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The Vicious Relationship between Apathetic Political Behaviour and Citizen Quiescence in Nairobi County

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Apathetic Political Behaviour, Voter Apathy, Citizen Quiescence, Demand for Public Accountability, Weak Public Institutions, Diminishing Public Trust, Votes Do Not Count.

Voter apathy is a growing phenomenon in Kenya. Voter turnout since the Constitution 2010 was enacted has been falling drastically. In the 2013 general elections, the voter turnout was 86%, and the turnout dropped to 78% in the August 2017 elections. Further, in the 2022 general elections, numbers dropped to 64%. More significantly, the number of young people registering to vote in the 2022 general elections dropped by 5.27% compared to 2017. This apathetic political behaviour among Kenyan voters has far-reaching implications not only for democratic practices in Kenya but in governance, particularly for demand for public accountability. In this study, the researchers aimed to establish whether a relationship exists between apathetic political behaviour and citizen quiescence (citizen inaction) in demanding public accountability. Citizen quiescence is operationalised to mean general disinterest, lethargy, or unwillingness to participate in civic duties. The researchers hypothesised a direct relationship between apathetic political culture and citizen quiescence due to weak institutions and diminishing public trust in Kenya. To establish this relationship, the researchers surveyed a sample of 100 respondents drawn from Nairobi City County using a multi-stage sampling technique. The test results for linear regression analysis were $R_{(98)} = 0.841$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 .703$, demonstrating a positive linear relationship between apathy and citizen quiescence among Kenyans. In other words, as citizens became more apathetic in participating in democratic processes, their quiescence in demanding public accountability also increased. Besides, it was established that all factors held constant; apathetic political behaviour could explain 70.3% of citizen quiescence in Kenya at a 95% confidence level. The significance of this study was to demonstrate the necessity of civic engagement in public accountability to reduce pilferage and misappropriation of public resources.

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INTRODUCTION

Apathetic political culture is the general unwillingness, indifference, and lack of interest in political matters such as voting (Chukwudi, 2022). Apathetic political culture was operationalised to mean citizens' physical, mental, and emotional detachment from civic duties, especially demanding accountability from elected leaders and government. Therefore, the researchers hypothesised a direct relationship between citizen quiescence and apathetic political culture among Kenyans. The apathy among Kenyans was measured using three units—diminishing public trust, weak public institutions, and a general belief that "votes do not count." Therefore, the objective of this study was to measure the extent to which apathetic political behaviour influenced citizen inaction in demanding public accountability.

Background: The State of Political Apathy in Kenya

Despite being a democracy, Kenya has experienced an increase in political apathy in recent years; the indicators for this phenomenon include a disinterest in voting and lethargy in participating in political and democratic processes. Low voter turnout is a crucial indicator of political apathy, as it shows the public's general disinterest in political activities or participation in democratic engagements. In the last three general elections, Kenya's voter turnout has declined. In 2013, the first general election since the promulgation of the new constitution, the voter turnout was 86% (Iraki, 2022). This turnout was one of the best in the world. According to Solijonov (2016), the average voter turnout in the world was 66% between 2011 and 2015.

Therefore, a turnout of 86% in the 2013 general election was exemplary. However, in 2017, this percentage declined to 78% (Iraki, 2022). In the 2022 general election, this turnout depressed to 64.6% despite a significant increase in registered voters (Iraki, 2022). Notably, in 2022, registered voters increased from 19.6 million in 2017 to 22.1 million. Therefore, the number of Kenyans who voted in the last general election needed to be higher than in 2017. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) targeted adding six million voters to the register. However, as the above numbers indicate, the commission increased the vote base by only 2.5 million. Hence, about 3.5 million eligible Kenyans did not register to vote despite attaining the minimum age.

Further, a unique form of voter apathy is emerging among the youth. The youth make up the largest group capable of influencing elections in Kenya. Regardless, many youths do not engage in political processes such as voting, albeit being used by politicians for mobilisation and sometimes causing violence. In 2022, people aged between 18 and 35 who registered to vote was about 40%, almost half of all the registered voters (Iraki, 2022). However, the youth recorded the lowest turnout among all age groups in that election. The political happenings in the country disillusion the Kenyan youth. Many get involved in political campaigns as agents and mobilisers or receive payments to cause violence. Others earn from distracting opponents, heckling in campaign rallies, and harassing women and vulnerable people who attend campaign rallies. The political elite has mastered the disillusionment among Kenya youth and uses them at its beck and call for the wrong reasons. The rational-thinking youth

also get immersed in the tribal inclinations of this political alliance versus the other. These factors discourage many youths from engaging in political processes as they do not seem to acquire tangible benefits from being active participants.

Moreover, a significant reason for low voter turnout is the constant political violence that characterises elections in Kenya. In 2022, Kenya made history for successfully transferring power to a presidential candidate and political coalition that ran against a state-sponsored candidate. The country had never experienced a handover of power from a sitting president to a candidate considered the enemy of the state. For instance, President Moi, who ruled Kenya for 24 years, ruthlessly sabotaged opposition leaders to sustain his presidency. However, in 2007, the country took an ugly path as the hotly contested general election turned into violence never witnessed, killing about 1,300 and displacing more than 600,000 people (Pfeiffer, 2022). In 2013, the National Super Alliance (NASA) contested Kenyatta's win in court and continued to cry foul after the Supreme Court upheld the former president's victory.

The 2017 election results almost dragged the country into another post-election precipice. This time, the opposition alliance contested the election results, and the court ruled in favour. However, the opposition stayed away from the repeat presidential election, citing the distrust of the IEBC. This decision culminated in the swearing of Raila Odinga, who had emerged second after Kenyatta as the "people's president," leading to a series of skirmishes that killed many people in Nairobi and Kisumu. These constant skirmishes have disillusioned the youth so much that they choose not to participate in voting. Also, Marx et al. (2020) reveal that many Kenyans avoid participating in elections because they distrust electoral institutions and do not feel that their votes count. Such is not surprising because the electoral body has been at the centre of election controversies. In addition, Kenyans lack the motivation to participate in voting because the electioneering exercise is uncertain, and political

violence can emerge anytime. For this reason, many opt to stay away to avoid getting maimed or killed in the process.

Furthermore, many Kenyan youths fail to contest political positions due to a lack of financial resources, networks, and drive (The Carter Center, n.d). Older adults (those older than 35) often dominate this country's political scene. Indeed, until the new constitution, most political positions were occupied by veteran politicians. However, in 2022, many youths contested and won seats at the county and national levels. However, youths still lag in competitive politics as old politicians dominate. In a survey by the Carter Centre (n.d.) involving youths and women, more than 90% of the participants said they had participated in the 2017 elections, but less than 40% had run for office (the Carter Centre, n.d.). The 2010 constitution has specific provisions intended to promote involvement in politics among the youth and women. In retrospect, the thresholds set by the constitution regarding the number of youths who should occupy leadership positions in the legislature appear elusive. The youths depict disinterest in pursuing these offices, which is unfortunate because veteran politicians will soon exit.

Another form of political apathy experienced in Kenya emerges from unfulfilled promises. Every campaign period is awash with extraneous campaign pledges and commitments. For example, politicians are apt to promise youth jobs, development projects, and appointment of low-income people to plum positions in government. Unfortunately, when the leaders capture power, the promises go unfulfilled, and the cycle repeats itself after every five years. For experienced voters who have voted at least two times, campaign pledges do not excite them as they know nothing changes after elections. Ordinary citizens are left to their devices, and the poverty status does not change too. These realities deride many voters to abhor getting involved in politics. Some believe that their votes do not count for anything. As such, unkept political promises predispose people to believe that participation in

political activities wastes time. A multiplicity of these factors explains why apathy is high in Kenya and influences how citizens demand accountability from government officials. Therefore, the researcher hypothesises that the citizen quiescence experienced in the country is a precursor of political apathy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

For Rousseau, the "general will" was supreme as it put the people's interest at the core of government policies. He construed elections as an expression of the general will, where the majoritarian interests ruled society as opposed to a monarch (Rousseau, 2017). In this regard, only a government negotiated through a social contract undergirded by general will had the legitimacy to rule society. Consequently, all society members had equal rights and power to express the "general will," and humans had equal rights in a sovereign government. Rousseau posited that democratic governments had the authority to enforce the "general will" by creating laws to promote mutuality and universalist ideals shared by all society members. These laws include those aimed at protecting public resources from plunder by a greedy political class. Accordingly, from a social contractarian perspective, corruption means the abrogation of the "general will" by one agent in the social contract (Rousseau & May, 2002). Traditionally, the social contract stipulates some moral duties to the citizen and the government.

On the one hand, social contracts require governments to provide public services to the citizens, such as education, health, security, and infrastructure. On the other hand, the moral duty of the citizens in the social contract is, among others, to pay taxes. Unfortunately, when public officials engage in corruption, they breach the social contract and the "general will." In a perfect and functional social contract, public officials will refrain from engaging in corruption as it breaches the "general will" and avoid individual utility maximisation in place of public benefit (Laskar,

2013). On the contrary, citizens will express their "general will" as a moral duty by participating in elections to punish unaccountable leaders who break the social contract and regain their ceded power. However, when citizens become acquiescent and apathetic, they also abrogate their moral duty and threaten the enforceability of the social contract.

Rousseau identified two main threats to social contracts—factions and private interest. The theorist promoted the ideals of collective citizen actions to diffuse the effect of factions within the government pursuing individual interests. Stated otherwise, Rousseau conceived that those factions within a government could potentially establish clientelistic and patrimonial networks that served private interests, thereby promoting corrupt practices at the detriment of social contracts. As suggested by Rousseau, the solution to diffuse factions in pursuit of private interests was for citizens to participate actively in state affairs through collective and majoritarian upheavals (Taylor, 2015). Retrospectively, apathy upends the fundamental maxims of social contractarian theories as citizens abrogate their moral duty while corrupt officials breach the "general will."

Empirical Review

The danger of apathy and weak public institutions is that it encourages corruption to thrive. It disenfranchises the indigents by imposing direct costs on them and spreads impunity like cancer. Some of these costs include inadequately equipped hospitals, a poorly funded education sector, insecurity, poor road infrastructure, and nutritional challenges for children. A disempowered and disillusioned population, especially in Africa, will likely not see these direct costs as inconveniences enough to punish unaccountability. Rather, they become apathetic and disinterested in public affairs as an escapist mechanism. Besides, other factors such as clientelism, patrimonial exchanges, and short-term material gains blind-fold them to realise the dangers of their apathetic behaviour, especially in holding their leaders accountable (Rothstein & Solevid, 2013). Undoubtedly, where citizens and

public officials exchange wealth and power, without absolute accountability safeguards, apathy breeds, corruption thrives, and their twin brother impunity becomes a norm.

Hooghe and Quintelier (2014), in a European Social Survey (ESS), examined the effect of corruption and citizen participation in political processes. The scholars concluded that corruption and weak public institutions in emerging countries in Eastern and Central Europe depressed citizen participation. Therefore, the researchers offered a scientific explanation of why citizen engagement in low-income countries was low despite exposure to poor governance and corruption. They argued that rather than corruption and unaccountability being a social mobiliser for citizens to act against unaccountability, it depressed political action as citizens felt powerless.

The powerlessness among voters as a cause for the growing apathy is not something scholars can ignore. Similarly, Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs (2011) established that corruption affected voter turnout negatively. The researcher concluded that corruption levels and voter turnout had an inverse relationship. As corruption increased, voter turnout reduced significantly. In theory, one would expect voters to mobilise to oust corrupt government officials during elections; however, empirically, that is the opposite (Solijonov, 2016). Instead, as corruption increases, voters become disengaged, apathetic, and abstain from democratic activities. Stockemer et al. (2011) argued that corruption had a disruptive effect, especially in consolidated democracies in low-income countries, and therefore, it undermined institutional safeguards to mitigate unaccountability and principles of good governance. Besides, it delegitimises government due to apathy and low voter turnouts. Dahlberg and Solevid (2013) also found that political participation was lower when citizens perceived corruption as widespread. Interestingly, this effect is consistent with nations with weak accountability institutions, as established in research by Rothstein and Solevid (2013).

The impact of public trust on public accountability is an area that has attracted many macro and micro-level studies. Park and Blenkinsopp (2011) investigated how transparency and trust impacted the association of corruption and citizen satisfaction from a South Korean perspective involving 348 respondents. These researchers used the Yeongdeungpo-gu local government's survey data to evaluate its Public Project Quality Management OK System (OK system). The results for $r = 0.637$, $p < .001$, confirmed a strong positive correlation between transparency and public trust (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011). Based on these findings, it is conceivable that trust can never exist without transparency. As used in governance, transparency allows citizens to access government documents and proceedings to strengthen oversight. Hence, a reduction in public trust means that government officials do not exercise this openness, and as such, the public cannot provide sufficient oversight over the activities of their leaders. Consequently, a decline in public trust leads to a vicious cycle that affects governance and how institutions function, including holding leaders accountable (Abidin, Saidon, & Andin Salamat, 2022). But more aversely, public mistrust can cause citizens to support extremist views like terrorism, creating discontent and violent conflicts for resources. Moreover, as people disengage from their civic duty, they become less willing to pay government taxes as they believe plunderers are waiting to steal them. As these beliefs spread wide, civic duty and political participation become pointless among disgruntled voters.

Della Porta (2000) aptly explained the duality of public mistrust and corruption by noting that lack of confidence in government and elected officials favoured corruption to the extent that it transformed citizens into bribers, clients, and beneficiaries. The mistrust also feeds into clientelism by causing private citizens to seek personal protection from policymakers in exchange for quiescence. The idea that "everyone is corrupt" and "no consequence" for corruption fosters a disincentive for public participation and tolerance for low-level and grand corruption. On

the contrary, corruption erodes public trust. As a result, as corruption increases, citizens tend to have low levels of support or participation in political processes. In other words, citizens have negative attitudes toward civic duty at the macro level.

Abidin et al. (2011) also investigated how ethical accountability relates to public trust in local governments targeting the Selangor local authority in Malaysia. The scholars found a proportional relationship between public trust and ethical accountability in the local governments they investigated. Such type of relationship implies that a decline in public trust directly lowers accountability in the government and vice versa. Second, the findings indicated that loyalty significantly influences how the public trusts the government's ability to deliver public services (Abidin et al., 2011). Third, there was a mediating effect of loyalty on how public trust and accountability relate. Trust is crucial in public administration as it significantly influences the relationship between public officials and citizens. In his contribution, Marx Webber perceived loyalty as existing when a public official obeys the public and sacrifices their self-interests to meet the people's interests (Abidin et al., 2011). Therefore, a loyal public servant usually focuses on the demands of the public, especially solving the everyday problems people face. That is why loyalty influences how public trust relates to accountability. A loyal public servant will likely implement mechanisms to enhance citizen participation in governance and openness in government operations. This way, such a servant increases trust and accountability. On the other hand, a disloyal public servant may be less interested in the affairs of the public, translating to diminished public trust and accountability.

Morris and Klesner (2010) offered a more nuanced examination of how public trust relates to accountability using evidence from Mexico. The motivation for this study was the findings from previous studies that identified trust as both a cause and outcome of corruption. Therefore, the researchers combined case study and OLS

regression to confirm the relationship between corruption and trust by examining different public institutions within the Mexican government. In this case, they relied on the data collected by the surveys of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), which gathers responses from the public's perception of different aspects of corruption, such as experience or participation in the acts of corruption (Morris & Klesner, 2010). Specifically, the data used by Morris and Klesner (2010) was gathered by interviewing 1,556 Mexicans in 2004. Mexico is one of the countries with a long history of entrenched corruption, making it a suitable case study for this research.

Ultimately, Morris and Klesner (2010) discovered that a 10% reduction in institutional trust results in a 6% increase in corruption. On the other hand, an increase in the index of corruption by 10% reduces the index of institutional trust by 16% (Morris & Klesner, 2010). Hence, Morris and Klesner (2010) affirm the findings of Abidin et al. (2011) and Park and Blenkinsopp (2011) that public trust relates directly to accountability. Morris and Klesner (2010) argued that mistrust discourages citizens from collaborating with others or the government to formulate mechanisms to eradicate this vice. Similarly, mistrust promotes citizens' quiescence in major political processes, such as elections, which creates favourable conditions for public unaccountability.

Public trust is both a cause and effect of corruption and unaccountability. Low levels of public trust nurture impunity and corruption. Usually, low levels of public trust prevent universalistic policies or cooperative efforts to fight corruption and instead build apathy. Stated otherwise, a society with low levels of public trust in leaders and institutions tends to have a tolerant and quiescent attitude toward corrupt individuals. As such, public mistrust increases perceived corruption in a country, providing opportunities to justify such behaviour.

The primary purpose of democracy is to provide citizens with opportunities to hold their leaders accountable. At its core, democracy emphasises

the participation of citizens in governance through direct deliberation of issues or choosing governing officials. Thus, this form of government grants citizens the authority to decide who should lead them. As such, in a representative democracy like Kenya, voting should be a mechanism for enforcing public accountability and voting out unaccountable leaders. However, in Kenya, democracy does not consistently achieve these potentials because, many times, Kenyans have voted for corrupt or unethical leaders. De Vries and Solaz (2017) conducted a literature review to identify instances when voters may fail to punish corrupt leaders. According to these scholars, citizens may not hold politicians accountable during elections if they do not have sufficient information linking the candidates to corruption scandals or other accountability issues. Indeed, in many cases, politicians enjoy information asymmetry at the detriment of democratic rights owed to citizens (De Vries & Solaz, 2017). Thus, they easily manipulate the electorates and continue misusing their political power to achieve self-interests.

Furthermore, poor attribution of blame regarding the consequences of corruption affects the significance of voting negatively. De Vries and Solaz (2017) argued that people are usually subjective in attributing blame or crediting political events. This lack of objectivity in assessing corruption makes it difficult for citizens to change their preferences during general elections. Politicians understand this and may not change their behaviours merely because they fear being punished during elections.

Further, it is essential to note that people are less likely to vote if they believe their vote will not count, depriving the public of the opportunity to hold the leaders accountable. Adsera et al. (2003) corroborated this perspective through a comparative study of how citizens of 131 countries hold their governments accountable. The hypothesis these researchers followed was that the quality of government depends on the level of democracy and information accessibility. The overall conclusion from this study was that

the extent to which a government is good/functions well depends on its citizens' ability to hold it accountable. The study found a significant variation in corruption levels across world democracies (Adsera et al., 2003).

In advanced democracies like the United States, citizens are likely to turn out in large numbers and vote for leaders based on their performance records or manifestos. In contrast, citizens in Kenya and many other African democracies may be adamant about participating in general elections if they do not believe in the electoral systems. Unfortunately, this apathy leads corrupt leaders to buy votes or manipulate uninformed voters to secure victories in different elective positions. Consequently, they become less interested in following the rule of law once in office since they secured it through dubious mechanisms. Hence, the disbelief in the power of a vote increases in an environment of dishonesty, corruption, and electoral fraud, thereby dampening public accountability. Several research gaps emerge from this literature review. Firstly, scanty empirical studies examine the relationship between citizen quiescence and political apathy in the African context. Besides, most studies are country-specific or regional, examining nuances between unaccountability and voter apathy. Therefore, their findings may not apply contextually in Kenya, which explains the necessity for this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a descriptive research design as it allows the use of both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the questions of why, what, when, who, or where. The survey was conducted in Nairobi City County, with a voter population of about 2,415,310 per IEBC (2022). However, due to limited resources, the researchers targeted three constituencies in Nairobi: Embakasi East, Mathare, and Kibra, as it was untenable to survey the entire population. These constituencies were selected because they are diverse based on the constituents' income levels, population size, neighbourhood, collective efficacy, and voting behaviours. Besides, they are

multi-ethnic and cosmopolitan as they accommodate Kenyans from all corners of the country. The study population from the three constituencies was 406,044 voters as per the 2022 general elections (IEBC, 2022). A sample of 100 respondents was computed from the population using Slovin's formula, as shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N is the target population, n is the sample size, e is the tolerance level or confidence level of 0.1

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{406,044}{1+406,044(0.1)^2} = 99.97 \approx 100$$

The researchers used purposive and multi-stage sampling techniques to obtain a representative sample. From these constituencies, the researcher utilised the constituency wards as strata and obtained samples from them purposively based on whether they were voters and residents in the specific constituencies. Further, the researcher used self-administered questionnaires and key informant interviews to collect the views and perspectives of the respondents to examine the relationship between apathy and citizen quiescence in demanding public accountability. In examining this relationship, the researcher treated apathetic political culture as the independent variable, while citizen quiescence was the dependent variable. In order to measure apathetic political culture, the researcher utilised three Likert scale questions to quantify the construct. The first question required the respondents to provide categorical responses as to whether they believed citizens were less likely to demand accountability from their leaders because they thought government institutions were too weak to take necessary punitive action. The second question asked whether they believed citizens hesitated to demand accountability from their leaders because they did not trust the government's intention to fight corruption. The third question required the participants to indicate whether they believed voters failed to participate in democratic elections to remove corrupt leaders

because they thought their votes did not count. The three questions helped the researcher construct apathetic political culture as a variable for measuring citizen quiescence. The researcher used SPSS to analyse descriptive and inferential statistics and summarised the findings in charts and tables, as illustrated in the sections below. The regression model for the study was framed as follows:

$$Y = a + b_0X$$

Where Y is citizen quiescence

a is a constant, b_0 is the coefficient, and X is apathetic political culture.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

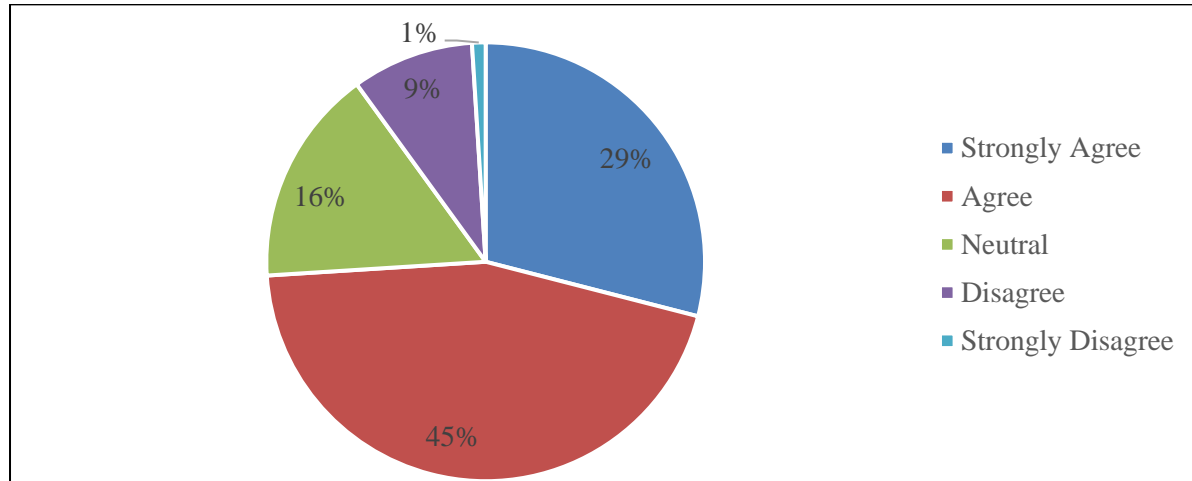
Weak Public Institutions and Citizen Quiescence

It is challenging for governments to build accountability systems with weak public institutions. There is an appetite across Africa for governments to establish anti-corruption agencies without empowering them to act independently to investigate, prosecute and recover stolen funds. Similarly, African states appoint judges to sit in anti-corruption courts, yet the state and political class are quick to interfere with their decisions if outcomes of corruption cases do not yield preferred outcomes. Stated otherwise, some African public accountability institutions are cosmetic programs that lack the independence to execute functions of holding those in leadership to account. Such weaknesses are a recipe for corruption and plunder as the government and its state agencies lack proper and structured mechanisms to enforce formal regulations, punish offenders, and recover stolen public resources (Yeboah-Assiamah, 2014). As this unfortunate duality of weak institutions and corruption continues, citizens, on the other hand, become quiescent, disinterested, and removed from accountability efforts. Such disinterest and indifference breed apathy and, unfortunately, reinvigorates the looters to plunder unabated. To investigate this assertion, we asked the respondents whether they believed "Citizens are

less likely to demand accountability from their leaders because they believe government institutions are weak to take necessary punitive action." The analysis of the responses confirmed

that many citizens did not believe public institutions could do much to punish unaccountable leaders. The responses are expressed in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: Weak public institutions



The majority of the respondents, 45% and 29%, agree and strongly agree that citizens would be less likely to demand accountability from leaders because they believed government institutions were too weak to take punitive measures against corrupt officials. Respondent 1124 said,

My ears are always open, waiting to hear the next corruption scandal. I only have one vote. What can I do?

Another respondent (1140) from our interview said

"Participating in elections every five years is meaningless to me. Have you seen anyone jailed for corruption in this country? From the NYS scandal, the Maize scandal, and the recent COVID-19 scandal to the AFIA house scandal, the perpetrators walk scot-free in town. Many are not even ashamed to contest for elective seats. I am not voting again; 2022 was the last for me."

These two responses show the growing level of apathy among Kenyans. It is illustrative of a feeling of lack of trust for public institutions to promote public good and hold leaders to account. Individual citizens consider their voices inadequate to cause leaders and public institutions to become accountable. Therefore, many of them

withdraw from governance and political activities, allowing corrupt individuals to plunder public resources unabated.

Diminishing Public Trust and Citizen Quiescence

Public trust legitimises government actions or inaction in democratic governments. On the contrary, a lack of public trust achieves the opposite by undermining legitimacy and threatening accountability mechanisms. Invariably, corruption affects public trust negatively. It betrays citizens' social contract with their government and dampens public sector outcomes to benefit the poor. Therefore, corruption and public trust have a direct relationship that reinforces each other.

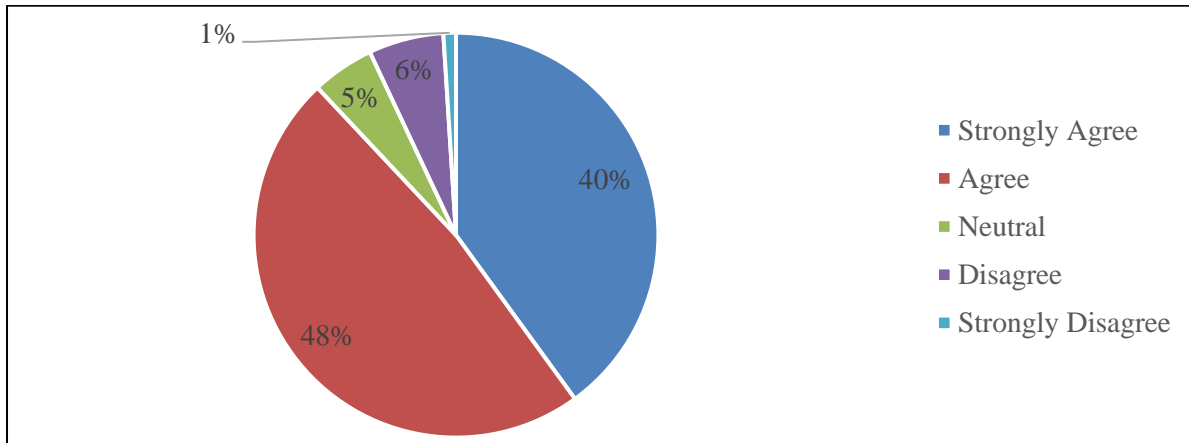
Out of a sample of 100 respondents involved in our study, 40% and 48% strongly agreed or agreed that the government had no intention of fighting corruption, as shown in *Figure 2* below.

Public trust in democratic governments is critical for public officials to engage citizens in the social contract, build commitments for the utilisation of public resources, and secure citizen compliance with government policies without coercion. However, if mistrust grows and citizens withdraw their support for government actions, they become

less willing to comply with policies and put the legitimacy of a government into question. Several causal factors influence public trust in government and its ability to deliver expected policy outcomes. Those causal factors may include social, economic, and political reasons. From the onset, a poorly performing economy can create disaffection among citizens, making living standards high and doing business challenging.

Citizens expect the government to work as an enabler and regulator for them to do their civic and economic duties without challenges. However, when life becomes unbearable, distrust and disaffection with the government grow. Secondly, political factors such as weak institutions, rising scandals, and media coverage of government corruption trigger declining public trust.

Figure 2: Public trust

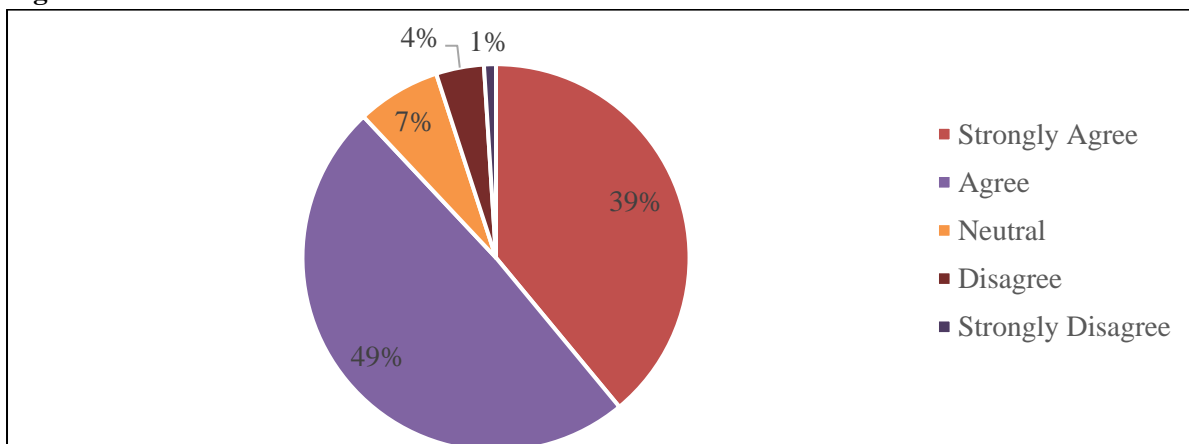


The Effect of the Believe That Votes Do Not Count on Citizen Quiescence

Allegations of voter fraud are synonymous with Kenyan elections. Both citizens and political opponents seem not to trust that the electoral body can deliver free and fair elections. This is because electoral fraud is always glaring and sundry for all to see. Vote buying and police intimidation here, ballot stuffing there, and political violence in hotspots are examples of electoral fraud experienced in Kenyan general elections (Dercon & Gutiérrez-Romero, 2012). Such occurrences

have far-reaching implications on civic duty and citizen apathy. The mass deployment of technology, change of electoral laws, and new commissioners in nearly every election do not seem to convince Kenyans that elections are free and fair. Respondents were asked whether they believed "Voters fail to participate in democratic elections to remove corrupt leaders because they believe their votes do not count." In response to this question, most respondents indicated that they did not believe their vote counts, as shown in *Figure 3* below.

Figure 3: Vote Does Not Count



Accordingly, 49% and 39% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that voters were unwilling to participate in democratic elections to punish unaccountable leaders as they believed their votes did not count. Only 7% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 1% strongly with the assertions. Some respondents commented that either machines tampered with the results to achieve a predetermined outcome or an invincible hand always chose the leader, especially in presidential elections. Consequently, those who hold this view consider engaging in election exercises, even to change or punish unaccountable leaders, futile. Respondent 1190 said

"I do not believe we have ever had fair elections in this country. The process itself is alienating. Once voters cast their vote, no one can tell whether the outcome reflects their will..... we vote as a ritual, but the outcome reflects the will of the deciders. Voting is so devaluing and dubious to imagine that anything good can come from it."

The atrocious prognosis of Kenyan elections is what makes voter apathy continue to grow in

alarming numbers. Pervasive electoral fraud reduces political competition and makes it difficult for voters to choose the right candidates. It narrows the contests to individuals who can influence the process with money or political power and disenfranchises upcoming leaders without the network and wherewithal to influence systems. In essence, electoral fraud makes electoral processes uncertain and increases the monetary and non-monetary costs for voters to participate in an election. Such uncertainty and direct costs like violence or harassment for election participation make many voters stay away. Besides, irregularities such as vote buying and ballot stuffing that undergird the Kenyan election negatively cause voters not to trust elections as avenues for pursuing accountability.

Correlation

The researchers conducted a Pearson test for correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between citizen quiescence and apathetic political behaviour. The findings are shown in *Table 1* below:

Table 1: Correlations between citizen quiescence and apathetic political culture

		Citizen Quiescence	Apathetic Political Culture
Citizen Quiescence	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Apathetic Political Culture	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

As *Table 1* above indicates, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was 0.841, showing a strong positive linear relationship between citizen quiescence and apathetic political behaviour. The findings were statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. These results indicate that citizen quiescence increased with voter apathy almost simultaneously.

Regression

While correlation is critical in showing the strength and direction of relationships, the

measure has some weaknesses. It cannot predict or show variance between variables, which explains the necessity of conducting a bivariate regression analysis to determine the predictability of citizen quiescence based on apathetic political behaviour. *Table 2* below shows the results of linear regression analysis between citizen quiescence and apathetic political behaviour.

Table 2: Regression between citizen quiescence and apathetic political culture

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.841 ^a	.706	.703	.471

a. Predictors: (Constant), Apathetic Political Culture

The Spearman's coefficient of determination (r^2) as per the result was 0.703. These findings show that apathetic political behaviour could explain 70.3% of citizen quiescence variance; all other factors held constant at a 95% confidence level.

The predictability of the relationship between citizen quiescence and apathetic behaviour could be summarised in a bivariate regression model drawn from the coefficients in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.099	.136		-.729	.468
Apathetic Political Culture	1.037	.067	.841	15.358	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Citizen Quiescence

The equation is as follows: $Y = -0.099 + 1.037X$, where y is citizen quiescence, x is apathetic political behaviour, and -0.099 is a constant. The bivariate regression equation shows that as more citizens remained apathetic in participating in political activities, citizen quiescence in demanding public accountability also increased. So a unit increase in apathetic political behaviour led to a 1.037 increase in citizen quiescence, all other factors held constant.

due to weak institutions and diminishing public trust in Kenya.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: There is a direct relationship between apathetic political culture and citizen quiescence due to weak institutions and diminishing public trust in Kenya.

Testing the Hypothesis

The researcher framed the null and alternative hypotheses as indicated below.

Before testing the hypothesis, the researcher used the factor reduction method in SPSS to transform the three Likert scale questions into a reduced and measurable construct. The researcher regressed the transformed variable against citizen quiescence to measure the effect and magnitude of the relationship between the predictor and predicted variable. The results of the alternative hypothesis test are summarised in *Table 4* below.

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There is no direct relationship between apathetic political culture and citizen quiescence

Table 4: Results of Hypothesis Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.841 ^a	.706	.703	.471	.706	235.855	1	98	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Apathetic Political Culture

The results of the test $R_{(98)} = 0.841$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 .703$ indicate that a positive linear relationship exists between apathy and citizen quiescence among Kenyans, which affects their aptness to demand public accountability from the

government and elected leaders. That conclusion emerges from the fact that the test yielded a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. But more importantly, the

Spearman ρ value was 0.841, denoting a strong positive correlation between apathy and citizen quiescence. Further, the coefficient of determination was 0.703, denoting that apathy could explain 70.3% of the total variance of the predicted variable. In other words, 70.3% of citizen quiescence in tax states could be explained by apathetic political behaviour among voters, other factors being constant. These findings are consistent with empirical evidence from other similar macro and micro-level research, such as those conducted by De Vries and Solaz (2017), Abidin et al. (2011), Hooghe and Quintelier (2014), Stockemer, LaMontagne, and Scruggs (2011), Solevid (2013) and Park and Blenkinsopp (2011). However, from the findings, it is also deducible that citizen quiescence and apathy had reverse causation. In other words, voter apathy resulted from citizen quiescence, and the opposite is also empirically founded.

CONCLUSION

The findings $R_{(98)} = 0.841$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = 0.703$ confirmed the hypothesis that a direct relationship exists between apathy and citizen quiescence. The findings denote a positive and direct relationship between apathy and citizen inaction in demanding accountability. In other words, the findings indicate that as the corruption level increases, citizens become disinterested and grow disaffection against their government. However, such disaffection and apathy have a deleterious effect on public accountability as the greedy political class uses it as an opportunity to plunder and weaken institutions to check unaccountability. Weak institutions, public mistrust, and the belief that votes are worthless are the major contributors to apathy in political processes and have a confounding effect on citizen quiescence when punishing corrupt public officials. Overwhelming evidence, as provided in the discussion, supports the nexus between apathy and citizen quiescence, and some scholars have argued that the two variables have a reverse cause and effect.

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