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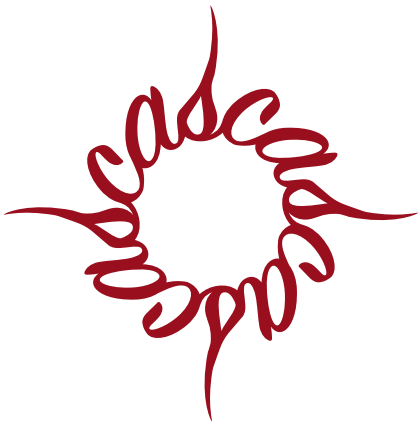

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Security and Policing Global Pandemics: COVID-19 Security and 'Scientific' Politics in Uganda

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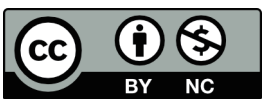
Abstract

Amidst global functional deficits, there is a burgeoning interest in redefining policing and security frameworks to incorporate infectious disease control, exemplified by COVID-19 strategies. This study retrospectively analyses state responses to global pandemics, societal reactions, and security implications in developing countries like Uganda. It investigates the jurisprudential and structural dynamics of pandemic policing, encompassing criminalisation, victimisation, police-public interactions, and media influences. These factors are pivotal in understanding structural and physical violence in developing regions, particularly concerning human rights, access to essential needs, and public health imperatives. Additionally, the study explores the ramifications of COVID-19-induced shifts in scientific discourse and electoral processes. Methodologically, it examines state strategies for COVID-19 prevention and treatment, public perceptions of related restrictions, and the media's role in shaping these perceptions, through participant observation, informal discussions, and content analysis.

Keywords: policing, COVID-19, global pandemics, scientific elections, Uganda



1. Introduction

In an unprecedented turn of events, COVID-19, originating in Wuhan, Hubei province, China in late 2019, initially remained foreign to the African continent. However, on February 27, 2020, Africa recorded its first case in Egypt, with Nigeria registering Sub-Saharan Africa's first case on the same day. From February 27, 2020, the virus rapidly spread across the continent. This precipitated a series of governmental responses aimed at curtailing its spread and mitigating its likely impact. The pandemic reshaped global dynamics, challenging nations to redefine security paradigms and political strategies in the face of unprecedented public health crises.

By February 29, 2020, countries worldwide, including Uganda, had implemented measures to mitigate the spread of the virus. Despite Uganda not reporting any positive cases of the novel coronavirus at the time, precautionary measures were already in place. For instance, Entebbe RHH hospital had been designated by February 28, 2020, for isolating suspected COVID-19 cases. From February 28 to March 17, 2020, there was a prevailing optimism in Uganda that the country was not at immediate risk of COVID-19, fostering a sense of complacency. Various hypotheses have been proposed to explain this complacency, such as the perceived sensitivity of the virus to hot temperatures in Africa, the continent's younger population, lower obesity rates, and prior experience with infectious disease outbreaks. Additionally, limited testing may have underestimated infection rates. The situation across the African continent is heterogeneous, with significant variations in progress and responses between countries (Sanogo 2020).

On March 18, 2020, President Museveni implemented the first movement restrictions and mandatory quarantine for suspected cases of COVID-19 in Uganda. This included the closure of all educational institutions (schools, colleges, and universities), churches, political gatherings, social events such as weddings and funerals, as well as bars and clubs. Despite the Minister of Health, Hon. Jane Aceng, requesting security support to monitor porous borders and restrict movement, there was initially no clear framework for internal police and security deployment.

The reality of COVID-19 hit Uganda on March 21, 2020, when a 36-year-old Ugandan tested positive upon arrival on an Ethiopian Airlines flight. The following day, two more cases tested positive upon landing from Dubai, UAE, with an additional six cases among passengers on Emirates and Ethiopian Airlines.

On March 22, 2020, a health emergency was declared, mandating the use of face masks. Non-compliance became a punishable offence, with charges including attempts to spread a harmful disease, attempted murder (assuming the infection could lead to death), and disobedience of presidential directives. Police and security forces significantly increased their presence in Kampala and nationwide, initiating mass arrests for those violating televised or radio-broadcasted presidential directives.

Table 1 below illustrates the trend of COVID-19 test results from March 21, 2020, when the first

case was identified, to April 8, 2020, when the president enforced stricter measures to prevent further spread. Among the fifty-three positive cases identified, nine were detected upon arrival in the country, thirty were found in quarantine centres, and fourteen were identified through contact tracing in the general community.

Table 1: Showing the COVID-19 infection trends in Uganda between 21 March and 8 April 2020

Dates	Number tested for COVID-19	Positive cases
21 March 2020	11	01
22 March 2020	22	00
23 March 2020	27	08
24 March 2020	143	05
25 March 2020	104	00
26 March 2020	197	04
27 March 2020	227	05
28 March 2020	225	07
29 March 2020	206	03
30 March 2020	82	00
31 March 2020	176	11
1 April 2020	63	00
2 April 2020	302	01
3 April 2020	419	03
4 April 2020	398	00
5 April 2020	300	04
6 April 2020	231	00
7 April 2020	150	00
8 April 2020	214	01
Total	3497	53

Source: President Museveni's televised updates on the status of COVID-19 in Uganda on 8 April 2020.

The escalation of COVID-19 cases, as shown in the table above, necessitated the government's announcement of stricter measures, including the suspension of all international flights and local movements in the country except for the essential service workers such as medics, police officers, some media outlets among others. The increasing number of positive results underscored the urgency of President Museveni's directives. Between March and April 2020, many perceived President Museveni

as the sole leader capable of navigating the country through this health crisis. He positioned himself as the guardian of public health, a disciplinarian, and the ultimate authority in COVID-19 containment efforts. In his speeches, he likened the fight against COVID-19 to the battle against post-independence dictatorships, drawing convergence to his victory in the 1986 bush war.

However, maintaining open borders for cargo trucks and drivers proved to be a compromise, allowing the virus spread to exploit this loophole and cause a spike in infection rates later on. By July 23, 2020, Uganda had recorded one thousand seventy-nine (1,079) positive cases of COVID-19, with one registered death (Africa News 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda has highlighted complex intersections between public health, security, and regime consolidation. It has prompted critical debates on the role of the state in managing health crises, the legitimacy of executive decrees, and the impact of these measures on civil liberties and socio-political stability. As COVID-19 cases fluctuated and new challenges emerged, Uganda navigated a landscape where pandemic response strategies intersected with broader political discourse and governance structures.

The study provides a detailed examination of how Uganda managed COVID-19 through security, policing, and political lenses. This includes analysing how public health measures were enforced, the role of law enforcement, and how security policies impacted pandemic management in the face of regime survival politics. The study sheds light on the relationship between government actions, public trust, and compliance with health directives. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for improving future pandemic responses and ensuring that policies are effective and respected. Also, analysing the balance between security measures and individual rights during the pandemic can highlight ethical concerns and the impact of stringent policies on civil liberties. This can inform discussions on how to protect both public health and human rights in future crises.

By focusing on Uganda, the research might offer specific lessons on how pandemic-related security policies and 'scientific elections'[1] play out in different socio-political contexts. These insights can be valuable for both global and local policy makers in crafting more effective and contextually appropriate responses to future pandemics.

Furthermore, responses to pandemics are intertwined with political consolidation and legitimacy in various African contexts. This paper examines the intersection of security, politics, and policing during the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda, focusing on how these dynamics influence or are influenced by political imperatives and eminent 'scientific' or digitalised approach to political participation.

[1] Although the term 'scientific elections' generally refers to the use of empirical and quantitative methods to make the electoral process more accurate, fair, and efficient, it was used by President Museveni and the Electoral Commission in this context to denote an electoral process that limited physical contact between voters and candidates. For example, social media, and conventional media like radio, TV, and print media were recommended instead of physical campaigning.

Methodologically, this study employs an interpretivist approach to elucidate these entwined security dynamics. By examining the conceptual underpinnings of pandemic policing strategies and their implications for security in Uganda, this research aims to contribute to broader discussions on global health security, policing, and governance in emergency contexts.

In line with this approach, anthropological methods such as personal experiences, participatory observation, and media analysis are employed to capture diverse perspectives and experiences amidst the evolving pandemic landscape. Central to this investigation are two key philosophical inquiries: firstly, the intertwining of security and public health in crisis management, and secondly, the implications of pandemic policing strategies within Uganda's complex political milieu.

Section two clarifies the definition of security and policing in the context of a health emergency. Section three delves into questions about jurisprudence and presidential decrees. Section four analyses cross-border restrictions. Section five examines the dangers of military policing in public health. Section six elucidates the quandary of scientific elections. Finally, section seven details the discussion and conclusion.

2. Policing and security: A conceptual clarity

The exploration of security and policing reveals a complex relationship that underscores the need for clarity in their definitions, particularly within governance and public policy contexts. The intersection between security and policing is not merely a matter of overlap but involves a nuanced understanding of their distinct roles and how they interact in practice.

Traditionally, security has been associated with the protection of a state or community from external threats to its sovereignty or internal threats to its stability and well-being (Buzan 2007). This definition has evolved, expanding to include non-traditional areas such as health, economics, and technology. The boundaries between traditional, militaristic forms of security and non-militaristic domains have become increasingly blurred. For instance, security now encompasses a broad spectrum of concerns, including national defence, economic stability, public health, environmental safety, and societal cohesion. It can be categorised into various dimensions: military security, economic security, political security, environmental security, and human security (UNDP 1994).

Security is inherently multi-dimensional and extends beyond national boundaries to include individual pursuits of survival and well-being. While the concepts of survival and well-being are subject to interpretation, there is a baseline agreement on the minimum standards necessary for such achievements. Security involves a reciprocal relationship between individuals and the state: individuals are expected to obey the laws, while the state is tasked with ensuring their safety and well-being. Conflicts in obligations or roles between the state and its citizens can jeopardise the effectiveness of security measures.

In the realm of international politics, security is not solely about state-centric concerns or military might but also involves addressing global challenges such as pandemics, individual rights, and freedoms (Collins 2019). This expansive view of security necessitates a broader understanding of who should be secured from whom or what, especially in the face of state dysfunction, regime protection issues, and societal exclusion.

In contrast, policing is specifically concerned with the enforcement of laws and maintenance of public order within a society. This encompasses activities carried out by law enforcement agencies, including crime prevention, investigation, and ensuring public safety (Reiner 2010). Policing operates at various levels, from local community policing to international law enforcement cooperation.

A critical aspect of policing is the enforcement of (or compliance with) laws, which sometimes requires the use of force. This enforcement function is grounded in the social contract between the state and its citizens, which grants law enforcement agencies the authority to use force when necessary (Bittner 1970). The application of force is a fundamental element of policing and is crucial in situations where public compliance with health regulations, such as COVID-19 SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), is mandated. For instance, during the pandemic, measures like Stay-at-Home (SaH) orders, curfews, and social distancing required law enforcement to intervene and impose penalties for non-compliance.

The role of police, as outlined in the Police Act (1994), includes not only fighting and preventing crime but also addressing non-criminal issues that disturb public order. This broader mandate extends to enforcing public health laws and regulations. However, the use of force must be balanced with constitutional protections for individual rights and freedoms. The challenge lies in ensuring that enforcement actions respect these constitutional guarantees while effectively managing public health crises.

Despite their distinct functions, security and policing intersect in many ways, particularly in addressing transnational issues like pandemics. Law enforcement agencies often work in collaboration with other security agencies, such as the military and the prisons, to prevent threats from destabilising societies. This collaboration reflects shared goals of maintaining societal order and protecting citizens' well-being. As noted by Heyman (2014), policing plays a pivotal role in fostering both objective and subjective perceptions of security. It signifies the efficient management of public safety and governance. A just approach to security, in turn, seeks to mitigate inequalities and various threats to individuals' well-being and survival.

The expansion of security concerns to include non-traditional threats, such as global pandemics, requires an integrated approach that combines both security and policing strategies (Aradau and van Munster 2007). This blurring of boundaries necessitates flexible and adaptive policy frameworks that address emerging challenges while considering the potential impacts on the political landscape. Diverse

perspectives from government agencies, international organisations, media, civil society, and the private sector influence how security and policing actions are defined and implemented.

In summary, achieving clarity on the roles and responsibilities of security and policing is essential for effective governance. Understanding their distinct functions and intersections helps in crafting policies that address both traditional and emergent threats while balancing the need for public safety with respect for individual rights especially in times of health emergencies.

3. Jurisprudence and presidential decrees

Uganda's Penal Code Act 1950. Chapter 120, Section 171 provides for negligent acts likely to spread infection of diseases. It states that:

> Any person who unlawfully or negligently does any act which is and which he or she knows or has reason to believe to be likely to spread the infection of any disease dangerous to life commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for seven years.

This public health law, however, is vague on the elements of commission and mens rea (intention). The studies have claimed that a significant number of people who are infected by COVID-19 are asymptomatic and, therefore, lack knowledge of the possession and spread of the disease (see also, Woodward 2020, White and Fradella 2020). If a person is tested negative for the infection, the court may lack sufficient grounds for conviction under this section.

3.1. Presidential decrees as public health legal instruments

Given the backdrop of the inability of the Penal Code to incriminate COVID-19-related offenders of public health, the presidential decrees were broadcast across media outlets, and such decrees transformed into criminal charges and were prosecuted in the courts of law. The first tough presidential speech that pronounced the temporary closure of the country’s borders was on 18 March 2020. There was only an exception for exiting the country until 22 March 2020 when all flights in and out were cancelled other than the repatriation of foreign nationals. According to the presidential orders, no person holding a Ugandan passport was allowed to fly out of the country or cross any Ugandan border by water, road, or railway. Several other presidential pronouncements followed either extending the application of previous restrictions and lockdown rules or adding newer and tougher restrictions to the public health statutory instruments.

3.2. The extent and limitations of COVID-19 special laws

A discrepancy exists between the purpose of the special public health laws/decrees and their application.

While the pandemic was a very unfamiliar situation and needed immediate interventions, some SOPs or restrictions lacked clarity. The government has had to grapple with quick enforcement of new guidelines. Sometimes these quick approaches have come back to bite. For example, requiring that markets close necessitated a relief system that swiftly mobilised, collected, and distributed food, and other essentials to all communities that depended largely on the markets in the cities and towns. Such a challenge was manifested in the continuous presidential clarifications on the already issued strict lockdown measures and application of SOPs and SaH procedures.

The rule that restricted movements of boda-bodas (motorcycle taxis) and private motorcycles to 2:00 pm did not provide the rationale for its application. What was the government preventing that would otherwise happen if the motorcycles worked at 3 or 4, or 5:00 pm? Such ambiguous application of decrees generated a myriad of complex security questions.

The decree on the utilisation of masks did not stipulate the 'how'. Also, the enforcement was very complicated as the vast majority of the people affected by economic collapse could not afford the cost of masks. The Daily Monitor (a Ugandan newspaper) conducted a mini-survey in public places such as banks, supermarkets, garages, pharmacies, hardware shops, restaurants, wholesale shops, and food markets that were allowed to operate and found out that compliance with wearing face masks was very poor (The Daily Monitor 2020). For many people, the alternative cost of buying masks was the shortage of money to buy food and other essential items for their families. While others saw the buying of masks as an utter waste of money, other sections of Ugandans claimed that they would wear the masks if the government supplied them.

Other restrictions such as the prohibition of carriage of more than one person on a boda-boda (motorcycle) taxi and the personal motorcycle were a needed effort as a social distancing strategy. However, the enforcement required that police deploy on all junctions of both the main roads and feeder roads. The people were able to spot the roadblocks and found ways to avoid them as they went about with their usual activities (some of which activities very vital for survival). The limitation of movements of passengers in public/private cars and on motorcycles was not supported by adequate provision of transport for the poor people who depended on such means of transport. This made access to health facilities very difficult for those affected by illnesses other than COVID-19 emergencies. Cases existed where some motorcycles carrying children purportedly to the hospitals were intercepted and sometimes seriously assaulted. Other than the night curfew that was implemented up to the village level with the use of brutal Local Defence Unit (LDU) militias, the daytime SOPs which could expose state brutality were easily dodged.

At a given time in the highs of the COVID-19 lockdown (especially in April and part of May 2020, private cars were not allowed on the road unless expressly permitted and with an authorisation sticker on. This paralysed the access to basic services and other errands for the vast majority. To maneuver

through this period, the drivers had to improvise to be on the road. The first improvisation was to identify vividly pregnant women who could act as though they were in labour (ready to give birth) or rushing for a medical check-up. There was no way the police could stop such an excuse. This resulted in an increase in the number of private cars on prohibited roads. It was a daunting task to identify who was using the opportunity of pregnancy to go about business as usual or who was genuinely going for antenatal care.

The people also used the opportunity of the exceptions for access to the road. The decree had directed that cargo trucks around the city were allowed to continue working. Cargo trucks meant and included any vehicle that can be visible as a carrier of cargo (including pick-up trucks). The people resorted to such trucks as their alternative means without necessarily being against the law. Those with small pick-ups could buy water pipes or load a water tank or some other cargo and move about doing other activities. Some people, therefore, generally found ways to defy the set public health guidelines.

The closure of shops and hardware was equally difficult to implement. Although the doors to the business facilities were to remain closed, the business still went on in the outskirts of the city. The business owners hung around and could avail sales to the customers after carefully studying the situation. To many, the restrictions were very overstretched because the business owners had families to take care of lest they starve. Going beyond restrictions and presidential directives was a needed survival skill.

4. Cross-border restrictions

Other than the quest to defy the SOPs and lockdown restrictions, the people generally found irrationality in restraining cross-border movements yet exempting cargo trucks and their drivers in and out of the country. This later became the source of COVID-19 contact infection, especially from neighbouring Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Sudan.

In the East African region, the cross-border transmission of COVID-19 began to escalate significantly in mid-May 2020, with truck drivers identified as high-risk suspects. President Museveni of Uganda positioned himself as a staunch opponent of the importation of COVID-19. However, he was also constrained by the economic implications of blocking the movement of cargo across Ugandan borders. He described the attempt to block trucks in and out of the country as suicidal and more self-hurting (Africa News 2020), given that Uganda relied on this cargo for its survival and prosperity. This presidential reluctance led to public hostility towards the policy of allowing truck drivers to continue their business as usual, even as the number of COVID-19 cases among truck drivers continued to rise.

Another point of concern was that, although trucks were allowed to continue their cargo services, agricultural products did not gain their usual access to markets abroad due to ongoing regional lockdowns. The domestic market was also distorted as access to cities was restricted as schools, restaurants, and hotels were closed. This situation led to the dumping of food products in markets in the

outskirts of cities and towns at very low prices. Consequently, the disruption of cross-border activities and supply chains restricted the ability of many African countries, including Uganda, to access markets for essential and food items, increasing the risk of poverty and famine. Despite a strong regional response, the repercussions of the global COVID-19 pandemic measures could have impaired Uganda's capacity to recover from the economic stagnation. Most importantly, unemployment-related issues are likely to be among the most severe post-COVID-19 challenges for Uganda.

5. The scientific election

Since colonial times, political opposition in Uganda has consistently expressed concerns about their limited access to public and political spheres. Freedom House's 2024 report classified Uganda as 'not free', ranking it 34th out of 100 countries assessed. The country scored 10 out of 40 on political rights and 24 out of 60 on civil liberties (Freedom House 2024). The electoral processes in Uganda have been characterised by exclusionary politics, where the ruling party monopolises essential electoral resources for its consolidation. This includes controlling the electoral roadmap, appointing the Electoral Commission, determining election timings, and exerting influence over government resources such as security forces, courts, public employees, government projects, and media outlets. Furthermore, Uganda's parliament, which aligns closely with the ruling regime, further bolsters this dominance.

This is not an exception in 'COVID-19 scientific elections'. In fact, the declaration of a state of emergency demonstrated that the state has the power to contain any form of opposition to the regime's survival. The total shutdown and routine presidential addresses clearly showcased the militant approach to the elimination of dissent. Even those earlier known as outlaws (the boda-boda riders, and taxi drivers) notoriously defiant, were humbled and cocooned in their local suburbs. The security deployment was spread across the country and several detentions over non-compliance were registered. The roads and institutions of learning were all evacuated. At Makerere University only marabou stocks were the only visible creatures walking past the main gate. Such a tight containment equipped the state with the experience of mapping, deployment, and control of the cities and suburbs in times of military emergency.

There were discussions over the cancellation of the 2021 elections citing the challenges of COVID-19 severity. According to Oswald (2022), the decision whether to hold or postpone an election during the COVID-19 outbreak was prompted by factors that benefitted the incumbent's consolidation by choosing to hold elections while restraining their competitors' ability to participate fairly, and restricting other forms of political rights (see also, Chirwa *et al*. 2021). Uganda's Electoral Commission (EC) on 16 June 2020 announced that considering the increasing trend of COVID-19 infection and prevalence rates in the country and the subsequent governmental responses to prevention of further escalation, the measures in place were going to disrupt the 2020-2021 general election campaigns as all other aspects of socio-political life in Uganda (Kalyegira 2020). The new EC guidelines excluded the traditional mass

campaign rallies which were a vital element of participation in electoral processes in Uganda and countries practicing electoral participation globally.

The 'scientific election' was an electoral process for the political offices from the presidency, to district leadership devoid of direct mass rallies but characterised by the use of available computer-generated platforms and other forms of media (audio, visual, and print). There was a general public outcry from the political opposition and the media over the fairness of this electoral policy. Most opposition parties and leaders claimed that the election was a National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime's shenanigan to rig another election. Canwat (2023) argued that Ugandan government used COVID-19 restrictions as an opportunity to suppress political freedoms. The study claimed that the pandemic was used as an excuse to suppress political dissent and restrict the space available for democratic engagement. A study by Oswald (2022) examined how regimes used the COVID-19 pandemic to strengthen their authority and limit the space for dissenting voices (see also, Brown *et al.* 2020). The study found that the pandemic allowed the government to justify extraordinary measures that curbed democratic freedoms and reduced the space for political debate.

Ntale and Ngoma (2021) noted that the NRM regime was/and still is in full control of all forms of media (print, broadcast, and electronic). The media platforms were shutdown/switched off as the case was from the 2011, and 2016 presidential and parliamentary electoral polls. They add that this has consequently disenfranchised the vast majority of citizens from their democratic rights and posed doubts about the citizens' readiness to embrace scientific political participation in the age of pandemics like COVID-19. Similarly, Sempijja and Brito (2022) established that in a country hamstrung by massive bureaucratic and political banditry and a well-established regime that uses disproportionate violence against dissent, fairness of the media access process is of serious concern.

Media which was the main feature in the 'scientific elections' had its flaws concerning the extent of coverage, access, and openness to fair competition. As much as the political activities of the opposition have considerable space in the cities and towns, the media in general is a restricted area for contestations. Outside Kampala according to Barbara—a journalist respondent in Uganda—almost 80% of media is owned by National Resistance Movement-inclined politicians and, before you get into the radio station, you know the owner of the radio station. Outside the newsroom, there are government agents such as Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) who are the representatives and the voices of the president and have such powers. The security operatives assemble outside the media station ready to contain the political impact of the hosted opposition politicians by dispersing the likely supporters and sympathisers, and where necessary, arresting the mobilisers.

The character of the media in the periphery is very well-defined. The rural media houses serve particular tribes, speak the tribal languages, know the political boundary, are aware of the sensitivities and taboos concerning the political rules on coverage, and, therefore, effectively communicate regime-

inclined discourse of political life to the local people who happen to be the voters. Is it possible that an NRM supporter-owned radio station in a given rural area who happens to be a current Member of Parliament can grant sufficient and uninterrupted radio station airtime to an opposition candidate competing for the same parliamentary seat? Also, over time, through these local media houses, the incumbent has drawn a clear line between acceptable and forbidden politics that the opposition had to grapple with at a severe disadvantage in this COVID-19-inspired scientific electoral process.

Political analyst Timothy Kalyegira (2020) has succinctly put it that there is a natural disinterest by the media in candidates who lack crowds. This is a disadvantage for some candidates and favourable for others. Because the advertorial responsibility is the core of private media function, the focus will be given to the person whose mass supporters guarantee a market for a given product or increase their viewership/listenership/readership. Traditional media such as television and radio stations have their usual programs to attract clients and, therefore, it may be costly to interrupt their business routines. The newspapers may manage to add campaign leaflets in their daily issue but at a huge cost. Government-owned media houses may open some space to the opposition but generally give a dominant position to the incumbent. Resultantly, the exclusionary media may lead to unequal access to the electorate. There are no legal implications for refusal to grant airtime space to an opposition candidate or disruptive services/breaks of media house during the allocated airtime.

Lastly, the cost of internet hinders the equal access to the social media-based electorate. The exorbitant costs of internet and social media taxes complicate the social media campaigning strategies. In the case where the government suggests that the internet (part of the ‘scienceness’) is the medium of communication between the political contenders and the voters, it has the responsibility of ensuring that at least minimum internet services are equitably availed to all members of society. Thus, in Uganda, the idea of media-based electoral campaigning/electioneering has been criticised as being detached from the realities of a common man whose choice to vote is seemingly no longer a government priority.

6. Dangers of militarised policing of public health

Tailoring response to a pandemic in communities with high population density and low-income is one that faces governments in the developing world. In Uganda, there have been several brutal acts sometimes leading to deaths or permanent disablement during enforcement. Human rights advocates accused the government of policing petty crimes while the LDU militias were beating up and murdering people for going to the shops/homes/hospitals. Scores of people have died while others have been severely disabled due to the brutal implementation of COVID-19 presidential decrees.

Policing excesses during the COVID-19 crisis reincarnated horrors/bad memories of the country’s violent past. From British colonial rule through post-independence to the current regime, militarism and associated violence have been pivotal in consolidating and sustaining political power. This

magnification of violence has negatively reaffirmed undesirable citizens-state (civil-military) relations. The memory of the violent past has two implications; one, it strengthens the image of the incumbent patron and closes the interactive space for dissent. Relatedly, Hanai *et al*. (2023) established that political repression, corruption, and injustice were found to be positive and significantly correlated with the containment of COVID-19 and Ebola in Zimbabwe. Two, it reminds the nation that recourse to violence is a likely possibility. The state shenanigans have, however, surrounded inter-state security agencies' counter-accusations in an attempt to win public trust. While the nation understands that there is no distinction between the police and other security forces in Uganda such as the military and prisons, the police establishment distances itself from brutal acts, as does the military establishment. In cases where government militias such as the LDUs exercised excessive force, the security agencies rhetorically denied association. With the military control of the pandemic, comes the political misconceptions tagged to the use of the pandemic for power consolidation. This may generally affect the policing strategies and implementations concerning the standards for the protection of the right to life enshrined in the human rights law.

From the experiences of COVID-19 policing, there seems to exist institutional malfunction. The agenda-setting and monitoring were all vested in the patron (the President). All the tasks related to the prevention and containment of COVID-19 depended largely on the presidential assignment. The security-related public health interventions, therefore, are not nurtured by the existing legal frameworks.

There is a danger of the precedence of the law. The COVID-19-related presidential pronouncements and their applications as a form of jurisprudence enforced by the security forces and prosecuted in courts, offer a possibility for future decrees' replacement of existing legal frameworks. The presidential special laws/ministerial statutory instruments undermine the principles of governmental separation of power. The enactment of laws is vested in the parliament (legislature) and not in the person of the president or the subordinate ministers. The Uganda Law Society (2022: 13) in the second quarterly report recommended that there should be no interfere with the judicial functions any person or any other organ of the state. It added that the climate of legality demands for judicial independence to dispense justice without any form of improper influence but based on the law and evidence. The presidential decrees complicated the relationship between the law and evidence because the president cannot be construed as the law.

7. Discussion and conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrust us into an unprecedented situation, raising profound security questions. Effective enforcement of public health policies must be intricately woven into the broader security discourse of 'who protects whom from what/whom?'. This challenge epitomises the

complexities faced in policing during this dynamic century marked by acute global crises such as climate change-induced disasters, pandemics, and technological hazards like nuclear threats.

In Uganda, the perception of security has long been intertwined with protection from a violent past. However, the enforcement measures during the COVID-19 crisis have revived memories of past traumas. Since the era of British colonial rule, militarism and its associated violence have been instrumental in consolidating and maintaining political power. The heightened use of force during the pandemic has strained the citizen-state (civil-military) relations, reinforcing undesirable dynamics. The disproportionate containment of pandemic through kinetic methods (militaristically), equipped the state with the experience of mapping, deployment, and control of the cities and suburbs in the times of military state of emergency.

While the government has legitimate concerns about public compliance with lockdown measures, overly restrictive measures and punitive approaches risk undermining public trust and compliance, especially among vulnerable communities struggling to survive.

The reliance on presidential decrees during emergencies sets a troubling precedent, blurring the boundaries between executive discretion and the rule of law. Such measures diminish the principle of separation of powers and consolidate executive authority at the expense of democratic norms.

Furthermore, the introduction of virtual 'scientific' elections outside constitutional frameworks raises significant issues of access, cost, and political inclusivity. It undermines the right to political association and limits electoral competition, potentially consolidating power within the ruling party.

In sum, the connection between global pandemics and security and policing dynamics highlights the intricate politics of maintaining regimes, the difficulties faced by dissent, access to justice, and the changing interpretations of state and the rule of law. Addressing these challenges requires balancing public health imperatives with democratic principles and human rights, ensuring that emergency measures do not erode hard-won democratic gains.

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Assessing People's Perceptions of Covid-19 and Domestic Violence against Women in Rwanda, Huye District: Case Study of Family Circle Love Lab Organization

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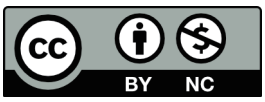
Abstract

This study assesses people's perceptions of Covid-19 and domestic violence against women in the Huye District of Rwanda through a case study of the Family Circle Love Lab Organization (FCLLO). Additionally, this study seeks to understand the causes and effects of domestic violence on women during the Covid-19 period, exploring how Covid-19 resulted in domestic violence against women, and determining the approach used by the FCLLO to adapt its strategies for supporting women experiencing domestic violence in Rwanda. A qualitative descriptive methodology is used in this study, and data are obtained via documentation and interviews. Eleven participants are purposively selected, and their research data are analysed qualitatively using content analysis. The findings of this study revealed cases of domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic due to unemployment, alcohol abuse, food scarcity, lockdown, and depression. These findings indicate that unwanted pregnancy and depression are the main effects of Covid-19 due to an increase in proximity between partners during the lockdown. The mechanisms used by the FCLLO to support women include but are not limited to trauma healing, conflict resolution through mediation, and assistance in developing resilience and confidence.

Keywords: Covid-19, women, domestic violence, FCLLO



1. Introduction

1.1. Study background

The Covid-19 outbreak, which escalated rapidly into a global crisis, was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Van Rensburg *et al.* 2020). The virus spread rapidly worldwide, with African countries being among the last to report infections. The World Health Organization (WHO) officially classified Covid-19 as a pandemic on 11 March, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The virus has resulted in more than 2.1 million confirmed cases and 142,229 deaths across 213 countries by that time (WHO 2019, Lone and Ahmad 2020, Van Rensburg *et al*. 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected several countries worldwide. Highly developed countries, such as the United States, with more than 9.15 million confirmed cases, and nations in Europe with 3.31 million cases, have been affected significantly. Other regions, including South-East Asia with 2 million cases, the Eastern Mediterranean with 1.53 million cases, Africa with 0.75 million cases, and the Western Pacific with 0.31 million cases, have similarly experienced considerable outbreaks (WHO 2019, Aristovnik *et al.* 2020). The virus has affected individuals of all age groups and disrupted almost all sectors of development, not only in developing countries but also in the most advanced economies globally (Aristovnik *et al.* 2020).

The persistent spread of the pandemic has resulted in new challenges, both physically and mentally. People are isolated, whereas schools and businesses are closed, thus promoting financial instability and job insecurity (Al-Rantisi and Faraj 2022, De Souza Santos *et al.* 2022). Consequently, children and their mothers are at an increased risk of domestic violence (Bradbury-Jones and Isham 2020). Women are typically affected by domestic abuse; nonetheless, they remain silent. Some believe that remaining quiet protects their loved ones, whereas others fear the shame and judgment from their social circles.

On 14 March, 2020, Rwanda recorded its first Covid-19 case involving an Indian man. Reflecting on the approach of other nations, Rwanda's President, His Excellency Paul Kagame, urged the public to comply with preventive measures to contain the virus's transmission. Subsequently, lockdowns were implemented to enforce social distancing and limit the virus's spread (De Vos 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected domestic violence. Owing to lockdown measures, many victims are trapped at home with their abusers, thus resulting in an increase in the frequency, severity, and danger of domestic violence (Taub 2020, De Souza Santos *et al.* 2022). However, the lockdown has also enabled some families to strengthen their relationships, as they were able to spend more time together than usual because of reduced work and school commitments.

1.2. Problem statement

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected human life considerably. Most nations implemented restrictions and changes to daily activities to combat the spread of the virus. In Rwanda, a nationwide lockdown

was imposed on March 21, where non-essential movement outside the home was prohibited. Citizens were encouraged to use mobile money and online banking to minimise the exchange of physical currency. Only businesses providing critical services, such as healthcare, telecommunications, security, and banking, were permitted to remain open. Additionally, gatherings and interdistrict travel were severely restricted (Mugabi 2020). Despite the abrupt and disruptive nature of the pandemic, many countries have implemented concerted efforts to guide their populations in adapting to the new normal, including the use of face masks and lockdown measures, to curb the transmission of the virus.

The Covid-19 pandemic has garnered significant attention owing to its political, economic, educational, and healthcare implications. However, an equally important concern that has been overlooked is the effect of lockdown measures on families, particularly in relation to domestic violence. Owing to restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus, families are able to spend more time together; however, many encountered financial hardships due to job losses (Taub 2020). This increase in time spent at home, coupled with financial stress, poses an increased risk of domestic-violence incidents occurring within households.

During times of crisis, women are typically affected by disproportionate risks owing to their gendered nature, which can limit their work and economic opportunities (Malik and Naeem 2020). Quarantine measures intended to address the disease place women at a higher risk of violence within their homes as well as detach them from essential protective services and support systems to which they previously had access. This exacerbates gender inequality and is a significant source of stress, thereby affecting women's physical and mental well-being. For instance, UN Women reports that globally, 65% of women work in the informal sector, which places them at a greater risk of economic uncertainty (De Haldevang 2020). This study aimed to understand local communities' perceptions of Covid-19 and domestic violence against women in Rwanda.

Despite the limited existing literature regarding this relatively new topic, this study seeks to acquire and document information regarding the relationship between Covid-19 and domestic violence in Rwanda. Understanding the causes and effects of domestic violence on women during Covid-19, particularly socio-economic losses, creates opportunity for advocacy towards the necessary social and economic support for women in Rwanda. Understanding the manner by which Covid-19 exacerbates domestic violence against women, particularly in Rwanda, helps decision makers to implement policies that protect women during pandemics or other disasters that may occur in the future (Campbell 2020). Additionally, it aids health workers in developing improved safety protocols and responses to crises and mitigating other foreseeable challenges. This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the manner by which Covid-19 exacerbates domestic violence against women in Rwanda and serves as a reference for addressing similar problems in the future. Additionally, this study raises awareness about Covid-19 and domestic violence against women, as well as offers lessons for protecting and empowering

women during crises.

1.3. Research Objective

Owing to the increase in domestic-violence cases during the Covid-19 pandemic, this study seeks to understand the causes and effects of domestic violence on women during the Covid-19 period, unravel the manner by which Covid-19 resulted in domestic violence against women, and determine the approach used by the Family Circle Love Lab Organisation (FCLLO) to adapt its strategies for supporting women experiencing domestic violence in Rwanda. The FCLLO, which is a local NGO in Rwanda, has been a leader in addressing domestic violence, particularly during the pandemic. This organisation offers a unique opportunity to examine the manner by which grassroots initiatives respond to domestic violence during Covid-19 and its implications in broader challenges, specifically in the Rwandan society.

1.4. Related literature

1.4.1. Causes and symptoms of Covid-19 pandemic on humans

The Covid-19 pandemic is a global health crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This virus is one of seven known types of the coronavirus, with some strains causing severe respiratory illnesses such as the Middle East respiratory syndrome and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Whereas most coronavirus infections result in the common cold, the SARS-CoV-2 virus poses a more severe threat, particularly to certain groups (WHO 2020). The effect of the virus can vary significantly, depending on an individual's immune system and overall health. Older adults and those with pre-existing conditions, such as cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes, are more susceptible to developing severe Covid-19 symptoms compared with those with stronger immune defences (WHO 2021). The SARS-CoV-2 virus is primarily transmitted through direct contact with infected individuals, thus highlighting the importance of preventive measures such as social distancing and mask wearing to limit the spread of the virus.

1.4.2. Effects of domestic violence against women during Covid-19 pandemic

People's lives have been profoundly affected by Covid-19. A notable outcome is the increase in mental-health problems, in particular depression. According to Bhowmik *et al.* (2012), depression is a prevalent mental-health disease characterised by symptoms such as chronic sorrow, loss of interest in or enjoyment from activities, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, disturbed sleep or appetite, exhaustion, and trouble focusing. Owing to the pandemic-related lockdown measures, many couples spend an unprecedented amount of time together, which presents both opportunities and disadvantages. Because of the elevated stress levels at this time, miscommunication, intimidation, or physical violence can occur

more easily in relationships, which may have contributed to the development of depression in certain people (Campbell 2020, Kumar 2020, Lausi *et al.* 2021).

Employment loss is a common economic stressor globally. It has been linked to an increase in domestic violence, particularly physical abuse, due to financial and psychological pressures (Bhalotra *et al.* 2021, Hamadani *et al.* 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in widespread job losses, which causes frustration and thus violence towards loved ones. Furthermore, the economic recession during the pandemic resulted in higher prices for goods, including food, thus rendering it difficult for many families to afford two meals per day (Kakaei *et al.* 2022). This scarcity of resources and financial hardship compounded the existing stressors, thereby increasing intimate-partner violence within households.

Globally, particularly in Lebanon, the lockdown affected domestic dynamics significantly, thereby resulting in increased tension within many households. With people confined to their homes for extended periods, the usual amount of time spent together escalated, thus increasing the risk of domestic violence among those trapped with their abusers. Meanwhile, the lockdown contributed positively to some families via the strengthening of bonds between family members. However, for those unfamiliar with such close quarters, the confinement resulted in the accumulation of stress, tension, and arguments (Usta *et al.* 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for many and has caused some individuals, particularly men, to resort to alcohol as a coping mechanism. However, this reliance on alcohol can increase the risk of violent behaviour towards family members, both physically and mentally. The impaired judgment and decision making caused by alcohol consumption can render it difficult for these individuals to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence, thereby further complicating relationships and personal well-being (Campbell 2020, Gallegos *et al.* 2022).

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to many women in terms of access to family-planning support. In remote regions, where local healthcare facilities were temporarily shut down, women could not readily travel to larger urban centres to receive the necessary medical assistance. This disruption in service availability had likely contributed to an increase in unintended pregnancies among a considerable number of women during this period (Hassan *et al.* 2022).

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected women disproportionately, thereby exacerbating the existing gender inequality. Women have been striving to achieve equality in various aspects of life, including economic, political, and social domains. However, the emergence of Covid-19 has threatened the progress achieved by women thus far (De Souza Santos *et al.* 2022). According to statistics, the global employment rate for women decreased by 4.2% in 2020, whereas that for men declined by only 3%. Moreover, women were underrepresented in decision-making processes related to Covid-19 recovery efforts. In fact, among the 225 working groups tasked with designing and implementing life-saving

Covid-19 programs, women comprised less than a quarter of the members (UNCTAD 2021).

In conclusion, the lockdown significantly affected domestic dynamics, thus increasing tension within many households. Additionally, the pandemic has created stress and anxiety owing to economic instability and social isolation. These stressors have been linked to an increase in violent behaviours at home. Economic difficulties due to employment loss have become a significant stressor that resulted in a higher rate of domestic violence. Restricted movement prevented access to family-planning services, which resulted in many unwanted pregnancies among women.

2. Methodology

2.1. Description of case study

The FCLLO is a community-based local organisation located in the southern province of Huye District. It began operating in 2015 and was obtained the Rwanda Governance Board registration certificate in 2018. The FCLLO responds to gender-based sexual violence towards girls and women using mental and psychosocial approaches for behavioural change and socio-economic transformation. In Rwanda, many organisations share the same mission of combating gender-based violence. However, the FCLLO is unique in linking gender-based violence and mental health; receiving, recording, and protecting data from victims; following up on different cases; and sharing information. Additionally, they advocate for and link their beneficiaries with the local government to identify solutions to specific problems. This NGO offers sufficient time to victims, listens to them, and offers cancellations to heal wounds before they proceed to socio-economic development. It offers a holistic approach in addressing gender-based violence and mental health for sustainable development. Active listening is provided through individual or group interactions. This NGO collaborates with other institutions, such as legal and health institutions, as its interventions may extend beyond what it can offer. Additionally, it intervenes in climate action by linking gender-based violence with environmental challenges.

2.2. Data-acquisition methods

Primary and secondary data were acquired via semi-structured interviews. A qualitative approach was used in this study (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011, Gerring 2017). The study population comprised 700 women who were beneficiaries of the FCLLO. Purposive or judgmental sampling was performed to select the participants. Eleven respondents were selected for the interviews based on the specified criteria of the individuals, such as being victims of domestic violence during Covid-19, with information relevant to the study used to direct the theoretical sampling procedure. Additionally, the availability and willingness of the individuals to participate in the interviews were considered. Among 11 respondents, 5 were single mothers and 6 were married women. Moreover, a staff member of the FCLLO was selected as a key informant with knowledge regarding the problems under investigation. The key informant was

selected to complement the responses from other respondents.

Theoretical sampling based on grounded theory was performed in this study. Grounded theory was originally developed to establish theories from empirical data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The choice of participants as well as the data collection are performed in parallel. A progressive comparative analysis is performed simultaneously with the process to outline similar and new data from the participants (Glaser 2009). When theoretical sampling was performed, the participants were selected based on their characteristics, which is consistent with the study's research questions. The sample size was maintained at the saturation point until no further information was available. Data were obtained until the 10th respondent and saturation was reached.

Since this study was qualitative, the data were analysed via content analysis by coding the responses from different respondents and using narrative techniques that involved directly quoting the respondent.

3. Findings

Table 1: Respondents' profile

Number	Code	Categories	Education	Sex	Age
1	A	Single mother	Primary level	Female	31
2	B	Single mother	Primary level	Female	26
3	C	Single mother	Primary level	Female	30
4	D	Single mother	Primary level	Female	40
5	E	Single mother	Primary level	Female	-
6	F	Married	Primary level	Female	58
7	G	Married	Primary level	Female	30
8	H	Married	Secondary level	Female	35
9	I	Married	Secondary level	Female	33
10	J	Married	Primary level	Female	33
11	K	Married	Master's degree	Female	-

Source: Primary data (2023)

Note: Data were acquired between June and August 2023

Table 1 shows the profiles of the participants based on the assigned codes, category (single mother or married), educational level, gender, and age. Among the participants, five were single mothers, five

were married women, and only one staff member participated as a key informant with relevant knowledge of the problems under investigation. Despite the differences in the category, education level, and age, the participants appeared to have the same perception regarding Covid-19 and domestic violence against women. Addition, based on the interviews, the participants had similar experiences of domestic violence.

First, the causes of domestic violence during the Covid-19 period were similar, and at least eight participants mentioned similar causes of domestic violence. The participants mentioned that during the Covid-19 period, domestic violence was primarily caused by unemployment, alcohol abuse, food scarcity, lockdown, stress, and depression, which adversely affected their lives as they must simultaneously manage the consequences of Covid-19 and the abuse they experienced. Most of the participants mentioned that they were extremely stressed, as some of them must fulfil the demands of their families by themselves, as neither their spouses nor relatives were providing for them. This was particularly difficult owing to the lockdown implemented to prevent the rapid spread of the virus. Additionally, one of the participants reported that she was pregnant as a result of rape by her partner.

The interviews clearly showed that cases of domestic violence increased during the Covid-19 period, particularly during lockdown. Among the 11 people who participated in this study, 8 mentioned that cases of domestic violence increased during the Covid-19 period, 2 did not provide their views, and 1 mentioned that cases of domestic violence reduced during the Covid-19 period.

Additionally, during an interview, a staff member of the FCLLO mentioned that the organisation was attempting to end domestic violence in Rwanda. Furthermore, she mentioned that the FCLLO collaborated with local leaders in the Huye district. According to her (a staff member), the local leaders helped the organisation to identify women who were victims of domestic violence. Subsequently, they introduced them to organisations that were able to provide assistance in trauma healing, couple therapies, individual therapies, and economic empowerment through savings groups formed at the organisation led by the beneficiaries. Additionally, those organisations provided training on sexual reproductive health rights.

Finally, a staff member (interviewee) mentioned the challenges encountered by the organisation in ending domestic violence in Rwanda, specifically in the Huye district. She stated that the number of domestic-violence cases increased rapidly. According to her, this increase in domestic-violence cases necessitate more staff members who are trained and qualified for the job; however, the organisation is not financially equipped to pay for the staff members.

3.1. Causes and effects of domestic violence against women during Covid-19

Table 2: Causes of domestic violence

Causes of domestic violence	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	Total
Unemployment	x	x	x	x	x	x	-	-	x	x	x	9
Alcohol abuse	-	-	x	-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	6
Food scarcity	x	x	-	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	-	8
lockdown	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
Depression	-	x	-	-	-	x	x	-	-	x	x	5

Source: Primary data (2023)

Note: Data were acquired between June and August 2023

Covid-19 rendered many people unemployed, as shown in Table 2. Many lost their jobs owing to lockdown restrictions, which were placed to avoid the rapid spread of the virus. Interviewee C explained how she lost her job and how it resulted in her suffering from domestic violence.

> For me, I lost my job. Even eating became hard since the place where I used to earn a living was no longer available. Now, even in my home, things changed a lot because if you used to have a job and drastically lost it, in your home, they see you differently and they treat you differently, because, at the end of the month, you used to get a salary and you used to buy food, and that the money stopped, they immediately considered you differently. They no longer consider you as theirs, and there is violence every day (Interview with C, 2023).

Not only were people who were working affected by Covid-19, but also some were affected because they depended on people who lost their jobs. For instance, Interviewee D explained how the father of her child stopped assisting her during Covid-19 because he lost his job, which adversely affected her and her child.

> There was a change because, before, I used to talk with my child's father, and I was able to find him at his place and ask him for money so that I can take care of him. However, at the beginning of Covid-19, roads were closed, and I could not reach my child's father. I was not able to see him, and I did not know his schedule or the activities he used to perform. Consequently, my parents told me that they could no longer provide for me and my child. This resulted in to quarrels, and they chased me away (Interviewee with D, 2023).

Job loss is not the only cause of domestic violence, as shown in Table 2. K explained some other causes of domestic violence during the Covid-19 period, which she learned from the different cases she received from different women affected by domestic violence. According to K, alcohol abuse is one of the causes of domestic violence during the Covid-19 period. K explained that because of unemployment, men have more free time, which provides them with more opportunities for alcohol consumption, followed by the release of their frustration on their wives or partners through beatings or other types of abuse.

Table 3: Effects of domestic violence against women during Covid-19

Effects of domestic violence	***A***	***B***	***C***	***D***	***E***	***F***	***G***	***H***	***I***	***J***	***K***	***Total***
Unwanted pregnancy	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	***x***	**-**	**-**	**-**	***x***	**-**	***2***
Depression	***x***	***x***	***x***	***x***	***x***	**-**	***x***	**-**	***x***	***x***	***x***	***9***

Source: Primary data (2023)

Note: Data were acquired between June and August 2023

During the pandemic, some women experienced unwanted pregnancies resulting from rape. Expecting a baby is a joyful event for couples, but not when one is neither ready nor planning to have a child. Therefore, unwanted pregnancies are considered an adverse effect of domestic violence during the Covid-19 period. The following was mentioned by Respondent F:

> This is not the same as before Corona. Some experienced unwanted pregnancies due to rape (Interview with F, 2023).

Meanwhile, depression can occur due to traumatic events experienced. Additionally, it can be caused by physical, mental, or emotional abuse experienced, be it from friends, family, or intimate partners. Women experiencing different types of abuse are more likely to be depressed. Covid-19 alone has caused depression among people, as it has affected almost every aspect of their lives. Additionally, some women who were victims of domestic violence suffered from depression owing to the abuse they experienced, which caused them to lose their self-confidence.

3.2. Contribution of FCLLO in ending domestic violence against women

After the victims were received by the FCLLO, they were provided with different types of assistance

based on their situation. For instance, they can be offered help with conflict resolution, since conflict is one of the causes of violence. This implies that when victims are received by the FCLLO, the latter first analyses the nature of the conflict between the victim and perpetrator through couple therapies. Respondent J mentioned:

> When I reached this place, they comforted me. I also participated in the training organised for married couples, and my husband also came to the training (Interview with J, 2023).

In most cases, the victims were considered weak and vulnerable because of the situation they were in. Victims at the FCLLO were provided assistance in increasing their resilience and were empowered to overcome the problems they encounter daily. They were assisted with trauma healing and individual counselling, which was proven to be helpful to the victims, based on the comments provided during interviews with some of the victims of domestic violence.

Some of the single mothers who participated in the study explained how the organisation helped them overcome the problems they encountered daily from their families and the community:

> When I became a member of the family organisation, it educated me and caused me to love it. I used to see that I was the only one who gave birth at home, but once I came here, I realised that there were other people with whom I shared the same problem. I lost my self-confidence, but my family organisation helped me to regain it. I felt that I had to educate my child, even she was called a fatherless child. Additionally, the family organisation helped me to discover myself and provided information on how to conduct myself in my reproductive life. Another piece of advice I was given by the family organisation was that I must make my own decisions such that I would be able to receive a loan, develop myself, and afford to buy health insurance and clothes for my child. The family did a lot for me (Interview with A, 2023).

K explained that the FCLLO uses different mechanisms when helping women who have experienced or are still experiencing domestic violence. The FCLLO trains the victims to develop resilience and provides information regarding the sexual reproductive health rights of women. This was proven to be helpful to some of the victims who participated in this study.

Furthermore, the victims were offered assistance with trauma healing. Most of the victims have experienced difficult situations. Some were raped, while others experienced undesirable situations that traumatised them.

Additionally, the organisation offers couples therapy, which involves a husband and wife. In these

therapy sessions, couples learn how their behaviours affect their partners, families, and the entire community. This allows them to discover peaceful living approaches and resolve conflicts peacefully. Additionally, the couples were taught how to care for each other.

The organisation offers group therapy as well, where women sit together and discuss different topics that affect their lives. They seek to identify solutions together with the assistance of the staff members of the organisation, who are present only to direct them and not decide for them.

Additionally, the organisation offers individual counselling to the victims. Not all victims can be helped via group or couples' therapy; some require individual counselling.

Finally, the organisation performs outreach activities. Outreach is conducted by visiting the homes of victims with their perpetrators and is considered field work by the organisation. However, the police and local leaders are involved in cases where women are in danger.

3.3. Challenges encountered by FCLLO in ending domestic violence against women

During the interview with the staff of the FCLLO, the respondent mentioned that the organisation was encountering several challenges. Some of the challenges she mentioned included insufficient well-qualified personnel, inadequate materials to be used during the sessions to help the victims, and insufficient funds. The low level of collaboration among other organisations with the same mission and vision was an issue as well. Collaborations would be beneficial and would facilitate knowledge and resource sharing.

4. Discussion

4.1. Causes of domestic violence against women during Covid-19 period

The findings from the literature and this study regarding the causes and effects of domestic violence against women during the Covid-19 period were almost similar. During Covid-19, domestic violence was primarily caused and influenced by economic factors such as unemployment, alcohol abuse, food scarcity, lockdown, and depression. For instance, 9 of the 11 respondents mentioned that loss of employment due to Covid-19 was a source of conflict in their families. This was similarly reported by Bhalotra *et al.* (2021), who discovered that unemployment increased cases of intimate-partner violence, particularly physical abuse, due to financial and psychological stressors. Similarly, during the Covid-19 period, many people lost their jobs and were rendered jobless. This resulted in frustration, which was released violently on their loved ones.

The findings showed that alcohol contributed to domestic violence. Campbell (2020) explained that because of the many stressors during the pandemic period, most people, particularly men, resorted to alcohol use to forget about the issues that stressed them. Owing to the influence of alcohol, they might be at a higher risk of behaving unfavourably, thus causing physical harm to their family members. The

findings of this study indicate that in some families, alcohol was a cause of conflict.

Another cause of domestic violence, as discovered from both literature review and research findings, was food scarcity (Kakaei *et al.* 2022). During the Covid-19 period, most families did not have sufficient food because of economic deprivation.

4.2. Effects of domestic violence against women during Covid-19 period

Unwanted pregnancies, lack of confidence, and depression were highlighted as the effects of domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic period. According to the WHO, lack of confidence is an indicator of depression. EuroMed Rights (2020) used the case of Jordan to explain unwanted pregnancies among women during the Covid-19 period. In Jordan, many hospitals were closed, and only large hospitals provided full services during the lockdown. This limited women's access to family-planning services. Even though some hospitals remained open, women who had been victims of abuse, including rape, might have opted not to go because of the fear of contracting the virus and the societal repercussions of reporting the violence experienced. Meanwhile, women who lived in isolated places with few local facilities were prohibited from using public transit on their own, thus rendering it impossible for them to travel to larger towns to seek medical attention. For many women, this may have increased their chances of unintended births (EuroMed Rights 2020, Hassan *et al.* 2022).

Additionally, Covid-19 has affected the mental well-being of healthcare workers owing to the high levels of stress and anxiety experienced by them (Alhouri *et al.* 2023). Covid-19 captured the attention of health workers as it was regarded as a disease requiring close attention and immediate treatment to avoid its spread and the death of patients suffering from it. Another concern was that patients with other diseases were neglected. Addition, the medical supply chain was disrupted worldwide, as most funds went directed towards Covid-19 treatment than to other diseases and medical facilities (Haleem *et al.* 2020, Lal *et al.* 2022).

4.3. Contribution of FCLLO in ending domestic violence against women

The FCLLO is committed to helping victims of domestic violence, which involves the perpetrators in certain cases. Additionally, the FCLLO assists women with trauma healing and conflict resolution through mediation involving the perpetrator and victim. This allows the women develop resilience and confidence in peacefully managing challenging situations, such as violence, without affecting their lives.

This is consistent with suggestions by the UN for helping victims of domestic violence and the perpetrators. The UN has suggested treatment and education programs for both the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. Based on the UN, treatment can help victims heal from their past or present conditions of domestic violence, whereas the education program can help the perpetrators identify methods to manage situations other than resorting to violence. Additionally, they can learn the

manner by which domestic violence affected them.

If the perpetrators require healing, they can be helped as well because some people use violence due to trauma or because they grew up witnessing violence in their families. The organisation uses different mechanisms to help women who experienced domestic violence, such as providing sexual reproductive health rights training such that the victims can develop positive resilience and obtain knowledge regarding the sexual reproductive health rights of women. Therapy sessions, trauma healing, and individual counselling are provided as well. However, the FCLLO encounters different challenges, such as insufficient funds to support projects that aim to end domestic violence against women in Rwanda. Additionally, the organisation lacks well-trained personnel who are qualified to perform the work required to end domestic violence against women.

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to assess people's perception of Covid-19 and domestic violence against women in Rwanda, Huye District, via a case study of the FCLLO. The findings indicate that during Covid-19, domestic violence was primarily caused and influenced by economic factors such as unemployment, alcohol abuse, food scarcity, lockdown, and depression. Unwanted pregnancies, lack of confidence, depression, and food scarcity were highlighted as effects of domestic violence against women during the pandemic period. Additionally, the findings indicate that the FCLLO is committed to helping victims of domestic violence, which may involve the perpetrators in certain cases. The FCLLO helps women with trauma healing and conflict resolution through mediation involving the perpetrator and victim. Additionally, it helps them in developing resilience and confidence such that they may be able to peacefully manage challenging situations, such as violence, without affecting their lives.

Covid-19 was an unexpected event that affected every aspect of human life. Lockdowns were mandated, which caused panic among people. Many have lost their lives or loved ones. The virus imposed devastating effects on people. Nonetheless, people have attempted to adapt and identify approaches to survive amidst the virus. Some families managed to bond during this period, whereas some women experienced domestic violence during this pandemic period. Owing to factors such as unemployment, food scarcity, lockdown, and depression, many perceived that Covid-19 increased the number of domestic-violence cases compared with the period before Covid-19.

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Initial Responses to the 'New Normal' in South Africa: Challenges and Social Transformations during the First Hundred Days of COVID-19 Lockdown

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Abstract

Since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in March 2020, South Africa has quickly adopted strict measures to contain the infection. It includes mass testing, an economic relief scheme that amounted to 10% of its GDP, and a lockdown. The perceptions and reactions of people in South Africa to these measures vary according to their situation, such as job, economic status, and nationality. However, people generally follow this new strategy for survival, despite the difficulties and inconveniences caused by restrictions. But how? This study examines how people in South Africa responded to the pandemic and the government's measures during the first 100 days of the lockdown by taking the following examples: (1) the persistence of informal businesses under the regulations, (2) restaurants working for the communities while their businesses were forced to shut down, and (3) the judicial procedure as a means of raising voices. The discussion argues how government measures had formed a 'one standard', which risked defining people as illegal and dividing people easily, and how people's actions worked to supplement the incomplete government scheme by offering support to those who were spilled over from the scheme and suggesting amendments.

Keywords: COVID-19, South Africa, lockdown, initial response

1. Introduction

COVID-19, the virus first identified in Wuhan, China, has been spreading worldwide and has also affected the African continent. In particular, the Republic of South Africa recorded the largest number of COVID-19 patients in the continent as of 4 July 2020, 100 days after its nationwide lockdown (WHO 2020)[1]. According to the Department of Health in South Africa, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country was 187,977 on that day (Department of Health 2020a). In the meantime, South Africa took strict measures to contain the pandemic soon after the first positive case was confirmed. Following the ten days after the number of cases exceeded 50, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a National State of Disaster (Presidency 2020a), and the lockdown was finalised before the first case of COVID-19-related death. Lockdown regulations initially restricted most of the behaviours except for essential activities. This structure eased gradually with five levels. To avoid clusters, the Department of Health has conducted 'mass-testing', with a total of 1,792,078 tests completed as of 4 July 2020 (Department of Health 2020a). One month after the lockdown began, the President announced a drastic economic relief scheme that amounted to 10% of its GDP to support companies and people who lost their income due to the lockdown and to expand the medical system preparing for the peak (Presidency 2020b).

The virus and the countermeasures taken by the government changed everyday life from the ground level. People generally follow this new strategy for their survival despite the difficulties and inconveniences brought about by the restrictions, although their perceptions and reactions to those measures vary according to various conditions, such as jobs, economic status, and nationality.

This study examines how people living in South Africa shaped their everyday lives in the initial stage of the pandemic by analysing the measures taken by the government and countermeasures taken by the people. In the following sections, I first describe the government measures in time sequence. Then, people's reactions against them are discussed by taking examples of (1) informal businesses under the regulations, (2) restaurants working for communities while their businesses were forced to shut down, and (3) judicial procedures as a means of raising voices, as exemplified by the High Court judgment that declared some lockdown regulations as 'unconstitutional'. The following discussion argues how government measures had formed a 'one standard', which risked defining certain people as illegal and dividing people easily, and how people's actions worked to supplement the incomplete government structure.

This study focuses on the pandemic situation in South Africa until 4 July 2020 100 days after the implementation of the lockdown. By examining the initial stages of the pandemic, this study examines how the government and people have adjusted to the unprecedented crisis. Even if the situation is

[1] This article was first written in October 2020 and amended with additional remarks in 2024. The data in this paper are thus mainly collected from March to October 2020.

'abnormal', lives continue, and this paper intends to learn from those people's efforts and struggles to live under such circumstances.

The author, staying in Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa, at that time, was also under lockdown with strict restrictions on going out. Therefore, data were collected mainly through gazettes published by the government and newspapers, adding to my own perspectives and insights from the experience of this situation. Thus, this paper can also be read as a record of one of the challenges faced by researchers who are unable to continue their research because of limited mobility.

2. Situation and Government Measures under COVID-19 in South Africa

This section outlines the situation in South Africa during the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic and the countermeasures taken by the government.

On 5 March 2020 Health Minister Dr. Zweli Mkhize announced the first positive case of COVID-19 in South Africa (Department of Health 2020b). The patient was a traveller who had returned from Italy. Ten days later, when the number of confirmed cases exceeded 50, President Ramaphosa declared "a National State of Disaster" (Presidency 2020a). The first interprovincial infection was confirmed on 17 March (Department of Health 2020c). On 23 March President Ramaphosa declared the implementation of a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, beginning three days later (Presidency 2020c). This decision was made before the first COVID-19-related death was confirmed on 27 March. On 26 March 23:59, a nationwide lockdown was enforced. This lockdown was subsequently extended for two additional weeks and then gradually lifted in five stages. On 1 May, the country moved to level 4. It was then downgraded to Level 3 on 1 June and continued on 3 July 100 days after its implementation[2].

Based on the Disaster Management Act, the government issued regulations and directions for dealing with the pandemic. When President Ramaphosa announced the National State of Disaster, various regulations were imposed, including a travel ban on foreign nationals from high-risk countries, closure of some ports, prohibition of gatherings of more than 100 people, and school closures (Presidency, 2020a). This was later published as a gazette, with an added prohibition on the sale, dispensing, or transportation of liquor (Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs [CoGTA] 2020a).

When the lockdown was initially implemented, all non-essential activities were suspended at midnight on 26 March (Minister of CoGTA 2020b; 2020c). This means that people could only leave their homes to buy essentials, such as food and medicine, seek medical care, or collect social grants. Only essential workers such as health workers and essential service providers such as supermarket clerks were permitted to work. All national borders were closed except for the transportation of essential goods. Even shops permitted to operate under these regulations were required to follow strict health protocols.

[2] The country was moved to Level 2 on 18 August 2020. The alert level was moved back and forth, and the National State of Disaster was lifted on 5 April 2022.

For example, in a supermarket, customers were required to sanitise their hands before entering the shop (Figures 1 and 2). Shopping carts were sanitised by the staff each time (Figure 3). In the queue to the cashier, people had to maintain social distancing as per the markings on the floor.

Figure 1. Queue for sanitising in front of the supermarket
Photo by author, at Pretoria, Gauteng

Figure 2. Sanitising station in front of the entrance

Photo by author, at Pretoria, Gauteng

Figure 3. Supermarket clerk sanitising and passing shopping carts

Photo by author, at Pretoria, Gauteng

From the beginning of May, under Level 4 of the nationwide lockdown, manufacturing resumed with certain restrictions: 50% employment in the automotive, stationery, and winter clothes sectors and 30% in all other sectors (Minister of CoGTA 2020d). The food industry was permitted to deliver meals; however, sit-down meals or takeaways were not allowed. People could also go out for exercise such as walking, running, and cycling from 6 to 9 a.m. However, most of the economy was forced to remain closed.

During Level 4, some regulations were amended according to the directions of the relevant ministers. The sale of winter clothes expanded (Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition, 2020a), and e-commerce was permitted to sell almost everything except liquor and tobacco (Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition 2020b). Until then, e-commerce was only permitted to sell office equipment and essential foods to avoid unfair competition among physical stores (Faku 2020). People can also move their place of residence by applying for a one-time permission from the government (Minister of CoGTA 2020e). It also allowed victims of domestic violence, whose numbers had increased under the 'stay home' situation, to run away to another place. According to a survey conducted by the University of Johannesburg from 13 April to 11 May the third week of the lockdown, even under such strict regulations, 85% of respondents believed that the president was doing a good job in handling the coronavirus outbreak at this time, and 78% agreed to sacrifice some of their human rights to prevent the spread of the virus (University of Johannesburg 2020).

From 1 June, due to the move under level 3 regulations (Minister of CoGTA 2020f), the economy resumed drastically. Almost all economic sectors were permitted to operate by adhering to sanitisation rules and restricting the number of people in the workplace, except for high-risk activities, entertainment venues, such as cinemas and theatres, and personal care services, such as haircutting and nail salons. Restaurants were permitted for both food delivery and takeaway; however, sit-down meals remained banned. Accompanied by the partial reopening of domestic travel for business trips, domestic flights and hotel accommodations were resumed.

Some of the above regulations, which were prohibited in the initial Level 3 regulations, were gradually lifted. This included sitting in restaurants (Minister of Tourism 2020), providing personal care, such as hairdressing (Minister of Small Business Development 2020b) and reopening the venue for non-contact sports and training in contact sports (Minister of CoGTA 2020g).

While containing the spread of the virus through lockdown, the government also conducted Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing throughout the country. The testing measures included 'community screening and testing (CST)' to identify patients, especially in densely populated areas. This contributed to an increase in the number of tests. As of July 4, 1,792,078 tests had been completed (Department of Health 2020a). However, this structure has also resulted in testing backlogs owing to the lack of test kits and limited capacity of laboratories. Subsequently, the government shifted its

measures to focus on the areas with high rates of infection.

Another leading measure to tackle COVID-19 was the social relief and economic support package announced by President Ramaphosa on 21 April (Presidency, 2020b), the twenty-fifth day of lockdown. ZAR500 billion[3], which amounts to approximately 10% of South African GDP, was allocated for credit guarantee and income support for companies, job creation and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and informal businesses, support for vulnerable households, health and other frontline services, and support for municipalities (National Treasury 2020). Struggling individuals were offered the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grants, with ZAR350 per month for those who are unemployed and do not receive any income or social grants. Over 3 million people received this grant as of 6 July, total costs over ZAR1 billion (Department of Social Development [DSD] 2020). For employees who were not paid salaries due to the lockdown, the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) offers relief benefits, ranging from R3,500 a month to R6,730 a month. In addition, child support grant beneficiaries could receive an extra ZAR300 in May, an R500 from June to October, and an additional ZAR250 for all other grant beneficiaries. Since individuals in lower-income households were disproportionately affected by the labour market impacts of the pandemic, with employment (often permanent) loss and reductions in working hours and earnings, these social grants were a crucial source of income relief for those households (Köhler and Bhorat 2020).

However, severe food insecurity during the pandemic shows that government schemes are not sufficient to protect all people in need. According to a report by Statistics South Africa on 20 May the number of people suffering from hunger increased from 4.3% to 7% since the start of the lockdown (Stats SA 2020a). Following school closure, the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which feeds nine million schoolchildren (Department of Basic Education 2015), was also suspended. To address this problem, the Department of Social Development (DSD) and South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) distributed food parcels. By 25 June the DSD and other stakeholders had distributed 1,037,648 food parcels for 5.2 million (PMG 2020). However, it has also been acknowledged that nearly 8.8 million more people were still food insecure and needed support (*ibid*). Moreover, the total number of food parcels included parcels distributed by NPO or provincial and local governments. These figures demonstrate that the government measures are insufficient.

[3] 1USD = ZAR16.7019 on 4 July, 2020. (First National Bank https://www.fnb.co.za/rates/ForeignExchangeRates.html)

Table 1: The chronology of South Africa under the initial stage of COVID-19 pandemic

Date			Occurrences	The total number of positive cases	The total number of deaths	The total number of tests conducted
March	5	2020	The first COVID-19 positive case was confirmed	1	0	N/A
	15		President Ramaphosa declared a National State of Disaster	51	0	N/A
	17		The first inter-provincial infection was confirmed	85	0	N/A
	23		President Ramaphosa announced the implementation of a nationwide lockdown for 21 days	402	0	N/A
	27		Day 1 of the nationwide lockdown The first COVID-19 related death was confirmed	1,170	1	28,537
April	9		President Ramaphosa announced a 2-week-extension of the lockdown	1,845 *April 8	18 *April 8	63,776 *April 8
	21		President Ramaphosa announced “the social relief and economic support package”	3,465	58	126,937
	23		President Ramaphosa announced the lifting of the lockdown in five levels	3,953	75	143,570
May	1		Lockdown level moved to level 4	5,951	116	217,522
June	1		Lockdown level moved to level 3	34,357	705	742,742
July	4		Day 100 of the nationwide lockdown	187,977	3,026	1,792,078

Note: Data were sourced from the daily announcements of Health Minister Zweli Mkhize published on the COVID-19 South African Online Portal (https://sacoronavirus.co.za/). There was no announcement from the Health Minister on April 9. At the national address of President Cyril Ramaphosa on that day, he stated that there were 1,934 confirmed cases.

3. Countermeasures Taken by People

Under the new structure created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the government’s measures, people in South Africa have been forced to change their everyday lives, while their perceptions of and reactions

to these measures vary according to their living conditions. This chapter focuses on people's actions and responses to the crisis, taking examples of (1) responses from informal sectors, (2) soup kitchens operated by restaurants, and (3) judicial procedures as a means of raising voices. These examples were selected because they represent people's attempts to adapt to the situation and reflect the impact of the new regime. By extracting examples from people under various conditions, this study depicted people's challenges in the first 100 days of the COVID-19 crisis from a multilateral perspective.

3.1. Informal Business

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, during the first quarter of 2020, 2.9 million people were working in the informal sector in South Africa (Stats SA 2020b), although this number may be more significant because statistics cannot calculate the exact numbers in this sector because of its informality. This section focuses on two job titles: spaza shops and waste pickers. Under lockdown regulations, workers in both jobs were forced to radically transform their ways of operation, primarily due to the 'permit rule' that the government required people to get permits to operate their businesses. These cases highlight the fact that government rules are inappropriate for the informal sector.

3.1.1. Spaza shop

'Spaza shop' refers to an informal grocery shop, especially those located in townships, formerly designated areas for Black people under the apartheid regime. Spaza shops have played an essential role as safety nets for vulnerable people by supplying food at affordable prices and in suitable quantities, and offering credit (Battersby et al. 2016).

When the lockdown was first declared by the President on 23 March only supermarkets were referred to as food retailers in his address (Presidency 2020b). In response to the lobbying by civil society (Rogan and Skinner 2020: 8), the fixed regulation promulgated by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) on 25 March included spaza shops and informal uncooked food traders to operate as an essential service during the lockdown (Minister of CoGTA 2020b). However, it was unclear what permits were needed to reopen and whether foreign owners could operate their businesses, as the Minister of Small Business Development announced in a media brief held before the lockdown that only spaza shops owned by South Africans would be allowed to operate (Qodashe 2020). About two weeks later, the Minister announced the direction (Minister of Small Business Development 2020a). According to this direction, spaza shops and other grocery stores, such as fruit and vegetable stores, could operate; however, they required permits issued by their respective local municipalities, which was a new requirement for spaza shops (Rogan and Skinner 2020: 9). If owners did not have permits, they could apply for temporary permits. The direction also clarified that permission was irrespective of nationality, although non-South African owners were required to have asylum seekers' or business

permits.

The government also declared that it would prompt support for spaza shops by the end of March (Donnelly 2020). This assistance was finally promulgated on 18 April (DSBD 2020), three weeks after the lockdown was implemented. Once spaza shops were registered for this support scheme, they could purchase products from the designated wholesalers at discounted prices using a card pre-funded and backed by the Khula Credit Guarantee scheme, part of the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), which has provided financial support to the SME sector. However, this program excludes foreign nationals because it requires a valid South African identification document. In addition, those who wished to apply had to register with several organisations, such as the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), South African Revenue Service (SARS), and Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

These procedures promoted the formalisation of spaza shops, which operated as informal businesses. In fact, the government announced that it had formalised 2,242 spaza shops as of 24 June (SA News 2020). According to the statement, the government welcomed this phenomenon, saying, 'This would assist the newly formalised businesses to build a credit profile, which would make them viable to access financing with banking institutions'(*ibid*). However, this radical formalisation carries the risk of designating those who do not align with the scheme as illegal and depriving them of their livelihoods. Rogan and Skinner (2020) argued that the government used this opportunity 'to achieve longer-term ambitions of formalising the informal economy and dealing with unregistered migrants' (9).

3.1.2. Waste pickers

In South Africa, informal waste pickers, or reclaimers, who salvage recyclable materials from waste products, have played important roles in the recycling industry. According to a 2016 report by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), there were up to 90,000 waste pickers in the country (Godfrey *et al*. 2016). They collected 80-90% of the paper and packaging and contributed to municipal authorities retrenching between ZAR300–750 million per year (*ibid*).

However, during the initial stage of the lockdown, waste pickers were prohibited from working, even though municipal recycling agents were allowed to work as essential workers (Cocks 2020). Later, when the country moved to Level 4 of its lockdown, they received approval to resume their jobs, albeit only if they had the necessary permits (Minister of CoGTA 2020d). To obtain these permits, waste pickers had to produce identity documents or passports within the municipality. However, these regulations are blind to the reality of many waste pickers who have lost their documents because of precarity (Breakey 2020). Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) asked the Gauteng High Court to declare this permit regulation unconstitutional after the incident in which the Tshwane Metro Police confiscated about 15 trolleys used by some waste pickers without a court order during Level 4 (Postman 2020). This permission process

excludes some waste pickers not because of the hygiene protocol but because they did not have access to their identification documents. Instead, it was intended to control informal waste-picking activities. The strict application of this protocol could induce job deprivation for the most vulnerable people. While, at the same time, Breakey (2020) observed the internal organising of waste pickers 'as they have made efforts to look after one another, collecting and delivering their own food parcels where the state has not'.

3.2. Soup Kitchens Operated by Restaurants

Covid-19 has had major impacts on many industries. Restaurants were hit severely by the total shutdown during the early stages of the lockdown. Regulations have been gradually easing; however, during Level 4, they were only allowed for delivery, which was then extended to takeaways during Level 3. Sit-down meals finally resumed on 29 June, three months after the implementation of the lockdown.

Throughout this period, some restaurants offered to use their kitchens to support the surrounding communities. For example, Soupathon 1,000, organised by the owner-chef of a restaurant in Cape Town's Mowbray with volunteer chefs, was one such effort. They made cups of soup for around 35,000 people per week, with contributions from neighbours and some companies (Maxwell 2020).

Another alliance called 'Chefs with Compassion', backed by more than 300 chefs, restaurant owners and volunteers, made nutritious meals from rescued produce and distributed countrywide. They produced 42,220 meals from 24,112 tons of rescued produce in the week between 18 May and 24 (Grobler 2020).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, food insecurity has been dire since the beginning of the lockdown, and the government support scheme was unable to cover all struggles during the crisis. In this context, the soup kitchen movement has the potential to complement the government's food security policy. In addition to soup kitchens, most food parcels were financed and distributed by civil society through provincial and local governments. However, the government required organisations to apply for permits from the Department of Social Development if they distributed food. The Department stated that the purpose of this step was to ask people to adhere to protocols such as social distancing and wearing masks (Singh 2020). Opposing this, '1000 Woman Trust', one of the NPOs contributing food parcels, took legal action with the largest opposition political party, the Democratic Alliance (DA). They complained that the government intended to centralise donations. One of the founding members of the 1000 Women Trust commented that they were happy to work with the government; however, they would not be dictated to do so (*ibid*). The court issued a ruling on 22 May that prevented soup kitchens and NGOs from being shut down until the matter was fully heard in mid-June. On 23 June they succeeded in blocking a new government regulation (Williams 2020).

The support 'by the community for the community' can become a safety net for those who are spilling

over from national measures. These activities existed even before the COVID-19 crisis started; however, during the lockdown, new cooperation emerged. Since daily business operations were suspended and mobility was restricted, people tended to spend time at their residences and interact with neighbouring communities much more profoundly and for a longer time than before the pandemic. These conditions ensure that people concentrate their efforts on community support. Restaurant action were one such phenomenon. Under regulations 'for safety protocol', such civil activities are, however, also affected by the control of the government. This has led to disputes over the priorities between making food distribution safer and saving those starving as soon as possible.

3.3. Judicial procedures as a means of raising voices

As of 100 days of lockdown, several cases were registered in the courts against the lockdown regulations, including the ban against tobacco and reopening of schools, and the controversial judgement passed on 2 June on one of them by the North Gauteng High Court Judge Norman Davis declared the regulations unconstitutional and invalid (Cele 2020).

The case was brought about on 28 May by Reyno de Beer and his organisation called the Liberty Fighters Network, a voluntary organisation fighting for rights to equal justice for all. Their main allegation is that the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was a 'gross overreaction' and 'regulations were invalid because the National Council had not approved them of Provinces and were in breach of the Gatherings Act, passed by Parliament' (Rabkin 2020). In the judgment, Judge Davis denied this argument, finding that the declaration of a national state of disaster itself was valid for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic (Cele 2020). On the other hand, the judge found that some regulations were irrational and invalid by listing examples such as restrictions on family visits, funerals, and informal sectors such as hairdressers, time limits on exercise, general restrictions of movement, and closure of beaches (*ibid*).

Two days later, the government appealed for this judgement (Mahlati 2020). On 30 June, Judge Davis granted the leave to appeal, but only for the "blanket" declaration of invalidity of the regulations and ordered the amendment of six regulations that the court found to be irrational (Gerber 2020). Against this backdrop, the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma asked the Supreme Court of Appeal for leave to appeal and insisted that Level 3 regulations were not placed before the court at the time of the hearing and that the plaintiffs failed to raise valid constitutional attacks, and thus the High Court ruling was overreached (*ibid*).

Experts had mixed views on this matter. Advocate Hishaam Mahomed, an MP at that time and former head of the justice department in the Western Cape, condemned this judgment as 'appealable' because of its judicial overreach and lack of cogency (Mahomed 2020). Calland (2020), Associate Professor in Public Law at the University of Cape Town, mentioned that this judgement was unconvincing as the

judge took 'a dim view of the reasonableness (not rationality) of a good deal of the government's decision-making, thereby potentially confusing the law', while at the same time shows that 'South Africa's rule of law and its judicial independence are alive and kicking'.

While the case was still ongoing as of 4 July[4] and did not directly and immediately cause the government to amend its regulations, it indicates that legal actions are one of the ways for people to negotiate against authority. This is not a single incident, but government regulations have also been tested in other cases, such as that of the one by 1,000 Women Trust, as mentioned in the previous section. Legal action is an effective way for people to raise their voices, and the fact that it has been widely covered in the media has further opened it up as an option that people can choose.

On the other hand, although legal actions play an important role in formal negotiations, these actions cannot represent all civil voices. Concurrent with several court appeals, there are also protests on the streets, sometimes involving stone throwing and looting. In one of the protests in Cape Town in April, a man said in an interview, 'I would rather die of COVID-19 than of hunger' (Evans 2020). Such imminent demands make it impossible to wait for legal procedures. This paper can only describe legal negotiations, but protests using physical appeal are also part of negotiations.

4. Discussion

4.1. New social structure controlled by the Government

Since the first confirmed COVID-19 case in the country, the South African government has taken several measures to contain the pandemic. The initial responses were rapid and strict. The government's measures began with the declaration of the National State of Disaster, with regulations such as travel restrictions from high-risk countries and school closures, and turned into a nationwide lockdown 22 days after the first positive case was identified. While controlling people's mobility, the Department of Health conducts mass testing to avoid clusters. The government also adopted a drastic economic package to mitigate lockdown damage.

A simple method for controlling infections is to control people's contact and actions. Thus, the initial lockdown was conducted under strict regulations that prohibited most behaviours. Although the lockdown was gradually lifted, it became more detailed and complicated. In the name of 'combating the virus', restrictions were justified, even if people had to be oppressed under the structure. This type of strict-controlled society, however, has a risk of defining the value of every action by 'one standard'. During the lockdown, people had to obtain permits from the government for each action such as operating businesses or providing aid. This control over informal businesses and civil movements means

[4] On 1 July 2021, the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) set aside the Gauteng High Court judgment, ruling '[a] generalised disquiet that the regulations constrain liberty, lack coherence or may have been less restrictively formulated does not suffice to secure a declaration of invalidity' (Mitchley 2021).

that if people's actions do not meet that standard, they will immediately be regarded as 'illegal'. In addition, in the spaza shop industry, if shoppers struggled during the pandemic and needed support from the government, they were required to register with organisations according to the protocol. This formalisation in the informal sector has been proceeding radically, and runs the risk of leaving behind vulnerable people who cannot meet the regulations. In terms of civil aid activities, permission procedures could centralise grassroots campaigns, which may undermine strengths such as mobility and local knowledge that such small-scale actions may have.

This 'one standard' regulation also risks dividing people by certain criteria. Because the conditions of people's lives are not the same, such blanket measures cannot be adapted for certain people. For example, those living in urban poverty who had limited access to basic infrastructure and stayed in high densities could not follow government regulations such as frequent hand washing and social distancing (De Groot and Lemanski 2021: 259). It shows 'how pre-existing inequalities in accessing basic infrastructure can be exacerbated by the virus and how the capacity to respond to public health advice is highly differentiated and often privileged' (*ibid.* 263). Not only economic status but also nationality has worked to divide people through government support schemes, and foreign nationals cannot apply for such packages. Sorting people according to nationality reminds us of and exacerbates xenophobic attitudes.

Although strict and blanket measures were inevitable during the initial stage of the pandemic, some government measures aimed to centralise power and kill society's flexibility, leading to an increase in people who cannot meet strict rules and fail in their lives.

4.2. People's reactions and adjustments against the new social structure and pandemic

Confronted with a new social structure controlled by strict regulations, people have attempted to adjust their lives in diverse ways. The rapid adoption of new procedures is one of the survival strategies, as evidenced by the increasing number of newly formalised spaza shops, while those who cannot meet the criteria for formalisation are placed in an even more vulnerable position, as mentioned above.

Civil societies responded rapidly to foster new community-based efforts, even at the beginning of the pandemic and restrictions. Examples from restaurant industries and the internal organisation of waste pickers show that people were not only oppressed by the lockdown but also created ideas about what they could do under strict rules. Lockdown seems to make people turn their attention back to their neighbours. The SMS also contributed to rapidly and extensively creating a community support scheme by connecting people, even those who did not know each other before. Although charity sometimes entails the risk of 'replicating older models of the deserving and undeserving poor', Ross (2020) observes in the social media networks she belonged to 'challenging stereotypes and doing the political work of setting one another straight when problematic assumptions are made'. While these grassroots

activities are also put under the regulations mentioned above, people still found a way to support their neighbours, and these activities were indeed crucial to people whom government blanket measures, such as food parcels, cannot cover.

Strict regulations did not or could not shut up people's voices. Several legal actions have been taken against these regulations, and a High Court ruling declaring some regulations unconstitutional revealed the possibility of raising voices through legal procedures. From this perspective, the South African structure against COVID-19 had room for negotiation, while the regulation itself was strict; people exercised judicial procedures as a device to express their opinions and correct the regime from various perspectives.

It is not only the government that has tried to form a 'new normal' in the wake of the unprecedented spread of the disease, but also the actions of civil society. Rather, these activities filled in the government's imperfect scheme. Governments that had always been challenged by inequality in the country even before the pandemic were unable to immediately correct the disparities. That is not to say that the government's response was to be taken generously but rather that the government could have acknowledged its own incompleteness and built a system that would be more supportive of such a grassroots approach. Similarly, the government's lack of support and formalisation approach towards the informal sector should have been reconsidered in a way that was more in line with the current situation in the sector by stopping dividing people according to nationality and issuing permits in a simpler process. In a situation where preventing the spread of infection is weighed against restricting people's freedom, and there is no easy 'right answer', it is crucial to be open to a diversity of opinions and actions. It does not mean criticism of the curfew restrictions themselves, but argues that the government alone cannot save everyone and needs to update and co-design with civil society even, or rather the sake of prioritising preventing infection and maintaining people's health. The examples discussed in this paper speak well of how people worked to revise and complement what the government formulated independently. Their actions are instantaneous, improvised, and diverse and cannot be simply talked about together; their diversity itself is crucial to go beyond a single answer to an unprecedented situation like the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it must not be forgotten that there are people for whom it is difficult to raise such voices and that those in vulnerable positions are often placed in such situations.

5. Conclusion

COVID-19 has caused fatal damage to human lives in South Africa; however, it is not sufficient to regard this crisis as a pandemic. Therefore, the government must create new methods to contain the virus, resulting in strict regulations. Under this strategy, people have tried to negotiate different ways of adjusting and forming a new normal.

This paper aims to portray how the government took various measures and how quickly and creatively people adapted to and shaped their new lives simultaneously in the short period of the initial 100 days. The author was also under lockdown and unable to go out; thus, it aimed to document what was happening at the time from multiple angles, including media reports and government announcements.

A particular feature of the South African government's initial response – as in some other countries, especially in Europe and North America – is that the people's movement was strongly regulated in a centralised manner. While it was necessary to control the spread of the virus in its early stages, we must be vigilant about how such powers are exercised. We must also remember that even when government regulation was 'uniform', the effects were different in each situation. Those who were vulnerable prior to the pandemic found themselves in an increasingly difficult situation because of a lack of access to water for washing their hands and living in densely populated areas. Permit regulations severely affect people without access to their documentation, who are generally in a vulnerable situation. In terms of the restrictions on going out, while jobs that allow teleworking (which are often well-paid white-collar jobs), including myself at that time, are able to maintain economic activity, those who cannot work without human contact, such as in the informal sector and restaurant industry, had a significant impact on their livelihoods. In addition, those with savings, who obtained more than the income needed to sustain their livelihoods, and those who survived by earning a daily wage differed greatly in their ability to cope with shocks. Government support schemes could not fully cover such vulnerable groups. The pandemic has resulted in such disparities. It was the efforts of citizens, such as soup kitchens and the internal organisation of waste pickers, which supported such people. At the same time, instead of silently following regulations, people also spoke out against regulations to which they did not agree through legal procedures. These people's actions and voices from various perspectives complemented the government scheme and served to prevent it from becoming excessive, forcing everyone to obey a single answer.

The subsequent impact of these responses in the initial stages requires further consideration. Comparisons with other countries' responses to the pandemic, which are beyond the scope of this study, are also an issue for future research.

Nevertheless, in the pandemic, where the number of people infected and the major regulations were central to the narrative, it was not only those ruling but also the individual responses of people who knit the 'new normal'. Without the people's actions, the pandemic would have been much worse. This unprecedented crisis exposed the government as an incomplete entity and the need for civil society cooperation and voices to complement it.

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Towards a Sustainable Cocoa Farming in Ghana: Risk Perception and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

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Abstract

Climate change has remained a critical challenge to agricultural land management, threatening the lives and livelihoods of poor farming households in developing countries highly dependent on agriculture. Climate change adaptation strategies offer smallholder farmers an opportunity to mitigate this threat and sustain farming. However, adopting these technologies largely depends on farmers' risk perception of climate change. This paper uses a composite scale measuring cocoa farmers' risk perception about climate change and evaluates its impact on adopting climate change adaptation strategies using a sample of 512 cocoa households surveyed from the Western North Region (241) and Ashanti Region (271) of Ghana, with varying degrees of climate vulnerability. The results show that farmers had medium to high-risk perceptions about climate change. Cocoa farmers with higher climatic risk perception are more likely to adopt on-farm and off-farm climate change strategies to mitigate the effect of climate change and protect their livelihood sources. Also, farmers in regions with greater climatic shocks tend to adopt more on-farm strategies to buffer against climate change. Therefore, understanding farmers' risk perception about climate change is vital for formulating policies to mitigate its effect on livelihoods and sustain farming as the cocoa belt faces the threat of climate change.

Keywords: climate change, risk perception, adaptation strategies, cocoa farmers, instrumental variables

1. Introduction

1.1. Climate change and cocoa farming

Climate change has remained a challenge to agricultural land management and a greater threat to lives and livelihoods, especially for poor people in developing countries (Dankelman *et al*. 2008, Lawson *et al*. 2020), highly dependent on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood (Acharya 2006, Kumar *et al*. 2006, Defiesta and Rapera 2014). Climate change negatively affects crop productivity (Koshti and Salame 2013), with increasing vulnerability to poor farmers (Defiesta and Rapera 2014). Furthermore, addressing climate change in developing countries is complicated by weak and inadequate institutions (Ravindranath and Sathaye 2002). In West Africa, where cocoa production is dominant, climate change threatens cocoa production. For example, the cocoa belt of Ghana is vulnerable to climate change (Schroth *et al*. 2016), with a predicted rise in the average temperature by 2^{o}C by 2050 (Läderach *et al*. 2013). To mitigate this threat, farmers need to adopt climate change adaptation technologies.

With the future threat of climate change and potential losses of farmers' livelihood sources, it is imperative to adapt farming to climate change to avert these challenges. However, smallholder and poor farmers have limited options in their adaptation strategies to climate change. Farmers can either opt for irrigation systems (which are expensive and consequently unaffordable by many farmers) or adopt natural systems like agroforestry and other climate-smart agricultural practices. However, the awareness and perception of farmers play a greater role in technology adoption (Chiu *et al*. 2023). For example, farmers unaware of a particular technology are less likely to adopt such technology, while those farmers more aware of the technology are more likely to adopt it. Similarly, the technology is adopted if the farmers perceive it as beneficial to their needs. Though there is a need to create awareness of the adoption of climate change adaptation technologies (Atta-Aidoo *et al*. 2022), the intrinsic character of farmers matters for the adoption of these technologies. For example, adopting these technologies depends on how farmers perceive risks related to climate change (Helgeson *et al*. 2012, Frondel *et al*. 2017, Tripathi and Mishra 2017). Helgeson *et al*. (2012) only provide a framework that associates risk perception and climate change adaptation without empirical analysis quantifying the effect of risk perception on climate change adaptation strategies. Frondel et al. (2017) looked at the determinants of risk perception, with risk perception as a dependent variable. The findings indicate that personal experience with adverse events and the resulting personal damage significantly influence how individuals perceive risk. In addition, socioeconomic factors such as age, gender, education, and income were also determinants of individual risk perception (Frondel *et al*. 2017). However, while age had a positive effect on risk perception when respondents were young, the effect became negative when respondents were old, gender (i.e., female) had a positive effect, and income and education had a negative effect on risk perception, respectively (Frondel *et al.* 2017). Tripathi and Mishra (2017) do not offer strong evidence linking risk perception and climate change adaptation strategies. Similarly, Kosoe and Ahmed (2022)

provide a descriptive study of the perception and awareness of climate change and climate change adaptation strategies of cocoa farmers in Ghana, drawing insights for climate information services. Hence, this paper explores the variation in climate change risk perception of cocoa farmers in rural Ghana and its relation to the adoption of climate change adaptation strategies using a composite scale measuring climate change risk perception.

Investigating the link between climate change risk perception and adaptation strategies is especially important in cocoa production in rural Ghana. Climate change affects cocoa pest and disease distribution (Cilas and Bastide 2020). For example, heavy rainfall promotes fungal growth and increases the risk of black pod disease. In field experiments, Mensah *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that drought and high temperatures negatively impacted cocoa productivity through physiological changes. Hence, climate change adaptation strategies, including integrating cocoa with shade trees, are a potential farm management practice to reduce evapotranspiration and drought risk and increase yields (Mensah *et al.* 2024). Climate change also affects cocoa management practices, *e.g.*, pruning and chemical spraying to control pests and diseases, as farmers cannot perform these activities in a timely manner (Bryant and Mitchell 2021). Hence, on-farm strategies such as fungicide, pesticide, insecticide, weedicide application, and regular and re-spraying of cocoa are used to adapt cocoa farming to these shocks. Regular spraying seeks to mitigate the negative impact of climate change on cocoa productivity. The cocoa farm is re-sprayed, for example, after rains. Farmers also adopt off-farm strategies, including processing and sale of agricultural produce and working on other people's farms for wage labour. These strategies generate additional income for cocoa farmers, granting them opportunities to withstand climatic shocks that lead to lower income from cocoa production. Also, cocoa farmers employ non-farm strategies such as petty trading, carpentry and masonry, remittances from distant relatives, teaching, migration to cities to seek other jobs, income from property, and the use of insurance. We use the number of strategies employed by farmers as the dependent variable as multiple strategies offer alternative ways of coping with climate change and diversified income sources in the case of non-farm strategies to cope with the income-reducing effect of climate change. The more strategies a farmer employs, the more likely they can adapt cocoa farming to climate change and cope with climate change.

Cocoa is important to the Ghanaian economy and rural households. For example, cocoa households had about two-thirds of their household income from cocoa farming, and most farmers reported that cocoa was their primary livelihood activity (Oppong 2015, Bymolt *et al*. 2018). Also, cocoa contributes significantly to Ghana's economy. It is a principal export crop and a major source of foreign exchange for the country (Bangmarigu and Qineti 2018). It contributes about 3.4% of the country's GDP (FAO 2008). Apart from its significant contributions to GDP, cocoa also plays a vital role in the employment of poor farm families, with about 800,000 smallholder farm families depending on cocoa for their livelihood (Anim-Kwapong and Frimpong 2004, Asamoah and Owusu-Ansah 2017). The cocoa

industry employs over four (4) million people in Ghana (Löwe 2017), which is about 14% of the population. However, climate change and pests and diseases affect the variability of cocoa productivity (Daymond *et al*. 2022). Other factors also affecting yield include poor management, soils, and cocoa varieties, and the age of cocoa trees (Daymond *et al*. 2022). Cocoa yields in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, and other West African countries are exceptionally low compared to the global average (Hainmueller *et al*. 2011, Kongor *et al*. 2018, Suh and Molua 2022). For example, in Ghana, cocoa productivity rates range from 300 to 500 kg/ha, with an average of 321 kg/ha (Ingram *et al*. 2018).

Our study is relevant in several ways. First, as climate change negatively impacts cocoa yields and, therefore, farmers' livelihoods, climate change adaptation can help mitigate these consequences and help improve farmers' livelihoods. Kyere (2016) revealed that planting more plantain suckers serves as a protective shield for cocoa seedlings against excessive sunshine, helping to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change. Similarly, Below *et al*. (2010) found that using improved hybrid cocoa varieties, which are tolerant to intense sunshine, has the potential to strengthen farmers' adaptive capacity. Oyekale *et al*. (2009) further explained that the high rates of climate change significantly impact various phases of cocoa production, including seedling, establishment and processing. Climate elements such as rainfall, temperature, and solar radiation directly influence cocoa production, with varying effects on crop growth. For instance, heavy rainfall can lead to erosion, while increased temperatures may promote pest infestations. Rainfall, in particular, plays a critical role in determining the planting date of cocoa beans. Bunn *et al*. (2018) projected that climate change will decrease the climatic suitability for cocoa production, creating additional challenges for the sector on a global scale. Similarly, Schroth *et al*. (2016) analysed cocoa's vulnerability to climate change in the West African cocoa belt, noting that adaptation strategies like using shade trees will be essential to mitigate the impact of excessive dry season temperatures. Oyekale (2020) noted that among the perceived forms of climate change, extremely high temperatures, stormy rainfall and delays in rainfall commencement were noted by most farmers to significantly influence cocoa production. Climate change, therefore, has many consequences on cocoa production and cocoa farmers. Second, we use cocoa household data from the Ashanti Region, where climate change is more severe, and the Western North Region, which has less severe climate change, to identify the effects of risk perception on adaptation behaviour. This comparison offers insights into addressing climate change and guides in policy formulation and targeting. Third, from observation based on the descriptive statistics, our study points out some novelty in that while most of the cocoa farmers perceive climate change risk, only a few climate change adaptation strategies were adopted by farmers on average, implying other barriers may hinder the adoption of climate change adaptation strategies.

1.2. Risk perception and climate change

In the psychology literature, the perception of climate-related risks is shaped by cognitive, experiential, subconscious, affective, sociocultural, and individual factors (Helgeson *et al*. 2012, van der Linden 2015). In a climate change risk perception model (CCRPM) developed by van der Linden (2015), climate change risk perception is a function of social-psychological factors, including cognitive, experiential, and socio-cultural factors, when key socio-demographic characteristics are controlled. Empirical evidence using a national sample of the United Kingdom population suggests that CCRPM explains about 70% of the variance in risk perception (van der Linden 2015). Information systematically affects risk perception as people change their risk perceptions when exposed to new information (Smith and Johnson 1988). Perceived changes in climate change affect land use adaptation strategies (Ewalo and Vedeld 2023). Many studies establish the link between risk perception and adaptation strategies (*e.g.*, Tripathi and Mishra 2017, Liverpool-Tasie and Parkhi 2021). For example, farmers' awareness of climate change risks led to investments in adaptation strategies by changing planting and harvesting patterns (Tripathi and Mishra 2017). Liverpool-Tasie and Parkhi (2021) found that climate risk perception is negatively associated with the adoption of value-adding practices by Nigerian maize traders. Also, Trujillo-Barrera *et al*. (2016) show that perceived financial risk is a barrier to the adoption of sustainable practices among hog farmers in the Netherlands.

Personal experience with adverse events and personal damage strongly predicts risk perception (Zaalberg *et al*. 2009, Frondel *et al*. 2017). Abunyewah *et al*. (2023) found an association between climate change knowledge, anxiety and experience, and climate change adaptation. Risk perceptions predict behavioural intentions (O'Connor *et al*. 1999, Zaalberg *et al*. 2009, Helgeson *et al*. 2012). Cocoa farmers with a high perception of climate change risk are likely to adopt adaptation strategies to reduce the risk of damage to their cocoa trees.

1.3. Climate change adaptation strategies versus productivity-enhancing strategies

Climate change adaptation strategies are crucial to adapt to climatic shocks facing smallholder farmers (Atta-Aidoo *et al*. 2022). Cocoa farmers' strategies for adapting to climate change can be categorised as on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm. While non-farm strategies are non-agricultural activities adopted by farmers to cope with climate change, on-farm and off-farm strategies are agricultural practices, with on-farm strategies being activities performed on a farmer's field and off-farm strategies being activities performed outside the farm or on other farmers' farms. In some instances, different terminologies are used. For example, Amfo and Ali (2020) used the term income diversification strategies of cocoa farmers to cope with climate change, including crop and livestock diversification, intercropping of cocoa farms, provision of labour for other farmers, and agricultural-related economic off-farm activities. On-farm strategies such as integrating tree crops in cocoa farms help farmers adapt to multiple threats due

to climate change (Lasco *et al*. 2014). For example, Sileshi *et al*. (2011) show that integrating leguminous trees in maize-based cropping systems improves rain use efficiency and yield stability under rain-fed agriculture in field experiments in Zambia and Nigeria.

However, there is usually a conflict between adaptation strategies to climate change and productivity-enhancing strategies. In this paper, we clearly distinguish between the two through survey implementation. First, farmers were asked about the strategies they know to be climate change adaptation strategies for on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm strategies (*i.e.*, Which of the following do you know to be a climate change adaptation strategy?). This was followed by a question related to the strategies they employ (*i.e.*, Which of the following climate change adaptation strategies do you employ?). We provided options for 'none' in each question type where a farmer does not know and/or employ any climate change adaptation strategy.

This paper, therefore, seeks to evaluate the impact of climate change risk perception of cocoa farmers on their adoption of climate change adaptation strategies. We hypothesise that high climate change risk perception positively affects the adoption of on-farm climate change adaptation strategies and the adoption of off-farm and non-farm climate change adaptation strategies. The rest of the paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, we present the methodology of the study, outlining the data, sampling techniques, measurement of risk perception, and the analytical framework for the empirical analysis. In Section 3, we present and discuss the results and conclude in Section 4.

2. Methodology

2.1. Data

Primary data was collected in an extensive study on 'A Survey of Cocoa Farmers and Cocoa Licensed Buying Companies in the Ashanti and Western North regions of Ghana' in October 2022. In this paper, we used part of the data on climate change risk perception. A multistage sampling technique was employed. The Ashanti and Western North regions were purposively chosen for differences in exposure to climatic shocks, with varying degrees of climate vulnerability. The Ashanti Region, a transitional belt, is especially hit with climatic shocks compared to the Western North Region, a forest belt. Cocoa farmers are, therefore, expected to respond differently to climate change shocks with respect to their adaptation behaviour (*i.e.*, the type and number of climate change adaptation strategies adopted). Hence, farmers in the Ashanti Region are expected to adopt more climate change adaptation strategies to mitigate the effect of climate change, including high temperatures, drought, and wind, than farmers in the Western North Region. The Ashanti Region increasingly faces high temperatures, leading to the drying and dying of cocoa trees and bushfires. Also, as the region has fewer forests compared to the Western North Region, which is a forest zone, climatic shocks, including droughts, are more common, putting more stress on the cocoa trees than in the Western North Region. Two cocoa-growing districts

from each region and five villages from each district were also selected, except the Effiduase Cocoa District, where three villages were selected (Figure 1). Finally, cocoa households were randomly sampled from each village. A sample of 512 cocoa households from the Western North Region (241) and Ashanti Region (271) were surveyed.

We construct a climate change risk perception (henceforth known as CCRP) scale from 20 statements recorded on a five-point continuum Likert scale representing strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) following Raghuvanshi and Ansari (2019). The statements were categorised based on exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity to climate change (Raghuvanshi and Ansari 2019). Each respondent's risk perception score is calculated by summing the ranks obtained on all 20 statements (Raghuvanshi and Ansari 2019). We further discuss the construction of the CCRP in section 2.2. Gumel (2022) advocated using an integrated approach to study climate change vulnerability instead of solely using the vulnerability variable assessment method and the indicator techniques for estimating vulnerabilities. Defiesta and Rapera (2014) analysed the adaptive capacity of farmers to climate change on adaptation strategies in the Philippines. The risk scale consists of 20 items and is internally consistent with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. We, therefore, analysed the data based on the scale instead of the single items in the scale (Gliem and Gliem 2003).

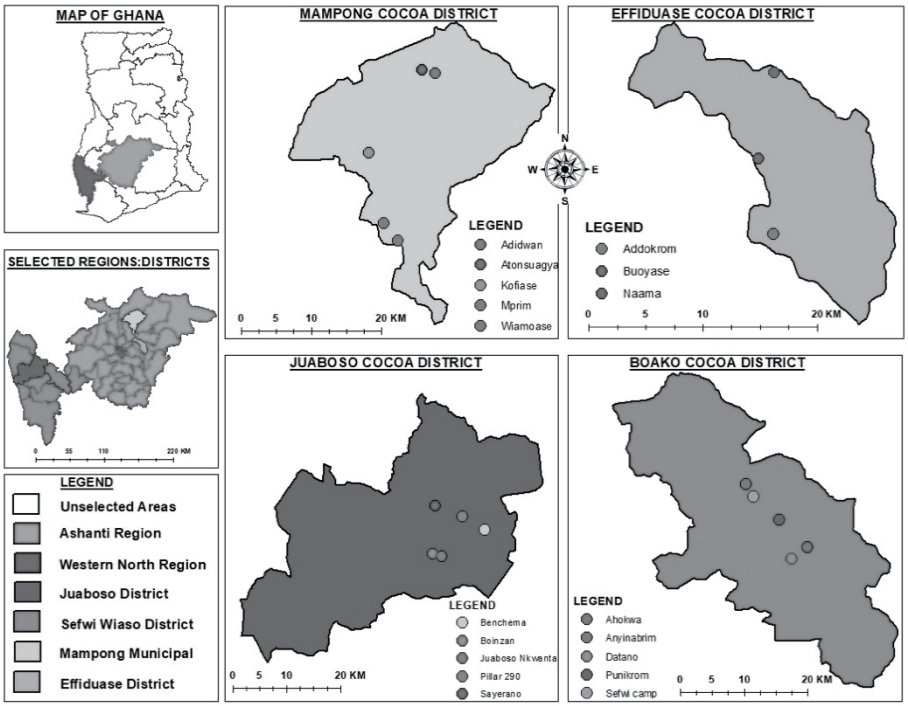

Figure 1. Map showing survey enumeration areas
Source: Authors' construct.

2.2. Climate change risk perception

Table 1 summarises the statements constituting the CCRP scale. The CCRP scale is constructed as

specified:

$$CCRP_i = \sum_{j=1}^{20} R_{ij}$$

Where $CCRP_i$ is the climate change risk perception for respondent i; R_{ij} is the rank assigned to statement j (see Table 1) by respondent i.

The maximum score is 100, and the minimum score is 20. The higher the scale, the higher the agreement. The statements are internally consistent, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91. Hence, the scale is reliable. The Cronbach's alpha test tests the null hypothesis (H_0) that the items within the scale are not correlated (*i.e.*, do not measure the same underlying construct). That is $H_0: \alpha = 0$, where α represents Cronbach's alpha. Hence, the null hypothesis implies that the scale's observed internal consistency (reliability) is no better than what would be expected by chance. A Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 implies internal consistency. The results indicate that farmers' perception ranges from agree to strongly agree across most statements, including climate exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity.

Table 1. Summary of farmer risk perception on climate change; N=512, Min=1, Max=5

	Percentage (%)					Mean (SD)
Statement	**SD**	**DA**	**UD**	**A**	**SA**	
(A) Exposure						
Agriculture sector has become more vulnerable due to climate change	2.54	2.54	2.93	23.05	68.95	4.53 (0.88)
Climate change is caused by both natural changes in environment and human activities	1.95	1.76	10.55	33.40	52.34	4.32 (0.88)
Extreme cold weather, strong wind and heavy fog affect farming	2.54	3.91	18.16	37.30	38.09	4.05 (0.97)
Climate change is the most important problem nowadays	3.52	4.10	12.89	28.52	50.98	4.19 (1.04)
Temperature is increasing every year due to climate change	4.10	5.86	12.11	30.08	47.85	4.12 (1.09)
Uncertainty in rainfall pattern is one of the major factors that affect the crop production	3.52	3.52	12.89	32.42	47.66	4.17 (1.02)
Extreme weather events in the last few years have affected the adaptation and mitigation practices	2.15	5.47	16.60	38.67	37.11	4.03 (0.98)
Climate change threatens the biodiversity in hills	3.12	7.42	17.97	33.01	38.48	3.96 (1.07)
The frequency and extent of dry spells has affected agriculture production	4.88	9.57	24.80	33.98	26.76	3.68 (1.11)
(B) Sensitivity						
There is increased incidence of weed and insect pest attacks nowadays as compared to earlier times	4.10	7.62	17.58	38.09	32.62	3.88 (1.08)
The productivity of different crops has changed due to climate change	2.93	4.88	13.09	33.59	45.51	4.14 (1.01)
Deforestation has become more severe due to climate change	4.69	9.38	18.36	34.77	32.81	3.82 (1.13)
Soil erosion is increasing day by day due to heavy rainfall	4.30	7.03	19.73	30.27	38.67	3.92 (1.12)
Many plant and animal species have become extinct due to changing climatic conditions	4.69	5.66	21.29	36.91	31.45	3.85 (1.08)
Livestock rearing has become vulnerable because of climate change	2.93	12.30	25.78	29.30	29.69	3.71 (1.11)
Productive capacity of livestock is adversely affected due to extreme climate conditions.	3.91	10.74	25.78	29.69	29.88	3.71 (1.12)
(C) Adaptive capacity						
There is change in crop seasons and cropping practices of the farmers due to climate change	4.10	6.84	14.84	31.45	42.77	4.02 (1.11)
Livelihood patterns of farmers are changing because of changing climatic conditions	3.32	8.59	18.36	32.81	36.91	3.91 (1.09)

It has become difficult to determine when to begin sowing and harvesting operations due to climate change.	2.93	4.88	17.19	29.30	45.70	4.10 (1.04)
Land use pattern in hills is changing due to changing climatic conditions	3.71	8.01	24.22	27.93	36.13	3.85 (1.11)

Note: *SDA=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, UD=Undecided, A=Agree, and SA=Strongly Agree.

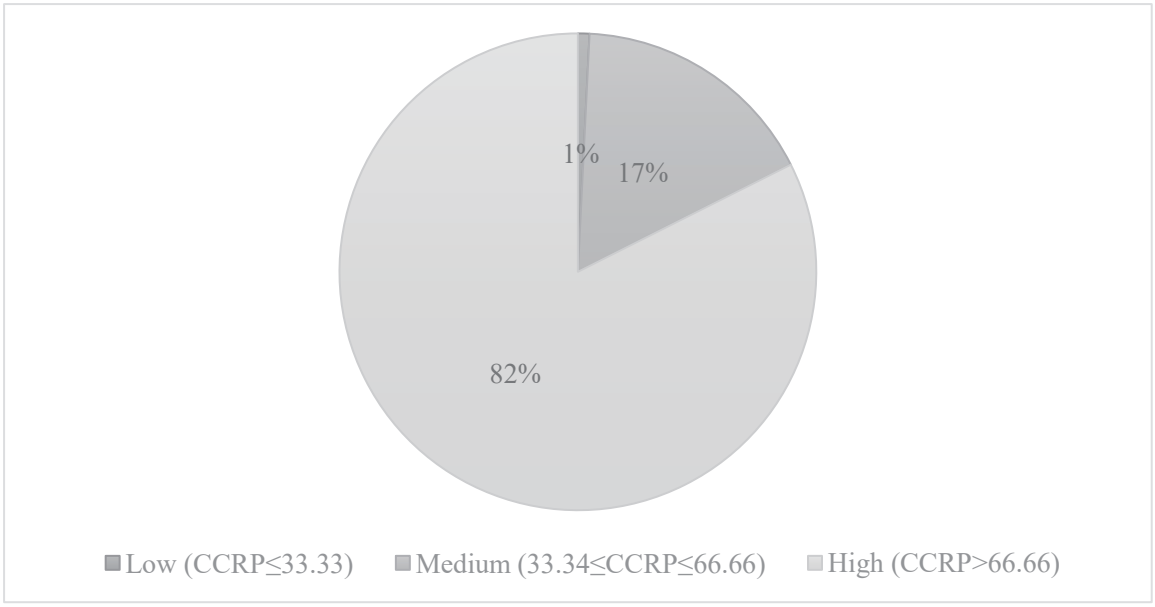

Figure 2. Distribution of climate change risk perception (CCRP)

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Figure 2 shows that most of the cocoa farmers (82%) had high climate change risk perception. The climate change risk perception scale is categorised based on equal intervals (Koshti and Salame 2013). Overall, farmers had medium to high-risk perceptions about climate change. This implies a high awareness of cocoa farmers about changes in their farming and environment due to climate change-related shocks. This awareness could translate into response behaviours to cope with the consequences of climate change. We explore the variation of farmers' risk perception on adaptation behaviour.

2.3. Climate change adaptation strategies

In Figure 3, most farmers (62%) use intercropping with trees and other crops as their on-farm adaptation strategy to fight climate change. While 31%, 27%, and 26% apply fungicides, pesticides, and insecticides, respectively. In addition, 26% of the farmers change the time of planting and harvesting cocoa beans due to climate change, especially rainfall fluctuations. Other farmers adopt regular spraying of their cocoa farms (18%), planting hybrid cocoa seedlings (18%) that are disease and drought-tolerant, fertilizer application (16%), and crop diversification (12%) to reduce the risk of higher climate change impact. Irrigation was only employed by 3% of the farmers as an adaptation strategy against climate change, demonstrating that most farmers cannot afford this technology.

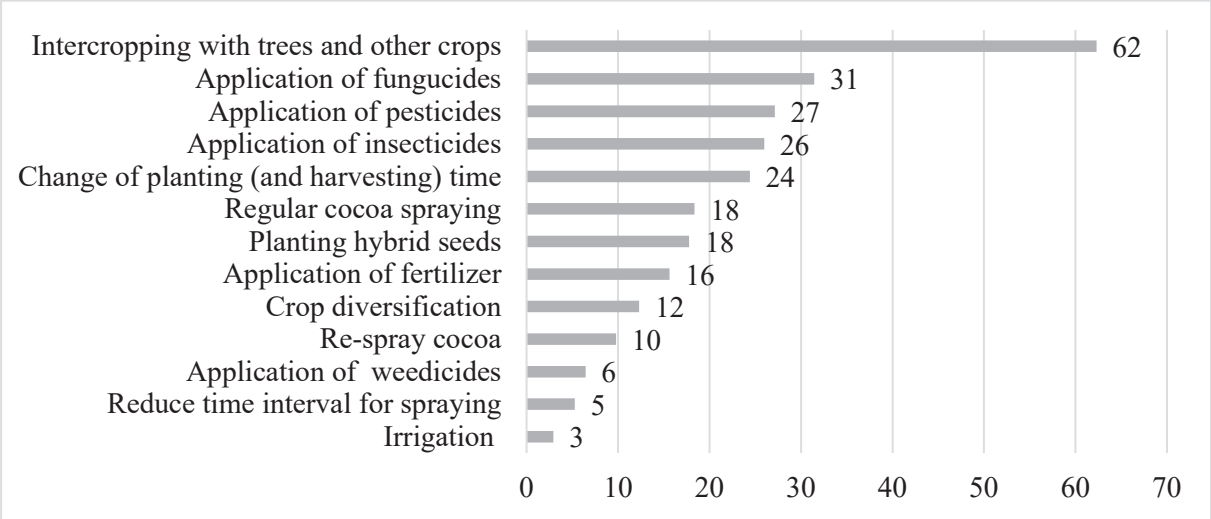

Figure 3. On-farm climate change adaptation strategies employed by cocoa farmers, per cent
Source: Field survey, 2022.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of off-farm and non-farm adaptation strategies; most farmers (49%) employ agricultural produce sales to cope with the impact of climate change. Agriculture remains the main economic activity in cocoa-growing areas; hence, apart from growing cocoa, farmers equally grow other agricultural produce. Twenty-four per cent of the farmers resort to petty trading for alternative sources of income to support their livelihoods. Other farmers employ the processing of agricultural produce (11%), working for wage labour on other people's farms (6%), and artisanal work like carpentry and masonry (4%). Fewer farmers (2%) receive remittances from relatives in distant places, and only 1% of the farmers use teaching, migration to cities, and income from property as a climate change adaptation strategy. Interestingly, none of the farmers use insurance as a coping strategy. Most studies show that insurance use is less among farmers both in developed and developing countries.

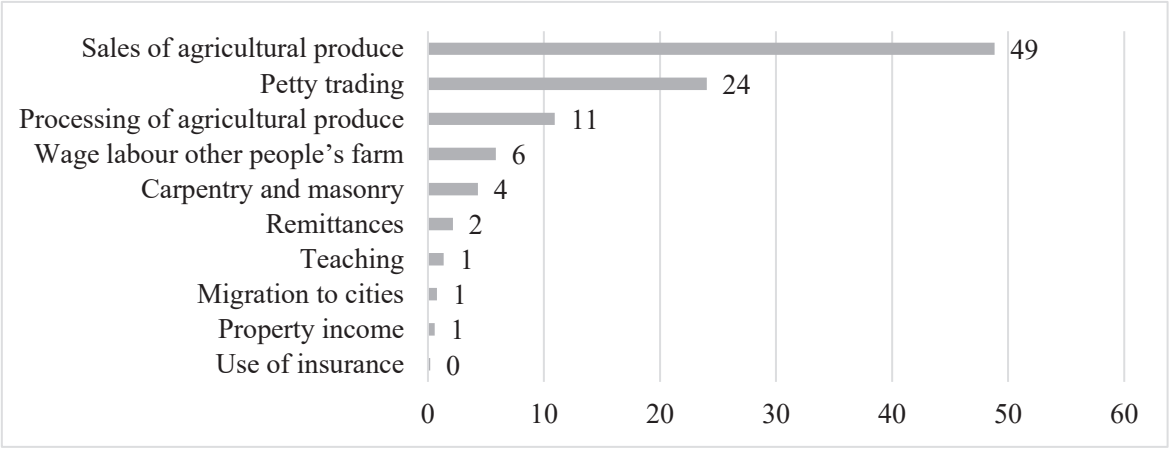

Figure 4. Off-farm and non-farm climate change adaptation strategies employed by cocoa farmers, per cent
Source: Field survey, 2022.

2.4. Analytical framework

2.4.1. Poisson and negative binomial models

We employed the Poisson (log-linear) regression model as the dependent variable is a count (Greene 2018). This log-linear relationship between explanatory variables and the expected count of the dependent variable ensures non-negative predicted counts (Greene 2018). The model is specified in equations (1) and (2). The Poisson distribution assumes equality of the mean and variance of the counts (*i.e.*, equidispersion) (Cameron and Trivedi 2013), as specified in equation (3). Where this assumption of equidispersion does not hold, the negative binomial regression becomes a suitable model. However, following Hilbe (2011), we start with a Poisson model and use the negative binomial where equidispersion is violated.

$$Prob(Y = y_i|x_i) = \frac{e^{-\lambda_i}\lambda_i{}^{y_i}}{y_i!}, y_i = 0,1,2, \quad (1)$$

$$ln\lambda_i = x_i'\beta \quad (2)$$

$$E[y_i|x_i] = Var[y_i|x_i] = \lambda_i = e^{x_i'\beta} \quad (3)$$

When $Var[y_i|x_i] = \lambda_i = \alpha\lambda_i^2$, there is 'overdispersion' and the negative binomial model is used. We, therefore, employed both Poisson and negative binomial regression models in our analysis. We use the negative binomial model where alpha (*i.e.*, the test for overdispersion in the data) is significant, implying that the negative binomial is suitable for fitting the data rather than the Poisson model. The empirical model is specified as:

$$ln(E[Strategies_i|CCRP_i, Region, X_{ik}']) = \alpha_0 + \beta CCRP_i + \gamma Region + \delta_k X_{ik}' + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

Where Strategies is the number of on-farm or off-farm and non-farm climate change strategies; CCRP measures climate change risk perception (=1 if high CCRP, otherwise 0); Region (=1 if Western North Region, 0 Ashanti Region); X_{ik}' is a vector of farmer and farm characteristics.

2.4.2. Instrumental variables

For robustness checks, we use an instrumental variables approach to account for the potential endogeneity of CCRP. Cocoa farmers' currently adopted technologies for better harvest are crucial in shaping their perception of climate change risks. Farmers who adopt on-farm strategies like intercropping with trees and other crops, irrigation systems, and climate-resilient crops often perceive

climate risks as more manageable. These strategies heighten their awareness of the variability in rainfall, increased temperatures, and extended dry periods associated with climate change, and their investments in adaptive practices help them recognize both immediate and long-term threats to their crops and livelihoods. Conversely, farmers who lack the resources to adopt such strategies are more vulnerable to climate variability. These farmers may rely on conventional farming methods and perceive climate risks as temporary challenges rather than long-term concerns, leading to underestimating the severity of climate change. Hence, effective technologies currently adopted for better harvest increase farmers' awareness of the risks posed by climate change. Those who successfully implement adaptation measures, such as diversifying crops or adjusting planting dates, are more likely to view climate change as manageable. On the other hand, farmers who experience failures in their adaptation efforts may feel more vulnerable, reinforcing the perception of climate change as an uncontrollable threat. This interplay between adaptation success and risk perception is vital in shaping farmers' future responses to climate change and encouraging sustainable farming practices in Ghana.

That notwithstanding, there is little to no study at the household level using an instrumental variable for risk perception. We address the concern for endogeneity in the explanatory variable (*i.e.*, CCRP) using access to information (*i.e.*, media coverage on climate change) as an instrument for risk perception. The empirical model to be estimated is specified as:

$$Strategies_i = \delta_0 + \delta_1 CCRP_i + \gamma Region + \delta_k X'_{ik} + \mu_i \quad (5)$$

But as $CCRP_i$ is endogenous; the 2SLS regression is used with media as an instrumental variable.

$$\text{1st Stage: } CCRP_i = \delta_0 + \delta_1 Media_i + \gamma Region + \delta_k X'_{ik} + \mu_i \quad (6)$$

$$\text{2nd Stage: } Strategies_i = \alpha + \beta \widehat{CCRP_i} + \gamma Region + \delta_k X'_{ik} + \varepsilon_i \quad (7)$$

Where media is coded 1 if the respondent answered 'radio or television or newspaper' to the question 'Have you heard about climate change before? If yes, how did you hear about it?'; otherwise, it would be zero. Other sources of information include extension officers, family or friends, fellow farmers, licensed buying companies (LBCs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and local government authorities. These sources were excluded from code 1 of the media dummy variable as farmers are more likely to receive other benefits or information related to cocoa productivity from these sources other than only climate change-related information, hence violating the validity of our instrumental variable

of media for the risk perception endogenous variable. We test the relevance of the instrument in the first stage for validity of the instrument (*i.e.*, media) in section 3.3.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics of the study. The average number of on-farm climate change strategies cocoa farmers adopt is 2.6, which varies across the two regions. The average off-farm and non-farm strategies is about one, with little variation across the two regions. The average age of a cocoa farmer is 54.38 years, implying that cocoa farming is largely done by older people as the youth do not find the enterprise attractive. A majority (63%) of the farmers surveyed were males, suggesting that male farmers dominate cocoa farming as it is a cash crop. On average, farmers have about 21 years of experience in cocoa farming, with those in the Western North Region having more years of experience (approximately 26 years). This implies that most of their adult life is spent in cocoa farming. The majority of the farmers (85%) engage in cocoa farming as a primary livelihood activity, demonstrating the importance of cocoa farming to their sustenance and survival. The average farm size is about 3 hectares, hence smallholder farmers. Though cocoa is a guaranteed source of income to farmers with secured purchase of cocoa beans from farmers by the government, small farm holdings mean that farmers earn less income on average. Smith and Sarpong (2018) estimate that a typical rural cocoa household of two adults and three children in Ghana requires a living income of GHS 1,464 ($329) per month for a decent living. About one-third of smallholder cocoa farmers do not earn a living income (WUR 2017). For example, while smallholder cocoa farmers in Ghana have an income of $1.42 per person per day, a living income of $2.08 is required (WUR 2017).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables

Variables	Full sample (N=512)		Ashanti (N=271)		Western North (N=241)		[3]Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Dependent variables:							
[1]On-farm strategies	2.60	2.55	2.86	2.71	2.30	2.32	***
Off-farm and non-farm strategies	0.99	0.99	1.07	1.04	0.90	0.91	*
Independent variable:							
[2]CCRP (High=1, otherwise 0)	0.82	0.38	0.84	0.37	0.81	0.40	
CCRP Scale	79.95	12.96	80.49	11.68	79.35	14.26	
Controls:							
Age of farmer	54.38	13.21	56.14	12.51	52.39	13.70	***
Experience (in years)	21.46	13.38	17.53	12.43	25.89	13.05	***
Years of schooling	8.97	5.05	9.63	4.94	8.24	5.07	***
Gender (Male=1)	0.63	.48	0.67	0.47	0.58	0.50	**
Household size	7.47	6.21	7.50	7.23	7.43	4.83	
Primary livelihood (Cocoa=1)	0.85	0.35	0.82	0.39	0.90	0.31	***
Married (Yes=1)	0.72	0.45	0.75	0.43	0.68	0.47	*
Native (Yes=1)	0.61	0.49	0.58	0.49	0.63	0.48	

Literacy (Read and write=1)	0.48	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.44	0.50	
Christianity (Yes=1)	0.88	.33	0.85	0.36	0.90	0.30	
Farm size (Hectares)	3.08	2.72	2.74	2.08	3.47	3.26	***
FBO member	0.54	.50	0.62	0.49	0.44	0.50	***
Credit (Yes=1)	0.23	.42	0.19	0.39	0.28	0.45	**
Extension (Yes=1)	0.80	.40	0.89	0.32	0.71	0.46	***
Hired labor (Yes=1)	0.69	.46	0.75	0.43	0.61	0.49	***
Livestock (Owned=1)	0.56	.50	0.58	0.50	0.54	0.50	
Record Keeping (Yes=1)	0.21	.41	0.14	0.35	0.28	0.45	***
Health Insurance (Yes=1)	0.82	.38	0.76	0.43	0.89	0.32	***
Trust (Yes=1)	0.53	.50	0.55	0.50	0.50	0.50	
Mobile Phone (Owned=1)	0.93	.26	0.94	0.24	0.92	0.28	
Household head unable to work (Yes=1)	0.19	0.39	0.07	0.26	0.32	0.47	***
Never saver	3.00	1.46	2.92	1.46	3.10	1.46	
Disciplined saver	2.52	1.46	2.52	1.46	2.52	1.46	
Spend little cash rather than save	2.46	1.40	2.39	1.37	2.54	1.43	

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$;

Note: [1]Strategies are measured as count. [2]Climate change risk perception (CCRP) scale is measured using 20 statements with ordered rankings from 5 to 1: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It is equivalently categorised into three levels of risk perception, namely high, medium, and low levels of risk perception. CCRP (High=1) is a dummy equal to 1 for the high level of climate risk perception; otherwise, 0. High climate risk perception dummy is used as only 4 out of the 512 cocoa farmers, representing 0.78%, had their risk score in the low-risk perception category (Figure 2). [3]We perform a balance test of the characteristics between cocoa farmers in the Ashanti Region and Western North Region using a t-test. The results of the balance test showed significant differences in the average number of climate change adaptation strategies cocoa farmers adopt across the two regions. We also found significant differences in most characteristics between the two regions. To account for the underlying differences, as well as the observed variations in climatic conditions between the two regions on the field, we estimate the main regression using the two samples (*i.e.*, as pooled data), incorporating a regional dummy variable to differentiate the regions.

3.2. Effect of risk perception on climate change adaptation

Table 3 reports the results of the effect of climate change risk perception on adaptation strategies. Cocoa farmers with high climate change risk perception are expected to have 1.53 and 0.35 additional on-farm climate change adaptation strategies and 'off-farm and non-farm' climate change adaptation strategies, respectively. Adopting on-farm strategies is especially important to cocoa farmers as they need to protect their source of livelihood, as most farmers depend on cocoa as their primary source of livelihood. Therefore, farmers tend to adopt more on-farm strategies than off-farm and non-farm ones, as the findings indicate. However, cocoa farmers in the Western North Region are expected to have 0.41 less on-farm strategies compared to those in the Ashanti Region. Specifically, the results show that cocoa farmers in the Ashanti Region with high climate change risk perception are expected to have 1.9

additional on-farm strategies and 0.23 additional 'off-farm and non-farm' strategies, while cocoa farmers in the Western North Region with high climate change risk perception are expected to have 1.21 and 0.46 additional on-farm and 'off-farm and non-farm' strategies, respectively.

Table 3. Regression results of the effect of climate change risk perception on adaptation strategies

	Ashanti Region				Western North Region				Full Sample			
	Negative Binomial	M.E	Poisson	M.E	Negative Binomial	M.E	Poisson	M.E	Negative Binomial	M.E	Poisson	M.E
	(1) On-farm		(2) Off-farm and non-farm		(3) On-farm		(4) Off-farm and non-farm		(5) On-farm		(6) Off-farm and non-farm	
CCRP (High=1)	0.76***	1.90***	0.26	0.23	0.60***	1.21***	0.57**	0.46**	0.66***	1.53***	0.41***	0.35***
	(0.18)	(0.45)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.17)	(0.34)	(0.23)	(0.18)	(0.12)	(0.28)	(0.15)	(0.13)
Western North Region (=1)									-0.18*	-0.41*	-0.09	-0.08
									(0.10)	(0.23)	(0.12)	(0.10)
Covariates[1)]	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
Constant	-0.43		-1.03		0.16		-0.30		0.09		-0.78**	
	(0.46)		(0.54)		(0.51)		(0.65)		(0.34)		(0.40)	
α (Test for overdispersion)	0.27***				0.24***				0.29***			
Log-likelihood	-542.58		-314.67		-439.54		-264.64		-996.51		-592.17	
Pseudo R^2	0.08		0.14		0.08		0.11		0.07		0.11	
Observations	271		271		241		241		512		512	

Standard errors in parentheses * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. *M.E = Marginal Effects.

Source: Field survey, 2022; authors' computation.

Note: [1]The covariates in the models include age, experience, years of schooling, gender, married, household size, religion, native, farm size, primary livelihood, literacy, farmer-based organisation membership, credit access, extension access, hired labour, livestock ownership, record keeping, health insurance, trust, mobile phone ownership, household head was unable to work, never saver, disciplined saver, spend little cash rather than save. There are no multicollinearity issues among the independent variables as the variance inflation factor (VIF) is less than 10 (Verbeek 2017) in the test for multicollinearity.

3.3. Robustness checks

We address the concern for endogeneity in the explanatory variable (*i.e.*, the risk perception of climate change) using media coverage of climate change as an instrumental variable. In Table 4, we report instrumental variables and OLS results of the effect of risk perception on climate change adaptation. The results remained qualitatively the same as the count data model results reported in Table 3. The F-test for the instrumental variable (*i.e.*, media coverage on climate change) power in the first stage regression was F = 23.63. Thus, the inclusion restriction test for the relevance of the instrument (*i.e.*, F>10) in the first stage is satisfied (Verbeek 2017).

Table 4. IV results of the effect of climate change risk perception on adaptation strategies employed

	On-farm		Off-farm and non-farm	
	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
[1]CCRP Scale	0.054***	0.180***	0.014***	0.030**
	(0.010)	(0.041)	(0.003)	(0.014)
Western North Region (=1)	-0.456*	-0.172	-0.087	-0.050
	(0.272)	(0.356)	(0.096)	(0.102)
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adj. R^2	0.261	-	0.293	0.256
N	512	512	512	512

Robust standard errors in parentheses * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$.

Source: Field survey, 2022; authors' computation.

Note: [1]CCRP Scale is a continuous variable measuring the climate change risk perception score with a minimum score of 20 and a maximum score of 100. The significance of the coefficients did not change with clustered standard errors at the community level (*i.e.*, the survey involved 18 communities) instead of robust standard errors. Hence, we report robust standard errors instead of clustered standard errors, as the number of communities is not large enough (Angrist and Pischke 2009).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper established the association between climate change risk perception and adaptation strategies among cocoa farmers in rural Ghana. The results showed that climate change risk perception is high among farmers and vital in adopting adaptation strategies to fight climate change and protect livelihoods. However, adopting climate change adaptation strategies varies at the regional levels due to different degrees of vulnerability to climate change, as the Ashanti Region, located closer to the Transitional Zone in central Ghana, may face higher climatic shocks. Hence, the study underscores the importance of risk perception in the adoption of strategies to cope with climate change. The link between risk perception and climate change adaptation behaviour offers insights into the design of policies to tackle climate change and sustain farming as a livelihood activity for the rural poor. As the majority of farmers have a high climate risk perception, introducing innovative climate-smart agricultural practices is likely to see a higher uptake by farmers for climate change adaptation. Also, more attention should be focused on the Ashanti Region as the degree of climatic vulnerability is higher there.

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Impeachment or Ouster?
Making Sense of Gubernatorial Impeachment in Kenya's Devolved State

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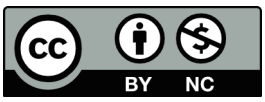
Abstract

This study explores the intricate dynamics and factors that influence gubernatorial impeachment in Kenya, highlighting the checks and balances within the devolved government system established by the 2010 constitution. The Kenyan experience of impeachment indicates that proceedings are often marred by political uncertainty, controversy, and procedural breaches, necessitating intervention by courts of law to correct abuses of power. This study examines how neo-patrimonial practices, gender dynamics, and party politics shape the impeachment process, reflecting broader struggles for power and resources. By looking at successful impeachment cases in Kiambu and Nairobi counties and comparing them with unsuccessful ones in Embu and Kirinyaga counties, this study highlights the crucial role of political affiliations and allegiances. Meru County was also scrutinised to determine whether the 2022 government would approach gubernatorial impeachment differently, considering gendered politics. This study evaluates constitutional provisions on impeachment; the roles of key actors such as the Senate, county assemblies, and judiciary; and the influence of political alliances and rivalries. Using qualitative data from case studies, stakeholder interviews, and media reports, this study provides a detailed understanding of impeachment as a political tool and its effects on devolved governance in Kenya. This study offers insight into balancing accountability and the potential misuse of impeachment for political purposes.

Keywords: gubernatorial impeachment, county governments (Kenya), devolution, neopatrimonialism, party politics



1. Introduction

1.1. The academic debate on decentralisation

The past few decades have been characterised by enthusiasm for decentralisation, highlighting its intrinsic and instrumental benefits such as enhanced democratic decision-making and the mitigation of regional or ethnic tensions (Gerhart and Suberu 2002, Bodea and LeBas 2014). Scholarly studies on decentralisation also present it as embedded in the potential to protect democratic gains and improve economic flexibility and service delivery. In this regard, in the 1970s, support for decentralisation was significant within the development community, marked by the World Bank's (1981) critical support for decentralisation's ability to bypass centralised state structures to improve service delivery. Since then, the pursuit of decentralisation has often gone hand in hand with promoting 'good governance' and creating mechanisms to reduce corruption in central states (USAID 2009).

Decentralisation refers to the structural alteration of governance where power and authority are transferred from the national to subnational levels (Faguet 2014). The primary goal of this transfer is to enhance government efficiency and responsiveness (Bardhan 2002), foster economic growth, and spread development, particularly in economically disadvantaged regions (Rondinelli 1981). Decentralisation also aims to improve public service delivery by promoting competition among local governments (Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra 2010). One form of decentralisation is 'devolution', which is the most autonomous type where power is transferred to local government units (Rondinelli 1981). During devolution, the central government retains minimal control by focusing on coordinating and setting general standards and regulations. Local governments are given autonomy and the ability to generate revenue, primarily through taxes or other funding sources, to develop their regions (Martinez-Vazquez and McNab 2003).

Decentralisation offers the promise of more efficient development and encourages a bottom-up approach. However, decentralisation presents significant challenges. Some studies have highlighted adverse impacts, such as reduced quality of public service provision (Prud'Homme 1995), increased regional disparities (Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra 2010), and higher or different levels of corruption (Hadiz 2004, D'Arcy and Cornell 2016). These challenges are especially pronounced in developing countries that often have weak institutional capacities, making the implementation of a decentralised system more difficult. Thus, effective decentralisation is possible if there is a foundation for strongly functioning institutions, as weak institutional capacity often undermines the expected benefits of decentralisation (Kyriacou *et al.* 2015, Prud'Homme 1995, Rodriguez-Pose and Ezcurra 2010).

Rondinelli (1981) argued that decentralisation can sometimes lead to the abuse of power as authority may fall into the 'wrong hands'. Hence, although decentralisation strengthens local governments, this transfer of power might increase opportunities and levels of corruption, particularly at the local level (Hadiz 2004, D'Arcy and Cornell 2016, Prud'Homme 1995) since local elites often control local

resources and influence policymaking (Hadiz 2004). Therefore, despite optimism, there have been challenges and scepticism about the practical barriers to effective decentralisation, especially how it may exacerbate inequality due to varying administrative capacities and the ability to generate resources among different regions (Robinson 2009). Decentralisation also has the potential to entrench regional inequality, potentially leading to ethnic conflict by encouraging the growth of regional parties (Brancati 2006), particularly if the central government exploits it to compete for votes. Decentralisation has the potential to make central governments less effective (Zanker *et al.* 2014).

The re-entrenchment of regionalism—and to that extent ethnocentrism after the establishment of decentralisation—is perhaps the most challenging in the process of decentralisation in Kenya since it was formally constituted in 2013 under the 2010 constitution. In this regard, decentralisation is embedded with the potential to be a tool for manipulation by political elites at the central government level (Barkan and Chege 1989). While decentralisation is implemented, its processes are dominated by central political elites who wish to maintain their influence. This manipulation often results in recentralisation [1] rather than genuine decentralisation, where real power remains with the central government, despite the structures of devolution.

1.2. Kenya's experience with decentralisation: Historical background and political dynamics

In realising the potential of devolved systems to limit the central government's influence, a broader pattern has arisen in other sub-Saharan African nations where the devolution of power has made central governance less effective at local levels (Zanker *et al.* 2014); in this context, the political class in Kenya has often sought to intervene in the decentralisation process. Kenya has a long history of decentralisation. Early negotiations for independence led to the establishment of a regionalist constitution (Majimboism)[2] that was quickly dismantled by the dominant political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), in the early post-independence period (Lynch 2011). The clamour for Majimboism continued to be a central theme in Kenya's political agitation, thus reflecting a recurring issue in Kenyan political history where decentralisation efforts were manipulated or reversed to preserve central control (Anderson 2005, Lynch 2011) but also took diverse forms after the Majimbo state collapsed.

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[1] 'Recentralisation' refers to the process whereby central governments reclaim authority after initially devolving it to sub-national entities. This undermines the goals of decentralisation, which aims to allocate significant power and resources to local governments. Central authorities often recentralise to reassert control due to shifting political imperatives or the need to consolidate power. This is especially prevalent when decentralisation threatens the central government's power and resources, prompting efforts to recentralise authority under various justifications (Rondinelli *et al.* 1989, D'Arcy and Cornell 2016, Cheeseman *et al.* 2016).

[2] Majimboism, derived from the Swahili word *majimbo*, meaning 'regions', advocates for federalism and regional autonomy in Kenya. Initially central to Kenya's constitution during independence, the first President, Jomo Kenyatta—who preferred a centralized governance system (D'Arcy and Cornell 2016)—quickly dismantled it. The 2010 constitution marks a partial return to majimboism principles. For more studies on majimboism, see Lynch (2011).

Decentralisation under President Moi in 1983 was intended to devolve power in the districts (Barkan and Chege 1989). District-focused decentralisation efforts came about with the 1983 reforms which, while ostensibly aimed at devolving power to districts, ended up serving to strengthen central control through recentralisation. As a result, one specific character of the districts became a clamour for more districts boundaries since districts embodied development and political control/inclusion and continued to be a hallmark of President Moi's rule (Kinyua 2022). This critical character, in which the politician was soliciting districts as they acted as a proxy for the central government, continued past President Moi's regime.

During the presidency of Mwai Kibaki, districts played a central role in the state's strategy to govern peripheral populations despite facing obstacles. Courts often ruled that many districts were illegally constituted, restricting the president's ability to create additional districts (Nguru 2012). The push for decentralisation by creating districts was further undermined by a strong movement advocating for constitutional reform, which ultimately bore fruit in 2010 after a long struggle.

The 2010 constitution marked a significant step towards effective decentralisation, which was initiated in response to electoral violence, ethnic tension, and centralisation (Cheeseman *et al.* 2016). This constitution established county governments with substantial local power and structures aimed at enhancing local representation in national governance (Kanyinga and Long 2012). The 2010 constitution introduced a devolved government system at the national and county levels. Citizens exercised sovereignty by electing county executives and county assemblies in 47 counties that were largely crafted out of the country's 47 districts of 1992[3]. Unlike districts headed by a district commissioner (DC) appointed by the executive, the county governor (as the political head and chief executive) and the deputy county governor are elected by citizens through a popular vote to run the affairs of the county government. The Kenyan Senate, also established under the 2010 constitution, is crucial to this structure and comprises 67 members: 47 elected senators representing each of the 47 counties, 16 women nominated by political parties based on their senate seats, two youth representatives, two representatives of persons with disabilities, and a speaker. The Senate's key functions include representing county interests, lawmaking related to counties, protecting against devolution, overseeing county governments, ensuring the efficient use of county funds, and scrutinising impeachment proceedings against governors. The Senate also includes critical representatives of the people at the ward level called members of county assemblies (MCAs), who form the local county assemblies responsible for policy at the county level and check the powers of the county's executives. Local county assemblies indicate a departure from the central state's manipulation of devolved units by entrusting the decisions of office bearers to ordinary

[3] Details of district boundaries can be found in the text of the *Districts and Provinces Act, No. 5* of 1992 available online at <https://www.coursehero.com/file/139189082/DistrictsAndProvincesAct105A-5of1992pdf/, Accessed on 20 August 2024>

citizens. The reforms also provide representation of local governance at the national level through elected women's representatives and senators for each county, aimed at strengthening local voices in national governance and creating oversight mechanisms for county governments. This link was absent in pre-2010 districts as they were void of representation and often acted upon the whims of the national executive.

Initially, devolution was met with positive public opinion since it was viewed as a means of democratising governance and enhancing local developmental outcomes (Cheeseman *et al.* 2016). Nevertheless, there was scepticism among county leaders, who anticipated national government interference in local matters (Boone 2012). In the early stages of the devolution of the 2010 constitution, the political class may have failed to comprehend the political power held by county governments. However, elections after 2013 suggest higher competition for the governor's seat. This competition underscores the centrality of counties as emerging hubs of power to control resources and serve as intermediaries to the central government[4] as well as vulnerabilities that constrain their effectiveness and increase susceptibility to exploitation.

Several obstacles have hampered county governments' effectiveness, including recentralisation by national authorities, which often jeopardises the objectives of devolution. Notwithstanding, the position of governor has become highly sought after by politicians, second only to the presidency owing to the considerable resources available within the county government. Intense competition at the county level has also produced an unconventional relationship between counties and central governments. As a new axis of power, county governance has given rise to new forms of patron-client politics that may benefit the central government more than the local ones. As such, we argue that impeachment (or governors' threat of impeachment) has become a way for the central government to assert its influence over the population, local politics, and new manifestations of neo-patrimonialism and ethnicity.

The impeachment of elected state officials is a fairly new concept in Kenya that is frequently applied by relevant bodies. In this regard, it is critical to conduct a political analysis of Kenya's political order as established by the 2010 constitution. Inspired by the historical realities of executives arbitrarily dismissing public officials such as vice presidents (Lynch 2024), the 2010 constitution stipulates the circumstances under which the president, his/her deputy, and governors can be removed from office (Mwakuni 2020). The provision for impeachment assumes that it provides fair grounds for removal from office and deters political interference. Despite this constitutional premise, removal from office using the impeachment clause has been marred by controversy as well as by elements of interference from the

[4] The narratives of power in the races for governor in 2013, 2017, and 2022 demonstrate that the counties have emerged as new hubs of power. The executive branch—which seeks to align with governors to maintain control over the population (as reported by former MCA for Kagaari North, P. Rugendo, in an interview on 10 March 2024)—often interferes with counties.

central government and political rivals. This interference is actualised through new forms of patron-client networks at the county level. The relationship between county governors and the central government determines the target of impeachment.

1.3. Decentralisation and patrimonialism

Kenyan political history shows that political actors are aware that patronage and development funds are crucial for sustaining a political career and the functioning of the government; thus, political actors play a role in upholding that system (Barkan 1976). Decentralisation efforts have always coincided with political schemes at the national and local levels. A key element of the above scheme is the Harambee[5] project, whose misuse by politicians has seen several calls at different junctures for its disbandment or regulations but has often yielded little or no results. Closely related is a type of financial support that was viewed as a remedy for Harambee at the constituency level called constituency development funds (CDFs); a member of parliament (MP) is at the centre of control and has taken over what Harambee used to accomplish during President Moi's regime.

This political scheme using CDFs has created critical obstacles to decentralisation. Cheeseman *et al.* (2016) identified this type of scheming as recentralisation, stating that it is a key hindrance to attempts at decentralisation. This echoes earlier academic studies such as those by Rondinelli *et al*. (1989), who also recognised the challenge of recentralisation. Rondinelli *et al.* (1989) identified recentralisation as a core obstacle in which central governments reclaim power, undermining the objectives of decentralisation. Cheeseman *et al*. (2016) built on this idea to underscore emerging forms of patron-client relations between governors and the central government.

Building on this point, the primary threats to decentralisation are neo-patronage politics and decentralised corruption, as the potential for devolution to create new winners and losers at the local level is substantial. Neo-patronage is the practice of exploiting existing social cleavages while creating new ones, in addition to stirring up conflict at the local level. Boone (2012) and Cheeseman *et al.* (2014) highlighted the potential for devolution to exacerbate existing social cleavages. Boone (2003) also emphasised the vulnerability of decentralisation reforms to elite manipulation, which is a key theme in the analysis of Kenya's devolution process.

Although Cheeseman *et al.* (2016) asserted that Kenya's experience with decentralisation cannot simply be viewed as recentralisation by the national government, it reflects a relatively robust form of recentralisation in which elected county governors have become chief figures in new political struggles. The patterns emerging from the impeachment of governors in Kenya show that devolved governance is indeed a case of recentralisation by the national government or the capture of sub-national units by 'local

[5] For more information on Harambee, see Wilson (1992) and Kinyua (2020).

elites' or 'notables' (Wunsch 2001). Thus, we critically examined the dynamics of recentralising the politics of devolution in Kenya by investigating detailed case studies on how and why recentralisation occurs, citing impeachment as a core strategy employed by national governments to regain and assert control.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design and approach

We adopted a qualitative research design to explore the intricacies of gubernatorial impeachment in Kenya within the framework of decentralised governance. We chose a qualitative approach to enable in-depth scrutiny of the political, social, and legal dynamics that influence the impeachment process. We did so by focusing on rich narrative data, an approach that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors and motivations behind gubernatorial impeachment. We employed a case study method and selected five counties for a detailed analysis: Kiambu, Nairobi, Embu, Kirinyaga, and Meru. Kiambu and Nairobi counties have experienced successful gubernatorial impeachments, providing valuable insights into the processes and factors that lead to such outcomes. Embu and Kirinyaga counties have faced unsuccessful impeachment attempts, offering a contrasting perspective on the dynamics that prevent successful impeachment. Finally, we included Meru County to examine the hypothesis that the new government of 2022, in handling gubernatorial impeachment, has not departed from the scheme set by the previous government; this case adds a particular focus on the role of gender politics in the process of impeachment. By investigating specific cases, we aimed to derive comparative lessons and identify common patterns and unique circumstances that influence gubernatorial impeachment in Kenya.

2.2. Data collection

We gathered data using multiple qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the impeachment process. The primary method included case studies that offer details about the selected counties, and which exhibit the political and social contexts of the impeachment process. This involved reviewing relevant documents, such as county assembly Hansard records, court rulings, and official reports. We also relied on secondary, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders through digital media platforms and commentaries by Kenyan YouTubers, who included MCAs, legal experts involved in the impeachment process, political analysts, representatives from civil society organisations, and governors and their deputies. Through the interviews, we intended to identify insights into the motivations, strategies, and challenges associated with gubernatorial impeachment. Media reports were critical; we analysed media reports from reputable sources to capture public perceptions, media framing, and the broader societal discourse surrounding impeachment.

2.3. Analytical framework

We examined the data collected through the case studies, interviews, and media reports using thematic analysis. This involved identifying and recording patterns (i.e. themes) within the data. The analytical framework consisted of familiarisation through a comprehensive review of the data to gain an initial understanding and pinpoint preliminary themes. We systematically coded these themes using qualitative data analysis and assigned them to significant segments of the text related to the research questions and objectives. We then grouped the codes into broader themes that capture the key issues and dynamics influencing gubernatorial impeachment. We developed the themes iteratively to ensure that they would accurately reflect the data. We reviewed and refined the themes to make sure they would be coherent, consistent, and representative of the reality of impeachment. The final themes provide a detailed narrative of the findings. We have included illustrative quotes from the interviews and case studies to support the analysis and enhance the richness of our results. By employing this rigorous methodological approach, we aimed to provide a nuanced, comprehensive understanding of the factors driving gubernatorial impeachment in Kenya, offering valuable insights into the interplay between politics, patronage, and governance.

3. Case studies

3.1. Successful impeachments: Kiambu and Nairobi counties

The pre-2010 constitutional order accorded executive powers the duty to assign and reassign heads of districts (Kinyua 2022). Under these arrangements, the DCs were key allies of the executive to the extent that they served as chairpersons of the ruling party. While the 2010 constitutional order complicated client–patron-based appointments of the heads of the devolved units, the elected officials in such positions often formed informal networks[6] that propagated new forms of neopatrimonialism, as those who stood in the way were impeached out of office. The executive is capable of influencing the decisions of MCAs, who are crucial in initiating the governor's impeachment motion (see Figure 1)[7]. The ability to buy the loyalty of MCAs and other representatives has been a common strategy, as exemplified by the promise to award approval of proposed constitutional amendments with grants for cars (Lang 2021).

MCAs have presented several impeachment cases that the Senate consequently approved. Among these are Kiambu and Nairobi. In Kiambu County, located in the central part of Kenya, the gubernatorial impeachment case revolves around former Governor Ferdinand Waititu. The impeachment process was

[6] For discussions on this line based on alteration or ignoring the constitution, see Gichohi and Arriola (2022).
[7] Several legal provisions regulate the impeachment of county governors. The Constitution mandates that Parliament pass legislation governing the impeachment process; the relevant laws also serve as guidelines for the Senate. The Constitution and the *County Governments Act* are the primary legal instruments that determine the impeachment of a county governor, with the standing orders of the county assemblies and the Senate providing additional guidance. Specifically, Article 181 of the Constitution delineates the grounds for removing a county governor, while Section 33 of the *County Governments Act* outlines the procedure for removing a county governor. Figure 1 portrays the procedure for impeaching a governor.

initiated in late 2019, catalysed by allegations of irregular procurement practices, misappropriation of public funds, and failure to adhere to the principles of good governance (Mwere and Oruko 2020). Likewise, Nairobi County, which is home to Kenya's capital and largest city, faced a high-profile gubernatorial impeachment case involving former Governor Mike Sonko. Impeachment, driven by allegations of gross misconduct, office abuse, and financial mismanagement, was initiated in late 2020. Governor Sonko's tenure was marked by significant controversy, including alleged irregularities in awarding tenders and the misappropriation of public funds (Otieno 2020).

During impeachment proceedings, the Senate can choose either a plenary session or a select committee of members to deliberate on the impeachment matter before the House and table their recommendations to the Senate. In Kiambu County, the Senate opted for a plenary approach to investigate accusations against Governor Ferdinand Waititu (Otieno 2020). Under the plenary approach, the entire house of the Senate was tasked with scrutinising detailed allegations of corruption, abuse of office, and gross misconduct. This choice was influenced by the complexity of the allegations, which required a thorough examination and the gathering of substantial evidence from various stakeholders, including the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) and civil society organisations (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2020a). The final detailed report provided a solid foundation for the Senate to uphold impeachment (Senate of Kenya 2020d). However, the choice of either a committee or a plenary session can be a requisite for determining the impeachment outcome.

Similarly, in Nairobi County, the Senate opted for a plenary investigation of Governor Mike Sonko (Obuya 2020). The decision was driven by the need to comprehensively analyse the charges of financial mismanagement and gross misconduct. Given Nairobi's prominence as the capital and the high-profile nature of the case, a plenary session was deemed appropriate to ensure a meticulous and impartial investigation (Otieno 2020); however, we must pay attention to the controversy surrounding the formation of the committee.

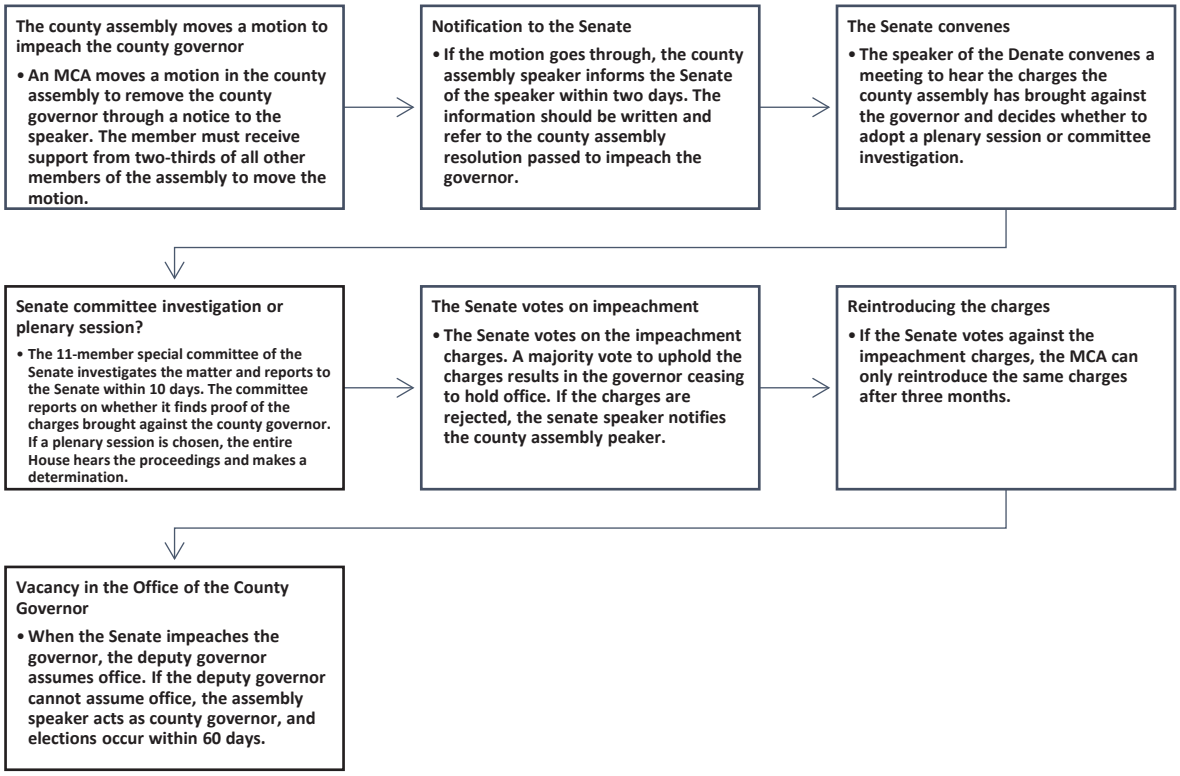

Figure 1: Process of impeaching a governor

Source: Author

3.2. Unsuccessful impeachments: Kirinyaga, Embu, and Meru counties

The Senate does not always approve the recommendations of the MCAs to remove a governor from office. As such, there have been key cases in which the Senate has rejected the admission of MCAs. Among these are the cases of Embu, Kirinyaga, and Meru counties. Martin Nyaga Wambora is said to be a governor with nine proverbial lives (Wanyoro 2017) as he survived several attempts to remove him from office in Embu County. The Embu governor's impeachment process was the first in the country under the new laws in 2014, with allegations of gross misconduct, abuse of office, and violations of procurement laws. Despite the county assembly's efforts to impeach Governor Wambora, the process faced significant legal hurdles and political resistance (Munene 2020). The Senate initially upheld the county assembly's decision to impeach Wambora, but the governor challenged the impeachment. The High Court and the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Wambora, reinstating him and highlighting the legal complexities and procedural flaws in the impeachment process. Governor Wambora experienced yet another impeachment as the MCAs seemed dissatisfied with the court's decision to reinstate him and vowed to impeach him as many times as possible (Muchiri 2014). Embu County impeached Governor Martin Wambora more than once, and the Senate opted for both a plenary session (KTN News Kenya 2014) and a committee investigation (Wafula 2020). This decision was influenced by the

contentious nature of the impeachment and the significant public and media attention it attracted. Despite the initial decision to uphold the impeachment, Governor Wambora's successful court challenges underscore the procedural complexities and legal hurdles of the process (Muthomi and Karanja 2024).

Kirinyaga County, situated in central Kenya, witnessed an unsuccessful impeachment attempt against Governor Anne Waiguru, initiated in 2020 by the county assembly through an impeachment motion (Daily Post Kenya 2020). On 23 June 2020, the Senate Special Committee convened at the Parliament building to investigate the proposed removal from office through the impeachment of the Governor of Kirinyaga County. The evidence was meticulously documented during the session. The Director of Legal Services, Dr Okello (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2020c), presented charges against Hon. Anne Waiguru, as articulated by the county assembly. Charges against Governor Waiguru included allegations that she had grossly violated the Constitution and other laws. The first was her failure to deliver the county's annual state address to the assembly. The second allegation concerned the county assembly authority. The third allegation involved violations under the written law, specifically citing the *Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act of 2015* and the *Public Finance and Management Act of 2012* (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2020c). However, the Senate overturned the county assembly's decisions, citing insufficient evidence and procedural flaws during the impeachment process.

The Senate convened a special committee to investigate the charges against Governor Waiguru (Nyamori and Obala 2020). The committee was tasked with conducting a thorough and impartial review of the evidence presented by both the county assembly and the governor's defence team. The special committee held hearings in which both the accusers (county assembly representatives) and the defenders (Governor Waiguru and her legal team) presented their cases. The committee reviewed all submitted evidence, including testimony, documents, and other relevant materials. This ensured that all allegations were scrutinised and assessed for their merit. After concluding the hearings and the review of evidence, the special committee compiled a report detailing the findings of each charge. The report included conclusions on whether the evidence substantiated the allegations against Governor Waiguru. This report was then presented to the Senate for deliberations. The full Senate debated the findings of the special committee. Senators had the opportunity to discuss evidence, committee conclusions, and the implications of the charges. Following the debate, the Senate voted to determine whether the charges warranted the removal of Governor Waiguru from office. A majority vote was required to uphold the impeachment charges. The Senate ultimately dismissed the impeachment charges against Governor Waiguru, concluding that there were procedural flaws in the impeachment process and that the evidence provided was insufficient to justify her removal from office.

In the initial period of implementing devolution under President Uhuru Kenyatta's leadership, all the instances mentioned above took place. Shortly after the general elections in 2022, a new government

was established, and the Meru County MCAs began expressing dissatisfaction with the new governor. The case of the gubernatorial impeachment in Meru County, in eastern Kenya, serves as a noteworthy example of the process under the new government of 2022. Impeachment proceedings against Governor Kawira Mwangaza started in early 2023, barely two years after she took office, with allegations of grave misconduct, abuse of power, and mismanagement of financial resources (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2023). The case has received considerable attention because of its timing and the broader political context of a recently elected national government (Marete 2023), focusing on the evolving dynamics of governance in Kenya's devolved system, particularly under the new national administration.

The Senate's handling of the impeachment case involving Meru County Governor Kawira Mwangaza was influenced by the broader political context of the newly elected national government. A plenary session was chosen to ensure maximum transparency and public engagement given the high stakes and public interest in the case (Kipkemoi 2023). This decision was made to address the gendered dimensions and political implications of the impeachment process. The plenary session provided an inclusive platform for debate with extensive participation from all senators (Kipkemoi 2023, Citizen TV Kenya 2023).

In August 2024, the MCAs presented another impeachment case against Governor Kawira Mwangaza on three charges: gross violation of the Constitution and other laws, gross misconduct, and abuse of office (Omulo 2024). Although this decision was later challenged in court, Meru became the first county in which the governor was impeached after the 2022 election.

4. Procedural flaws: A committee investigation or a plenary session?

During gubernatorial impeachments, the Senate has a constitutional mandate to either form a special committee or conduct a plenary session to investigate and deliberate on accusations made against governors. The choice between these two approaches is influenced by various factors, including the nature of the allegations, political dynamics, and the perceived need for transparency and thoroughness. A special committee is often preferred when a detailed examination of evidence and witness testimony is needed. This method allows for a more structured and focused investigation, with committee members having the opportunity to delve deeply into the specifics of a case. The committee, usually comprising 11 senators, conducts hearings, collects evidence, and reports its findings to the Senate for final deliberation and voting. In contrast, a plenary session involves the entire senate in the investigation and deliberation. This approach is typically chosen when there is a high level of public interest and the need for transparency and accountability is paramount. A plenary session allows all Senators to participate in questioning witnesses, reviewing evidence, and debating the merits of a case, thereby ensuring collective decision-making.

Besides the factors influencing the Senate's decision to choose between a special committee and a

plenary session, the political climate and relationships within the Senate can also affect the choice (see Mwangaza's case in NTV Kenya 2023), with some cases requiring broader consensus and participation. Legal considerations are also critical in determining the format the Senate adopts to ensure adherence to legal and procedural standards, especially in cases with potential legal challenges. The plenary session highlights the challenges of political manoeuvring and the potential for procedural flaws, as seen in the eventual legal outcomes of these cases (see Waiguru's case in Idara 2020). In both instances, courts may play a critical role in reviewing the Senate's decisions, emphasising the importance of legal compliance in the impeachment process (see Wambora's case and others in Mwere 2020a). The Senate's decision-making process in choosing between a special committee and a plenary session is therefore multifaceted. Factors such as the need for detailed scrutiny (favouring a committee), the demand for public transparency (favouring a plenary session), political alliances, and the potential for legal challenges all play critical roles. The nature of the allegations and political environment surrounding each case are significant determinants.

Looking at the cases analysed here, the choice of either the plenary session or the special committee is critical to the 'expected' outcomes of the impeachments and often carries undertones of political reasons driving the impeachments. The Kiambu County case reveals intrigue within the ruling Jubilee Party that led to the leader of the majority, Samuel Poghisio, declining to move the motion meant to establish a committee to investigate charges made against the governor (Mwere 2020b). Similar intrigue characterised the choice of a plenary session for Mike Sonko of Nairobi, with last-minute changes in the adoption of a special committee under unclear circumstances. In this choice, the senators' view was that it was easy to impeach the governor, despite his wish that a plenary session would grant him a fairer hearing (Otieno 2020)

5. Impeached or ousted?

The five cases of gubernatorial impeachment in Kenya demonstrate an intricate interplay of legal interpretations (Muthomi and Karanja 2024, Mutinda 2018), political affiliations (Warigi 2020), and executive influences (Nyamori 2023, Warigi 2020) that determine the outcomes of such proceedings. The cases of Embu, Kirinyaga, Nairobi, Kiambu, and Meru counties illustrate how these factors interact, leading to either successful or unsuccessful impeachments. These outcomes demonstrate that being removed from office through impeachment, defined as the process of ousting a governor through adherence to constitutional thresholds, often means being ousted regardless of the evidence presented before the Senate. These cases have striking similarities.

The Embu County case highlights the crucial function of the judiciary during the impeachment process (Mwakuni 2020). The unsuccessful attempt to impeach Governor Martin Wambora of Embu County was largely due to judicial intervention. Despite accusations of serious misconduct and abuse of

office, the High Court and Court of Appeal reinstated Wambora, accentuating the vital role of the judiciary in interpreting the law and its application during the impeachment process. Legal protection underscores the importance of adhering to procedures and examining impeachments under legal scrutiny. The judiciary's role in safeguarding Wambora's position indicates the critical function of legal institutions in balancing political actions with legal standards (Mwakuni 2020).

Embu County also reveals the political competition that could occur within the County Assembly, which could lead to an impeachment process. Governor Wambora's misfortune was often attributed to his political rivalry with senior politicians in the county who sought a takeover[8]. There was no clear evidence of executive protection for Wambora, although his membership in the Jubilee Party since 2013 and his political rivalries within the county suggest possible motives for his political adversaries seeking his removal[9].

The success of the impeachment process is also highly determined by political tensions that may catalyse executive favours. In Kirinyaga County, the impeachment motion against Governor Anne Waiguru was initiated amid heightened political tension in the Mount Kenya region (Citizen TV Kenya 2022). President Uhuru Kenyatta required the support of strong governors to consolidate his position and finalise his presidential term following the fallout with his deputy, William Ruto. As Waiguru was aligned with Kenyatta, the Senate appeared reluctant to impeach her, reflecting executive favour (Daily Post Kenya 2020). Political dynamics and executive support played crucial roles in Waiguru's retention of her gubernatorial position, demonstrating the influence of national political strategies on local governance issues (Inooro TV 2020). This favour also informed the choice of a plenary session as opposed to a committee and investigation.

The cases of Embu and Kirinyaga stand in contrast to the successful impeachments in Nairobi and Kiambu counties, where the governors had fallen out of favour with the executive (Muriuki 2024, Citizen TV Kenya 2020). The case of Nairobi County exemplifies the fate of a governor facing impeachment if he/she has no executive support. Sonko became increasingly isolated from President Kenyatta's administration (Muriuki 2024), despite seemingly credible accusations that his governance was marked by corruption and gross misconduct. The executive's determination to oust Sonko and place Nairobi under new management facilitated the impeachment process (Mutahi 2021). Sonko's removal was effectively executed without support from higher authorities or significant legal and ethical violations (Omulo 2020). Like in Nairobi, Kiambu Governor Ferdinand Waititu's impeachment was influenced by his political alignment. Waititu's open support for Deputy President William Ruto—whom the ruling party perceived as rebellious—contributed to his impeachment (Bloomberg 2020). His

[8] Interview with an informant, M. Kivuti, on 12 February 2024.
[9] Interview with an informant, M. Kivuti, on 12 February 2024.

removal was seen as a strategic move to neutralise Ruto's rising popularity in the Mount Kenya region (Mbaka 2020). The Senate's decision to uphold the impeachment reflected the broader political goal of consolidating executive control and reducing factional influence within the ruling party.

Attempts to impeach Meru Governor Kawira Mwangaza were made in 2022 under the newly formed government. However, this process was unique in the context of local politics among the Ameru people. As in the case of Embu County, where political rivalry played a significant role in influencing the situation, political rivalry in Meru County centred on gendered politics to convince ordinary people that Governor Mwangaza was unfit for office. These political manoeuvrings seem to debate whether a woman should be allowed to hold a powerful political position[10], such as that of governor (Muchui 2023). Furthermore, despite hopes for a different approach from that of the new executive, President William Ruto's administration appeared to follow similar patterns to the previous regime. To maintain strong support in the Mount Kenya region, Ruto needed to support the regional leadership (Marete and Muchui 2023, Mbaka 2023). This executive support was critical in preventing Mwangaza's impeachment, despite strong opposition from the MCAs, who were resistant to a female governor controlling the county's wealth and politics[11]. The case of Meru County highlights continuity in executive influence and political considerations in gubernatorial impeachments, indicating that the new government may still employ old strategies to maintain political stability and loyalty (Marete and Muchui 2023, Mbaka 2023, Jalio 2024).

In August 2024, Meru County MCAs made a third attempt and successfully removed Kawira Mwangaza from office after the senate overwhelmingly voted in favour of her impeachment. In her previous impeachments, Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua had reconciled the MCAs and governor in line with Ruto's strategy. However, in August 2024, Gachagua had a falling out with the president, and his support for Kawira Mwangaza was insufficient to keep her in office.

The impeachment of these elected public officials is not merely a question of their culpability. Rather, these cases demonstrate a process of futility at times with a predetermined outcome, as evidenced by the impeachment cases discussed above. During impeachment proceedings against governors, defence teams put forth several key arguments to counter the charges brought by the respective county assemblies. However, the primary defence arguments seem to lack substantial evidence. The defence argued that allegations against the governors were not supported by concrete or compelling evidence. They emphasised that the accusations were based on circumstantial evidence and lacked the necessary proof to substantiate claims of gross violations of the Constitution and the abuse of office. The governors' defence teams contended that the impeachment motions were politically motivated (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2014, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2023). They asserted that the charges were part of a broader

[10] Interview with an MCA associate, Meru County, M. Kimani, on 4 March 2024.
[11] Interview with an MCA associate, Meru County, M. Kimani, on 4 March 2024.

political agenda aimed at undermining their leadership and destabilising the county government. The defence maintained that the governors adhered to all relevant legal procedures and regulations in their conduct as governors. They contended that any perceived violations were either administrative oversights or misinterpretations of the law, rather than deliberate acts of misconduct or abuse of office. They asserted that any mistakes or shortcomings were not indicative of gross misconduct but rather typical challenges faced in governance (Senate of Kenya Hansard 2014, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2023). These procedural flaws, embedded in political undertones, make it easy for governors to be impeached despite the reinstatement by judicial courts.

6. Conclusion

The impeachment cases in Embu, Kirinyaga, Nairobi, Kiambu, and Meru counties offer critical insights into the multifaceted nature of Kenya's gubernatorial impeachment process. The findings underscore the significant roles of the judiciary, political affiliations, executive influence, and gender dynamics in shaping impeachment outcomes. The Embu County case demonstrates the judiciary's vital role in safeguarding against potential abuse during the impeachment process. Governor Wambora's reinstatement by the High Court and Court of Appeal shows the judiciary's capacity to interpret and enforce legal standards, ensuring that impeachment procedures adhere to constitutional requirements. This intervention highlights the judiciary as a key player in maintaining checks and balances within Kenya's governance system and may aid in trumping political rivals.

The cases of Kirinyaga, Nairobi, and Kiambu counties illustrate how political dynamics and executive influence can significantly impact impeachment outcomes. Governor Waiguru's alignment with President Kenyatta protected her from impeachment, reflecting the strategic importance of political alliances. Conversely, the impeachment of governors Sonko and Waititu in Nairobi and Kiambu counties, respectively, was facilitated by their falling out of favour with the executive. These cases indicate how executive support and opposition determine the success of impeachment motions, highlighting the intertwined nature of national and local politics.

The Meru County case sheds light on gendered aspects of political leadership and impeachment. As a female leader, Governor Mwangaza faced significant resistance from local political actors, reflecting the broader societal and cultural challenges regarding women's leadership. The executive support she received to prevent impeachment underscores the importance of political backing in overcoming gender bias and maintaining leadership roles. This case shows the need for continued efforts to address gender disparities in political governance. The findings from Meru County also suggest a degree of continuity in governance approaches despite the change in national leadership. Like its predecessor, President Ruto's administration leveraged executive influence to manage regional political dynamics and preserve support from key constituencies. This continuity indicates that, while new leadership may bring different

faces into the picture, the underlying strategies to ensure political stability and loyalty remain consistent. The successful impeachment of the third attempt to remove the Meru governor from office cements the primacy of aligning with the executive to remain in office.

The gubernatorial impeachment cases in these five counties provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing impeachment in Kenya and answer the question of whether actual impeachment occurred, defined as removal from office through a lawful process hinged on substantial evidence, or an ouster anchored in the political standing of the governors. Judicial interventions, political dynamics, executive influence, and gender considerations play critical roles in shaping the outcomes of these actions. The findings highlight the complexity of Kenya's devolved governance system, where national and local politics are deeply intertwined, with county governors embodying new hubs for the consolidation of power, legal frameworks must be robustly upheld to ensure fair and just governance. These insights demonstrate the significance of strengthening legal and procedural frameworks for impeachment; enhancing the capacity of judicial and legislative bodies; and fostering a political culture that supports transparency, accountability, and gender equality. As Kenya's governance structure continues to evolve, these lessons will be vital for promoting more effective and equitable governance at both the national and county levels.

Impeachment is becoming a critical element in Kenyan politics beyond the devolved units of governance. As this research was ongoing, the senate began a process of removal from office by impeachment of the deputy president, a process that was successful in both the lower house and the Senate but challenged in court. In this regard, impeachment remains a critical issue for further analysis of politics in Kenya and perhaps beyond.

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Culture and Food Habits in the Yamba Society of the North-West Region of Cameroon: An Anthropological Analysis of the Challenges of Food Crop Production

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Abstract:

The work is looking at the various farming methods and techniques which in themselves constitute cultural diversity from the preparation of the farming area or site right up to harvesting, transportation, transformation and consumption. The Yamba people form their ridges and furrows according to the type of crop that will be planted on that ridge. People just making their first contact with this community without the prior knowledge of the people's staple food decided to sponsor the roots and tuber project in the community where new farming methods and techniques were introduced but the locals rejected the project. Most of the food crops that made up the roots and tuber project were not found to be appetizing to the local indigenes because they believe that their own foods have power and strength (both physical and spiritual). The Yamba people are being guided by their culture to the extent that what they produce, how they produce it, distribute it, transforms it, prepare (cook it) and consume it is determined by their culture.

Keywords: Cameroon, culture, food crop, production, Yamba.

1. Introduction

Ecology is a scientific term, derived from the Greek word *Oikos* meaning habitation, but each of the scientific disciplines has its own connotations for this word. Ecology according to McC. Netting (1997) is the study of the economy of the household, of animal organisms. This includes the relationships of animals with both the inorganic and the organic environments, above all, the beneficial and the inimical relations that Darwin referred to as the conditions of the struggle for existence. When cultural Anthropologists borrowed the term ecology from the biologists, they also bent it to their own particular uses. They began with humanity, examining the environment as people were affected by it, uses it, sought to understand it and modified it.

From the biologists and cultural Anthropologist view of ecology, we can clearly depict how Man is endlessly simplifying and generalizing his own view of his environment; he constantly imposes on his environment, his own constructions and meanings. These constructions and meanings are characteristics of one culture as opposed to another. Now, when you impose your own culture on another person, what becomes of the constructions and meanings that person made regarding his own view of the environment. The Yambas on their part know that they can look up to their environment for shelter, nutrition, religious, political and social protection. From their environment, they can obtain the wood (sticks), ground and grass for the construction of their houses. They know that they can till the soil to cultivate crops or go to the forest and do a bit of gathering and hunting and then to the streams and rivers to fetch their drinking water and for fishing. From the forest they can still fetch their firewood which they use in cooking their food. Farming, hunting and fishing tools are also obtained from their environment, the forest. Rituals are performed and sacrifices offered to appease the environment when it is angry, in order that a peaceful relationship exists between them and their environment.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how development programmes use top-bottom methods to introduce (new) projects in rural areas without the involvement or implication of the rural stakeholders leading to the failure or rejection of such projects by the indigenous people.

1.1. Connections between the environment and food crop production in Yamba

The Yamba people are economically, socially, politically, culturally, morally, mentally upright and healthy when their environment is at peace with them. They believe that the environment has ears, eyes, nostrils and a mouth just like any other living thing. With its ears, it hears their cries and their shouts of happiness and joy. With its eyes, it sees their sufferings and enjoyments. For all these to be achieved from the environment, a host of rituals are performed and sacrifices made every year at the beginning of the farming period and after harvest (Eliason 1997). In line with this view, Gufler (2003: 107) clarifies that:

> The Yamba rituals show in an exemplary way how the Yamba see the World they live in and how they cope with the problems they are confronted with. Traditional Yamba belief accords great power and efficacy to their rituals. Despite exposure to western influences and the advent of schools and the World religions, these rituals are still performed whenever the need arises.

During the preparation for the new farming season, rites are performed here and there with the *chàm* secret society; which is believed, has the powers to go to an unknown world and bring abundant or excess food. In the course of their mission they kill any witch or wizard that tries to interrupt them. During this period this *chàm* secret society is fed with a special meal *mbeng nkù* and *ngi* that is pounded cocoyam and *egusi*. As explained by Ta Yefack[1] of Mbem. This food is prepared in a special way with neither salt nor oil. In reaction to the rites that are performed before and during the farming season (CICIBA 1989: 32-33), argued that:

> We note also the diverse rites which are accomplished on the occasion of the various agricultural farming seasons, during labour and harvest. These songs and rites constitute cultural values and concepts in regards to the soil which is not supposed to be considered as an inanimate entity but a living entity with which dialogue has to be established, it has to be handled like the nourishing mother and its rhythm of life has to be respected for the fear of provoking calamities, droughts, erosions and many others.

Contrarily, most of the development programmes and donor organizations found in the African continent and rural areas in particular tend to ignore these rites. Having the impression; you have to work many acres of lands with tractors and apply enough fertilizer and pesticides to produce much and stand the challenge of competition. Resulting to failure and the rejection of development programmes by local populations. The principal occupation of the Yamba people is farming, though they also rear animals, a bit of bee farming, hunting and fishing (hunting and fishing are done mostly during the dry season and at the beginning of the farming season). The staple food crops include: maize, cocoyam (*Colocasia esculenta)* commonly known as taro and guinea corn. They also produce a bit of plantains, banana, Irish potatoes, yams (*Dioscorea-minutiflora*), sweet potatoes, beans, soya beans, cassava, *macabo (Xanthosoma sagittifolium*) and rice.

Our objective here is to identify some of the unwanted approaches used by fund donors to launch

[1] Tayefack, is the Prime minister in charge of culture and agriculture, he is the one who consults the *Fon* and other notables and give the program for the annual year cultural festival ; the *nkah laak*.

development projects so as to reverse the trend and secondly identify the food crops produced in a community in relation the spiritual and physical environments which play great roles in their socio-cultural manifestations and the consumption patterns of the people.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Study area

Following the 1987 population census report, the Yamba people are about 32 000 in number, while the Nwa Rural council Monographic study of 2001, projects a 45,402 and as of 2016, 920,000 inhabitant with a population density of about 30.3 per km². Administratively, Yamba is a tribe in Nwa subdivision in Donga Mantung, and some 201 km from Bamenda the capital of the North West Region of Cameroon and some 96 km to the South of Gembu town in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 5.30° and 6.45° north of the Equator and Longitude 10.45° and 11.3° east of the Greenwich Meridian. Yamba refers to the tribe, the people and language spoken in this area. According to the Journal of West African Language Volume XIII number 2, 8 Dec. 1983. Yamba is a group of dialects spoken around the Nigerian frontiers east of Nkambe, North West Region of Cameroon. It belongs to the Mbam-Nkam; a sub group of the Bantou Grass fields. The Yambas are bordered to the North by Mfumte, to the North-east by Nigeria, to the South-east by Mayo Banyo (Adamawa Region), to the South by Mbaw and to the West by the Wimbum people (Jikong 1979).

The entire habitant area of this tribe is marked by strong winds during the rainy season (from mid-March to October ending) with relatively high humidity. The Harmattan wind, which is cold and dry, is very prominent during the dry season (that runs from the November to mid-March). As far as vegetation is concerned, there are savannah grasslands and other shrubs. We find a mixture of patches of secondary forest and grass vegetation. There are equally the pre-forest savannahs of Guinean type, oil palm. While in this region, one could see the abundant raffia palms that are well catered for, because they produce palm wine which is used in all the traditional ceremonies even in settling disputes and marriage arrangements. The distribution of soil types is related to the local vegetation, relief and climate. The low-lying areas have dark volcanic clay humus soil, rich for agriculture whereas the highland areas have hard- laterite brown soils which are unfertile. The fertile areas are found around or along the river banks, which are also solicited by cattle owners, justifying the frequent farmer grazier conflicts.

2.1.1. Daily Routines

The organization of production in Yamba households today as in the past allocates women’s labour to subsistent food crops and domestic tasks. Men’s work varied more through time, depending on their age and status. In the pre-colonial Yamba; men were primarily warriors, farmers, tapers and hunters. Just before the day breaks, a chorus of roasters begin their crowing, which is soon drowned out by blaring

radios and men whistling to assemble their dogs and begin their journey to their raffia bushes. Mothers shouting directions to their children either to do one or two things as fast as possible, such that by 6: 00 A.M the fire is lit, food is cooking and water is heated for washing school age pupils (Goheen 1996). After this, the women take off for their farms and the young girls will join them later on because they were assigned some chores by their parents. The young boys on their part either follow their fathers to the raffia bushes or join their mothers in the farms. In other words, work or food crop production in Yamba land following our research findings, is divided according to sex, age and to a certain extend individual abilities. In this view some particular activities are reserved for the women and others for the men. In some cases, children and the adolescents have their own specific roles to play not leaving out the third age group persons (old people).

The men while in their raffia bushes, do the first taping *sóp rūk* after which they sit down by the fire site in the huts that they have built in the raffia bush and roast some plantains, cassava, sweet potato or cocoyam (macabo) which is accompanied with a number of glasses or cups of palm wine. This serves as their own breakfast or coffee and last for at most an hour after which they start the second taping (*réŋse rūk in* Yamba*)*. If they have customers to supply, the boys are the ones to carry the wine from the bush to the customers' house or to the market. At times the customers come and collect the wine from the bush by themselves. Once that is done, the men and their dogs can now go on to inspect their traps and set new ones; they might return to town (home) if they have caught some animals and would like to sell them immediately or because they have some pressing issues to iron out in the family, traditional council, the *Fon's* Palace and wherever their presence are deemed necessary (Gelam 2000). Without these preoccupations, most men prefer spending most if not all of their time in the raffia bush. This men's attitude is mostly prevalent in the upper villages of the Yamba society, in the other villages that are found in the Mbaw plain, the situation is not the same. Here we are talking of villages such as Jato (Gwembe) and Kurt-Gamfe, where men and women work together either harvesting rice or coffee.

The women on their part work tirelessly on the farms to provide food for the family and are supposed to come back earlier and perform some domestic tasks, fetch fire wood after leaving their farms and are even the last people to go to bed. Most of these women are the bread-winners of their households, though they are working on their husband's lands, one can say without err like (Goheen 1996: 90) that 'Men Own the Land and Women Own the Crops'. The youths do almost all the work even that which is reserved for the elderly such as the cutting/cleaning of working tools like handles for hoes, spades, diggers, spears and even weaving of bags and baskets. The division of labour is organized around labour intensive tasks set within an agricultural calendar that is dictated largely by rainfall. Clearing of farmland begin in October and end in early March. Tilling properly takes place in April *ŋwu womfàk* planting follows suit. The month of May, has been reserved for the planting of groundnuts *ŋwu Bì Njʉ̀* while the harvesting takes place as from July *ŋwu kup Gombì* (corn harvesting month).

2.2. Data collection method

2.2.1. Focused population

The field work site was Yamba in Nwa sub division in the Donga and Mantung division of the North West Region of Cameroon. There are seventeen (17) villages that make up the Yamba ethnic group or society, so we collected data in all these seventeen villages to be assured of the similarity of the data. The study design consisted of both exploratory and explanatory components. Our question guides were open–ended and semi–structured due to the decision taking nature of the situation under study. We further used direct observation to compliment data we could not gather using other methods described above. The exploratory phase combined qualitative and quantitative ethnographic methods aimed at describing the qualities and quantities of food crops (roots and tubers) that are produced in this community. The explanatory phase was incorporated to show why certain food crops are produced, used and consumed in socio-cultural manifestations than the others. It was also to explain the reluctant attitude of the study population in adhering to the Roots and Tuber (R and T) project.

2.2.2. Data collection and processing

Our informants were selected form the target population, though we had some 10 foreigners who were Nigerian business men and women; with some who have settled in this area. We randomly contacted and interviewed people from all the reasonable age groups, sex, status, occupation and religious denominations. Here, most of the people interviewed were farmers, even though any reasonable person who could provide us with information was equally interviewed. Some 30 informants were selected with using the Snowball method, reasons being to have the general view of what the people think about the production of roots and tubers**.**

The research incorporated hypotheses and objectives which needed to be verified and attained with information gotten from experts in some particular aspects. It is for this reason that during our field trips, we solicited the expertise of the following: the sub divisional Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Development for Nwa Sub division, the Regional Delegate of Agriculture and Rural Development for the North West, the Regional antennal officers of National Programme for the Development of Roots and Tubers (PNDRT) for the North West, some staffs of the International fund for Agricultural development (IFAD) and the Institute of Research for Agricultural development (IRAD) headquarters in Nkolbisson- Yaoundé. The services or expertise of all the Yamba Fons and Queens were solicited, pioneer farmers, leaders of tontines or group works, hunters, fishermen, bee farmers, cattle rearers, Restaurant owners, elites, diviners, ritualists, tradi-practioners, Rev. Pastors and Imams. A total of 45 informants were used to collect and exploit the necessary data from the age groups, sex, and occupation, administrative, traditional and religious groups to be represented in this work for a better understanding of the study.

3. Farming methods

According to the Informant Nº 13, a male farmer interviewed on the 15th January 2020 in Gwembe said that:

> The Yamba people form short and oval ridges for the planting of their staple crops; the Bamiléké people make very large oval ridges in order to plant their staple food crops, while the Beti people form very small mountain-like ridges to plant their staple food crops. All these forms of ridges are signs/proves of a rich cultural diversity; hence a society might likely refuse new practices/methods for the fear of losing its own cultural heritage and identity.

The Yamba people, especially those inhabiting the hilly regions (upper area), practice shifting cultivation, that is you farm on a particular piece of land for about two to three years and then you allow that piece of land to fallow and you can come back to that same piece of land two or three years after. This is done such that the soil can regain or increase its fertility because the Yambas do not apply fertilizers on their farms. They believe that any food crop that is fertilized is untasteful or tasteless at all and are not eager to consume such foods. Before the beginning of any farming season, the farmers would go to their farmlands and choose spots covered with tall grass as the areas where they would cultivate their crops that particular farming season. Areas or spots covered with tall grass are pre-judgments of fertility, short or stunted grasses are signs of infertility. If the soil is fertile, the grass on that spot will grow taller and taller. After the choice of such areas, the farmers (mostly women) chop the grass into desirable sizes and shapes, depending particularly on the type of food crop the farmer wants to plant on it.

For the cultivation/planting of cocoyam (taro), after chopping the grass of the desired area to be cultivated, the grass are then gathered into heaps of short, small and oval ridges and then allowed to get dried. After this, particles of soil of a desired quantity are added on the heaps or ridges and fire is then set underneath. As explained by Informant Nº 29, a male Farmer/Trader interviewed on the 10th December 2020 in Yang:

> This takes place between November and February, during the dry season and when the rain falls, the farmers can then come and soften them with their hoes. Planting of seedlings, grains, seeds and whatsoever follows immediately and weeding takes place about a month later depending on the other preoccupation of the farmer. Harvesting takes place some three to six months afterwards depending on the types of crop; because crops such as corn/maize, groundnuts, pumpkins, soya beans, sweet potato, Irish potato and some particular types of

> yams usually take between three to four months to be harvested while cocoyam, *macabo* (*Xanthossoma sagittifolium*), *egusi* (*Citrullus lanatus*) and the rest of the other yams take about six to seven months before they can be harvested.

Some particular types of cassava do take about six months to be ready and that is why farmers have nicknamed that particular specie of cassava the 'six months cassava'. Generally cassava takes about ten months to a year or more to be ready for harvesting while others can last in the farms for about two years, depending on the particular species of the cassava, some decay as time goes on while others resist.

3.1. Storage mediums

One of the major areas in which rural communities and the Yambas in particular want to remain attached to their traditional/subsistent farming, is the storage medium. The preservation of the food crops by the Yamba people nowadays, is the method that was employed and or practiced by their ancestors; hence they do not want to cut that link. Food crops such as cassava, cocoyam (*taro*) yams, *macabo*, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and many others are simply buried in the ground for storage/preservation. That is the people dig a big hole either under a tree or a big stone (rock) and put their crops inside after which they spray a slight quantity of grass on these crops before finally covering them with soil. The size and number of such holes depend largely on the amount/quantity of the crops harvested. At times a farmer might decide to separate the holes for easy identification and even to reduce the risk of losing all of his/her crops through excessive heat or wild fire. With this in mind, the farmer knows that he/she has Irish potatoes in hole 'A' which is found under a pear, mango, guava or what so ever tree, cassava is in hole 'B', sweet potatoes in 'C', Yams in 'D' and *Taro* in 'E'. A child can be sent to the farm(s) where these crops are found and get the type of food crop the mother desires to prepare in her menu on a given day. The separation of these holes at times, is to avoid the risk of losing one's food crops in a single day either through wild fire or the crops can be eaten/destroyed by cattle and goats. We, the Yamba farmers have learned a lot of lessons from the parable:

> Do not keep all of your eggs in one basket, and by so doing have decided to keep our crops in separate holes. These crops are harvested during the dry season when there is a lot of sun, producing a lot of heat due to increase in temperature causing the roots and tubers to get rot. (The viewpoints of Informant Nº 42, a female Farmer interviewed on the 5th January 2020 in Sih).

This area is characterized by a lot of seasonal hunting during the dry season coupled with wild fire, which is the number one destroyer of human property and leads to the disappearance of many plants and

animal species. As a matter of fact, the Yamba people carry out a lot of hunting during the dry season, which is also the harvesting period of roots and tubers. Corn is usually harvested in July commonly known in the Yamba calendar as '*nwu kup gombi',* literally meaning the month of harvesting corn. The corn harvested are stored or preserved in bands while the roots and tubers harvested during the dry season risk being burnt down by hunters. That is the hunters usually surround a bush or a forest and send their dogs to go and fetch out animals from the bush or forest. If the dogs fetch in vain, they now set fire in the suspected or targeted area of the bush/forest and then lined up on the other side waiting the animals that are fleeing from the fire for safety. Most often than expected, the fire may grow wild and then cross into the neighbouring farms and cause massive destruction of human property and the termination of many plant and animal species. It is very difficult and risky to store roots and tubers in bands at home or in a house because most of them would get rot due to too much heat while others would dry off due to the lack of moisture and enough air. Most roots and tubers can be stored for a long period of time if and only if they are transformed into any stage where they would not quickly get bad. Roots and tubers such as cocoyam (*taro*), yams, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, *macabo* and others are hardly transformed into a by-product by the Yamba people hence these crops are stored in the same state as they were harvested. For this reason, these crops cannot last for a length of period longer than six to seven months. If we are to take a mathematical calculation, we will find out that the Yamba ancestors were right to call the month of June as the hungry month '*nwu njie'*.

3.2. Farming tools

The main farming tools in the Yamba community include; hoes, machetes (cutlass), diggers, spades axes and sticks *mbeng nkù*. Cutlasses are used for clearing thick and virgin forests and bushes:

> Hoes are used for tilling and softening of the soil and the formation of ridges planting of crops and also for weeding the crops. Diggers are used mostly by the men for digging holes where they plant plantains, bananas, coffee and cocoa plants and even spades are used for gathering grass into heaps or bundles and also for planting crops like groundnut, corn soya beans, beans, *egusi* and some particular types of yams. (Informant Nº 37, a female Weaver interviewed on the 5th December 2020 in Gom).

Some of these tools especially the hoes have the hanging down reputation, which were being handed down from one generation to another generation. This practice is seriously taken into consideration because each time a girl gets married; the groom's family has to pay these hoes as part of the bride price. In the Yamba language it is called *mbám nténg* or *mbám so'o.* These particular hoes (*so'o làak*) are not used for cultivation today but the hoe remains an indispensable element in the Yamba agricultural life

and marriage commemorations (Jikong 1979). The hoes that are being used today are modifications of the previous ones that were smaller in size and a bit blunt as compared to the ones that are being used today that are bigger in size and sharp, hence an improvement in the Yamba technological life.

3.3. Harvesting and transportation materials

The harvesting materials according to Informant Nº 52, a Housewife interviewed on the 10th January 2020 in Saam are:

> The bare hands, baskets (long and short) for corn, hoes, diggers and spades for harvesting cocoyam, yams, sweet and Irish potatoes, cassava, *macabo* and many others (some of these harvesting materials are locally fabricated while others are imported). Sticks *ntie mbang nkù* are used mostly during the rainy season, when the soil is still soft and also because at this moment, not all the cocoyam are ready for harvest hence a stick is used to off root only a particular cocoyam stem.

Hoes and spades are dangerous at this moment because they can destroy the other crops that are not yet ready for harvest. While harvesting corn, the farmers with their long baskets carried on their backs, break off the cobs from the main corn stem and put them into their long baskets. People who do not have these long baskets use the short ones, or basins, buckets and even bags. When the baskets, buckets, basins, bags and whatsoever you are using, are full you go and put them at a gathering site that is arranged in such a way that the corn can be there for more than one week before transporting them to the store bands. Some farmers construct huts in distant farms where their produce are temporally stored pending transportation to their homes. This is because during the harvesting period, some of the road paths are muddy and slippery, thereby making it difficult for the crops to be transported. Also at this period: July-August are the rainy periods hence the streams and rivers are fast running and deep and people face lots of difficulties crossing them with loads on their heads. Cocoyam, yams, sweet potatoes, *macabo, egusi* and others are harvested generally during the dry season.

The transportation materials include: baskets (long and short), basins, buckets, bags, carriages and many more. Wheel barrows, trucks, carts and to a lesser extent cars (land rovers) are used for transporting crops mostly at the plains/lowlands. At the highlands harvesting is generally done by the women, children and the youths while the men only assist in the transportation. In the plains, men and women can harvest altogether but the women participate in the harvest more than the men.

3.4. Local believes

These are believes that have not been verified but which go a long way to jeopardize the production of

some particular food crops. Some of these believes include; hard work, hard food, sweet potato as food for children, Irish potatoes as a very light food, some particular types of yams are food for the Ibo people of the neighbouring Nigeria, cassava as food for the '*Yawondo*' people, *garri* a product of cassava leads to blindness. Cassava leaves also lead to blindness, rice is also food for the children and eaten mostly on Christmas day (equally a cash crop). Let us now examine each of these believes and see how they influence the Yamba people vis-à-vis the cultivation, production and consumption of some particular food crops and not the others.

3.4.1. Hard work hard food

The people believe that when you do hard work, you should eat something hard or heavy as it is commonly said in this society. Hard or heavy food in this community is referring to *mbeng nkù* and fufu corn. The rest of the food types are considered light in their stomach (*wèiré se véu in Yamba).* It is believed that when a farmer eats these light foods, he/she cannot work well or cannot work for a very long time. Hence fufu corn and *mbeng nkù* are not only the staple foods of the Yambas but foods that permit them to work hard and tirelessly on their farms. There are situations where married women usually encounter problems with their husbands just because they have prepared food which are considered as roots of trees (*ngang ntiè*) and very light in the stomach. We have the case of one of our informants (Informant N^{o} 35 a house wife interviewed in Kurt– Gamfe on the 1st November 2020) who said that:

> When I prepare food like yams, cassava, Irish potato and others for about two or three days, I would certainly develop a crucial problem with my husband, who would react saying: is food finished in this house? Referring to *mbeng nkù* and fufu corn, I am tired of eating roots (roots and tubers) every day in this house of yours.

She further went on to say that by these words, her husband is seriously annoyed and she cannot approach him from any direction because the husband at this point is considered being starved by the wife. She continued with her narration that she can only make things return to normal by preparing a delicious dish of *mbeng nkù* for her husband and any other food type when the husband is angry, he would not eat the food. She equally revealed that when a woman keeps preparing the food that her husband dislikes, she is like opening her matrimonial door for her husband to go out for the "other women" who are anxiously waiting for such golden opportunities. When these 'women' (free or unmarried women or whatever name you prefer) get hold of a food wandering man or husband, they would just prepare his favourite dish (*mbeng nkù*) and you can imagine the rest of the story.

3.4.2. Relationship between food production and food consumption

This part of the work focuses on the use and consumption of some particular food types with no alternatives or substitutes during their socio-cultural manifestations and it is this practice that determines the types of food crops they produce just like this remark by (Requier-Desjardins 2008: 20) that:

> A man's culture determines his behaviour even what he produces and consumes. In this approach, there is a return to the cultural instead of the natural permitting human societies to better integrate their ecosystems.

The food types used and consumed during socio-cultural manifestations include fufu corn (*mbeng gombi*), fufu made out of guinea corn '*mbeng nzang'* and pounded cocoyam (*taro), mbeng nkù* accompanied by palm wine as the official drink together with kola nuts. Socio-cultural manifestations or rituals in which these food stuffs are used and consumed massively include; cleansing of grains, seeds and seedlings at the beginning of the farming season especially with the coming of the first rains, feast of the first fruits, *beungsə gombi, beungsə mbeng*, during traditional weddings, when celebrating the birth of twins and new born as a whole, during the cleansing of couples in case of infidelity *lām chim, lām fouré*, during the enthronement of the; *Foin* (the King), senior *Njis, Njis* (*Ta* in Yamba) (all the nobles in general) and any other title holder including the celebration of triumphant dances or catch of wild animals, during funerals and death celebrations, when receiving elites, visitors, strangers, friends and relatives and finally nowadays it has been included in political rallies.

Food production, transformation, preparation and consumption is highly determined by the various cultures so much such that people will first of all produce what they themselves can consume before producing what they will sell to purchase what they cannot produce. It is only when it comes to cash crops such as coffee and cocoa that people will produce for sales only because they engaged in the production of such crops to boost their economies.

3.4.3. Beliefs, rituals and practices surrounding food

The Yamba people believe that their foods (*mbeng nkù* and fufu corn), have power (both physical and spiritual) and that they can connect with their ancestors through these foods. In Cameroon, some cultures prohibit women and girls from consuming some delicacies like the heart/liver of some animals, gizzard of fowls. In such communities, some parts of the animal such as gizzard of a fowl are consumed by men while women and girl children are prohibited from consumption (Nkengla Asi *et al.* 2018). There are so many beliefs, rituals and practices surrounding food in the Yamba community from the beginning of the farming season right up to the harvesting season. Below are some of such beliefs, rituals and practices.

At the beginning of every farming season especially with the coming of the first rains, the Yamba

farmers are prohibited from planting anything until this ritual is performed. A special day (country Sunday) is chosen as the day for the purification of the planting materials (Gelam 2000). On the eve of this day, the 'town crier' goes round the village to remind the people about the purification exercise. This usually takes place at the Fon's Palace hence an official ceremony with the nobles and members of the royal family in attendance. The Yamba people believe that the natural environment is a living entity of itself and so possesses eyes with which it sees the goodness and wickedness of man, it has ears with which it hears all the good and bad sounds human beings make, it has a nose/nostrils with which it gets the scents of pleasant and unpleasant things (foods) and has a body that feels when touched (the sense of touch). With this in mind, it is believed that before anything has to be done on the natural environment, the ancestors must be consulted first for guidance and protection. It is equally believed that the ancestors are found everywhere in the natural, social, cultural and psychological (mental) environment, hence one might in one way or the other, harm them in one's daily activities, discussions and practices.

During the preparation for the new farming season, rites are performed here and there with the *chàm* secret society; which is believed, has the powers to go to an unknown world and bring abundant or excess food. In the course of their mission they kill any witch or wizard that tries to interrupt them. During this period this *chàm* secret society is fed with a special meal *mbeng nkù* and *ngi* that is pounded cocoyam and *egusi*. This food is prepared in a special way with neither salt nor oil. In reaction to the rites that are performed before and during the farming season (CICIBA 1989: 32-33), argued that:

> We note also the diverse rites which are accomplished on the occasion of the various agricultural farming seasons, during labour and harvest. These songs and rites constitute cultural values and concepts in regards to the soil which is not supposed to be considered as an inanimate entity but a living entity with which dialogue has to be established, it has to be handled like the nourishing mother and its rhythm of life has to be respected for the fear of provoking calamities, droughts, erosions and many others.

3.4.4. During weddings (Traditional, Council and Church)

One of the ceremonies during which lots of *taro* and fufu (all transformed products of Roots and Tubers) corn are consumed is wedding; be it traditional, council or church wedding. Church wedding here includes all the denominational or religious weddings. Prior to an arrangement for a wedding to take place, both parents of the groom and the bride must have accepted that both of their children should live together as husband and wife, hence the wedding properly said, is a public or an open declaration, engagement or commitment which requires a lot of feasting and merry-making:

> On the wedding day (traditional wedding), the ceremony usually takes place at the

> residence of the bride's parents. As such, the parents of the groom upon coming, they are supposed to come along with jugs of wine (5 to 6 jugs, which is evaluated to be about 150 litters or more), cocks, kola nuts, money and at times a goat or goats depending on the history of the two families. The parents of the bride on their part are supposed to reserve food (fufu corn and *taro/mbeng nkù*) wine, kola nuts and at times groundnuts to host their special guests, their in-laws (Informant Nº 57, a male Notable, interviewed on the 10th December 2020 in Mbem).

It is believed that the way the parents of the bride receive the parents of the groom has a lot of influences in the lives of the couple (that is if the parents of the bride did not receive well the parents of the groom, the bride will have some though times in her marital home; but if her parents were generous to their special guests, the bride, in her marital or husband's home will be well humbled and respected).

4. Discussion and conclusion

4.1. Interaction between Development Programmes and indigenous cultures

For the past 3 or 4 decades, the fight against poverty, rural exodus (migrations in general), hunger and suffering, illiteracy, gender equality, crime, social control and many more have become the day-to-day policies and slogans of many development programmes in the developing countries and African governments put together. With these policies and slogans, many of the new programmes maybe, due to their previous failures somewhere now have resorted to the use of new slogans or appellations such as Community development programme (CDP), Framer Participatory Research (FPR), Grassroot Communities (GRC), Local Area Development Programme (LADP), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) among others. All these slogans and appellations are to attract the attentions of the rural "poor" farmers, the youths and women in particular but the big question remains, have they succeeded in attracting these people? In line with this thought, this is what (Lazarev and Arab 2002: 15), had to say:

> The context in which the policy of rural development is formulated has on one hand the fight against poverty and on another, development in general, in other to reduce migration (rural exodus) and diversify the new Urbanisation policy which is to create jobs, revenues and diversify the various economic activities. The fight against poverty has become a dominant policy in the last two decades. Priority has been given to human development, arguing that there is no possible development without the eradication of poverty. The projects usually situate their objectives on the target populations to be determined by the gravity of the poverty. After all these, an evaluation report of development programmes

> and projects for the past twenty years remain very preoccupying as the poverty is not reducing.

Four possible hypotheses are advanced to explain this, one being that the nature of contact between development projects and alien cultures is that of an over throw (that is new programmes are imposing what they want to the local cultures), the second being the lack of the appropriate means of transforming the necessary produce, thirdly the distribution facilities and lastly the available financial resources do not get to the right places or the right hands at the right time.

We have earlier said that the Yambas and African cultures in general have their daily routines, that is, each person (men, women, youths and children put together) have their daily programme of activities better known as the daily routines. The argument is that new programmes or projects come to disrupt or perturb the daily work routine of the local people. A man gets up in the morning, he knows that he has to go to his raffia bush between 6 : 00 AM to 9 : 00 AM and at 10 : 00 AM, he is working on the farm with the rest of his family members (his wife, children and whosoever). At 3: 00 PM, he is leaving the farm back to his raffia bush only to arrive his home or residence as from 6: 00 PM. While at home, there is some sort of division of labour between the children, some are fetching water, which their parents will bath with in the evening while the others are washing the plates and dishes. At about 7: 00 PM when their Mum is preparing the evening meal and discussing the work plan with their “Dad” for the following day, the children are studying or revising their notes. After having eaten the family meal at about 8: 30 PM, everybody goes to bed, having fully exploited their daily routine.

But with the coming of new projects, especially when it comes to working with a tractor or oxen (bulls), the daily routines will witness a lot of disruptions and perturbations, because the people shall be obliged to go to their farms very early and to come back as from midday. If you are working with a bull, at noon, the ox must be very tired and hungry and certainly needs to have some rest and well fed. With this farm work, which forms part of a leisure time is disrupted as the women retire home earlier than the normal routine and with this, they are forced to visit their friends, neighbours and relatives, giving way to gossiping and jealousy because at this time, they will hear, see, say and do what they were not entitled to, thereby bringing some disorder in their community.

The World Bank and fund donors in general (development programmes) are fond of dominating and imposing certain methods which they think will promote the growth of developmental projects vis-à-vis elevate rural poverty. As we can see with (Deler 1988: 185) in the following words:

> Most often fund donors occupy dominant places in the development projects just because of the money they inject in the projects. They also impose on the choice of methods to be applied in the realization of the project even on the experts and the target population.

New programmes integrate local population for pity sake else they come and say this is this and this is how you are going to use it. They do not consult the people to see if they are ready to use it. Take for example the tractor, if it breaks down, the people will not know how to repair it and will abandon it for their local materials. Even the cost of maintaining and managing a tractor is so costly so much such that even if new programmes provide a tractor free of charge to the rural farmers, they will not afford for the necessary maintenance and repairs. In the Yamba society, the acceptance in the use of either a tractor or an ox means impossibility because we have already said in chapter three that there exists the hanging down practice of farming tools from one generation to another. These local farming tools are simple and easy to fabricate and maintained by the indigenous populations; as compared to the imported farming materials. New projects disrupt or overthrow the social cohesion that exists between the local populations. For the Yamba people as (McC. Netting 1977: 73) puts it:

> Agriculture impinges directly on social organization, because people in groups do the farm work, share in the consumption of food, and have rights to the resources necessary for subsistence. In this society, the strength of the rural farmers is group work, where a number of people form a social group, either a women's group, men's group, a youth group or a mixture of all these people.

If they resort to the use of say ox farming or mechanized farming, this social cohesion or organization must break off, something which the people would not like to temper with.

4.2. Symbolic interpretation of food

Food to nutritionists symbolizes healing, medicine, good living or well-being, it equally symbolizes healing or medication to herbalists **(**Geertz 1973). Food (bread or biscuits) eaten or taken during communion (Lord's Supper) symbolizes the body of Christ to Christians. Christians eat food (bread) during communion or Lords' supper as a symbol of Christ body, commitment, engagement and remembrance of Jesus Christ in accordance with the holy scriptures of the Holy Bible where it is written; while they were together, Christ took bread, broke it and said; this is my body eat it in remembrance of me. Wine (top grenadine) to Christians symbolizes the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross of Calvary for the purification of Christians or in fulfilment of the scriptures where Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying "drink it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" in an interview with a male Rev. Pastor in Rom on the 26th October 2020):

> Food (fufu corn and *mbeng nkù*) to the Yamba people symbolizes a harmonious, peaceful and cordial, political, economic, social, psychological, mental and cultural relationship between the people (both the living and the dead) and even God. Most third age Yamba people do not eat all their food or empty their dishes, they usually leave a small quantity of the food (fufu corn and *mbeng nkù*) in the dish arguing that it is food for *Nwie* (God). Even if that small quantity is thrown away the following day or eaten by dogs, it is believed that *Nwie* (God) has already eaten his own share. Note should be taken here that despite the advent of technological development and the influence of other food types from neighbouring tribes likewise modernization, the symbolic importance of food and the rituals performed have not changed. The people have succeeded because they do not use alternative foods in their rituals even though they do eat imported food.

Indeed, although being a tuber producing community, the Yamba of North-West Cameroon, as we have highlighted, have a strong preference for flour and products derived from corn. Which makes this cereal a supplementary commodity in this community, a highly valued staple food, what De Garine (1979: 79) calls ‘a cultural super-food’. For the Yamba, in fact, the availability of this commodity ensures stability in the culturally shared diet of the populations while the opposite situation is perceived as a crisis, a sign of scarcity. On this subject, authors such as Pagezy (1996) points out that a seasonal scarcity of the most valued super food, such as meat in the forest or fish on the coast, induces a feeling of hunger for the populations of each of these respective companies. Our stay in the field allowed us to make the same observation in terms of food preferences as well as their rate of consumption by the informants. Indeed, in light of the various testimonies received from informants, not eating fufu corn and pounded cocoyam (*mbeng nkù*) at least twice a week is interpreted in this community as a sign of famine within the family or community. Thus, the advent of cultivation techniques and practices which aim to improve the production of the favorite food of local populations is likely to benefit from the consent of the farmers registered in the project to satisfy the essential food needs of members of the community. The resistance observed relative to the introduction of large-scale projects on the mass production of cassava thus arises from the inadequacy between the types of foodstuffs carried by the said project and the local food aspirations of the populations. We are not facing an insurmountable barrier, everything depends on the context and the economic, nutritional and cultural scope of the innovations offered to beneficiaries. To this end, it has for example been shown that membership in a peasant association positively influenced the adoption of new agricultural technologies in Congo, because they usually share and discuss the advantages of using innovative techniques (Mwangi and Kariuki 2015, Mushagalusa Balasha and Nkulu Mwine Fyama 2020). Also, the level of formal education

of adopters was mentioned as a significant determinant among farmers in the Mouchou loop in Burbinia Faso (Barry *et al*. 2023).

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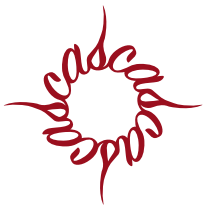

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