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RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

Research paper No. 14:

Decoupling of Child Labour Policy and Implementation in the Ugandan Agricultural Sector: Causes, Drivers, and Effects

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Executive Summary

This study attempts to identify the causes, drivers, and effects of the decoupling of policy and implementation, particularly in the context of child labour in the agricultural sector in Uganda. While Uganda has adopted policies in line with international standards concerning child labour, instances of child labour continue to occur in the agricultural sector, hence why this nation's and industry were selected for the study.

Child labour has been proven to be detrimental to children's development and growth and as such, the proper implementation of policies pertaining to this matter gain critical importance to the nation's development and fight against poverty. Furthermore, the path forward towards bridging the extant decoupling between policy and implementation are considered and outlined.

The results presented are based on a three-week qualitative study of various stakeholders across the agricultural sector and suggest that this decoupling is a result of a series of social, economic, and cultural factors. These factors not only create this gap, but serve to perpetuate and exacerbate them due to their convergence on individuals within the agricultural sector. Long-term effects of decoupling have also been identified as creating a perpetual cycle of lack of education and reliance on child labour.

This research allows for gaining more profound insights into the factors that contribute towards decoupling in order for scholars and practitioners alike to be able to prepare for and address these issues while operating in the context of the Ugandan agricultural sector. The results are comprised of a series of concepts and themes which outline why decoupling occurs, what drives it, and its effects on Ugandan society as a whole.

KEYWORDS: Decoupling, Agricultural Sector, Child Labour, Stakeholders, Poverty, Uganda

Introduction

“Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation, but the only riches she can call her own.” - Samuel Johnson, 1765

Throughout the world's history, agriculture has played a crucial part in humanity's development. Today, agriculture is a primary source of employment and income for many around the globe, accounting for 4.6% of the global GDP in 2016 (World Bank, 2016a). Global estimates of the number of individuals involved with agricultural work have determined that 26% of the global workforce is in some way employed in agricultural activities (ILO, 2010). This number can be seen to grow in low-income and developing countries, wherein the majority of economically active adults are engaged in agricultural work (FAO, 2004). While many nations globally rely on agricultural activities to provide sustenance and resources, not many do so as Uganda does.

Within Uganda, agriculture is a significant component of daily life and accounts for a substantial percentage of the country's employment and output. Studies have shown that approximately 80% of Ugandan households live in rural areas, where most of them depend on agricultural activities as their primary source of economic benefit (Gollin & Rogerson, 2010). A 2016 report by the World Bank determined that approximately 25.8% of Uganda's GDP in 2016 was comprised of economic activity along the agricultural value chain (World Bank, 2017). Due to Uganda's unique geographic location and the country's lack of access to any seas or oceans, the nation produces almost all of its food domestically, accounting for the bulk of agricultural activities within their borders, while a small amount of it goes towards export crops (Gollin & Rogerson, 2010).

The major crops that are grown in Uganda consist of sweet potatoes, matoke (cooking banana), beans, cassava, coffee, groundnuts,

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maize, millet, sorghum, and sesame. It is important to note that agricultural activities within Uganda are broken down into two categories: subsistence and commercial. Estimates show that within the large percentage of the Ugandan population which live in rural areas, most families make a living out of subsistence agriculture (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2007). While subsistence agriculture is the primary mode of agriculture occurring in Uganda, there is also a small yet pronounced commercial agricultural sector within the country as well. The commercial agriculture in Uganda can be seen as divided between animal agriculture and crop agriculture, producing goods for domestic consumption as well as for exports. While the major crops for domestic consumption were previously noted, coffee, tea, sugar, and cotton account for the major export crops in Uganda (FAOSTAT, 2009). Considering the prevalence of agricultural activities among Ugandans, it's important to note that sometimes duties around the homestead and farms fall onto the population's most vulnerable demographic: children.

Across the globe, there are different definitions of what constitutes as work and what is an acceptable activity to ask a child to participate in. In many high-income nations, the term "Child Labour" often conjures graphic images of children being abused and mistreated as employees in hazardous conditions. However, studies show that most working children are at home, supplementing their families' efforts by assisting with domestic work or contributing to the family business (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). In order to be able to analyze this phenomenon, it's important to hold a clear definition of child labour and what exactly it entails. For the purpose of this study, we will utilize the International Labour Organization's definition of child labour: "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development" (ILO, 2018). Examples of such activities have been known to be mentally, physically, socially or morally

dangerous and harmful to children; interfere with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school or obliging them to leave school prematurely, or in some cases requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO, 2018).

The ILO also goes one step further by identifying certain forms of child labour as being innately harmful and hazardous to a child's development, outlined in Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182 as "slavery, debt bondage, prostitution, pornography, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, use of children in drug trafficking and other illicit activities, and all other work likely to be harmful or hazardous to the health, safety or morals of girls and boys under 18 years of age" (ILO, 2010). The ILO estimates that there are currently as many as 246 million children between 5-17 years actively engaged in labour globally at the moment, of which 179 million are engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Of these economically active children, approximately 48 million are in Sub-Saharan African nations such as Uganda, where 41% of the continent's children are at work, primarily in the agricultural sector (ILO, 2010).

Over the last few decades, international policymakers have strived to outline and identify the threats and dangers that children might face during the process of employment and have implemented multiple policies in order to protect children around the world. Most notable are the Conventions passed by the International Labor Office pertaining to the minimum age to work and the worst forms of child labour (Bureau of International Labor Affairs). Other statutes include the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, which include provisions pertaining to discrimination against children based on their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, language, property, or disability (OHCHR, 1989). Another convention which is relevant, specifically to the worst kinds of child labour, is the Palermo Protocol of Trafficking in Persons, which

focuses specifically on the prevention, suppression, and punishment of those involved in the trafficking of women and children (OHCHR, 2000).

While the Ugandan government is party to international agreements on the prohibition of child labour and has integrated this principle into its national policies, studies by the Bureau of International Labor Affairs indicate that as many as 30% of children in Uganda are somehow employed, largely in the agricultural sector (BILA, 2016). This phenomenon, wherein policies exist but are not implemented on the ground is known as decoupling, as initially put forth by Meyer & Rowan (1977), and later expanded upon by Bromley & Powell (2010). Although these scholars analyzed decoupling in multiple contexts, most of their efforts were focused on organizational structures resembling that of firms and business organizations; this study aims to contribute to their perspective by considering the national implementation of policies.

The goal of this study is to identify and analyze this decoupling which exists between the policies and implementation of said policies as they pertain to child labour activities in the Ugandan agribusiness value chain based on extant theories on this phenomenon. While the Ugandan government conforms to international standards of child labour on paper, there are numerous known instances of this phenomenon taking place within the country currently, indicating the occurrence of decoupling in some form. This research aims to identify the causes, drivers, and effects of child labour along the agribusiness value chain in an effort to define this phenomenon according to established theoretical frameworks... As such, the research question is: *What are the causes, drivers, and effects of the decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour in Uganda?*

This question is addressed through a comprehensive study which takes into account multiple points of view through relevant themes

and research conducted into this matter, followed by analysis of data collected on the ground in Uganda. Various themes and concepts pertinent to this matter are considered and discussed, ultimately leading to the theoretical and practical contributions of the research.

Literature Review

Child Labour in Uganda

As aforementioned, a large percentage of the world's working children are employed in developing nations, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Ugandan government considers any person under the age of 18 as a child and conforms to international laws protecting these individuals from harmful or hazardous work. However, the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development states that many children aged 10-14 are currently employed, while one in five of them has had no formal education. These children engage in work on plantations, crop farms, unskilled manual labour, and domestic duties (Mywage, 2018).

The root cause of child labour globally has been attributed to the existence of poverty within a population, "which forces the parents to employ their children" in order to meet daily needs (Naeem et al., 2011). Considering the definite existence of poverty in Uganda (19.7% in 2013), the fact that child labour occurs within the nation's largely agricultural economy is to be expected (World Bank, 2016b).

Children in Uganda are employed in the following sectors: Agriculture, Industry, Services, and the Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labour. Within the agricultural sector, children are utilized in the cultivation and harvest of crops, acting as human scarecrows, herding cattle, fishing, and charcoal production (BILA, 2016).

Children who are employed face multiple threats as a result of their economic activity,

including damage to their education as well as hazards on the job. Contributing as a member of the workforce can interfere with a child’s development particularly as it pertains to their ability to gain an education. Studies have shown that educational attainment is a known determinant to a child’s survival and health, and children who work are often faced with decisions prioritizing their education over their work responsibilities (Rogerro et al., 2007). Another concern with child labour is its effect on a nation’s human capital as a result of children missing school; child labourers generally tend to grow up to be low-wage earning adults, resulting in the necessity for their children to work in order to supplement the family’s income, which causes poverty and child labour to be handed down to the next generation (Rogerro et al., 2007).

Child Labour Policies and Regulation in Uganda

Considering the importance and attention given to the regulation and elimination of child labour around the globe, it’s worth noting that the Ugandan government has taken steps in order to meet international standards for labour practices and the development of its children. In addition to the laws pertaining to child labour and the governing bodies overseeing them, the Ugandan government has also established national policies geared at addressing specific issues pertaining to the mistreatment and abuse of children, including but not limited to child labour.

Currently, policies such as the **National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour**, which aims to reduce the worst forms of child labour in Uganda by 2017 and was developed in collaboration with the ILO, are used as guidelines for local organs of government within the country. Other notable policies include programs to protect children from dangerous conditions such as human trafficking (**National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking**), as well as policies which aim to tackle child labour from a

developmental point of view, such as the **National Social Protection Policy (NSPP)** and the **National Strategy for Girls’ Education in Uganda (NSGEU)**. The NSPP aims to reduce child labour by decreasing poverty/ socioeconomic inequalities in Ugandan society by targeting vulnerable demographics, such as child labourers. The NSGEU focuses specifically on increasing girls’ education as an ends and considers child labour as a key barrier to achieving their mission (BILA, 2016).

Ugandan law has been ratified to meet international standards for child labour regulation in most of the relevant categories, save a few. The involvement of children in hazardous work, forced labour, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities is monitored and regulated through multiple sections of the Uganda Employment Act (e.g. Regulation 5,6,8), the Children Act, as well as the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act. While many of these provisions are in line with international standards, some fall short; the minimum age for work in Uganda is identified as 16 by an amendment to Section 7 of the Children Act, which is still two years younger than the ILO’s minimum age of 18 (BILA, 2016).

When considering policies and their implementation in terms of child labour and children’s access to education, the governing bodies within the Ugandan government include the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD), the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions in the Ministry of Justice. Each branch of government oversees specific aspects of this situation, which are identified in the table below.

Organization	Role
MGLSD	Labour law enforcement throughout the country. The MGLSD’s Child Labour Unit acts as a regulatory arm and provides

	awareness and resources towards the elimination of child labour.
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Enforcement of criminal laws pertaining to the worst forms of child labour. The ministry's Child and Family Protection Unit (CPFU) investigates forced labour- Human trafficking is overseen by the Special Investigations Division and the Anti-Human Trafficking Desk- Commercial sexual exploitation of individuals is overseen by the Sexual Offenses Desk.
Ministry of Local Government	This ministry supervises Labour Officers in District Offices in order to refer cases of violations to the Industrial Court and deploys Community Development Officers in the absence of a District Labour Officer.
Ministry of Justice	This organ prosecutes criminal cases turned over by the Uganda Police pertaining to the worst forms of child labour.

Figure 1: Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2016)

Relevant Theories

When considering the decoupling between policies and implementation, it's important to note the trend over the last few decades towards accountability and transparency in organizational and managerial sciences. Scholars have posited that when considering the effectiveness of an organization towards its external environment and subjects, external influences(e.g. international standards, national legislation, standardization, public opinion) play a considerable role in shaping organizational policies. This school of thought explains how organizations are pressured into attempting to align their policies and practices in order to conform to expectations from a diverse array of domains, including but not limited to human rights and environmental concerns. An example of this can be seen in Uganda's adoption of international child labour standards in order to comply with the ILO and not be subject to sanctions or penalties as a result of not adhering to these standards.

As organizations adopt policies in order to maintain relevance and remain up to date with these external influences, their actions and

operations must in turn be modified to match and accord with said policies. However, over the last few decades, studies have shown that in situations wherein organizations adopted policies in order to conform to external expectations regarding formally stated goals, their behaviour was not markedly changed in practice (Scott, 2008). This condition, wherein an organization's official policies are not directly translated into their actions and operations, is formally known as **decoupling**. This concept was originally developed by Meyer & Rowan in 1977, but since then there have been multiple contributions made towards a deeper understanding of this occurrence. One such contribution was the development of a typology of decoupling by Bromley & Powell (2010), which differentiates between the various forms of decoupling and describes the conditions for each. Further studies on the matter suggest that in some cases organizations might not implement their policies properly or "act irresponsibly, not out of malice or ill will, but because they have to stretch their resources and capabilities in order to coordinate and monitor subsidiaries" (Strike et al., 2006).

As previously noted, the first and foremost theory of the phenomenon of decoupling and how it occurs was posited by Meyer and Rowan(1977). Meyer and Rowan categorized wilful decoupling by organizations into six distinct types, each of which motivated and influenced by different factors. These categorizations are further built upon by Whiteman et al. in their study "Decoupling Rape" and include decoupling by *neglecting program implementation, actively encouraging professionalization and delegating to professionals, avoiding integration, ceremonializing inspection and evaluation, as well as leaving individuals to informally work out technical interdependencies and making goals ambiguous or vacuous and substituting categorical ends for technical ends* (Whiteman & Cooper, 2016).

According to Bromley & Powell (2010), decoupling in contemporary organizations occurs in two forms: **policy-practice** and **means-ends** decoupling. The distinction between the two forms has been noted to be of importance due to the variation in the consequences they hold for organizations. While most previous research into decoupling had been primarily focused on policy-practice decoupling, some scholars argue that considering the increased focus and emphasis on methods of evaluation, standardization, and benchmarking of performance in organizations, means-ends decoupling is like to be increasing (Bromley & Powell, 2010).

Throughout the history of studying organizations and their functions, there has been an evolving view of the relationship between policies and their implementation. Early scholars such as Weber (1930) found that “formal organizational elements (e.g. policies) were expected to be tightly integrated with actual work activities and to play a direct role in controlling and directing day to day practices (Bromley & Powell, 2010). As research on this topic mounted throughout the decades, some scholars expressed views that defied this traditional outlook, suggesting that there are many instances wherein the relations among formal structures were loosely coupled. (Weick, 1976).

One of these scholars, Karl Weick, suggested that the reason for this decoupling was the fact that “formal policies were an ideal theory of organizational action, whereas concrete decisions and actions depend on specific contexts and resources” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This is to say that while policies are written and defined in order to reach the organization’s goals and fulfill its mission, the implementation of these policies can be rather far removed from idealism and might be subject to a number of influencing factors, such as capability, resources, and external factors.

Expanding further on this topic, Weick argues that “intentions are a poor guide for action, intentions often follow rather than preceded action, and that intentions and actions are loosely coupled” (Weick, 1976). Essentially, Weick’s view is that despite the intentions behind policies set forth by the management of any organization, the organizational consequences of enacted policies are commonly unpredictable and unforeseeable by organizations. Throughout the years, the environment in which organizations have been operating has shifted and changed considerably as a result of an increased interest globally in issues such as safety, transparency, accountability, the environment, etc... As a result of the increased attention to such factors, organizations are forced to fulfill multiple demands and institutional pressures, some of which might be seen as competing and contradictory to one another or the organization’s primary objective (e.g. generating profit). This phenomenon results in the decoupling of departments within the organizations, in order for each unit to be able to achieve their given task or objective. As aforementioned, existing literature regarding decoupling classifies two primary forms of it occurring in modern organizations: Policy-practice and means-ends decoupling.

According to Bromley & Powell’s description of this phenomenon, **Policy-practice** decoupling is the most commonly known form of decoupling, wherein “policies are adopted purely as a ceremonial window dressing or implemented, evaluated, and monitored so weakly that they do little to alter daily work routines” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). Studies on this topic have put forth that in many cases policies are not an effective predictor of daily activities in organizational research. Policy-practice decoupling often occurs in the face of increased institutional pressures on an organization, where it allows the “organization to adopt multiple, even conflicting, policies in response to external pressures, without unduly disrupting the daily operations by trying to implement inconsistent strategies” (Bromley &

Powell, 2010). This is to say that in cases where organizations are pressured to comply with new regulations or conform to international standards, policy-practice decoupling is likely to occur in order. A 2009 study of national stock exchanges found that the ceremonial adoption of policies is closely associated with international coercion and pressures to comply with global standards (Weber et al., 2009).

Further research has posited that policy-practice decoupling might occur in cases where certain policies are directly opposed by the interests of the organizational leaders and management (Bromley & Powell, 2010). In many cases decoupling is seen to have negative outcomes, particularly when it is in response to environmental pressures on the organization, such as the international pressure for Uganda to comply with labour standards. Scholars argue that decoupling can also lead to fraudulent activities within an organization as a result of an increased buffer between top management and subunits (Vaughan, 1982). Another negative outlook towards decoupling is put forth from Lyon and Maxwell who outline cases in which organizations adopt policies towards environmental protection and philanthropy while their core operations are environmentally harmful. In this case, the organization is diverting attention away from their harmful operations by drawing interest towards policies adopted in order to invest in renewable energy and so on (Lyon & Maxwell, 2010). While considering the drivers that result in this form of decoupling, studies have shown that policy-practice decoupling is more common when it serves the interests of powerful leaders (such as governments), and over time results in a circuit which produces leaders that are skilled at symbolic manipulation (Bromley & Powell, 2010).

While considering decoupling in the context of nations and states, researchers argue that even when policies are adopted symbolically and primarily as window dressing, the

conditions on the ground eventually are affected. Hafner-Burton and Trutsui posit that if a nation-state submits to international commitments, specifically in the field of human rights, even if they are in violation of the agreement the “process of empty institutional commitment to a weak regime paradoxically empowers non-state advocated with the tools to pressure governments towards compliance” (Hafner-Burton et al., 2005). Another point to keep in mind during analysis of decoupling in recent times is that as reporting and monitoring of activities of organizations increases, it might seem that instances of decoupling are on the rise, whereas as Cole (2005) suggests, this gap usually subsides over time. Focusing particularly at developing countries, Drori et al. found that the implementation of national science policies are less likely to be followed through, leading to a higher rate of decoupling in these nations (Drori et al., 2003). The primary drivers of policy-practice decoupling can be the early adoption of a policy, adoption as a means to gain legitimacy, and utilization of a weak capacity to implement said policies (Bromley & Powell, 2010).

Another known instance of decoupling has been identified as **Means-Ends Decoupling**. This type of decoupling has been described as situations where “formal structures have real organizational consequences, work activities are altered, and policies are implemented and evaluated, but where scant evidence exists to show that these activities are linked to organizational effectiveness or outcomes” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This is to say that organizational participants recognize the fact that their contributions towards a policy’s implementation might be of limited utility yet they continue to commit to these practices in order to satiate overarching organizational and institutional pressures.

In relation to the previously discussed form of policy-practice decoupling, Bromley & Powell state: “Whereas policy-practice decoupling can be thought of as symbolic adoption, means-ends decoupling is better characterized as

symbolic implementation” (Bromley & Powell, 2010). This can be attributed to the fact that considering the increased level of global connectivity and progress towards international standards for policies and practices, “many organizational activities reflect larger social and cultural meta-narratives rather than technical requirements”. (Dobbin, 1994). Therefore in this type of decoupling, the common thread is the fact that the relationship between the implementation of policies and the core goal of the organization is obscured and unclear. This type of decoupling has been known to occur in instances when agents of an organization are tackling an issue based on policy while knowing that their efforts won't render significant change on the subject due to overarching issues such as the organization' or the problem's scale or capacity.

While study of decoupling has been widespread and extensive, these studies tend to be specific to their respective domains and cannot be considered universal in their application. An additional gap when considering the extant literature on decoupling is that the majority of studies geared towards the analysis of this phenomenon are focused around firms and commercial institutions and not on the scale of national policy and implementation. Through an in-depth study and analysis of the decoupling within the context of the Ugandan agricultural sector, this study will prove to be a valuable source of information for practitioners and scholars alike.

Methods

In this segment, the research context, research design, data collection, and data analysis methods are outlined. The research question will be answered via a qualitative research method and analysis of data gathered across the Uganda agribusiness value chain.

Research Context

The research for this report was conducted in Uganda in collaboration with Agri-quest

Uganda during March-April 2018. Uganda was determined to be a viable subject country to consider agricultural policies due to its population's heavy involvement within this sector. As aforementioned, as many as 80% of Uganda's population rely on agriculture as their primary source of economic income and the industry plays a significant role in the country's social and economic policies. Considering the enactment of multiple policies which pertain to the use of child labour on farms and during the cultivation process of agricultural products over the past few decades and the known instances of these policies failing to be implemented, Uganda was deemed as a suitable focus for this research.

Agri-quest Uganda is a project focused on Strengthening Agribusiness Ethics, Quality Standards and Information and Communication Technologies usage in Uganda's value chains. Agri-quest strives to fulfill their mission via sensitization and monitoring of farmers' activities with regards to ethical standards and Codes of Conduct. Their activities include the training of value chain actors in local and international agricultural policies and standards and enable them to see how these apply and empower them to thrive in agriculture (Agriquest, 2016). Therefore, collaboration with this organization was seen as a valuable tool in order to gain access to key actors on the field in order to gain insightful data through primary data collection. In addition, the applied nature of Agri-quest's activities provides a suitable environment for gathering information in order to bridge the existing decoupling between policies and implementation by engaging with individuals on the field along the agricultural value chain.

While there have been studies into the working conditions on the ground in Uganda as they pertain to child labour, there have been no specific research studies devoted to identifying the causes, drivers, and effects of the decoupling between policy and implementation in order to identify how to bridge the existing

gap. As such, the Ugandan agricultural sector was seen as a qualified research context.

Research Design

The data for this research was collected via qualitative research methods that was comprised of semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field visits, as well as photographs and observational notes taken throughout the research process. The reason qualitative research was chosen was due to the “how” aspect of the research question and this method’s benefit in order to gain a full understanding of the context of the research phenomenon. As Myers describes, the use of qualitative research is conducive to “see and understand the context within which decisions and action take place” (Myers, 2013).

In order to be able to fully grasp the complexities of the dynamic environment which exists between various stakeholders in the agricultural sector, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection. Studies have shown that while conducting qualitative research the use of interviews allows researchers to gain insights into attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours, or predictions (Rowley, 2012). Particularly when considering the overarching subject of child labour and the diverse range of issues that it is intertwined with, gathering in-depth and contextual data is essential to achieving an understanding of the circumstances and outcomes. Limitations such as accessibility also played a role in the choice of interviews, due to the fact that coordination of meetings with multiple stakeholders proved to be rather difficult prior to arrival to Uganda.

The use of semi-structured interviews was meant to allow the research to maintain a level of adaptability in order to deal with variables on the field. A set of approximately ten questions was used as a central base for most interviews, with certain points being stressed upon in order to probe significant responses and often questions being skipped due to their

lack of relevance. The use of semi-structured interviews was also meant to allow for improvisation in cases where new information was uncovered in the duration of the interview and allowed for better accommodation of the interviewee (Rowley, 2012). In order to make the most out of the time with the interviewees, particular focus was given to identifying the causes, drivers, and effects of the decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour, rather than focusing on instances of it happening.

As a means of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the situation on the ground, field observations were also made throughout the research expedition in Uganda. While interviews can sometimes be subjective to their subjects and the questions posed, field notes on observations allow for first-hand witnessing of events as they occur. The observational notes in this research were used as additional data to bolster the data gathered via interviews.

Data Collection

The data collected as part of this research was collected on the field in various locations in Uganda. The research was conducted as part of a five-member team from the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, during March and April of 2018. The data was collected in collaboration with researchers from Agriquest Uganda. The decision to collect data on the field was made based on the aspiration to gain in-depth information from key stakeholders without the barriers that arise from digital communication in order to be able to fully realize the causes, drivers, and effects of the decoupling between policies and implementation. Interviews were recorded for audio, and additional notes were taken as well. In order to satisfy this research goal, various stakeholders from across the value chain were interviewed. The individuals were comprised of small to medium-sized farmers, farmers’ rights collectives, vendors of agricultural products, regulatory officials tasked with the

implementation of policies related to child labour, as well as employees of non-governmental organizations which oversee the use of child labour and the effectiveness of policies. The interviewed farmers and actors involved in the production of agricultural products were largely engaged in subsistence farming, with a small minority of them active in the commercial distribution of their goods.

The research team was based primarily in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The data was collected in various regions of Uganda, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how agricultural activities take place across multiple value chains, including rice, cassava, maize, and matoke (a type of banana). Access to these stakeholders was coordinated through the Agri-quest Uganda team, who have built ties with farmers in various locations across the country. Agri-quest's network expands from the Eastern region of Bugiri, northwards to Oyam, and ultimately to Kisoro and Mbarara in the western parts of Uganda. Agri-quest allies in each district were designated as guides who served to connect the research team to local stakeholders and in some cases translated interactions with farmers who only spoke in their local dialect.

Data was collected via visits to farms and processing plants to speak with farmworkers and owners in order to understand their views on the utilization of child labour within their operations. Regulatory information was obtained by visits to the local district office headquarters, where agents of the government are tasked with the implementation and enforcement of policies and regulation in tandem with the police, who were also included in the data collection. Information on the decoupling of policies and practices was gathered primarily



Figures 2 and 2.1: Youth group interview in Oyam District
Figure 2.1 : Interview with rice millers in Bugiri District

by interviews with NGO representatives in the capital city of Kampala. The NGO interviews were coordinated via individual efforts by the researcher and were supported by members of the Agri-quest team when possible. Additional observations and field notes were taken throughout the research trip wherever events of note occurred, such as relevant observations made on the streets and markets of Kampala.

Data Analysis

The data collected during this research project was coded and analyzed using the Gioia methodology after being transcribed in collaboration with other members of the research team. Transcriptions were compiled through the use of audio recordings of the interviews in addition to notes taken while they occurred.

Coding Interviews

The interviews conducted throughout the research project were analyzed and coded based on the inductive coding method put forth by Gioia et al., as it has the potential to generate rich theoretical insights (Gioia et al. 2013). The interviews were initially transcribed, then reviewed for relevance to the topic as well as patterns of repetition of certain terms, themes, or key elements. These first-order, informant-centric concepts were then analyzed with a higher level of theoretical abstraction in order to identify larger themes and overlaps, which resulted in the establishment of second-order themes. The more theoretic nature of these second-order themes renders them as more researcher-centric concepts, which can be used to explain the contributing factors to the aggregate dimensions of the research topic and question. The multi-tier process of collecting primary data and subsequently process the information from informant-centric to a more academic perspective allows us for a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Analysis of Field Observations

In addition to the interviews, the observational field notes made throughout the research were also used to increase the validity of the collected data. Analysis of the field notes was conducted upon completion of the interview coding in order to be able to relate the notes to the established themes and dimension. As a result of this additional measure, the interview findings were either bolstered with new support or revised in cases where disparities were spotted.

Findings

In the following section, the results of the analysis of the collected data are presented, categorized by the themes of what emerged throughout the research. The Gioia method has been used to identify first-order concepts. These are then built upon and shaped into

second-order themes, which fall under the overarching aggregate dimension: the decoupling of policy and implementation on child labour in the Ugandan Agricultural sector. In order to address the aggregate dimension of the decoupling between policy and implementation, the second-order themes of Cause, Drivers, and Effects emerged from the collected data. These concepts and themes are further described in the following segment.

Aggregate Dimension: Causes, Drivers, and Effects of the Decoupling Between Child Labour Policy and Implementation

Based on the coding method utilized, interviewees' responses were analyzed in order to identify the themes that contribute to the aggregate dimension of the factors affecting and being affected by the state of child labour policy implementation within the Uganda agricultural value chain. The identified themes are the **causes**, **drivers**, and **effects** of the decoupling between child labour policy and its implementation. These themes are further expanded upon in the following segment.

Theme 1 - Causes of Decoupling Between CL Policy and Implementation

While considering the causes of the decoupling between policy and implementation, it's important to consider the social, cultural, and economic settings of Uganda in order to fully comprehend the situation. This second-order theme of the causes of the decoupling between child labour policy and implementation is described by the first-order concepts it was derived from in the following segment.

A. Poverty

As aforementioned, the existence of poverty in a nation has been known to result in child labour and hinders effective implementation of policies pertaining to this phenomenon. The analysis indicates that poverty affects the

implementation of child labour policies on two levels, both from a **governmental** and an **individual** perspective. The findings illustrate that poverty on both levels results in a prioritization of personal gain and survival, diverting attention away from national policies such as those towards mandatory education and child labour, ultimately resulting in instances of decoupling.

On the governmental level, there are factors that exacerbate and enforce the decoupling of policies and their implementation. Uganda is currently on track to have the highest *population growth* globally (AllAfrica, 2006). As a local county's Community Development Officer Geoffrey Ogwel put it: "the population is growing, and the resources are not enough". This is to say that the resources allocated from the government are not keeping up with the rapid pace of population growth within Uganda, resulting in decoupling as a result of the government's inability to provide adequate resources to meet the growing demand.

Another issue of note was the deficiency in the allocation of resources to *education*. Educators and parents alike mentioned that despite the government's implementation of Universal Primary Education, the school facilities are often not operating fully and the amenities provided to the students are little to none. This can be seen as a major cause of decoupling since education is the government's primary deterrent to child labour. Kacia Kimbugwe, an educator at an international school in Kampala, believes that the lack of resources such as the ability to provide the children with lunch is one of many obstacles to school attendance: "The distance and the lack of amenities result in a reluctance to send the children to school". According to Ogwel, not attending school and gaining an education not only results in the involvement of children in labour activities, but also leads them to be adults who drink and gamble, discouraging the younger generations from studying as well. Children who stay out of school tend to spend more time being idle, which increases their vulnerability to being

recruited into work in multiple facets of the agriculture industry, including cultivation, transportation, and vending of agricultural products. This state of limbo which results from the low quality of education offered at public schools serves to exacerbate the decoupling between educational policies as a deterrent against child labour and their implementation.

A third concept which appeared considering the governmental poverty of Uganda and its relation to decoupling was the matter of *infrastructure*. Ugandan roads proved to be a major factor during the research and multiple interviewees noted the big role they play in the implementation of policies such as education initiatives. As Dennis Oeo, Senior Assistant Secretary of Loro County in Oyam District put it, within his district "bad roads or rain make children not to come to school". This issue seemed to be a pervasive cause of inefficiency and hindrance towards the achievement of goals set by the government. In this case, while the government policies dictate that children should go to school, the lack of implementation of infrastructural initiatives and road repairs results in this apparent decoupling.

Considering the effects of individual poverty on the apparent decoupling between policies and implementations, multiple concepts were identified through analysis. Peter Damzungu, Senior Agricultural Officer of the Bugiri District Headquarters, states that in cases of severe poverty and lack of financial resources, families sometimes turn to their children to work on the farm "in order to increase the yield of the harvest". While this practice can be harmful to the child's health or education, it is sometimes seen as a necessary deed. Such conditions among the rural population in Uganda led to a disregard for policies regarding child labour and education as a deterrent, resulting in widespread decoupling.



Figure 3: School-aged children vending fruits in Nakasero, Kampala.

deprived, it marshals all its energies in the service of satisfying these demands (Mazlow, 1991). Considering this principle allows us to better understand why working on the farm is seen as more beneficial than spending time and money on education. This shift in priorities can be identified as one of the catalysts for decoupling among the largely impoverished population of Ugandan farmers and agricultural workers.



Figure 4: Example of typical road conditions across rural Uganda.

Other factors of individual poverty can be seen to be indirectly interwoven with the government's operations as well. Due to low-quality roads sometimes hazardous road conditions, which were experienced by the research group as well, children who must travel long distances to schools must purchase shoes in order to make the journey. The analysis reflects that multiple educators and governmental officials stated that the "lack of shoes" was seen as a major hindrance to school attendance and ultimately a contributor to the decoupling between child labour policies and their implementation.

In order to better understand the role that poverty plays as the cause of decoupling, one can gain better insight by considering Mazlow's hierarchy of needs. Parents are reluctant to send their children to school for a better future through education because they're concerned for their immediate safety and physiological needs. As Mazlow puts it: "As long as the body feels substantially

B. Culture

As previously noted, a substantial portion of Uganda's population has been engaged in agricultural activities for generations. As such, there are deeply ingrained cultural traditions which guide and direct everyday life and sensemaking. While modernization and the adoption of policies by the government have been progressive in order to keep up with international standards, cultural tendencies often clash with the enactment of these policies and procedures. The analysis resulted in the identification of multiple concepts revolving around the topic of culture, which will be analyzed in the following segment of the study.

Due to the long history of farming in Uganda, farming practices and *traditions* have been handed down for centuries. These practices are generally taught to children as they grow up and help out around the homestead,

learning while they work. According to multiple field observations, women will opt to take their children with them on the field, rather than leave them unattended inside the houses or huts. This combination of tradition and safety concerns results in the children being primarily raised on the fields, engaging them in agricultural activities far before their ability to attend school. The importance given to agriculture serves as an exacerbating factor in preventing policies geared towards children's quality of life and education to be implemented.

Another important cultural concept that arose during the analysis was the key factor of *low family planning* in the use of children on the farms. As Dennis Oeo states: "poor family planning results in issues regarding space & education". Sometimes a family cannot afford to send all of their children to school". As the Uganda Bureau of Statistics reports, more than four out of every ten pregnancies in Uganda are unplanned (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2011). This can be seen as another hindrance to the implementation of policies meant to combat child labour, specifically within the agricultural sector of Uganda.

One way of understanding these emerged concepts is by considering them through the lens of a cultural framework, such as that of Geert Hofstede. A 2013 study into cultural values of Uganda based on Hofstede's framework conducted by Purdue University found that Uganda's time orientation is very *short-term oriented*. As such, they posited that: "The short term orientation would suggest that a focus on the present and more immediately realizable results would be considered more appropriate than organizational policies and procedures that emphasize the future and delayed gratification (Rarick et al. 2013). This allows us to understand why cultural values would make Ugandans more likely to undertake a venture with a quicker return, such as farming, as opposed to investing in a long term activity such as education. This indicates that the short-term view held by the rural

population of Uganda is one of the primary causes of decoupling as a result of not giving importance to education and the healthy development of their children.

C. Lack of Institutional Support

The third major concept that emerged with relation to the theme of the cause of decoupling as a result of the coding was that of the lack of institutional support from the government to actors on the ground. As put by the members of a youth group in Oyam who were committed to improving the lives of children in their district: "The government is unable to address the issues on the ground due to procedures and bureaucracy". Further examples of the lengthy bureaucratic procedures causing a decoupling between policies and their implementation were also provided by regulatory authorities, such as Geoffrey Ogwel, who claimed that when it comes to child labour cases, sometimes *:"[sometimes]policies cannot be properly enforced due to the bureaucracy process and how long the case takes to go through the court system."* The lengthy and often inefficient processes described by stakeholders on the ground can be categorized within Strike et al.'s findings that decoupling in large organizations often occurs "not out of malice or ill will, but because they have to stretch their resources and capabilities in order to coordinate and monitor subsidiaries" (Strike et al., 2006).

Theme 2- Drivers of Decoupling Between CL Policy and Implementation

The analysis the decoupling between child labour policy and implementation revealed a diverse collection of elements which come together in creating the conditions necessary for this decoupling to exist. The second-order theme is described through the first-order concepts which emerged from the data analysis in the following segment.

A. Lack of Governmental Resources

Through analysis of the data, one of the primary first-order concepts which emerged within the theme of drivers for the decoupling between policy and implementation in Ugandan child labour policy was that of the lack of governmental resources, specifically those which affect child labour. Stakeholders throughout the agricultural sector pined for more resources to be made available by the government in order to increase standards across the country. Peter Damzhungu, Senior Agricultural Officer of the Bugiri District Headquarters, states that he believes: “the Ugandan government is not allocating enough resources to specifically address this issue”. This is to say that the resources diverted towards the expansion of the universal education program and the enforcement of child labour laws could definitely benefit from having more resources allocated to their budgets.

a. Education

While universal primary and secondary schooling (UPE & USE) have been made mandatory in Uganda over the last decades, the *quality* of the universal education has been brought into question by educators and parents. Public schools, especially in rural area, “experience extremely high dropout rates”, according to Kacia Kimbugwe, an educator in a private institution in Kampala.

One issue that was brought up during multiple interviews was that of private versus publicly funded schools. While the UPE & USE programs guarantee the right to education for students, the quality of the education provided can vary greatly depending on the institution. According to Juliet Nambi, director of the Rehaboth Orphanage, this issue can further exacerbate the “significant discrepancy between individuals brought up with access to private educational institutions and those without”, leading to higher dropout rates from public schools in rural areas.

Another concept that was determined to be a driver towards the decoupling between Ugandan policies and their implementation was the incompatibility of these policies with the local lifestyle of individuals in the Ugandan agricultural sector. The curriculum set forth by some of the UPE schools has been the subject of some controversy among Ugandan farmers, according to Albino Ogwal, of the Department of Production and Marketing of Oyam County. Ogwal states that in certain cases “schools require children to be present early in the morning and late into the afternoon, which doesn’t allow them time to spend with their families”, and that considering the tight-knit nature of the Ugandan families, this leads to parents’ apprehension regarding their child’s school attendance.

The third and final driving concept regarding education’s role in the decoupling between child labour policy and implementation is the infrastructure of the education system in Uganda and its accessibility to the country’s rural population. Pastor Richard Kkulumba, Director of the Child Care Miracle Church, stated that: “the schools are there, but they are far and the roads are not easy to walk on. Many children can’t afford to buy shoes to wear and get left behind from their education”. These children, Kkulumba believes, are the most prone to falling prey to child labour activities and abuse.

b. Enforcement

In addition to the lack of government resources pertaining to education, an additional yet similar theme was identified in the enforcement of actual laws and regulations which oversee child labour within the agricultural sector. As Nicholas Burunde, Program Officer at the UNDP, states: “*at the moment, the government lacks the capacity to properly enforce all of the regulations adopted in the last two decades*”. Due to the massive size of the agricultural sector in Uganda, any organization tasked with regulating it should have the necessary resources at its disposal to do so, or else

decoupling is likely to occur. Currently, the onus falls on to the District Labour Officers in each local county government, such as Isiac Muwereza. With regards to the necessary resources to fulfill their mission, Isaac stated: “*currently our office does not have the necessary staff, budget, or other resources to be able to fully monitor and regulate the district for child labour violations*”.

B. Cultural Pushback

Another concept of note among the drivers is that of cultural pushback against the implementation of policies which might interfere with a population’s cultural or traditional practices. Cultural practices can be deeply ingrained and can sometimes supercede new laws and regulations. As aforementioned, culture can become an obstacle or hindrance to the implementation of policies and the shifting of values, especially when put into a rural versus modern context. One of the cultural issues that functions as a driver in maintaining the status quo in Uganda, is the prevalence of informal businesses, who operate independently and free of regulation. As Burunde of the UNDP explains: “most of the business in Uganda are informal. As a result, it is difficult to implement significant reform and regulations into their operations”.

Delving deeper into the cultural pushback towards the implementation of child labour policies, the contrast between rural and urban areas plays a major role. With over 80% of the population living in rural areas, it can sometimes be problematic to expect individuals to comply with rules being set by the central government in Kampala. During a field observation, Oche, a cassava farmer in the Oyam District stated: “The government in Kampala cannot decide what is best for us from their offices, they need to come here and see the conditions”. This indicates a growing need for policies to be set with the local populations in mind.

Another driving cultural force towards the existence of the decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour is the rejection of local populations of those within them who begin to have an understanding and appreciation of the regulation. Community activists, often individuals of strong will and moral backgrounds, often act as intermediaries between the government and local populations in order to sensitize them to policies and help underprivileged individuals, such as children. Agnes Nangobi, one such community activist, emphasized the importance of individuals such as herself and stated that community activists often face extremely tough conditions: “agents who strive to empower women and children and establish positive trainings are ostracized and receive negative attention from community members who believe in the old methods.”

Theme 3- Effects of Decoupling Between CL Policy and Implementation

The third and final theme identified within the decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour in Uganda was that of the effects of this decoupling on the individuals involved in these activities as well as their respective societies. In the following segment, this second-order theme is described through the first-order concepts that it is comprised of.

Cycle of Lack of Education

As aforementioned, the child labour in the Ugandan agricultural sector is the result of a series of convergent factors which come together in creating social, cultural, and economic pressures on children to work. The effects of these activities can be seen in various facets of Ugandan life. As scholars have noted, child labour causes a cycle of disadvantages for children and their future. Rogerro states that in many impoverished nations, “Child laborers grow up to be low-wage-earning adults; as a result, their offspring will also be compelled to work to supplement the family’s income. In this way, poverty and child labor is passed from

generation to generation” (Rogerro, 2007). This can be seen as an example where decoupling between educational policies and practices can result in further exacerbating the problem of lack of education, resulting in further decoupling down the road due to not valuing education.

This notion was further enforced as a result of the analysis of the collected data, as Oyam Community Development Officer Geoffrey Ogwel explains, this cycle can be detrimental to society as a whole. He explains how working as children “ leads them to be adults who drink and gamble, discouraging the younger generations from studying as well”. Another point to note is that a lack of educations generally results in a short-sighted outlook towards life and the future. Community activist and Rehoboth Orphanage Director states that “Uneducated individuals consider things on a short-term day to day business, making unwise decisions in their lives”, further cementing the notion that participation in child labour activities perpetuates a cycle of lack of education and further child labour, resulting in a cycle of decoupling.

Captain Sebuyongo, Commander of the Bugiri District Police department, is in charge of enforcement of regulations pertaining to child labour and he describes the cycle as being mainly stemmed from the lack of education. In his opinion “Young marriages and pregnancies between illiterate couples results in dysfunctional families with little ambition and desire for education”, which he believes results in more cases of child labour across his jurisdiction. The overall concept which was repeated by multiple stakeholders was that poverty leads the children to work, which disallows them to gain an education, which ultimately results in them having uneducated children, perpetuating the cycles of child labour and the decoupling between policy and implementation of government initiatives.

Another notable effect of the decoupling between policy and implementation in child labour is the cycle that is initiated through the economic benefit that might be gained by the children’s efforts. In some cases, parents begin to rely on the extra income and food that is generated by the use of their children as part of the agricultural activities. Community activist and farmer Agnes Nangobi stated that farming families consider their children “a valuable source of labour around the homestead...”, outlining their importance to the family’s activities.

Considering the considerable poverty of Uganda, particularly in the rural population, families rely on any income or food that can be generated by all of their members. Children as young as five years old are trained to help their mothers throughout cultivation of subsistence crops in order to maximise the harvest. As Geoffrey Ogwel described “Children who work often fail to see the benefit in education and prioritize work, as they feel fulfilled in contributing to the family’s activities.” This inclination from the children to contribute to the household’s work rather than focus on their education also perpetuates and exacerbates the use of child labour, as the children will grow into adults who see positive benefit from child labour.

While this cycle is firmly in place and many Ugandans in poverty believe that their only option is to carry on with traditional methods, Nangobi believes that creating and emphasizing the importance education can be the solution to ending the cycle: “education is a primary factor in overcoming the socio-cultural obstacles that exist in the road to eliminating harmful social practices”. The cycle of reliance of child labour is a major effect of decoupling of policy and implementation on this matter and serves to sustain itself until major change occurs in the design and implementation of policies.

Cycle of Reliance on Child Labour

Summary of the Findings

A project mainly financed by:



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The thorough analysis of the collected data concerning the decoupling between policies and implementation within the Ugandan agricultural sector has resulted in the establishment of multiple first-order concepts, which contribute to larger second-order themes which comprise the aggregate dimensions. With consideration to the aggregate dimension of the existing gap, the themes of causes, drivers, and effects were considered. The aggregate dimension of the path forward to bridging this gap is elaborated upon through the themes of sensitization of population, governmental reform, and community empowerment.

The causes of the decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour within Uganda were identified as being a combination of poverty, culture, and lack of governmental resources. Distinctions between various forms of poverty and different facets of culture have been identified, as well as how the government's bureaucracy results in this gap.

The drivers which emerged from the data analysis were that of a lack of governmental support, particularly with relation to educational initiatives and enforcement of child labour regulations, as well as the cultural pushback against the implementation of policies. Various manifestations of this type of pushback are identified and analyzed in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The effects of this gap have been identified as two cycles that are put into action and perpetuated by the existence of the decoupling which is occurring. Two cycles, one of lack of education and the other of perpetuation of child labour have been identified and analyzed, which allows for more profound insight into the situation.

Discussion and Implications

The motivation of this research was to analyze the extant decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour in the Ugandan

agricultural sector in order to identify the causes, drivers, and effects of this gap as well as to identify clear directives on how to move forward on this issue. The analysis showed that this condition is derived from a series of elements that come together in obstructing the proper and efficient implementation of these policies. The application of Bromley et al.'s theoretical framework to the issue allows us to expand on Bromley's work in order to further understand this phenomenon and its solution. Whereas the Ugandan Government has adopted policies in tune with international standards, this study shows that both the adoption of the policies and the initiatives to implement them can be deemed as somewhat ceremonial. This is to say that the condition on the ground in Uganda is a combination of both policy-practice and means-ends decoupling as a result of insufficient resources and inefficient processes within the organs responsible for the prevention and elimination of child labour. The theoretical contribution and practical implications of the study will be expanded upon in the following segment.

Theoretical Contributions

This study expanded on the theoretical framework set forth by Bromley et al. in order to identify the types of decoupling that occur along the value chain of agricultural products in Uganda. The results indicate that decoupling manifests in multiple ways among various stakeholders, resulting from the environment within the agricultural sector.

While the examples of decoupling are in tune with those described by Bromley et. al, this study posits that decoupling of both types(policy/practice & means/ends), can occur simultaneously and that stakeholders within this industry might be exposed to multiple instances of this phenomenon. This analysis also showed that instances of decoupling within the research context fell within Meyer and Rowan(1977)'s described categories, but not exclusively to one or another. Instances of avoiding integration, and

ceremonializing inspection and evaluation were identified throughout the research, in some situations occurring simultaneously. The analysis of the data also reflected results in accordance to Strike et al's stance on decoupling in large organizations; wherein decoupling occurs as a result of the massive scope of the Ugandan government's operations and their inability to stretch their resources and capabilities in order to coordinate and monitor subsidiaries (Strike et al., 2006). The research also builds further on top of Drori et al's findings that the implementation of policies will face decoupling in developing nations due to the lack of resources and existing infrastructure for enforcement and monitoring of initiatives (Drori et al., 2003). This suggests that over time, with the nation's further development, the frequency of instances of decoupling might decline.

Therefore this study posits to consider decoupling as a fluid state, not mutually exclusive to any of its forms, depending on the context and situation. The analysis concludes that these different types of decoupling are not mutually exclusive, but could come together under certain circumstances. A combination of institutional, social, economic, and cultural factors can converge in creating a unique environment in which multiple types of decoupling occur at multiple levels among stakeholders within the agricultural sector.

Practical Implications

In addition to the aforementioned theoretical contributions, this study also sets forth a series of practical implications from the research in order to address the extant decoupling between policy and implementation on child labour in the Ugandan agricultural sector. The primary practical implication is that of *increasing community empowerment initiatives*; this can be applicable by firms or investors interested in Ugandan agriculture as well as by the government, as noted in the Path Forward aggregate dimension. These

initiatives can serve to sensitize and empower community members in adapting to local and international standards for ethics and codes of conduct, resulting in a more conducive agricultural sector.

Another practical implication for Ugandan officials and authorities is that of *increasing funding* to educational and regulatory institutions; this can serve to enhance the capabilities of the UPE and USE schooling as well as allow officials on a district level to better implement policies set forth by Kampala. The third and final practical implication is geared towards NGOs and charity organizations; *decrease the flow of foreign aid into Uganda*. Multiple stakeholders agreed that a reliance on foreign aid funds results in a dependence on ongoing aid and decreases incentives for self-sustainability and independence among actors in the agricultural sector. These implications serve to simultaneously empower agricultural workers, enforcement officials, as well as the Ugandan Government through sensitization, increased funding, and independence from charity organizations and foreign funds.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study has arrived at both theoretical and practical implications, which were previously discussed, there are also limitations to the conducted research. The first limitation is identified as that of *subjectivity*. Considering the qualitative nature of the research and the proximity of the researcher to the interview subjects and conditions on the ground and despite efforts to stay objective, a certain level of bias and subjectivity is inevitable to occur. In addition to this limitation, early on into the research the *sensitivity of the issue* became clear, as some families were reluctant to discuss or even acknowledge child labour. In many cases, stakeholders (mostly farmers and farm-owners), refused to acknowledge the existence of child labour in Uganda and went as far as to say that such a phenomenon does not exist, which is disputed by established

research and statistics. This limitation was partially overcome by focusing on regulatory officials and NGOs, other pertinent stakeholders within the agricultural stakeholders. The third and final limitation of this research is its *specificity to the Ugandan agricultural sector*. The research and analysis were conducted and wholly focused on the influencing factors and conditions on the ground in Uganda and as such, the results are not exactly universally applicable to other nations wherein decoupling occurs.

This study recommends that future research on this issue focuses on the following issues in order to further expand and elucidate the subject matter. First and foremost, the length of any future research can be extended in order to gain a deeper understanding of the decoupling that occurs in Uganda; this research was conducted over a three week period, which could be argued is not enough to fully grasp the intricacies of the situation. Second, the specificity of this research can be built upon by the study of decoupling in other countries, primarily sub-Saharan African nations, in order to form a comprehensive framework for this part of the continent. The development of a multi-nation framework would serve as a guide for firms and organizations interested in engaging in activities in these environments.

Conclusion

This research serves as a source of understanding of the causes, drivers, and effects of decoupling in the Ugandan agricultural sector as well as a guide on how to move forward on bridging the gap. The research not only identifies and outlines the relevant factors in their local context, but also puts forth suggestions on how research on this topic can be taken further to expand understanding on the matter. While policies pertaining to child labour are firmly in place and the institutions to implement them are currently striving to fulfill their mission, this study posits that continued efforts and

research into bridging the gap are necessary in order for Uganda to eliminate the phenomenon of child labour once and for all.

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