach: conservationist or direct protection through the establishment of parks or through limiting the harvest of key species. Based on this approach, the individuals or communities that were in close proximity to these resources had no rights to use or harvest these resources. The socio-economic conditions of the local community was not considered, and the local community was merely considered as the destructors of natural ecosystems and resources. Over time, the conservation approach has shifted to benefit local communities, including legal and policy reforms and environmental education efforts. More recently, conservationists have tried an alternative approach to community conservation to identify economic and other measures that would incentivise communities and other stakeholders to protect and conserve biodiversity.

2. Literature review

This chapter presents the literature relevant to the findings of the study; the reviewed literature focuses on ecotourism as an empowerment tool (Section 2.1), conservation challenges, and threats (Section 2.2). The literature review refers to general discussions, focusing particularly on research centred in Sub-Saharan Africa and Rwanda. The literature review provides information on community participation in natural resource management from various perspectives.

2.1. Conservation opportunities through ecotourism

Many authors indicate that various political and economic instruments that aim to combine environmental objectives with socio-economic development goals have been implemented by countries all over the world. This is based on the premise that if conservation and development can be linked, then the interests of both can be served (Berkes 2004).

Ecotourism has been proposed as a viable economic activity that may minimise negative human impacts on wildlife habitats, whilst providing an incentive to preserve natural areas. This approach also attempts to decrease the dependence on natural resources by local people through by substituting with alternative livelihood activities where natural resources are intrinsic to everyday livelihood. This is because the willingness of the local community to participate in biodiversity conservation and landscape protection is to some extent dependent on whether their basic needs are satisfied, because they rely on natural resources for their survival (Lin and Lu 2013, Fennell 2015). It is a process of providing alternative means of making a living, for example, the provisioning of alternative fuel to prevent forest degradation or economic compensation to outweigh the costs of changing to less environmentally harmful behaviours (Nilsson *et al.* 2016, Zacarias and Loyola 2017).

Ecotourism is an umbrella term defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of local communities by focusing on increased economic

benefits, non-economic impacts, and policy processes (Zacarias and Loyola 2017). It also helps educate the tourist, provides funding for conservation, directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, and fosters respect for different cultures and human rights. One of the principles in the ecotourism equation is that it provides financial benefits and empowerment for local communities through the provision of incentives (Kipkeu *et al.* 2014).

The economic benefits of ecotourism include the expansion of business and employment opportunities. The non-economic benefits include building capacity and the empowerment of poor communities, as well as the mitigation of environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the local community. Finally, policy processes include establishing more supportive and planned frameworks that enhance participation of the local community in the decision-making process; tourism must be financially reasonable, environmentally delicate, and socially suitable (Zacarias and Loyola 2017). Ecotourism is considered a sustainable development tool that offers many potential economic benefits for host communities compared to traditional commodity exports; this includes increased employment, improved socio-economic conditions, and greater market stability. It contributes to the economic growth of countries as it generates income for the local community, the creation of new employment opportunities, improvements to the structure and balance of economic activities in neighbouring communities, and the encouragement of income-generating activities (Ashley and Garland 1994).

Mpumalanga Province provides an example on how the local community has focused efforts on amplifying profits through tourism around national parks. In this province, towns contiguous with Kruger National Park, have begun focusing on offering additional tourism activities that has initiated businesses and, in turn, increased the positive effects of the Park in the district (Saayman and Saayman 2006).

Since 2005 in Rwanda, a TRS scheme was initiated that aimed to share 5% of tourism-generated income between the nation and the local community that is at its recreation centre. Whilst this community bears the cost of preservation efforts, it also receives additional advantages from conservation and thus, has a stake in its prosperity. In 2017, the Rwanda Development Board increased 5% to 10% of the TRS scheme and invested 40% of total revenue sharing funds to support local community projects; the remaining 60% of the funding was directed to local infrastructure. This is to ensure that the local community feels a sense of ownership of these parks. From the environmental perspective, this is one of the ways to increase awareness amongst the local community in hopes that they will support conservation and contribute to natural resource protection. The defenders of TRS philosophy, including Archabald (2001), argue that it promotes tourism development and ensures that local communities enjoy tangible benefits from the industry whilst participating in wildlife conservation (Archabald and Naughton-Treves 2001). However, Tosun (2000) has noted that sharing tourism benefits

with local communities has always been a controversial issue regardless of the community participation approaches adopted by the tourism industry.

Although there is no doubt that tourism can generate considerable benefits, another dimension of the problem is related to the inequitable distribution of costs, benefits, and power among different stakeholders at various scales. For example, there may be insignificant economic impacts at local destinations where only a handful of locals benefit from tourism or are included in decision making (Rice 2007, Blanco and Razzaque 2011). Estrella and Gaventa (1998) have observed that the community is often involved during the implementation stage, as opposed to the entire process, such as project identification, preparation, monitoring and evaluation (Estrella and Gaventa 1998). This failure to engage the community at all levels of the process led Reed *et al.* (2006) to suggest that engaging the community during the early stage of the project cycle provides better decision outcomes and strengthens trust between the community and conservationists. For Reed *et al.* (2007) the combination of local and scientific knowledge should be considered whilst empowering the community to monitor and manage environmental projects (Reed *et al.* 2007). Another constraint of ecotourism is that tourism development is associated with habitat degradation, increased water and energy use, increased littering, disruption of local social values, social imbalances, child labour and/or prostitution, among other negative impacts (Mugisha and Ajarova 2006). Ecotourism has been proposed as a tool for local community participation and empowerment by engaging locals as members of the public and as tourism-related decision-making bodies (Zhao and Ritchie 2007).

Participation in the decision-making process is a crucial determinant to ensure that the benefits local communities receive from tourism are partly guaranteed, and their lifestyles and values are respected. It is a means in which to enable a social environment where decisions and choices made either individually or collectively are directed at social transformation by strengthening the native ability to acquire skills, knowledge, power, and experience (Chambers 1994, Li 2005, Chok *et al.* 2007). Various studies, including Tosun (2006), have indicated that local community participation in tourism development may be achieved through involvement of a committee elected by local communities or through joint decision-making by the appointed and elected local government agencies or through consultation with the local community residents. However, this requires a large commitment by the government to empower the local community in terms of building beneficiary capacity, increasing effectiveness in the desire to share costs, and improving the efficiency and success of projects. As shown in the general model, conservation actions may be grouped into four categories: direct protection and management, law and policy, education and awareness, and incentives. All stakeholders are trained and equipped with knowledge that helps them fulfil their tasks, where incentives are provided to make them feel that they are part of the conservation process.

2.2. Challenges and threats to conservation

Figure 1 shows that they threat are factors that negatively affect biodiversity and the achievement of conservation goals (e.g. commercial logging or overfishing by local community members, mining, poaching, and others). During the conservation process, it is very important to identify who or what is linked to specific threat to integrate this type of information through the planning process.

According to Salafsky *et al.* (2002), when listing direct threats, it is necessary to indicate who or what is underpinning these threats. For instance, poaching to obtain meat for consumption at the household level differs from poaching by large industrial companies that sell bush meat. Threats are different when they are caused by individuals in the community as opposed to being instigated by the entire community or large companies. It is also necessary to identify internal and external threats when they are caused by local communities near or outside the area. It is very important to identify indirect threats and opportunities that are drivers that lead to direct threats (e.g. poverty, lack of education and awareness in the local community, or resource management institutions). The indirect threats critically induce direct threats such that when local communities are unempowered, they will directly rely on natural resources. For instance, by harvesting trees, killing wild animals to obtain food or to sell to acquire cash income. Whilst resources are considered economic resources, such as cash income they are also considered living resources, where local communities value these resources in terms of being sources for food and well-being.

Conservation challenges are not a new phenomenon in Rwanda. Currently, conservation has been a cornerstone strategy for national economies and a guiding principle to comply with Vision 2020 for the achievement of sustainable development goals (Nibeza 2015). Two of the most current pressing challenges in Rwanda are poverty reduction and conservation strategies for natural resources (Andrew and Masozera 2010). Poverty was a major cause for people to be involved in unsustainable and destructive activities to improve their well-being, whilst threatening biodiversity (e.g. by killing wild animals (Kideghesho *et al.* 2005, Wittemyer *et al.* 2008). Household poverty also limits access and usage of sustainable and environmentally friendly sources of energy. This is a challenge for the conservation of ecosystem goods such as firewood and charcoal, which are the most dominant and reliable sources of energy for cooking and heating in Rwanda. The increase in energy demands places greater pressure on woodland areas, driving significant land cover change in most unprotected areas (Kideghesho *et al.* 2013). The conservation of natural habitat may also create conflicts and negative relationships between conservation and human well-being, including loss of access rights to natural resources and human-wildlife conflicts (Gleason *et al.* 2011).

3. Material and methods

This study aims to explore public perceptions on conservation opportunities and challenge, using the

Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks in Rwanda, as a case study. This section describes and explains the methodology and decisions regarding the empirical part of the study. First, the study area (Section 3.1) and data collection process (Section 3.2), is described.

3.1. Study area

Data for this research was collected in villages directly adjacent to Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks (Figure 2). Nyungwe National Park is a highly diverse hotspot in terms of endemic and globally threatened species that are recognised in the eco-region and internationally. The park supplies substantial ecosystem services, including water provisioning and tourist attractions (Banerjee *et al.* 2017), spanning an area of 1019 km² and is contiguous with Kibira National Park in Burundi. It is one of the largest remaining forest tracts in east-central Africa. Populations are at high densities, with an average of 300 inhabitants/km, where approximately 90% of the population is engaged in subsistence farming (Masozera *et al.* 2006).

Gishwati-Mukura National Park is made of two forest blocks that are distant from each other. We selected the Mukura forest because of its management history and site characteristics that differ from those of Gishwati. There has been investment into many conservation efforts and a conservation organisation has been in permanent operation. Mukura Park, a high-altitude forest located in the west of Rwanda, covers an area of 1798 ha (17.98 km²) in a densely populated area with many people living below the poverty line (Kakuru *et al.* 2014).

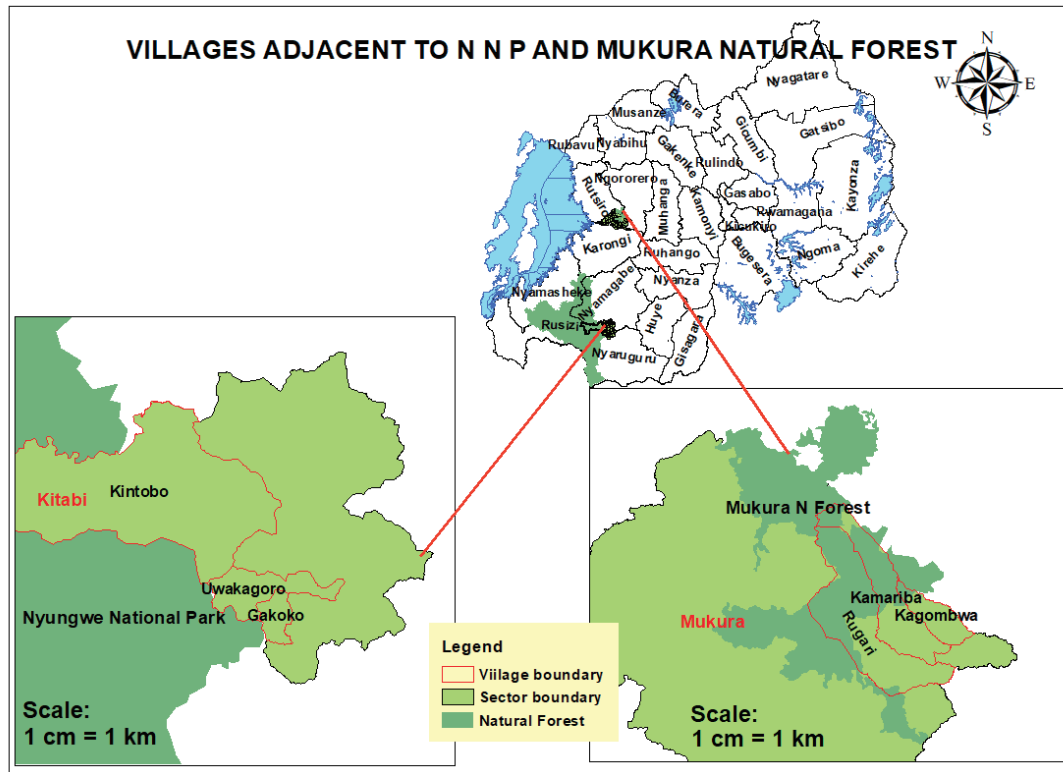


Figure 2. Location of study sites as of 8 July, 2018.

Villages constituting within the study area were selected purposively in Kitabi in the eastern part of Nyungwe National Park. The Kitabi sector located in Nyamagabe District was selected as a tourism sensitive site featuring many conservation programs. In Gishwati-Mukura National Park, villages in the Mukura sector of Rutsiro District were selected due to the significantly larger zone surrounding the forest, its location as an influential site for conservation project initiatives, and the presence of different categories involved in the management of the park. The latter includes local leaders, forest patrol teams, conservation program staff, illegal activity factors, and business centres.

3.2. Data collection

Primary and secondary sources of data were used, where the former was gathered via focus group discussion (FGD), in-depth interviews, and observations. Data was collected in May and June, 2018 to identify information related to factors that influence wildlife resources and conservation practices within the two parks. Secondary sources of data included journal articles, websites, and reports. Natural resource conservation organisations and the Rwanda Development Board, were consulted to harness ideas on the practice and challenges of wildlife conservation. The observation methods were also used to acquire further information on anthropogenic activities in both areas.

The selection of respondents was based on the purpose of finding individuals that were able to provide information related to the issues under investigation; as such, respondents were selected

purposefully (Creswell 2014). At each site, individual semi-structured interviews were framed for key persons as respondents. In Nyungwe National Park, interviews were administered to selected respondents in the Kitabi sector of Nyamagabe District. A number of participants were selected in the Kitabi sector: one group discussion with six park rangers, key respondents with 2 RDB staff, one local government staff, one representative of ex-poachers, and two respondents from the bee-keepers union association. It was presumed that such a selected sample would have sufficient experience and understanding of the conservation of Nyungwe National Park to link it with their past and present experiences. All participants were interviewed at their workplace. We selected qualitative interviews to go through further into the conceptions or experiences of participants in order to engage them to express their perceptions regarding the benefits and causes of illegal activities and how they are challenging conservation initiatives. Interviews were a practical means of understanding peoples' perspectives using qualitative research (Bryman 2012). Focus group discussions were also used to allow participants with similar backgrounds to express certain views through interaction.

At Mukura Park, we were deliberate in our selection of respondents; these included one local authority, one conservation project staff, and five community members involved in mining activities that were engaged through a focus group discussion. All semi-structured interviews were conducted in Kinyawanda, transcribed, and translated back into English. The collected information was then analysed using content analysis by identifying deductive codes derived from existing literature and supplemented with inductive categories that emerged from collected data.

For ethical consideration, prior to the beginning of the interview, participants were briefed on the aim of the research and the possible benefits of the research. The researcher clearly informed the participants that they were free to request clarification at any moment and these questions would be addressed. The researcher clarified that their true names would not appear in data analysis or publication of results. To anonymise participants, we used alphabetical letters to ensure confidentiality during data analysis and the presentation of results.

4. Results

This study aims to understand the public perception of conservation opportunities and challenges around Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks. This section summarises the findings, spanning the topics of conservation opportunities (Section 4.1), conservation challenges and threats (Section 4.2), and strategies and solutions to overcome conservation challenges (Section 4.3).

4.1. Conservation opportunities around Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks

The findings indicate that the local community neighbouring Nyungwe National Park benefited from TRS, where different infrastructure such as schools, roads, health centres, and water tanks were

developed. The results showed that the involvement and empowerment of local people was undertaken through activities-based cooperative associations and funded projects. Reference was made to resource use, awareness raising and skills for interactions, cooperative spirit promotion, and entrepreneurship. The findings at Gishwati-Mukura National Park indicate that local communities did not directly benefit from the park.

4.2. Direct and indirect threats that hinder better conservation outcomes in Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks

According to the community adjacent to Nyungwe National Park, before this park was established as a national park, it was used by the local people as economic and social living resources. The local people collected timber and sold this to earn an income, produced honey inside the park, poached wild animals as a source of meat, mined inside the park to obtain resources for income generation, collected medicinal plants, and engaged in other activities such as agriculture. The majority of respondents indicated that these activities were very important to their livelihood. Since the establishment of this park as a national park in 2005, the Government of Rwanda through RDB set policies and regulations that protected the park from the human activities that destroy it. From this time, many initiatives and projects that were designed to protect the park were implemented. However, this park continues to be subject to threats related to illegal logging, human-wildlife conflicts, snares, and some cases of poaching wild animals. These were also reported by one of the RDB staff who indicated that mining, snares, logging (red wood), honey collection, planting marijuana inside the park, and poaching were some of the illegal activities they frequently encountered in Nyungwe National Park. They were also supported by a FGD, where park rangers reported fodder cutting, wood collection, tree cutting, mining, and snares as major legal activities found in Nyungwe National Park. This was reinforced in an interview with one local community member who reported cases of poaching and killing animals, and the culture of hunting as the primary job of hunters.

The results show evidence that older people still consider the Park as their own property and believe that hunting is not an illegal activity rather, it represents their job and is part of their culture, as confirmed by participants in the FGD. This was also confirmed by one of the RDB staff, who reported that the most critical challenges they face are bamboo cutting, the collection of grass for livestock, mining activities, fire or forest burning on the Burundi side, and the collection of wood for cooking. These activities are carried out by locals who mainly collect bamboo and produce handicrafts or use the resources collected to build their houses.

Respondents pointed out issues related to the provision of incentives where the oldest participants mentioned that for many years, they had been using the forest for their livelihoods, whilst it is now prohibited. As such, they desired extra support beyond the common benefits gained through TRS, such

as the constructions of school buildings and clinics.

Residents also complained about the lengthy process for wildlife damage compensation. Residents stated that the forest is their neighbour, and as such, it should be of great benefit to them. This is often the case for individuals that were either unemployed, poor, or older who had no other abilities to receive benefits introduced by the Park, such as through businesses and service delivery.

Challenges at the Nyungwe National Park site were shared in Gishwati-Mukura, where most respondents illustrated that fodder cutting, mining, firewood collection, and grazing were major threats to the latter park. This was emphasised by a community leader who stated that people are involved mostly in mining, fodder cutting, firewood collection, and tree cutting. The main reasons that force individuals to illegally engage in activities within Gishwati-Mukura park was the collection of resources like fodder, minerals, and firewood, as they do not have alternatives to these resources that are critical for their livelihood, and they lack of other income-generating activities to substitute for the resources collected from the Park.

According to the field observations and information from respondents, the most important conservation challenges to wildlife around the study area were habitat disturbance through agricultural expansion and settlement, and human-wildlife conflicts due to crop raider and livestock attack problems. Conflicts between wild animals and the community as well as park staff always occur once wild animals raid crops planed by the community and the community seeks revenge by killing wild animals. This constitutes a big challenge in the conservation of the Park. RDB staff emphasised this issue, stating that there were consistent conflicts between the RDB and the community. One of the rangers was killed by the local community in Nyamasheke District, and wild animals were also killed. RDB still faces challenges related to a community mindset that feels that meat from wild animals is sweeter than domestic animal meat and still considers resources from wild animals a traditional remedy. RDB also faces transboundary threats related to security in some parts of the park, posed by people from Burundi.

Results from field observations (Figures 3, 4, 5) show that many anthropogenic threats including bamboo cutting, mining activities, and fodder cutting, are the most crucial challenges directly impacting Mukura and Nyungwe forests, which may in turn compromise wildlife conservation in the area.



Figure 3. (left) Bamboo used to build roofs on some houses; (right) bamboo parts are left inside the bamboo forest zone.



Figure 4. (left) Active mining site extending, a long distance from inside Gishwati-Mukura National Park; (right) diversion of natural water courses and alteration of other forest resources for mining.



Figure 5. (left) Fodder cutting inside Gishwati-Mukura National Park; (right) severity and number of landslides at the highly sloping edges of Mukura Forest during heavy rainfall.

Key respondents were arguing that the community surrounding protected areas were causing problems in Nyungwe and Mukura forests through overgrazing, firewood collection, agriculture expansion, fire, and killing wild animals. All these constitute challenges for the conservation of both forests, as these areas still serve the community as a grazing and agricultural space. During the interview with one respondent named B, they stated ‘if Park managers increased the support to our initiatives, I think many of those involved in illegal activities could stop it and get involved in conservation activities’.

4.3. Strategies and solutions to overcome conservation challenges

In 2005, the government of Rwanda through the RDB initiated a TRS program, where a percentage of the revenue from tourism was returned to the community to support them through cooperatives starting from those involved in illegal activities; this percentage was initially 5%, and has now increased to 10% . In addition, some members of the local community reported that the money allocated to support community initiatives is insufficient, especially for unemployed youth, as this group are more involved with illegal activities as alternatives to earn money. To this end, there is a need to increase opportunities for local communities.

Respondents at Mukura forest also pointed to the issue of creating more opportunities that could serve as alternatives to illegal activities. This was highlighted in an FGD where participants reported that a potential alternative to illegal activities could be to provide progressive opportunities from different jobs to people involved in illegal activities as they currently face difficulty finding alternatives. They said that they should be paid regularly to avoid temptation when short of income. For them, this is one strategy that may be effective and facilitate a long-term goal to prevent illegal activities.

In terms of the restoration of degraded areas, local leaders emphasized the promotion of projects at this site, which would regularly provide job opportunities to individuals that were previously conducting illegal activities. For them, it is fair to implement measures aimed to protect the park due of its importance. They argued that if protection measures were not implemented, even those resources they were being collected illegally may become completely depleted. The prioritisation of strategies towards sustainable solutions has provided job opportunities to locals around Mukura as an alternative occupation for those previously involved in illegal activities. Many respondents identified other strategies such as the plantation of other trees and promotion of improved stoves that could serve as sources of energy to replace firewood use.

5. Discussion

The loss of biodiversity and related changes in the environment have become rapid in the past 50 years, than ever before in human history. Many animal and plant populations have declined either in abundance, geographical distribution, or both; however, current losses are the outcome of human actions. Human activities have increased the extinction rate by at least 100 times compared to the natural rate (Dirzo and Raven 2003, MEA 2005, Jackson and Sax 2010).

Protected areas in Rwanda are threatened by an ever-increasing population, habitat loss, and degradation (Andrew and Masozera 2010). Due to the growing human population, there is increasing encroachment into the wildlife area and more lands adjacent to protected areas are used for farmland, creating stress for wildlife. Land use changes through agriculture, and rural and urban development activities degraded and altered wild areas, resulting in the extinction of wildlife species and natural areas, which serve as important habitat. For instance, a large area of land has been cleared within Nyungwe National Park to cultivate marijuana and set snares (RDB 2015).

This study assessed the opportunities and threats experienced by two National Parks that directly impact conservation activities. Lack of income-generating activities and alternative resources were identified as the main causes of illegal activities, especially at Mukura Forest. At Nyungwe, although the community recognises the intervention of RDB in the creation of other resources and job opportunities through TRS, there is a need to strengthen existing initiatives and increase income-generating activities in the area.

According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), the current major issue facing wildlife areas is the increase in human population around protected areas. This is the case for Nyungwe and Mukura national parks where deforestation, animal hunting, and land degradation are major threats for many wild animals. The human population around most protected areas over the years has been changing in terms of size, density and livelihood strategies (MEA 2005). These changes have influenced many attitudes and activities of the local communities surrounding protected areas that have provided the

results of this research. Additionally, anthropogenic activities have degraded the attractiveness of the wildlife and natural resources in the two natural forests.

In Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks, as well as many areas abundant in wildlife, conservation initiatives are challenged by logging, mining, grazing, grass-cutting, and firewood collection (Kakuru *et al.* 2014) occurring at the forest edges and within the forest itself. This was similar the findings of this study for the Mukura sector around the Mukura forest, where frequent illegal activities included fodder cutting, firewood collection, and mining activities. The poor local communities still consider the forest as their own property, and do not consider firewood collection as a problem as they rely on it as a source of energy. However, it is difficult for a poor community to gain and maintain control over resources that produce high economic profits (Angelsen and Wunder 2003). Gleason *et al.* (2011) indicates that the conservation of natural habitat may create conflicts and negative relationships between conservation and human well-being, including loss of access rights and human-wildlife conflicts (Amare 2015). The most critical situation and a major concern for most people living near protected areas are conflicts that arise when wild animals raid crops and the local communities kill these animals.

People are also a source of conflict around protected areas; there have been incidences of the murder of park rangers, and the discrimination of individuals who work towards protecting areas. According to field observations and information provided by respondents, the conservation challenges are different in the two forests; Nyungwe National Park has many more rangers and many conservation challenges compared to the Gishwati-Mukura National Park. Other researchers have reported that the threats and resulting challenges around protected areas are the expansion of agriculture and settlement, competition with livestock and resources, and human and wildlife conflicts due to crop raiding and livestock concerns.

Human activities disturb the integration of natural forests, including Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks. Threats identified by Kideghesho *et al.* (2013) and Kakuru *et al.* (2014), include logging, mining, grazing, grass cutting, and firewood collection, also emerged in this study. In Nyungwe National Park, the threat of snares was significant. It has been demonstrated that poverty at the household level causes people to engage in unsustainable and ecologically destructive activities to improve their well-being. These activities threaten biodiversity by killing wild animals and other species (Salafsky *et al.* 2002, Kideghesho *et al.* 2005, Wittemyer *et al.* 2008); these findings were echoed in this study, where poverty is considered an indirect threat that hinders better conservation outcomes.

5.1. Critical thoughts from researchers

By comparing Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks, conservation activities have brought significant changes to the livelihood of the community living around Nyungwe parks than the

community of Gishwati-Mukura National Park. Although conservation efforts in different parks has been substantial, illegal activities are still prevalent in both parks relating to common illegal activities such as wood collection, grazing, and wildlife killing for bushmeat. Mining activities are more prevalent in Gishwati-Mukura than in Nyungwe National Park.

Tourism-related activities are not accessible to all parts of Nyungwe National Park; this may lead to a lack of access to tourism opportunities, including employment and other incentives to individuals living near the Park and force them into disregarding conservation efforts.

At the Gishwati-Mukura National Park, residents mentioned that conservation awareness and campaigns should be strengthened. Tourism development initiatives should be established for a better understanding of the critical role of transitioning from natural forest to national park.

For illegal activities, some respondents mentioned that some individuals are involved in illegal activities as it is their habit, whilst others pointed out that these activities persist due to poverty and the failure of benefits from ecotourism to reach the entire community. This is also highlighted by Turiansky (2010), who recognised that community conservation mostly helps the wealthiest community members, increasing economic when revenue sharing remains at the community level instead of focusing on differing economic capacities of the community.

5.2. Conclusion and recommendations

This study assessed the public perceptions on conservation opportunities and challenges for Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks.

The study findings revealed the role of ecotourism in creating opportunities for local communities around national parks, such as income-generating activities, employment, development of infrastructure, and the increase of environmental awareness.

The major challenges that constitute direct threats to biodiversity conservation in Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura National Parks were overgrazing, human settlement, agricultural expansion, illegal logging, forest shrinkage, human-wildlife conflicts, habitat fragmentation, insufficient water, migration of wild animals, and cut-carry systems of grass, with some incidences of human-induced fire, mining activities, and killing and hunting of wildlife. These direct threats were emphasised by the significant poverty that is experienced by the local community living adjacent to Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura national parks.

The following recommendations and suggestions were made based on findings for the sustainable use of resources by minimising threats and human-wildlife conflicts. This research recommends that policy-makers strengthen the TRS policy to better achieve conservation goals and meet the expectations of local communities through different opportunities. Tourism activities should be initiated around Gishwati-Mukura National Park, and there should be concurrent increases in infrastructure, awareness,

and community participation in this Park. There should also be efforts to strengthen and improve the existing compensation policy in both parks.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in Japan and the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences in Rwanda for the opportunity to produce this paper. We would like to thank Editage (www.editage.com) for English language editing.

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Bakola/Bagyelli households between precariousness and struggle for survival: Lessons learned from an indigenous community in search of well-being

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Abstract

Socio-economic household surveys among indigenous peoples in general and the Bakola/Bagyelli in Cameroon in particular are infrequent. The dearth of such works testifies to the low interest of specialist of social science, especially anthropology, in this subject. This article presents the current socioeconomic status of Pygmy households in the south-coastal region of Cameroon. The Bakola/Bagyelli are now more than ever concerned about their living conditions, which are rapidly deteriorating. They have implemented survival strategies to fight poverty and precariousness, which hamper their well-being. These include slash-and-burn agriculture, the rearing of small ruminants, petty trade and the introduction of the market economy. Although invisible at the national level, these strategies aim to direct Pygmy camps towards sustainable economic development. This article's objective is to highlight the dynamics of and local strategies implemented by these populations to improve their living conditions. Through a census, data on sociodemographic characteristics, productive activities, access to resources, and family budgets of households within the camps are collected from the Bipindi, Lolodorf, and Lokoundjé subdivision. The methodology used combines several methods and techniques. The results of this study show an improvement in the living conditions of Bakola/Bagyelli households.

Keywords: Bakola-Bagyelli, households, survival, well-being, Cameroon

1. Introduction

Socioeconomic surveys of households among indigenous peoples of Cameroon remain fragmentary; much of this work is still outstanding. Currently, extrapolations made from data collected during more general studies, such as the *Food anthropology of Cameroonian populations*¹ programme, *Avenir des Peuples des Forêts Tropicales*² project, and population and housing censuses³ or household surveys⁴, suffice. However, large-scale studies and large-scale programmes on Bakola/Bagyelli did not continue after the 2000s. Ngima's (1996) field work presents the most recent data on the living conditions of Bakola/Bagyelli households. The scarcity of such studies reflects the low interest of scholars of social sciences, particularly anthropology, in this region.

Ngima's (1996) study on consumption and family budgets among the Bakola/Bagyelli primarily aimed to answer three questions: How do the Bakola/Bagyelli live? What are they consuming? What use do they make of the resources they acquire by hunting, gathering, agriculture, and craft-making. Ngima reveal several characteristics of the Bakola/Bagyelli population—in particular, the social organisation and employment situation, evolution of their habitat, and their economic system.

The Bakola/Bagyelli practised semi-nomadism, and their production activities as well as their economic system were based on hunting, gathering, fishing, agriculture, and crafts. Although precarious and based on the marketing of products acquired from the forest, such as *Strophantus gratus* (*eneh/neah/iné*)⁵, the results of Ngima's (1996) survey already revealed the germs of a market economy. At the time, the Bakola/Bagyelli had begun the process of sedentarisation, opting between two types of camp for housing: a permanent camp to which they always returned even after a year of absence and the provisional hunting camp, which was more basic, and used only during hunting excursions. Ngima's (1996) study observed no systematic individual, family, or collective household budget. The only true forecast of an individual, of a household, was the departure for hunting or the search for starchy foods in the field or forest, or near their Bantu neighbourhoods. This study, although qualitative and descriptive, had nevertheless made it possible to highlight the (i) rudimentary nature of the Bakola/Bagyelli economic system, and (ii) level of precariousness of households within the camps. However, Ngima did not address household composition, housing characteristics, household goods and equipment, and access to capital.

The current research documents the living conditions of the Bakola/Bagyelli in light of the

¹ *Food Anthropology of Cameroonian Populations* (1983–1993) studied food in the normative framework of survival in society, itself integrated in a natural, or less anthropised, environment, using a sample of rural Cameroonian populations.

² *Future of Tropical Forest Peoples* (1995–2000) explored the problems faced by tropical forest peoples in order to propose concrete recommendations. The project involved a multidisciplinary team of 30 researchers from Europe and Central Africa, the Caribbean, and the Southwest Pacific.

³ Cameroon has so far conducted three general population censuses in 1976, 1986, and 2005.

⁴ Cameroon has so far conducted four household surveys in 1996, 2001, 2007, and 2015.

⁵ There are many common names of *Strophantus gratus*, unique to different populations and regions. It is called *eneh* in Ngoumba, *neah* in Bakola/Bagyelli, and *iné* in Ewondo.

transformations and dynamics underway within the camps. The remaining article is organised as follows: First, we discuss the methodological basis of our investigation; then, we lead a conceptual debate around the terminology 'Pygmies', and briefly describe the Bakola/Bagyelli. After reporting the main results, we further discuss the Bakola/Bagyelli *worldview*⁶ and its relationship to the search for well-being among them.

2. Research area and methods

This study was based on a plurality of methods, techniques, and sources of additional information. In this section, we describe the different stages of our methodological approach. The aim is to briefly present the following points: generalities concerning the research area, methods, data processing and analysis, and interpretation of results.

2.1. Research area

The district of Bipindi covers an estimated area of approximately 750 km². To its north is the Eseka district, and then the Akom II and Efoulan to the south, the Lolodorf district to the east, and the Lokoundjé district to the west. Bipindi, which is the eponymous capital, is located 78 km from Kribi. In 2005, the district of Bipindi had 14,118 persons, including 6,869 men and 7,249 women⁷. This population is divided between urban and rural areas. Bipindi has a low demographic density of 18.82 inhabitants per km². The natives (the Ngumba, Evuzok, Fang, Bulu, Bassa, and Bagyelli) and the non-natives (the Bamiléke and Bamenda) are the population groups that make up the subdivision of Bipindi.

The administrative district of Lolodorf covers an area of 1,200 km² and has 27 Bantu villages and 23 camps. The towns of Eseka and Makak lie to its north, Mvengue to the east, Bipindi to the west, and Efoulan to the south. The city of Lolodorf, which serves as the capital, is located 200 km from Yaoundé via Eseka. It is 76 km from Ebolowa and 110 km from Kribi. The district of Lolodorf has 14,326 persons, including 7,121 men and 7,205 women⁸. Lolodorf also has a low demographic density of 11.94 inhabitants per km². The sub-division comprises two main population groups: the Ngumba, Ewondo, Fang, Bulu, and Bakola, who are the natives, and then the non-natives. The Bakolas-Bagyelli live scattered in the sub-divisions of Bipindi, Lolodorf, and Lokoundjé, as shown in Figure 1.

⁶ The worldview is a particular perception of the world, more or less conscious and coherent, which tends to give the individual a particular appreciation of what surrounds him, this appreciation can change continuously. This is what Goldmann calls "the awareness of reality". He says on this subject: "at every moment; indeed, every social group has on the different questions that arise for him and the realities he encounters, a certain consciousness of fact, real" (Goldmann quoted by Mouchtouris 1994:13).

⁷ Demographic data from the 2005 general population.

⁸ Demographic data from the 2005 general population.

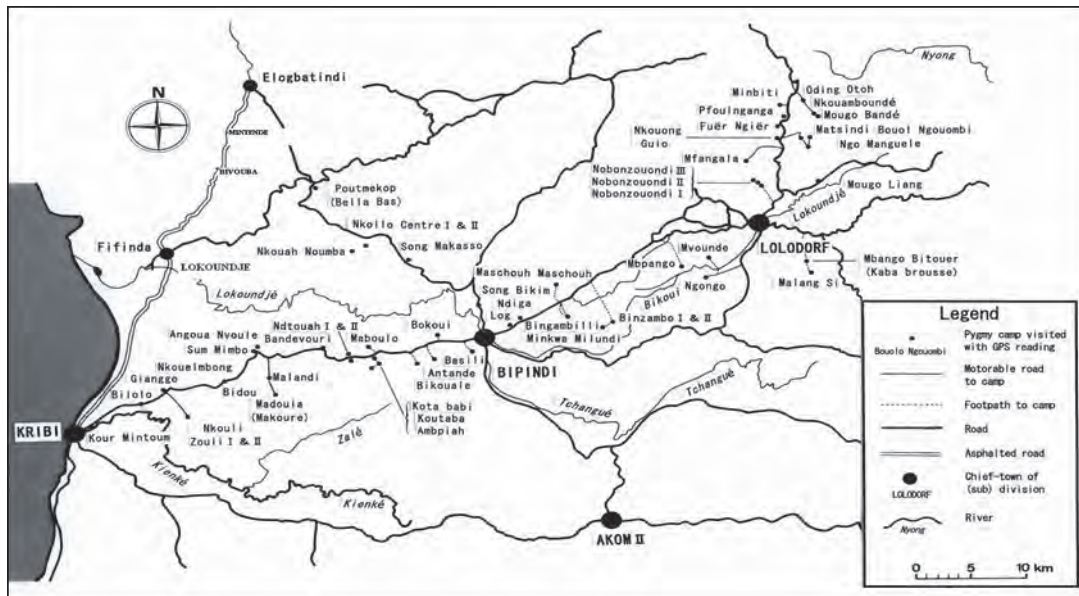


Figure 1. Area research: Districts of Bipindi, Lolodorf, and Lokoundjé showing the dispersed Bakola/Bagyelli encampments.

Source: Ngima (2001:210).

The administrative district of Lokoundjé is bordered to the north by Edea, to the south by Kribi, Campo, and Nyete; to the east by Bipindi; and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. Its capital Fifiinda is located 35 km from Kribi. The Lokoundjé district has approximately 36,650 persons. It has a young population, and 50% of its population are women. Fifiinda has a low demographic density of 2 inhabitants per km², against 13.4 inhabitants per km² for the Southern Region. As in most contexts, the population of the arrondissement comprises several human groups, including the indigenous populations (the Ewondo, Batanga, Mabea, Bakoko and Bassa, Fang, Ngumba, and Bagyelli) who formerly settled there and the non-natives.

2.2. Methods and data collection procedure

The methodology used herein combines several methods and techniques, such as conducting observations and collecting information from households in the various localities selected for the study. The observation units were permanent households⁹ within the Bakola/Bagyelli camps. ‘Household’ is defined as a socioeconomic unit of people who share the same meals and who regularly live together, most often under the same roof, by pooling their resources.

The study took place in 24 of the 96 camps in the study area. The very advanced sedentarisation of Bakola/Bagyelli has contributed to the establishment of villages, wrongly called camps. Indeed, their

⁹ A permanent household is a household whose members settle on the site is estimated to at least 6 months.

presence in these living spaces is almost permanent throughout the year.

The household survey covered 121 households, representing 68.4% of the estimated households in the three subdivisions. Heads of households and their spouses were the main informants. One hundred and thirty-six people were interviewed, including 79 heads of households and 57 spouses. Data collection within households took place iteratively over a period of three weeks in August 2016. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaire intended for the head of household made it possible to collect data on the sociodemographic characteristics and living conditions of the households. The questionnaire addressed to women helped to collect precise information on the sociodemographic characteristics of Bakola/Bagyelli women as well as the various economic production activities and their level of participation in the functioning of groups and associations in the rural world. The household questionnaire was administered to the head of household or his representative, while the female questionnaire was administered to the spouses. Literature research, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and photography made it possible to collect qualitative data.

2.3. Data processing and analysis

We processed the collected data using different techniques. The data contained in the questionnaires were double-entered on CS Pro 5.0. This phase was followed by a data cleaning on SPSS 17.0, and an export to Excel for converting the data into tabular form. Qualitative data from the focus group discussions and individual interviews were transcribed, and then codified in Atlas Ti version 6.3. A method of analysis that integrated both quantitative and qualitative components was used (Creswell 2003). This approach allowed for the concomitant analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive statistics (univariate and bivariate) and the explanatory statistical analysis (multivariate) were used for the quantitative data. For qualitative data, discourse analysis (Landowski 1989) and ethno-perspective (Mbonji 2005) were used.

2.4. Results interpretation

The interpretative framework was built around the theory of cultural dynamics (de Lauwe 1971; Solinis 1988; Mouchtouris 1994). This theory analyses the processes of emergence of new forms of social life, expression of social groups, culture-action, and elements of future innovative cultures in the transformative perspective of the implementation of a new self-development (Solinis 1988:7). Its operationalisation is based on bringing together concepts such as cultural dynamics, worldview, social aspirations, and social transformations. Within the framework of this work, the cultural dynamics are understood at two levels: first, it is an emerging creation of people who must invent their survival. On this subject, Solinis (1988:12) states that:

Cultural dynamics offers a particular analysis of the relationships between economic, technical and social transformations, and grassroots movements.

Second, cultural dynamic refers to a *bet* on human innovation—on the possibility of finding solutions to problems even when the dominant structures do not favour humans. According to Solinis (1988:12), the cultural dynamic is articulated through three transformation processes that exist in a fundamental tension against each other, that is, ‘the reproduction of social structures that favor dominant groups, opposed to creation on the part of the excluded’.

Further, ‘worldview’ is a particular perception of the world—more or less conscious and coherent—which tends to give the individual a particular appreciation of what surrounds him or her; this appreciation is able to change continually. This is what Mouchtouris (1994), in taking over Goldmann, names calls ‘awareness of reality... at every moment; in fact, any social group has a certain awareness of fact and real awareness of the various questions which arise and the realities it encounters’ (Mouchtouris 1994:13). The worldview is pure perception to which one can give a scheme of appreciation. Whether conscious or unconscious, the individual can accept the worldview, refuse it, or negotiate it. Goldmann calls this ability of the individual to choose the ‘awareness of the possible’. Further, he states that (Mouchtouris 1994:13):

It happens very often that the real consciousness of a more or less notable part of the members of a group aspires to change status or to integrate into another group, even more than individuals who constitute it are already trying in part to adopt the latter's values.

3. The Bakola/Bagyelli¹⁰

The Bakola/Bagyelli¹¹ occupy the westernmost position of southern Cameroon. In addition to a few settlement islets mentioned in the north of Equatorial Guinea, their presence is asserted mainly in Cameroonian territory, delimited in the west by the Atlantic coast, between the Ntem river in the South and the Nyong river in the north, and in the east, at latitude 10°60', which passes approximately over the town of Eseka. They are found in the great majority of the department of the Ocean in the districts of Lolodorf, Bipindi, Kribi I & II, Akom II, Niété, Lokoundjé, and Campo.

¹⁰ In the remainder of the text, words in italics refer to the Kola vernacular designations of certain key concepts related to habitat structure.

¹¹ The name ‘Bagyelli’ comes from Ngyeli in the singular and Ba-Gyeli in the plural. This is the name they give themselves in the South (Loung 1987) in the Kribi zone, while their brothers in the north Lolodorf area are called Ba-Kola (sg. Kola). The Mabi and the Ngumba call them Ngyelli/Bo-Gyelli, the Fang-Beti call them Nkwé/Be-Kwé, and the Mvae Nyela/Be-Yela. The /bajélé/, language of the Bagyelli, is of Bantu origin and belongs to the Maka-Njem group (A-81 according to the classification of Guthrie), that is, close to /Mbumbo/ and /Mabi/, the respective languages of Ngumba and Mabi.

The Bakola/Bagyelli have many singularities and specificities¹² that help to distinguish them from other palaeo-African groups. The data from the literature and those collected in the field reveal that many changes are perceptible at the sociocultural and societal levels. The migratory history of the Ngumba suggests that the Bakola/Bagyelli have a very old relationship with the Ngumba. Their close linguistic kinship with the Kwasio (Ngumba, Mabea) suggests that their history is more or less linked to their ancestral migrations (Dounias 1987, Joiris 1992, Ngima 1993; 2001).

According to Joiris (1992:127), ‘the language of the Bakola is very close to that of the villagers Ngumba and Mabea with whom the Pygmies arrived in the region during the last migrations’. Their cohabitation with their non-Pygmy neighbours has become considerably structured and diversified over the years, accompanied by cultural and religious nations or technical contributions. These exchanges profoundly changed the culture and way of life of the Bakola/Bagyelli, and, in some places, favoured the introduction of new religiosities such as Christianity and Islam (Bitouga 2017).

Sedentarisation and the existence of sentimental and matrimonial alliances with their Bantu neighbours mean that the morphology of the Bakola/Bagyelli is abandoned in favour of their current way of life in order to describe them. Indeed, by becoming sedentary, they have been influenced by the way of life of the ‘villagers’, which has had severe cultural repercussions, in particular on habitat construction, agricultural practices, and eating habits. Despite their ‘assimilation’ into a sedentary lifestyle, the Bakola/Bagyelli, like other indigenous groups, face discrimination and marginalisation. Their relations of cohabitation with the Bantu are, in a nagging way, punctuated with various conflicts and abuses (Bitouga 2011; 2014). Their cohabitation relations with their various neighbours (e.g. the Ngumba, Bassa, Bulu, Fang, Evuzok, and Bakoko) have continued to pose problems for researchers as well. This is perceptible in the terminology used to qualify the nature of these relationships: ‘servants’, ‘slaves’, ‘vassals’, ‘clients’, ‘parasites’, or ‘symbiots’ (Robillard and Bahuchet 2012:27). Regarding the cohabitation between the Bakola/Bagyelli and their non-Pygmy neighbours, Joiris (1992:131) notes that:

Pygmy and village communities are associated in a client relationship based on relations of voluntary dependence of the Pygmies on the villagers. The friendship between two heads of families is often at the origin of this interethnic relationship.

Similarly, Ngima (2001:1) states that:

The relationships between the Bakola and the various Bantu populations mentioned above

¹² It is now clear that the advanced sedentarisation of the Bakola/Bagyelli has contributed to the introduction of new forms of religiosity, including Christianity and Islam, in the camps. The presence of a chapel or a place of Christian worship within a Pygmy hamlet is no longer unprecedented. The presence of a mosque was recorded in the Angoua Mvoulè encampment in the village of Makouré II (Bipindi).

differ from one clan to another of the same ethnic group, and even from one individual to another. The frequency, quality, and quantity of gifts and counter-gifts exchanged, assistance and services provided, and even the forms of partnership itself, show a considerable variation.

Next, there are generally two types of housing within the camps: traditional housing (*mbasa*) and modern housing (*ndabo*). Although increasingly falling out of favour, *mbasa* are made from large leaves of Maranthaceae or Anthocleista. These are fixed to the vegetable framework of the habitat. A notch is made on the vein near the petiole, and the leaves are crocheted in a row. This arrangement gives the house the appearance of pangolin scales. The leaves of Maranthaceae or Anthocleista are replaced by raffia panels or palm branches. According to the Bakola/Bagyelli, the use of raffia panels is a good compromise: They are less ephemeral than the simple leaves of Maranthaceae or Anthocleista, and are available all year round. The totally vegetal structure of this type of habitat gives it a certain fragility. In the absence of nails, the structure of the building is maintained by liana ligatures, which, in the medium term, cannot oppose the collapse of the box. *Ndabo* are partly based on the Bantu construction model. The use of pisa (*nda si*) to cover the walls is widespread in camps. The vast majority of these dwellings are covered with a raffia panel roof (*ndula mbasa*). However, in some cases, the homes of some wealthy Pygmies are covered with aluminium sheets (*ndula bikwembe*).



Figure 2. Modern housing (*ndabo*) belonging to Bang Roger, Nkola of the Matsindi camp (Lolodorf).

Source: Photographed by author at Matsindi in 2009.

The gender distribution of roles in economic production is based on the valuation of categories—male or female—with the exception of activities subject to a symbolic prohibition (Dounias 1987, Joiris 1992). This division of labour based on the valuation of social categories is also present among the Kola and the Aka (Bahuchet 1991). This gender complementarity in the division of labour observed among

the Baka is also present among the Bakola in the Campo region (Ngima 2006). Ngima (2006:67) states that:

Women perform particularly important roles in certain cultural activities, such as dancing, funeral services, and organising a great hunt for ceremonial occasions. The absence of women could be a reason for cancelling such activities.

4. Results

4.1. Description of the study population

The study population consisted of Bakola/Bagyelli heads of households or their representatives and their spouses. Regarding the subpopulation of heads of households, 79 people were interviewed, with the following breakdown by district: 21 in Bipindi (26.6%), 42 in Lolodorf (53.1%), and 16 in Lokoundjé (20.2%). The gender composition of heads of households shows that men represent 92.4% (73) and women represent 7.6% (6) of the total sample. Further, 38% (30) were between 15 and 34 years of age, 38% (30) between 35 and 64 years, and 24% (19) were 65 years and over at the time of the survey. Finally, 56.4% of the respondents had primary education, while 25.6% were out of school. On the other hand, the subpopulation of spouses/wives comprised 59 individuals, whose distribution by district was as follows: 17 in Bipindi (27%), 29 in Lolodorf (52%), and 13 in Lokoundjé (21%).

4.2. Household characteristics

The average household size was 6.4 people; 92.4% (73 of 79) of households were led by men. Regarding the age of the head of household, more than three-quarters were between 15 and 64 years old (60). About 45.6% (36) of heads of households lived in marital cohabitation.

Regarding occupancy status and housing characteristics, notwithstanding their level of insecurity, 79.7% (63) of heads of households owned their own homes. Regarding the level of seniority in the occupation of houses, 50.6% (40) of heads of households declared having spent four years on average there. Those who had been there for five to nine years represented 20.3% (16) of the population, with the oldest (five years and over) representing 11% (9). These data reflect the advanced sedentarisation among the Bakola/Bagyelli.

Further, houses built with pisa/rammed earth (*nda si*) are the most common model (65.8%, 52) and 77.2% (61) of households used kerosene lamps as a light source. Almost all households used firewood for cooking (96.2%, 76). The possession of good and electronic equipment (television set, radio set, etc.) remains low. About 64 kitchens (81.7%) had agricultural tools.

It appears that households have access to drinking water from rivers (50.6%, 40), wells (16.5%, 13), unimproved water sources (13.9%, 11), boreholes (10.1%, 8), and developed sources (7.6%, 6). These

statistics are deeply worrying, given the correlation between the quality of drinking water and the state of health. If such few households have access to drinking water, their members are inevitably exposed to water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

4.3. Economic situation and accessibility to household capital

As Pierre (2003:190) notes in Lush households¹³, the Bakola/Bagyelli household economy is the manifestation of a ‘poverty economy’. Indeed, incomes from various economic production activities within households are lower. Most of the Bakola/Bagyelli households are struggling for their survival. This situation is accentuated by numerous constraints—in particular the weak integration of their agricultural and rural economy into the national economy, embryonic nature of the transformation of their agricultural production, fragmentation and lack of organisation of the rural economic system, inaccessibility to technical and commercial information, logistical weakness in access to agricultural inputs, lack of support for local development initiatives, and inaccessibility of Pygmy households to financial services (credit, micro-funding, etc.) that meet their needs. It is increasingly difficult for rural households to ensure their livelihood through agricultural activities alone; therefore, they have to seek other sources of income.

The strategy a household can adopt to diversify its livelihoods depends on access to several types of capital, which, in turn, makes it possible to assess the level of household development. In the context of this study, we retained three types of capital: natural, financial, and human. According to International Funds for Agriculture Development, household access to these three forms of capital can increase the (i) household access to the means of production, (ii) household access to basic services and infrastructure, and (iii) influence of households in community affairs.

To ensure their survival, the Bakola/Bagyelli households must divide their work between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. According to quantitative data, households have a multitude of sources of income. Hunting (39%, 31), agriculture (24.7%, 19), collecting (24.7%, 19), pharmacology (18.2%, 15), and petty trade (3.9%, 3) constitute the major sources of household income. In a minimal portion, we identify crafts as well. To ensure their food self-sufficiency, 88.7% (70) of households owned a family farm. A small proportion of households declared that they market products from their farms (12.9%, 11).

Regarding access to household capital, 87.1% (69) of households declared that they owned the land on which they carry out their agricultural activities. Further, 81% (64) of households did not have access to credit. Regarding human capital, 55.7% (44) of heads of households have a primary education level. Finally, 47.4% (37) of households had recourse to public health facilities, and 32.1% (25) went to private

¹³ The Lushois designate the populations of Lubumbashi, one of the provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

denominational health centres.

5. Vision of the world and relation to well-being among the Bakola/Bagyelli

Notwithstanding the weight of the norms and values inherited from the past, the Bakola/Bagyelli today are part of a transformative and emancipative dynamic. Through their sedentarisation, we note social transformations within the camps which reflect the cultural dynamic (Mouchtouris 1994:119) in this socio-culture. There are mutations in many areas of their lifestyle and habits. These are the transformations that are observed, particularly in terms of their occupancy status and the characteristics of their homes. The same is true of their access to various energy sources, economic situation, and access to financial capital. All these social transformations contrast the observations made by Ngima (1996). Access to *ndabo* is one of the current social aspirations of many Bakola-Bagyelli in the localities of Bipindi, Lolodorf, and Lokoundjé. The possession of such a type of housing gives its owner a privileged position among his or her own, even on the scale of the region. Owning such a property is perceived within the camp as a sign of remarkable material success. Its owner is presented as an individual who has acquired complete economic independence.

The objectification of the current transformations within the Bakola/Bagyelli households requires the analysis of their 'worldview' in relation to their perception of well-being and, therefore, of development. By asking the Bakola/Bagyelli about their perception of well-being, it emerges that there is a perceptible difference between those who live in a traditional hut and those who occupy a modern habitat. The reasons given are mostly that *mbasa* are uncomfortable and poorly adapted to their new sedentary lifestyle. The ephemeral character of these dwellings as well as the promiscuity that prevails there because of its narrowness have regularly appeared as the reasons that justify the desire and the increasingly growing will of the Bakola/Bagyelli to aspire to own a *ndabo*. This modern habitat is more spacious, presentable, and rewarding. With the sedentarisation of the Bakola/Bagyelli, we note the emergence of new social aspirations, which are themselves carriers of social transformations. This situation results in a re-interpretation of the environment and a new apprehension of space as well as a redefinition of oneself.

Long considered as a socio-culture where 'private property is non-existent', it now appears that the Bakola/Bagyelli, by becoming sedentary, have seen their detachment disappear to materiality. Indeed, we must retrace the history of colonial expansion to better understand why the Pygmies had often posed a problem for the colonisers in their conquest of domination and subjugation of the forest peoples. The latter had had trouble leaving with the Pygmies who always seemed to have nothing to lose. Today, however, we are seeing significant restructuring and reconfiguration in the Bakola/Bagyelli worldview. Their openness to the market economy and their integration into the rural and agricultural economy bear witness to their need to meet the current demands of modernity. All these actions are indicative of their

adaptability to a new way of life, which allows us to understand the different transformations observed within households.

When the Bakola/Bagyelli women are asked about the destination they give to the income they obtain from the sale of products from their various economic activities, they reply: ‘We buy products such as soap, kerosene, clothes, kitchen utensils, school supplies for our children’ (FGD, Bakola/Bagyelli women from Bikassa-Biba camp, Bidjouka). All these ‘response objects’¹⁴, which are products of Western culture, are considered by these women to be essential for their well-being—an attitude that reflects that the Bakola/Bagyelli aspire to ‘better-being’ and ‘better living’. More than in the past, Pygmies are concerned about their living conditions, which are deteriorating daily. Consequently, they are implementing survival strategies within the camps to fight poverty and precariousness, which are their daily lots.

Finally, all societies, even those most refractory to changes, whether these changes are rapid or slow, manifest a certain dynamic. Everything does not change as a whole; however, we do not observe the ‘emergence of elements of new forms of social life and innovative cultures’ (De Lauwe 1975:328) in the daily life of these societies. This is the case of Bakola/Bagyelli households, who are fighting for the improvement of their living conditions (Bitouga 2017). Consequently, a set of dynamics is mobilised with a specific objective—that of a transforming society (Bitouga 2011). This objective seems to be achieved when we analyse all the strategies developed within the camps (Fouda 1999, Nke Ndihi 2005, Soengas 2010). We do not observe a marked desire among the Bakola/Bagyelli to find solutions to their problems of poverty and precariousness despite an unfavourable context and ‘dominant structures’ (Solinis 1991) which do not always support their aspirations social.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to report on the economic situation of Bakola/Bagyelli households in the districts of Bipindi, Lolodorf, and Lokoundjé. To provide a fairly recent and synthetic picture of household living conditions, a methodology based on a triangulation of methods and techniques was constructed. The results of this study show that the Bakola/Bagyelli households are undergoing changes, particularly in terms of living conditions—whether in terms of housing characteristics or access to different sources of energy and capital. The Bakola/Bagyelli are increasingly concerned about the improvement of their living conditions, which are deteriorating daily. This has forced them to implement survival strategies to fight poverty and precariousness. Although the actions that are undertaken at the local level are insufficient, the Bakola/Bagyelli aspire to a well-being that is contrary to what some scholars seem to regularly support. Note that the vast majority of palaeo-Africans are presented as ‘a

¹⁴ This concept borrowed from Njoh (2014:30) refers to consumer goods whose purpose is to meet human needs.

people-relic who refuses and rejects modern civilization’ (Alawadi and Meyanga 2010:12)—considerations that are based on a certain exoticism and lack of knowledge of the surrounding reality. Indeed, the aspiration for better living conditions cannot be the prerogative of a few specific societies.

The Bakola/Bagyelli communities, as a full community of Cameroon, are part of the poorest segment of the population. Therefore, these forest communities cannot be excluded from the process of social and economic transformation. For Njoh (2014:29), the socioeconomic development of Pygmies appears to be a categorical imperative. In this regard he argues that we ‘must get the Pygmies out of their usual living conditions, in the same way as we must get Africa out of underdevelopment’. Indigenous peoples, like any other people, aspire to well-being, a healthy life, and a fulfilling existence. Despite the differences that may remain among cultures and even societies, there is only one development. This position is defended by Nga (1998:43) who maintains that development ‘is an objective fact, observable and demonstrable, and as a universal and absolute datum’. In conclusion, we can state that the current living conditions of households are better than three decades ago¹⁵, a situation that has resulted from a combination of several factors, both exogenous and endogenous.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the populations of the various villages and camps from where the data were collected. This work is in memory of Professor Godefroy Ngima Mawoung, who followed us and supervised to the best of his ability throughout the completion of this doctoral thesis, which helped build this reflection. May he find the testimony of our deep gratitude for the work accomplished.

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¹⁵ We take as reference the surveys by Ngima between 1987 and 1993 among Bakola/Bagyelli households in the districts of Campo, Bipindi, and Lolodorf as part of the *Food anthropology of the Cameroonian populations* project.

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Challenges on the valorisation of local knowledge: Preliminary assessments in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Area (DRC)

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Abstract

The management of protected areas (PAs) and their surrounding landscapes is generally associated with the response of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to biodiversity conservation and climate change. The general aim is to reduce deforestation and preserve biodiversity. This preliminary study aims to identify the local knowledge and potential challenges associated with their valorisation in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Area (RTHA), a PA in the northern DRC.

The methodological approach included the combination of qualitative and quantitative elements through a triangulation approach, and results show that the collective memory of local communities retains traditional knowledge (practices, beliefs, and perceptions) that promote biodiversity preservation. Unfortunately, changes in the socio-economic situation of the country and the local context threaten this knowledge. Additionally, l'Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) has not tried to build on traditional knowledge memory to promote local biodiversity conservation. To avoid deforestation and a biodiversity crisis, the participatory approach can be useful for mainstreaming traditional/local knowledge in the management plan of protected areas of the DRC, such as RTHA.

Keywords: local participation, local knowledges, biodiversity, protected area, Rubi-Tele Hunting Area, Bas Uele, Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has an exceptional natural heritage that represents more than 60% of the Congo Basin rainforest (Desclée *et al.* 2014) and contains an extensive network of protected areas (PAs) that include eight national parks and fifty-seven reserves and hunting areas (UICN-PACO 2010). According to the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), these PAs are globally representative of regional ecosystems and are characterised by a high degree of endemism (ICCN 2012).

However, the PAs are dramatically threatened by multiple pressures, including poaching, illegal logging, deforestation, and land-use conversion, which is characterised by agricultural exploitation, pastureland transformation, artisanal mining, and settlement in PAs (UICN-PACO 2010).

The Rubi-Tele Hunting Area (RTHA) is no exception to the general conditions of protected areas in the DRC.

Additionally, the RTHA is among the PAs omitted from the agendas of the government and its technical and financial partners (Majambu *et al.* 2020) and is confronted with the inexistence of a clear legal status (Omasombo Tshonda 2014), the absence of collaboration between RTHA managers and local communities, and the perception of illegitimacy by local communities (Mokolonayenga 2016).

These are the most significant difficulties that limit the preservation of biodiversity in this protected area.

Created in 1930, the RTHA was inhabited by several local communities that had long interacted with the forest resources and they had developed local knowledge that is demonstrated through practices, beliefs, and perceptions favourable to preserving the natural resources. Stevenson (2005) notes that traditional environmental knowledge is the collection of practices and beliefs that are transmitted through oral tradition and direct observation and includes a classification system, a set of empirical observations of the local environment, and a system of self-management governing the use of natural resources.

However, despite guaranteeing social sustainability, the valuable knowledge, developed by local communities, is in danger of disappearing (Maindo *et al.* 2017). The collective memory of local communities in the RTHA deserves to be highlighted before it disappears completely. Thus, this preliminary study aims to identify the local knowledge and potential challenges associated with their valorisation in the RTHA, northern DRC.

2. Methodological framework

2.1. Presentation of the Rubi-Tele hunting Area

The Rubi-Tele hunting Area (RTHA) is located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in Bas Uélé Province, south of Buta, the provincial capital. The RTHA is one of the first protected areas in the DRC and was created as a hunting reserve by the Ordinance N°51/ agri of 12 December 1930 and modified by the ordinance N° 64/Agri of 28 November 1932 (Mokolonayenga 2016). The RTHA covers

an area of 6,191 km² (UNEP-WCMC 2020).

Management of hunting areas was formerly the responsibility of the Department of the sustainable natural resources management of the ministry of the conservation and sustainable development. However, management was transferred to the ICCN by Ministerial Order N° 36/DECNT/BCE/78 on 13 July 1978.

The RTHA is crossed by National Road Four (RN4) that connects Buta to KISANGANI and other eastern DRC cities. This study primarily focused on Sukisa, Ngbete, and Boboso, the three largest villages in the RTHA located along RN4 (Figure 1).

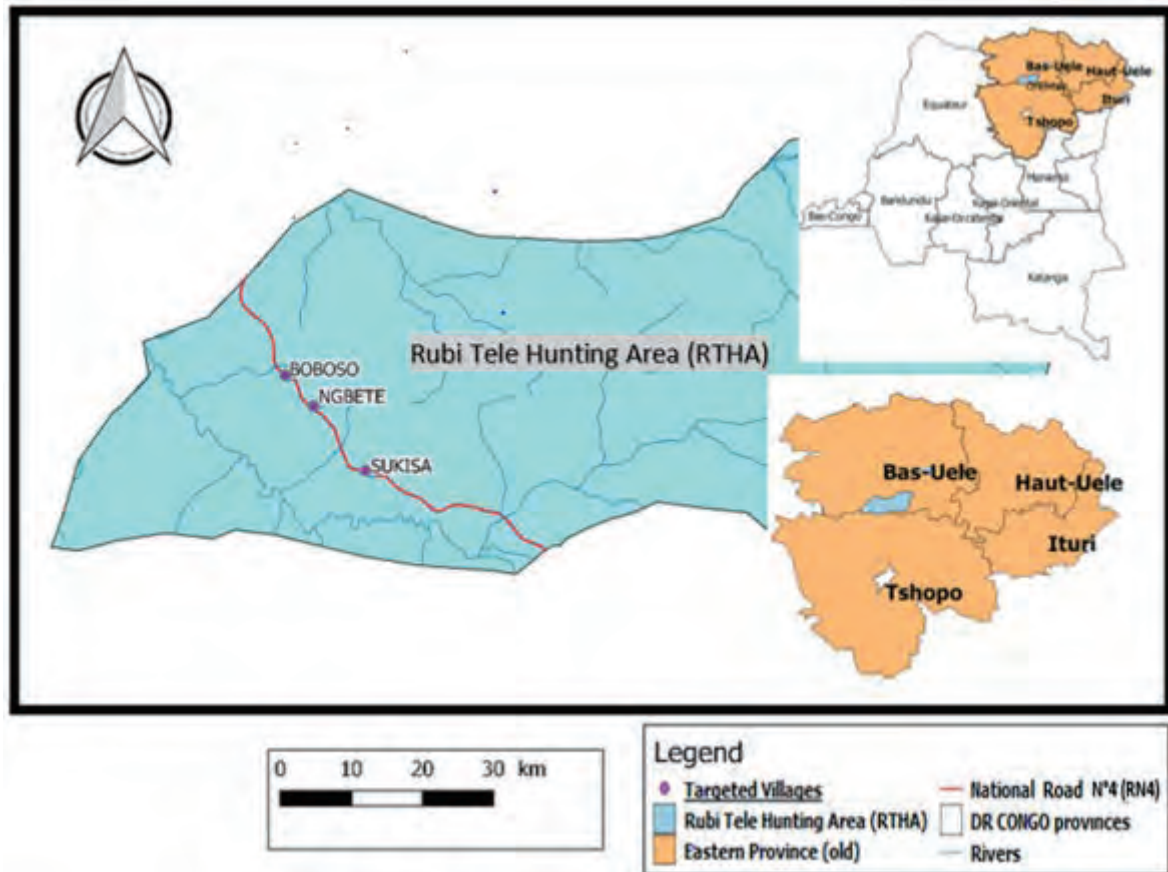


Figure 1. Map of the Rubi-Tele Hunting Area (RTHA) produced by the authors

2.2. Data collection and analysis

This study was based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative elements through a triangulation approach (Anadón 2019). To best comprehend local knowledge in the RTHA, we conducted household surveys and individual interviews with the village chiefs, household heads, and the RTHA manager. Data collection was completed from on 3–13 April 2018. Globally, this study covered a sample of 62 people, divided into 57 household heads, three village chiefs, the ICCN/RTHA manager, and the ICCN/RTHA research officer. We used questionnaires and an interview guide to collect the information.

Local communities gave the names of animals in the national language (Lingala). We relied on a

specialist (a doctor of zoology who was part of the team) to give us the binomial names of the species identified by the respondents, as recommended by Chevallier *et al.* (1988).

Data from the household surveys were written in Excel for the production of the graphs, and calculation of the central tendency measures was also facilitated by R studio version 3.3.2.

The qualitative data and consulted RTHA documents were subjected to content analysis. A GPS (Global Positioning System) was also used to take geographical coordinates and map the villages through QGIS software version 2.18.18.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Local knowledge favourable to wildlife conservation

Table 1 below shows that each family has a totemic animal, and most tribes living in the RTHA, such as the *Baboa*, *Bangelema*, *Bambole*, and *Bamugbwali*, have developed beliefs around some animal. Consequently, these animals have been prohibited for consumption, contributing to their preservation. Furthermore, the above-mentioned tribes have developed expressions and maxims that favour biodiversity preservation. For example, the *Bamugbwali* say: ‘Wasimo loli’, meaning ‘You mustn’t kill a leopard’. Likewise, the *Bambuza* use expressions, such as ‘Okeke amukunda oyilake’, meaning ‘When you go into the forest, don’t eat the turtle!’

We realise that most of these beliefs generally promote discrimination against women, particularly pregnant women. For example, the *Bangelema* mention ‘Akali kaye angile’, meaning ‘A woman should not eat the turtle’. The *Baboa* note also that ‘Enka kayagage nyame ya lemo nabalo’, signifying ‘Women cannot eat the meat reserved for men’.

The ancestors of the under-reviewed tribes have long demonstrated the desire to sustainably use forest resources. The ancestors of the *Baboa* tribe suggest: ‘Ya ékede obisa akwa, gbami gbaye goto’, meaning ‘Eat with moderation to keep the opportunity to enjoy for the children’. The *Bangelema* ancestors emphasise ‘Kamagna wagepala’, which recommends that ‘following generations do not destroy the forest’.

A chief of the Ngbete village added: ‘In the past, among the *Baboa* people, the hunting activity was organised by the *Angbadili* or the chief advisers, who regulated hunting activities. They controlled the duration of the closure period and the number of traps set by each hunter. Additionally, traps were made so that the young animals were spared as much as possible’.

Thus, the *Baboa* and *Bangelema* cultures have similar customs to those observed by Massaer Diallo and cited by Cisse *et al.* (2004) who recognises that, what is now called ‘environmental preservation’ and ‘sustainable natural resource management’ have equivalents in traditional cultures and age-old societies.

Table 1. List of animals with particular traditional values

Animals	Local language	Scientific Names	Cultural status	Traditional beliefs	Social group/ tribe
Leopard	Nkoyi (Lingala)	<i>Panthera pardus</i>	Not edible for women or children.	Considered a messenger (of good or bad news) to the person who meets it	Bamugbwali
Turtle	Koba (Lingala)	<i>Kynixis erosa</i>	Not edible for women	Embodies hypocrisy from its behaviour, which consists of withdrawing into its carapace when in contact with other animals.	Baboa
Genette	Bolende (Bambole)	<i>Genetta geneta</i>	Not edible for women	Ancestral tradition	Bangelema
Atherure	Ndjiko (Lingala)	<i>Atherurus africanus</i>	Not edible for women	The person (woman) who consumes this animal can adopt the same behaviour as the animal and run away to escape married life.	Bambole, Baboa, Mugbwali
Antelope	Mboloko (Lingala)	<i>Cephalophus moticola</i>	Not edible for women	The person (woman) who consumes this animal can adopt the same behaviour as the animal and run away to escape married life.	Bambole
Water chevrotain	Elebe	<i>Hyemoscous aquaticus</i>	Not edible for pregnant women	In case transgression, there is a risk of abortion or giving birth to a malformed children	Baboa
Yellow-backed duiker	Mulumbu ou mbiye	<i>Cephalophus silvicultor</i>	Not edible for pregnant women	In case transgression, there is a risk of abortion or bleeding after giving birth	Baboa
Oryctérope du Cap	Ngbonda	<i>Orycteropus afer</i>	Forbidden, especially for women	This animal (especially its nails) is used for fetish practices.	Baboa, Bangelema

Animals	Local language	Scientific Names	Cultural status	Traditional beliefs	Social group/ tribe
Hippopotamus	Ngubu (Lingala)	<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>	Prohibited to kill or eat	To the fisher people, this animal is a guardian of the waters and must be protected.	Bangelema
Aquatic civet	Libobi	<i>Civettictus civetta</i>	Prohibited to kill	Ancestral traditions	Baboa
Pangolin		<i>Manis</i>	Not edible for pregnant women	There is a risk of giving birth painfully, in case of transgression because of this animal's habit withdrawing into oneself.	Baboa and Bangelema

Source: Field data collected by the authors from interviews with household heads and village chiefs

3.2. A chimerical valorisation of local knowledge in an unfavourable local context

The local context in and around the RTHA must be analysed to present the challenges of the cultural and socio-economic situation that obstructs local knowledge valorisation in this protected area.

We realise that the local knowledge valorisation is blocked by the following factors: cultural characteristics of the local communities and internal migration, the demographic composition of households, modern religious domination, household survival strategies, the local and global socioeconomic situation and the institutional weakness of the ICCN in the RTHA.

3.2.1. Socio-cultural characteristics of local communities and internal migration

The tribes more represented in the three villages are the *Bangelema*, *Baboa*, *Bangbandji*, *Bambuza*, *Bamugbali*, *Bambole*, *Bamokere*, and *Bamangwetu*.

The *Baboa* tribe, renamed the *Ababua*, consider themselves the native people of the RTHA. Moreover, all RTHA areas are located in the *Baboa* chiefdom. These people are preferably farmers and, unlike the *Bangelema* who arrived from Banalia and Basoko territories, in the Tshopo province, are great hunters and fishermen (Hart 2007).

Tribes long ago migrated from their ancestor land to the RTHA in search of natural resources. Results show that people considered allochthones, account for 61.7 % of respondents. Among them, the *Bangelema* are more represented 47.3% of respondents. Other tribes include the *Bangbandji*, *Bambuza*, *Bamugbali*, *Bambole*, *Bamokere*, and *Bamangwetu*. Most note having left their ancestral land since the Simba rebellion that occurred from 1961–1964, in the DRC.

A notable member of the *Baboa* tribe, contacted in Boboso village, added that since the *Bangelema* and other tribes arrived in our area, all the animals have become edible. They hunt and consume all animals without distinction, unlike the *Baboa* tribes.

In the same sense, Feloche (2009) confirms that traditional practices, beliefs, and perceptions evolve through contact with others.

Moreover, the RTHA is crossed by national road number four (RN4), one of the factors explaining the intensification of hunting and mining activities, as increasing numbers of people practice these activities in the RTHA. Thus, internal migration into the RTHA creates a multicultural context that obliges local communities to import the new practices and new beliefs that alter their traditional management of the natural resources.

Additionally, Kyale and Maindo (2017) reinforce that the consolidation of traditional practices of nature conservation among the *Turumbu* and *Bamanga* tribes is not satisfactory because of the multiple mutations observed in the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve in Tshopo Province.

3.2.2. Demographic composition of households

Statistical measures of central tendency facilitate analysis of the demographic composition of

households. The mean number of people per household is 9.22, and the highest frequency is 11.

The head of a household in Ngbete mentioned: ‘When you have a large family, it is not easy to select which animal to kill for the meal and which one to let go. Moreover, nowadays, it is very difficult to catch it in the forest’.

Two great paradigms explain the link between demography and the environment. The first attributes all the evils of the Earth to population growth, and the second denies human expansion almost any role in environmental deterioration. For the former, the pessimists, disaster must be avoided with birth control and a rigorous family planning policy. To the optimist, population is a secondary and sometimes favourable factor that is less of a priority than poverty, inequality, inadequate technology, agricultural policies (priority to cash crops), land ownership, urban bias, wars, and political regimes (Tabutin and Thiltgès 1992).

In the RTHA context, demography is a factor that explains the unsustainability of local knowledge. However, other local and global elements can be added as ingredients in the analysis of local knowledge valorisation in the RTHA.

3.2.3 Traditional belief versus the expansion of Christianity and other religions

Figure 2 shows that Christians (Catholic and Protestant) represent 58% of the respondents; 2% are animists, which is the category of people admitting they practice a traditional religion.

The Catholic Apostolic Prefecture of Uele was created at Buta in May 1898, and Protestant communities in Bas Uele province were created during the Heart of Africa Mission in 1913 by Englishmen Charles Thomas Studd, and Alfred B. Buxton. Many Protestant revival churches in Bas Uélé come from other parts of the country but have local representations in the province. Kimbanguism and the Islam are also present and considered the former competitors of the Catholic and Protestant churches in the DRC (Omasombo Tshonda 2014).

The presence of these religions has destroyed most of the above-mentioned myths and the traditional practices. For example, one woman in Ngbete noted: ‘Our ancestors were so greedy and egotistical that they prohibited women from eating anything that was delicious. Nowadays, you must be pagan to respect all these myths and beliefs about animals’.

The traditional myths do not hold out against the political and religious ideology (Louis-Vincent 1976). In the same sense, the traditional practices and beliefs of the Niominka in Senegal were losing many supporters, because of Islamic influence (Cisse *et al.* 2004).

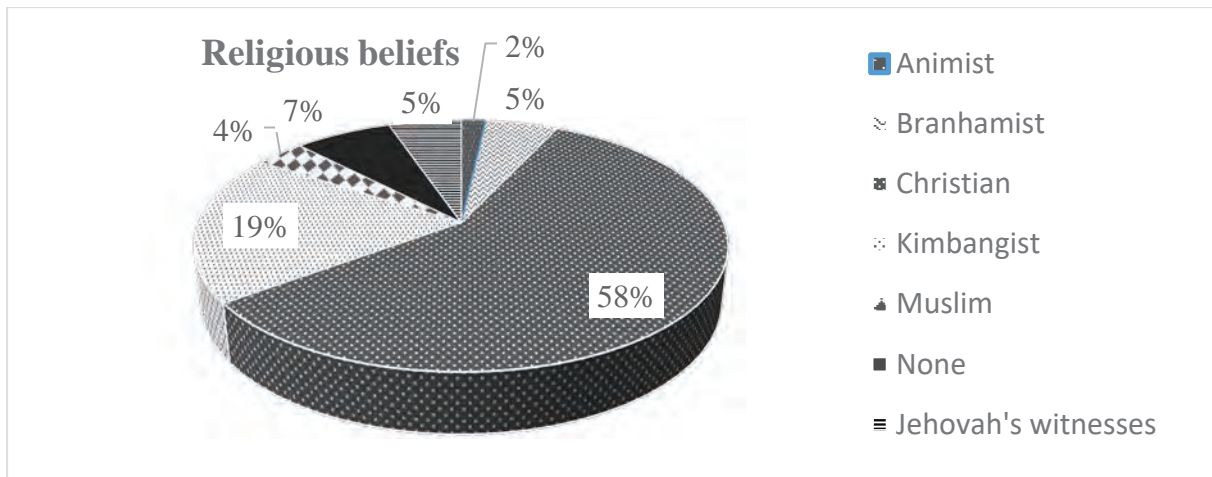


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents according to religious belief, from field data collected by authors

3.2.4. Survival strategies and local socio-economic context of RTHA residents

Local RTHA communities survive by natural resource exploitation (Figure 3). Agriculture, hunting, and gathering are the primary survival strategies.

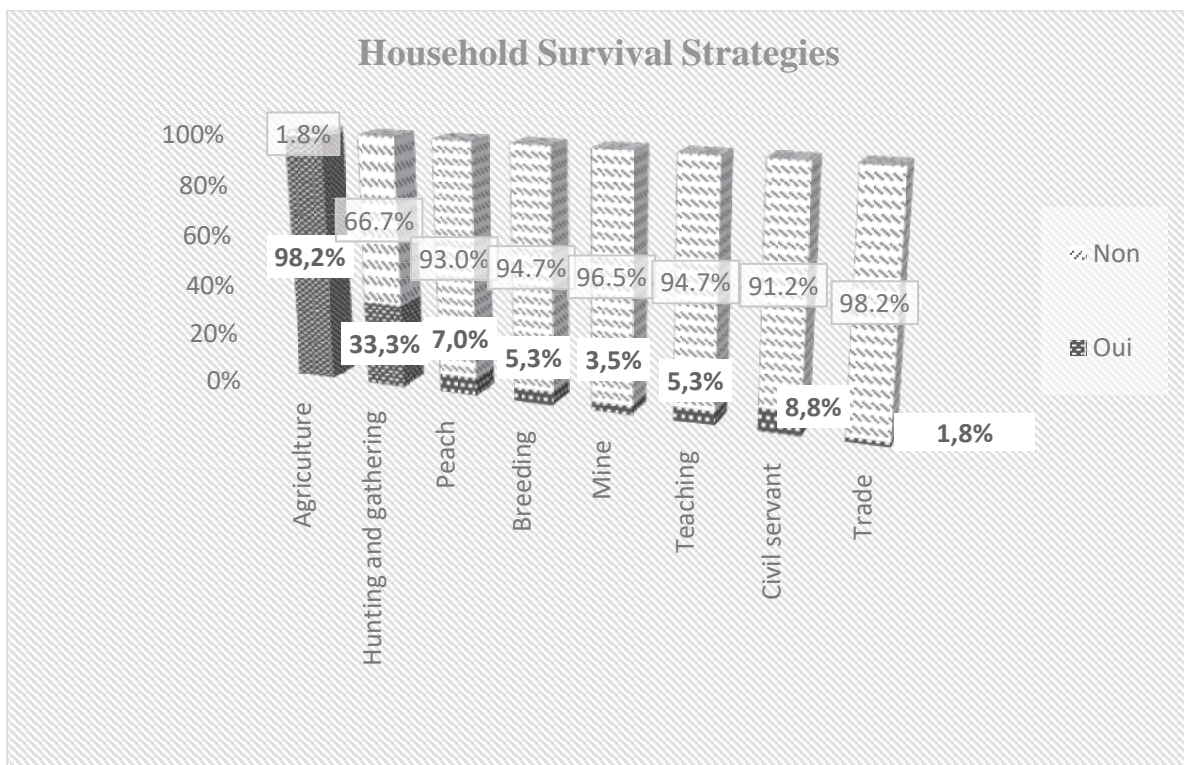


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents according to their survival strategies, from field data collected by authors

Gathering and collecting are seasonally regulated seasonally and constitute complementary activities to agriculture (ACF 2008). In the DRC, the informal agricultural sector employs 59.7% of the workforce. Nevertheless, income is the lowest in this sector, in contrast to hunting and mining activities (INS 2012).

However, agropastoral production of food crops, fishing products, and livestock in Bas-Uele does not satisfy demand. Household self-sufficiency is generally less important, because food is not permanently available. Thus, the population often lacks food during the dry season, and market stalls suffer (Omasombo Tshonda 2014).

A household chief, contacted in Ngbete village, has declared that mining quarries in the RTHA are a factor that explain internal migration and intensify hunting because of the increased demand for food.

RTHA is not an isolated entity in the country, and residents experience the same socio-economic situation as most of the rural DRC population, particularly those in Bas Uélé province. All the villages on RN4 between the Tele River and Buta lack a commercial exchange area (Hart 2007). Additionally, schools and health posts are inadequate for local communities.

The residents of Bas Uélé province, particularly the RTHA, live in very precarious conditions. That can be explained by the breakdown of the socio-economic fabric caused by a series of events that are often well-known but sometimes unclear. In chronological order, these events include the Simba group rebellion that began in 1961; economic circumstances and historical events, such as zairianisation and looting in the early the 1990s; repeated wars between the AFDL (Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo) and MLC (Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo) from 1998–2003; and incursions by foreign armed groups in recent years (since 2008). In addition to historical-socio-economic obstacles, climate, water resources, and the ecosystem are also key factors influencing the daily lives of the population (Omasombo Tshonda 2014).

3.2.5. Institutional disability of the ICCN at RTHA

The Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) is a public institution that manages protected areas in the DRC and is a technical and scientific institution for nature preservation.

ICCN has developed partnerships with other organizations in order to contribute to the financial and technical assistance of protected areas in the DRC (Pelissier *et al.* 2015).

Interviews of the RTHA managers revealed that this protected area faces several challenges, the most important of which are related to the opacity of the legal status, the absence of limits materialisation, the insufficient number of eco-guards and agents, the absence of a management plan, the lack of a comprehensive fauna and flora inventory, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, the available budget in deficit, and the reduced capacity to mobilise, benefit, and involve local communities. Majambu *et al.* (2020) have noted that the RTHA is ignored by the government and by the technical and financial partners that accompany other protected areas in the DRC. To illustrate this, the ICCN staff assigned 42 agents to the RTHA to secure an area of 6,227.74 km² of the 42 agents, only six are paid by the Congolese government.

Thus, the agents lack the necessary resources to organise significant patrols in the surrounding forest (Hart 2007).

Regarding the community based conservation, interviews with village chiefs and RTHA managers mention the lack of opportunities for meetings and collaboration between the ICCN and local communities according the RTHA management. In this sense, Mokolonayenga (2016) confirmed that there is no collaboration between ICCN agents and local communities in the RTHA and added that existing contact is limited to the SUKISA control post, where the ecoguards confiscate hunting products from some recalcitrant members of the local communities. The valorisation of local knowledge seems unrealistic for the RTHA in these conditions.

Peluso and Padoch (1996) suggest that local communities should participate in decision-making process and the implementation of development actions that directly affect the forests that constitute their essential source of livelihood.

4. Conclusion

Local RTHA communities have developed beliefs and restrictive practices regarding certain wild animals; however, most of these beliefs and practices are discriminatory against women. Our results show that local and global contexts do not currently favour biodiversity preservation and the valorisation of local knowledge in the RTHA.

The local context is characterised by internal migration in search of natural resources, the propensity of modern religious beliefs, the high natural resource demand of local households, socio-political and economic instability in Bas Uélé province, and institutional disability of the ICCN/RTHA. Regarding the global context, the RTHA is not an isolated entity but is influenced by political dynamics, the socio-economic situation, and the protected area management policy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thus, the model of sustainable management in the RTHA adapt to the global context and simultaneously fit in the local context through participatory approaches that encourage the consideration of local knowledge.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) for allowing this research through the EU-FORETS project. This study is part of the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS REDD+) supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees, and Agroforestry (CRP-FTA). We would also like to thank the Rubi-Tele manager for accepting our invitation to perform a survey within the Rubi-Tele hunting area and the anonymous peer reviewers of this work.

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Women's land rights realities in the 'Rubi-Tele' Hunting Domain, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Abstract

Women contribute to reducing hunger and improving household food security and livelihood. However, they do not benefit from secure land rights. This study thus aimed to determine the factors that prevent women from Rubi-Tele from enjoying their rights. A 2-week survey completed by four focus groups in four villages helped us gather information that was later analysed using a socio-legal approach. All women were involved in agriculture, but they were the only workers who could not control or manage the land. They often accessed land through the family channel (96.7%), while other pathways were less used by the origin (3.3%). Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made enormous progress, women were unaware of these advances: thus, 70% did not know their rights. This unawareness impeded their ability to initiate strategies to claim their rights. Some women have been able to identify their difficulties. They incriminated the custom standards that favoured their male counterparts (21.7%). Additionally, begging for husband permission (28%) and poverty (20%) were cited as barriers to women's property rights. Moreover, some women conservationists preferred the custom to formal laws, despite their advances (30%). No strategy has been initiated because women fear the society's response.

Keywords: women's rights to land, access to land, customary law, biodiversity conservation, Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain

1. Introduction

The majority of the Congolese of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the Congo D.R.) lives in the countryside, and about 80% rely only on agricultural activity to ensure food security (FAO *et al.* 2010). This activity, for which land constitutes an important asset, mainly involves women due to traditional and social practices in the villages. Another observation is that women are found in a larger proportion (53% of the population) than men (ILC *et al.* 2004, Ministère du Genre, de la Famille et de l'Enfant 2009); thus, women significantly contribute to their household livelihood, family food security, and children's health (USAID 2016). However, they are still discriminated against in terms of land and property access, control, and ownership (Buuma *et al.* 2013, UN Women 2019), although there are undergoing efforts (legal instruments), at both national and international scales, to reduce the gender gaps and bootstrap rural development (USAID 2016).

In its 16th article, the agriculture law of the Congo D.R., law n°11–022 of 24 December 2011, does not make any requirement regarding sex to acquire a piece of land. In addition, in the 49th article of the land law of the Congo D.R., law n°73–021 of 20 July 1973 as amended by the law n°08–008 of 18 July 1980 the legislator clearly stated that ownership of property can be acquired or transmitted by gifts between Congolese who are still alive; by will, by succession and by agreement. This Congolese legislator had thought about women's rights to land, which rights should enhance their capabilities and abilities to fight against vulnerabilities and expand their power in negotiations (Agarwal 1994).

Moreover, the Constitution of the Congo D.R. (amended in 2006 in 2011), as well as international and regional legal instruments, constraining and non-constraining ratified by the country, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW¹) of 1979, the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa, and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa in 2009, guarantee access to land and individual property to men and women, and prohibit gender discrimination. Furthermore, there exist various commitments throughout the world for securing women's rights (UN Women 2019), which benefits from the supremacy over national laws (legal monism).

Despite this panoply of legal instruments protecting women's rights to land, there still exists a gender gap in practice in Congolese villages, in general, and Rubi-Tele, in particular. Many reasons can be listed, and amongst them, the no respect to the legal monism by courts (C.CEDEF 2013), the legal pluralism promoted appears unfavourable to women's rights (Cotula 2007, Mitic *et al.* 2012) due to the contraction between different sources of norms, as well as the lack of implementation and vulgarisation of the existing laws, and so forth. Aligning with what precedes, this work pursued the objective of

¹ Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo, 1985. 'Ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)/ convention ou comité sur l'élimination de toutes formes de discriminations à l'égard des femmes (CEDEF)'. <<https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=fr/CEDAW/C/COD/6-7> / Accessed on 4 January 2021>.

determining the factors that prevent women from Rubi-Tele from enjoying their right to land in terms of *usus* and *fructus* compared to their male counterparts.

Rubi-Tele is a public property of the Congolese State, thus any of its portion of land cannot be sold or no one can enjoy the land right in terms of '*abusus*'. Furthermore, the Congo D.R. is reputed to be rich in terms of cultural diversity and hosts many ethnic groups with different practices. On this basis, we postulated that divers of discrimination against women differ from culture to culture in spite of the existence of general reasons.

2. Method

The study site was the hunting domain of Rubi-Tele (62,300 ha), which is located in the northern part of the Congo D.R. at the border of the provinces of Bas-Uéle and Tshopo. This hunting domain is scattered with several small villages (of less than 100 inhabitants), but only some of those (Sukisa, Ngbete, Mabanga, and Ngomba) alongside national road 4 were surveyed as they were accessible to our team.

The information was collected during the first 2 weeks of April 2018, and observations were made on a 60 sized-sample selected based on a probabilistic-based method. Although women were the target population (58 to 2), the focus groups included both women and men. All the surveys were conducted in Lingala, as it is widely spoken in the study region compared to dialects, and thus, precautions were taken to ask questions in Lingala, and during the post-survey, answers were translated into English.

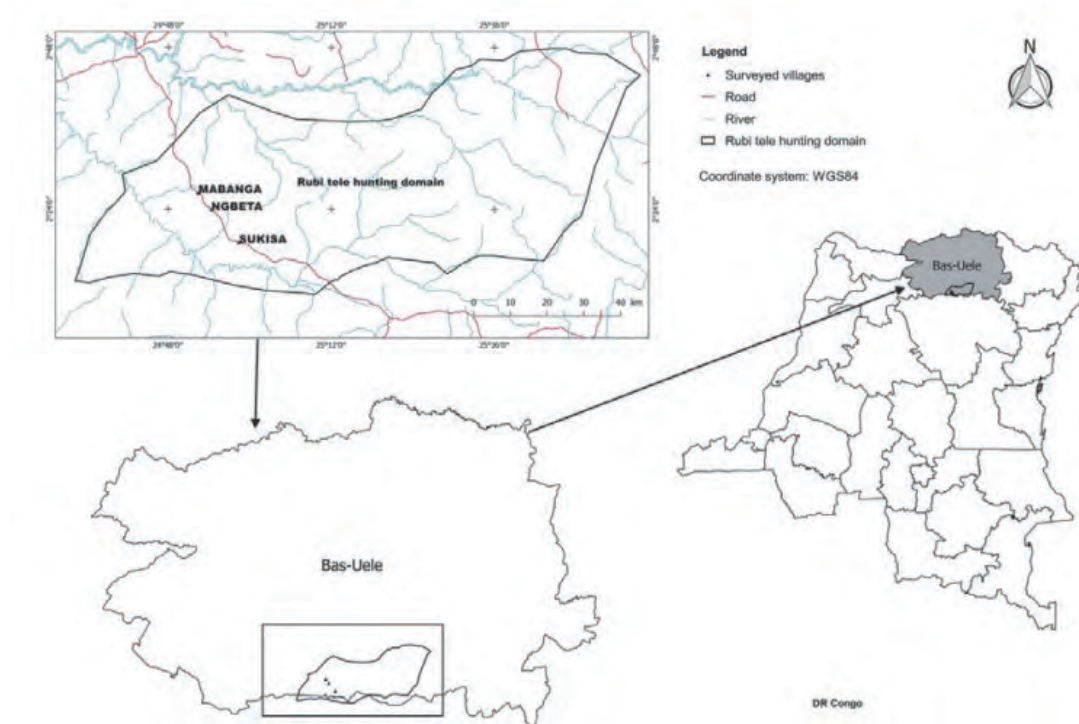


Figure 1. Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain map (Majambu *et al.* 2019)

To better capture women's rights to land in the region of Rubi-Tele, we opted for the legal method, but in its socio-legal approach. Formal laws should be derived from social practices (Villegas and Lejeune 2011). However, for a diverse country in terms of ethnic groups, the Congolese D.R. formal laws did not embrace all realities from all ethnic groups, which is why the gender issue will need to keep an eye on the social practices in force (Robert 1982), making every region specific.

This approach provides an advantage in analysing collective consciousness (Villegas and Lejeune 2011), as well as the links between this consciousness and the laws. To achieve this, the approach combines the lecture of legal texts with field observations. In addition, to take into account the importance of customary rules in defining women's rights in most developing countries, this approach is particularly mindful of how the interactions between written and customary laws affect the situation of women (Cotula 2007).

As a consequence, the concern of this study case is to confront the facts observed on the ground (investigation) to the legal framework of land law and establish the relationship between customary and formal laws in the field of ownership of property, access, and control over land, as well as their impact on the fate of women.

3. Results and discussions

This survey essentially turned around married individuals (95%) whose ages varied between 17 and 71 years old. None of them went to the university or college; about 58% of respondents stopped their studies to the primary level, only 8% reached high school, and all the rest had never been schooled. It has been noticed that eight different ethnic groups live together at the study site with high representativeness for Baboa (33.3%), Basoko (26.7%), and Bangelema (26.7%) insuring a cultural mixture through exchanges among them leading to many commonalities than differences in their traditions. The main activity for women remains a slash and burn based subsistence agriculture for all. This activity, in conjunction with the growing population, leads to forest landscape fragmentation and forest emissions of CO₂ (through the burning of organic matter). A small proportion of the population diversifies sources of income, and only about 22% of women combine agriculture with goods sales to increase their household livelihood.

3.1. Women access to land and control over a land

All the respondents reported having access to land unfortunately was limited for women. The land ownerships and control are men's responsibility, keeping the reproductive role for the woman. The survey revealed that this family asset mostly belongs to either the respondent husband (73.3%) or father (18.3%); only 1.7% of women declared possessing their own land (Figure 2b). Land acquisition is still governed by customary laws that do not recognise women's right to inherit land, which is important

because in 98.3% of cases, land was acquired through family pathways (Figure 2a). Negotiation (the rental of land) is also used as a means to access land, but infrequently (1.7%) (Figure 2a).

The Arable land is a crucial economic asset for many households in most rural areas (Agarwal 1994, Ki Zerbo *et al.* 2006) and a source of power in general (Buuma *et al.* 2013), and in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain, in particular. Agricultural activities conducted on rural lands involve more women than men (USAID 2016) due to their demography compared to their male counterparts; thus, their contribution to food security and rural development increases (Campos *et al.* 2015) as well as their bargaining power within the family (Dhakal *et al.* 2016, USAID 2016). Positive results were found in Tanzania, Nepal, Rwanda, India, Ethiopia, and so forth for women enjoying secure land (USAID 2016).

These lands granted to women are mostly of less quality and/or smaller than those owned by their male counterparts (USAID 2016). Despite the fact that women seldom inherit land in Rubi-Tele, it has been discovered that the acquisition pathway is tightly linked to household dissolution (divorce or husband death) (Dokken 2015). In addition, most sub-Saharan traditions give more privilege to men than to women; women have to use their husbands' lands (Hamahi *et al.* 2009). Despite the existence of legal instruments (Constitution of the Congo D.R. 2011, CEDAW 1979, etc.), many practical efforts are still to be achieved to secure women's land rights (identified as a crucial sustainable development goal), which may lead to expectations such as larger agricultural production and women empowerment.

Women still feel insecure. They can access land as long as they belong to a household. This right depends on the climate of the relationship between women and their male relatives (Cangelosi and Pallas 2014). Although they have gone for the full community resources as a marital regime, wives are not treated as a particular case, and their access to land is still fragile. In South India, in the case of separation (divorce or death of the partner), women automatically lose their right to access their husband's lands (Agarwal 1994) and are forced to return to their parents, unless she was kind to the husband's family. They cannot inherit the transfer of their husband's land (social practices), while the legislator reserved these rights (Family code of the Congo D.R. 2016).

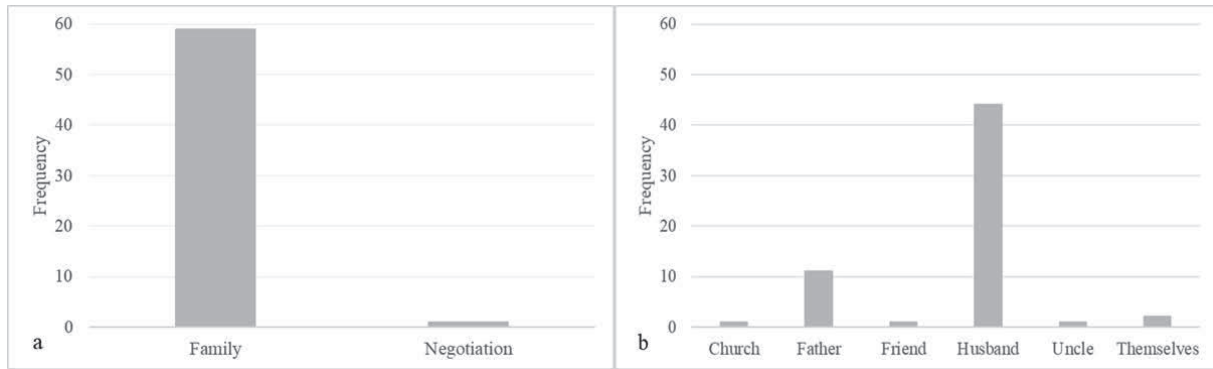


Figure 2a (left). Land acquisition pathways.²

Figure 2b (right). Owners of lands that women access in Rubi-Tele.

In the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain, land is mainly acquired through two different pathways: inheritance (96.7%) and negotiation (3.3%) (Figure 2a); no title can be issued to a private property because this has already been classified as a public property for the state (Land Law of the Congo D.R. 1980). As such, belonging to a given ethnic group will play a key role in land acquisition ($X^2 = 1.4224$; $df = 8$; $p\text{-value} = 0.9939$; $\alpha = 5\%$) compared to the education level reached by these women ($X^2 = 2.697$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.2596$; $\alpha = 5\%$). Educating women means empowering them (USAID 2016), but in the context of Rubi-Tele where customs are dominant, other factors should enter the game.

Negotiations for land renting are mostly used by women married to men who do not originate from the Rubi-Tele domain; however, curiously, their husbands take over land management and control as soon as they obtain a piece of land. This reality is common to many rural areas throughout the world (USAID 2016). Furthermore, there were noticed the existence of some community lands (for churches and other associations), but women have not undertaken such initiatives yet.

Traditions in force in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain do not grant women the right to inherit land which is the opposite of what the Constitution states in its article 34. In the case of the parents or husband's death, land management and control become exclusively the responsibility of men in more than two-thirds of cases (Figure 3) discriminating against women (CEDAW 1979). In Figure 3, we can see that the more lucky to inherit family land are sons (53%) and the more marginalised are their mothers (17%). In some cases (5%), if the household did not account for any infant boy (sons), the management came to the defunct brothers (Figure 3). The widow and her daughters are not, in many cases, land management decision-makers. The family code of the Congo D.R. (2016), in its articles 512, 530, 758, etc., widows and her daughters have the right to inherit. What people are doing in practice is the torsion of state laws.

² The family pathway includes both inheritance and granting land to someone, the negotiation option encompasses rent and access to some else land without minding something in return.

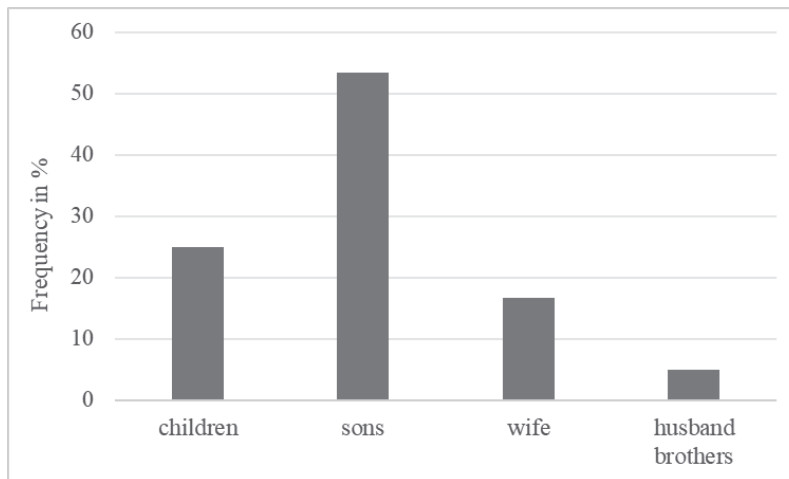


Figure 3. Potential groups³ of heirs of land after a household dissolution.

During the focus group time, there were several reasons raised to support social practices. '*Mwasi aza mopaya*' means that women are stateless. This was reported in a survey in a Burkina Faso village; women are considered foreign in their own families to the point that they do not wish to hold any property right over land (Ki Zerbo *et al.* 2006). Similarly, mentality is found in the South Kivu province, Kalehe, and Walikale clusters; however, women occupy certain positions (princess, business women, etc.) impose their domination to acquire land (Buuma *et al.* 2013).

Treating women as foreign or guests implies that they will have to leave their respective parents' homes and/or the village to start their new lives as wives. However, at their husbands' death, they will have to return to their relatives or seek another family to start. This instability does not allow them to take the lead of land management. Some expressions like '*Mwasi atongaka mboka té*' (women do not build cities) emphasise the preceding idea. Women have to follow their men, wherever they decide to install the shelter. Another expression commonly used in the focus groups is that '*mwasi azalaka nasé ya mibeko ya mobali*' to say that women should always obey and execute their husbands' orders.

Although all these multiple reasons have been raised, women can inherit land in some specific cases, if men show the incapacity to manage this family legacy or after household dissolution (divorce or death) (Dokken 2015). However, it is still seen as a taboo. For many, women who own their own land are immediately identified to prostitutes and insubordinates or 'difficult women', 'delinquent', 'rebellious', and 'complicated' as it is the case in the Walikale and Kalehe clusters (Buuma *et al.* 2013). Women are less likely to own land and their rights are still in a pronounced precarity (USAID 2016) because of all these reasons that put them in an inferior position in society. Furthermore, all of the aforementioned

³ In the group 'children', we can find daughters and sons considered without any discrimination. When sons were cited as unique heirs, we used the exclusive group 'sons'.

reasons, from both men and women, push women not to mind about their situation. Men then take advantage of this situation and impose their domination on women.

3.2. Difficulties encountered by women with regard to land ownership

The woman in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain is conscious of the situation she is living in, but she does not express the desire to fight for her rights to land because she fears her husband and/or the society response, although there still exist unexploited lands for agriculture in the hunting domain.

The survey results showed that about one-third of the interviewees reported that this situation was uncomfortable and that there must be a change. They cannot raise their voice but keep waiting for external help. A small portion of the interviewees (3%) did not have any idea of what their empowerment means. On the other hand, women reported that obtaining authorisation from their respective husbands (28%) constitutes a huge barrier to enjoying their land rights; 21% of them reported they think that customary practices play a crucial role in maintaining the situation unchanged. A significant proportion (20%) think that being financially poor is the main reason they do not own land (Figure 4). Above all, women are not united. In the focus groups, we reported that women do not gather in association to face their problems, which is why men's domination is still strong.

Women are free to undertake actions that contribute to their household well-being without husband permission (2016). The advances made by the Congolese legislator are not aware of the customary standards (32% of the interviewees raised it), which denied inheritance to women (12%). These findings are in line with those of Cotula (2007), Buuma *et al.* (2013), Banque Mondiale (2015) and Soc Etude Recherche Developp (2016) study office, which exposes the woman to the impossibility of accessing land on her own. Furthermore, poverty is a barrier to obtaining land (Hamahi *et al.* 2009), but remember that once obtained, men take over their control. This poverty-related reason seems not real for women to enjoy their land rights. Also, traditions holders are still conservationists and are the one to say the last word, while those who are for the women empowerment shyly express themselves in groups (Ki Zerbo *et al.* 2006). In the Ivory Coast rural areas, women add that their physical weakness to land labour and huge homework prevent them from gaining control over land (Koné and Ibo 2009).

A correspondence analysis (alpha, 0.05) shows a correlation between difficulties such as bad customary practices and the fact that men do not allow their wives to fully enjoy their right to land (Figure 5). At Ngete, it seems that difficulties are less felt than at Ngomba, where women report that men do not permit their wives to enjoy with their right to land. On the other hand, at Mabanga, the ignorance of the difficulties highly characterises women.

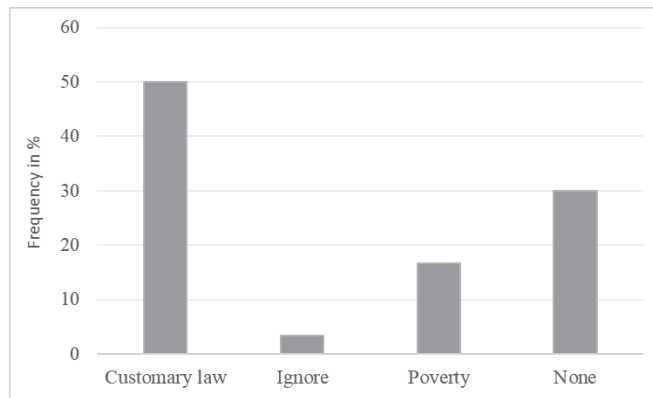


Figure 4. Women opinions about drivers that create a gender gap in the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain.

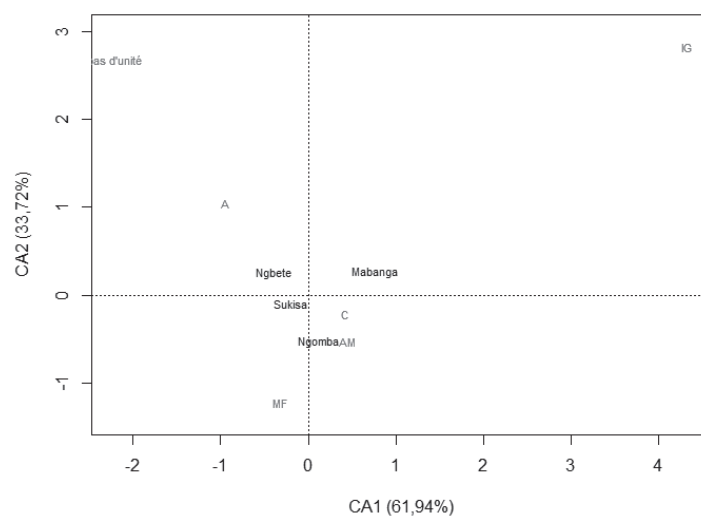


Figure 5. Analysis of the correspondence between the reasons given by women and their villages.

3.3. Impact of formal laws and strategies implemented by women

The context in the study sites is such that 70% of women do not know their real rights (Figure 6a), and 42% prefer their customs to formal law (Figure 6b). No strategy has yet been implemented by women with a view to claiming their right to inherit or possess their own land. A chi-square analysis ($\chi^2 = 18.889$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 1.386e-05$; $\alpha = 5\%$) revealed a link between the facts of not knowing the formal laws and not undertaking any strategies in place to claim their rights. In addition, the vulgarisation of the state laws seems poorly done to the point that almost none of the women were aware of the advances made by the Congo D.R. legislator in the abolition of marital authorisation of the Family Code on 15 July 2016. Despite the advantages offered by the state law, only 57% of the interviewees think that formal laws should take precedence over customary laws.

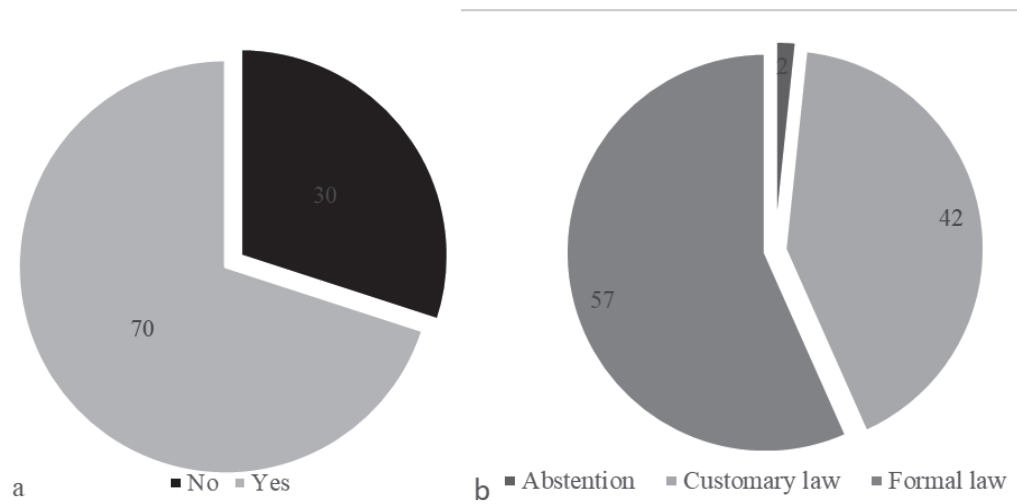


Figure 6a (left). The level of popularization of formal laws that promote women rights.

Figure 6b (right). Women preferences between formal and customary laws.

In Ghana and Cameroon, women gather in groups/associations to claim their rights; however, for the Masai women of Tanzania, they also associate this with the development partners in the negotiations for land acquisition (ACORD *et al.* 2012). Some women tried to take their dossiers to the court when they felt discriminated against, as was the case for Dhungana in Nepal (Cotula 2007) or another woman from the Tillabéri region of Niger (Van Duivenbooden and Kessler 2016). Formal laws agree that women and men are equal in rights and, thus, they are considered as protective for women compared to customary laws that state the opposite (Ki Zerbo *et al.* 2006).

However, the woman from Rubi-Tele is not convinced of the superiority of the formal laws to the customary ones. Although opposites on some aspects, the formal laws give power to the customary laws in rural regions, signs of their cohabitation. However, customary laws keep hidden positive advancements made by formal laws that suffer from less vulgarisation. Ignoring these advancements and being less educated, women from Rubi-Tele have no reference for their empowerment.

3.4. Link between women land right and biodiversity conservation

The role of women in biodiversity conservation has only recently been recognised (Alvarez and Lovera 2016). If women from Rubi-Tele could equally enjoy land rights, biodiversity conservation would be more effective. Conservation of biodiversity is linked to social practices in force (ILC *et al.* 2004), and its loss affects people differently, but the most vulnerable are marginalised people, including women (Bechtel 2010). Women tend to be conservationists and their knowledge uncorrupted by culture mixing, and they have transmitted the knowledge of conservation from generation to generation; therefore, there is no sustainable development without their contribution (Momsen 2007).

Women's knowledge of wild plant species is greater than that of men as they are to collect firewood and harvest non-wood forest products for family subsistence (medicinal and diet plants). In the current context of global changes where pressure on natural resources is ever felt, denying women's rights to land (land control) exposes her to long walks to seek the above resources, raps, diseases, etc., which exacerbate their marginalised status (Alvarez and Lovera 2016). Naturally, women contribute positively to biodiversity conservation *in situ* by cultivating wild plants in their lands, thus ensuring the long availability of resources they use for them and their families.

4. Conclusion

The applicability of women's rights to land issues in the Congo D.R. (case specific of the Rubi-Tele) was assessed in this work and specific focus was given to the profile of women holders of land rights, the obstacles that make Rubi-Tele women do not enjoy their right to land and, finally, strategies undertaken by these women to break barriers that prevent them from making profit. Information was collected through a 2-week survey (from 31 March to 15 April 2018) and our focus group organised at Sukisa, Ngbete, Ngomba, and Mabanga.

Women use household land resources to contribute to family well-being, but do not possess their own land. They still depend upon their husbands or relatives, and only a small portion enjoys the right to possess ownership. The latter are considered to be prostitutes or insubordinates.

The roots of this situation are to search in their customs, not forgetting that the insufficient popularisation of formal laws plays a key role in keeping it without change. Considering men as household heads, women need authorisation to undertake any project, which is not always acquired. The ignorance of the state and other formal laws blinds these women from undertaking any action that goes in the direction of their emancipation.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) for granting this research through the financial support of the European Union (EU) through the FORETS (FOrmation, Recherche, Environnement dans la TShopo) project. The authors thank the Bringmann Excellence Scholarship for Congolese Universities (BEBUC) for their tutorship. This study is part of the Global Comparative Study on REDD+ (GCS REDD+) supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (CRP-FTA). Finally, we would also like to thank the Rubi-Tele manager for accepting our invitation to carry out a survey within the Rubi-Tele Hunting Domain and the anonymous peer reviewers of this work.

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A relational approach to Uganda's state corruption as an organised crime: Decoupling analytical misconceptions on regime consolidation

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Abstract

Research has posited profound questions regarding governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, and most of these questions are focused on political practices. Therefore, several research agendas, including that of the current paper, have focused on understanding complex governance phenomenon, such as state corruption. I will address the following research questions: How do we explain the cultural properties inherent in state corruption in African political regimes? What are the complexities within the *rational* 'interest' and the *cultural* 'normativity' while explaining state corruption as an organised crime in African governmentality? Which factors are we failing to understand? In this paper, I engage a relational analytical approach that integrates the notion of motivation (including interest, greed, and grievance) as well as the process of cultural production and reproduction of corrupt practices, particularly in Uganda. First, I seek to explain that the type of politics and environment wherein such politics are manifested define the context and extent of corruption as well as the regime's commitment to its prevention. Second, and most importantly, the rules, experiences, routines, and taken-for-granted practices that characterise the structure of a specific polity produce and reproduce a culturally corrupt system wherein people do not question the authoritative figures and are perpetually ruled over.

Keywords: state corruption, interest, culture, organised crime, Uganda

1. Introduction

Compliance and non-compliance to state reforms are the major challenges of governance that the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) states have yet to address. Despite the trajectory of political transitions from authoritarianism to imagined democratic governmentality, Uganda continues to be characterised by high levels of corruption, lack of government accountability, poor institutional practices, tight controls over state-spending information, and poor application of jurisprudence. These challenges have facilitated complex state-society relations that may necessitate clear conceptualisation of state corruption. This may serve as the basis for examining significant socio-political concerns, such as authoritarianism, a shrinking political space for dissent, and impracticable African development. This background facilitates knowledge of bureaucratic orientations in complicated corrupt states. This is the primary justification for supporting a strong commitment to research agendas prioritising the corruption-related problems of governance.

The Ugandan presidential anti-corruption walk that was conducted on 4 December 2019¹ in Kampala city, forced intellectuals to ponder the following question: ‘Who is chasing who?’ It may be perceived as a rat chasing its own tail. Therefore, we must rethink the definition of manifestations of corruption and its relationship with the politics of regime consolidation. Why was it considered normal that traffic and free movement within Kampala city was restricted on 4 December 2019 for a presidential walk? Who accounts for the government resources—human or otherwise—that were used on that day? Whose funds were used to buy and print the t-shirts used by those participating in the walk? How accountable is the presidency in itself? To address these simple yet puzzling questions, we must first examine how we analyse and use corruption as a concept in African politics and governance spheres.

In this paper, I explain the intricate ramifications related to corruption as an aid for accessing and consolidating political power. How does state corruption become entangled in the issue of regime continuity in Uganda? Today, while engaging in governance complexities—including regime change and consolidation as well as security—rampant in Uganda and other corruption-ridden nation-states, we mention their association with patronage edifices. Similar to most white-collar crimes, corruption sometimes victimises people indirectly and without the victims’ knowledge (Green and Ward 2004). When corruption becomes a routine issue, non-corruption transforms into defiance, which has notable governmental implications. From the perspectives of the rulers and the ruled, the causes and effects of corruption are ambiguous, trivial, and a way of life in a dysfunctional society. Therefore, the topic of elevating corruption studies to the level of a study field has remained disregarded. Increased attention toward corruption may unlock the potential steps for assessing more significant security phenomena that

¹ AFP coverage of Uganda’s Museveni leading a Much-derided Walk Against Graft on 4 December 2019. <<https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/ugandas-museveni-leads-much-derided-walk-against-graft-20191204-2/>> Accessed on 10 December 2019>.

are seemingly controlled by its existence in political regime configurations (in connection with other components of political life, such as militarism).

To understand security and political participation in Uganda, attention may be directed toward exogenous determinants (such as regional insecurity spill-overs, the global flow of events, such as international organised crimes, terrorism discourses, and the negative role of international humanitarian interventions), but we ought to turn our focus to the internal factors (the state and regimes). The issues related to state corruption are intertwined with general state bureaucratic and administrative practices as majorly top-bottom constructions. This top-bottom system introduces patriarchy as a point of reference in the complex relationship of the regime with the state. Bose (2012) noted that corruption is as old as the formation of governments; although other commentators may point to the beginning of human nature because they consider all humans to be inherently corrupt. In particular, corruption is nurtured, and the state and regimes are the primary architects constructing the existential magnitude as well as the extent of its prevention. Therefore, it offers the rationale for the consolidation/protection of the regime.

Although the presidential anti-corruption walk conducted on 4 December 2019, may have been planned with good intentions of creating awareness, there is widespread agreement that Ugandans have experienced a state-induced corruption scenario, either as victims or perpetrators, or have at least heard about it in recent days. For example, state bureaucratic corruption (wherein public and civil services are sold to the highest bidder through extortion and bribery [rent-seeking]), and political corruption (wherein politicians buy votes through contributions to weddings, funerals, or even directly provide cash, food, drinks, and clothes to voters to gain or maintain political offices) are considered normal practices and the effects are understood by those living within this context. Once they receive access to power, some politicians solicit kickbacks in the form of bribery and other grafts as compensatory gratification, whereas other politicians are involved in corrupt activities to maintain their power. Similarly, presidential political appointments to patronage cadres as tokens of appreciation for political allegiance is also a suitable example.

Clientelism in patrimonial states is another common practice leading to the production of elements of personalised politics that distort the efficacy of bureaucratic practices and may curtail participatory regime change in affected nation-states, such as Uganda. *Clientelism* endures because the masses are excluded from politics; power is the monopoly of a small group in the patron-client circle who will fight tooth and nail to preserve the patron's position in the political spectrum (Hadjor 1993:66). Behind this patron-client façade lies the neo-colonial elements of power usurpation (Haynes 1996:30), which is a form of corruption. Therefore, it is unsurprising because post-colonial Ugandan rulers picked a leaf from colonial methods of power consolidation. For European colonialists, consolidation indicated that all positions of influence remained occupied by the European patrons. Similarly, for Ugandan rulers, survival in politics necessitates a trust network of kinsmen and close cronies.

In terms of causation, the causes of corruption may be exogenous to some extent, but the extent to which endogenous factors inherent in the political systems can better explain the causation and damaging effect of this reality. Is it true that corruption and patrimonial politics cement regimes, thereby curtailing regime change? Although corruption can facilitate regime change through anti-corruption rhetoric and movements, it can also consolidate the regime by strengthening the reciprocal syndicates of the patriarchy. This analysis disregards the external relations that shaped every nation-state. I share the same perspective as that of Tilly regarding the processes of war- and state-making as an organised crime. In his analysis of the European nation-state formation—a situation that seems familiar to African nation-states—Tilly (1985:169) noted:

A portrait of war makers and state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs bears a much greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives: the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government.

Research has yet to provide an explanation regarding how the creation and sustenance of a strong patron-based regime and a submissive state significantly depends on the holders of power in a political system, wherein corruption is already well knitted by the nation's brutal history and existential difficulties related to human rights abuse. Corruption scholars must also seek to integrate cultural explanations while focusing on state corruption.

2. Corruption and regime consolidation

During a presentation of this paper at the first Japan Society for Afrasian Studies (JSAS) conference that was conducted at Kansai University in 2018, I experienced an academic engagement with Professor Yoichi Mine, an economics professor at Doshisha University Japan, and Dr. Pedro Miguel Amakasu Raposo, an economic researcher at Kansai University in Japan, regarding the issue of the quantification of corruption. This quantification debate is supported by the attempts of governmental policies and civil societies to explain the current state of affairs related to corruption. One such narrative is the government anti-corruption agency of the Inspector General of Government (IGG) in Uganda that categorises corruption cases into two types: grand and petty corruption. According to the IGG, any case of corruption involving a figure beyond the threshold of one billion Uganda shillings is considered high-level corruption and is thus investigated by a special directorate in the IGG's office². Professor Mine

² NBS TV (2017) hosting the deputy IGG, George Bamugemereire. Is the Fight Against Corruption Pure Rhetoric? <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mn8kUF4SY30/> Accessed on 20 September 2019>.

may be satisfied with data indicating the most corrupt country and the reason for this judgement. However, there are two prominent challenges in this ambition. First, the dilemma regarding whether we want to compare states or focus on a specific state. If comparison is necessary, would an intra-state comparison of political regime performance provide the best analytical portrayal? Is it rewarding to categorise corruption as high or low level? How did we create this threshold? Is it easy to have a universally accepted yardstick to objectively measure the variables and the extent of corruption? Although I appreciate their contribution as a mission to increase empiricism for an effective definition and law enforcement, the valuation of corruption and drawing lines to determine the extent of corruption may be a daunting task. This economic approach can lead to the misconception of corruption. First, it may not be easy to attach an economic value to patronage or trust networks. The construction of a patron-based web is sometimes an unconscious process that the parties may be unaware of. Second, even if we wished to quantify them, acts of corruption always remain so clandestine that only the exposed cases are brought to the public eye. Valuation and quantification only serve to make a case clear in terms of legal processes, but may not conclusively assert the concept in itself.

On the other hand, some spectators advance the relativity of the concept of state corruption. For example, an African graduate student from Doshisha University in Japan commented (during the same conference at Kansai University) that we must acknowledge the context of a specific state while discussing corruption. For example, in some countries, corruption acts involving an amount lower than the specific amount cannot be regarded as corruption. He concluded that in the process of defining corruption, similar to that of democracy, we must include adjectives, such as 'most corrupt' and 'least corrupt', based on datasets suggesting the standard statistical measurement. He also expressed irritability regarding the relationship between regime longevity and state corruption because the period of continued political power does not necessarily imply corruption. Such intellectual debates may attempt to decouple corruption from political formations while engaging problematic statistical inferences. They attempt to portray the notion that the state is in control. However, such research ambitions—as explained by Jones (2009:10)—are bound to a development economy. The research project funders, line ministries, and other development partners are the entry points for most statistical research regarding development. The resulting perception is one wherein the state and international society understand and attempt to mitigate excesses of corruption through government policies. This article posits questions regarding such puzzling ambiguities.

In many post-colonial African states wherein the western bureaucratic political order embedded patrimonial legacies, the result was/is the quest to maintain the grip on power and predation of scarce resources. The best examples of such regimes are Seseke Mobutu of former Zaire, Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, Milton Obote, and Idi Amin Dada of Uganda, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and other active regimes in power, some of which pose personal security issues for academic analysts. Kandil (2016)

stated that in a deliberate quest to amass popular support, the masses must be mobilised and organised. Therefore, coup leaders devote themselves to building reliable patron-based political institutions during and in the aftermath of war (Finer 1962:164–65). The most meaningful element of institutions built on this ideology is that they appropriate supporters through a mixture of patronage, clientelistic alliances, and sometimes systematic intimidation (Decalo 1998:48–49, Kandil 2016). Warlord regimes (such as those in Uganda) achieve this mixture by first dismantling the social structures of the previous regimes that were labelled as bad regimes and creating loyal institutions, including trade unions, professional associations, and religious groups. Through such loyal institutions, warlord regimes recruit members in their political networks. The patronage-created networks work parallel to the pre-existing, pre-war system but form an elaborate construction of control apparatus to eliminate threats to the regime (Puddington 1988:1), thus a section of the pre-existing network soon assimilates, whereas a sizeable portion shrinks to non-existence.

To achieve popular support, the regimes must embark on organising a mass movement based on their ideological rhetoric of political business within highly structured patron-state institutions. This mass movement involves the creation of a single-party system that does not starkly differ from the post-1986 war in Uganda and the post-1994 genocide politics in Rwanda. According to Kandil (2016:58), ‘where the locus of power rested with a mass-mobilising ruling party that is charged with directing all aspects of social life’, consolidation thus becomes an obvious outcome. Regimes have employed this model, and it has resulted in an exceptionally effective penetration of after-war hopeless constituents, thereby embedding its endurance in the political life of such unsuspecting constituents (Nordlinger 1977:18). Members of the ruling regime infiltrate crucial state/governmental offices to achieve complete consolidation. This is a tool used to block dissidence or the rise of other opposing political forces (Arendt 1951:419–20). Specific to this type of institutional arrangement, the warlord-based patron military is transformed into an administrative arm of the regime, and as Odom (1978:41–44) stated, ‘not something separate from and competing with it’.

Although Kandil (2016) stated that the organisation of masses around revolutionary patriarchy and the assertion of bureaucratic pressure for their consolidation are two alternative options at the disposal of an authoritarian regime, there is no harm in their concurrent application. Risk-cautious warlord rulers may throw their weight behind the bureaucratic processes, including manipulation of the constitution and constitutionalism. The constitutional process in Uganda since independence from colonial rule has served as an example of a bureaucratic strain on change and in favour of the consolidation of regimes. This powerful force matches the anti-dissidence attitudes and overt political arrogance and/or reluctance among government officials. According to Nordlinger, the regime typically assumes that ‘their control of state institutions is sufficient to accomplish their goals’ (1977:114). To consolidate their survival, regimes join their overwhelming control over the bureaucratic apparatus with a multitude of offices

occupied by their political cronies to increase their political support³.

The conceptualisation of corruption as a state crime lies beyond patriarchy. Michalowski and Kramer (2007) characterised it as illegal or a socially injurious action resulting from a mutually reinforcing interaction between the policies and/or practices in pursuit of the goals of parties in institutions of political government. In NTV's mini-documentary regarding the rise and fall of Abdallah Kitatta, a respondent clarified, 'don't you know that power is superior to the law? (adding that) people who have fenced off your land have the power...'⁴. Such phenomena of corruption and their environment can be perceived as concentric circles whose basic forms are located at the centre of power (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006). Such basic forms are integrated into the increasingly complex strategies of actors and the context to create a routinised corrupt practice. Such practices through routine functioning in public or civil service offices become embedded in a series of recurrent socio-political and economic contexts. Accuracy can be achieved through a multidimensional approach because corruption may be perceived through a minimal command of two languages—the languages of official rules and informal practices.

In criminological and economics schools, corruption is typified as a rational action based on the motivation and demotivation of actors. For example, Green and Ward (2004:13–18) defined corruption in different categories, such as corruption as the means, as tolerated, and as an organisational goal. Although state corruption can be characterised as a motivation, such categorisation only answers a part of the corruption question if it ignores the embedded norms accrued in the processes of strategic interaction. Corruption is learned through on-the-job experience, which is a progressive process involving initiation, adaptation, and assimilation into this learning process, starting from the formative years of the colonial African states. The configurations of such 'African social logics' (Haug 2012:36), current patterned life, and the historical context naturally drag the political patriarchy-dominated state into the conceptual clarity of corruption.

3. Decentralisation and the predatory nature of regimes

The decentralisation system introduced soon after Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) war served in two capacities: First, in agreement with Professor Takeuchi that it was a system intended to extend the patronage down to the grassroots. Second, to create a new system through which public services would be channelled to strengthen the grip on power. Amaza—one of the 1981–86 revolutionaries—explained the same scheme as a political consolidation project,

³ In a discussion with Professor Shinichi Takeuchi, decentralisation (increasing the number of districts and county constituencies through which the political allegiance is channeled) was a political card intended to extend the political patronage and was not based on service delivery as the policy claims. It was intended to provide political positions for their cronies and increase the legislative constituents through which legislations can be made in favor of the existing regime's consolidation.

⁴ NTV Uganda 2019. 'The rise and fall of Abdallah Kitatta'. NTV Panorama, Updated on 10 February 2019. Video. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fdqDIoyguY/> Accessed on 18 November 2020>.

citing the relationship between the National Resistance Council and the NRM/A (Amaza 1998:48–49). Tushabe (2013:152) explained that greed for power and control remains a notorious camouflage of decentralisation in Uganda.

Museveni was not the first Ugandan president to engage in a decentralisation strategy. In 1974, Idi Amin introduced ten provincial governments and increased the number of districts from 19 to 37—a clear example of the *prebendalistic* practices that are particularly common in Africa (Van de Walle 2007). Therefore, granting the district status is a noted feature of Museveni’s rewards to his supporters and a reciprocal promise for political support of his regime. Tushabe deemed this the ‘politics of giving’ (2013: 156) wherein Museveni—the Chairman of High Command—presents himself as a *giving dad* in the revolutionary struggle. Similar to Idi Amin, Museveni’s district creation and the facilitation of five-layered local administrative units, formerly Resistance Councils (RCs) 1–5 and later known as the Local Councils (LCs) 1–5, created patronage opportunities that paid-off in the subsequent elections. Unlike Idi Amin, President Museveni’s government has continued to subdivide districts at regular intervals to 121 districts or more.

The correlation does not always suggest positive outcomes regarding whether this massive subdivision of administrative units translates into effective and localised service delivery. Government officials have claimed that district creation helps to ensure enhanced service delivery in various areas, such as the construction of schools and roads, water, and electrification. However, there is no correlation between the creation of new districts and improved service delivery in Africa. During Museveni’s regime (hereafter NRM’s regime), service delivery must appear as the regimes’ reciprocity to its political strongholds or as a tool to weaken dissenting voices. As indicated by the President of Uganda, newly created districts often suffer inadequate staffing, with human resource levels at an average of approximately 55% of their full capacity and as low as 10% in many districts (Green 2015). Moreover, the effect of the dubious subdivision of local administrative units has subsequently implied that central government funding to districts is spread even thinner, thereby making it impossible to obtain substantial development. These factors are not particularly surprising, because there is strong evidence to prove that district creation has been driven by political and electoral calculations, rather than developmental requirements. Table 1 presents the evolution and chronology of political decentralisation in Uganda from the 1950s to 2017.

Table 1. Evolution of decentralisation of political districts

Year/Date	No. of Districts
1959	16
1962	17
1968	18
1971	19
1974	38
January 1979	40
May 1979	22
August 1980	33
15 March 1991	39
20 March 1997	45
28 November 2000	56
1 July 2005	69
1 July 2006	80
1 July 2009	87
1 July 2010	111
1 July 2016	115
1 July 2017	121

Source: Obtained from the fact sheets of the Ministry of Local Government⁵.

The decentralisation problems in Uganda are the projects intended to systematically extend political patronage through the transmission of the NRM's idea of state capture. To ensure NRM maintains power, no stone must remain unturned.

Government office allocations in such a patrimonial-bureaucratic crisis are deliberately politicised and corruptly administered. The regime deliberately charges different offices with overlapping, and sometimes identical tasks, to facilitate the smooth transfer of power between and among them. For example, each district has an LC5 chairperson elected by the people; however, there are other positions that assume a share of the LC5 chairperson's powers and responsibilities, such as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC). The CAO and the RDC are government employees whose actions and tenure can be determined by the appointing authority not very far from the regime elites. In most cases, appointments to such offices are treated as rewards for supporters of the ruling party, particularly the RDCs. Even among the elected local council chain, funding for their districts may be uncertain if their political perspectives oppose that of the regime. Therefore, as Kandil (2016) explained, the regime can easily liquidate the functions of certain government agencies and relegate others to the shadows of bureaucratic performance.

This dilemma exists not only in decentralisation, but also in the central government. The regime asserts pressure to prevent bureaucrats from nurturing stable power bases that are likely to threaten the regime's grip on power (Arendt 1951:401–404). The regime has discretionary power in the selection of

⁵ The MOLG facts sheet can be obtained on <https://molg.go.ug/sites/default/files/MoLG%20-%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>/ Accessed on 10 February 2019>.

institutional bureaucrats; typically, the transfers within and between governmental institutions are largely focused on curtailing dissenting voices. Interestingly, the politics around bureaucratic placements, transfers, and termination start with the regime patron, but over time, the middle managers also widen their network and carry the virtue of the mastermind surviving patron. However, a contradiction has been noted regarding whether the middle managers are instrumentally clustered around the ambitions of the patron or are intend to maximise available crony-opportunities. In the eminent contradictions in the interpretation of the patron-bureaucratic relationship, the regime takes a notable share in their consolidation project.

4. State, state formation, and regime survival

We must first conceptualise the state in its nature to understand the intricacies of the dubious state enterprise. For example, Skocpol (1979:27) defined the state as an administrative, policing, and military complex controlled by a well-coordinated executive authority—an autonomous political structure—characterised by a structure with logic and interests of its own. Kandil (2016) added to this economic motive-based analysis of the state that cultural assets, such as myths, religious doctrines, ideologies, symbols, values, and norms, eventually find expression in the laws and practices and aid in legitimising the existing political order.

This mechanism noted in Skocpol and Kandil's explanations also conditions subjects to accept and be mobilised when required for regime consolidation. Although Kandil acknowledged the existence of a cultural element in the consolidation of political order, he showed that regardless of noticeable cultural and economic assets in the ruling blocs, the governments and regimes entirely depend on coercive and political power. Kandil (2016) may have mistaken or perceived differently the processes leading to the consolidation of political power and coercive force, among which cultural components are vital. States, governments, and regimes do not only survive based on coercion and repression. The processes facilitating their consolidation depend on multifaceted dynamics (inclusive of corruption).

The NRM regime, according to Khisa (2019:105), has been partly constructed on the 'legal and engineering' or what can be referred to as the 'rule by the law', instead of the rule of law. Rather than applying the rule of law, in states with webs of pervasive political corruption, control over the parliament is crucial for ensuring easy preservation of the regime. Khisa (2019) added that this is why consistent, direct financial inducements have been provided to members of parliament to enable legal constitutional manipulation. This constitutional manipulation was noted in 2005, when the constitution was amended to remove the term limits without a referendum to allow President Museveni to contest again for the 3rd and several subsequent terms of presidential tenure. Later (and most recently) in 2018, the constitution was successfully raided again for an amendment to scrap the age limit for the presidency. Many observers have perceived the state/government institutions as a centralised and personalised system of

power directly controlled by President Museveni and his immediate cronies.

Tilly (1985) presented the same dimensions that consider states as criminal enterprises. Tilly (1985:169) referred to the state as a form of *protection racket*, similar to organised criminals interested in effective predation. Protection is a term used to connote both the confrontation (the response to non-compliance of the common people) and prevention of damage (violence), which is inspired by the strong arm of the state itself. Tilly stated that this economic observation of the state characterises its formation and consolidation. Other state-based analysts have noted that states provide protection against internal and external violence, and those that complain against the price of protection are deemed anarchists and subversive. However, according to Tilly, a 'racketeer is someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction' (1985:171). Although Tilly blinded himself regarding cultural considerations of state formation, he does not blatantly deny the cultural components of state formation and consolidation. Because he is aware of the foundations of the state being perceived as a form of punishment, Tilly must be informed about the state's survival on a string of informal rules, symbols, rituals, and norms that form the major part of Uganda's public culture.

5. Literature and continued ignorance

The noteworthy literature on corruption is inspired by Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) functionalism, as cited by Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006:18), which emphasised the study of the institutions and norms contributing to the stability and reproduction of social systems at the cost of analysis of corruption as a socially deviant reality. The *structural functionalist* Radcliffe-Brown emphasised the role of this phenomenon in the maintenance of society, which resonated with the French philosopher Durkheim. Durkheim (1951) showed that once a deviant action, such as corruption, becomes a rule and non-corruption an exception, the practice ceases to be perceived as a disorder and transforms into a norm responsible for perpetuating impunity. This has a negative implication on national security.

Due to the emphasis presented by functionalists, such as Radcliffe-Brown, scholars and practitioners have opted for an easy alternative—the moralisation and acceptance of corruption as a trivial aspect of social inquiry. Corruption continues to affect citizenry in their daily lives, ranging from failure to access justice and rule of law, rampant horizontal and vertical inequalities, and limited access to quality health, education services, and other social and public amenities (Twinoburyo 2015), all of which double the chances of lapsing and/or relapsing to violence. Twinoburyo (2015) argued that in Sub-Saharan Africa, a vicious cycle and endogenous causalities may have created poverty traps, where weak states, predatory political regimes, generalised corruption, commodity-based market structures, and windfall gains reinforce each other. Therefore, corruption is a security hazard and not a functional element of an ideal society. Corruption, as an aid to regime consolidation, is equally damaging.

However, in the Penal Code Act division ii (relating to offences against the administration of lawful

authority) (1950)⁶ and the Anti-Corruption Act (2009), especially part ii relating to the ingredients of corruption⁷, the legalities do not address the structural concerns of a state as a culprit. Legal definitions and implications disregard the cultural components of the state as a social being. These two legal frameworks (the Penal Code Act and the Anti-Corruption Act) consider the state as an institution of individuals bound by the laws. They position individuals as the culprits and the state as a victim, which is problematic.

Other works have pointed toward corruption as a clash between the traditional and modern systems of governance. This argument implies that corruption goes hand-in-hand with societies undergoing rapid change, wherein the coexistence of different styles of political action exacerbates the gap between legal norms and pragmatic political action⁸. Bayart (1993:39) demonstrated that corruption typifies the appropriation and re-appropriation of Western models of politics by African states.

Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006:22) indicated that the shunning of corruption as a state crime in social inquiry may have been precipitated by its conception as being dangerously flirty with deep ethnocentrism. The analytical process has perceived corruption as a normative dysfunctionality and crisis in African states. According to Terray (1987), terms, such as corruption and nepotism, are verdicts based on the ethnocentric notion, and these terms become problematic only if they lead to inequalities in terms of jobs and wealth. Numerous studies have shown that in places wherein corruption is endemic, a high level of disparity is noted. Green and Ward (2004) concluded that corruption is increasingly pervasive in societies characterised by *clientelism* and patrimonialism, and such societies tend to have notable disparities between the rich few patrons and an impoverished majority. Therefore, the extent and penetration of state-organised crime/deviance depends on the degree of poverty and inequality. For example, in the Transparency international report, Zúñiga (2017) acknowledged the negative impact of corruption on the distribution of income through poor and selective tax policies that favour the rich at the detriment of the poor, tax evasion by the powerful few and *clientelistic* connections to the income access, all of which undermine the government's capacity to ensure an increasingly equitable resource distribution. Regarding the corruption in the Philippines, Azfar and Gurgur (2005) noted that increased inequality caused by corruption exacerbates the position of the poor in society by reducing the resources available for social spending, such as education, food, and health. This equally affects people's potential to make political claims.

Azfar and Gurgur (2005) showed that corruption is responsible for delays in health services and decreasing education standards for the poor. This blends in the worst type of structural inequality. This type of inequality ensures that people become increasingly poor and are thus unable to demand

⁶ Penal Code Act 1950. <<https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/120/> Accessed on 15 March 2019>.

⁷ Anti-Corruption Act 2009. <<https://ulii.org/node/24728/> Accessed on 15 March 2019>.

⁸ Simon Ottenberg in his 1967 work on Local Government and the Law in Southern Nigeria.

accountability (Chêne 2014). Therefore, it is unjustifiable to conclude that corruption may not necessarily be an analytical problem (Twinoburyo 2015), and that it can be treated as an organ of a functional whole, as portrayed by functionalism. Kaufmann and Vicente (2011) showed that when there is high inequality (corruption is accountable in part) and the majority is receiving low income, the population may not have the power to threaten the elite with a successful insurrection. Therefore, the elites opt for the cheapest illegal forms of control of the power to ensure that the poor remain poorer. Although many scholars and practitioners have noted that state corruption is normal for the survival of society and a necessary component of life, the negative effects of state corruption are significant in impeding political development. There are numerous reasons to determine that state corruption is highly detrimental to the achievement of regime change. Therefore, corruption must be deemed increasingly problematic.

6. From interest to culture in a revolutionary regime

Until recent times, the issues associated with corruption have been typically legalistic, with total disregard of cultural properties in everyday politics. One notorious critique of the cultural explanation of corruption is cited from the works of Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006), who unwittingly cast doubt on the scientific credibility of corruption as an object of anthropological inquiry. Other scholars are focused on understanding the positioning of agency in the theorising process. Is state corruption an individual issue, societal issue, cultural issue, or natural phenomenon that human beings may have no control over? Choices regarding the analysis category among the mentioned placements of the agency may determine the thought process of the researcher. Rather than accepting an economic analytical blindfold, I analysed corruption as a consequence of mechanisms at play in political actions. The state capture by the regimes begins with state instrumentalisation intended to maintain political power and then transform through social networks, thereby embedding such practices and norms of the procedure. For example, when the president hands out money and free t-shirts to voters, it is not corruption but providence in the eyes of the voters. Moral incorrectness is less important because the most corrupt people become the most cherished and respected members of society.

Society considers the corrupt as successful. Within state institutions, if you are not in a corruptible position—otherwise known as wet offices—you may be lacking an outstanding social network. From my personal experiences, while I worked as a police detective at Makerere University, I was transferred from a location that was known to be a dry assignment due to its nature of cases (Makerere) to a location known to have the highest crime incidence (Kawempe). Many fellow officers told me that my new placement was highly lucrative, due to the high criminality, and was thus highly corruptible. I asked them whether high criminality meant high salaries, but they answered: ‘You know that police files mean *sitrep*’. *Sitrep* is an abbreviation for the ‘situational report’ in its obvious usage, but its figurative usage

connotes extortion. This is indicative of the transformation of corruption and the associated negative symbolisation of rules as a way of life.

However, research from the early 1960s until the present day has credited the incentive structure as the driving force for corruption among state-service men. Scholars have contended that low salaries, poor supervision, weak laws, and poor economic situation in the country are the primary areas of focus in the search for answers regarding corruption, its causation, and persistence. Hope (2000) showed that the decade between 1975 and 1985 characterised poor purchasing power for public servants in Kenya, Sudan, Nigeria, and Somalia, among other Sub-Saharan African countries, thereby explaining the rampant corruption in these countries. There is a judicious agreement that Uganda suffers low incentive structures, thereby likely creating a deficit that provides grounds for corruption justifications. However, there are mega scandals involving the government's *big shots*, who are rich enough to engage in corruption activities (risky behaviour). Therefore, the question regarding the factors motivating the Ugandan rich people into corruptibility may be answered by approaching their socialisation and resultant semiotics.

Critiques of cultural schools have inclined to the new institutionalism advanced by North (1990). Although this theory is fairly recent, the conclusions of scholars of law and economics regarding state function resonate well with North's theorisation. Rational choice scholars have noted that institutional structures provide incentives to rational individuals. Their explanations regarding the factors creating institutional change emphasise identifying where actors have achieved an institutional equilibrium. The rational institutional approach remains relevant for analysing police corruption regarding formal rationality and procedural regularity (Gofas and Hay 2010:79). When accessing the choice options for the corrupt, I noted that what the vast majority consider rational is a structure of subconscious elements prevalent in the environments they comfortably cluster, and not only a question of choice. During my tenure as a police detective, I had the choice and the legal instruments to fight corruption, but the system in which I worked demanded the status quo, wherein actions that are foreign to the normal method of doing business would not be tolerated. This situation was unrelated with the incentive structure.

Although there is more evidence to support the incentive structure as stated by rational choice theorists, it is noteworthy that the discrepancy emerges from ignoring the practices within the social realms of state institutions. State officials, similar to people in any other sub-cultural group, do not have a stable set of preferences. Based on these practices and social realms, individuals cease to be passive recipients of the incentive structures but are instead involved in the interpretation of such incentive structures, as well as their social reality, as embedded. We must look beyond only incentive structures while analysing such complex situations as corruption and regime consolidation. Prince 1975, in his sociological research conducted on the Ghanaian public service, showed that even if the bureaucratic classes were considerably highly paid, as compared to the majority of the population, they continued to

perceive their salaries as low, based on the standard of living they aspired for and their societal status. In the questionnaires administered to 434 state employees, 80% acknowledged the challenge of support for poor dependents other than their immediate families. This indicates that a regime whose foundation was focused on recruitment within what Tilly deems the trust networks, will likely employ through *clientelistic* and tribal lines. Employees will also attempt, to employ their relatives to reduce dependency, and unconsciously widen the patronage that becomes a vicious state crime, based on which the state/regime thrives.

My argument is that there is a close relationship between the bureaucratic process and corruption. One of the respondents—a student at Makerere University—laboured to explain the culture of corruption in terms of power. She stated that corruption is focused on consistent access to authority or everyday control over the use of violence. She illustrated her claim by citing a high incidence of corruption in police, court, and less among government teachers. In this situation, people understand who has power over what should be done. Although the research points to deviance as being culturally embedded, few studies have indicated that corruption typifies an African political pathology (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006). The emphasis in this article points to the fact that traditional cultures are not fertile grounds for the incubation of corruption in Africa. Rather, considerable focus is given to studies that understand state corruption as an act of routinised deviance producing practices of officers—which are defined as a way of life. However, the fusion of modern state institutional practice—bureaucracies—with the traditional patriarchies (the daddy—politics) could have invoked the cultural identity influence on the running of neo-patrimonial states in recent times. Bose (2012), in his aspects of bureaucratic corruption, illustrated the strong connection between governmental bureaucracies and corruption. He posited that the accurate analysis of corruption starts with government bureaucracies as the primary culprits. Because state bureaucracies in Uganda are infested by the regime's systemic patron-based networking, the excessive exercise of authority is most likely to be present with overt impunity.

How has a *culturalist* school characterised and explained state corruption? While debating the genealogy of corruption, some scholars have argued that it is a phenomenon in perpetuity or constant continuity. On the other hand, the rupture school has suggested that the emergence of corruption in African states and traditions resulted from a clear historic rupture that coincided with the importation of Western political culture through colonialism. The former lays claim for endogenous character and the latter claims the exogenous character of corruption (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006:27). Earlier *rupturists*, such as McMullan, have considered the pervasiveness of corruption and its construction in African states to be a result of the 'clash of traditional values and customs with the modernising project' (1961:186). He explained that although the customary exchanges of gifts equated to corruption in a modern cash economy in Ghana, the clash between such customs of traditional reciprocity, attitudes,

and patronage, with the new forms of government contributed to the pervasiveness of corruption. Traditional values collided with modern methods, thus exemplifying the notions of reciprocity exhibited in gift exchanges, the prestige of having dependents and servants, social appreciation of generosity, respect for elders, and the preference for personal contact in the spheres of public administration (Werlin 1972).

These traditional values could have translated directly in the modern state function as severe systemic grafts and normalised scandals. However, caution must be exercised when assessing these opposing schools. The line between normal societal customs and the manifestations of corruption is faint. African reciprocal traditions, intermarriages, and power relations existed in almost every society, but have not been emphasised as the cause of corruption. These schools of thought are perceived as having a condescending attitude toward precolonial states. There are some extents of the past histories deep-rooted in kingships' ancestral habits and interactions that at face value may not have translated into bad and selfish intentions amounting to corruption (similar to every human society). For example, the king of Buganda or Ankole assuming that he is only a receiver of peasants' harvests and not a giver in a reciprocal relationship is a shared element of domination among monarchs everywhere.

Finally, I argue that state corruption—which is perceived as thriving in legal-rational institutions—is a social activity, not only regulated and in accordance with complex rules and regulations, but also tightly controlled by tacit codes and norms (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006). However, it is important that although we build fantasies around the literature on corruption both as a cultural object of analysis and organised around incentive structures, we ought to connect it to its role in the political regime consolidation matrix. Future studies must focus on understanding the play of the Weberian bureaucracy in parochial civic culture and how this operates in combination with other aspects of the regime consolidation mechanism.

7. Conclusion

Corruption is a notable factor in African governmentality. Widespread predation and greed serve to express the social struggles surrounding the hegemonic quest for and production of the state in Africa. An understanding of state corruption is inherent in the foundations upon which the state-making process was/is possible in this part of the world. Then, if the state-making process is in itself an organised crime, it may be equally valid that the products of the state reflect its formation. Although (African) nation-state formation was by and large a European instigation, the dynamics inherent in the new states not only adopted the bureaucracy of state administration and associated bottlenecks, but also could not resist the traces of patrimonial politics of dominance that existed earlier. The choice between being and not being corrupt is largely determined by the toleration of opposing views to the regime's existence. The

use of force (state violence) to retain power is a type of corruption that most regimes in the world have refused to confess guilt toward.

When the patrons remain in power for a long period, their cronies build the web of protection around them, which makes it impossible for outsiders to penetrate or dismantle the corrupt institution. It is usually common knowledge that in politics, such as these, opposition to the regime stems from within (other than some exemptions). The executive—president—maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through constructive ideology or the law; however, some patron–client relationships may be constructed by shared political ideology, such as revolutionary patriotism in Uganda today. The relationships between loyalty and dependency pervade a formal political system. Whether in classic patriarchy—wherein the right to rule is ascribed—or in modern patriarchy—wherein dominance is enforced—the pivotal mindset works to consolidate the patrons' rule over others. The distinction between private and public interests is intentionally blurred. The power to curtail corruption resides in the ability of regimes to exercise self-restraint.

In its relationship with regime consolidation, state corruption cannot be discussed as merely a rational choice. The formation of patriarchs also involves the uniqueness associated with the selection of clients suitable for a trust network. Although it is valid to claim that motivation and incentive structures, such as reciprocal relations, resource allocation, and elite dominance, could best help to understand state corruption or other forms of deviance that include gratification, we must observe the state formation, its predatory characteristics, and the normative tendencies that emanate from the routinisation of state function as the primary supporting explanatory grounds for incentive structures' claims. Why are some nation-states increasingly prone to state corruption? The level of state development processes and the effects of the routines will help us answer that question, although this may require another research agenda. Post-colonial states in Africa are likely to be increasingly prone to corruption, compared with more developed countries in Europe and elsewhere, because of the nation-state maturity variations. However, I consider the incentive structure a puzzle piece in the context of fragile African nation-states, such as Uganda, faced with structural violence. Rationality and its interaction with normative political structures may remain the best explanatory ground for state corruption.

Acknowledgements

This work was part of my grand doctoral research. I have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Conflict-induced migration and local development: The socio-economic dynamics of a refugee-hosting area in Uganda

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Abstract

For decades, Uganda has been a favourable destination for refugees. Between the late 1980s and the 1990s, violent conflicts in northern Uganda and southern Sudan caused complex patterns of human movement, including internal and cross-border migration. In addition, a mass influx of refugees from South Sudan occurred in late 2013. Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa, taking a progressive refugee management approach aimed at self-reliance and the peaceful coexistence of refugees and the host population. This paper reveals how South Sudanese refugees and the host population, most of whom consist of people who were displaced during the regional armed conflict, navigate life in new social and economic conditions in and around a refugee settlement in mid-western Uganda. Refugees have long been looked upon as a burden to host countries. Recent studies on the refugee economy, however, reveal that refugees can contribute to the Ugandan economy. I analyse how a refugee-hosting area saw economic development and urbanisation in a relatively short period. On the other hand, local people, whether refugees or Ugandan nationals, have been struggling to cope with the depletion of resources, including food, land, and firewood. Finally, I discuss the social and economic impact of conflict-induced migration in refugee-hosting areas.

Keywords: conflict, migration, refugee–host relations, refugee policy, Uganda, South Sudan

1. Introduction

1.1. Aim: the social and economic impact of refugee influx

Taking the case of the socio-economic dynamics in and around the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement (Kiryandongo R. S.) in mid-western Uganda as an example, this paper aims to illustrate how South Sudanese refugees and Ugandan nationals in a refugee-hosting area interact with each other to make a living and how refugee-hosting areas become urbanised.

There is considerable literature on the social, economic, and environmental impact of refugees and forced migrants on host countries in Africa. Much of the previous literature addresses constrained livelihood opportunities, competition over resources between refugees and the host population, and the depletion of the environment (Martin 2005, Kalyango 2006). Recent studies on refugee economies emphasise refugee–host networks through employment and market activities, and refugees’ contribution to the local economy (Jacobsen 2002a, Werker 2007, Betts *et al.* 2014; 2017, Taylor *et al.* 2016).

Chambers is one of the scholars who emphasises the need to look at the socio-economic impact of refugee influx on host populations in African countries. He has criticised refugee-centrism in humanitarian assistance, which refers to aid organisations being more concerned with refugees than hosts (Chambers 1986). Focusing on the social and economic inequalities in host populations, he points out that in rural refugee-hosting areas, the livelihoods of the poorer hosts are adversely affected due to scarce land and the depletion of resources, while the better-off and more visible hosts usually gain from the presence of refugees and from refugee aid programmes. Jacobsen (2002b) also explores the challenges and opportunities for African states from the double impact of refugee-generated resources. According to her, ‘While refugees impose a variety of security, economic and environmental burdens on host countries, they also embody a significant flow of resources in the form of international humanitarian assistance, economic assets and human capital’ (Jacobsen 2002b:577). She refers to these material, social, and political resources that refugees bring as ‘refugee resources’, which potentially represent an important state-building contribution to the host state.

Although academic studies pay attention to both the benefits and risks that refugee influx can bring to refugee-hosting areas, host countries, donor countries, and aid organisations have regarded refugees as an economic, environmental, and security burden. Recent studies on refugee economies, in which the Refugee Studies Centre (RSC) of Oxford University has taken the initiative, challenge the common assumption that refugees are entirely dependent on aid and stress refugees’ productive and entrepreneurial activities, based on their findings in Ugandan refugee settlements and Kampala (Betts *et al.* 2014; 2017). Betts *et al.* (2014) argue that although refugees are economically diverse and have significant levels of internal inequality, they often make a positive contribution to the host state economy through networks within settlements and outside settlements with Ugandan traders.

Based on the discourse on the social and economic impact of refugee influx, this paper discusses

economic development and urbanisation in the refugee-hosting area of Kiryandongo district, focusing on the socio-economic relations between refugees and hosts, and the impact of refugee assistance programmes.

1.2. Conflict-induced migration in northern Uganda and the Ugandan refugee policy

Uganda has a decades-long history of welcoming refugees from neighbouring conflict-affected areas. The country's earliest refugee settlements, except for two settlements for Polish refugees under British colonial rule, were established in southwestern Uganda in the late 1950s to host Tutsi exiles fleeing Rwanda.¹

After gaining independence in 1962, Uganda hosted refugees from many African countries, including Rwanda, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Burundi. Most people who fled countries and crossed borders have been hosted or have self-settled in the western and northern regions. Northern Uganda, including the West Nile region and the Acholi sub-region, has been one of the favoured destinations among South Sudanese refugees due to its proximity and the transborder network that was built among border communities since the first arrival of Sudanese refugees in Uganda in 1955 when the First Sudanese Civil War broke out. Following the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement in 1972 between the Government of Sudan and the southern rebel army Anyanya, most of the Sudanese refugees were repatriated to southern Sudan. In 1983, fighting between the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Government of Sudan began in southern Sudan, followed by the 22-year internal conflict that was the Second Sudanese Civil War.

In Uganda, after the fall of the Idi Amin regime in 1979, most of the soldiers and residents that hailed from West Nile fled to southern Sudan. They began to return to Uganda in the late 1980s when security deteriorated in southern Sudan. In 1986, when the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) took power in the government, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), organised under its leader Joseph Kony, who hailed from Acholi, began military activities in the Acholi sub-region to topple the NRM/A regime led by Yoweri Museveni. At the peak of the LRA insurgency, over 1.5 million Ugandans were estimated to have been forced out of their homes as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The large-scale displacement in northern Uganda was partly caused by the government's decision in 1996 to force civilians into IDP camps, which were referred to as 'protected villages', in order to keep the LRA rebels at bay and increase protection for local residents (Mulumba and Olema 2009:13). Many local residents had little choice but to reside in IDP camps, while others decided to move to other districts or remain in their villages.

In the 1990s, when the SPLM/A was split and inter-factional fighting intensified in southern Sudan,

¹ The Nakivale Refugee Settlement and the Oruchinga Refugee Settlement are the oldest refugee settlements in Africa.

hundreds of thousands of Sudanese fled home to seek asylum in Uganda. They crossed the border en masse into northern Uganda at the beginning of the 1990s, settling in several refugee settlements in northern and mid-western Uganda. In January 2005, when the Government of Sudan and the SPLM signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), a little less than 200,000 Sudanese refugees remained in Uganda (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] 2006a). Most of them were repatriated to southern Sudan by the 2011 referendum on the self-determination of southern Sudan.

In July 2011, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan with the overwhelming support of the South Sudanese. Peace, however, was short-lived due to unstable local security and political unrest in the government. Military clashes that occurred between the presidential guards in December 2013 devolved into armed conflicts along ethnic lines. Deadly conflicts between the government forces of South Sudan (SPLA) and the rebels loyal to the former vice president or the Sudan People's Liberation Army-in-Opposition (SPLA-IO) continued for five years. During this new civil war, nearly four million people, equivalent to one third of the entire nation, were displaced internally and externally. The Government of South Sudan signed a peace deal with SPLA-IO in September 2018, which led to the establishment of a unity government in February 2020. Nevertheless, a large number of refugees still remain in Uganda and are unwilling to return home due to security concerns, lack of infrastructure, and food insecurity in South Sudan. As of 2020, Uganda hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa, including over 800,000 South Sudanese refugees, representing 61% of the total refugee population (UNHCR 2020). South Sudanese refugees are living in the existing and new refugee settlements in six districts in northern and mid-western Uganda as well as in Kampala.²

Uganda has been praised as one of the countries with a progressive and hospitable refugee management scheme. In Uganda, a large number of refugees are held in settlements rather than in camps and are said to be 'self-reliant' through agriculture and self-employed works, while the rest are permitted to live in Kampala without any in-kind assistance from the UNHCR in Uganda, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or the Ugandan authorities. In refugee settlements, the government's Refugee Department allocates land for housing and farming to every refugee household.³ As such, Uganda's refugee management scheme has been called the 'local settlement policy'.

In 1999, the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the UNHCR in Uganda embarked on the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) in West Nile to respond to the protracted refugee situation in refugee settlements. 'Self-reliance' is defined as 'the ability of an individual, household or community to depend on their own resources (physical, social and natural capital or assets), judgement and capabilities with

² After July 2016, nine refugee settlements were opened in the West Nile region and the Acholi sub-region. In 2018, the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe district became host to over 25,000 refugees, the largest number of refugees in Africa.

³ Currently, the Ugandan government's Refugee Department is placed under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

minimal external assistance in meeting basic needs, and without resorting to activities that irreversibly deplete the household or community resource base' (UNHCR 2006b). Under the SRS, refugees are not just encouraged to be self-reliant, but are expected to promote the host country's economy as 'agents of development'. In addition, refugees are allowed to access social services in host communities, such as healthcare and education, based on the integration of social services in refugee settlements and host communities.

In Uganda, regarding the legal protection of refugees, the Refugees Act of 2006 and the Refugees Regulations of 2010 stipulate that refugees have the right of free movement and employment within the country. They can pursue livelihood opportunities on their own, including participating in the labour market and running businesses. After a new influx of South Sudanese refugees, the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic Framework was launched, with the aim of bringing together a wide range of stakeholders in a harmonised and cohesive manner to more effectively promote the resilience and self-reliance of the entire population of refugee-hosting areas. It is a key component in the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), as stipulated in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants (19 September 2016). As stated in the ReHoPE (GoU *et al.* 2017), one of the main goals is to foster sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities, thereby contributing to socioeconomic growth and increased individual income.

2. Research and method

This paper is based on archival historical research and 6 months of fieldwork between August 2014 and August 2016 in Kiryandongo R. S. and its adjacent town in the host community, Bweyale, to reveal refugee livelihoods and trading networks between refugees and hosts. During my fieldwork, I collected data using non-structured interviews with refugees and Ugandan traders, a household survey on refugee livelihoods, and literature collection on local history.

The research area is the refugee-hosting area of Kiryandongo district, as shown below (Figure 1). In 1991, the Kiryandongo R. S. was established in the Masindi district (present-day Kiryandongo district)⁴ in the western region, approximately 230 km north of the capital, Kampala, and 110 km south of the northern central town of Gulu. It is a 3-hour drive by taxi⁵ to Bweyale, which is the town that is the nearest to Kiryandongo R. S. The total area of the Kiryandongo R. S. is 3,725 hectares, divided into three clusters: Ranches 1, 18, and 37 (Figure 2). Ranches 1 and 37 are allocated to asylum seekers and refugees from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, and others, while Ranch 18 is mainly allocated to the IDPs from the Bududa district of the eastern region of Uganda who survived

⁴ Kiryandongo district was established in 2010, separate from Masindi district.

⁵ This term refers to the privately-owned minibus taxis that are commonly available in Uganda.

the landslide disaster of 2010.⁶

It is located on the routes connecting Kampala and Gulu, and further across the border to Juba, the capital of South Sudan. In the implementation of refugee assistance programmes, Bweyale Town, which has a trading centre, is the host community surrounding the settlement. The population of Bweyale Town is approximately 31,000 (UBOS 2014), while that of Kiryandongo R. S. is estimated to be over 55,000 (UNHCR 2019).⁷ The distance between the Bweyale trading centre and the Kiryandongo R. S. is only about 5 km. Compared with other refugee-hosting districts where local towns are located far away from the settlement, the distance between the two locations in Kiryandongo is relatively short. In this paper, the refugee-hosting area in Kiryandongo district refers to the geographical area that includes both Bweyale and Kiryandongo R. S.

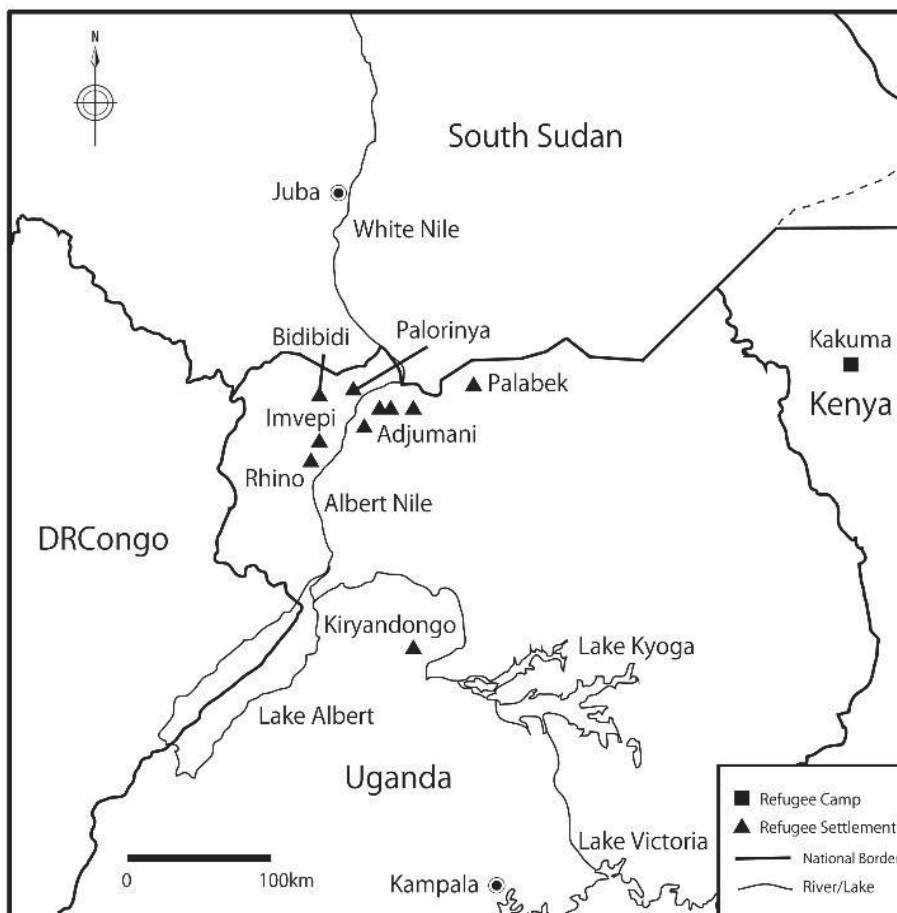


Figure 1. Map of refugee settlements in northern Uganda

Source: UNHCR Uganda (2017).

⁶ The IDPs residing in Ranch 18 are called 'Bududa' after their origin, Bududa district.

⁷ The refugee number that the UNHCR publicises represents those who register with the organisation in Kiryandongo R. S. The actual population of the settlement may be less, considering that many South Sudanese refugees are practically living in Bweyale.

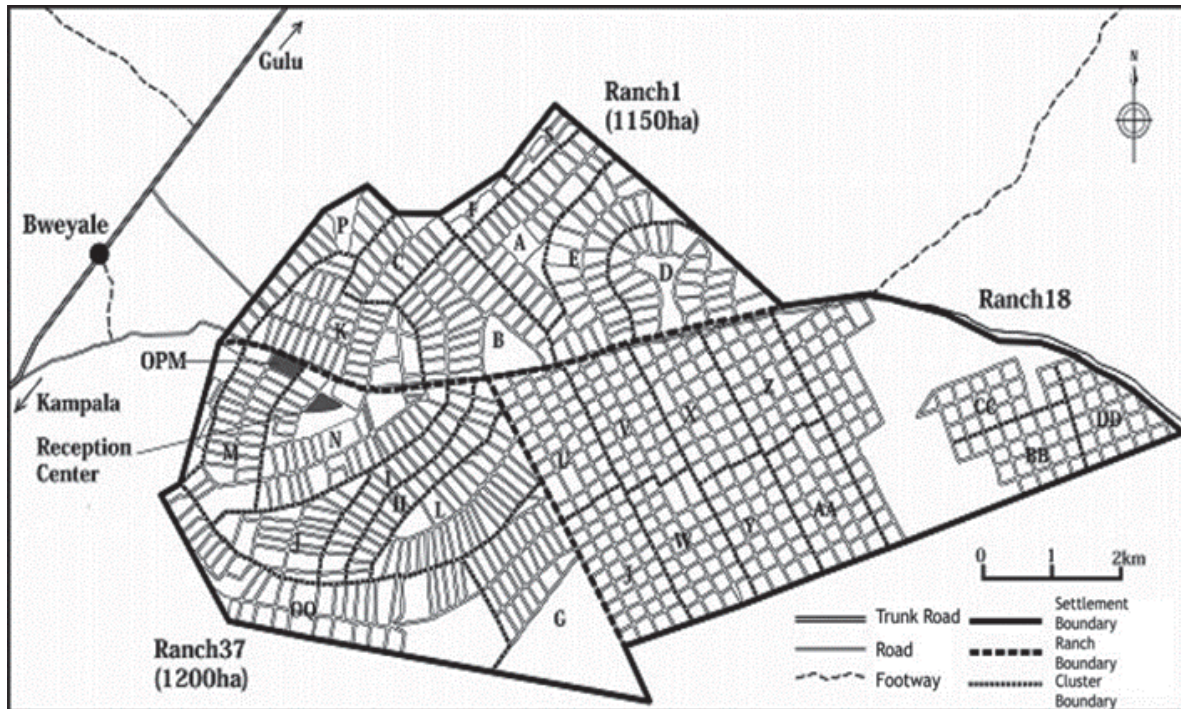


Figure 2. Map of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and Bweyale Town

Note: Produced by author on the basis of the map composed by the OPM.

3. Local development of refugee-hosting areas

3.1. Demographic changes in refugee-hosting areas

Most refugee settlements in Uganda have been established in underdeveloped and sparsely populated areas close to the national border, game reserves, and lakes. Nabuguzi dubbed this ‘bureaucratic fencing’ (Nabuguzi 1998:61) in reference to refugee settlements’ location in isolated areas, far away from local Ugandan towns, where they are bureaucratically segregated from host communities, so that refugees cannot integrate into local communities. Before the enactment of the Refugees Act of 2006, all refugees who registered with the UNHCR were required to reside in government-designated settlements, not in towns. They needed to obtain travel permits from the GoU to leave the settlements temporarily.

Refugees in Uganda have been subject to various formal and informal constraints in terms of making a living; in reality, many refugees cross the refugee–host boundary to sustain themselves and improve their livelihoods through extra-settlement activities, such as trade and paid manual labour. Here, I demonstrate how refugees, specifically internally displaced Ugandan Acholi, and other migrants have built socio-economic relations to pursue livelihoods in and around the Kiryandongo R. S. for decades after its establishment.

The Kiryandongo R. S. dates back to the GoU and the UNHCR’s establishment of a transit centre to host about 14,000 Sudanese refugees who fled Eastern Equatoria in southern Sudan due to an attack by the SPLA on Torit and the border towns in the 1980s. While this group of refugees arrived in Uganda

from various areas of Sudan, the majority were Sudanese Acholi. They were hosted in a transit camp in the Kitgum district of northern Uganda. Shortly after they came, they were harassed by the LRA. In 1990, the Ugandan government gazetted the land in the Masindi district for use by refugees and set up a transit centre to fulfil the UNHCR's request that Sudanese refugees be transferred to a safer location. Part of the land was utilised as a ranch under the Idi Amin regime during the 1970s; this land fell into disuse after the regime's collapse (Kaiser 2000:3). In 1991, the GoU and the UNHCR formalised the establishment of the Kiryandongo R. S. and allocated land to refugees the next year. Each refugee family was allocated a plot of land in proportion to the number of family members (Mulumba 2010:192).⁸ The following comment is from a South Sudanese refugee who has been in Kiryandongo R. S. since 1990:⁹

At the beginning of April 1990, when we were transferred to Kiryandongo from Kitgum, we did not find any water. First, we had to dig the boreholes ourselves. We brought water up to a water tank by truck from Karuma or Masindi port day and night.¹⁰ We run water (through a pipe) from the OPM's office up to the clinic, called the Panyadoli Health Centre. All the areas around the refugee settlement were covered in deep forests. We cleared land to make farmland. In those days, Bweyale had only one police post and a small cotton trading post where Indian traders occasionally came from Kampala to collect cotton.

During the 1990s, the UNHCR and the GoU were responsible for determining the number of people that needed to be fed, and the World Food Programme (WFP) was in charge of providing food rations for refugees. Land allocation to almost all refugees was completed in 1995 in Kiryandongo R. S. By the mid-1990s, the WFP cut food assistance to almost all refugees on the basis of the UNHCR's evaluation that many of the refugees had already achieved 'self-reliance', which prompted the UNHCR to phase out its assistance. The repatriation and new influx of South Sudanese refugees between 2005 and 2017 changed the demographic composition.

After the political crisis that took place in Juba in December 2013, the South Sudanese who fled Juba or other towns registered at Kiryandongo R. S. The majority were Dinka and Nuer, which are the two largest ethnic groups in South Sudan. Some refugees have relatives in Kampala. When another round of fighting broke out in Juba in July 2016, the 'Equatorians', who hail from the three Equatoria regions, constituted the majority of new arrivals. In August 2017, the GoU and the UNHCR officially announced the suspension of refugee registration in Kiryandongo on the grounds that the acceptance of more refugees could cause a lack of land for allocation; it was therefore recommended that new arrivals

⁸ 1.2 hectares to 1.4 hectares of land was provided to Sudanese refugees in Kiryandongo R. S.

⁹ The author interviewed with him in October 2015. The interviewee, who hailed from Lotuho in Sudan, was in charge of a school as a volunteer in Kiryandongo R. S. during the 1990s.

¹⁰ Both locations are over 30 km away from the settlement.

register in newly-established settlements in West Nile. As of July 2017, the refugee population of Kiryandongo was estimated to be approximately 56,000 (UNHCR Uganda 2017). Approximately 99% of the total number of refugees had fled from South Sudan, while the rest had fled from the DRC, Kenya, Burundi, and Rwanda. Women and children under 18 accounted for 84% of the residents, and children made up 64%.

Although the OPM and the UNHCR in Uganda do not publicise the ethnic breakdown of South Sudanese refugees,¹¹ the demographics and socio-economic data collected by the Danish Refugee Councils and its partners in Kiryandongo R. S. (Khadka 2017) suggest that more than 75% of the refugees are from Equatoria, with Acholi accounting for the highest proportion, followed by Kakwa, Kuku, and Madi; the Dinka account for about 30%, and the Nuer account for less than 10%. There were about 3,000 refugees in addition to the new arrivals who registered after December 2013; among these, the Acholi had the highest repatriation rejection rate and many remained in Kiryandongo R. S. These refugees are hosted in Ranches 1 and 37. Approximately 4,000 Ugandan IDPs from Bududa reside in Ranch 18 (Figure 2).¹²

Like the residents of Kiryandongo R. S., the host communities in refugee-hosting areas are not homogenous; rather, they consist of multi-ethnic ‘communities’. I illustrate how an influx of refugees and migrants has changed the local economy and demographic configuration, taking the two towns of Kigumba and Bweyale as an example.

Historically, the Kiryandongo district was part of the ancient kingdom of Bunyoro.¹³ Its original inhabitants are the Banyoro, who speak Runyoro. Since the mid-1950s, this district has received many migrants from other parts of the country, as well as from Kenya, Sudan, and the DRC. As early as 1954, Kenyan refugees were resettled by the British in Kigumba as a result of the Mau Mau Uprising (Ginyera-Pinyawa 1998). Starting in 1957, Kenyan Luyas started to settle in Kigumba under a settlement scheme (Charlsley 1974:339). These Kenyan migrants introduced maize cultivation to the area. In the mid- and late 1960s, migrants from West Nile and refugees from southern Sudan settled in Kigumba to seek livelihood opportunities. Maize became a staple food and the main cash crop for settlers due to the generous, well-distributed rainfall in the area and reasonably fertile soil.

During the 1990s, the district saw a rapid and significant influx of Acholi from the areas around Gulu and Kitgum, the two towns hit hardest by the LRA’s activities (Kaiser 2000:5). These IDPs are characterised by their wide economic differentiation. Some persons from powerful and prosperous

¹¹ The OPM and the UNHCR in Uganda stopped counting the refugee population by ethnicity in 2014. The statistics and survey conducted by the Danish Refugee Council show the ethnic breakdown of 190 sampled individuals from all 17 clusters in Kiryandongo R. S.

¹² This figure is an estimate, taking account into the OPM’s announcement that about 10% of 10,000 affected households were resettled in Kiryandongo district after the 2010 landslide disaster (Rukundo *et al.* 2015)

¹³ Bunyoro Kingdom was established by the Banyoro, a Bantu-speaking people. The powerful kingdom has ruled a large area in western and central Uganda since the 14th century, until it was defeated by the British in the late 19th century.

families with many resources started or continued successful business ventures, while others were displaced with little property. Many obtained land for settlement in Bweyale through negotiations with the town council, and they were able to make a living without external assistance.

From the 1990s to the early the 2000s, Bweyale became a larger town, a key public transportation hub, and a trading centre. Its economic development attracted traders and labour migrants seeking better opportunities for business from various areas, particularly West Nile and Kampala. Its unique location, connecting Kampala and the Ugandan border towns, coupled with its relative safety encouraged refugees, IDPs, and other migrants to start businesses. In addition, the Refugee Affected Area (RAA) approach has been taken very seriously in Uganda. It is estimated that 40% of the assistance disbursed by the UNHCR in Uganda has been directed to the area surrounding the settlement in order to facilitate a general improvement in living conditions and mitigate the Ugandan population's possible resentment of refugees (Kaiser 2000:6). Humanitarian assistance for the host community led to improvements in infrastructure and social services. Bweyale's rapid development is clear at a glance when Bweyale is compared with Kiryandongo Town, which has served as the district headquarters. Bweyale is currently the most bustling town in the district, given that it is a trade centre that hosts numerous economic activities. On the other hand, Kiryandongo is a less busy town and the site of relatively little economic activity.

Today, there is no single dominant population or language in Bweyale. It is estimated that over 55 languages, including Acholi, Madi, Alur, Kiswahili, Runyoro, and English, are spoken there. Similarly, the Kiryandongo R. S. is a refugee-hosting area representing a heterogeneous, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual 'community'. Contrary to the popular conception of refugees as 'outsiders' hosted by local 'native' citizens, the host community of the Kiryandongo district developed significantly after the establishment of the refugee settlement and the influx of various migrants.

3.2. Refugee livelihoods and refugee–host relations

Regarding the general characteristics of refugee–host relations, Bøås states 'Whereas refugees seek to improve their livelihoods through extra-settlement activities, the nationals that live in the areas close to the camp seek to improve their livelihoods by deepening their integration into the services that the settlement provides such as education and health centres' (Bøås 2015:127). This is accurate in the case of the relationship between the Kiryandongo R. S. and Bweyale. Here, I illustrate how refugees have built socio-economic relations with host populations by pursuing livelihood pathways.

First, the words 'refugees' and 'host' should be explained. In Ugandan refugee aid programmes in the Kiryandongo district, the term 'refugees' refers to the foreign nationals who obtain or seek refugee status and is therefore equivalent to the terms 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' in official use, while 'host population' includes any Ugandan nationals living next to refugees, whether or not they are urban

dwellers, including Ugandan Acholi IDPs or IDPs from Bududa in the settlement. This distinction indicates that ‘refugees’ are divided from ‘hosts’ according to nationality differences and not based on residential location. In that sense, the divide between ‘refugees’ and ‘hosts’ is clarified in the refugee–host framework, in which diverse relief activities come into operation; the divide is also visualised geographically by hosting refugees in a government-designated refugee settlement. However, as Turner (2016) points out, the social and geographical boundary between refugees and Ugandans, which is designed to create a division between ‘us’ and ‘others’, is constantly transgressed by both refugees and members of the host population, both of whom actively seek opportunities in and around the settlement in terms of trading, business, educational access, health care, etc. These everyday activities of both refugees and hosts have formed a particular pattern of migration, economies, and socialities in refugee-hosting areas.

In the Kiryandongo R. S., social and economic links have been fairly well established between refugees and the host population over the past three decades. According to an investment profile compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uganda, at the district level, over 70% of refugees are involved in economic activities. Among these, agriculture is the main activity, accounting for 50%, while other activities include retail and *lejaleja*, meaning casual labourers or piecework to generate income (UNDP Uganda and Uganda Investment Authority [UIA] 2017). The majority of refugees now live on crops that they are able to grow for self-consumption and sale.

Land usage, livelihood strategies, and entrepreneurship vary according to nationality and ethnicity; however, maize cultivation is a major agricultural activity for food and cash income irrespective of the nationalities of both refugees and their Ugandan hosts. Mulumba’s (2010:298-307) case study of the Kiryandongo R. S. suggests that the livelihood strategies used by refugees in the early 2000s do not differ much from those that are being utilised at present, although the demographic composition of the settlement changed considerably after a new refugee influx in 2013.¹⁴ Gender roles among refugees can change due to protracted displacement. According to a female refugee who has lived in the settlement for 30 years, Acholi women had to take on the previously male agricultural activity of digging due to their husbands’ long absences from the settlement for the purpose of seeking casual work in other districts that are far away from the Kiryandongo R. S.

In the Kiryandongo R. S., most South Sudanese cattle keepers, including Dinka and Nuer, lost their livestock during the fighting or kept them in remote villages in their home areas. Since it is impossible to continue large-scale animal husbandry on a small plot in the settlement, many former cattle keepers lend their plots to other refugees, including ‘Equatorian’ refugees, a majority of whom are agricultural peoples residing in Bweyale. In general, ‘Equatorian’ refugees and other refugees from Kenya and the

¹⁴ In the early 2000s, Sudanese Acholi accounted for almost 70% of the total number of refugees in the Kiryandongo R. S., with only a few refugees from Dinka and Nuer.

DRC are keen on securing access to land and producing crops. The agricultural products that Ugandan hosts cultivate are more diverse than those produced by refugees due to the amount of available arable land. In addition to maize, cassava, bananas, beans, tobacco, groundnuts, sesame, and rice are popular cash crops among host communities.

Generally, all refugee families cultivate maize, while some also organise mutual aid groups and borrow land from other refugees and the host population. A self-organised group of Moru refugees, one of the ethnic communities vigorously engaged in agricultural activities, borrows unused land from a family of Dinka refugees and utilises it as common land. The group's leader sells the harvested maize to raise funds to build a church.

Entrepreneurial refugees cultivate a variety of agricultural products, such as beans, groundnuts, sesame, tubers, vegetables, and fruits for self-consumption and sale (Murahashi 2018). Refugees are also encouraged to engage in income-generating activities, such as operating a local brewery, making and selling snacks and light meals like chapatti and cassava chips, rearing poultry, managing a small-scale business, and working as a casual labourer. In protracted refugee situations where refugees are not provided with food assistance, they tend to diversify their piecework both inside and outside the settlement.

Once maize is harvested and stored in a granary, it is used for self-consumption and sale. I interviewed 100 refugee households to ascertain the annual amount of yield, self-consumption, and sales (including maize scheduled to be sold) in October 2015. The results show that the average yield is 712 kg per household, while 422 kg is to be sold (Figure 3). In general, refugees decided to sell about 60% of the harvested maize. Household yield varies depending on the actual size and fertility of their land. Some refugees cultivate larger tracts of land by borrowing land from neighbours, relatives, or friends. Most South Sudanese refugees cultivate maize without any fertiliser or pesticides, as they used to do in their homeland, although some began using them in Uganda.

In order to save on transport costs between the settlement and Bweyale,¹⁵ instead of going to the trading centre at Bweyale, most refugees sell their harvested maize to Ugandan traders who collect it by lorry (Figure 4). The past decades have seen the formation of a well-established trading network that connects the settlement with Bweyale and other Ugandan markets. New arrivals, long-term refugees, and Ugandan host populations buy and sell commodities and goods using this networked trade route.

Ugandan traders can sell the maize they buy from refugees at higher prices in border towns or in Kampala. Maize can be sold at two to three times its Kiryandongo purchase price in the Kenya–Uganda border town of Busia and in the South Sudan–Uganda border town of Elegu. The price of maize varies

¹⁵ If maize is transported by motorcycle taxi (*bodaboda*) between the settlement and Bweyale, it costs about UGX 3,000 to UGX 5,000 (approximately US \$0.8 to US \$1.3) per 100 kg sack. UGX is the currency code for the Ugandan Shilling.

by season and year, depending on the supply and demand in the maize market. A good harvest, therefore, does not necessarily mean that a maize producer can obtain a sufficient income to make a living, given selling price fluctuations.¹⁶ Refugees often seek out the opportune time to sell their maize in order to cope with uncertain market prices and earn a higher income.

It is not just agricultural activity that creates a particular type of refugee–host economy; humanitarian assistance can also become a commodity for exchange in refugee–host trading. For instance, refugees sell a large portion of the monthly food rations they receive from the WFP for cash. The main crop in the rations is sorghum, which refugees do not readily eat, partly because Ugandan red sorghum is believed to be of poor quality and is also thought to be indigestible. Ugandan traders buy food rations, such as farm products, from refugees to resell.

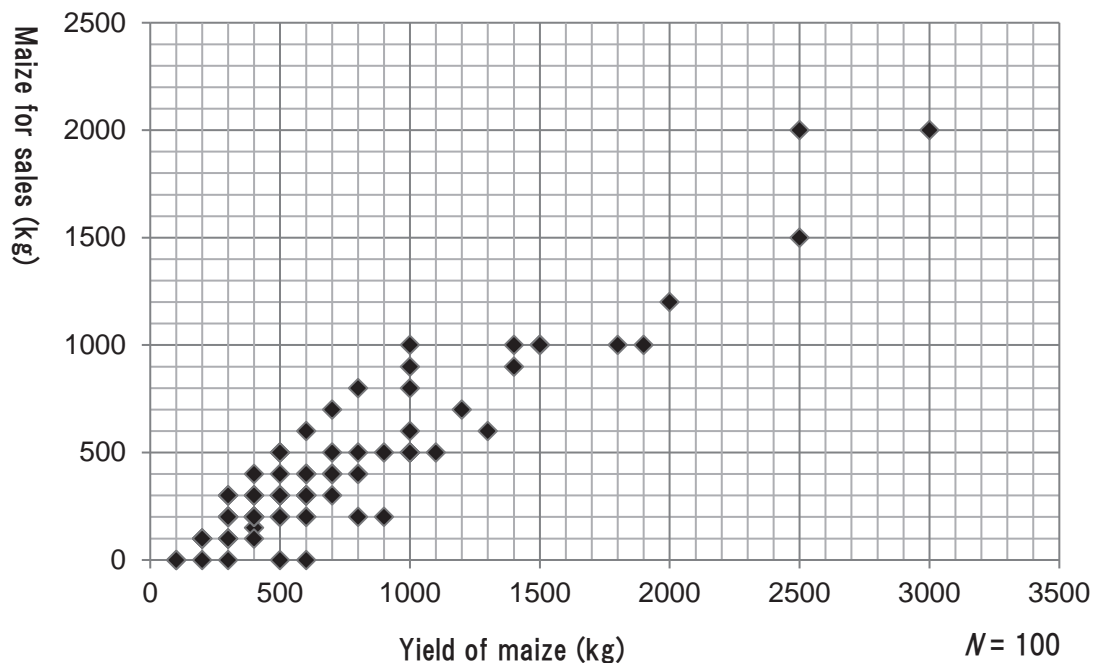


Figure 3. Yield and sales of maize in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

Source: Author, Data collected in September 2015.

¹⁶ In 2016, when the yield of crops was at the normal average, the selling price per kilogram was between UGX 300 and UGX 500. In 2017, when damage by a harmful insect affected the maize yield, the price went up to UGX 3,000. In 2018, when the refugees had a good harvest, the selling price fell to UGX 300.



Figure 4. Ugandan trader loading sacks of maize at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

Source: Author, September 2015.

Casual paid work, such as making bricks, house construction, and contract digging, is also a source of income for refugees, although many of these activities are done within the settlement and not in the host community. However, apart from running self-employed businesses, including a small-scale retail enterprise called a *kiosk*, some refugees can find short-term paid work in the host community, such as harvesting work on a large farm close to the settlement or road construction,

Here, I take a young South Sudanese refugee as an example of a refugee who is making a livelihood pathway in the host community. He was born in a border town in southern Sudan during the 1980s and raised by a family of Catholic priests in the Kiryandongo R. S. after his parents were killed during the Second Sudanese Civil War. He grew up like a son to the host family, until he returned to Juba after the signing of the CPA in 2005. In December 2013, after narrowly escaping the fighting and soldiers' atrocities against civilians in Juba, he sought asylum in Uganda once again. When he returned to Kiryandongo, he rented a house in Bweyale and established a small-scale business without being registered by the UNHCR in Uganda. His business offers the service of taking photographs of customers with a small digital camera he borrowed from his friend; the photos are developed and edited in Kampala and sold to the customers. There are no photo studios in Bweyale, although there has been high demand among local people for identification card photographs and family mementos. He told me that he became a mobile photographer to survive, i.e. to earn money to cover his living costs and save for his education. For him, Bweyale is the better place to run his mobile business because he can expect more customers on the ground than he can in the Kiryandongo R. S. Further, Bweyale provides access to Kampala. Like

him, some refugees prefer to live in Bweyale, whether they register or not, in order to gain better access to social services and capitalise on livelihood opportunities.

3.3 Scarce resources and economic hardship

While refugee acceptance can benefit the host economy in some ways, the presence of an unprecedented number of refugees inevitably causes the depletion of resources shared between refugees and host populations in refugee-hosting areas. Taking into account the protracted nature of the refugee situation in Uganda, land is a major resource for refugees and Ugandan nationals alike, as both groups need it to sustain their livelihoods and achieve self-reliance in the long run.

However, because of the continuous influx of refugees from South Sudan, Burundi, and the DRC, and the increased population of Ugandan nationals in host communities, arable land has decreased in refugee-hosting districts. In the refugee settlements in northern Uganda,¹⁷ the amount of land per refugee household has already been reduced from 50 m × 50 m (2,500 m²) to about 30 m × 30 m (900 m²) in order to accommodate new arrivals.

Furthermore, other materials that refugees need to cook meals and build housing, such as firewood, poles, and thatch, have also become scarce. As Poole (2019) reports, most refugees gain a little income through the sale of ‘bush products’, such as fish, brick, and firewood, while receiving food aid to cope with serious food shortages. Refugees often search for these materials in the host community without permission from local Ugandans, which leads to conflicts between refugees and host populations (Dawa 2018, Poole 2019, Van Laer 2019).

As is the case in northern Uganda, quarrels over land, natural resources, and access to social services have been seen in the Kiryandongo R. S. to a lesser degree. According to Khadka (2017), the three main causes of conflict in the Kiryandongo R.S. are related to natural resources, aid, and access to social services. About 70% of the respondents in an inquiry about the frequency of conflicts over natural resources in the past month indicated that 42% were related to aid, 26% were related to access to social services, and 19% were related to land. In particular, water and firewood shortages within the settlement are a major driver of conflict.

The land allocations are too small for refugees to generate a sufficient income to cover their living costs, school fees, and medical expenses. Nearly 80% of the refugees own a plot of land that is less than 1,000 m², while only 13% own a larger plot that is between 1,200 m² and 5,000 m² (Khadka 2017:18). Refugees often cope with the land shortage by negotiating with other refugees or with members of the host community in order to gain access to more plots of land. Land allocation reduction has had a

¹⁷ There are several refugee settlements in Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe, and Arua in the West Nile region, as well as in the Lamwo district of the Acholi sub-region. Established in August 2016, the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Yumbe district hosts the most refugees in Uganda.

negative impact on food security and income-generating activities. In recent years, both refugees and host communities have been vulnerable to adverse conditions, such as erratic rainfall, prolonged drought, land exhaustion, and pests. Several refugees who are able to cultivate a significant amount of land by renting and buying additional land engage in various types of commercial agriculture. A model farmer who receives NGO grants has been keen on cultivating various cash crops with the use of fertilisers and pesticides; such farmers can make a profit by selling their harvested crops within settlements.

Most of the refugees are married, but not many have their spouse present in the settlement. There is a general tendency of men leaving the settlement temporarily to seek job opportunities and women remaining in the settlement, caring for their families as bona fide household heads. Women play a pivotal role in income-generating activities at the household level. They are engaged in multiple economic activities, such as selling vegetables, making and selling snacks, brewing and selling homemade alcohol, and selling clothes and daily necessities. Vegetables are cultivated and foodstuffs are made in their houses, while Ugandan wholesalers from Kampala bring other commodities, such as used clothes and shoes, and notebooks and stationery for schooling.

Remittance is a transnational network that supports refugees economically. In East Africa, including Uganda, it is well known that Somali refugees have built and taken advantage of the global network of remittance through which they link with diasporas living in wealthy industrialised countries. Some South Sudanese refugees whose families, relatives, and friends resettled in Australia and the United States in the early 2000s are the constant beneficiaries of overseas remittances. However, most gain little financial support. Even those receiving remittances from South Sudan have suffered due to the continued decline in the exchange rate of the South Sudanese pound due to dire economic collapse.

4. Concluding remarks

This paper reveals the relationship between conflict-induced migration and local development, focusing on a particular type of economy emerging through refugee–host relations. As Betts *et al.* (2014) point out, the flexibility of asylum policy in Uganda has allowed refugees to become integrated into trade and labour economies with local peoples, thus stimulating the Ugandan economy and creating opportunities for refugees to work and build self-sustainable livelihoods.

As the local development of refugee-hosting areas such as the Kiryandongo R. S. and the economic integration of refugees with hosts show, it is safe to say that contrary to the popular assumption that refugee acceptance is a burden on refugee-hosting countries, refugee hosting and humanitarian assistance have boosted Uganda's local economy and improved infrastructure and social services in refugee-hosting areas. The 'birth' of Bweyale Town as a host community and its expansion of urban space represent how refugee resources, as Jacobsen (2002b) points out, are the pull factors that attract various people, i.e. refugees, IDPs, and domestic migrants, to live in politically stable and food-rich

areas. In and around refugee settlements, a particular refugee–host economy has emerged. Refugees put their labour into their land to produce food for self-consumption and income generation. In relation to the host community, refugees are also customers, in addition to providers of labour. Ugandan nationals who settled in towns surrounding the settlement came in search of livelihood opportunities, better infrastructure, and social services; many have started a business or secured employment with the UNHCR in Uganda or an NGO. The refugee economy is linked to the host country's broader economy through the exchange of goods and commodities. Agricultural products, such as maize, are major items to be exchanged between refugees and hosts, while daily necessities, such as used clothes and shoes, are brought from outside into refugee settlements (Figure 5). Such networked economic activities interconnect refugee settlements with host communities and even with neighbouring countries and the refugees' countries of origin.

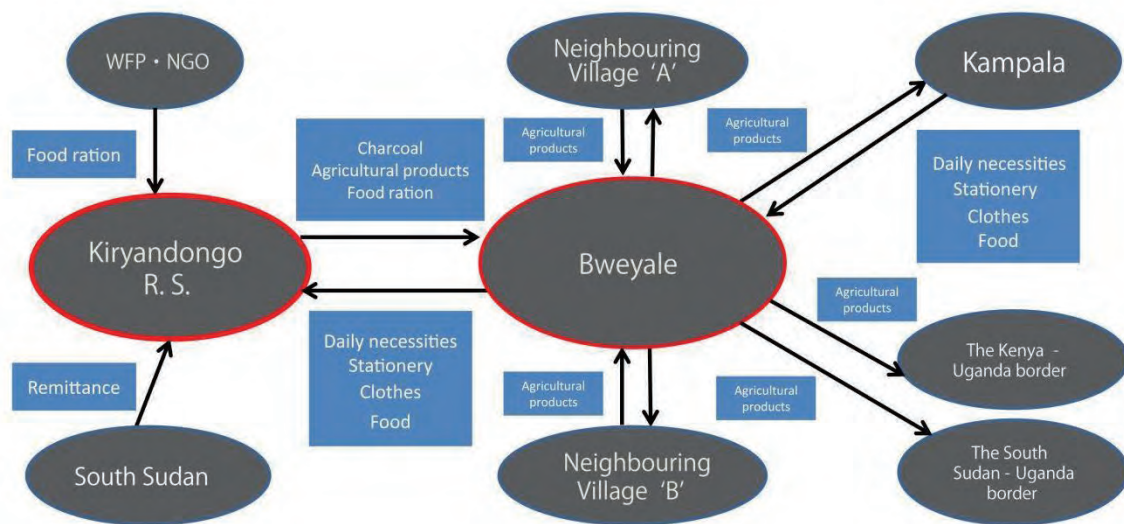


Figure 5. The flow of commodities and goods in a networked refugee–host economy

Source: Author.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to examine the empirical experiences of the refugees and the host population who have been engaged in subsistence agriculture, self-employed business, and short-term casual work. A survey conducted by the UNHCR in Uganda, the OPM, and the WFP in 2017 demonstrated that 69% of refugees are living on less than UGX 2,000, which is equivalent to US \$1.68 per day in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms and is below the threshold for internationally-recognised extreme poverty, while only a small number of refugees have household per capita expenditures amounting to UGX 5,000, which may indicate some form of 'self-reliance' (Development Pathways 2020:vii). In fact, refugees are much more likely to live in poverty than host populations, even though the former receive food assistance (ibid.viii). Even in the Kiryandongo R. S., which has more favourable

conditions for refugees to pursue livelihood pathways than other settlements in northern Uganda, many refugees stated during my fieldwork that they maintain their dignified life and envision a future without humanitarian assistance.

Uganda has been praised as a hospitable country with open and progressive refugee policies and laws. However, in reality, Uganda is faced with big challenges in the implementation of refugee aid programmes due to the unprecedented number of refugees, limited resources to meet the demands of refugees and hosts, and insufficient international support. Despite international donors' high expectations that refugees are gradually weaning off the aid programme and will achieve self-reliance in the near future, there is little hard evidence indicating that the Ugandan refugee policy has been working successfully, except among a very small portion of refugees. It is therefore necessary to thoroughly examine the benefits and challenges of refugee hosting in the political and social contexts.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by a Grant-in-Aid for JSPS Fellows (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP13J04291, JP17J09937) and by a research grant from the Konosuke Matsushita Memorial Foundation (Grant Number 15-181) for fieldwork. During my fieldwork, I was supported by the OPM, the UNHCR in Uganda, and the refugees in the Kiryandongo R. S. I would also like to express my thanks to the anonymous referees and to Editage (www.editage.com) for English language editing. The author declares no conflict of interest.

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International migration dynamics in Mozambique and natural resource exploration: Gold and forest predation

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Abstract

In recent years, global connectivity has led to the phenomenal movement of people across Mozambique in search of natural resources. Easier communication has turned the world into a nutshell in terms of time and distance. It is predicted that the growth of international migration will become aggravated in the coming years. Given Mozambique's openness to foreign direct investments (FDIs), the peace that followed the country after the General Peace Agreement in 1992, and the subsequent era of coal, oil, and gas discoveries, the country came into the spotlight before the international community. Countless international migrants have entered the country by road, air, and sea in search of gold and forestry resources, while large companies came to explore oil, gas, forests, and coal. Thus, this paper seeks to reflect on the depredation of natural resources, perceived by many to be caused by international immigrants with either legal or illegal status. The literature review, data collected in the Cabo Delgado and Gaza provinces in the context of artisan mining and environmental refugees, and empirical evidence from news sources help to shed light on the issue. The main research question is: Is Mozambique again facing a new era of resource predation?

Keywords: international migration, natural resources, predation, gold, forests

1. Introduction

Mozambique is comprised of 819,380 km² overall, of which farm land spans 786,380 km², inland waters measure 13,000 km², and the marine surface spans 120,000 km² (Dos Muchangos 1999). According to the 2017 IV census, of all people registered, the nation has 27,106,207 inhabitants, including 26,899,105 Mozambicans (99.24%) and 207,102 national foreign residents (0.76%) (INE 2019). Historically, Mozambique has been shaped by in-bound and out-bound migration: first by Arabs, later by Portuguese, and most recently, by people from all over the world. Raimundo and Raimundo (2017) pointed out that current migration and resource exploration are influenced by the General Peace Agreement, signed by the government led by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the National Resistance of Mozambique (RENAMO), and the state's openness to foreign direct investments (FDIs). Further, with the spark of conflicts around the African Great Lakes and in the Middle East, numerous refugees have been displaced, driving them to migrate to Southern Africa, including Mozambique. 'Mining' discoveries, together with FDIs, have attracted a new wave of immigrants, including Asian ones. Two natural resources for this analysis were chosen: gold and forests. Both are discussed widely in the media; artisanal miners from abroad seek gold, while the plundering of forests (due to over-exploration) is blamed on the Chinese, 'who cut trees down 'without any pity and export loads of logs'. This is against the approved Policy and Strategy for the Development of Forests and Wildlife (Boletim da República de Moçambique 1997), which is aligned with the principles of sustainable development.

Aquino *et al.* (2018) showed that Mozambique possesses 34 million ha of forests, which covers 43% of the nation's surface area. The country lost 267,000 ha between 2003 and 2013. Between 2014 and 2016, about 86,000 hectares of forests were lost, with direct consequences for carbon emissions and a lack of resilience to climate events. The causes of deforestation in Mozambique are linked to poverty, swift population growth, low-scale agriculture, and wood demand from the international market. In response to global trends in forest and wildlife protection, the government has adopted several legal instruments, including the recently approved Law of Forests and Wildlife passed in 2016. Despite this law, according to Magalhães (2014), a system for monitoring and staffing is lacking, in addition to a shortage of efficient forest management systems and a dearth of industries. Thus, Mozambique exports wooden logs, with a low contribution to the country's revenue.

Raimundo *et al.* (2020) found a new geography of international migration in Mozambique that began in the 1990s, demonstrated by the influx of immigrants from places that were previously thought of as unthinkable of producing them. Up until 1990, the country was solely seen as an outbound (not a receiving) country. The movement of people towards gold mining areas and the deforestation of trees is unprecedented. Raimundo (2018) wrote a report commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) titled, 'A comparative perspective on the trends and potential of managed migration flows within responsible informal artisanal mining in Angola and Mozambique'. Raimundo revealed

that in Cabo Delgado Province, namely in Namuno and Ancuabe districts, a group of artisanal miners from Tanzania is squandering gold and forest resources. Moreover, the IV General Census of Housing and Population illustrates that the number of foreigners rose by about 12% compared to the previous census. What do they seek in a country where the official language is Portuguese, and the nation is known for being affected by natural disasters (floods, cyclones, and droughts) and military instability (16 years of war, plus insurgencies and armed attacks in Cabo Delgado Province)?

Local and international news argue that ‘the country is under attack’, ‘the country’s resources are being stolen’ and ‘the country’s forests and mineral resources are deteriorating’. What kind of policy can curb or prevent the depletion of natural resources and control migration and labour contracts in Mozambique?

The literature review, data collected in the Cabo Delgado and Gaza provinces in the context of artisan mining and environmental refugees, and empirical evidence from news sources helps to shed light on the issue. In this paper, I discuss the concepts of artisanal mining and environmental refugees. World Bank Group-IBRD-IDA (2013) defines artisanal mining, also known as small-scale mining, as an activity done outside of regulations and carried out using technology with minimal machinery. Alexandre (2009), the former national director of the National Directorate of Mining in Mozambique, stressed that many workers in the mining sector do not possess mining certification and operate in undesignated areas. International agencies have not arrived at a consensus on what constitutes an environmental refugee, according to the Climate Migration Coalition.¹ Broadly, environmental refugees move due to changes in the environment, such as natural disasters, which are linked to events beyond climate change. Under these circumstances, is Mozambique again facing a new era of resource predation?

2. Methodology

Studying people on the move poses a challenge in demographic studies. According to Rocha-Trindade (2015:71), it is hard to identify the various components of people moving from one site to another, particularly foreigners, who cross national borders without declaring when and in which circumstance they crossed a specific one, and even less so when it comes to describing their length of stay in a country, such as with tourists. This is not new, as migration scholars have already pointed out. To make things worse, difficulty arises when it comes to data, as institutions in charge of registering migrants keep information secret. The IV General Census of Population and Housing of Mozambique was administered in 2017; the general results were released in 2019. Researchers’ requests for access to the database on

¹ <http://climatemigration.org.uk/environmental-refugees-definition-numbers>

migrants were denied, as they were considered to have been seeking classified information.

The Immigration National Service (INS) keeps data on international migrants. Its principle is similar: ‘This cannot be disclosed because it is classified information’. Thus, the only way to obtain data is through indirect methods, including indirect calculations or measurements based on projections, World Bank facts, IMO facts, information circulated by local newspapers, or case studies undertaken by different scholars in diverse contexts, including dissertations and consultancies. Further, all foreigners are deemed immigrants found in mining areas, as in Cabo Delgado Province (northern Mozambique) and in the forest sector, as in Gaza Province (southern Mozambique). Certain ministries, including the Ministry of Labour, also do not disclose any data about workers or related information.

Obviously, it is hard to obtain information about their migration journeys, but through interviews between 2017 and 2018 in Cabo Delgado and Gaza provinces, I was able to identify where they came from and their length of stay in Mozambique. Another challenge in obtaining real information is the double status or citizenship of most interviewees. For instance, in Gaza Province, there are Mozambicans, South Africans, and Zimbabweans, while in Cabo Delgado, there are Tanzanians, Mozambicans, Congolese, Ugandans, Burundians, and Rwandans.

Even though it is difficult to measure aspects of people on the move, the censuses undertaken in Mozambique give some idea of international immigration circumstances. Usual information about migrants is captured by asking them about their place of birth/origin, their current place of residence, and how long they lived in a particular location 1-5 years before the census.

As proposed in the title, I discuss the relationship between immigration and natural resource depletion. It was difficult to establish a clear link between those who deplete resources and their citizenship. To make things easier, I relied on reports about some kinds of citizenship of people who have been accused of depleting resources. These are Chinese, Nigerians, and Tanzanians and those who fall in the category of ‘refugees’, namely Rwandans, Burundians, and Congolese.

Taking these challenges into account, I wrote this paper on international migration and the relationship with natural resources deprivation due to various studies undertaken in the context of migration, artisanal mining, and environmental refugees in Gaza and Cabo Delgado provinces. I consulted different reports related to the mining and forestry sectors and migration in Mozambique. The commonality of these studies is that people are living in a ‘strange’ environment because they settle in a home or a place where they can invest and contribute to development. During my studies, I came across citizens from Tanzania, Burundi, China, India, Portugal, Rwanda, Congo, and Nigeria; they all claimed to be in Mozambique due to business opportunities. They used long-standing migration routes, kinship relationships, and the fact that some of them have been evicted from South Africa on account of xenophobic attacks and other hostilities, to enter the country.

3. Mozambique: A blessed and cursed country due to its geographic location and natural resources

3.1. Geographic location

Mozambique is geographically located in Southern Africa (see Figure 1).

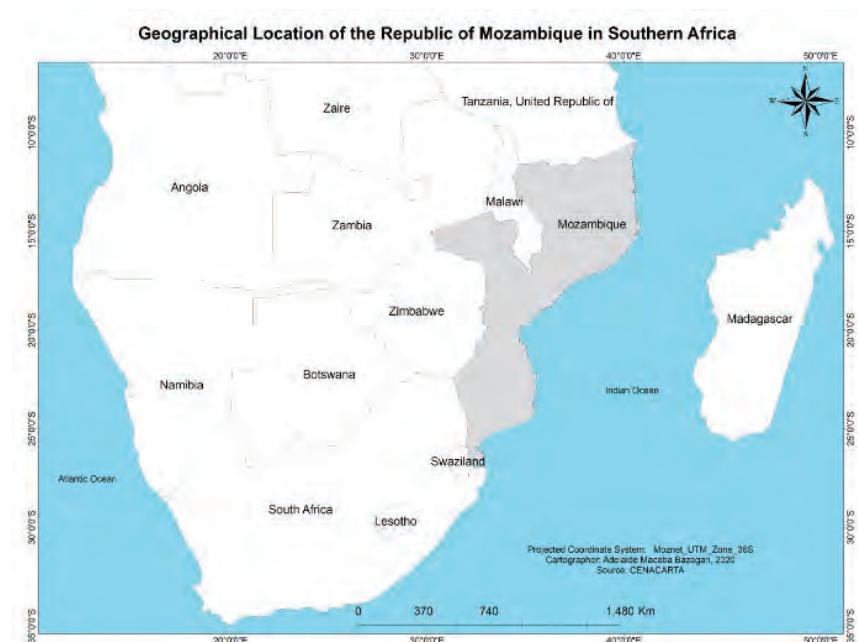


Figure 1. The geographic location of the Republic of Mozambique in Southern Africa.

3.2. General physical characteristics

The country, apart from exuberant forests and rivers, is extremely rich in mineral resources; some claim it has the largest reserves in the world. Some of these minerals are gold, diamond, graphite, oil, gas, and coal (Brandão 2010, Notícias 2017, Raimundo and Raimundo 2017). These riches attract people from around the globe. Mining areas are also attractive to locals, who decide to move to these zones on a temporary or definitive basis.

3.3. Population, urban and rural characteristics

Mozambique has approximately 27,909,798 people: 13,348,446 (48%) males and 14,561,352 (52%) females. From 2007 to 2017, the population increased by 7,277,398 (35%), as seen in Table 1. In terms of economic activities, 66.8% of people are engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mineral extraction.

Table 1. Population growth between 1980 and 2017

Year	Total population	Population growth rate (%)
1980	12,137,000	2.5
1997	16,100,000	1.7
2007	20,670,000	2.5
2017	27,106,207	2.8

Source: INE (2019).

Other than Mozambicans, the largest proportion of total population comprises Malawians, followed by Zimbabweans, Tanzanians, Portuguese, Indians, and Pakistanis (Table 2). Chinese are not yet represented in statistics.

Table 2. Population living in Mozambique by the time of the IV census (2017) by place of origin

#	Country/region of origin	Total population
1	Mozambique	26,899,105
2	South Africa	14,698
3	Zimbabwe	15,083
4	Tanzania	10,083
5	Zambia	2,388
6	Burundi	3,418
7	Rwanda	1,626
8	Malawi	65,295
9	China	1,346
10	Portugal	5,560
11	India	3,349
12	Pakistan	1,259
13	Other African countries	12,694
14	Other European countries	1,624
15	Unidentified countries	3,384
16	Other foreign countries	207,102
	Total population	27,106, 207

Source: INE (2019):Tables 4.24 & 25.

3.4. Migration

The exact number of people who move to these areas and where they settle is not known; neither is their origin. However, it is known that the number of immigrants has risen drastically in response to both national and international factors. Migration represents an important demographic response to poverty and environmental stress in Africa and elsewhere. It is not a new phenomenon in Southern Africa, nor in Mozambique. Thus, there is a need to fully grasp the patterns of such movement. Understanding patterns of migration flows could assist governments in planning and formulating accurate policies that drive proper management and development. Countries have exchanged their populations for centuries, including for labour migration. However, common regulations to satisfy all countries have still not been reached. The lack of concrete action on migration in Southern Africa has led to very flexible migration laws. This is observable through bilateral visa agreements. The effective visa exemption between Mozambique and several Southern African countries is responsible for these signs of change.

Studies by the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) and other migration experts have stressed that several African nations from Southern Africa have been involved in the labour system towards South Africa, which has a dynamic, robust economy. If there are regional studies on migration, little can be said about migration and natural resource depletion, as discussed in this article.

3.4.1. Migration flows, trends and data

Migrants are an essential component of international, regional, and national economies, and comprise a significant channel of the flow of labour (Castles and Miller 2009, Akesson 2018). Some scholars have conventionally perceived migration as negative with respect to its relationship with development, rapid urbanisation, and illegality, which is why countries are protecting their borders from migrants. However, they become friendlier when it comes to tourism, as tourists bring money.

The migration process begins for a reason. This means that a decision is made (i.e. to move or not to move) based on a complex set of factors. Such factors may involve many people, households, families, or the community, and depend on the circumstances in which the decision is made. No country can avoid receiving and sending migrants, particularly when it comes to states experiencing war, such as Mozambique, on account of the blossoming of mineral resources, including oil, gas, and coal.

Obtaining data on migration is challenging. There is a widespread belief that migration data are derived from population censuses or public registers (for a given interval of time), which track migrants and their movements. Based on this assumption, countries should have a good data system for to collect information if people enter on a regular basis, cross borders formally, and possess valid documents. If international data are difficult to capture, the situation worsens when it comes to internal migrants.

3.4.1.1. International migration in Mozambique

The idea of emigration (outbound migration) and immigration (inbound migration) entails displacement of people from one place to another. Generally, those who move hope to be well-received, and those who host immigrants expect not to be invaded by ‘aliens’ and not to see their resources spoiled by immigrants. International migration in Mozambique has different scenarios and features. Within its 45 years of independence (Raimundo and Raimundo 2016; 2017, Muanamoha and Raimundo 2018a; 2018b, Raimundo 2018), the country has faced civil war for 16 years, natural disasters (floods and cyclones), political and military stability immediately after the signing of the General Peace Agreement in 1992, and so-called ‘mining’ discoveries (Raimundo and Raimundo 2017).

During my research in Cabo Delgado, I asked one of my interviewees about how he came to Ancuabe District to loot gold. He stated:

Your question is interesting. I found Mozambique as I have relatives here in Macomia. My cousins are my relatives in Macomia. But I am a Tanzanian and I came down here to find some gold, as I am a businessman and I need to do businesses in my country (Ancuabe, 17 November 2017).

During the same session, I met another individual from Tanzania involves in sales, who said:

I am here for gold. The quality of gold here is the same as that of Tanzania. There are many people looting gold. We are living in a highly competitive world. And because they are many people, I had to find another place. Here, it is still a virgin area (Ancuabe, 17 November 2017).

3.4.1.2. Cross-border migration

The locals have a long history of buying and selling goods in the region, especially with countries that share the same borders. People have crossed borders not solely for selling, but for paying visits to their friends and each other, especially between Tanzania/Mozambique, Malawi/Mozambique, Mozambique/Swaziland, and Mozambique/Zimbabwe (Raimundo and Raimundo 2016). There are other motives as well, such as studying and obtaining medical treatment.

People from several South African states trade with each other regularly. A recent study undertaken by SAMP on border monitoring indicates a trend (Raimundo and Chikanda 2016). In Mozambique, crossings are facilitated by kinship ties and by the border facilitation agreement signed between the governments of Mozambique, Malawi, Swaziland, and Tanzania during the 1980s due to the military situation in Mozambique.

Southern African developing countries (SADCs) agreed to facilitate the movement of people and goods and the harmonisation of their currency. By January 2008, free trade was implemented. Duties for goods produced in the region of the Customs Union were eliminated by 2010. The Common Market was established in 2015, the Monetary Union by 2016, and then the Single Currency and Economic Union in 2018. According to SAMP, this program shows the importance of understanding the dynamics of small-scale, cross-border trade to enhance border management and movement through border posts. The majority of traders (approximately three quarters) are women. Businesspeople and entrepreneurs fear that integration will definitely help cross-border traders since, according to an unpublished study on border monitoring, interviewed people declared that their enemies were the customs services and immigration officers, whom they try to avoid at all costs.

One issue of cross-border or irregular migrants is those who are in illegal status because they do not possess valid documents; they overstay their visas and simply do not hold any identification documentation with them. To possess a passport means that a person must at least be registered in his or her birthplace. However, in Mozambique, many people who have reached the age of Forced Military Service (18 years) were not registered. Several Mozambicans lost the habit of living with identity documents due to their state of mobility, the civil war, and floods. It is a ‘vicious cycle’ because to get a passport requires an identity document; this, in turn, depends on having a birth certificate. People have lost their identification primarily due to the aforementioned reasons or because they were not registered.

3.4.1.3. Internal migration

As in other regions of Africa and elsewhere, there is a long history of internal migration. This feature has many reasons and continues. The growth of rural impoverishment and unemployment in urban areas has driven people to move instead of remaining at home. Following this global trend, scholars have found that regional migration has become feminised. Women who were not born in cities have been involved in the informal economy and are engaged in cross-border migration to maintain their incomes.

According to Raimundo and Raimundo (2017) and Chemane (2019), links between rural and urban areas developed by migration are significant at promoting remittances, encouraging community-level initiatives for the construction of public facilities and infrastructure, and connecting rural procedures to urban markets. In general, the rapid urbanisation of Southern African countries and its feminisation result from intense rural-urban migration. When news of mineral resources spread, people were drawn to these places. The increase in poverty and lack of a better future have exacerbated the situation, as one of those interviewed by STV-Mozambican Television said, ‘We are here in gold-digging to find something for our family’. However, there is no accurate information about people who have moved to these places of mining.

3.4.2. Migration and resource depletion

Trying to blame migrants and resource depletion is aligned with the perspective of ‘blaming migrants as being the cause of all ills in a host country’. Thus, in this article, I do not necessarily blame migrants for resource depletion, but I try to shed light on the role of the mismanagement of migration, which could facilitate poaching by immigrants (those who are not authorised to work in Mozambique) and illegal activities that include looting gold and other precious and semi-precious stones, wood cutting, and illegal exports; local media, writers such as Konijn (2014) and Chemane (2019), and some interviewed people have mentioned these issues. Also, in this discussion, I include mass investments in mining and forestation and deforestation, which bring immigrants and are causes of depletion.

Both gold and forests have high value in the international market. Historically, gold has been used as an exchange currency among populations from coastal and hinterland zones, and has continuously been used in the stock market (Raimundo and Raimundo 2017).

4. Investments and resource depletion: Mozambique’s awakening to the world

4.1. The investment environment in Mozambique

Since 1992, Mozambique has opened up to the world due to its desire for FDIs and the growth of its economy. As Monié and Carvalho (2019) and Francisco (2020) pointed out, since the late 2000s, the country has been seen as a model of the emergent economy or an ‘economic miracle’ due to a sustainable gross domestic product (GDP) and the influx of a considerable volume of foreign investments in industrial megaprojects and infrastructures, which were planned to promote competitive insertion in a global world. One sector that has received attention from investors is coal mining, followed by oil and gas. Several nations such as Brazil, China, India, and Portugal have invested deeply in Mozambique (Jafar 2017, Patel 2017, Raimundo and Raimundo 2017).

For instance, Jafar (2017) considered China’s exploratory nature, environmental invisibility, workers, and social problems arising from the rampant exploration of natural and human resources, emphasising the historical relations between China and Mozambique, and Chinese investments in natural and human resources based on readings done in 2011, 2010, 2012, 2011, and 2006. In his debate on Chinese migration, he discussed the context of Chinese migration, which is the response of an overpopulated nation where Chinese have lower incomes towards a country where one can easily accumulate income or capital.

In the context of Mozambique, the process of capital accumulation is characterised by a rampant exploration of natural and human resources by investing in capital and the involvement of Chinese enterprises and the labour force (Chemane 2019, Jafar 2017). Chichava (2010), Jafar (2017), Allen (2019), and Chemane (2019), in their examination of the long-standing Chinese presence, asserted that they came to Mozambique due to China’s opium war in the 19th century, when many artisans were

obliged to flee China due to unemployment, a dictatorship, and unequal internal opportunities. They may have been pushed out by the Dutch East India Company from the Eastern Cape of South Africa. Medeiros (1998) revealed that the Chinese first settled on the Island of Mozambique (Ilha de Moçambique) in 1858. They knew many arts and worked as carpenters, stone workers, blacksmiths, and stone shoppers, whose role was to bring to Africans the spirit of hard work, as for them Africans ‘were lazy’. Previously, they settled in the city of Beira (in the central region) and the capital of Maputo.

Allen (2019) showed that during the 1800s and 1900s, there was a considerable number of Chinese under the category of Asians. This reality was also defended by Medeiros (1998) when he stated that the number of Chinese was so significant that they had to create a Chinese Association. During one of my interviews in a study undertaken with Migration for Inclusive African Growth (MIAG), I spoke with my uncle (married to my aunt), whose late father was Chinese. He said:

My father was one of the presidents of this Chinese Association and used to be a vendor at the central market of Beira, and had a shop where he sold groceries and wine. This association was recognized by the Portuguese Colonial State, as Mozambique was part of the colonial empire of Portugal (Maputo, 23 August 2020).

There are debates on the country’s Chinese presence; its importance depends on which ‘side’ each analyst is. There are those who mention the colonial character of the Chinese presence, those who refer to cooperation and the development perspective, and a third group (mainly locals) who believe that the Chinese are coming to explore ‘our resources’. This is why in areas such as Manica, Zambezia, Tete, and Sofala, they obtained new land made of vast areas of clearings.

In 2018 when I was in Zambezia Province, I met a family in Nicoadala District at the administrative post of Manhonha. I came across a report by a local TV station about ‘various trucks that belonged to Chinese and that were caught by forest guards, full of wooden logs’. Apart from negativists, some of my interviewees argued that the Chinese presence is crucial in the sense of selling cheaper things, unlike citizens such as Indians, Portuguese, and Arabs.

According to Orre and Ronning (2017), the Mozambican government’s economic strategy has focused on the country’s vast natural resources including hydropower, coal, forestry, fisheries, and oil and gas to attract a massive inflow of capital from abroad. Regarding debts and international investments, China has been considered the leading creditor, having lent Mozambique USD 886 million. This credit is meant for building infrastructure. Referring to the same source on page (2), China invested USD 6 billion in 2005 and 2015 in coal and mineral resources. Japanese investments have also increased in sectors such as agriculture, construction, and the mining of coal and gas.

Macqueen and Falcão (2017) and Muianga and Norfolk (2017) discovered that the main forest

product to export is wood due to not requiring a high investment and a low level of technology. Other factors are: (1) lack of a system for monitoring and staffing; (2) the shortage of an efficient forest management system; and (3) a dearth of industries. Thus, the country exports wooden logs, with a low contribution to the nation's revenue (Magalhães 2014). One of my interviewees in Gaza Province said:

Communities blame the government for using a false policy towards deforestation and poaching, as there are no harsh measures against those who pay wood cutters and poachers. The government blames communities for the attitude of a merchant's ear (meaning that people pretend that did not understand) because they continue to chop down wood, to poach, and refuse to settle in predetermined areas for settlement (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019)

Another said:

They are saying that we have to watch our forests and depend on aid. What does this aid bring? Only canned sardines, cooking oil, maize flour, beans...in ridiculous quantities...we fight to get some of this stuff. We want to decide what we produce and what to eat. True, we know how important trees are and how to protect them, as they mean everything. During the floods of 2013, we settled temporarily under trees where we stretched our tents. When we arrived here, we used to worship under a tree that we found over there... (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019).

This is why wood exploration is very high, with consequences for deforestation. Among African countries, Mozambique is the main supplier of wood to China, which represents 90% of exports to China (Muianga and Norfolk 2017). Due to China's high demand for Mozambican wood, these enterprises are responsible for illegal wood cutting (ibid.10), which leads to corruption in all value chains of wood production, a lack of transparency regarding title deeds, and a lack of monitoring and control.

4.2. Artisanal mining (gold looting): The evildoer of Mozambique for sustainable development and resources preservation

There is no common definition of artisanal mining or Small Scale Mining. However, World Bank Group-IBRD-IDA (2013) refers to informal mining activities carried out using low technology or with minimal machinery. It is estimated that more than 100 million people rely on this sector for income, mainly in developing countries. Data in this sector are difficult to gather, as in many cases, artisanal mining is illegal, and there are actions by poachers. Further, World Bank Group-IBRD-IDA (2013) stated that

artisanal and small-scale mining occur in approximately 80 countries. Globally, approximately 100 million artisanal miners exist. The sector supplies about 80% of the world's sapphire, 20% of gold, and up to 20% of diamonds. It is widespread in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Central and South America. Although the informal nature and generally un-mechanized operation usually results in low productivity, the sector represents an important livelihood and income source for those living in poverty. Approximately 100 million people and their families depend on artisanal mining in Mozambique, compared to about 7 million people worldwide.

Like most African countries, Mozambique is blessed with minerals, as seen in Figure 2, which varies from clay, bauxite, bentonite, limestone, coal, kaolin, copper, iron, gas, graphite, marble, and gold.

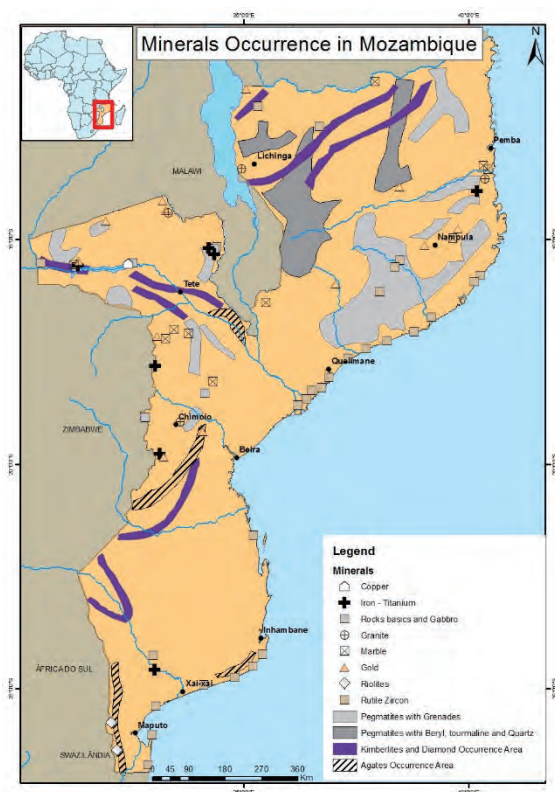


Figure 2. Mineral mining in Mozambique

According to Jackson (2014), Mozambique faces uncertainties concerning the administration, interpretation, and enforcement of existing regulations on mining (Figure 19). Mozambique ranks 79 out of 122 countries on the Investment Attractiveness Index (ibid. Table 1).

In Mozambique, gold mining is supposedly the most dominated by artisanal operators and the use of children as a work force, as TV reports indicate. In central Mozambique, almost 20,000 people are involved. Only 30% of the labour force is linked to legal associations, but they need to be integrated into environmental, health, and safety programs. Artisanal mining sites in Mozambique are numerous, dispersed, and often remote. This takes into account the size of the country, which is in the midst of the

second largest forest of the world after the Amazon in the equatorial zone. According to the literature, new sites are discovered every day, while others abandoned, and others still are rediscovered and revived.

Mining in small-scale areas can both facilitate and hinder development. On the one hand, it provides jobs for thousands (if not millions) of people, gives families an income, and contributes to GDP. On the other hand, there are situations where mining is illegal, there are no permissions or licences, land rights are absent, there is exploration, and mineral transportation from the government. Illegal mining draws people in irregular conditions that include illegal migration (including unaccompanied migrant children) and tax avoidance. In most cases, people working in illegal conditions suffer from all kinds of abuses and human rights violations, including no access to health facilities. This worsens the situation according to the IOM (2016) and Raimundo (2018), in the following ways:

- Lack of a national and cross-border monitoring system;
- Limited knowledge and understanding of migration and health;
- Limited inter-sector and inter-country debates and partnerships;
- Limited cross-border referrals, resulting in poor continuity of care and an increase in defaulters;
- Limited harmonisation of protocols (treatment, prevention, etc.), as these agreements do not adequately protect African migrants from host countries.

4.3. Illegal mining sites

Media reports have informed the public about abuses through pillaging and assaults, including human rights violations perpetrated in the context of extortion by state agents. Moreover, minerals have been used to fund civil wars and crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations of international humanitarian law, including rape, pillaging, and the use of child soldiers.

Mozambique Land Law was approved by the Council of Ministers. Known as the 1997 Land Law, it reaffirms state ownership, defined in the first constitution of 1975. The first land law was enacted in 1979, then amended in 1986. The amendment emphasised tenure and land possession. All versions of the law (1979, the amendment of 1986, and the version of 1997) recognise and safeguard rights acquired traditionally through occupation and inheritance. The law also creates incentives for investment by granting land use concessions to private entities for renewable periods of 50 years. Article 109 of the revised (2004) constitution stresses that land is owned by the state. Mozambicans have the right to a title deed known as the *Direito de uso aproveitamento da terra* (DUAT, or land usage title document), which allocates a title deed to someone who occupies a plot of land.

The government approved the Mining Law in 2014, which regulates the terms to exercise rights and duties related to mineral resources regarding the environment and the national economy. Article 4 states that mineral resources found underground, in interior waters, offshore, in the economic exclusive zone, and along the continental platform are state property, according to the constitution. Article 5 defines

legalities for the recognition, prospection, research, and exploration of mineral resources acquired through the following deeds and authorisations: a recognition licence, prospection and research licences, mining concessions, mining certificates, and mining passwords.

4.4. Gold looting, tax evasion and soil excavation

Gold looting has spread outside of government authorisation. Article 7 of the Mining Law of 2014 refers to the requirements for the attribution of mining titles. However, there is no easy way to get a mining title due to the bureaucracy claimed by my interviewees in Namuno and Ancuabe in 2018. Because of gold looting, mineral exploration has become an activity, even though it is practised in ‘remote’ areas and facilitates the movement of people as nationals or foreigners. In Ancuabe and Namuno, gold looting has become the main source of household income. My interviewees relinquished agriculture and fishing in favour of looting gold. Gold looting, apart from diverting people from traditional activities, has another aspect: tax evasion. This is bad for foreigners who are digging without work permits and do not declare their incomes, as they do not have legal status in the country. A government officer from the Ministry of Energy and Mining told me: ‘Most gold looters have a nomadic life style and hide under local chiefs’ protection; there is no way of tracking them’ (National Directorate of Mining; Maputo, 10 October 2018). Gold looting also provokes excavations with immeasurable consequences (Figure 3). Figure 4 indicates soil erosion due to gold looting in Ancuabe District, Cabo Delgado.



Figure 3. Gold looting in Namuno District, Cabo Delgado Province.

Source: Picture taken by Inês Raimundo, Namuno District, on 17 October 2018.



Figure 4. Soil erosion in Ancuabe District, Cabo Delgado Province

Source: Picture taken by Inês Raimundo, Ancuabe on 7 October 2018.

4.5. Mining and forest activities

Mining is a long-standing activity in Mozambique. Hence, it is necessary to have an accurate understanding of the activity and its context, considering the following:

- Mozambique's pre-colonial and colonial history is marked by the exploration of minerals: first alluvial gold along the Zambezi River, and later by industrial enterprises.
- For centuries, mining has been small-scale and in the artisanal system.
- The long-standing civil war and military instability—which displaced thousands of people in the country—as well as refugees across other African states, have impacted the mismanagement of the movement of people and uncontrolled mining areas, thereby facilitating illegality and smuggling activities.
- Mining areas have become 'free zones of movement' to people from all over the country.
- One legacy of military instability is the openness of borders, including porosity supported by the long-standing history of neighbourly relations, and the fact of being a refugee for Mozambicans.
- Smuggling characterises artisanal mining areas, including the poaching of rhino and ivory tusks.
- Long-lasting mining activity, economic growth observed after the war, and relative peace in Mozambique have attracted numerous people from all over the African continent, particularly from the Great Lakes region, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and from

the Horn of Africa, to mining areas. Similarly, these zones attract nationals from rural and urban locales.

- The regional movement of people is facilitated by labour agreements, but also by informal networks that have developed over the years, most of them related to cultural, religious, kinship, and friendship ties (Raimundo 2009, Raimundo and Raimundo 2016).
- Internally, people's movement is typically prompted by prospective workers seeking employment, family reunification, and displacement due to natural disasters such as floods, drought, cyclones, and war.

Migration in the mining zone is poorly discussed in the literature, and the number of migrants in an illegal situation is not accurately known. However, the following are certain:

- There has been a rise in undocumented migrants or those with illegal status found by the police and reported in the media.
- There is a rise in illegal activities such as poaching and mining; migrants from other African countries are reported to be behind illegal activities.
- Mining is a decoy of skilled and unskilled migrants from everywhere.
- Likewise, the informal economy absorbs a large number of workers. There is an assumption that this sector, after agriculture, might absorb a larger portion of the workforce.
- Mining areas are populated by migrants operating in small-scale enterprises in both legal and illegal practices; in this case, under the connivance of local authorities.
- Inbound migrants mix with locals, who are jobseekers and wealth seekers at all costs. They are involved in the exploration and commercialisation of stones, without control and exemptions from taxes. The richest provinces are Zambezia, Tete, and Niassa.

4.6. The state of forests and deforestation in Mozambique

According to Dos Muchangos (1999) and the forest map of Mozambique (Figure 5), the country is 'blessed' by several types of trees that form the forests of the Miombo woodland, the savannah, xerophytes, and aquatic forests (Table 3).

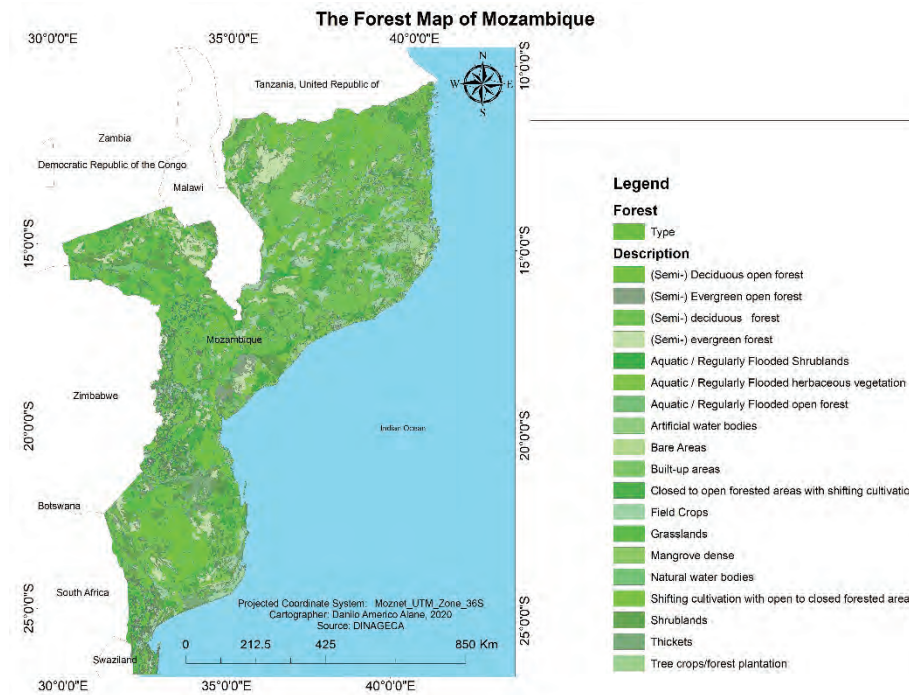


Figure 5. The forest map of Mozambique

Table 3. Forest typologies found in Mozambique

#	Name of forest	Forest class	Location	Provinces
1	A perpetually green forest, higher than 1000 m in altitude	<i>Pittosporum</i> , <i>Ilex</i> , <i>Rapanea</i> , <i>Widdrintonia</i> and <i>Podocarpus</i> and grasses formed of <i>Panicum monticola</i> , <i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i> .	Located in the hills and mountainous regions of Mozambique	Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Manica and Zambezia
2	Forest of caduceus leaves, higher than 500m and less than 1000m in altitude	Reed and bamboo, <i>brachystegia</i> and <i>julberernardia</i>	Sub-plateau and along humid areas	Sofala, along with Libombo heights and parts of Inhambane Province and river and riverine areas of Mozambique
3	Xerophyte Savana arboreal	<i>Adansonia</i> and <i>Setaria</i>	Nearby sea and ocean, and lack of fresh water	Southern Save River: Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo

				provinces
4	Aquatic forest	Mangrove	Coastal saline and/or brackish water	Coastal zone and in the mouths of rivers

Source: Dos Muchangos (1999:76).

Against this background of an abundance of forests, some industrialised countries see Mozambique as a state where excavation is still possible (Orre and Ronning 2017, Konijn 2014, Chichava 2010).

The government has identified deforestation as an issue (Boletim da República de Moçambique 1997). Between 1972 and 1990, the country lost around 4.27% of its forest cover. Maputo Province fared worse because of high exploration due to a highly concentrated population. Among the typologies of forests, mangroves, located in the estuaries of large rivers, were the most affected, as the deforestation rate was approximately 2.9% in the same period (equivalent to 12,000 ha). In the same period, the country planted 46,000 ha of forests, mainly in Manica Province (central Mozambique). Eucalyptuses (which provide fuel) and pines were planted near the three large urban areas of Maputo, Beira, and Nampula (Boletim da Republica de Moçambique 1997: 51/2). Macqueen and Falcão (2017) recognised that Mozambique still possesses abundant forests, even though there is faster reduction due to deforestation. What is missing is a set of incentives for wood forest operators that could drive them to improve economic, social, and environmental sustainability. To them, the priority is to widen the discussion of what has to be included in forest legislation through a national debate among wood operators and Chinese companies. One of the biggest achievements is the creation of the National Agency for Quality Control (AQUA), which is based on controlling the influx of wood in real time from places where trees are cut down to where they are destined.

The study in Gaza Province shows that deforestation occurs for firewood and charcoal. The following specimens were used for this purpose: *Chamate*, *Mopane* (*Clophospermum mopane*) *Simbirre* and stakes. Forests are cut for construction. The target trees are *Chamate* and *Simbirre*. For timber, the following are used: *Mondzo*, *Chanfuta* (*Afzelia quanzensis*), Sandalwood, *Chacato preto*, *Umbila* (*Pterocarpus Angolensis*), *Panga-panga* (*Millettia stuhlmannii*), and *Chanatse*. Lastly, for tea production, there are other uses: Tea-chicutse (*Bossia albitrunca*) and *Macuácuá* (*Strychnus madagascarensis*).

Macqueen and Falcão (2017) found that Chinese in Mozambique are working in two spheres: one in which forestation and others are involved in wood exploration, and one that entails mining, infrastructure, and agribusiness. One of the biggest projects of China is Governance Forest China and Africa, which aims to strengthen joint actions to improve Chinese investment in African forests. China is the main importer of African forests; Mozambique exports about 93% of its forest products to China. However, Macqueen and Falcão mention sustainability and legal problems. The government adopted a new Policy

and Strategy of Forests (2016-2026), which includes the issues of legality and the introduction of new licences for log wood exportation. In 2016, all forest operators were assessed, and 31 assessment criteria were developed by Eduardo Mondlane University and the Ministry of Land, Environment, and Rural Development. Meanwhile, Chinese enterprises are not the sole voice in discourses on forest losses and unsustainable exploitation. Chinese enterprises are not uniform as they are of different sizes. In addition, local enterprises are responsible for this. One of my interviewees in Gaza Province, when asked about forest exploration, answered.

The Forest Law and Wildlife of 1999 and Regulations of 2002 divided native forests into three categories, all belonging to the state according to the Land Law of 1997. The forests were divided as follows (Table 4). According to the Forest Law, concessions for forest exploration are approved by the National Directorate of Land and Forests. For greater concessions (e.g. over 100,000 ha), only the Council of Ministers can give permission. One needs a *Direito de Uso e Aproveitamento de Terra* (DUAT) to explore forests and land in Mozambique.

Table 4. The classification of forests in Mozambique

Category of forest	Characteristics	Legal access	Size/surface
Productive forest	Possesses high-quality wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concession for a long period to all collective and individual entities based on the presentation of a management plan for 50 years and the installation of a transformative industry within the country - A simple, short-term licence only for Mozambicans (up to 10,000 ha) and subject to a tax payment based on size, and the obligation of a management plan for up to five years 	26.9 million hectares
Multiple use areas	Characterised by the presence of forest and other wood specimens, but with some other high-value forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The DUAT is given for different uses of land - Can be used for agriculture - The communities can establish agro-forest activities, plantations 	14 million hectares

		for biomass, and wood exploration under a simple licence	
Protected areas	Are divided into rich areas for wild animals and forests and park hunting, wild farms and national parks, and reserves.	As for jurisdiction, these are divided into rich areas of the Ministry for Tourism and Culture and the Ministry for Agriculture and Food Security.	

Source: Adopted from Macqueen and Falcão (2017:9–10).

4.7. International migration dynamics in Mozambique and natural resource exploration: Gold and forest predation

As proposed in the title, I seek to shed light on international migration dynamics, represented by the influx of immigrants and foreign investment, which are causes of the predatory quest for gold and forests in Mozambique. The following 10 statements below illustrate the situation of deforestation.

Box 1.

We have received people from Maputo and elsewhere in search of charcoal and wood. We have received businesswomen from Maputo who come here for maize and charcoal. They bring money to us. With money we can buy many things for our families. Here, either you do agriculture, or you are engaged in supplying wood or charcoal for suppliers. It's up to you. But if they catch you, you are gone. (Chihaquelane, 23 November 2019)

Box 2.

Here, by the end of the day, everybody cuts trees. It is a profitable business. (Mabalane District, 27 January 2019)

Box 3.

Yes. I have heard that it is because we are cutting trees that there is no rain. The issue is we didn't know that cutting trees, which God has given us, could prevent the fall of rain. (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019)

Box 4.

Here, if we don't flee war, we flee the impetuosity of the Limpopo River. I never thought the river

would flood again, likewise in 2000. I am reliving those moments. I regret my stubbornness. I lost my belongings and now I am trying to recover. It is hard. There is no business. I lost my job in South Africa, so I only have this business of coal. We have heard that if the inspectors catch us cutting trees such as *umbila* [*Pterocarpus Angolenses*], they will fine us. But...I don't have a word to say on this. (Chihaquelane Resettlement Camp, 23 November 2019)

Box 5.

But if someone comes and says to you: 'All of these are forest products, and what you are doing is not correct as you are cutting trees indiscriminately. Oh...this is our means of livelihood'. (Chihaquelane, 24 November 2019)

Box 6.

We are hungry and we need to do something. Our children are unemployed. Those who went to South Africa were evicted and attacked by xenophobic people who hate us. So what can we do? (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019)

Box 7.

They are saying to fine us a million meticaïs if they find us cutting trees...yes, they will fine all of us. (Chihaquelane, 23 November 2019)

Box 8.

We know that it is happening. It has not rained for months. We don't know what is going on. As far as I know, there is no rain because we cut trees for charcoal production. In the past we used to produce charcoal for cooking. Perhaps we are exaggerating because we produce charcoal for selling, or perhaps there is over-exploration. But when it is about to rain, I don't know how to explain it—people say that we are responsible for drought because we cut down trees. Now I am not sure if the reason is that or not [laughs]. (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019)

Box 9.

We are involved in the charcoal business because we are hungry. Some of us sell chickens. But it's not enough. (Chinhacanine, 22 November 2019)

Box 10.

What I defend in this case is the enforcement of the replanting law. Thus, a forest management plan,

a tree re-setting plan, and something related to that. This is the only way to force people to see the damage they are creating with that cutting activity. The other group, which understands their actions, is composed of people who have been impacted by floods or drought. Really, the tree cutters are not necessarily people who live here. They come from other districts—even provinces—including people from Maputo. They have money to hire people who can cut trees in order to produce charcoal sold in Maputo. Wood and charcoal is a big business. Last but not least, we are paying for what we are not responsible for. (Director of Chokwe Agrarian Institute, 26 July 2019)

The above statements point to the prediction of deforestation without replacement, which will cause the country to become a desert. Whom shall we blame? I would say that nationals and international agencies are responsible because structural problems have not been resolved such as poverty reduction, regulations, and monitoring, while international agencies act consciously or unconsciously in the way that they explore Mozambican resources. Immigration as a movement is not a problem, but when immigration occurs in an irregular way and when foreign citizens enter Mozambique without a work permit or other regular or legal permit to poach, loot gold, and engage in irrational deforestation, the problem begins.

5. Conclusion

Forest and mineral maps of Mozambique demonstrate that the country is blessed, as it possesses a variety of minerals including gold, heavy sands, and precious and semi-precious stones. Due to its geographic location, which comprises coastal areas and a hinterland in a tropical zone, the nation has an abundance of several kinds of forests, including mangroves.

Mozambique has 34 million ha of forests, which cover 43% of its total surface. The country lost 267,000 ha between 2003 and 2013. Between 2014 and 2016, about 86,000 ha were lost, with direct consequences for carbon emissions and a lack of resilience to climate events. The causes for faster deforestation include poverty, swift population growth, low-scale agriculture, and wood demand from the international market. While Mozambique is moving towards deforestation, it faces another threat: illegal mining through gold looting in Cabo Delgado Province (the study area) and other central and northern regions.

The country has reached this stage over the 45 years following its independence due to civil war, natural disasters, the General Peace Agreement, openness to FDI, and the increase in irregular migration facilitated by the porosity of its borders.

China has been blamed as the lead reason for deforestation, as some Chinese enterprises have stimulated tree cutting and the export of wooden logs to China, which is the largest country in the world that imports wood from Africa. Apart from China, other states such as Portugal, China, India, and Brazil

are the biggest investors in the mining and agriculture sectors, thereby affecting the local economy. For instance, the Cabo Delgado communities of Ancuabe and Namuno are slowly giving up their agriculture and fishing activities to make way for mining for gold, which allows people to earn money more quickly. In Gaza Province, people are cutting down trees indiscriminately, and are backed by businesspeople, without any inspection from the government.

In this paper, I tried to establish a connection between resource depletion and migration as an interlinked phenomenon for the following reasons:

- Migrants come to Mozambique following the routes of mines, including the long-standing mining of gold.
- Migrants come to Mozambique in search of business opportunities. Once in the country, they realize that regulations (for forests and mining and work) are so weak that they can easily get around them.
- Migrants come to Mozambique following their ancestors and traditional migration routes established before colonialism.
- The country's openness to FDIs has created conditions behind the money a group of citizens who follow the money of their countries.

Gold and forests are both shown in the media. Gold is operated by artisanal miners who come from abroad, while forests' over-exploration is blamed on the Chinese, who cut down trees 'without any pity for trees and export them in log loads', which is against the approved Policy and Strategy for the Development of Forests and Wildlife.

Local and international news opine that 'the country is under attack', 'the country's resources are being stolen' and 'the country's forests and mineral resources are deteriorating'. What kind of policy can curb or prevent the depletion of natural resources and control migration and labour contracts in Mozambique?

Is Mozambique again facing a new era of resource predation? I believe there are main points of discussion, and the paper did not answer the question, as I explained that obtaining data on mining and forests is a burdensome exercise.

Acknowledgements

This paper is a result of support from the African Studies Centre of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, which provided funds to conduct research on natural resource depletion in Mozambique. I am deeply indebted to Professor Shinichi Takeuchi, Director of the African Studies Centre of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, who kindly invited me to contribute to this set of articles, and to Dr. Akiyo Aminaka from the same centre, who introduced me to this awesome project. Through them, I

attended the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS) and the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) Joint Seminar on Resource Management and Development, which was held in Huye, 18-19 February 2020. There, I presented a paper titled ‘Deforestation and environmental policies: The ‘unfair’ policy to communities living in areas threatened by drought and floods’. From this workshop, I made valuable contributions that drove me to write this paper.

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Land titling in Mozambique: Improved tenure security for communities?

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Abstract

Land has become a widely debated topic in the world. From governments, academics, civil society groups to local farmers, all have been concerned with issues related to land and, more specifically, how to make use of this asset to improve societies' well-being and promote economic development. Among the many debated issues concerning this topic, there is concern about promoting a secured land ownership tenure that will give incentives for greater investment in land as well as the importance of preventing and correcting social inequalities to promote a more equitable and sustainable development. In the current context, the majority of the African population lives off the land practicing agriculture for subsistence, and Mozambique is no exception. Amid the increase in the number and size of foreign land investments, this paper aims to analyse the impact of land titling on the tenure security of communities in Mozambique. The theoretical focus will be on the Neoliberal Paradigm that advocates for land titling and privatisation in the process of land reform.

Keywords: tenure security, land titling, large-scale land investments

1. Introduction

Land titling has become an issue of contention and reflection among circles of policy makers, academics, and civil society organisations around the world. Extensive literature has been written regarding this subject, which has become a key component of land reforms and a measure of the impact of implementation of these land reforms. However, land rights, the main target of land titling, do not follow a one size fits all approach. Different countries have implemented different policies regarding land distribution and land rights systems. Throughout history, many social, political, and economic factors have shaped the way in which the current land rights are defined worldwide. In sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, many different types of land tenure systems have been implemented, resulting in a pluralistic nature of the land tenure system in this region where different types of formal and informal land rights coexist. According to the World Bank, only 2% to 10% of the land in Africa is formally registered, and all this land is located in urban areas (Cotula *et al.* 2009).

Renewed interest in the question of land titling in sub-Saharan countries has been registered with international actors, foreign governments, and multinational corporations aiming to secure foreign land for food production, investment, and speculation under the contexts of urbanisation, demographic pressure, climate change, and scarcity of arable land. Thus, increase in foreign direct investment, land rush, and land grab has made it imperative to discuss land access and its related subtopics.

One of the main arguments that justify securing land in foreign countries is the vast availability of vacant or idle land in sub-Saharan Africa that leads to concessions as large as 500,000 hectares in Madagascar and 100,000 hectares in Mozambique. However, Cotula *et al.* (2009) warn that this argument needs critical analysis and that it does not necessarily address the vacancy of the land but the perception of lack of productivity. However, this perceived lack of productivity might still ensure the livelihoods and food security of local inhabitants. This is brought to evidence by Régulo Lopes¹, the community leader in Morrua (a community in the Angoche district in Mozambique), who states that the lives of rural communities are essentially natural. They rely on plants and agricultural products, both for self-consumption as well as for selling to have money for basic necessities such as paying for education of their children, going to a health centre, or using the grass to build their houses.

The idea of idle land is also related to the lack of government information on the status of land use nationwide because of the absence of an extensive and updated database on land use and informal types of tenure that the majority of the population lives under which are recognized by the government as legitimate rights of occupancy, despite not being formally registered.

Mozambique has 80 million hectares of land, of which 36 million hectares are arable, and according to government sources, 16 million hectares of land is already occupied. From the information available,

¹ Interviewed by the author in Angoche, Nampula in January 2019.

details of the occupied land are as follows: 17 million hectares are for parks and other protected zones, 10 million hectares are occupied by delimited communities, and 3 million hectares have already been allocated to investors (Mousseau and Mittal 2011). Besides agricultural land, the country is also endowed with mineral resources such as aluminium, oil and gas, coal, gemstones, gold, and heavy sands. All this potential for agriculture, forestry, and mining investments has not gone unnoticed and, in fact, the country has become one of the top 20 destinations for foreign direct investment in land. However, this interest was met with the state's lack of preparation to negotiate these deals and to ensure that such deals did not result in resource depletion and impoverishment not meeting the government's agenda for development. After the publication in 2008 of the alarming report 'Seized: The 2008 landgrab for food and financial security' by the non-profit organisation GRAIN, the term land grab came to be widely used to describe the pervasive displacement and impoverishment of rural communities. Mozambique, in response, imposed a moratorium on land allocation from 2009 to 2011, this was an action added to the ongoing land policy reform with a national consultation process that had been initiated in 2007. One of the main topics addressed in this forum was how to preserve the rights of local communities, considering the lack of formalisation of their tenure. During the discussion, the old neoliberal prescription of privatisation and land titling was again revisited. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss how land titling in the context of increasing foreign large-scale land acquisition benefits the local communities in terms of tenure security. By doing so, it also adds the case of Mozambique to the vast literature on the relevance and impact of land titling as a central measure of land reform, considering the local dynamics of land tenure and land rights recognition. In the present endeavour, a revision of the literature on land titling and tenure security will be presented, along with a description of the land titling process in Mozambique and an analysis of the status of tenure security of rural communities. This paper presents a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. First, some of the arguments of the debate on land titling and tenure security are presented based on literature review and interviews conducted. Second, a description of Mozambique's land law and land titling policy is presented based on an analysis of the current and past laws and policies. Then, an assessment of tenure security in Mozambique is presented, combining a compilation of quantitative studies based on large surveys conducted in the country by secondary sources as well as individual and group focus interviews conducted by the author. The geographical scope was limited to Mozambique and the provinces of Maputo where the interviews with government officials and academics were conducted and Nampula and Tete, where the author visited the communities in Angoche and Moatize, respectively. In total, six individual interviews were conducted with key informants, two group interviews were conducted with 29 community members aged 24 to 68 in Tete province, and one community consultation was observed in Nampula.

2. The debate over land titling

The Neoliberal Paradigm and Neoclassic Economic Theories advocate for the implementation of land titling as a way to promote economic development through the creation of tenure security, increased land investments, access to credits, and development of land markets. In the current context of the avid interest of governments of developed countries, sovereign wealth funds, financial institutions, and multinational corporations in securing land in developing countries, there has been a renewed debate on the importance of land titling. However, some scholars argue that land titling has a negative impact on the tenure security of vulnerable stakeholders. The following section presents the main arguments of both sides in favour of and against land titling.

2.1. Proponents of land titling

Land has always been an important issue, but there is renewed interest in the land debate accompanied by a global call for new land reforms. This renewed debate has a neoliberal orientation focused on the improved use of land to generate capital. This is the economic argument for land titling. The World Bank tried to advance this economic perspective on land titling and tenure security through its ‘Land Reform Policy Paper’, published in 1975. Essentially, this policy paper defended the central impact of land on poverty reduction and economic growth by advocating for the abandonment of communal tenure systems in favour of freehold titles, which would essentially lead to the formalisation of individual titles and the privatisation of land despite recognizing a plurality of tenure systems in the developing world. These developing countries are inhabited in majority by poor rural communities who value group identity and customary laws: why then do land reforms instead of strengthening and promoting these ties are going in the direction of promoting individual land rights? Those who advocate for property rights believe that it will prevent wasteful investment to secure the land by other means, will lead to a more sustainable use of natural resources, will facilitate access to credit and attract investment which would lead to the evolution of financial markets, and will facilitate the transfer of property from less to more productive owners (Deininger and Feder 1999, Deininger and Binswanger 1999, Feder and Nishio 1998:25–26, Hadisi and Ndong 2018).

The main justification is that investments to increase the productivity of land are only made when there are expectations of enjoying the benefits of these investments over a long period of time; therefore, tenure insecurity due to the risk of losing the land reduces this incentive. Feder and Nishio (1998:25–26) argue that land titling reduces risks and increases investments along with productivity. Furthermore, the formal land title would guarantee access to formal loans that have lower costs than informal credits that do not require land as collateral. The authors support their argument using the cases of Thailand, India, Costa Rica, Brazil, Jamaica, and Ecuador as quantifiable examples of the connection of land titling with tenure security and productivity. Additionally, if the land users do not possess the necessary skills to

properly allocate these incentives for productivity, land titling will enable the transfer of land through a monetary transaction to more skilled users. In such transactions, having formal land titling, recognized by the legal system, would reduce land ownership uncertainty, which can cause lower demand and lower offer prices. In sum, the economic approach to land titling aims to create better land allocations and efficient land markets.

The Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto is also a great proponent of the view of land as central to economic development. In his book ‘The Mystery of Capital’, published in 2000, he established the link between property rights and poverty and has been vocal about capital loss in the extensive arable lands in the developing world due to lack of property rights. He argues that what distinguishes a foreign investor from a local one is the legal right to use the land because this right can attract credit or investment capital. With investment, the value of land in developing countries, used by big mineral and agroindustrial companies, is rising in the global market. For him, both the vast availability of minerals and the global food shortage are leading to a growing interest in land in developing countries. He started to experiment his argument in Peru, where he worked to help 1.2 million Peruvian families to acquire the titles of their farmlands (De Soto 2011:35–40). In practice, land titling is usually one of the aspects addressed by land reforms worldwide in the context of neoliberal promotion of market reforms across the developing world with various implementations and multiple outcomes.

Besides the economic importance of land rights, other arguments in favour are that titling will promote labour diversification, urban migration, better land governance, less duplication of land rights, and can fortify group cohesion by defining boundaries and informing communities of their rights.

2.2. Critics of the land titling argument

The opponents to the view that land titling creates multiple benefits for land users, argue that land titling does not increase productivity, does not guarantee access to capital, and though it does increase tenure security, it may cause conflicts.

A major limitation of the previously presented market-based approach to land as a commodity is that it advocates for a radical change in the land tenure system. As noted by Boone (2014), individual land ownership rights in sub-Saharan Africa are rare. As cited by Boone (2014:22), only 2% to 10% of land is under private property regimes in sub-Saharan Africa. As for Mozambique, in 2003, only 3% of all land was registered under private title. The same was the case with most sub-Saharan countries as they had less than 20% of the land registered as private property with the exception of Zimbabwe (41%), Namibia (44%), Lesotho (44%), and South Africa (72%), all former colonial states that had white settlers. Many countries are under a statist land tenure regime where the public land or all of the land is owned by the state, giving it a higher discretionary power to allocate land. As Boone shows, in sub-Saharan countries, the reality is that majority of the land allocations are not market-led as most

proponents would want it to be, but are in fact authority-led where state entities or agents control structures landholding, access to land, and land transactions, and therefore, land tenure systems in sub-Saharan Africa differ from liberal forms of property (Boone 2014:23–25). A qualitative study conducted by Brown (2005) in Zambia to assess the impact of land titling concluded that while there has been some increase in investments for tourism and agriculture, land titling of customary land has led to land speculation by investors; displacement of local inhabitants through the allocation of occupied communal land to investors by chiefs and councils, leaving the affected community members landless; erosion of local rights to nearby common pool resources such as forests, rivers, and lakes; and intra-community conflicts and resistance.

Unruh (2006:754) has stated that ‘land tenure has proven to be one of the most perplexing issues in the developing world’ due to the lack of conciliation of formal and customary property rights to provide security to tenants. He adds that previous studies have proven that giving land titles to small-scale farmers did not cause any significant change in inclusion or connecting tenure systems and that recognition of customary or informal rights makes it difficult to create an inclusive land law. He proposed landscape-based evidence that can be used to claim both formal or customary rights, showcasing Mozambique as an example of this practice.

Higgins *et al.* (2018) in a literature review of 59 studies to assess the impact of measures to increase rural land tenure security, found that there is a positive relationship between land tenure security and investments in conservation agriculture as well as for women’s empowerment. However, the authors found a weak connection between tenure security and productivity and access to credit and income. Bruce and Migot-Adholla (1994) corroborate that the literature does not present substantial evidence of the positive effects of land registration and titling in Africa, particularly on tenure security. In their quantitative research conducted to assess the impact of security of tenure and the relevance of titling in the African context, they identified three elements of importance: duration of the rights, protection of rights, and robustness of rights. In the studies conducted in Somalia, Senegal, Uganda, and Kenya, to assess the contribution of state initiatives of land titling to tenure security, they found that ‘registration under a weak tenure from the state does not provide meaningful security and may, in fact, decrease security of tenure’ (Bruce and Migot-Adholla 1994:257).

The British Department for International Development (DFID 2002 cited by Hanlon 2004) recognises that ‘freehold titles are unlikely to meet the needs of many of the poor and titling has not in general led to improved access to formal credit’ and Deininger (2003) in the ‘Land Policies for growth and Poverty Reduction’ has stated that ‘it is now widely recognised that the almost exclusive focus on formal title in the 1975 paper was inappropriate’. Critics of the World Bank Land Policy remark that customary tenure systems which are widely prevalent in African countries can provide tenure security, rendering unnecessary the costly, time-consuming, and universally unattainable conventional titling

policy of replacing customary rights (Quan and Toulmin 2005).

3. Mozambique's land tenure system

Although Mozambique's first post-independence land law was adopted in 1979, the first legislation towards land was adopted with the 1975 independence constitution in which the government revoked all previous tenure systems and nationalised all existent territorial land and its natural resources. The total state ownership of land has prevailed throughout the constitutional revisions of 1990, 2004, and 2007, and remains still in place. The land law of 1979 (Government of Mozambique 1979) consolidated this ownership, reinforcing that land was not subject to sale, rent, mortgage, or any type of alienation. In the period of implementation of the first land law, Mozambique followed a Marxist-Leninist orientation and envisioned the creation of a socialist state and the collectivisation of the means of production by creating state farms and communal villages, resembling those of the Soviet Union (Lunstrum 2008). Takeuchi (2014) argues that privatisation of land was not a policy immediately implemented by the African states after independence because most governments were interested in perpetuating or extending the states' control over customary lands. Socialist ideology reinforced this land policy because it was opposed to the promotion of private property rights that led to class stratification. Boone (2014:38–39) calls it a Statist land tenure regime, where 'the central state itself is a direct allocator and manager of land access and use' and where '...a property right not honoured by the state is no property at all' (ibid.40). However, political and economic events affected the course of governance in the country and, consequently, the land administration. One such event was the 16 years long civil war that began in 1986 along with the end of the Cold War. After 1992, there was an ideological shift in multiple spheres towards a more neoliberal orientation for the Mozambican state to become more democratic, decentralised, and market-oriented, reversing the privatisation of state-owned enterprises and ending state farms and communal villages. This shift was greatly influenced by the Bretton Woods Institutions that provided financial aid for the country's post-war reconstruction. This shift also addressed land tenure, a central issue for the Neoliberal Economic Paradigm; thus, a new land law was drafted and implemented in 1997 through a process that was deemed very participative due to the nationwide public consultation during the drafting period. This law has been described by Lunstrum (2008) as a compromise between the proponents of privatization and those concerned with the land rights of the rural poor communities. The 1997 law has been in a decade of revision by an inclusive myriad of stakeholders who hold annual meetings through the Consultative Forum on Land to discuss issues that are part of the neoliberal global debate. Some of the issues under debate are related to institutional capacity, inclusive participation, tenure security, and access to financial credit in rural areas (Tunzine 2019).

3.1. Mozambique's land rights

The new 1997 Land Law introduced the DUAT- Direito de uso e aproveitamento da terra (right of use and improvement of the land) that can be acquired through a formal request or through occupancy by individuals or communities according to customary norms and practices, and individuals in good faith (for a prior minimum of 10 years). Without the formal title, the DUAT can be claimed through witness proof (community members) or other means.

These rights are limited only by areas of the public domain, such as protected zones for conservation, nature preservation, or areas for state defence and security². For non-commercial purposes, individuals and communities have an indefinite right of occupancy of the land, and for economic activities, a lease concession can be granted for 50 years subjective to renewal³.

Furthermore, although the state forbids sales and rentals, the DUAT can be transferred through the sale of the improvements done to the land (trees, infrastructure, etc.) or through inheritance, and individuals can use these improvements as collateral for loans.

3.2. The land title

The land title, which is a document that proves the right of use and improvement of the land (DUAT), is issued by the provincial services of geography and cadastre, and other general or urban public services within the maximum period of 90 days. According to Article 13 n.2 of the 1997 Land Law, the absence of the title does not compromise the right of usage by occupation and can be issued to communities or individuals. In the case of individuals within a community, their request for individual titles has to be preceded by community demarcation. For communities with customary tenure, the law states that they can request delimitation of their land, rendering them a certificate of occupancy which can then be formalized to the land title.

3.3. The State's discretionary power over land allocation

As mentioned previously, the land in Mozambique belongs entirely to the state. According to Article 18 of the 1997 Land Law, the right of use (DUAT) can be revoked through voluntary request, lack of fulfilment of the exploration plans, or by revocation of the right for reasons of public interest upon the payment of a compensation to the users. In Chapter 6 (Articles 25-27) of the Land Law, initially a five-year provisory land right is granted to applicants, and after the fulfilment of the exploration plan, a definitive right and the land title is granted. After the five-year period, if the exploration plan is not fulfilled and there is no justification, the land right can be revoked without compensation for

² Nevertheless, a special license can be requested for specific activities.

³ For economic activities, specific licenses have to be obtained and the duration of the land right will depend on the regulations of each specific license.

improvements made in the land by the applicants. However, this monitoring is deficient as many applicants request the land for speculation purposes and keep it idle. In 2018, the government launched a national land inspection campaign of approximately 7.8 million hectares, to reclaim idle land by either revoking the land right or reducing the exploration area of those requests larger than 1,000 hectares. The target was to reclaim one million hectares by 2019. Furthermore, Article 22 of the 1997 Land Law states that for non-urban areas, the approval of land use is under the competency of provincial governments for areas smaller than 1,000 hectares; the Ministry of Agriculture and Fishing for areas larger than 1,000 hectares but smaller than 10,000 hectares; and the council of ministers for areas larger than 10,000 hectares.

One of the causes of conflicts between communities and investors is the allocation of vast areas of land by the state without proper consultation with the communities that held customary rights to the land in question or without paying proper compensation to the communities.

3.4. Communities' land rights

Communities have customary rights over land for an indefinite period. In the rural area, the land law attributes them the right to participate in the management of natural resources, in conflict resolution, and in the titling process where they should be consulted to confirm the vacancy of the land. A minute of the community consultation is one of the eight documents required to obtain the land title. The Regulation of the Land Law, Decree n. 43/2010 (Government of Mozambique 2010), and the Ministerial Diploma, n.158/2011 (Government of Mozambique 2011), establish the procedures to be followed during the community consultation. One of the provisions is the requirement of at least two community consultations, the first one to inform and the second one to ask for the community's deliberation. After the consultation, a copy of the minute of the community consultation must be given to the community. In theory, this is where the communities have the opportunity to voice their doubts and concerns about land allocation or even oppose land allocation. However, it is the state entities who have the ultimate decision-making power in the allocation and it has been reported several times by communities and NGOs that the consultation procedures have not been followed by the administrative authorities, resulting in conflicts between the communities and the investors.

Community consultations are important for two reasons: first, information regarding the land deals and the investors is still difficult or inaccessible to the general public. This is an opportunity for the communities to gain access to this information. The second and most important reason is that there is still a lack of awareness of the legal rights of the communities and the land policy in general; the consultations are also an opportunity for the administrative entities to inform the communities about their rights. Some initiatives are being carried by NGOs such as União Nacional dos Camponeses (UNAC) and Iniciativa para Terras Comunitárias (ITC) to inform communities about their rights and

organise them to form associations for the management of natural resources. With knowledge of their rights and the procedures of land transfers prior to the engagement with the investors, the communities are better prepared to negotiate fair compensation.

4. The land titling process in Mozambique

Hanlon (2004:605–611) believes that the land law definition of local communities is both broad and vague because communities are self-defined; they can be a traditional clan with chiefs, an extended family, or a group of neighbours.

‘In general, it appears that rural communities are being defined in terms of areas under individual régulos or other chiefs, referring back to maps from the colonial era (even though this is not necessary, as communities can define themselves in other ways). This suggests that Mozambique has several thousand communities, which implies a delimitation cost of 10-30 million usds’ (ibid.).

Furthermore, ‘the law is an attempt to balance the need for a simple system to guarantee the rights of most Mozambicans to the land they occupy, while creating a modern land title system that is seen as necessary for investment’ (ibid.).

Adams and Knight (2012:47–48) argue that new global trends of large-scale land investments undermine the impact of land tenure reforms in Southern Africa and that the actual tenure security of poor rural smallholder communities is much weaker than it was before the reforms, mostly due to the poor implementation of reforms. The authors point to the lack of resources and political will as the main reason for the poor implementation of these reforms. They use Mozambique as an example of the focus on the promotion of investment instead of allocating enough financing to land delimitation. However, they argue that even if appropriate efforts are put into delimitation, there is no certainty that they would be enough to prevent the central government from allocating communal land to large-scale investments.

Currently, land titling occurs through voluntary decision of the community members, land rights campaigns led by NGOs, investment interest, and the government’s registration campaigns. The most prominent land titling initiative is being led by the Ministry of Land and Environment called Terra Segura. Funded by the World Bank, this project plans to cover 71 districts corresponding to 45% of the territory within the period 2018 to 2024. Prior to this project, only 950 communities had been delimited, and around 500,000 land titles had been granted. The main challenges to land registration were poor institutional capacity in terms of finance and trained staff, lack of coordination between registration services, and diversification of standards and practices across the country (World Bank 2018). Furthermore, there was a lack of incentives for the individuals and communities due to the long distances to institutions, the costs, and the number of procedures.

5. Assessment of tenure security in Mozambique

5.1. Quantitative studies: Perceptions of tenure security

The mixed views on the importance of land titling call for more evidence-based studies that take into consideration the African context where institutional capacity for land governance is weak, access to formal credit institutions is low, and informal customary tenure is prevalent and recognized by the state and where communities draw social security from within. There is still a gap in the literature, in particular, pertaining to Mozambique's perceptions of tenure security and the impact of land titling in enhancing this security. Some qualitative studies analysed tenure security using policy analysis methodology. From a legal perspective, theoretically, Mozambique has a progressive land policy that recognizes and protects the customary rights of communities despite the absence of a formal title. Following this rationale, the tenure security of holders of customary rights is somewhat guaranteed without the need for titling. However, as discussed in the previous sections, the Mozambican state enjoys discretionary power as the sole regulator of land use, but still has a poor record of land governance. Thus, the reinforcement needed for tenure security could come from the dissemination of information about land rights to the communities, the strengthening of governance capacity, and the implementation of the existent regulation. However, it is also important to consider the voices on the ground by assessing these communities' perceptions of their own tenure security, but quantitative studies based on large surveys to collect this information are still very few.

Nevertheless, important considerations can be drawn from the existent data. This section presents the findings of three studies conducted in Mozambique to assess perceptions of tenure security.

5.1.1. The Urban Land Mark survey

The first study is the Tenure Security Facility Southern Africa Project from the Urban LandMark, conducted in 2012 in two provinces of Mozambique: Maputo in the South, 567 households were surveyed, and Tete in the centre with 407 respondents (Urban LandMark 2013). In this study, two questions were asked pertaining to the perception of tenure security: if the respondents thought their property rights were strong and if they had done any improvements to the infrastructure. In Maputo, 67% of the respondents believed their rights were strong compared to 63% in Tete. With regard to improvements, 72% of the respondents in Maputo achieved improvements compared to 53% in Tete.

Additionally, it was also asked if the respondents had a formal title (DUAT) and if they had any conflicts related to their land. In Maputo, 50% of the respondents bought the property and 4% acquired through the municipal council attribution. In Tete, only 28% bought the land and 28% were allocated land by the municipal council. In terms of conflict, 7% of the respondents in Maputo experienced a land conflict compared to 6% in Tete.

5.1.2. The Millennium Challenge Account survey

The second study is an extensive report (Singing *et al.* 2017) commissioned by the Millennium Challenge Account to assess their Land Tenure Service Project in Mozambique and brought some insightful findings to understand tenure security in Mozambique. This report (*ibid.*), published in 2017, was conducted to evaluate a 507 million USD project between the Government of Mozambique and the Millennium Challenge Account Corporation from 2008 to 2013. This project aimed to increase land investment, reduce costs of land rights acquisition, and prevent land conflicts.

The report describes a study conducted in the provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado, both in the northern region of Mozambique, where 1,417 households were surveyed on issues related to employment, parcels, land conflicts, land law, land rights and perceptions of risk, parcel renting, investments on land, crops, ownership of assets, monthly expenditures, credit, livestock, and consumption. For the purpose of this paper, the focus on the report findings will be specific to the situation of land rights and the perception of the impact of titling (Singing *et al.* 2017).

In terms of access to credit, the report found that access to formal credit is extremely rare; only 4.1% (56 of the 1,417 households) had applied for credit in the 12 months prior to the survey, and only 27 of the 56 applicants were granted credit. Of the credits denied, insufficient collateral and insufficient income were among the reasons. The majority of households which did not apply for credit claimed a lack of access, not wanting to contract debt, fear of not being accepted, and not needing it as reasons for not applying. 66% of the applications were for agricultural production (*ibid.*).

The report also mentions the existence of a rental and sales market, but inheritance remains the most important mode of land acquisition. Furthermore, the land was mainly rented to family members, and the land for residential purposes did not involve payment or financial compensation.

In terms of investments, 19% of the respondents made investments in the land, and only 7.3% made investments in agriculture to increase irrigation and to create water supply facilities (*ibid.*).

In terms of land rights, 93% of the households surveyed did not have a formal land right (DUAT) but were interested in having one, 73% of the respondents believed that having a DUAT would increase the value of the land, 4.2% thought it would not make a difference, and 12% thought it would reduce the value of the land. In terms of the surveyed perception of conflict, 12% thought there was a potential for land conflict in the future, 27% believed that the land demarcation would increase the chances of conflict, and 70% believed that the DUAT would make dispute resolution more likely. Furthermore, 80% of the households thought that having a DUAT would likely reduce the risk of land expropriation; 64% believed that having a DUAT would make land investments more likely and 5% thought it would reduce investments (*ibid.*).

5.1.3. The Prindex survey

The third quantitative study presented in this paper was conducted by Prindex, the first global dataset that measures the perceptions of tenure security. In Mozambique, 1,436 surveys were conducted asking ‘in the following five years, how likely or unlikely is it that you could lose the right to use this property, or part of this property against your will?’ (Prindex 2020:8). According to this database, 57% of the respondents felt secure against 24% who felt insecure about their property rights. The causes for insecurity included disagreements with family or relatives (21%), owner may ask me to leave (13%), government may seize (11%), death of a household member (9%), lack of money or other resources (6%), companies may seize (4%), and issues with customary authorities (2%). In terms of documentation, only 50% of the respondents had formal documents, 9% had informal documents, and 41% had no documents (ibid.).

5.2. The qualitative study: Communal rights in practice

Qualitative research was conducted by the author in the form of group discussions, observation, and interviews with key informants in the provinces of Nampula and Tete. This section presents two cases of communities that received large-scale foreign investments for mining purposes. These two communities did not hold a formal land title prior to resettlement, relying only on their customary rights. These were also well-documented cases of early interactions between communities and large-scale investors. Many lessons were learned from these two cases that raised awareness of potential causes of conflict in other similar contexts as well as improvements to the land law policy.

5.2.1. The case of Moatize

Moatize district, located in the province of Tete, has an area of 8,428 square kilometres, with 260,843 inhabitants and a population density of 34.6 inhabitants per square kilometre (INE 2019:11). In 2007, 78.3% of the population in the district of Moatize practiced agriculture; 15.9% worked in commerce, transport, and services; and 5.7% worked in industry, energy, and construction (Ministry of Statal Administration 2014). Besides its potential for agriculture, the district also has one of the biggest coal reserves⁴ that has successfully attracted foreign investment. Coal mining began in 2011, preceded in 2009–2011 by the resettlement of the small-scale farmers community that resided in the area. A total of 1,365 households were resettled by the mining company Vale to three neighbourhoods in the district. The Rio Tinto Benga mine, which was first acquired by the Riversdale company and subsequently by the ICVL company, began its resettlement in 2011, moving an estimated 736 households. These were the first cases of large resettlements in the extractive sector. Proper resettlement guidelines and

⁴ The country has been described as *El Dorado* of coal due to its ‘largest underdeveloped coal basin on the planet’ by Kirshner and Power (2015:67).

legislation were not in place at the time, resulting in faulty procedures and violations of the communities' rights thoroughly documented by Oxfam, Human Rights reports, the local media, and the Mozambican Bar Association (Ordem dos Advogados de Moçambique) who sued both the company and the state for its misconduct.

Although these two cases of resettlement were managed differently, some of the complaints were shared by both affected communities such as deficiencies in the consultation process, lack of sufficient information about the resettlement process, forced resettlement, dissatisfaction with the compensation, unfulfilled expectations of job creation or job opportunities, loss of livelihoods, poor quality of the houses built, difficult access to water, distant access to the market, and loss of diversified livelihoods.

The case of the Moatize resettlement became a cautionary tale of what not to do when engaging with communities, and rightly so. As a result, a National Conference for Resettlement in Mozambique was organised by the government in 2016, with the participation of companies from the extractive sector, NGOs, civil society groups, community representatives, and academics reflected on how to improve the relationship between investors and communities and protect the rights of the vulnerable, while paving the way for economic development.

5.2.2. The case of Angoche

The district of Angoche, in the southern part of the Nampula province, has a total area of 3,535 square kilometres, an estimated population of 327,304 inhabitants, and a population density of 110 inhabitants per square kilometre. Subsistence agriculture is the main occupation for the majority of the population in this district; other minor activities are cattle herding, hunting, collection of wood, and fishing. In terms of land rights, most land users do not hold a formal title. Despite the precarious living conditions, the district of Angoche is rich in mineral resources and the coast is being exploited for heavy sands by the Chinese company Haiyu Mozambique Mining since 2011, year of the attribution of two mining licenses to operate near the localities of Sangage, Morrúa, and Nagonha. The exploration of heavy sands has an environmental impact that directly affects the communities' livelihoods. However, of the 12 communities affected by mining activities, only three were consulted. This exclusion led to serious conflicts between the communities and the investor. Furthermore, in 2015, flooding affected the community of Nagonha, one of the excluded communities, leaving 290 people homeless. A report by Amnesty International (2018), based on interviews with the affected community members and expert analysis of satellite images, concluded that the heavy deposits resulting from mining activities might have contributed to the flooding by blocking the natural pathway for water drainage. The company denied any responsibility. After the incident, the community of Nagonha requested several times to be resettled due to the environmental impact of mining activities on their well-being and livelihoods. However, after negotiations, the company proposed a resettlement that offered compensation of only 90

USD to each family to rebuild their houses, which the communities declined. Furthermore, the remaining community consultations were held after the company started its activities.

It is important to note that the guidelines for community consultation were only published in 2011, under a Ministerial Decree, no. 158/2011, and the Regulation on the Resettlement Process Resulting from Economic Activities Decree, no. 31/2012, was only implemented a year after the concessions were granted to the mining company.

6. Conclusion

This study combined qualitative and quantitative data collection to assess the tenure security of communities amid the increased interest in communal land by foreign investors. Here, tenure security was analysed based on three components: first, *de jure*, through a discussion of the local land legislation, it was found that both formal and informal rights of communities are protected by law; second, perceived security with a review of quantitative studies that shows that although the majority of respondents do not have a formal land title, their perception of tenure security is relatively high; and third, *de facto* evidence of two cases involving poor implementation of legislation and lack of protection of the communities' rights showcases their tenure insecurity in the face of investors' interest (even if they perceived it as secured). These two examples make evident the lack of bargaining power and the tenure insecurity of the communities. Due to the weak status of formalized land rights, the process of land titling usually occurs when there is already an interest in the transfer of land rights. In such cases, titling is more beneficial to facilitate the acquisition of land rights by investors rather than to strengthen the land rights of communities because they cannot legally sell the land and only receive financial compensation for the little improvements done on the land. Changing this scenario, land titling campaigns are in motion covering all of the country's provinces, particularly, the densely populated areas or areas of interest for large-scale investments that could be potential focus of conflicts. These campaigns disseminate information regarding land use, strengthens the institutional capacity for land governance, expedites the process of land transfer to investments, thus reducing potential conflicts. For the communities, it is beneficial to inform them of their territorial boundaries and educate them about their rights and land policy at large. However, even with more information and a title, it is not clear to which extent their tenure security would improve due to the high discretionary power of the government in land allocation processes. A further study comparing the data regarding tenure security before and after land titling is needed to reach a more decisive conclusion.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the African Studies Center - Tokyo University of

Foreign Studies (ASC-TUFS) for the financial support to conduct this research.

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