Gender Gaps in Support for Vigilante Violence

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June 2, 2022

Abstract

Mob vigilantism - the punishment of alleged criminals by groups of citizens - is widespread throughout the developing world. Drawing on surveys with more than 13,000 respondents from Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, this paper shows women are more likely than men to support mob vigilantism. Qualitative evidence, a vignette experiment and survey measures suggest men and women differ in their beliefs about mob vigilantism. Men are more convinced that mob vigilantism creates risks of false accusation for those who do not commit crime. I trace this divergence in beliefs to differences in men's and women's personal risk of being accused of a crime that they did not commit. The results speak against the notion that women are inherently more opposed to violence than men.

Keywords: vigilantism, women, Sub-Saharan Africa, crime, punishment, informal, justice

1 Introduction

When confronted with crime, citizens in developing countries frequently eschew the police. Instead, they call on their community – neighbors, friends, and family – who apprehend and brutally punish or even kill the accused. Mob vigilantism of this kind is widespread. A police report from Uganda suggests vigilante mobs killed more than one person per day in 2013.[1] In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, groups killed roughly one person every two days during a period of five years.[2] In South Africa, the police registered almost six cases of vigilantism per day in 2018, with about two resulting in murder.[3] Because many incidents of mob vigilantism remain unknown to the authorities, these numbers are likely underestimates.

Mob vigilantism often turns into gruesome spectacles watched by entire communities.[4] In many cases, spectators do not stop the violence but rather cheer it on. Where police investigate, they face communities who refuse to testify and frustrate the police's attempts to separate witnesses from perpetrators. Sometimes such non-cooperation is driven by fear of retaliation, but other times by a desire to protect perpetrators. In addition to those who inflict violence, vigilante acts are thus fueled by larger groups of people who view mob vigilantism as legitimate and are willing to support it.

This paper investigates who supports mob vigilantism and why. The existing literature on non-state mechanisms of crime control largely focuses on the role of state capacity.[5] I instead home in on the social drivers of mob vigilantism. I draw on original survey data from Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, as well as the Afrobaromter,[6] to demonstrate that there is a robust gender gap in support. Women are substantially more likely to support vigilante violence than men.[7]

What explains this gender gap? Two additional data collection efforts help investigate this question. Study 1 consists of a vignette experiment from Uganda, and suggests women and men differ in their beliefs about mob vigilantism. A possibility that seems to loom large in the minds of men is that vigilantism can be directed towards the "wrong" person. Vigilante acts are committed by "angry mobs" that move to murderous violence with little

deliberation. Men see scenarios conducive to false accusations as more plausible than women.

Why might women and men diverge in their perceptions of the risk of false accusations? One reason may be that women face a lower personal risk than men. Study 2 uses survey measures from Tanzania. The findings suggest 71% of men but only 48% of women believe it likely that they could be attacked for a crime that they did not commit. If the risk of being attacked is concentrated on men, they face greater incentives to learn about the prevalence of false accusations. Women and men may also judge the overall risk of false accusation based on their own experiences. The gender divergence in personal exposure may lead men to perceive the overall risk of wrongful accusations as higher, which may dampen their support for vigilantism.

In sum, I argue that gender conditions support for mob vigilantism, because it shapes how people understand its risks.[8] I consider a number of alternative explanations which find little empirical support.

This study makes several contributions. First, the paper is one of few to investigate how gender shapes support for mob vigilantism.[9] Existing work sometimes includes gender as a control variable in multivariate regressions. These analyses are difficult to interpret, because they condition on attitudes that are plausibly affected by gender *and* by respondents' views on vigilantism.[10] Here, I use seven data sources from three different contexts to show that women consistently support mob vigilantism at higher rates than men.

These results seem surprising because, anecdotally, most perpetrators of vigilantism are men. Yet, my results do not imply that all men oppose vigilantism. For example, mob vigilantism may be popular among subgroups of men who are unlikely to be falsely accused. In Tanzania, support appears high among tight-knit groups of motorcycle taxi drivers, who may be able to defend themselves against vigilante attacks. Most kinds of violence tend to be perpetrated by men, and the dynamics that induce a supporter of vigilantism to personally inflict violence are likely complex.[11]

Even though few women personally attack criminal suspects, the finding that women

support vigilantism at higher rates adds to our understanding of why such attacks occur. Women can encourage and discourage vigilantism in important ways. Women have instigated vigilante acts and may convince bystanders to participate.[12] As witnesses, women can cooperate with police and may encourage others to do the same. As parents, women may shape how mob vigilantism is viewed by younger generations. Finally, women, just like men, may join movements that protest vigilantism.[13]

Mob vigilantism poses risks even for people who are not involved in crime. One advantage of a well-functioning judiciary is that it protects the basic rights of criminal suspects. My findings suggest this benefit may not have the same salience for groups like women who are less prone to personally experience false accusations. One way to foster engagement with the state may thus be to raise awareness about the risk of false accusations posed by non-state practices like vigilantism. Increased awareness of this risk has fueled protest against vigilantism in the past. In 2018, for example, protests erupted after mobs in India killed several people in response to false rumors about child kidnappers.[14]

My findings also contribute to a large public opinion literature that finds women to be generally less supportive of violence than men. This literature is concentrated in the United States and Western Europe and covers capital punishment,[15] gun control,[16] military aid and the usage of troops,[17] defense spending,[18] inter-personal violence, and the display of violence on television.[19] A common interpretation of these findings holds that traditional gender norms socialize women into an "ethic of care," which leads them to oppose violence.[20] The notion that women are opposed to violence also shapes expectations about the consequences of female empowerment. Fukuyama, for example, predicts that "[a] truly matriarchal world (...) would be (...) more conciliatory and cooperative than the one we inhabit now."[21]

This paper joins a set of studies that add nuance to these claims.[22] My findings suggest women can support violent practices at higher rates than men, even in societies where women are expected to play caregiver roles. Moreover, I interpret this gender gap as resulting from differences in women's and men's *beliefs* rather than tastes. I do not argue that women have

a greater preference for violent punishments of those who commit crime. Neither do I claim that men care more about protecting those who do not. Instead, I show that women and men have different beliefs about the extent to which mob vigilantism targets the innocent and trace this disparity to gender differences in experiences with mob vigilantism.

This belief-based explanation highlights the role of information in explaining violence. Some theories of violence see it as an outcome of people's preferences. Accounts of civil war, for example, point towards grievances or a desire for material gain.[23] Classic theories of crime highlight economic benefits and material sanctions.[24] Other parts of the literature focus on beliefs. Seminal accounts of interstate war, for example, view it as resulting from insufficient information about resolve and capabilities.[25] This paper joins the latter category in pointing towards uncertainty – here about the risk of false accusations – as an important driver of violence.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 provides background on mob vigilantism. Section 3 describes the estimation strategy and section 4 the main results – estimates of the gender gap in support for vigilantism. Section 5 presents evidence on the mechanisms which may give rise to this gap. Section 6 considers alternative explanations. Section 7 concludes.

2 Background

This special symposium is about collective vigilantism defined as group violence that punishes perceived offenses to the community. Here, I focus on a sub-category that I call mob vigilantism.[26] This form of vigilantism is perpetrated by spontaneously formed groups of ordinary citizens, which distinguishes it from other forms that are perpetrated by organized groups like peasant committees,[27] crime prevention panels,[28] self-defense groups[29] or gangs.[30] This paper focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa because mob vigilantism predominates in many parts of the region. Data stem from Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, three contexts in which mob vigilantism has been a recurring concern. See papers 3 and 4 in this symposium for work on spontaneous violence in other contexts.

Mob vigilantism sometimes resembles other forms of violence like racially motivated lynchings and ethnic riots,[31] and it does disproportionately target certain groups. For example, it is more often directed toward men than women. Anecdotal accounts also suggest minority groups are more likely to be targeted. However, even if discriminatory in practice, the incidents I study do not have as their putative purpose the persecution and control of identity groups. Rather, mob vigilantism is a response to alleged criminal acts.

I focus on violence in response to offenses like robbery, assault, and reckless driving that fall under state jurisdiction. However, I also consider vigilantism in response to black magic which, in the contexts under study, is often perceived as criminal. Group-based punishments appear to arise more commonly in response to petty crime than witchcraft allegations. Among 426 cases of vigilante killings in Uganda in 2013, 70% were a response to theft, robbery, or burglary, 9% a response to murder and only 1% a response to an allegation of witchcraft.[32] Yet, previous research suggests black magic is often attributed to women,[33] which provides a potentially informative contrast to other offenses.

Mob vigilantism is often more "violent" than state punishments for equivalent transgressions. Respondents describe horrific acts of murder and torture. One vigilante method called "necklacing" places a tire over victims' shoulders, fills it with petrol and sets it alight. Even though reports of human rights abuses by state institutions exist in the contexts studied here, such abuses are not as endemic as in places with highly militarized police. Prior work suggests countries with common law systems are less prone to state torture than those which inherited civil law systems.[34] All three countries studied here had some exposure to common law under British colonial rule. This similarity make cases comparable but raises the question whether results would differ in contexts with more abusive states. Data from the Afrobarometer provide some evidence of generalizability across Sub-Saharan Africa.

3 Empirical Strategy

I use multiple surveys to measure respondents' support for mob vigilantism. Sampling and question wordings are discussed for each analysis below. I use the following linear regression specification to estimate gender gaps in support:

$$\boldsymbol{Y} = \alpha + \beta \boldsymbol{x} + \boldsymbol{C}\boldsymbol{\gamma} + \boldsymbol{\epsilon}.$$

$\boldsymbol{Y}$ here is a vector of binary indicators for whether the respondent supports mob vigilantism over reliance on police; α is an intercept; $\boldsymbol{x}$ is a vector of binary indicators for whether the respondent identifies as a woman and β the coefficient of interest; $\boldsymbol{C}$ is a matrix of region or community fixed effects and $\boldsymbol{\gamma}$ the vector of associated coefficients; $\boldsymbol{\epsilon}$ is a vector of error terms that allow for heteroscedasticity. Two-tailed p-values are calculated using a Wald test of the null hypothesis that the coefficient on gender is zero based on a normal approximation to the sampling distribution. Outcomes are imputed through bootstrapping.[35]

4 Main Results

Table 1 displays the main results. The key takeaway is that, across different samples, countries, and question wordings, women express higher support for mob vigilantism than men. In some cases, the share of women who support vigilantism is almost twice that among men.

The first three columns draw on data collected in 2015, 2016, and 2017 for an unrelated study on mass media and social norms in 168 villages in Uganda's central region. Respondents in each village were sampled randomly, but the set of villages is a convenience sample. To enter the sample, villages had to have a local video hall, which are common in rural Uganda, and to be no closer than four kilometers to the other villages in the sample.[36]

| | Mob Vigilantism Preferred over Police Intervention | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ug. 1 | Ug. 2 | Ug. 3 | Tan. 1 | Tan. 2 | | Tan. 3 | | S.A. | Pooled | Afrobar. |
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Woman	0.048***	0.047***	0.048***	0.036**	0.044*	0.054**	0.005	0.043	0.024	0.043***	0.023***
	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.037)	(0.032)	(0.018)	(0.005)	(0.003)
Avg. men	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.1	0.07	0.1
Area FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mob target	Driver	Driver	Thief	Driver	Thief	Thief	Thief	Thief	Driver	Mix	
Crime victim	W	W	W	W	W	M	W	M	W	Mix	
Observations	2,431	5,534	1,956	1,365	601	604	232	264	1,300	13,246	51,587
Adjusted R^2	0.013	0.014	−0.004	0.019	0.007	0.027	0.001	0.043	0.003	0.016	0.072

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 1: Across seven different samples in Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa, as well as the 2013 Afrobarometer, women are more supportive of mob vigilantism than men.

Coefficients stem from a linear model that regresses a binary indicator for whether the respondent supports mob vigilantism as opposed to reliance on police on community or region fixed effects and a binary indicator for whether the respondent identifies as a woman. Heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors are shown in parentheses. Significance stars are based on a two-tailed Wald test of the null hypothesis that the coefficient on gender is zero using a normal approximation to the sampling distribution. The samples used in columns 2 and 3 share 1,041 respondents. The row "Avg. men" shows the mean outcome among men. The row "Mob target" shows information about the accused who was attacked by a mob in the survey vignette. The row "Crime victim" indicates whether the accused was described as having committed a crime against a man (M) or a woman (W).

Columns that label the "Mob target" as "Driver" rely on a survey question that asks respondents to imagine a truck driver drove through their village and ran over a small girl, killing her. The scenario suggests a group of villagers got hold of the driver. Respondents are asked which of two statements comes closest to their view:

1. The group of men should beat the truck driver to teach him a lesson.

2. The group should leave it to the police to investigate and to determine the truck driver's punishment.

Columns 1 and 2 show women in the 2015 and 2016 samples are five percentage points more likely than men to select the first statement. Among men, 6% of respondents agree with this statement. Support for mob vigilantism is thus 80% higher among women. The p-value indicates this difference is unlikely to arise due to sampling variability alone ($p < 0.01$).

In 2017, during re-interviews of some 2016 respondents and interviews with new respondents from the same villages, the survey question was changed. The new wording was designed to create empathy with the crime victim and to reduce stigma associated with endorsing violence by placing the statements of support in the words of "friends:"

> Suppose a widow from your village is selling soap in the market in order to raise enough money to send her son to school. One day, when she is about to close up for the day, a young man on a boda [motorbike] from a different village rides past and grabs her money, stealing all the money that she made during the day. Observing the incident, some men from your village manage to push the driver off his bike. One friend turns to you and says, "We should call the police, this man could be hurt." The other friend says, "The police won't do anything, we should punish him now." Which friend would you agree with?

Column 3 shows the results. The alternative wording indeed elicits higher levels of support. Now, 12% of men agree with the friend who endorses mob vigilantism. However, the share

of women who agree with this friend is still five percentage points higher ($p < 0.01$). The gender gap is smaller in relative terms, but support among women still exceeds that among men by 40%.

Column 4 reports results based on a survey conducted in 2018 in thirty-six villages in Pangani, Tanzania, as part of a natural experiment on radio and social norms.[37] Respondents were randomly sampled within villages, which were selected based on their proximity to radio transmitters. The survey asked the same question about a truck driver who killed a little girl. Once more, there are sizable and statistically significant gender differences. Women are four percentage points more likely to support mob vigilantism ($p < 0.05$). As in the samples from Uganda, the share of men who support mob vigilantism is 6%.

So far, all measures involved mob vigilantism against someone accused of harming a woman or girl. Hence, one may worry that women display a greater demand for violent punishment simply because they identify more strongly with these victims. Columns 5 and 6 report results from a survey which randomly varied the crime victim's gender. The survey was part of a field experiment on radio soap operas conducted in thirty rural villages throughout fifteen wards in Tanzania's northeastern Tanga Region.[38] Villages were again selected to satisfy experimental requirements, and respondents were randomly sampled within villages. The question read:

> A [man/woman] from your community is blowing the whistle, because [he/she] saw someone stealing food and a box of cold drinks from [his/her] yard. The neighbors come running and one of them gets hold of the thief. Again, which of the following do you believe the neighbors should do?

The words in square brackets distinguish the two versions of the scenario. Each respondent read one scenario assigned through simple randomization. Respondents who answered "The neighbors should beat the thief there and then" instead of "The neighbors should call the police and leave it to them to deal with the thief" are coded as supportive of mob vigilantism. The results are remarkably consistent with the three Ugandan and the other Tanzania

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sample. Women are four to five percentage points more likely than men to support mob vigilantism ($p < 0.1$ and $p < 0.05$), irrespective of the crime victim's gender.

The same randomized question was included in another survey in Tanzania in 2021. The survey sought to randomly sample forty respondents within thirteen randomly selected villages in Pangani District, Tanga Region.[39] Columns 7 and 8 report the results. Here, there is little evidence of a gender gap when the victim is described as a woman, but support among women is roughly four percentage points higher when the victim is described as a man. This difference is not statistically significant, perhaps because the sample is much smaller. Again, the results provide no evidence that the gender gap in support is driven by women's identification with the crime victim.

Column 9 reports the gender gap in answers to the truck driver question from South Africa. Citizen Surveys South Africa included the question as part of their May 2018 public opinion survey, fielded in-person among a multi-stage, stratified random sample. The estimated gender gap is again positive, though it is not statistically significant.

Column 10 pools the samples from columns 1 through 9.[40] Across data collection efforts from 2015 to 2021 that surveyed over 13,000 respondents, women are four percentage points more likely than men to support mob vigilantism over police intervention. The standard error is small relative to the estimated effect, suggesting the likelihood of this difference arising due to sampling variation alone is low ($p < .01$).

The final column uses the 2013 round of the Afrobarometer to test for gender gaps in support for mob vigilantism across thirty-four Sub-Saharan African countries. The question asks, "If you were a victim of crime in this country, who, if anyone, would you go to first for assistance?" Respondents are coded as supportive of mob vigilantism if they answered they would go to their "own family or friends" or that they "would join with others to take revenge." Again, there is statistically significant (if substantively smaller) evidence for a gender gap in support. 10% of men would turn to friends or family, or would join others in taking revenge. The share of women who choose these options exceeds that among men by

roughly two percentage points ($p < .01$).

5 Mechanisms

Next, I investigate the mechanisms that may underpin the gender gap in support for mob vigilantism. I show that men are more likely to believe mob vigilantism poses risks for the innocent, and that these risks are likely concentrated on men.

5.1 Conceptual framework

Vigilante acts consist of gruesome assaults and often result in the death of criminal suspects. What generates demand for such extreme violence? In qualitative interviews, respondents often maintained that those who commit crime deserve harsh punishments and that harsh treatment of "criminals" in public will teach a lesson to others who commit crime. One South African woman said, "Yes, when we get them, we will kill them," suggesting criminal suspects deserve to be executed. Market vendors in Uganda advocated for the public beating of thieves with a *kiboko* (heavy cane), explaining that this practice discourages other pickpockets.

Vigilante punishments are typically harsher than sentences handed out by the state. It is common for mobs to kill suspects for petty crimes that would, at most, result in a prison sentence when reported to the state. Moreover, mob incidents are often watched by entire communities. Demand for vigilantism may thus be driven by a preference for harsh and public sanctions, linked to an inherent taste for punishment or a concern for deterrence.[41]

The view that vigilantism is an effective way to punish wrongdoers assumes that vigilante acts are indeed directed towards those who break the law. Anecdotal accounts suggest, however, that the evidence base for community judgments of guilt is often tenuous. Where suspects are not caught red-handed, accounts of individual witnesses or vaguely related circumstantial evidence are often sufficient to trigger violence.[42] Hence, there is scope for both accidental and deliberate false accusations.

The possibility that vigilantism could target innocent citizens may dampen citizens' support. Even someone who would like those who commit crime to be executed may hesitate

to support a practice that executes innocent people. The suspicion that vigilantism targets innocent citizens may also create doubts about its deterrent effect. Deterrence crucially depends on the perceived correlation between guilt and the likelihood of being targeted. To see why, imagine vigilante mobs were known to randomly select their victims. Then, all citizens would face the same likelihood of being attacked, whether they engage in crime or not. Vigilantism should not affect the decision to break the law in this scenario. Finally, the risk of false accusations also raises the possibility that oneself or one's friends or family could be attacked for a crime that was committed by someone else.

Similar dynamics have been documented regarding harsh punishments by the state. Information about wrongful convictions in the US justice system, for example, appears to reduce support for capital punishment.[43] In relative terms, however, false accusations are likely a more salient concern with vigilantism than with the state. In the contexts studied here, state institutions tend to be weak. Conviction rates – whether right or wrong – are low. Moreover, even in states with weak due process protections, judicial processes move considerably slower than the instantaneous decision-making of mobs. Hence, concern about false accusations should lead individuals to favor the state over mob vigilantism.

The possibility that mob vigilantism could target individuals who did not commit crime seemed to be an important consideration for men I spoke to in qualitative interviews. The head of security of a large market in Uganda, for example, described how he must be careful where he puts his hands when he moves about the market, lest his brushing past someone be mistaken for an attempt at pickpocketing. A South African respondent recalled a case in which a man who was running away from a group of robbers ended up being mistaken for the accused and attacked. Market vendors in Uganda explained that criminals sometimes levy false accusations against innocent vendors to create a mob situation that allows them to escape. Finally, a young man in South Africa expressed the view that false accusations by mobs are common. He deemed it almost impossible to convince "the community" of one's innocence once one has been accused.

Women, on the other hand, seemed less attuned to the risk of false accusations in qualitative interviews. Of eleven female focus group and interview participants in South Africa, not one mentioned false accusations as a problematic feature of vigilantism. One reason for the gender gap in support may thus be that men are more convinced that vigilantism poses risks even for those who do not commit crime.

A related issue is that the risk of being accused of a crime that one did not commit is likely concentrated on men. Men are generally more likely to commit crime. Figure 1 in the online appendix shows women make up roughly 3% of prisoners across Sub-Saharan Africa. Unless state judiciaries are severely biased in favor of women or women are substantially better at not being caught, the plot suggests most crimes are committed by men.

Vigilante mobs make quick decisions about guilt, often in the face of substantial outrage over a crime. Hence, stereotypes about what kinds of people typically commit crime may play a big role in who becomes a target. Men may thus be falsely accused and attacked at much higher rates than women. Consistent with this logic, Uganda's Annual Crime Report indicates 94% of 508 people killed by mobs in 2013 were men,[44] which is similar to figures reported in a recent press review from Ghana.[45] Almost all vigilante incidents that came up in qualitative interviews were directed at men.

This gender divergence in personal risk may be a direct cause of the gender gap in support. Maybe, women support mob vigilantism at higher rates because they are unlikely to suffer the downsides. Yet, most women have sons, brothers, or husbands. Why would women support a practice that puts their male family members at risk? What seems more plausible is that the divergence in personal risk contributes to women and men having different *beliefs* about the overall risk of false accusations.

Both women and men may judge this overall risk based on their personal experiences and those of people in their networks. Hence, men may over- and women underestimate this risk, especially in gender conservative societies where most communication happens along gender lines.[46] Alternatively, men may have greater incentives to learn about the prevalence of false

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accusations. Scrutinizing an allegation may not be a priority among people who never expect to be subject to one. People who expect they could be falsely accused themselves may pay greater attention to the evidence or attempt to investigate after the fact.

One exception to this logic may be vigilante attacks in response to witchcraft accusations. In some contexts, the stereotypical "witch" is a woman,[47] and the risk of being punished for using black magic may thus be concentrated on women. It also seems unclear how to think about certainty of guilt in the case of witchcraft. Neither my measurements nor my explanation for the gender gap fully extend to witchcraft related vigilantism. The subsequent analyses focus on violence in response to other offenses, but I discuss witchcraft related findings in passing.

5.2 Study 1: Gendered understandings of vigilantism in Uganda

I designed a vignette experiment to answer two questions. First, do men and women differ in their assessments of whether mob vigilantism can be triggered by allegations with a tenuous evidence base? Second, do respondents believe men are more likely to be targeted than women? The experiment was part of the 2017 household survey in rural Uganda described above.[48] Respondents were asked to rate a hypothetical vigilantism scenario in terms of the likelihood that it could happen in their village. The scenario was randomly varied to find out what kinds of incidents are seen as plausible.

5.2.1 Design

The 2017 sample consists of $N = 1,956$ respondents from Ugandan villages (see section 4 for details). During a longer interview on various topics, enumerators read out the following scenario:

Imagine a situation in which a [man/woman] [from your community] [is accused of/is observed] [stealing from/using black magic against] a [man/woman] [from your community]. [A bystander/the victim] gathers a group of people [in the garden/in the market place] and they [beat/kill] the [accused/perpetrator].

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The square brackets indicate attributes that were varied at random. For example, the accused was introduced as either a man or woman. The second bracket contains only one version because the origin of the accused was described as "from your community" or not mentioned at all. Attributes were varied independently using simple random assignment. Respondents were read one scenario and asked to rate the likelihood that the scenario could occur in their community.

Three attributes vary the extent to which the scenario allows for false accusations. First, the scenario states that the suspect has been "observed" or that he has been "accused" of committing the offense. The word "observed" suggests witnesses exist, while "accused" allows for the evidence base to be more tenuous. Second, the scenario refers to the suspect as "the accused," which suggests uncertainty, or as "the perpetrator," which suggests certainty of guilt. Third, the mob in the scenario is gathered either by a bystander or the victim. Mention of a bystander implies at least one other person is willing to corroborate that the crime happened. The victim herself rallying the community leaves more room for accusations to be fabricated. Finally, I also varied the gender of the accused.

I investigate the effect of these variations on whether women and men believe the scenario could happen in their village.[49] The theory predicts men are more likely to see a scenario as plausible if it allows for false accusations. Women's plausibility assessments should, if anything, be lower if the scenario leaves scope for allegations to be fabricated. Moreover, irrespective of respondents' gender, vigilante acts that target men should be perceived as more plausible than those which target women.

Analyses are based on respondents who were assigned to scenarios in which the suspect is accused of theft. Results for black magic scenarios are shown in the online appendix. I estimate average marginal component effects (AMCEs).[50] The effect of each prime may vary with other scenario characteristics. The AMCE reflects the average effect of a prime across the distribution of other scenario characteristics that results from randomization. I estimate separate AMCEs among, respectively, men and women as well as the difference between

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these by regressing the outcome on an indicator for assignment to a prime, an indicator for respondents' gender and the interaction between the two. Hypothesis tests are based on heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors.

5.2.2 Results

I begin with the primes that vary the scope for false accusations. The first subtable of Table 2 displays the percentage of women and men who indicate the vigilante incident could happen in their village broken down by whether the scenario mentions the crime has been observed. Men are roughly five percentage points *more* likely to deem the scenario plausible if it does *not* specify that the crime has been observed. The opposite is the case for women. The share of women who believe the scenario could happen in their village is around nine percentage points *lower* if the crime has not been observed. This difference in means is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Women thus seem more inclined to deem vigilante scenarios plausible if the suspect's guilt is certain, while men appear to consider incidents plausible if the evidence base is tenuous.

This interpretation is re-enforced by the descriptive differences across men and women, holding constant the randomized primes. The share of women who think a scenario in which a suspect has merely been accused could happen in their village is almost ten percentage points lower than the share of men who think so. Scenarios in which the suspect has been observed, on the other hand, are deemed plausible by 65% of women but only 61% of men.

Similar patterns appear in the second and third subtables. Men are roughly ten percentage points more likely to think it plausible that a vigilante incident could happen in their village if the suspect is referred to as "the accused" rather than the "perpetrator" ($p < 0.05$). The same change in wording does not appear to have an effect on women's plausibility assessments. Moreover, the share of men who deem a scenario plausible increases by eight percentage points if the mob was rallied by the victim as opposed to a bystander ($p < 0.1$). Women are, if anything, less likely to believe that an incident could happen in their village if the instigator is the victim. Finally, comparing across genders, both subtables suggest a

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greater share of men believe in scenarios that leave room for fabricated accusations.

Mob responding to [observation / suspicion] of crime could happen in my village.

	Women (N = 543)	Men (N = 465)	*Estimated gender gap:*
Suspect was observed (N = 529)	65.3%	61.4%	+3.9 pp.
Suspect was accused (N = 479)	56.1%	66.5%	-10.4 pp.**
Estimated prime effect:	-9.2 pp.**	+5.1 pp.	-14.3 pp.**

Mob targeting [perpetrator / accused] could happen in my village.

	Women (N = 543)	Men (N = 465)	*Estimated gender gap:*
Suspect described as 'perpetrator' (N = 535)	60.3%	59.3%	+1 pp.
Suspect described as 'accused' (N = 473)	61.7%	69.3%	-7.7 pp.*
Estimated prime effect:	+1.4 pp.	+10.1 pp.**	-8.6 pp.

Mob instigated by [bystander / victim] could happen in my village.

	Women (N = 543)	Men (N = 465)	*Estimated gender gap:*
Bystander instigates mob (N = 501)	62.6%	59.5%	+3.1 pp.
Victim instigates mob (N = 507)	59.2%	67.8%	-8.6 pp.**
Estimated prime effect:	-3.5 pp.	+8.2 pp.*	-11.7 pp.*

Mob could happen when all three primes [reduce / heighten] false accusation risk

	Women (N = 149)	Men (N = 128)	*Estimated gender gap:*
All three primes reduce risk of false accusation (N = 149)	67.9%	49.2%	+18.6 pp.**
All three primes heighten risk of false accusation (N = 128)	52.3%	71.4%	-19.1 pp.**
Estimated prime effect:	-15.5 pp.*	+22.2 pp.***	-37.7 pp.***

Table 2: Beliefs about the plausibility of vigilantism among women and men in Uganda

Data stem from 2017 household survey in rural Uganda. Results are estimated among subset of respondents presented with an incident of theft (as opposed to black magic). Last subtable is subset to respondents assigned either to all three primes that increase uncertainty of guilt (scenario does not mention that crime was observed, suspect is referred to as "accused" and incident was instigated by victim) or to none of these primes (scenario mentions that crime was observed, suspect is referred to as "perpetrator" and incident was instigated by a bystander). Significance stars are based on a two-tailed Wald test of the null hypothesis that the AMCE is zero or that group means or AMCEs are equal across genders. Variance estimates are heteroscedasticity-robust. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The final subtable restricts attention to extremes, comparing respondents who received all three primes signaling uncertainty of guilt to those who received none. Scenarios that describe the crime as observed *and* refer to the target as "the accused" *and* mention the crime victim as the instigator leave the most room for false accusations. Conversely, scenarios that describe the crime as observed *and* refer to the suspect as "perpetrator" *and* mention a bystander as the instigator should provide the strongest indication of guilt.

The results are striking. Around half of men assigned to a scenario that strongly implies guilt believe the scenario could happen in their village. Scenarios that allow for the accusation to be false are considered plausible by roughly 70% of men – an increase of more than twenty percentage points. Among women, the effect is of similar size but in the opposite direction. Roughly 68% of women who saw a scenario that implies certainty of guilt believe the scenario could happen in their village. This share decreases by almost sixteen percentage points if the scenario implies a tenuous evidence base. Both effect estimates are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.1$) and so is the difference between them ($p < 0.01$). In addition, men are almost twenty percentage points more likely than women to believe in scenarios that leave space for false accusations. The share of women who believe in scenarios that strongly imply guilt exceeds the share of men who do by roughly the same amount.

Mob targeting [man / woman] could happen in my village.

	Women (N = 543)	Men (N = 465)	*Estimated gender gap:*
Mob targets woman (N = 491)	57.9%	55.7%	+2.2 pp.
Mob targets man (N = 517)	63.7%	72.4%	-8.7 pp.**
Estimated prime effect:	+5.8 pp.	+16.7 pp.***	-10.9 pp.*

Table 3: Beliefs about the plausibility of vigilantism among women and men in Uganda by whether the target is a woman or man

Data stem from 2017 household survey in rural Uganda. Results are estimated among subset of respondents presented with an incident of theft (as opposed to black magic). Significance stars are based on a two-tailed Wald test of the null hypothesis that the AMCE is zero or that group means or AMCEs are equal across genders. Variance estimates are heteroscedasticity-robust. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Overall, the results of the vignette experiment align with the qualitative evidence. Women

seem less convinced that vigilantism can be directed towards someone who did not commit crime, while men appear to perceive a greater risk of false accusations.

One reason for this divergence may be that men are more likely to be targets of vigilantism. Are vigilante attacks against women indeed seen as less plausible? Table 3 shows respondents deem scenarios in which vigilante mobs target a man more plausible than scenarios in which the target is a woman. The estimated difference between the share of women who believe that, respectively, a man or a woman could be targeted is roughly six percentage points. Among men, the estimated difference is almost seventeen percentage points ($p < 0.01$). While this evidence does not directly speak to the risk of *false* accusations, these patterns suggest men see themselves as the more likely targets of vigilantism. Women appear to think the same, though to a lesser extent.

Tables A1 and A2 in section B.1 of the online appendix show results are less clear cut when scenarios involve an accusation of black magic. Here, none of the primes that imply a tenuous evidence base appear to affect whether men and women rate a scenario as plausible. The gender of the mob target, however, seems to matter. Men are twelve percentage points more likely to rate a scenario as plausible if the mob targets a man ($p < 0.01$). Among women, the same estimate is five percentage but falls short of statistical significance. These results suggest the belief that magical offenses are committed by women may not be as widespread in Uganda. The findings also support the notion that certainty of guilt is a murkier concept when it comes to witchcraft.

5.3 Study 2: Vigilantism and false accusations in Tanzania

The survey in Uganda did not include direct measures of citizens' beliefs about the likelihood of false accusations and did not elicit respondents' views on whether they themselves could be punished for a crime they did not commit. Instead, the vignette experiment manipulated the degree to which vigilante scenarios allow for false accusations through subtle primes. This approach sheds light on which scenarios women and men find plausible while guarding against experimenter demand effects. Study 2 takes a more direct approach.

5.3.1 Design

The study relies on a 2019 survey with $N = 1,205$ and a 2021 survey with $N = 496$ respondents in rural Tanzania.[51] Details on sampling can be found in section 4. The survey includes two measures of respondents' perceptions of the likelihood of false accusations. The first captures beliefs about the accuracy of community perceptions of guilt but is not specific to vigilante violence:

> I will now read you two statements. Please tell me with which of the statements you agree more, even if you do not agree with either one completely.
>
> - Statement 1: If most people in a community think that a person is a criminal, that person is probably a criminal.
>
> - Statement 2: If most people in a community think that a person is a criminal, this does not mean that the person is actually a criminal.

The second presents respondents with a scenario in which vigilante violence targets an innocent person and asks how likely it is that the respondent him- or herself could be targeted in this way:

> Imagine the following situation: A group of people accuses someone of stealing and beats up the person. Later, it turns out that the person was innocent. How likely do you think it is that you would ever be falsely accused and attacked in this way?
>
> - It is very likely that [I/an innocent person] could be falsely accused.
>
> - It is somewhat likely that [I/an innocent person] could be falsely accused.
>
> - It is not very likely that [I/an innocent person] could be falsely accused.
>
> - It is not likely that [I/an innocent person] could be falsely accused.

The brackets indicate a difference in answer options across surveys. In 2019, the options mistakenly referred to "an innocent person." In 2021, the options match the question and refer to respondents themselves. Since enumerators are prone to skip answer options when reading out questionnaires, respondents' interpretation of the question is likely to reflect the question stem. Hence, I interpret the measure as capturing perceptions of respondents' personal risk of being falsely accused.

5.3.2 Results

Table 4 shows around 45% of both women and men believe someone who is deemed a criminal by most people may not necessarily have committed a crime. Hence, women and men do not seem to differ in their assessments of the likelihood that communities may wrongly denounce members. That said, the question used to elicit these responses does not explicitly mention vigilante violence. Do women and men differ in their assessments of whether they could personally become the victim of a vigilante attack without having committed a crime?

Some people suspected of crimes are not necessarily criminals.

	Women (N = 864)	Men (N = 837)	*Estimated gender gap:*
% who agree:	45.5%	44.9%	+0.6 pp.

It is somewhat or very likely [I/an innocent person] could be falsely accused.

	Women (N = 864)	Men (N = 837)	*Estimated gender gap:*
% who agree:	47.6%	71.1%	-23.5 pp.***

Table 4: Beliefs about mob vigilantism among women and men in Tanzania

> Data stem from a 2019 and 2021 household survey in rural Tanzania. Significance stars are based on a two-tailed Wald test of the null hypothesis that group means are equal across genders. Variance estimates are heteroscedasticity-robust. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The lower subtable reports the share of women and men who think it "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that they could be personally attacked for a crime they did not commit. Here, there is a large difference between men and women. Around 48% of women believe it likely that they could be falsely accused and attacked. The share of men who believe this could happen to them is 71%. That men perceive a greater risk of personally becoming the victim of a false accusation may be one reason why men find vigilante scenarios that are

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based on a tenuous evidence base more plausible and why they are less supportive of mob vigilantism than women.

6 Alternative Explanations

The previous section has proffered an explanation for the gender gap in support for mob vigilantism. Women and men have different understandings of the risk that such violence poses to innocent bystanders and may face varying kinds of risks themselves. Of course, I cannot conclusively establish that these variations cause the observed gender gap. Such questions about mediation are notoriously difficult to answer. One problem is that women and men differ along many dimensions other than their beliefs about the risk of false accusations. I here provide evidence which suggests the gender gap in support is not driven by alternative ways in which women's views about justice may diverge from those of men.

6.1 Differential police treatment

Most of my measures of support for mob vigilantism invite respondents to identify whether they prefer mob vigilantism or police intervention. Accounts of mistreatment of women by predominantly male police forces can be found throughout the world, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, one might ask whether women are more likely to support mob vigilantism because they hold a dimmer view of police than men.

Table A3 in section B.2 of the online appendix displays estimates of gender gaps in respondents' approval of police. Columns 1, 2, and 4 suggest women in two of the Uganda and the first Tanzania survey are *more* likely than men to expect satisfactory police treatment. Column 3 illustrates women in Uganda are less likely to think a police officer would expect a bribe in exchange for police work. Columns 5 and 6 provide no evidence that women are less trusting of police than men in South Africa and the Afrobarometer sample. Columns 7 and 8 show women in the Afrobarometer sample are less likely than men to believe police are corrupt and no more likely to report difficulties with access to police.

In sum, the table lends no support to the notion that gender gaps in support for mob

vigilantism are driven by women's distaste for police. If anything, women are more likely to expect satisfactory treatment from and to trust in police.

6.2 Differential demand for deterrence

Previous research suggests women are more afraid of crime than men and as a result more supportive of harsh punishments.[52] Perhaps, women express greater support for mob vigilantism because they have a stronger preference for deterrence. To investigate this possibility, the 2017 Uganda survey elicited respondents' demand for punishment, independent of their support for mob vigilantism. Specifically, the focus was on respondents' views about punishment by the state. Because it was unclear a priori what punishments would be considered severe, the seriousness of the crime and the length of the sentence were randomized:

> Imagine you've been robbed at [gunpoint / knifepoint] and you report the robbery to the police. They arrest the robber, and he will be kept in prison for [1/5/10] year[s]. Is that a severe enough punishment, or should he have been punished more?
>
> 1. It is severe enough
> 2. He should have been punished more

Column 1 of Table A4 in the online appendix shows women in the sample are indeed more supportive of harsh punishments than men. Columns 3 and 5 display estimates of the gender gap in support for mob vigilantism from a regression that controls for respondents' punishment preferences. The goal is to understand whether gender conditions support even if one "blocks" the causal path running from gender to support through demand for harsh punishments. Indeed, the estimated gender gap in support remains of roughly the same magnitude and statistically significant. This result provides some re-assurance that women's greater demand for punishment alone cannot account for the gender gap. Note, however, that this interpretation rests on strong assumptions about the absence of confounders in the relationship between gender, punishment preferences and support for mob vigilantism.[53]

6.3   Differential demand for due process

I argue women support mob vigilantism more than men because women estimate the risk of getting the "wrong" person to be lower. This claim implies, if women came to believe that this risk is higher, their support for mob vigilantism would drop. An alternative possibility is that men simply care more about protecting those who do not commit crime. If so, a mere change in women's *beliefs* would not be enough to counter their support for mob vigilantism. The 2017 Uganda survey included the following question to elicit how respondents navigate the trade-off between effective punishment and due process protections:

> What about situations in which you cannot be sure whether the accused actually committed a crime? Some people say that it is better to punish the accused there and then even if you are not certain of their guilt, because otherwise they might get away with it. Others say that you should get all of the facts before deciding whether to punish someone even if it means that guilty people will sometimes escape punishment. Which view comes closest to your own?
>
> 1. It is better to punish the accused there and then even if you are not certain of their guilt, because otherwise they might get away with it
>
> 2. You should get all of the facts before deciding whether to punish someone even if it means that guilty people will sometimes escape punishment

Column 2 of Table A4 in the online appendix shows there is no evidence that women have a greater willingness to punish without certainty of guilt. Moreover, the estimated gender gap in support for mob vigilantism remains unchanged when controlling for respondents' demand for due process (columns 4 and 5). Hence, the evidence does not support the interpretation that women's greater support of mob vigilantism is driven by a greater tolerance for accidental punishments of those who do not commit crime.

7 Discussion

Across a range of domains and industrialized settings, a large public opinion literature finds greater support for violence among men than women. In this paper, I document women support vigilante violence at higher rates than men across seven original surveys from three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. While vigilante violence is like other violence in that it is mostly perpetrated by men, women nonetheless play an important role in encouraging or discouraging mob vigilantism. Women around the world are frequently assaulted and robbed and may be driven to instigate mob vigilantism. Conversely, women who do not support vigilantism may stop others from participating or deescalate incidents.

Drawing on qualitative evidence, vignette experiments, and survey data from Uganda and Tanzania, I have explored the underpinnings of the gender gap in support for vigilantism. The findings show men are more convinced than women that vigilantism poses risks even to those who do not commit crime. I trace this disparity to differences in the extent to which women and men are personally affected by such risks.

Like existing accounts of women's apparent opposition to violence, my explanation points towards the influence of distinct gender roles. I suggest the perception that crimes are mostly committed by men results in a concentration of the risk of being falsely accused by a vigilante mob on them. In contrast to existing accounts, however, I do not link differences in how society treats women and men to tastes for violence. The essence of my account is not that women have a stronger desire for violent punishments of those who commit crime. Nor do I argue that men are inherently more inclined to protect those who do not. Instead, I demonstrate that women and men hold different *beliefs* about the extent to which vigilantism threatens the innocent and argue that these beliefs drive varying levels of support.

While I have shown that the gender gap in support for vigilantism exists across several samples from Sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to ask whether this finding will travel to other points in time and parts of the world. Some aspects of the argument suggest we might see similar patterns elsewhere. Given the spontaneous and unregulated nature of

mob vigilantism, the risk of false accusations is likely a recurrent feature. It is not difficult to find anecdotes about vigilante attacks on innocent citizens in contexts other than the ones considered here. Where the risk of being falsely accused is concentrated among men, similar divergences in beliefs may arise and reproduce the gender gap. However, it is entirely possible that other ways in which gender identity shapes people's experiences may offset or even reverse the patterns observed here.

One more complicated question is why the gender disparity in beliefs about vigilantism persists despite cross-gender communication. If men are personally afraid of being wrongly accused, why do they not communicate this fear to the women in their lives? Presumably, women would not want to support a practice that puts their husbands, sons, and brothers at risk. While definitively answering this question falls outside the scope of this paper, the data allow me to speculate.

Figure 2 in section B.3 of the online appendix shows the gender gap in support widens with age. Women and men support vigilantism at almost the same rate among eighteen-to-twenty-year-olds, but the gender gap measures five to seven percentage points among those of age thirty or older. Since older cohorts differ from younger ones in many ways, this pattern is open to multiple interpretations. One possibility is that older cohorts were raised under gender norms that limit cross-gender communication and help sustain the gender divergence in beliefs. Another is that women in older cohorts were more confined to the home and had less exposure to vigilantism. The ability of these and other explanations to account for gender differences in opinions remains a topic for future research.

Finally, my results suggest raising awareness for the tenuous evidence base of vigilante attacks may be one way to reduce support for vigilante violence. Such campaigns may also reduce the gender gap in support and increase citizens' willingness to draw on state justice institutions. A promising next step to solidify these conjectures will be to randomly expose individuals to information about the risk of false accusations. Such a test can be done relatively inexpensively in the context of a survey experiment. A more ambitious research

design may invite participants to interact with victims who were attacked for a crime that they did not commit. Either design would shed light on the potential of campaigns that stress risks for those who do not commit crime to shore up societal opposition to vigilantism.

Notes

[1] Uganda Police. *Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report.* `https://www.upf.go.ug/download/publications(2)/Annual_Crime_and_Traffic_Road_Safety_Report_2013(2).pdf?x74136`. 2013.

[2] Paul M Ng'walali and James N Kitinya. "Mob justice in Tanzania: a medico-social problem". In: *African health sciences* 6.1 (2006), pp. 36–38.

[3] South African Police Service. *Crime Statistics: Crime Situation in Republic of South Africa Twelve (12) Months (April to March 2018/2019).* https://www.saps.gov.za/services/april_to_march2018_19_presentation.pdf. 2018/2019.

[4] Lee Ann Fujii. "'Talk of the town:' Explaining pathways to participation in violent display". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 54.5 (2017), pp. 661–673.

[5] E.g.: Daron Acemoglu et al. "Trust in State and Non-State Actors: Evidence from Dispute Resolution in Pakistan". In: *Journal of Political Economy* 128.8 (2020), pp. 3090–3147; Jasper Cooper. "State Capacity and Gender Inequality: Experimental Evidence from Papua New Guinea". Unpublished Manuscript. 2018; Justin Sandefur and Bilal Siddiqi. "Forum Shopping & Legal Pluralism". Unpublished Manuscript. 2011; and papers 3 and 5 in this special symposium.

[6] Afrobarometer. *Afrobarometer Data, 34 Countries, Round 5.* available at http://www.afrobarometer.org. 2011-2013.

[7] I use the terms "men" and "women" to describe gender identities, not biological traits. As my measures rely on self- or enumerator-coded binary gender identification, I cannot explore whether results differ for cis- and trans-gendered or non-binary individuals.

[8] Other work argues that support for extra-judicial violence reflects deontological and not instrumental concerns. I here focus on the gender gap in support. Baseline levels of support may well reflect deontological considerations. See: Hannah Baron et al. "Moral reasoning and support for punitive violence: A multi-methods analysis". Unpublished Manuscript. 2021

[9] One exception is an ethnographic account of women's engagement in vigilantism, which, however, does not focus on gender gaps in support. See: Ray Abrahams. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State.* Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1998.

[10] These attitudinal variables are "colliders" on the path from gender to support for mob vigilantism

(See: Judea Pearl. *Causality: Models, Reasoning and Inference.* Second edition. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Evidence regarding the gender gap in support is mixed. Papers on Ghana, Pakistan, and the Netherlands provide no statistically significant evidence of a gender gap. Two studies in Latin America find that support for vigilantism is greater among men. See: Justice Tankebe. "Self-Help, Policing, and Procedural Justice: Ghanaian Vigilantism and the Rule of Law". In: *Law & society review* 43.2 (2009), pp. 245–270; Justice Tankebe and Muhammad Asif. "Police legitimacy and support for vigilante violence in Pakistan". In: *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 40.4 (2016), pp. 343–362; Nicole E. Haas, Jan W. de Keijser, and Gerben J.N. Bruinsma. "Public support for vigilantism, confidence in police and police responsiveness". In: *Policing and Society* 24.2 (2014), pp. 224–241; Amy E. Nivette. "Institutional Ineffectiveness, Illegitimacy, and Public Support for Vigilantism in Latin America". In: *Criminology* 54.1 (2016), pp. 142–175; Daniel Zizumbo-Colunga. "Community, authorities, and support for vigilantism: Experimental evidence". In: *Political Behavior* 39.4 (2017), pp. 989–1015

[11]This is well known for other forms of violence. For example, in addition to views on gender, violence against women has been linked to violent childhood experiences, alcohol consumption, peer pressure and more. See: Lori L Heise. "Violence against women: an integrated, ecological framework". In: *Violence against women* 4.3 (1998), pp. 262–290

[12]A report from South Africa provides an example: "We heard a woman screaming *i-Bag yam? I-Bag yam? Nal'isela* (My bag! My Bag! Here's a thief!). In no time, I mean, in no time, everybody was coming out (...) Then they descended upon this man – they came with all sorts of weapons to assault him. Rocks on the street were thrown at him. In no time, the man was gone (...)." From: Khayelitsha Commission. *Towards A Safer Khayelitsha. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Police Inefficiency and a Breakdown in Relations between SAPS and the Community in Khayelitsha.* https://www.westerncape.gov.za/police-ombudsman/files/atoms/files/khayelitsha_commission_report_0.pdf. 2014, p.342

[13]For example, a social movement emerged following vigilante incidents in Cape Town, South Africa, and led to a government inquiry called the Khayelitsha Commission in 2014.

[14]Sugam Pokharel and James Griffiths. *India WhatsApp rumors: Mob kills man in latest attack, 30 arrested. CNN* (July 16 2018). https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/16/asia/india-whatsapp-lynching-intl/index.html. 2018.

[15]Brandon K Applegate, Francis T Cullen, and Bonnie S Fisher. "Public views toward crime and correctional policies: Is there a gender gap?" In: *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30.2 (2002), pp. 89–100; Jon Hurwitz and Shannon Smithey. "Gender Differences on Crime and Punishment". In: *Political Research Quarterly* 51.1 (1998), pp. 89–115; John T Whitehead and Michael B Blankenship. "The gender gap in

capital punishment attitudes: An analysis of support and opposition". In: *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 25.1 (2000), p. 1.

[16]Robert Y Shapiro and Harpreet Mahajan. "Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s". In: *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50.1 (1986), pp. 42–61.

[17]David Fite, Marc Genest, and Clyde Wilcox. "Gender Differences in Foreign Policy Attitudes: A Longitudinal Analysis". In: *American Politics Quarterly* 18.4 (1990), pp. 492–513.

[18]Lise Togeby. "The Gender Gap in Foreign Policy Attitudes". In: *Journal of Peace Research* 31.4 (1994), pp. 375–392.

[19]Tom W Smith. "The Polls: Gender and Attitudes Toward Violence". In: *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 48.1 (1984), pp. 384–396.

[20]Carol Gilligan. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

[21]Francis Fukuyama. "Women and the Evolution of World Politics". In: *Foreign Affairs* 77.5 (1998), pp. 24–40.

[22]Oeindrila Dube and SP Harish. "Queens". In: *Journal of Political Economy* 128.7 (2020), pp. 2579–2652; Sabrina Karim et al. "International Gender Balancing Reforms in Postconflict Countries: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from the Liberian National Police". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 62.3 (2018), pp. 618–631; Mark Tessler, Jodi Nachtwey, and Audra Grant. "Further Tests of the Women and Peace Hypothesis: Evidence from Cross-National Survey Research in the Middle East". In: *International Studies Quarterly* 43.3 (1999), pp. 519–531; Mark Tessler and Ina Warriner. "Gender, Feminism, and Attitudes toward International Conflict: Exploring Relationships with Survey Data from the Middle East". In: *World Politics* 49.2 (1997), pp. 250–281.

[23]Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. "Greed and grievance in civil war". In: *Oxford economic papers* 56.4 (2004), pp. 563–595.

[24]Gary S Becker. "Crime and Punishment: an Economic Approach". In: *The economic dimensions of crime.* Ed. by Nigel G. Fielding, Alan Clarke, and Robert Witt. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, pp. 13–68.

[25]James D Fearon. "Rationalist explanations for war". In: *International organization* 49.3 (1995), pp. 379–414.

[26]Mob vigilantism is equivalent to "spontaneous collective vigilantism" as defined in the introductory essay.

[27]John S. Gitlitz and Telmo Rojas. "Peasant Vigilante Committees in Northern Peru". In: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 15.1 (1983), pp. 163–97.

[28]Bruce Baker. *Multi-choice policing in Africa.* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008.

[29]See paper 5 in this symposium.

[30]Dennis Rodgers. "When vigilantes turn bad: Gangs, violence, and social change in urban Nicaragua". In: *Global Vigilantes*. Ed. by David Pratten and Atreyee Sen. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

[31]Stewart Emory Tolnay and Elwood M Beck. *A festival of violence: An analysis of southern lynchings, 1882-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995; Steven I Wilkinson. *Votes and violence: Electoral competition and ethnic riots in India*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, and paper 8 in this symposium.

[32]20% of incidents arose from unspecified causes. Uganda Police, *Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report*

[33]Edward Miguel. "Poverty and witch killing". In: *The Review of Economic Studies* 72.4 (2005), pp. 1153–1172; Emily Oster. "Witchcraft, weather and economic growth in Renaissance Europe". In: *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18.1 (2004), pp. 215–228.

[34]Beatriz Magaloni and Luis Rodriguez. "Institutionalized Police Brutality: Torture, the Militarization of Security, and the Reform of Inquisitorial Criminal Justice in Mexico". In: *American Political Science Review* 114.4 (2020), pp. 1013–1034; Courtenay Ryals Conrad and Will H Moore. "What stops the torture?" In: *American Journal of Political Science* 54.2 (2010), pp. 459–476.

[35]One non-missing value is randomly sampled for each missing value. This procedure is, in expectation, identical to mean imputation. Section C.2 of the online appendix shows results based on listwise deletion are almost identical.

[36]The constraint was five kilometers for the 2015 sample. In 2015, we interviewed 2,431 and in 2016 5,534 respondents. In 2017, we re-interviewed 1,041 respondents from the 2016 survey and 915 new respondents. In total, we interviewed 8,880 unique respondents. When conducting pooled analyses, we only use each respondent's first interview. For details, see: Anna M. Wilke, Donald P. Green, and Jasper Cooper. "A placebo design to detect spillovers from an education-entertainment experiment in Uganda". In: *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A* 183.3 (2020), pp. 1075–1096; Donald P Green, Anna M Wilke, and Jasper Cooper. "Countering Violence Against Women by Encouraging Disclosure: A Mass Media Experiment in Rural Uganda". In: *Comparative Political Studies* 53.14 (2020), pp. 2283–2320

[37]Donald P. Green et al. "The Effects of Public Affairs Radio on Tanzanians Interest in Politics: Evidence from a Planned Natural Experiment". Unpublished Manuscript. 2022.

[38]Donald P Green, Dylan W Groves, and Constantine Manda. "A Radio Drama's Effects on HIV Attitudes and Policy Priorities: A Field Experiment in Tanzania". In: *Health Education & Behavior* 48.6 (2021), pp. 842–851.

[39]The within village sampling strategy resembled the one used in our Uganda studies. Not all sampled

respondents were available. Non-available respondents were replaced using a random walk procedure.

[40] Excluding 1,041 observations from the sample in column 3 who were already interviewed as part of the sample in column 2.

[41] See also: Nicholas Rush Smith. *Contradictions of Democracy: vigilantism and rights in post-apartheid South Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.

[42] For example, residents of a South African police precinct where I conducted fieldwork in 2018 assaulted a man who had come to the precinct from a neighboring community. Community members found a phone in the man's possession, which was thought to have been stolen by a group of men addicted to nyaope (a prevalent drug in South Africa). Since stolen goods are often exchanged for drugs, community members concluded the man must be a drug dealer. When police arrived, they could not find any evidence that the accused was involved in the drug business. It remained unclear whether his phone was indeed the phone that had been stolen, and whether any phone had been exchanged for drugs.

[43] Robert J Norris and Kevin J Mullinix. "Framing innocence: An experimental test of the effects of wrongful convictions on public opinion". In: *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 16.2 (2020), pp. 311–334.

[44] Uganda Police, *Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report*.

[45] Millicent Adzimah-Alade et al. "Vigilantism in Ghana: Trends, Victim Characteristics, and Reported Reasons". In: *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* 59.2 (2020), pp. 194–213.

[46] This logic is used to explain why non-white respondents in the US perceive a greater frequency of wrongful convictions than white respondents. See: Marvin Zalman, Matthew J Larson, and Brad Smith. "Citizens attitudes toward wrongful convictions". In: *Criminal Justice Review* 37.1 (2012), pp. 51–69

[47] Miguel, "Poverty and witch killing".

[48] Wilke, Green, and Cooper, "A placebo design to detect spillovers from an education-entertainment experiment in Uganda"; Green, Wilke, and Cooper, "Countering Violence Against Women by Encouraging Disclosure: A Mass Media Experiment in Rural Uganda".

[49] The answer options were "Something like this would never happen in my village," "Something like this could happen, but it is not very likely," "This is the sort of thing that sometimes happens in my village" and "Things like this are very common in my village." I use a binary outcome that is zero if the respondent said 'Something like this would never happen in my village" and 1 otherwise. Section C.1 in the online appendix shows that results are qualitatively similar when using the ordinal outcome.

[50] Jens Hainmueller, Daniel J Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto. "Causal inference in conjoint analysis: Understanding multidimensional choices via stated preference experiments". In: *Political analysis* 22.1 (2014), pp. 1–30.

[51] Green, Groves, and Manda, "A Radio Drama's Effects on HIV Attitudes and Policy Priorities: A Field

Experiment in Tanzania".

[52]Hurwitz and Smithey, "Gender Differences on Crime and Punishment".

[53]see Tyler VanderWeele. *Explanation in Causal Inference: Methods for Mediation and Interaction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, chapter 2.3.