



UiT

THE ARCTIC
UNIVERSITY
OF NORWAY

Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

Centre for Peace Studies

Youth Unemployment in Uganda

Challenges and survival strategies for young women in Kampala

Anne-Marit Pettersen

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List of Abbreviations

AU – African Union

FGP – Focus Group Participant

KVTC – Kyebando Vocational Training Centre

MGLSD – Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

NPHC – National Population and household Census

SH – Sexual Harassment

UBOS – Uganda Bureau of Statistics

UN – United Nation

UNHS – Uganda National Household Survey

WHO – World Health Organization

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Abstract

Uganda has one of the youngest and fastest growing populations in the world. Youth are often described as a group of people with high potential for increasing productivity and hence can be a good basis for economic growth. However, a large young and fast-growing population also poses immense challenges in the form of widespread youth unemployment.

Statistics shows that youth faces a higher unemployment rates than adults, and that women faces higher rates than men. Hence, young women face a double burden by being both youth and female. Young women often find themselves trapped in the middle between the expectations culture and society has of them as women, and their own aspirations.

This thesis uses gender analysis to identify some of the challenges faced by youths, especially young women, when looking for employment. And secondly, examines the survival strategies employed by youths.

The main findings from the thesis suggest that socially constructed gender norms and cultural practices may discriminate against young women's access to employment. Women reported facing high levels of Sexual Harassment by potential employers, which made some of them preferring work in the informal sector or as self-employed. As a survival strategy, cross-generational relationships were stressed as a survival strategy both for men and women.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Sexual Harassment, Gender, Cross-Generational Relationships, Survival Strategies, Gender analysis

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1. Introduction

In most African countries, unemployment and underemployment among especially youths have continued to rise. The unemployment is made worse by a large youth population, weak national labor markets and persistent poverty in the countries. Youth unemployment in Uganda is one of the highest in Africa (ActionAid, 2012). Uganda also have the second largest percentage of young people in the whole world, with a median age of 15.9 (Myers, 2016). The National Population and Household Census (UBOS, 2014) found that staggering 78 % of the population is below 30 years old.

The high unemployment is called Uganda's ticking time bomb (Mbogo, 2015) by local media as high unemployment rates means that a lot of youths are left without anything constructive to do. The high level of idleness can have a destabilizing and disturbing effect on the economy as well as the society at large as the youth often are at the forefront of revolutions and political turmoil.

Young women often have less capital in forms of skills, savings, and credit than men do, which makes them especially vulnerable (Okoiye, 2003). Women also face socially constructed gender norms and stereotypes that may discriminate against their access to employment (ibid). Female economic empowerment has increasingly been regarded as a fundamental strategy both to eradicate poverty and to achieve gender equality (Chant and Jones 2005, p.185).

The increased empowerment of women together with a declining economic situation in Uganda, has led to more women entering into the labor force. Young women often find themselves in a difficult situation where society has expectations from them as women, and they also have their own aspirations that are to a certain extent reinforced by the changing development processes and contradictory to the society. Hence it seems like the society is at a changing point. Where traditionally men have been the main 'providers', now women are increasingly entering the work force. Competing with the men for the few available jobs and challenging the existing notions of gender and gender relations.

1.1 Research Question

The aim of this study is to shed a light on the current problem of urban youth unemployment in Kampala, Uganda and its consequences for young women. The main focus will be on

identifying some of the challenges that young Ugandan females are facing directly and indirectly because of the high unemployment rates and the coping mechanisms they employ in order to get by. This will be analyzed through gender lenses looking at the changing gender relations and roles in the Ugandan society as an explanation of the results from the findings.

In this study I was interested in three aspects

1. Challenges faced by youth in looking for employment
2. Coping mechanisms/survival strategies
3. Gender aspect – tradition vs. modernity

In order to have a guideline throughout the process some questions were formulated to be used in the interviews. The questions worked as a guideline in conducting the fieldwork and gave inspiration to discussions in the interviews and focus groups. This will be further discussed in the methodology chapter. The interview guide questions are attached as an appendix (Appendix 1).

1.2 Relevance, importance and motivations

My first encounter with Kampala and Uganda was as an exchange student in 2012 when I spent 6 months studying at Makerere University as part of my bachelor degree. During my studies I was living in Wandegaya, a suburb of Kampala consisting mostly of students living at hostels, located right next to Katanga – one of the biggest slums in Kampala. A vibrant area with people everywhere and noise, always music playing, church singing, cars and bodaboda's passing by. Hundreds of small shops selling second hand clothes, bags, pillows, shoes, electronics, airtime and street food.

I got many friends in my class who were all fearing what to do after graduating “there are no jobs” – they would tell me. “The crime rates are going up and youths are restless, they have nothing to do”. “The girls are supplementing their income and surviving by dating older men that can buy them hair, nice food and clothes”. This was the statements I heard repeatedly. This peaked my interest. How are youths in Kampala surviving when they lack employment and income?

Youth constitute the highest and fastest growing proportion of Ugandan society, therefore there is a need to understand the challenges they are facing. Okojie (2003, p.7) remarked that

due to unemployment many youths are increasingly getting involved in criminal activity in one way or the other. Further this will have a negative effect on other people in the society

With regard to gender, female economic empowerment has increasingly been regarded as fundamental strategies both to eradicate poverty and to achieve gender equality (Chant and Jones 2005, p.185). Research have highlighted many challenges that youths are facing because of unemployment and underemployment, but not much literature can be found on how this affects the females specifically. This is in line with the findings of Chand and Jones (2005, p.186) that research on livelihoods among young people tends to neglect the gender dimension.

This thesis seeks to contribute to reveal some of the challenges faced and survival strategies employed by youths, especially women, in Kampala.

Regarding youth unemployment, Uganda is especially interesting because of the combination of a very young population, high population growth and birth rate combined with a rising unemployment rate.

1.3 Scope and limitations

This master thesis follows a qualitative approach. While a certain number of interviews and one focus group has been carried out, the total number of participants is too small to be representative of the Ugandan youth overall.

Uganda's national youth policy defines youth as those between 15-29 years old (MGLSD, 2001, p.9). This thesis focuses on those individuals aged between 18 and 30 years old, as the fieldwork only includes participants which is above 18 years old.

As mentioned in the introduction this thesis is focusing on urban youth unemployment in Kampala, mostly on educated or semi educated youths, and more specifically on the challenges faced by women and the survival mechanisms they apply to survive in a country with one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. Youth unemployment is both a social and economic problem. The interest of this study is concentrating on the social problems.

1.4 Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into two main parts; the Contextual Framework and The Empirical Findings and Analysis. These main parts are then further divided into several sub-chapters speaking to different issues.

PART ONE - The contextual framework

This part spells out the theoretical and conceptual definitions. Gives a short introduction to Uganda and Kampala and the demographic development of the country. It provides some background to the problem of youth unemployment, and explains gender relations in Uganda. And most importantly, it includes the methodology chapter of the thesis.

PART TWO - Empirical Findings and Analysis.

As the title indicates; this is the findings and analysis part of my thesis. Here I will present the findings from the fieldwork and analyze the data. This will be done within the contextual framework as spelled out in part one.

PART ONE – Contextual Framework

2 Theoretical and Conceptual definitions

This chapter will lay out key theoretical concepts which I have employed to interpret and analyze my research findings from the fieldwork and document analysis. The main concepts are youth, gender and gender relations and the concept of culture. The presentation of gender and gender relations is of special importance as I have used these concepts as a lens for understanding the challenges women face in looking for employment and the survival mechanisms they employ.

2.1 Defining youth

The word youth is plagued with ambiguity. It is variedly defined in different cultural context. Several UN entities, instruments and regional organizations have different definitions of youth. The UN secretariat defines ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years while the UN youth fund as those between 15-32 (UN fact sheet – definition of youth). Uganda’s national youth policy defines youth as those between 15-29 years old (MGLSD, 2001, p.9), while the African youth report (2009, p.11) defines youth as individuals aged 15-35 years in line with the definition given by the African Union (AU).

The African youth report explains that AU adopted this definition based on its recognition of the limitations connected with UN age categorization, based on the argument that the transition from childhood to adulthood, and the defining process of a youth can occur at different ages, and over different periods depending on the economic, social, cultural and political context (ibid). In Africa the tendency to extend the category of youth to 30 years and beyond seems to be a reflection of the emerging phenomenon of a prolonged period of youth dependence (Chigunta, 2012, p.2).

2.2 Defining Culture

The concept of ‘culture’ is very broad and researchers have even argued whether culture is something we “have” or “something we do”. The traditional understanding has been that culture is something that people ‘have’, in that they belong to this or that culture. However, Dahl (2014) argues that in today’s global world this understanding has become problematic as

cultures often are mixed. He concludes that culture therefore is something people ‘do’.

“Culture is not something people have, but something they construct in specific human encounters where mutual relations and power are part of the context. Meanings are shared, interpreted and created when people do something together” (Dahl, 2014).

With these two concepts of culture in mind we can say that in general, culture is a way of behaving, thinking and reacting to situations. Culture is not static but changing with time. And that several versions of ‘the same’ culture can exist at the same time as people share and interpret their surroundings.

Gender identities and gender relations are critical aspects of culture because it shapes daily life in the family, the wider community and the workplace. Gender, like race or ethnicity, functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings assigned to being male or female (Tuyizere, 2007, p.45).

2.3 Defining Gender and Gender Relations

The term ‘gender’ refer to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles and relationships between women and men, they are socially constructed and vary widely among societies and cultures (WHO – Gender, 2017). Gender differs from ‘sex’, which refers to the biological differences between men and women determined at birth, while gender describes the socially constructed roles, activities and responsibilities assigned to women and men. While ‘sex’ is static and does not change, gender has a more dynamic character in that the content of the concept can change over time.

Gender relations refers to the social relations between and among women and men based on the gender norms and roles prescribed by gender. These relations often create hierarchies between and among groups that can lead to unequal power relations and disadvantaging one group over another (WHO - Gender relations, 2017). Baaz and Stern (2010, p.42) argue that *“Gendered power inequalities are embedded in the production and reproduction of gender norms, which regulate the character and behavior of “good women and good men”, therefore certain expectations are deeply although not permanently, inhabited in gender chores and characteristics”*. When individuals or groups do not fit the established gender norms they often face stigma, discriminatory practices or social exclusion (WHO -Gender, 2017).

2.4 Gender as an analytical framework

Gender analysis is according to Hunt (2004, p. 139) “*the process of assessing the impact that a development activity may have on females and males, and on gender relations*” and that gender analysis can be used “*to assess differences in participation, benefits and impacts between males and females, including progress towards gender equality and changes in gender relations*” (ibid). Arnot & Fennel stated that the concept of gender is vital because when applied to social analysis it reveals how women’s subordination is socially constructed (Arnot & Fennel, 2008, p.2). This understanding makes gender analysis a useful tool for my thesis when looking at the findings from my fieldwork.

In line with the definition of gender presented above, gender is in this thesis understood as socially constructed behavioral expectations and experiences that often are set to men and women. Gender is learned through socialization at an early stage and children/youths will experience pressure from relatives, community and society as a whole on how they behave. The content of ‘gender’ in a culture is shaped by social, cultural, economic and political conditions, as well as expectations and obligations within society (Tuyizere, 2007). This means that if one or several of these conditions change, it can also affect ‘gender’ and the expectations and norms that come with it.

3 Background to Uganda and Youth Unemployment

This chapter should serve to give a background to some important elements of my study. Firstly, I provide a brief introduction to Uganda and the demographic development of the country. The main part of the chapter is devoted to presenting youth unemployment in Uganda, including the prevalence, social impact, some reasons and a short overview of available jobs.

3.1 Uganda brief introduction

The Republic of Uganda is a landlocked country located in Eastern Africa, on the northern shores of Lake Victoria bordering to the countries Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, and The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The country was a former protectorate of the British Empire from 1894 until it gained its independence on the 9th of October 1962 (CIA 2017).

Uganda is home to four remaining kingdoms which the largest one is the Buganda

Kingdom. This kingdom was highly prioritized by the British and is where the country takes its modern name from (Afritorial, 2013). Uganda is the Swahili expression for Buganda and was the name the British used for the country (ibid). Uganda has a rich ethnic diversity. The population consists of more than 40 ethnic groups, which are then further sub-divided into clans. The largest ethnic group is the Baganda tribe, which compromises almost 17 % of the Ugandan population and is located mostly in the Central Region of Uganda. Other important groups include the Banyankole (10 %), Basoga (9%), Bakiga (7%), Iteso (7%), Langi (6.%), Bagisu (5%), Acholi (4%) and Lugbara (3%) among others (CIA 2017).

Uganda has an estimated population of around 41 million inhabitants of which 16.8 % of the live in urban areas (CIA, The world Factbook - Urbanization, 2017). The political and economic capital is Kampala, which is in Central Uganda at the shores of Lake Victoria and has approximately 1.9 million inhabitants. Other urban areas are Mbarara in the West, Gulu



Figur 1: Map of Uganda (source: <http://kids.britannica.com/elementary/art-64955/Uganda>)

and Lira in the north and Jinja and Mbale in the East but they are all considerably smaller than Kampala.

The inhabitants of Uganda are mainly Roman Catholic (39%), Protestant (45%), and Moslems (13%) (CIA, The world Factbook, 2017). Traditional beliefs and superstitions are still widespread in the Ugandan society although only less than 1% identifies as believing in the traditional Ugandan religions (ibid).

President Museveni took over power in 1986 through a military coup and has since stayed in power, bringing with him a relative stability to the country. Museveni has been credited with restoring relative stability and economic prosperity to Uganda after years of civil war and repression under former leaders Milton Obote and Idi Amin (CIA, 2017). This political and economic stability has brought with it opportunities to address social inequalities and improve the well-being of citizens, but progress has been slow (ActionAid, 2012).

Other areas like demographic development, youth unemployment and the gender relations in the Ugandan context will be discussed in more detail in the following sub-chapters. The purpose of this short background was to give a quick overall introduction to the country Uganda.

3.2 Demographic development

With a population of 41 million, Uganda is one of Africa's largest and fastest-growing countries, on top of this, it is also one of the countries with the youngest population in the world. Therefore, you cannot talk about youth unemployment in Uganda without including the demography of the country.

The Ugandan census from 2014 reports that out of a total population of 34.5 million¹, 55 % is below 18 years old and 78 % of the total population is below 30 years old. On top of this Uganda also has one of the world's most rapidly growing populations with a total fertility rate at 5.8 children per woman (NPHC, 2014,p.16). These numbers suggest that Uganda's population will continue to grow in the coming years, because of the large number of people

¹ CIA world factbook estimates the total population to be 41 million in 2017
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ug.html>

who are either currently at an age when they are having children or who will soon enter that age group (WPD sheet, 2011).

The population pyramid in Figure 2 shows the graphical presentation of age and sex composition of the Ugandan population. Uganda’s rapidly growing population places great pressure on the economy as it affects the dependency ratio, and size of the labor force which is characterized by a fast-growing working-age population. An article published by the World Bank (Empowering Uganda’s youth, 2015) suggests that youth unemployment continues to be a serious problem on the African continent, where the share of the population between ages 15-25 is rapidly growing, but not in tandem with the job market.

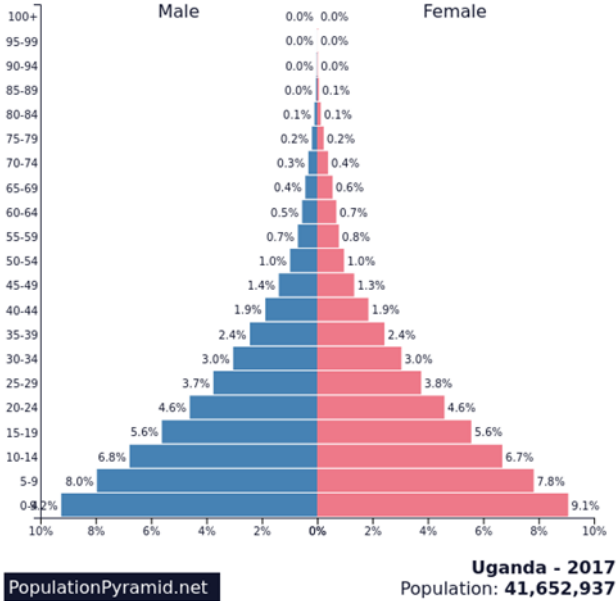


Figure 2: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/uganda/2017/>

3.3 Youth Unemployment

In this chapter, I will present the situation of youth unemployment in Uganda with focus on the Urban unemployment. How serious is the problem of youth unemployment in Kampala? I will also provide a contextual background to the problem of youth unemployment in Africa in general, also including the gender dimension.

It is important to note that high unemployment is in no way unique to Uganda. Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon experienced in different countries all over the world. Karahman (2011) notes in his phd dissertation² that the challenge of youth unemployment is an increasingly challenging phenomenon for both developing and advanced economies (Karahman, 2011, p. iv) and refers to O’Higgins (in Karhaman, 2011 p.13) stating that youth unemployment rates are generally observed to be higher than adult unemployment for every country for which statistics are available. This is also the finding of Chigunta who in his paper

² Karahman’s dissertation is titled “Youth Employment and Unemployment in developing countries: Macro challenges with micro perspectives”

about the socio-economic situation of youth in Africa points to youth unemployment as one of the major challenges facing developing countries, especially in Africa (Chigunta, 2002, p.10).

3.3.1 Statistical overview of the prevalence of unemployment in Uganda

Looking for the statistics of unemployment in Uganda proved to be a comprehensive task as numbers varied greatly across the scale. The World Bank's estimate is as low as 2.3 % in 2016, in contrast the same database puts Norway at 4.8 % (World Bank, 2016, unemployment, total). The Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2014 (NPHS, 2014, p.27) established that 78 % of the working age population (14-64 years) was working and puts the unemployment rate at 9.4 % (NPHC, 2014, p. ix). When looking specifically at the World Bank's statistics for unemployed youths the numbers are around 4 %, then counting the percentage of the total labor force aged 15-24 years old (World Bank, youth Unemployment, 2016).

If one looks at the official unemployment rates in Uganda, it seems as if there is not a big problem or big concern in the country. This is a stark contrast to the concerns raised by both the government of Uganda and several NGOs, among them ActionAid Uganda who have argued that the numbers do not adequately reflect the impressions from the ground. A survey carried out by ActionAid in 2012 showed that 61.1 % out of 1100 youths in 11 districts questioned were unemployed (ActionAid 2012, p.27). Youth Map Uganda (IYF, 2011, p.viii) notes that the country has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa and that youth constitute 80% of the nations unemployed. These numbers are a big jump from the official numbers presented. In media, youth unemployment is often referred to as Uganda ticking time bomb³ and even local artist Bobi Wine⁴ has made a song⁵ about the high levels of unemployment and how it's affecting the youths. The high levels of youth unemployment has been a large cause of concern for the government and the president himself admitted publicly in 2013 that "*unemployment is the main problem affecting the youth in the country and the entire world*" (Vison Reporter, 2013, 14. August) and that the problem of unemployment is getting out of hand.

³ E.g. see New Vision (2013) https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1328972/youth-unemployment-pressing-govt and Monitor (2015) <http://allafrica.com/stories/201507311377.html>

⁴ Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu aka Bobi Wine is known as the 'Getto President'. 11 July 2017 he was elected member of parliament representing Kyaddondo East constituency in Wakiso District, Uganda Central. He is well known for using music to spread political messages.

⁵ Bobi Wine – Time Bomb <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5EjmTWRFrE>

One reason for the gap in statistical numbers could be that a large percentage of the population is employed in the informal sector, or self-employed, groups that tend to be difficult to measure (Devlin, 2013). The difficulty with providing accurate statistics on youth unemployment has also been noted by Chigunta (2002, p 10-11). He points to the conceptual and design limitations imposed by definitions, and measurement problems of ‘employment’ and ‘youth’ as some of the issues making it difficult to assess the scope of the problem.

Given the fact that 78 % of the population, over three quarter of the total Ugandan population is below 30 years old and the statements from the government about the seriousness of the problem the official number seems like an understatement. I agree with Michal Pletscher⁶ (2015, p.7) who in his Master thesis about the sources of youth unemployment in Kampala, concludes that the 4 % unemployment rates presented by World Bank seems like a massive understatement and suggest that the actual numbers are closer to the ones stated by ActionAid.

3.3.2 Gender differences in the statistic

The International Youth Foundation (IYF, 2011) recorded the gender differences among youth and noted that the unemployment rate for females (ages 18-24) was at 27 % compared to 9 % for males in the same age group in 2009. For the whole of Africa, female employment rates were 33.8 % for females, against 49.7 % for males in the year 2000 (Okoiye, 2003, p.3). Official labor statistics have a tendency to not adequately reflect women’s activities, as a great deal of women’s economic activities are for family consumption and unpaid activities in the home. This goes especially for the rural areas where production systems are still predominantly household, or family based (ibid). The higher unemployment among women may also be explained by the socially constructed gender norms that discriminate against women’s access to employment especially in the private sector (ActionAid, 2012, p.29). These gender norms will be further explored later in this thesis.

3.3.3 Behind the numbers – The social impact of Youth Unemployment

In her research paper focusing on unemployment in the US, Sarah Ayres gives a good description of how youth unemployment creates negative long-term effects for both the individual youth and for a country as a whole (Ayres, 2013). According to Ayres, being unemployed for a longer time at a young age leads to a lack of work experience and skills

⁶ Michael Pletscher is one of the people in interviewed during my fieldwork in 2014. He was then the Director of Fontes Foundation in Kampala.

which leads to lower earnings for a person. Those reduced earnings then lead to reduced purchasing power of those youths, which again has a negative impact on the overall economy and aggravates the problem of youth unemployment further as the economic growth of the country is reduced. Youth unemployment also creates additional costs for the government as it must deal with consequences like increased crime rates as people are struggling to survive and make the ends meet (Ayres, 2013, p.7). I believe this to not only be true for the United States, but for any country with high unemployment rates as similar observations have been done by other studies (Chigunta, 2002; Kahrman, 2011; Okoije 2003). Another aspect of youth unemployment in many cities in Africa, including Kampala, is visible 'idleness', whereby youth congregate at bars and eating places to drink or converse or smoke marijuana, for substantial parts of the day (Okoije, 2003, p.7). In Kampala, sports betting has also become increasingly popular in the last years and youths gather at the sports bar to make their bets in the hope of earning some quick cash. This idleness has also contributed to the development what Okoije refers to as the "street youth" in Africa, where youths grow up in a culture that encourages criminal behavior (2003, p.7). These youths survive by engaging in various activities such as petty trading, stealing, pick-pocketing, prostitution, touting and other illegal activities. Some have become drunkards, others are on drugs such as marijuana (Chigunta, 2002, p.17-18).

3.3.4 Reasons for Unemployment

A major aggregate determinant of youth unemployment is related to the size of the youth work force as a greater number of people in the labor market mean a greater number of jobs required to accommodate them (Kahraman, 2011, p.19). The population growth, or age of the population, is however not the only reason for the in-creased number of youths being unemployed. General poverty, an outdated education system and skills mitch match, corruption and negative attitudes amongst the youths themselves are only some of the reasons that are often mentioned regarding youth unemployment in Uganda (Pletscher, 2015, p.9-15). A World Bank report (2008/9, p.5) revealed that in Sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment is highest amongst those with higher education attainment. The reason for the high unemployment rates amongst low or uneducated youths was explained in connection to the point that they tend to indulge in the informal sector, unlike educated youths who tend to depend on employment in the formal sector notably in the public service.

Another key factor leading to specifically urban unemployment, is the high degree of geographical mobility of youth in the form of rapid rural-urban migration which has resulted

in a concentration of youth in African cities where there are few jobs available in modern sector establishments (wage, formal employment) (Okoiye, 2003, p.6). The same scenario has been observed to occur in other major African cities such as Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya (Haji, 2007). Another cause of the high unemployment rates in Uganda, is the societal and cultural aspect that generally encourages young people, especially the girls, to continue to depend on parental support even at an old age (YLTT, 2012, p.6).

3.3.5 Jobs available

As indicated above, the formal employment market is not able to consume the large youth population seeking employment. Those lucky to get formal employment often works in different NGOs, as clerks in Bank, Academia, doctors etc. All these options are there. The problem is partly as mentioned the skills miss match and often the low education level of many youths. This has been noted by several analysts who argue that regarding formal employment in Africa the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers (Kahraman, 2011, p.7), and that employers tend to prefer those with a lot of experience (Pletscher, 2015). The challenges mentioned causes young people to settle for not-ideal employment, such as jobs that are low-paying, temporary, or unsafe, or ones for which they are overqualified (Delvin, 2013).

In Uganda, informal employment continues to be predominant and accounts for about 67 % of total employment outside agriculture (IYF, 2011, p.19). The Labor Market transition survey statistics on labor quality indicators, showed that informal employment was almost universal among young workers and put the number at 92 % (UBOS, 2016, p.3). Some of the major informal sector areas that attract youths in urban areas are bodaboda's, welding, carpentry, and hair dressing saloons, in addition to construction, market vending and road side restaurants selling local food (ActionAid, 2012, p.28).

Women in the informal sector tend to work as hairdressers, dressmakers and petty traders. In Kampala providing copy and printing services in small roadside shops is also a popular activity. Okoiye (2003, p.5) also notes the significantly darker activities like dealing in prohibited substances such as drugs, stealing, robberies and prostitution. She also notes the informal employments as having an element of underemployment as many tend to work long hours under poor working conditions with little to show for it in terms of economic return (ibid). In lack of employment and a steady income, Okoiye further explains that many youths

survive from the goodwill of their parents, relatives and friends, while young women often rely on their husbands or get involved in sex work because of a lack of better alternative means of employment (ibid).

4 The Gender Dimension

In this chapter I will provide information of the gender relations and gender perspectives in the Ugandan society. This will add to the conceptual framework which the analysis of the findings from my fieldwork is built upon and many of the issues presented here will be further explored in part 2 of this thesis. It will also serve as a literature review of existing research in the field.

4.1 Female Unemployment

Young women often have less access to jobs, education, and training, and are more likely to be fully engaged in nonlabor-market activities, such as caregiving and household work. Several research's both on global level and in an African context have noted that young women face greater constraints than their male counterparts in finding decent work (Pletscher, 2015; Okojie, 2003; Chant & Jones, 2005). The high rate of joblessness among females compared to males is often attributed to employers' preference of men to women in some types of jobs. Female youth are also reluctant to search the job market and compete for employment opportunities. Statistics shows that youth faces a higher unemployment rates than adults, and that women faces higher rates than men. Therefore, we can say that in many ways young females faces a double burden by being both youth and female.

As stated previously, women in Uganda face various structural constrains on their participation in economic activities. Okojie (2003) points out some of the major constrains as customary laws and norms that hinder women more than men, from obtaining land, credit, education, information and healthcare. A second reason she points to is time poverty. This resulting from women's multiple and competing reproductive and productive responsibilities as women tend to be responsible for cooking, raising the children and taking care of the house in addition to any other income generating activity (ibid).

4.2 Gender Relations in Uganda

In Uganda, legislative frameworks⁷ protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality have seen some positive outcomes but to a large degree they lack implementation. Especially

⁷ The constitution of Uganda acknowledges the importance of gender equality, Uganda has also laws protecting women from domestic violence, female genital mutilation, and trafficking. The parliament gazetted the Employment regulations in 2012, which among other things deals with the issue of Sexual Harassment. Uganda is currently implementing the second National Development Plan (NAPII, 2015-2020) which recognizes the

customary laws and practices, as well as social norms continue to impact the implementation and efficacy of the laws (SIGI, 2015. p.19). Tuyizere, a female researcher at Makerere University have written a comprehensive book about gender relations in Uganda where she analyzes the role of culture and religion for gender development. She gives a good introduction to the current state of gender relations in Uganda:

“Although the Ugandan constitution gives women the same rights as men before the law, societal ideas, attitudes and customs have ensured and perpetuated a negative image of women. The fact that most ethnic groups in Uganda are patriarchal in nature has ensured male authority over women in the home and dominance in all important social institutions, such as marriage, policy-making at all levels and administration. This state of affairs is supported not only by men, but also by women. Cultural practices in most parts of Uganda hold women not as equal partners to their counterparts, but as subordinates. Women are seen as workers who were married so that they could labor in homes and the fields, or as a necessary source of wealth, as they bring bride price on marriage, or they are perceived as mere reproduction agents. Traditionally, they are expected to fulfill the roles of mother, housewife, family worker and agricultural laborers” (Tuyizere, 2007, p.49)

Uganda is a highly patriarchal society. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men “dominate, oppress and exploit women” (ibid). Men are deemed to be superior and women require controlling. It governs how social and state institutions operate and the values and attitudes forming these operations, hence, patriarchy is the foundation upon which gender relations in Uganda are based (ibid). Structural domains such as ethnic groups and classes generates a system of values and beliefs that create gender differences in social behavior, and at the same time reinforce and maintain the status quo in terms of economic and social relations (Ssetuba, 2002). Tuyizere points that many cultural practices illustrate the perceived inferiority of women *“Women are expected to kneel before men while serving food, welcoming or talking to men or asking for something. Women are not permitted to look directly into the eyes of men when talking to them. Women are expected by the culture to carry water for their husbands’ baths”* (Tuyizere, 2007, p.47).

Although much of the research mentioned above is done specifically for women in rural areas,

importance of gender mainstreaming for fostering inclusive growth and development in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SOURCE: The Uganda Gender Policy 2017 (August draft, p.5) report prepared for the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

to a large degree they are also true for the Urban population. Wyrod (2008) research about gender differences in urban Uganda finds that despite the economic hardships faced by residents of Bwaise⁸, masculinity remains strongly tied to the breadwinner identity (p.804). And that it exists an established hegemonic masculinity and men are premised on maintaining the patriarchal power relations that frame men's power over women as natural and inevitable (ibid p.809).

4.2.1 The Urban youth – caught between tradition and 'modernity'

The title of Wyrod's (2008) article "*Masculinity and Shifting Discourses of Gender Difference in Urban Uganda - Between Women's Rights and Men's Authority*" gives us a good description of what is happening in Kampala today. As the title indicates he found that there is a shift in the gender discourse and relations (especially) in urban areas of Uganda today.

Because of the changing gender relations and roles, many women and men today find themselves as lost in a world between modern and traditional culture (Tuyizere, 2007, p.57) where on the one side society expects them to uphold their role as mothers and wife, while at the same time being encouraged to become more independent and empowered. Today the employment sector attracts more women into the labor force and more women are taking higher education. This involvement of women in the labor sector has had an influence on women roles at home which has brought about criticism from the wider community, since the 'modern' Ugandan urban woman tend to leave domestic work and child care to house maids (Tuyizere, 2007, p. 45-46). Many people have embraced the changes, while others resist. One example of this is Munyambazi (2004, in Tuyizere, 2007, p.57) who when referring to the changing roles in society comments that women have lost their dignity, leading to "rotten values and behaviour", especially among the youth.

Mbasalaki's research about Sexual Harassment in the workplace in Uganda finds that some women find it hard being taken seriously by men at work because some men perceive them as sexual objects rather than colleagues at work (Mbasalaki, 2011). The high level of SH in the workplace in Kampala is to me an indicator that the traditional gender roles influence the 'modern' work environment, which is something that will be further discussed in the analysis part of this thesis.

⁸ Bwaise is a urban sub-burb of Kampala. It is located just next to Wandegeya where much of the fieldwork of this thesis was done.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction to methodology

In the following chapter I will reflect upon and describe the methodological choices for this thesis, and analyze the role I attained within my research, encompassing my personal reflections and experiences.

The data for this thesis has been a continuous process over several years, but the fieldwork itself was done over a period of 5 weeks from end of July to beginning of September 2014. This was although not my first time in Uganda as I spent 7 months in Kampala as an exchange student at Makerere University in 2012 as part of my bachelor in Norway. I then have been back several times also after the official fieldwork was conducted and lived in Kampala for most of 2017.

This thesis uses a qualitative approach and is a case study of youth unemployment in Kampala. In short, the methodology consists of semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion, combined with document analysis as a means of both validating the data but also gaining pre-knowledge of the topic before carrying out the fieldwork. Small talk and conversations with random people, friends, bodaboda⁹ drivers etc. constitute inseparable parts of my cultural knowledge and serve as a tool to analyze the information from interviews. The fact that I have been in Kampala several times over periods has strengthened my cultural knowledge and competence of the country.

5.2 Qualitative research

This subchapter will briefly describe qualitative research before moving on to explaining and discussing the chosen methods for this research.

Commonly when defining qualitative research its defined as the opposite as qualitative research in the way that while the latter focuses on aspects that can be measured by statistic, qualitative research is concerned with not so easily measurable aspects (Silverman, 2006, p.43). According to Holliday (2007, p.6-7), qualitative research develops from anthropology and sociology and therefore he argues that qualitative surveys and statistics are insufficient for understanding human affairs, instead it is necessary to delve deep into the subjective qualities

⁹ A bodaboda is a motorbike taxi commonly used for transport in Uganda

that govern behavior. As the objective of this thesis is to identify challenges youth face in looking for employment and survival mechanisms because of the lack of the former, a qualitative approach is the most useful as this is social aspects that cannot easily be answered by looking at e.g. statistics.

5.2.1 Document Analysis

An important part of my research has been the use of document analysis. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic material (Bowen, 2009, p.27). As Bowen (2009) have noted, researchers typically review prior literature as part of their studies and incorporate that information in their reports. Merriam (1988, in Bowen, 2009, p.28) underlined that in cross-cultural research, relying on prior studies may be the only realistic approach. Therefore, as a foreigner to Uganda, document analysis was crucial for me in gaining some understanding of the context of the issue of youth unemployment and gender relations in Uganda as a preparation for my fieldwork. This, together with my existing knowledge of Uganda, helped me identifying my thesis topic and the research questions to be discussed. The documents include articles, online newspaper articles, facts sheets and statistics, master thesis and research on similar topics. The documents I analyzed provided me with background information as well as historical insight and helped me contextualize data collected during interviews.

The second reason for using document analysis as part of my data collection is that document analysis can assist the researcher in verification of the findings. This verification also helps the researcher to reduce the impact of potential biases that can exist in a single study. According to Patton (1990, in Bowen (2009), p.28) triangulation helps the researcher guard against accusations that a study's findings are an artifact of a single source or a single investigator's bias. Document research can off course also contradict the researcher's findings which can then be a sign that the researcher should investigate further. The documents referred to in this thesis have, to a large degree, verified my findings, confirming they are not just merely the results of my imagination but something that other researchers also have observed. I did not come across any documents strongly disagreeing with my findings, that is not to say they don't exist but it seems the main agreement in the field is aligned to my findings.

Many of the documents does not relate directly to the topic discussed in my thesis but still provide crucial information for understanding the wider context of youth unemployment and contribute greatly to the background chapter of this thesis.

In sum, documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other data sources.

5.2.2 Semi structured interviews

In addition to the document analysis, a large part of my data collection was done through interviews in different forms. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p.315) states that *“While all interviews are used to get to know the interviewee better, the purpose of that ‘knowing’ varies according to the research question and the disciplinary perspective of the researcher”* and that the purpose of the qualitative research interview is to *“contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewees”*.

In my case I mainly used semi-structured interviews in my fieldwork, both when it came to the in-depth one on one interviews and in the focus group I conducted, as I felt this allowed me to have a freer approach to the interview itself. Semi-structured interviews are often organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between the interviewer and the participant (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:315) which allowed the conversation to have a better flow. I had a page of about ten open questions that I would use as a guide in my interviews. These were focused both on firstly, answering the research questions of challenges faced by youth looking for employment and identifying survival strategies, and secondly, to understand cultural aspects like gender relations in Uganda and the deeper context of youth unemployment in the county. The idea was that the latter would contribute to my contextual framework and thereby strengthen my analysis of the findings from the research. Some of the questions were also changed after the first few interviews as I felt they were too much of a yes/no question and therefore not open enough to create a good dialogue. I wanted to avoid a situation where me as the researcher would ask a question and the participant(s) would simply answer in short then waiting for the next question. My goal was to delve deeper into the social and personal matters of the participants in order to obtain a wider range of experience, thoughts and feelings about youth

unemployment in Kampala. The question guide used for my interviews can be found in the appendix (see Appendix 1).

5.3 Gaining access to the field

One of the most fundamental tasks relating to the undertaking of fieldwork for a qualitative research study lies in how to gain access. This involved both securing entry into a particular organization and ensuring that individuals associated with it will serve as informants. In order to gain access to the participants I applied several strategies. The following sub chapters will describe how I gained access to the field through the use of Gatekeepers and snowball sampling.

5.3.1 Gatekeepers

A gatekeeper is defined as those (individual or organization) who provide directly or indirectly access to key resources needed to do research. Resources can be logistical, human, institutional or informational (Campbell et.al, 2006, p.98). Randall Keesling (2008, p.2) defines a gatekeeper as a person who stands between the data collector and a potential respondent and therefore can control who has access, and when, to the respondent. A gatekeeper can be helpful facilitators who provide access to and increased acceptance among research subjects and can help interpret cultural/political issues. The role of gatekeepers can be crucial in gaining access as having an individual who holds a position of authority, high respect or leadership to introduce the researcher to the groups often is essential. The person can act as a bridge to link the researcher to the participant, but also as guide who can point out what occurs and how culturally different actions (for the outside researcher) are locally meaningful (Bhopal, 2010, p.190). Gatekeepers can take many forms, including guards or doormen at secured residential or business complexes; secretaries, administrative assistants, or office managers in businesses; family members, housekeepers, and so forth (Keesling, 2008, p.2). And different types of gatekeepers can provide access to different types of resources, and rarely can a single gatekeeper provide access to all resources (ibid). In addition to providing access, gatekeepers can deny access and control who they want to give the researcher access to (Campbell et.al, 2006, p.103; Broadhead & Rist, 1976, p.326-329.). In other words, gatekeepers can stop access into some part of information and prevent introduction to certain key informants due to their own personal or political reasons (Cummeson,2000. in Johl & Renganathan, 2010, p.42). Lee (1993) points to the importance

of the study being in line with the gatekeepers' hidden agendas, ideologies and cultures for them to grant the researcher access to the information and potential participants (Lee, 1993, in Johl & Renganathan, 2010, p.42).

In collecting data for this research, I had different starting points which enabled me to access different type of information and participants for my research. These starting points were individuals who served as gatekeepers for me to access information and participants. In addition, I was in contact with two different organizations, both working with Vocational Training targeting unemployed youth. The leaders of the organizations assisted me with understanding the context of youth unemployment and gave me access to students at their centers to participate in my research. The first organization was Kyabando Vocational Training Centre (KVTC) which is a local Ugandan NGO and the second Fontes Foundation which is a small Norwegian NGO operating in Uganda.

My two main individual gatekeepers were two close friends of me, one male and one female. They were also two of my most important informants and field assistants. Stan Stevens (2001, p.72-73) notes how it is beneficial to return to the field several times and describes how having friends in the field helps to better understand local issues and define problems. This has also been noted by other researchers like Garth Myers (2001, p. 195-196) who describes that having a friend explain his research agenda to the community helped open the community's doors to him. This is also something I experienced through my research, especially in Wandegeya which I will get back to later. In having friends as gatekeepers, I also was aware of the possibility of them influencing the direction of the research. McFadyen & Rankin (2016, p.83) notes that gatekeepers might influence the research progress and access to participants based on their own assumptions and preconceptions about the research and its implications, and underlines that understanding the position, perspective, belief and values of the gatekeeper is an important issue to consider (ibid).

My female field assistant served as my informant, gatekeeper, and in some cases, my translator. She was chosen as my field assistant firstly because of the pre-existing friendship between us, but more importantly because I believed she would provide a good starting point in being an "insider"¹⁰ with the participants. In being a young female Ugandan, educated but also unemployed at the time when fieldwork was conducted she shared some of the criteria's I was looking for in the participants. She spoke the language of most of the participants and

¹⁰ The term "insider" is further elaborated on in another subchapter – see insider vs. outsider perspective

had inside knowledge about the cultural context around gender relations and youth unemployment. She introduced me to some acquaintances of her from university, two female graduates that were currently unemployed and introduced me to the leader of KVTC. As noted above, her decisions on who she introduced me to probably was influenced of her own preconceptions and interpretations of my research objectives. Biernacki & Waldorf (1981) stresses that the probably most important factor when choosing a research assistant is “...*the extent to which the researcher can trust the person to understand the goals of the research and present the project to others in an acceptable and serious manner*” (Biernack & Waldorf, 1981, p.154). As my good friend, and someone I had spent excessive time with discussing the topic I see her as someone who had a good understanding of the objectives of my research and I also spent time making sure she clearly understood them and I trusted her to be able to present my project to others.

In the case of the two organizations KVTC and Fontes Foundation the gatekeepers were the directors and leaders of the organizations which came with its own challenges and benefits. In the case of both this organizations the initial contact was with the directors, which on the positive note gave them authority to provide an access point for me. On the other hand, it is importance to keep in mind that institutions have objectives of their own. Meaning that the organizations we as researchers are working with could have their own interests in collaborating with us (Campbell et.al. 2006). Relationships with gatekeepers therefore do more than provide access. Gatekeepers can also attempt to control, reroute, or otherwise influence research, regardless of how relationships between gatekeeper and researcher appear (ibid). Alliances with government agencies and NGO’s can make a researcher more suspect to local people, especially if the organization is having a certain view on the issue. Campbell et.al. (2006, p.107) used the example of an organization working with conservation of turtles, then the researcher can have trouble getting the trust of the people who are e.g. catching turtles for eating. However, in my case this was not an issue. My formal gatekeepers and alliances was with NGO’s not having a specific sensitive view of an issue, and therefore it was an asset rather than a problem working with them. In addition, the objectives of the NGO’s I went through was in line with my own research. They were working towards helping youths find or create employment, and I was trying to identify the coping mechanisms and challenges the youths were facing because of unemployment, therefore our objectives was not conflicting in any ways. Still I always introduced myself as an individual researcher.

5.3.2 Snowball sampling

In what follows I will first supply a brief background on snowball sampling, emphasizing the method's dynamic quality, and thereafter raise some of the problems with Snowball sampling as a data collection method. In this study the use of snowball sampling was especially prominent in the fieldwork conducted in Wandegeya, where I tapped into my existing network and engaged my friend to help me 'get the (snow)ball rolling'¹¹.

A sampling procedure may be defined as a snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants. Informants refer the researcher to other informants, who then refer her/him to other informants, and so on. Hence the evolving 'snowball' effect (Noy, 2008, p.5). My Ugandan friend has a small shop selling bags and pillows in Wandegeya and had a network of other youths in the area who he could put me in contact with, I therefore contacted him as my first starting point. He became the first participant in the study and afterwards he introduced me to a friend of his, who put me in contact with another friend and so on. Thereby I employed snowball sampling within his social network. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981, p.153) note that "*When the snowball sampling method is used and study respondents are enlisted to help find other potential respondents, they become de facto research assistants*". This is true in my case, where my friend, and first participant later became my research assistant and helped me with both identifying participants and gaining access to the field as a gatekeeper.

One of the challenges raised by researchers relating to snowball sampling is the fact that the researcher herself/himself sometimes becomes a topic of discussion between network members (Noy, 2008). This occurs when informants tell each other about the interview experiences they had when they contact each other as part of the process of suggesting further referrals. This happened in Wandegeya as most of the youths knew each other and would probably share information about the interview experience when I was not around.

The fact that all the information about informants available in snowball sampling is supplied solely by the informants themselves has, according to Noy (2008, p.7), a crucial consequence in that the researcher relinquishes a considerable amount of control over the sampling to the informants (ibid). Therefore, in a way each of the informants where snowball sampling was used acted as a kind of gatekeeper to the next informant. I could direct them as to the gender,

¹¹ Biernacki and Waldorf (1981, p. 144) identifies finding respondents and starting referral chains as one of the problems regarding the use of snowball sampling.

age and number of people I wanted to talk to but it was they who decided who they would refer me to. In that way the participants themselves had some power in pointing the direction of what kind of information I would gain access to.

Many researchers emphasize the need to pay attention to personal relationships, especially because such relationships can affect the perceived neutrality of the researcher (Campbell et. al. 2006). In the case of Wandegeya my research assistant was a good friend of mine and several of the other participants I would see almost on an everyday basis when passing up and down the street. Hence, me being aware of my personal relationships with different participants was of great importance. As a starting point I would say that having my friend as the field assistant in the area seemed to be of benefit as the participants trusted me, and did not see me merely as another Muzungu¹². But at the same time, the awareness of relations with participants in Wandegeya also made me include other starting points of the data collection, to ensure I diversified the information and did not rely solely on ‘one snowball’. The experiences from the field will follow.

5.3.3 Outsider vs. insider perspective

All researchers begin data collection with certain assumptions about the phenomenon being investigated, situations to be observed, and people to be interviewed. The more one is like the participants in terms of culture, gender, race, socio-economic class and so on, the more it is assumed that access will be granted, meanings shared, and validity of findings assured (Merriam et.al, 2001, p.406). In my case I was coming from a very different culture and therefore being aware of the insider/outsider status was important.

Early discussions in anthropology and sociology of insider/outsider status assumed that the researcher was either an insider or an outsider and that each status carried with it certain advantages and disadvantages. Recent discussions on insider/outsider status have unveiled the complexity inherent in either status and have acknowledged that the boundaries between the two positions are not all that clearly delineate (Merriam et.al, 2001, p.405). Factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status. According to many contemporary researchers you can simultaneously to some extent be an insider and to some

¹² Muzungu is a Swahili word which translates as “someone who wanders without purpose / someone constantly on the move”. It is commonly used in East Africa to refer to a white person.

<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=mzungu>

extent an outsider (Merriam et.al, 2001, p.405-406; Dwyer&Buckle, 2009, p.60; Hellawell, 2006, p.487).

Dwyer and Buckle talks about the space in between being an insider and outsider (2009, p.60-62). According to them, whether the researcher is an insider or an outsider, the personhood of the researcher including his/her membership status in relation to those participating in the research is an essential aspect. Holding a membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group and likewise not being member of a group does not denote complete difference. They posit that the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest and interested in the experience of the research participants and committed to accurately and adequately represent their experience. Because of the complex features of human experiences, an individual external to the experience might be able to appreciate the wider perspective, with its connections, causal patterns and influences, more than an individual that is internal to the experience (ibid). We may be closer to the insider position or the outsider position, but because the fact that our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher, we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions. This is very true for my situation. Since I had previous knowledge about the cultural norms and the society, knew some Luganda, and most importantly a youth myself, I was not totally an outsider, but still I was not an insider. I was in the space between, but closer to the outside than the inside.

5.4 Who are they? Presenting the participants

When setting out for the fieldwork I only had a vague idea of who I wanted to target in my research. I knew I wanted to focus on Kampala and that I wanted to speak with females about the challenges and survival techniques relating to the high level of unemployment and that these should be between 18 and 30 years old. The first thing I realized when arriving on the ground was that I needed to narrow the search, and the importance of including men in the data collection. This was important to get a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the context and cultural norms surrounding the issue of youth unemployment in Kampala. To narrow the research sample, I decided to focus on youths that had completed secondary school as a minimum, and preferably also had started higher education. The choice for this was based on the assumption that youths with none or low education and those with at least secondary education would face different challenges in looking for employment, and in what types of

jobs they would apply for in the first place. I wanted to target the youths who seek employment in the formal economy and the challenges linked to this.

I mainly used in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants aged between 18 and 28 including both genders, the age ranging from 21-28 years. I had 12 females and 15 male participants in addition to two male police officers, the director of Fontes Foundation, director of Kamwokya Vocational Training Centre (KVTC) and director and founder of Youth at work initiative (YAWI). This brings the total of 31 individuals interviewed with 19 being males and 12 females. Initially my plan was to interview mainly female participants, with inputs also from the males. However, I ended up with a larger sample from males than females. The reason for this is that in general the men were more forthcoming and would easily open-up and share their grievances and would actively seek contact, while the females on the other hand were more shy and harder to get contact with. I needed to spend more time gaining trust with the females than the men. This could be linked to the gender relations and cultural norms in the country as spelled out in the background chapter.

In the one focus group conducted there were 3 males and 2 women, all which had completed secondary school. The focus group was very interesting because it contained both genders and turned into an interesting discussion about the difference between challenges for men and females.

5.4.1 Conducting interviews

For ethical reasons all the interviews were sound-recorded with the permission of the participants and all filled out written consent forms. In seeking informed consent, the interviewee would be informed of the general objectives of the study and that she/he could withdraw at any point. They were also informed that the expected outcome of the research would be my thesis and degree and that I would not be able to change their situation in any way.

In their article Campbell et.al (2006, p.110) stresses the fact that to a large extent, how our relationship with gatekeepers are perceived by participants is beyond our control. In spite of the researchers best efforts to establish independence from a gatekeeper, research subjects will make up their own minds about this relationship based upon a number of factors (Campbell et.al, 2006; Sultana, p.378). Many people I interviewed had preconceived ideas of who I was and what I was doing. These views seemed to be a product of preexisting perceptions of foreign volunteers, tourists and Muzungus in general, rather than based on my individual

actions. In the same way as 'we' (the west) have stereotypes of the 'Africans', they also have stereotypes about us. This became clear in some meetings. Two examples are the former sex worker at KVTC that wanted money because I was white, and a male participant who assumed that I was pro homosexuality because I was from the west.

Interestingly, how I was perceived was different when I went through the formal, and the informal gatekeepers. In the formal settings at the organizations, the interviews became naturally more formal and I could feel that me being white and "from" the organization affected their behavior towards me. The interviews done through formal gatekeepers were done at the sites of the organizations (KVTC, Fontes Foundation). This created a more formal setting for the interviews. Also prior to the interviews, I had not interacted with the participants. I could feel the imbalance in power relations when I interviewed them. Me being white, educated, and from the west played a big role in the power dynamics. They had no prior knowledge of who I was, what I was doing and why. They got just some basic information from the NGO leader or manager when they were asked to participate.

Many methodologies emphasize non-hierarchical interactions and understanding and stresses the fact that the methods of data collection may be embedded in unequal power relations between the researcher and the participants (Sultana, 2007, p.375). I became very much aware of my nationality, class and education. Therefore, I always started the interview with telling them about what I was doing and who I was, and spent a few minutes with small talk to try making them more comfortable with me. Still we did not get time to really 'get to know' each other. The girls interviewed was quiet and careful in their answers. Sometimes they spoke so low that it was hard to hear their answers. Here having my field assistant with me was of great value.

The membership role can give the researcher a certain amount of legitimacy and acceptance and therefore participants are typically more open with insiders. This may give a greater depth and insight of the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle 2009, p.58). The fact that my field assistant was able to explain further to the participants in Luganda if they were unsure about the questions, and she knew the local culture more in depth than me, many of the participants felt more comfortable with her and opened up. Participants might be more willing to share their experiences because there is an assumption of understanding and shared values (ibid). On the other hand, they might not have expressed many things fully because of her presence. Since they assumed that she already knew the culture, many of the cultural specific details could have been lost to me, as they did not feel the need to explain this explicit since they assumed

she knew them. In addition, it could be that they felt they had to live up to some social standards and expectations in their replies e.g. of how to act as a girl because of her being an insider to the culture (Dwyer & Buckle 2009, p.58). Still I do not think this was of too much importance since we were within the same age group. It would have been different if the age difference were greater, as the older generation often has a more strict conception of correct behavior for a girl.

When I interviewed people that I got in contact with through my informal gatekeepers, mainly in Wandegeya, the atmosphere was different. Some of these interviews I conducted in a local restaurant/bar over lunch or in the street where I lived. The most important difference here was that they had seen me before, walking up and down the street every day, talking to our common friend. I also had made small talk with some of the participants earlier. Here it was interesting because my relationship with the participants evolved over time. In the restaurant where I interviewed the two graduates over lunch, the atmosphere was relaxed and influenced by the fact that we were four same-aged girls. Since my gatekeeper and research assistant knew the girls from earlier, it made me more instantly a part of the group even though I was a 'Muzungu'. Here me being a friend of their friend seemed to weigh more heavily, than me being a foreigner. The fact that I already was familiar with the basics in the culture also contributed to make the interaction easy and loose.

5.5 Challenges and lessons learned

The completion of this master thesis has been a long road. It started with doing fieldwork in 2014 only to be completed in 2017. The road might have been long but it has also been full of lessons learned and experience gained. Some of the challenges and concerns have already been discussed in previous subchapters relating to the insider/outsider perspective, gatekeepers and snowball sampling. However, there are some additional challenges and lessons learned that I also wish to highlight.

The first challenge, now turned into a lesson learned, is the importance of having a clear research objective before getting into the field. One of the biggest challenges for me was that I ended up with excessively information, which in the end was hard to comprehend and decide what was important and to scrap.

A second issue relates to the long period of bringing life to this thesis. As mentioned fieldwork was done in 2014 and hence there was a long time from when I initially started my thesis until the completion. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981, p.158) underlines the danger of information being lost when you have a rather long delay between obtaining the actual interview and the analysis of the material it contains. The negative side of my delay between obtaining information and the analysis therefore is that I might have forgotten some details from the interviews. To mitigate this, I spent extensive time re-listening to the interviews and reading notes to remind myself of the findings and process. On the other hand, the benefit of the long period is that of being able to observe the nature and development of youth unemployment over a longer period and the opportunity to revisit the field on several occasions and I truly believe my cultural understanding is larger today than it was in 2014 when the initial fieldwork was conducted.

A third major challenge that I wish to highlight is that of language. Most of the interviews were conducted in English, but a few of them was done in Luganda. This was in incidents where their English was not good enough for them to express all the nuances and details they could give in Luganda. Since I am not fluent in Luganda, my field assistant did the interviews with me present. The few interviews done in Luganda was transcribed to English by my field assistant and here some details could have been lost in translation and/or her personal opinions could be reflected in the written version. The researchers' perceptions might be clouded by his or her personal experience and that as a member of a group he or she will have difficulty separating it from that of the participants (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.58), this means that her personal experiences of the interviews might have affected her transcription of the data. She was herself at the time unemployed, a female and part of the culture and therefore might have shared some of the experiences as the participants. Still, as most interviews were done in English I do not see this as a major implication for the data collection for this study.

3.5 Intermediate Summary

As described in the previous sub chapters, this study uses a qualitative approach to answer identify challenges relating to youth unemployment in Kampala with a special focus on the females. I saw the qualitative approach as the most fitting as the objectives are to look at the not so easily measurable aspects like feelings, perceptions and personal experiences of the participants. The fieldwork was done over 5 weeks in Kampala where I used semi-structured

interviews and one focus group with youths. I also talked with the directors and some staff of two different NGO's which added on my understanding of the contextual background.

The fieldwork has been interesting, challenging and a great learning experience in so many ways. I have become more aware of my own role as a researcher and how to act in an interview situation. My friends in the field helped me to better understand and define problems and two of them became both my field assistants and gatekeepers with everything that entails. I experienced people placing me in certain categories, 'othered' me and negotiated the relationship between us on a continual basis. I noticed how doing interviews in a more formal setting was different from the more informal settings and how this related to who introduced me to the participants. Another interesting aspect was how the participants from the area I lived opened-up as they became more used to me. Through the conversations with random people and friends, I was able to bridge some gaps between us, and become more accepted. This due to commonalities, such as us having common friends, living in the same area, and me being able to greet them and small talk in Luganda. I also came with a basic knowledge about the culture and society which made it easier for me to fit in. I believe that the way I was able to interact with people helped in forming a relation of trust which is important in fieldwork. In retrospect I am sure there are many things I could have done differently, other people I could have interviewed and questions I could have asked. Still I believe that the fieldwork left me with valuable insights and rich data which I have analyzed with the best of my ability.

PART TWO – EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALASYS

6 Data presentation and analysis

In this chapter, I will present and process the data collected during my fieldwork. I have separated it into two sub-chapters. The first research question seeks to identify some of the major challenges youth and especially females faces when looking for employment. Does women and men face similar challenges? One of the questions asked to answer this research question, was if the participants thought it was easier for a woman or a man to get a job. The second research question focuses on the survival strategies, or coping mechanisms employed by youth in order to get by. How does youth survive in a country that suffers from such a high unemployment rate? Does men and women employ different strategies?

I will support my analysis with relevant theory and findings from other research, my own reflections and the interviews from my fieldwork. Both questions will be analyzed through gender lenses as described in the concept definition, background and methodology chapters.

6.1 Challenges with finding employment

There are many factors and reasons for it being difficult for youths to find employment in the formal economy in Uganda. Existing literature points out some reasons for youth unemployment as the demography of the country, tribalism and corruption, lack of experience and a skills mismatch between what the youths can offer and the needs of employers (Pletscher, 2015; Okoije, 2003). In addition to these challenges the youths in my study also reported feeling discouraged getting turned down too many times or experiencing sexual harassment when applying for a job. While acknowledging the importance of all these challenges, I have chosen to focus on the most stressed by participants relating to gender.

6.1.1 The existing notion of Gender and gender relations as a challenge

Patriarchy is still a dominant social institution in Ugandan society, ingrained within the day today social codes and ‘grammatical’ principles (Wyrod, 2008, p.809). As described earlier, culturally and socially, men are perceived to have more decision power than women. Women are to a large degree raised to be submissive to the man as part of the content of their gender entails them to be. Tuyizere argues that the taught submissiveness makes women vulnerable

to sexual exploitation and abuse as they are afraid of saying “no” (2007, p.20). Most of the victims are young girls seeking employment or marks from their teachers and lectures (ibid). This was also raised by the participants in this study.

The concept of gender was discussed in all my interviews, but I want to highlight part of the discussion from the Focus Group. During the interview, we spoke about gender roles by reflecting on what it means to be a good man and woman, and about the tasks assigned to the different genders. What does it mean to be successful? Here, all the male participants answered that being a successful man entailed being able to provide for his family as the most important trait. On the issue of gender equality both girls said “yes, we want”, while the guys somehow were more reluctant. They agreed there should be some gender equality, but only to a certain extent. One of the male participants commented:

“No, a man should be higher. Because these women, it was a must but now people are taking it for granted, it used to be a must that the man should marry a woman that is younger than him. Nowadays they are marrying women that are older than them, so you find the woman is on the man’s head” (M1, FGP).

The discussion continued to the topic of the changing economic situation in Kampala. Kikooma (2012, p.19) argues that the decline of agriculture in the 1970s which lead to an economic crisis which pushed women to seek employment outside their homesteads. This weakened the basis of men’s domination and challenged the traditional role of the man as the ‘provider’ and women as the main caretaker of the household (ibid). As one of the other males added:

“Most of the families these days you find both genders are working so it’s better you share some homework like cooking and cleaning, although it’s the woman who is supposed to do most of the thing. But it’s good for the man also to help. Why not” (M2, FGP).

The notion of gender equality was also discussed in some of the individual interviews done in Wandegeya. One participant noted

“In Africa society when a boy grows up he’s expected to get married. That means a boy to marry a girl not a girl to marry a boy. Then they will look at you as you are a loser. Especially when the woman has more money because you won’t have what to say in the family because she is wearing the pants. Which is not good” (M, Wandegeya).

“To me I think it would be good for a woman to have enough money. But not showing off. Let him still be the man.” (F, Wandegeya).

Most participants were positive to women working, although the male participants raised some concerns with the women then forgetting that *“he is still the man”*, some of the females also agreed. The men preferred the women to work near the house or stop working at least when they had small children to ensure that she could take care of the house. This gender disparity is linked to the gender perception that domestic labor is “women’s work” in accordance with the normative ideal that women should be ‘homemakers’ (Chant & Jones, 2005, p.191-192). One male participant stated this as showing love to the wife by allowing her ‘to rest’, it is after all his job as man to provide.

“If I have a woman and she gives birth at least I would want her to stay home for at least 2 years, but that is if I am financial stable to take care of them without her to also work, it’s good for her to rest. I have seen parents going to work too early when the baby is too young. Babies really need the mothers love especially in the beginning. I would want her to be there for the kid. Then she can go back to work, if she was working” (M2, FGP).

Some participants stated they wanted their partner to stay at home as it reduces the chance of seeing other men.

“Ladies they don’t have that thing of refusing, they accept very quickly. When she sees a man in his (Mercedes) Benz, and me I’m on my feet daily, she asks “why am I wasting my time with this fool?”. Leaves the child there and goes with the other one driving himself. So, when she is home, chances are higher of staying with her for a long time. Even at work, the boss might want her, increased the money. When at home you are not financial stable... and then slowly you can see her changing... When before she used to put water for you for bathing, she now doesn’t... because of that other boss” (M, FGP)

Although the statement attracted some complaints by the female participants, they also agreed to some degree. Admitting that some women do take advantage, and only want to look for the men who can “buy them nice things”. They however stated this depended on the girl’s upbringing, indicating a ‘good girl’ would not do this.

Based on these findings we can see the definition of a ‘good husband’ and a ‘successful man’ as being able to provide for his family is a potential challenge for women who want to work.

Women might be more reluctant to seek employment because they know it might put them in an argument with their partners.

As noted in earlier chapters women in Uganda is to a large degree raised to be submissive to the man. Hence, the ongoing liberation empowering women makes them disobedient and provocative to their spouses (they talk back). Silberschmidt (1991) notes that the transition from a traditional patriarchal society to a ‘modern’ society is associated with social changes which might affect power relations in society. The increasing participation of women in wage work can create uncertainty and insecurity for men in their traditional role as breadwinners and principal decision makers (ibid). Hence, female empowerment is a challenge to male authority. This means that women do not only face challenges by potential employers, but also by spouses at home as they risk getting on the wrong foot with their partners when they challenge the traditional gender roles.

6.1.2 What do I get in return? Employment opportunities with conditions

Several participants noted bribing as one of the major challenges to securing a good job.

“To get a job you need to pay. Because you need someone to recommend you. And we the youth don’t have money to pay” (M, Wandegeya)

This finding is in line with other studies. E.g. a NGO stakeholder quoted in the Youth Map Report stated that everything has been commercialized, and that you must bribe to get a well-paying job (IYF, 2011, p.17). The findings from the fieldwork further revealed that what was the expected payment for getting a job might vary between the genders. One of the questions I asked in my interviews was if the participants thought it was easier for a man or a woman to find employment and why. In the focus group there was an agreement that there definitely was a difference between the genders.

“Girls get more jobs; they get opportunities... because for them, I’m sorry to say, they have different ‘things’. If I told the manager of that business he is a male, off course... you attract. But after? You have to what... to service” (M2, FGP)

Another one added:

“Easier for a girl to get a job, why? Most of the directors the big people when you are beautiful there will be more chances to get a job. Like he wants to get something to go to the

next step, you get it? So, I can give you a job without enough qualifications because I want you, like to be my girl... A girl has more chances” (M3, FGP)

This experience was also confirmed by the female participants. When talking about employers one of female participants stated:

“They want you to be his wife or... a side dish. Wherever he needs you he needs you to be there... for him... for sex. That is the challenge” (F, FGP).

The females never talked about their own experiences, but narrated through other episodes they heard about. But in this case the female participant started the story talking about a friend but in the end, it became evident she was talking about her own experience, which indicate they were reluctant to admitting experiencing these things themselves.

“A friend, went to a big company and got an interview. For you to get the job you must first sleep with me, I’m the HR. if you want the job just do it and we will give you the job. Seriously this guy was so bold, and he was old, like in his late 40s, and I was like 20” (F, Graduate).

These findings suggest that women face some special challenges like sexual harassment when looking for employment. In addition, it seems the sexual harassment also makes them more reluctant to search for formal employment and could be one of the reasons for such a large percentage of the participants preferred being self-employment rather than formal employment.

After stating he and most youths preferred being self-employed, I asked him the reasons behind this. On top of bad pay and long working hours he added:

“More especially the woman are mistreated. A girl I studied with got a job as a receptionist. What happened, the boss decided to abuse her demanding for something else, or not the job will be given away. In the end she ended up giving it up, for the job. You know these old people, the big people. Ok let me call them sugar daddies. They do take advantage. Let me say a young girl is having a problem, and the only thing they could look at she needs maybe money and material things, so they can put so conditions so that you know she will be giving herself in”. M, Wandegeya

The fact that so many youths are seeking employment makes it an employer’s market where they can pick and choose and have large power over their employees – making many employees willing to go the extra mile to keep their jobs.

This was noted by one of the participants:

“Unless you accept term and conditions there is always someone in line to get the job because unemployment is so high” (F, Wandegeya)

It was also discussed that the issue of getting a job on conditions were not only experienced by the women seeking employment, but also some men. In the focus group discussion one male participant added

“And by the way; It’s a two way, the boys also face the same sometimes. Sugar mommies or the gays. They also take advantage of the boys looking for a job” (M, FGP)

It has been noted in several studies that young women face greater constraints than their male counterparts in finding decent work. Interestingly almost all participants in this study thought it was easier for a woman to find work than the men, but indicated that it might come with some conditions. These findings correlate with those of Kyamulabi (2012). Some of her study participants disagreed with the statistics indicating that men easier get employment than women, indicated that girls have more opportunities as they are attractive to male bosses (p.30-31). It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that it is easier for a woman to get a job, but it speaks to the participants perceptions of their reality.

6.2 Survival Strategies

Okoiye (2003) explains that in lack of employment many youths survive from the goodwill of their parents, relative and friends. Societal and cultural aspects like the patriarchal system and the gender roles as the man as the provider encourages young people, especially girls, to continue to depend on parental support even at an old age (YLTT, 2012, p.6). When girls grow older and turns into young women they tend to they tend to rely on their husbands or get involved in sex work because lack of better alternatives (Okoiye, 2003). The research mentioned above gives a taste of what existing literature have said about survival strategies. This existing literature was to a large degree consistent with my own findings. As I interviewed more participants a trend developed towards girls tending to look to a man for survival, in one way or the other. Either as a boyfriend, husband or entering a cross-generational relationship. This was stated by both men and women.

6.2.1 (Early) Marriages

Among young women, causes of high levels of unemployment include early marriage. Many young women drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy and marriage or financial difficulties where parents prefer to educate male children (Okoiye, 2003, p.6)

As stated by one of the participants:

“Because of African culture favorizing the man over the girl, she doesn’t get a lot of attention. She can grow up in a family not being looked after well. More especially when she reaches adolescence they start giving up because they know she can easily get something like a boyfriend to give her things. While as for a boy they try” (F, FGP)

Because of the traditional gender roles, girls tend to spend more time doing domestic work than boys, leaving them with less time for study. This then lead to poorer school performances and in worst case, dropping out. Girls therefore end up with less education and fewer skills than boys, this increases discrimination against them in the labor market (Okoiye, 2003, p.6).

Participants in the study also argued that getting married is applied as a survival strategy by many girls.

“Adding on early marriages most of the weak girls when drop out of school the last resort is to get married so you can get quick money, because you know the husband will provide everything. Which in most cases is not the right thing...” (F, FGP).

They further indicated that girls look for someone with more money, often older men, to get married to as they are more established and hence can offer more stability.

“Girls who comes from a poor family, how can I get married to someone that don’t have money, yet I’m also poor”

The use of marriage as a survival strategy has also been noted by potential employers, and could be one of the reasons for men being favored in the labor market. Kyamulabi (2012) conducted a study about unemployment among young women graduates in Uganda. She finds that employers have noted women’s preference for marriage and hence are reluctant to hire her. The society have greatly accepted the notion that all women wants to get married as soon as they graduate (ibid, p.30). This points to the Ugandan societies overall traditional understanding of gender roles which assumes she will not work after getting married as she will have the husband to provide for her. Hence society, and the employers, tend to forget that

women are not a homogeneous group. Rather young women's dreams and aspirations vary widely, and while some really wants to get married, others might want to pursue a carrier (Kyambulabi, 2012, p.30-31).

6.2.2 Transactional Sex and Sugar daddies

Patters of gender inequality frequently limit young women's economic options, which leads to many seeking transactional sex as one of the few economic options (Bantebya et.al, 2014). Girls may seek out such relationships themselves, or might experience pressure from parents or other family members to contribute to the household (ibid).

A study by Luke and Kurz (2002) uncovered that the prevalence of transactional and cross-generational sex is very high in Uganda. They argue that the worsening economic situation has forced women to become more dependent on men for economic support. Literature has different definitions of a sugar daddy, but most agree that sugar daddy relationships entails large age and economic asymmetries between the partners (Luke, 2005, p.8). Bantebya et.al (2014) notes define distinctions between transactional sex and cross-generational sex. They argue that cross-generational sex not necessarily take place for a cash or in-kind payment, although in many cases it can be transactional. In urban areas cross-generational relationships are often focused on more temporary and immediate material gains, although they might not be formalized as a commercial transaction. The motivations behind girls engaging in sexual relationships with older men were overlapping, with gifts and other financial benefits as the major incentives for such relationships (Luke & Kurz, 2002, p.2). These findings were very much in line with my own. The most commonly mention survival strategy mentioned for the women was to rely on a man in one way or another. Either through early marriages, finding a boyfriend, gross-generational marriages, relationships and sex and finding a sugar daddy.

Although none of the participants acknowledged having sugar daddies themselves, they narrated knowing someone who did. Some participants noted:

“Some girls bet, others get sugar daddies. They go in for old guys to get money. And some, they become prostitutes. Old men like over 50 years might come look for you and give you money, but he does not want to marry you. I have some friends that have sugar daddies, but I don't ask them. If I ask they might look me badly. Like you have entered too much into their lives. So, you don't talk open about it, but we know”. (F, Wandegeya).

According to findings from Bantebya et.al. (2014) older partners are more likely to have full-time jobs and access to monetary resources, which means they can provide for the girls. Luke & Kurz (2002) indicate that some young women engage in relations with older partners to help pay for tuition, living expenses, university housing, clothes, and food. The basic needs that they might otherwise have struggled with. Further, they describe how many young educated “white collar” single women have relationships with much older, very wealthy men to help achieve their goals of financial security and social mobility (ibid). An older, well established man can also provide luxury goods such as nice clothes, make up, perfume, and modern hairstyles. Things parents are often unable or unwilling to pay for (ibid).

Although its sometimes common for a girl to have one or more partner, social norms surrounding sexual exchange ensure that girls must guard their reputations (Bantebya et.al 2014). This was also evident in the way the participants claimed that they did not have a sugar daddy themselves and that they did not talk about it, but knew of others.

The guys also expressed frustration with the situation, claiming the demands for money by the girls made it difficult for them to enter relationships.

“The girls are supplementing their income and surviving by dating older men that can buy them hair, nice food and clothes. Me, I can’t afford a girlfriend – it’s too expensive. Girls want guys who have money. You need to buy them chicken and fries. Me I want to date a muzungu girl – she can help me with money and I can help my family. My dream is to go to Europe” (M, Wandegeya)

Others highlighted that it was not only young women who employed dating someone with a better income as a survival strategy.

“Guys that don’t have money. I have a friend of ours, do that homosexuality looking for money. For us we don’t like that, homosexual. But in case you can get a sugar mommy you go for that one. I can achieve that. That homosexuality, I don’t like that. But some guys do it. They do it 100 %. I have some friend of mine that do that thing. Because of the money, he’s broke. You can get like 1M¹³ (one million UGX)! In one go if you are lucky.” “M, Wandegeya”

¹³ 1,000,000 UGX =273.5353USD, www.xe.com, 2017-10-31

This was also expressed with a different participant:

“The idea of the sugar mommy is to get money. The rest we don’t care. Even if she is affected (HIV). If you have a broke guy like this, he can go for it” M, Wandegeya

He continued:

“It’s a big problem. Even boys too. Not only girls. The boys have sugar mummies too. The youth like good stuff. Like smart phones, style. So, you end up this woman giving you things and then ask for something else. It’s just like some girls getting married to older men, those that are 80s, 60s. getting married. The girl taking advantage too. She can feel secure, get each and everything she wants, even a car.”

Interestingly both homosexuality and dating a woman who is older and have more money is ‘against’ the culture and societal norms. As mentioned already, according to traditional gender roles the man is supposed to provide for the woman not the other way around.

Homosexuality in Uganda is perceived by many as unnatural, un-African and promoted by the west. In a press-release issued in February 2014 President Museveni has stated that *“many of those recruited (into homosexuality) were doing so for mercenary reasons – to get money – in effect homosexual prostitutes...”* (Daily Monitor, 2014¹⁴).

Regarding transactional sex, researchers have previously focused on two aspects. One highlighting the vulnerability of girls in these relationships, and the other one pointing to girls agency in seeing it as a means to achieve financial and developmental objectives (Bantebya et.al, 2014). Although there exists quite a lot of research on the prevalence and implications of Sugar Daddy relationships, less have been written so far about sugar mummies and same-sex relations, especially in the African context. Still there is no doubt that it is there. A quick google search on “Sugar Mummies Uganda” gives you a ton of tips on how to get one. One of the articles is named “Campus Tips – How to get a sugar daddy or sugar mummy¹⁵” advertises: *“With a sugar mummy, you will have the latest I-phone to click on; you will have the latest clothes to walk around in, the latest car to drive and of course, the latest STD to spread”*.

¹⁴Press release by President Yoweri Museveni released 24.february 2014, in the Ugandan newspaper Daily Monitor. <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Museveni-s-Anti-Homosexuality-speech/688334-2219956-4xafil/index.html>

¹⁵Big Eye Uganda is a well known gossip page in Uganda. <http://bigeye.ug/how-to-get-a-ugandan-sugar-daddy-or-sugar-mummy-campus-tips/>

Indicating both the benefits and dangers of dating a sugar mummy in one go.

6.3 Summary of main findings

This chapter presented some of the findings from my data collection during my fieldwork in Uganda. In line with the objectives of the study I decided to focus specifically on those challenges and survival strategies relating directly to cultural and social perceptions of gender and gender relations.

The main findings suggest that women perhaps more than men are facing gender specific challenges when looking for employment. Two examples of this was given. The first focuses on how men's preference of keeping his woman close to the house is a challenge for women to even go looking for a job. Two reasons were given. The woman's traditional gender role as taking care of the house/children and husband. The other a fear from men that if she goes to work, she will be tempted or stolen by other men.

The second example was employment on conditions. Here both genders expressed frustration with often being asked to pay for a job. But the nature of the expected payment differed between the genders. Where men to a larger degree was asked to give cash, the women were asked to pay with sexual favors. Women's higher risk of facing SH both when looking for employment and as noted by Mbasalaki (2011) at the workplace could also be a reason for men's fear of the women being stolen by other men.

On the other research question relating to survival strategies the answers from participants were surprisingly consistently pointing to women finding a man to lean on as the most common strategy. Interestingly the fieldwork also revealed the increased level of men also seeking older female partners or even 'turning into gays' as a mean of surviving. Both men and women are employing strategies that breaks with the traditional gender roles. Women in being promiscuous by e.g. dating older men, maybe more than one at the time, to survive. Men by breaking their traditional role as the 'provider' by looking for older women (sugar mummies) that can assist them with their finances.

7 Concluding remarks

Youth unemployment has a serious impact on the development of a country, especially in the case of Uganda. The massive share of youth in Uganda combined with the very high unemployment rates can cause a serious threat to the country's overall development (Pletscher, 2015).

As noted in the introduction part of this thesis many studies have noted the challenges and reasons for the high unemployment rates. Some of these are, e.g. skills miss match, lack of experience, and the high urban-rural migration making it to many people fighting for few jobs. I have argued that employment statistics are not on young women's side, as they face a double burden with being both young and females.

The gender aspect of challenges faced because of youth unemployment has been increasingly acknowledged and highlighted in research. In line with findings from Tuyizere (2007), Kyabulami (2012) and Wyrod (2008) I argue that many of the challenges faced by women in Uganda with finding employment are rooted in the gender discourse in the country. Based on my own findings I agree with Wyrod (2008) when he states that there is a changing gender discourse going on in urban Uganda as this was noticed throughout my fieldwork.

I want to highlight one of the concerns given by one of the male participants on the changing gender roles and the content of the concept of gender.

"Its difficult with this culture, no these days we are getting more like your culture, taking over our culture, which is not good... You know when culture in Africa fails, we will be like a chicken with its head chopped off, we won't be knowing where we came from." (M, Wandegeya)

At the same time, it seems like the traditional gender concepts still provides a challenge for women who wish to join the labor force. As found by Kyambulabi (2012) with employers being reluctant to hire a fresh female graduate on the notion that she probably will get married soon anyway, and hence is not worth investing in. In that way, the traditional gender roles interfere with the chances of the 'modern' working woman who wants to find a good job and make a career. The preference of some women getting married at a relative early age can therefore be both a challenge to finding employment, and a survival strategy employed because of lack of employment (or preference to not work).

According to my findings many women tend to lean on a man in one way or another for economic support as a survival strategy. This could be linked to the ‘traditional’ relations between the genders where the man’s job is seen to provide (financially) for the woman and the woman is to take care of her husband. This is in many ways holding women back in the society. On this note I also wish to highlight that the notion of sugar daddy relationships in no way are unique to Uganda or the African context. In 2017 the webpage richmeetsbeautiful.no created controversy in Norway because of an advert encouraging female students to date rich men instead of taking up student loans (TNP, 2017¹⁶). The advert was eventually banned, but I will claim that if there were no market for such pages they would not exist in the first place.

To a large degree the existing research and statistics shows that men easier get a job than women. The findings from my fieldwork shows differently as all the participants noted that it is easier for a woman than a man to find formal employment. This is not necessarily a statistical fact, but it represents the perceptions of the youth and how they see their own chances of finding employment. I further suggest that the sexual harassment that many young women faces when applying for a job is one of the reasons many prefers to be self-employed as they then are their own bosses. This has also been noted by Kyambulabi (2012) who finds that due to frustration faced by some young women in looking for formal employment, their attitudes and activity have tended to reduce hence prolonging the unemployment period. Or seeking back to the traditional roles with finding a man to provide for them.

Findings suggests that on one hand, women are faced with reduced access to resources and subjected to oppressing mechanism legitimized by social norms uphold by patriarchal structures. At the same time, they are far from just being passive victims. As noted by Luke & kurz (2002) and Banteyimba et.al (2014) it seems poverty and economic dependence push girls into seeking relationships with a better off man that can take care of them. Girls, and to a increasingly degree also young men, seek towards partners that can assist them in getting where they want in life and as a minimum provide them with their basic needs as a result of not finding employment.

¹⁶ <https://www.tnp.no/norway/panorama/website-encouraging-female-students-date-rich-men-creates-controversy-norway>

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Appendix 1. Questions for interview guide

Basic

1. Age
2. Level of education
3. Employment status

Interview guide

Employment

- What kind of work would you like to do?
- Is it some jobs that are considered to be more higher than others?
- Self-employed or formal employment? If you prefer being self-employed, why?

Gender Relations

- How do you consider an ideal relationship?
- What about gender equality?
- What does it mean to be a 'good' man and a 'good' woman (successful)

Challenges with finding work

- Which problems do you find looking for a job?
- Difficulties at the work place?
- What are the social impact for female unemployment in the society?
- Is it a difference with challenges men and women face when looking for employment?

Survival Strategies

- If unemployed, how do you get money?
- Which measures are you taking to change your situation?
- How do young women cope in the environment of high unemployment?

Appendix 2 – Consent form

Request for participation in research project "Youth unemployment in Uganda – Challenges for females"

Background and Purpose

This is the Master Thesis project for my master in Peace and Conflict Transformation at the Arctic University of Tromsø (UIT), Norway. The purpose of this project is to put focus on the women's perspectives on unemployment and how women see their own situation within the Ugandan society. The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

What does participation in the project imply?

Questions will concern your views on youth unemployment, gender issues, family values, women's place in the society, and measures taken in order to get by. During our meetings I will take notes and Interviews will be audio recorded.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. The Master Thesis will be published, but participants will be anonymized in the publication. After completion of the project, the personal data and recordings will be deleted.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be deleted.

Consent for participation in the study

- I agree to participate in the interview
 I agree that information given by me may be published/saved after project completion

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)