

Vulnérabilité et accès à l'éducation en Ouganda

Vulnerability and access to education in Uganda

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Résumé

Cette étude a examiné les facteurs de l'accès à l'école et au secondaire dans le contexte de la précarité des enfants et de la jeunesse. D'ailleurs, le manque de scolarisation est à la fois une manifestation de la précarité, et une cause et conséquence de celle-ci.

Suite à l'analyse des données EDS de 2006, les enfants des ménages les plus pauvres, ceux du nord, de ménages à forte présence d'enfants en bas (<5 ans), et ceux hébergés dans les autres ménages étaient plus vulnérables quant à l'accès à la scolarisation et au secondaire.

Inversement, le statut d'orphelin, l'âge et le statut de maladie du chef de ménage et le sexe de l'enfant n'étaient pas de facteurs clés dans la scolarisation des enfants. Les femmes chefs de ménage scolarisaient plus leurs enfants par rapport à leurs homologues masculins, raison de renforcer davantage la scolarisation des filles pour promouvoir le développement sociétal.

Abstract

This study looked at access to education on one hand and progression to secondary school on the other in the context of vulnerability of children and the youth. Indeed, lack of education is not only a form of vulnerability but also a cause and consequence of vulnerability.

Following the analysis of 2006 UDHS data, children from the poorer households, the northern region, those from households with a bigger population of the under-fives, and those fostered or staying in other households were more vulnerable with regard to accessing basic education, and progressing to the secondary level.

Conversely, orphanhood status, age and illness status of household head and sex of child were not strong factors explaining children's education. Female household heads were more likely to educate their children compared to their male counterparts, the more reason why girl child education should be bolstered to enhance societal development.

Introduction

The role of education in the emancipation of the human race is no longer a matter of conjecture. Indeed, economists, demographers, sociologists, anthropologists and social scientists in general are agreeable that education is a critical factor for human development.

For economists education is indispensable for economic progress, for sociologists and anthropologists it is a critical factor behind family and societal changes, for demographers education impacts on norms and behavior with regard to nuptiality, fertility, migration, mortality and health (Kobiané, 2009).

As clearly pointed out by Pilon (2006) and in the spirit, of the Universal declaration of human rights of 1948, the Education for All founding document reaffirms in its preamble that “education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world”. While it is clear that access to education is a fundamental human right, having no education is a form of vulnerability for the Ugandan Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy (MOGLSD, 2004) defines the latter as “A state of being or likely to be in a risky situation, where a person is likely to suffer significant physical, emotional or mental harm that may result in their human rights not being fulfilled.”

Indeed, the definition of vulnerability by Smart (2005) and Kaare (2005) is quite elastic and according to them a "vulnerable child" is anyone below the age of 18 years who is currently either experiencing or likely to experience lack of adequate care and protection. What more care is there than to enroll one's child in school. This paper looks at status of education or lack thereof not only as a form of vulnerability but also a cause and consequence of vulnerability and I intend to study the interactions between various forms of vulnerability and access to education in the first place but also progression to the secondary level for both children (below 18) and the youth as lack of access to education and dropouts on the part of many young people can be a precursor for social and political turmoil. Since the theme of this workshop is about the youth as well, my analysis also takes into account household population aged up to 25 years (data was collected on current school enrolment status of the household population up to 25 years) although the Uganda National Youth Policy defines youth as all young persons; female and male aged 12 – 30 years (MOGLSD, 2001)

The selection of the independent variables was in a way guided by the various forms/manifestations of vulnerability in which case they include, *inter alia* , the orphans and orphaned households, children affected by HIV/Aids or other diseases, children in the hard to reach areas in Uganda (MOGLSD,2004), working children and children heading households in Tanzania ,children in foster care ,children from very poor households in Rwanda, children in female headed households and those who do not go to school in Zambia and so on (Smart, 2003). We need to note that these categorizations of vulnerable children for different countries are not exhaustive but just enough to enable me select variables that exhibit some form of vulnerability for the population under study for Uganda.

Uganda's education system follows the 7-6-3 classification whereby it is 7 years of primary education, 6 years of secondary education and 3 years of education at the tertiary level. Correspondingly, the official ages for the three levels are 6-12 years for primary, 13-18 for secondary and 19-24 for tertiary education. In this regard, Demographic and Health Survey collected data on the "current" schooling status of the household members aged between 5 and 24 years.

Data and Methodology

This paper used data from the Demographic and Health Survey conducted in Uganda in 2006. For the analysis, I used the household member records' dataset but downsized it to the population aged 6 to 24 in the Households for this corresponded to the dependent variable of interest, current education status of child. I used a total of 21,346 child records for the entire nationally representative survey.

The dependent variable is the current education status of the Individual or child/youth in our case and the independent variables can be categorized as follows;

- i. Individual Child/Youth Characteristics
 - o Sex
 - o Relationship to head
 - o Vulnerability status defined as living with a parent/adult that was ill for more than 3 months or died within 12 months prior to the survey.
 - o Age that was also introduced in the model as a control variable

- ii. Household/parental/Location Characteristics
 - o Place of residence
 - o Region
 - o Household Wealth Status
 - o Sex of the household head
 - o Age of the household head
 - o Survival status of parents captured as; Both Parents alive father alive and mother alive
 - o Household Size
 - o Household Population under 5 years

The analysis starts with an exploratory approach where all variables, dependent or independent are inspected but most importantly, I use the logistic regression model to study the odds of not/never being enrolled in school for the children/youths aged 6-24 years but also the odds that a child aged 13-24 years is enrolled/has ever enrolled in secondary while controlling for all the explanatory variables.

I am predicting the probabilities of not/never enrolling in school (1= not enrolled, 0= enrolled) and enrolling in secondary school (enrolled/ever enrolled =1, not enrolled=0) for a given set of explanatory factors, hence the use of logistic regression.

Not only is not enrolling in school a form of vulnerability as is the case in some countries like Zambia (Smart, 2003), it is also a cause and an effect of child vulnerability. In this regard, an exploration of the interactions between various forms of vulnerability and school enrolment status would but yield interesting findings.

I model the probability of enrolling in secondary school separately (instead of using educational attainment as one variable) since transitions from one grade to another, and in this case, from primary to secondary, have historically been the points of greatest school attrition (Mare, 1980).

Besides, while the traditionally used education statistics of Gross or Net Enrolment ratio, may portray impressive results at the primary level (GER=117, NER=82) as per UBOS (2007), they are silent on other issues like the proportion of children not in school, the rate of completion of the primary level, the quality of education offered but also regional (Marcoux and Pilon, 2003; Monguérou, 2010) or even household variations in enrolment and progression in school.

Looking at access to the secondary level is a way of looking at a filtered group and explaining its access to this level within the context of individual, household, parental and community characteristics. Table 1 explores the individual characteristics of the children/youths while table 2, looks at household and community characteristics.

Table 1: Child characteristics

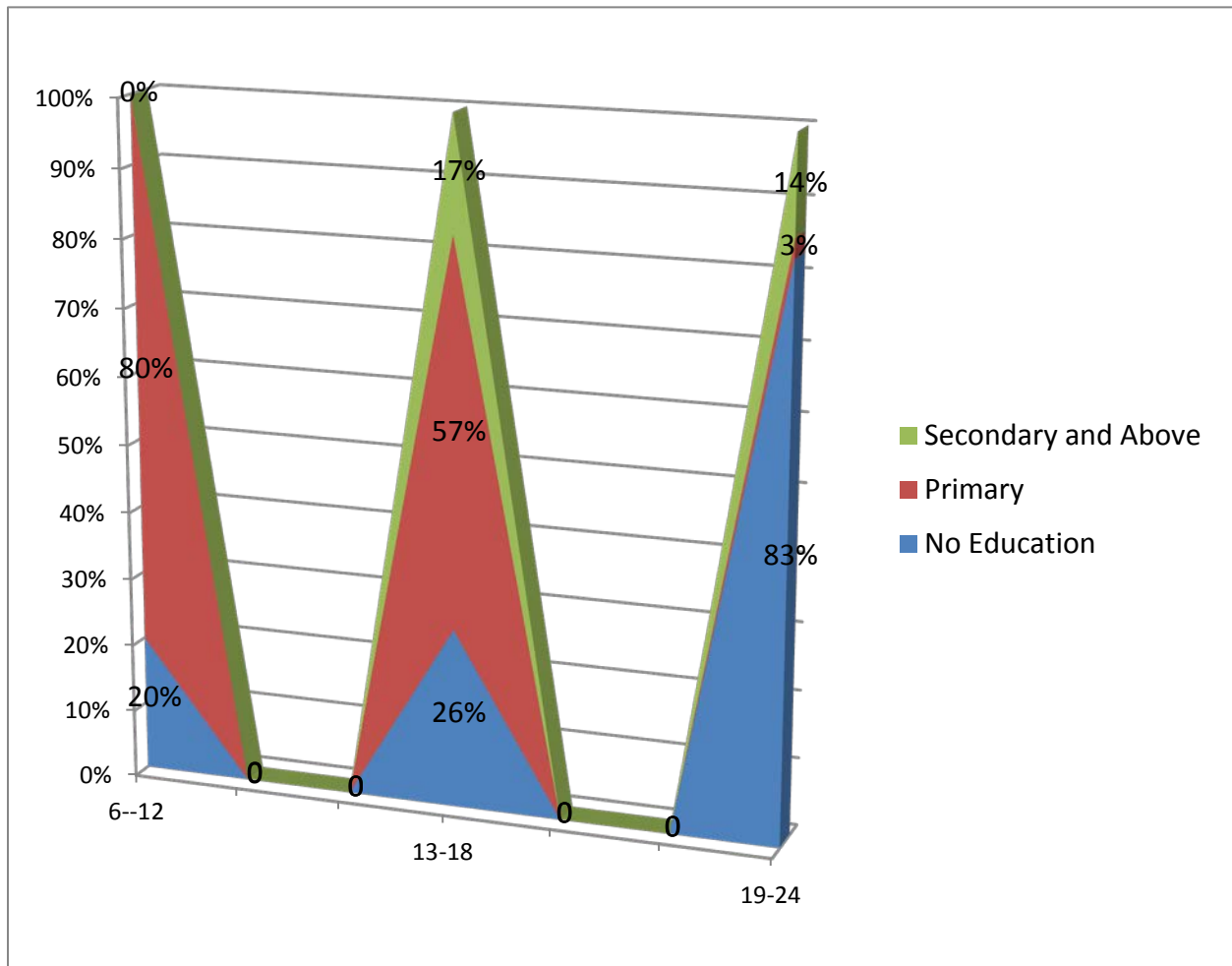
Child/Youth Characteristics		
Education Level	Number	Percent
No education	7,095	33.5
Primary	12,445	58.7
Secondary and Above	1,645	7.8
Total	21,185	100.0
Sex		
Male	10,367	48.6
Female	10,979	51.4
Total	21,346	100.0
Relationship to Head		
Head or spouse	2,091	9.8
Own Child	12,839	60.2
Others	6,416	30.0
Total	21,346	100.0
Parent dead or very sick for 3+months		
No	12,760	77.8
Yes	3,650	22.2
Total	16,410	100.0
Age		
6-12	10,919	51.2
13-18	6,447	30.2
19-24	3,980	18.6
Total	21,346	100.0

Child characteristics

Education status of the child, sex, relationship to head and illness status of parent/caretaker have been hypothesized here and elsewhere as indicators of vulnerability or marginalization (Kobiané, 2009; UBOS, 2007; MOGLSD, 2004; Smart, 2003)

For the population under study, its distribution according to sex is more or less equitable but with regard to educational attainment, while about one third of the household population aged between 6 to 24 were not/had never been in school, only 8% were enrolled in secondary school, a pointer to late entry into school and high attrition levels at the primary level, respectively. The late entry into school and probably drop out and resumption can be illustrated by figure 1.

Figure1: Enrolment in School by Age



A quick glance at this figure brings out two things; that illiteracy increases with age and that most children enroll in secondary, late.

Again, close to one third (30%) of the population in these households were not real children of the household head, indicative of the practice of child fostering but also child labor and the degree to which the studied households embraced extended family practices.

Close to one quarter (22%) of the children were in households where the head or an adult had been ill for more than three months or had died within 12 months preceding the survey. We need to note that the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, defines these as vulnerable children. About eight for every ten household members from whom data on “current” school status was collected, were aged eighteen years and below, indicative of a young population in a country with high population growth rate (3.3% per annum) and high fertility rate (6.7 children per woman).

Table 2: Household and Community Characteristics

Household/Parental/Location Characteristics of Child		
Place of Residence	Number	Percent
Urban	2,878	13.5
Rural	18,468	86.5
Total	21,346	100.0
Region	Number	Percent
Central	5,623	26.3
Eastern	4,657	21.8
Northern	6,416	30.1
Western	4,650	21.8
Total	21,346	100.0
Household Wealth Status		
Poorest	4,869	22.8
Poorer	3,918	18.4
Middle	3,853	18.1
Richer	4,067	19.0
Richest	4,639	21.7
Total	21,346	100.0
Sex of Household head		
Male	14,799	69.3
Female	6,547	30.7
Total	21,346	100.0
Age of Household head		
Bellow 18 years	99	0.5
Above 18 years	21,246	99.5
Total	21,345	100.0
Both Parents Alive		
No	3,162	19.8
Yes	12,840	80.2
Total	16,002	100.0
Mother Alive		
No	1,565	9.6
Yes	14,829	90.4
Total	16,394	100.0
Father Alive		
No	2,805	17.1
Yes	13,580	82.9
Total	16,385	100.0

Household and Community characteristics

While close to one-sixth of the children were located in urban areas, their distribution according to household wealth status was more or less even with the poorest and richest households having slightly more children than others. The northern region had most respondents (30%), followed by the central while the eastern and western regions come in the third place.

Close to one third (31%) of the households were female headed and this is closely related to widowhood and a negligible proportion (0.5%) were child headed at the time of the survey a pointer to the fact that some of the orphaned children are fostered in other households.

The variable on orphan hood was captured as; both parents alive mother alive and father alive. While more children were paternal (17%) and less of maternal (10%) orphans, closely related to differential survival patterns between males and females globally, the fact that 20% the children had lost at least a parent and only less than 1% of the children were in child headed households reinforces the argument that indeed many of the orphans are taken up and live in other households. As to whether this enhances their education is not as obvious, as pointed out by Bruyninckx and Pilon (2010) in the case of Haiti where some parents send young children to their relatives in towns in anticipation of better education just only to end up in child labor, bordering on slavery. Table 3 looks at the relative contribution of each of the independents variables to the dependent in a logistic regression model

Table 3: Logistic regression: Predicting the odds of children's education

Urban					Rural				
Odds of having no education (Aged 6-24 yrs)			Odds of enrolling in secondary (13-24 yrs)		Odds of having no education (Aged 6-24 yrs)		Odds of enrolling in secondary (13-24 yrs)		
	OR	S.E	OR	S.E	OR	S.E	OR	S.E	
Region (ref= Northern)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Central	1.022	0.226	4.128***	1.415	0.777***	0.055	2.547***	0.465	
Eastern	0.654	0.227	4.484***	1.953	0.461***	0.030	1.541**	0.290	
Western	1.068	0.335	2.202*	0.990	0.840***	0.052	0.813	0.159	
Household Wealth Status (ref= Poor)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Middle	0.450*	0.214	0.681	0.621	0.676***	0.042	2.250***	0.440	
Rich	0.426***	0.128	2.100*	1.909	0.470***	0.029	6.370***	1.086	
Sex of Household head (ref= Male)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Female	0.561***	0.092	1.963***	0.384	0.997	0.049	1.35***	0.160	
Age of Household head(ref= >18 yrs)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Below 18 years	1.980	1.27	0.720	0.501	2.145***	0.541	1.482	0.749	
Both Parents Alive (ref= Yes)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
No	0.535	0.409	2.415	2.609	0.735	0.163	2.140	1.005	
Mother Alive (ref= Yes)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
No	1.095	0.356	0.638	0.255	1.305**	0.162	0.830	0.202	
Father Alive (ref= Yes)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
No	1.083	0.436	0.596	0.290	1.351**	0.199	0.645	0.193	
Parent dead / sick for 3+months (ref= No)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Yes	0.685	0.449	1.070	0.143	0.953	0.153	1.430	0.499	
Sex of Child (ref= Female)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Male	0.782	0.117	0.888	0.158	0.875***	0.037	0.914	0.094	
Relationship to Head (ref= Own Child)	(----)		(----)		(----)		(----)		
Others	3.091***	0.501	0.348***	0.070	1.240***	0.063	0.656***	0.082	
Age	1.044**	0.023	1.802***	0.119	0.927***	0.006	1.832***	0.072	
Household Size	0.880***	0.026	1.095***	0.034	0.986	0.009	1.068***	0.021	
Household Population below 5years	1.312***	0.108	0.695***	0.076	0.953**	0.022	0.758***	0.042	

ref= (----) is the reference category, *** significant at 1%, ** significant at 5%, * significant at 10%, S.E is standard error

Region of residence is likely to impact on vulnerability as some children are in hard to reach areas where schools are both few and of poor quality since the best teachers tend to stay in towns or more accessible areas. While region of residence is not related to enrolment status of the child in the urban areas, it remains a critical factor for enrolment in the rural area and progression to secondary in both the urban and rural areas. Indeed, while children in the rural central, eastern and western, are less likely to be uneducated (more likely to be enrolled) than their northern region counterparts, children in the mentioned regions are generally more likely to enroll in secondary in the urban and rural areas than their northern region counterparts. It should be noted that the northern region suffered 20 years of insurgency that not only disrupted the education system from the perspective of supply (number and distribution of school infrastructure, number and quality of teachers, quality of school supervision etc) but also from the demand side (ability of the parents to send and sustain their children in school).

The wealth status of households is not only a factor in children's enrolment in school, it is also critical to accessing secondary schooling, most especially for rural households. Indeed the probability that a child is not educated reduces steadily with an increase in the wealth status of the household, irrespective of place of residence and the chances of accessing secondary education increase proportionately with household wealth to the extent that a child from an affluent household, in the rural area is six times more likely to enroll at secondary level than his/her counterpart from a poor household. This implies that the existence of Universal primary education notwithstanding, other barriers to accessing education still exist. The Qualitative Module of the Uganda National Household Survey (UBOS, 2010) points out lack of scholastic materials like uniforms, exercise books and pens, inadequacy of teachers and child labor in the households among the factors for not being in school and dropouts. This is also echoed by Kakuba (2006) in Uganda and Pilon et al (2010) in Madagascar where the latter also talk of boarding fees, money for feeding and some compulsory fund towards the Parents Association as being barriers to education.

The fact that household wealth greatly explains access to secondary education implies that education at that level is costly for most households especially in the rural areas and that illiteracy and school attrition at the lower levels are in a way exacerbated by poverty within households. These findings corroborate those by Balihuta and Semogerere (1995) on education and poverty in Uganda where they found that poverty was the most important factor inhibiting access to education at all levels.

While children under female heads were less likely to be uneducated in the urban areas, they were at a great advantage with regard to secondary schooling as compared to their counterparts from male headed households and this was equally true for urban and rural residents. In this case therefore, children in male headed households are more vulnerable with regard to progression in school and this is corroborated by the study undertaken by Lloyd and Blanc (1996) in seven countries within Sub-Saharan Africa. Mothers are known to budget better and invest in the education and welfare of the children than fathers. Besides, they can invest more time, love and attention in children all of which enhance academic achievement and attainment but also , may expect more from these children in their old age (given their prior vulnerability in terms of education and access to resources) than their male counterparts(Kaboré et al ,2003).

Children whose household heads were aged below 18 years, were more likely to be uneducated in the rural areas but this had no effect on enrolment in the urban areas as well as enrolment and progression in school in both the urban and the rural areas. This could be related to strong kinship ties where by relatives to these children support them (Ntozi et al, 1999) but also the role of NGOs and other charity based organizations in taking care of these children.

In the same vein, other than in the rural areas where children with no mother or no father were slightly less likely to be enrolled, enrolment in the urban areas and enrolment and progression in both the urban and rural areas were not affected by orphanhood status of children in Uganda and this is corroborated by findings of Lloyd and Blanc (1996) following a study on the role of fathers mothers and others in children schooling within seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where orphanhood seemed not to play role.

While boys were slightly less likely to be uneducated /more likely to be enrolled (OR=0.875) than girls only in the rural areas and this could be attributed to starting school late for girl child protection reasons given inadequacy and unevenly distributed schools, enrolment in secondary school was not gender selective and this corroborates the study by Kakuba (2006) and UBOS (2007), where they found no sex differentials in children's educational attainment in Uganda. It is thus; increasingly evident that the gender gap in educational attainment has narrowed overtime and this places Uganda at an advantage with regard to achieving the indicator of narrowing the gender gap in schooling, the quality of education notwithstanding.

Children of the household head were less likely to have no education (more likely to be enrolled) as compared to other members in the household and this was unequivocally true for both urban and rural households. In the same vein, other household members were less likely to be enrolled in secondary school compared to the children of the head, the place of residence notwithstanding. Seen in the context of household size where an increase in the size reduces the chances of no education especially in urban areas and increases the probability of enrolment in secondary in both urban and rural areas, it is logical to conclude that the other household members come in to do household chores and other home activities as found elsewhere by Bruyninckx and Pilon, (2010) and Kobiané (2006) but also supplement household income all of which enhance enrolment and progression in school for children of the household head.

An increase in the household population below the age of 5 increases the chances of not enrolling in school in the urban area but reduces the chances in the rural area. This may imply that some young, uneducated children are employed to take care of the under-fives in the urban area and that the under-fives in the rural are true siblings of the school age going children in which case the latter are taken care of by either their non-working(formal employment) mothers or other members of the extended family. With regard to enrolment in secondary school, children in both urban and rural areas are equally disadvantaged as corroborated by Wakam (2003) in Cameroun and this can be explained by both increased household, farm and off-farm activities to sustain these children but also reduced income (due to increased medical care and nutrition costs towards the under-fives) to invest in secondary education.

Conclusions and recommendations

Despite the existence of Universal Primary education since 1997, one fifth of the children aged 6 to 12 years were not in school and generally, one third of all the household population aged 6 to 24 were not /had never been to school by the time of the Survey in 2006.

In a nutshell, orphanhood status, age and illness status of the household head and, to a lesser extent sex of the child were not strong factors determining education of children.

Household wealth status, region of residence, household population below 5 years and relationship of the child to the head were negatively related to education of children in both the urban and rural areas.

Household wealth status had an effect on both enrolment of the child and progression to the secondary level implying that children from poorer households are more vulnerable with regard to access to basic education but also progression in the school system. This calls for specific assistance in form of, uniforms, scholastics, boarding fees and feeding costs especially for the very poor households. It also implies that government should hence forth critically look at the quality of education in the public primary schools for it is increasingly common that parents shift their children to private schools for them to get better grades and progress to secondary. In this case, the right to education and the universalization of primary education are in balance if both enrolment and progression are strongly tied to the wealth status of parents or household heads.

Children in the eastern, central and western regions were generally more likely to access secondary education and this is related to supply factors like the number of schools and their distribution, the quality of teaching as well as the level of facilitation in form of textbooks, laboratories, libraries etc. but also demand factors related to the ability of the households. Government and partners should build more schools in an even manner while endeavoring to rectify the regional imbalances in this regard, with emphasis on the northern region but also equip them with laboratories, libraries and books. In addition, government should put incentives like a better salary and other benefits to attract good teachers into working in previously disadvantaged areas, especially in northern Uganda.

Equally children fostered /staying in other households are more vulnerable for they are unlikely not only to access basic education but also fail to progress in school. A positive correlation between household size and access to secondary education by the children of the household head is a pointer to child labor in the receiving households, hence negatively affecting “foreign” children’s education. The Ugandan government should pass a law making primary education compulsory, in which case it will be easier to track down children not in school from the school and reprimand their parents or caretakers rather than looking them up in households or factories where they are “employed”.

Children from female headed households were less vulnerable with regard to children’s education and this, calls for continued education of the girl child as this has a multiplier effect. Efforts by government and especially NGOs to help keep orphans, more so double orphans in school should be sustained.

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