

PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is a publisher's version.

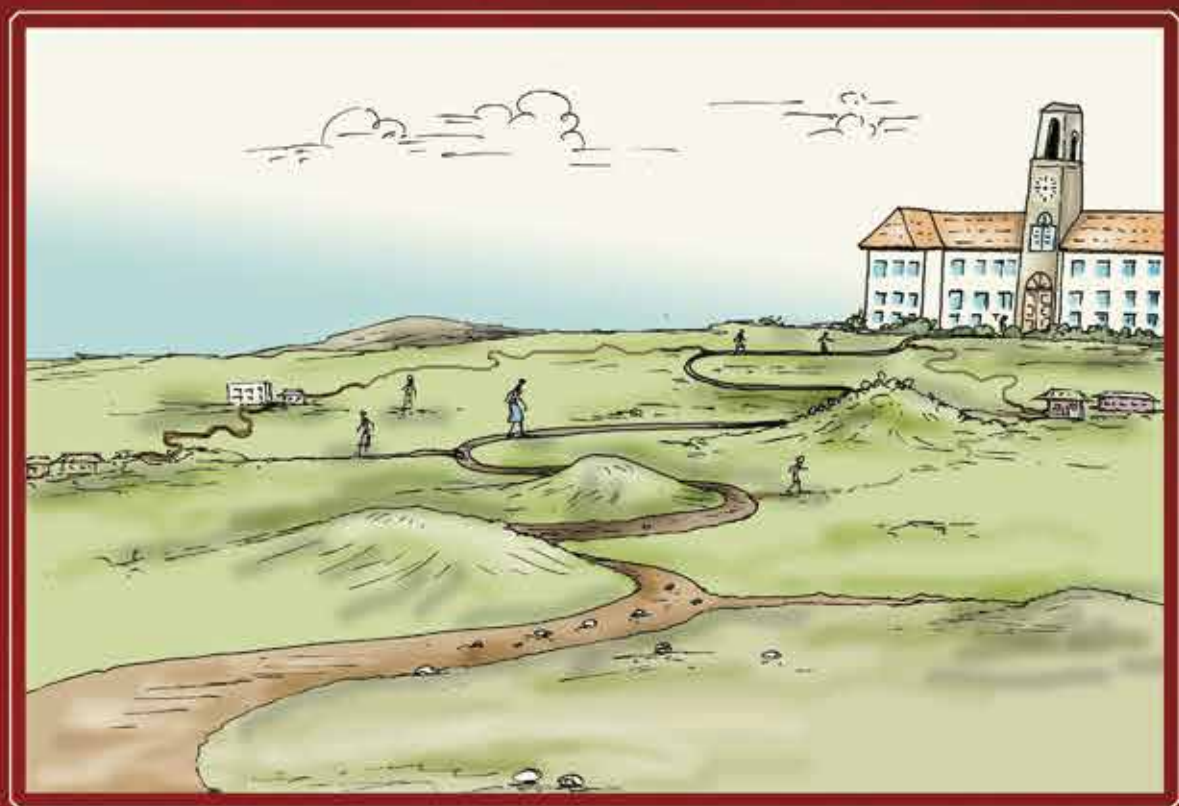
For additional information about this publication click this link.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2066/176179>

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2022-02-22 and may be subject to change.

EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Narratives of
Female Academics and Administrators
in Ugandan Universities



Mary Cecilia Draru

EDUCATION PATHWAYS:
Narratives of Female Academics and Administrators in Ugandan
Universities

Mary Cecilia Draru

Printing:

IPSKAMP Printing, Enschede

Cover design:

By dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo, Uganda (with permission)

The drawing on the cover page depicts the building in which Makerere, the first university in Uganda, was housed. The building remains an iconic local symbol in the local imagination that represents the 'Ivory tower' associated with university life and with tertiary education in Uganda.

ISBN/EAN: 978-94-028-0711-0

© Mary Cecilia Draru, 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author or when appropriate from the publisher.

EDUCATION PATHWAYS:
Narratives of Female Academics and Administrators in Ugandan
Universities

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
op gezag van de rector magnificus prof. dr. J.H.J.M. van Krieken,
volgens besluit van het college van decanen
in het openbaar te verdedigen op

dinsdag 26 september 2017

om 16.30 uur precies

door

Mary Cecilia Draru
geboren op 2 februari 1965
in Rhino Camp, Oeganda

Promotor

Prof. dr. Paul Hoebink

Copromotor

Dr. Catrien Notermans

Manuscriptcommissie

Prof. dr. Marieke van den Brink

Prof. dr. Erdmute Alber (Universiteit Bayreuth, Duitsland)

Prof. dr. Marjo Buitelaar (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)

EDUCATION PATHWAYS:
Narratives of Female Academics and Administrators in Ugandan
Universities

Doctoral Thesis

to obtain the degree of doctor
from Radboud University Nijmegen
on the authority of the Rector Magnificus prof. dr. J.H.J.M. van Krieken,
according to the decision of the Council of Deans
to be defended in public on

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

at 16.30 hours

by

Mary Cecilia Draru
born on February 2, 1965
in Rhino Camp, Uganda

Supervisor

Prof. dr. Paul Hoebink

Co-supervisor

Dr. Catrien Notermans

Doctoral Thesis Committee

Prof. dr. Marieke van den Brink

Prof. dr. Erdmute Alber (Bayreuth University, Germany)

Prof. dr. Marjo Buitelaar (Groningen University)

To my dear father who thought I was much more than a girl in the family;
and to my beloved mother who taught me the joy of womanhood.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xv
PREFACE	xxiii
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Navigating the School System	9
<i>The pipeline</i>	10
<i>Education tracks</i>	14
<i>Pathways</i>	15
1.2 Negotiating Social Context.....	18
<i>Self-selection</i>	18
<i>Motherhood in Africa</i>	19
1.3 Women’s Agency	22
<i>Tactical and strategic agency</i>	23
<i>Dialectics of power and agency</i>	24
1.4 Research Approach.....	26
1.5 Outline of the Dissertation.....	28
CHAPTER TWO - METHODOLOGY: CONSTRUCTING LIFE HISTORIES.....	33
2.1 Research Design.....	34
2.2 Research Process.....	47
<i>Contacting the women and the life history interviews</i>	49
<i>Data management</i>	53
2.3 Ethical Considerations	54
2.4 Reflections on Field Experience	55
<i>Feedback</i>	60
<i>Reflection</i>	62
2.5 Participants’ Perception of the Researcher.....	67
2.6 Representation of data.....	72
2.7 Conclusion.....	72
CHAPTER THREE - STRUCTURAL TRACKS AND WOMEN’S EDUCATION PATHWAYS ...	79
3.1 Education System in Uganda	80
3.2 Theoretical Discussion on Women’s Education	84
3.3 Education Pathway: Primary to Bachelor’s degree	86
<i>High School Education Track (HSET)</i>	88
<i>Professional Education Track (PET)</i>	95
<i>Vocational Education Track (VET)</i>	100
3.4 Educational Pathway: Bachelor’s degree to PhD.....	105
<i>Transition from bachelor’s to master’s degree</i>	106
<i>The social obligation for marriage</i>	113
<i>Transition from master’s to PhD</i>	115
<i>PhD pathway</i>	118
<i>Institutional support and networking</i>	118
<i>Constraints along PhD path</i>	122
3.5 Conclusion.....	124

CHAPTER FOUR - NAVIGATING CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE NATAL FAMILY.....	131
4.1. Theoretical Discussion on the Family	134
4.2 Gender Patterns in Ugandan Families.....	136
4.3 Access to School.....	142
4.4. The Central Figure of the Father	145
<i>Unsupportive category of relatives</i>	146
<i>Shift in position of relatives</i>	156
<i>Succumb to social pressure</i>	159
<i>The 'pen' as a tool for the women's survival</i>	162
<i>Supportive relatives</i>	165
4.5 'My mother was always there for me': Maternal Support	172
4.6 Conclusion.....	176
CHAPTER FIVE - ' <i>SHE IS THE ONLY BOY IN CLASS</i> ': NEGOTIATING GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM	183
5.2 Primary School: Launching Education Pathway	189
<i>Defining the classroom space</i>	195
<i>Self-discovery, sexual agent, and a pupil</i>	197
5.3 Lower Secondary School: Active and Passive Resistance.....	203
5.4 Upper Secondary School: Active Resistance.....	212
5.5 Tertiary and University: Negotiating Gender in the Classroom.....	215
<i>Initiation as honorary male</i>	216
<i>Sexualisation</i>	220
<i>Social isolation in the university</i>	224
5.6 Postgraduate Pathway: Resisting Gender-Based Discrimination	228
5.7 Conclusion.....	231
CHAPTER SIX - BARGAINING CAREER PATHWAYS IN THE SPOUSAL HOUSEHOLD.....	237
6.1 Theoretical Discussion on Women and Spousal Household	241
6.2 Context of Marriage in Uganda	245
6.3 Spousal Role in the Education Pathways	246
<i>Pre-marital phase</i>	247
<i>Marital phase</i>	253
<i>Positive spousal response</i>	254
<i>The wavering spousal support: 'stop talking about your trip to Israel'</i>	260
<i>Unsupportive spouses</i>	262
6.4 Spousal Support on the Professional Pathway	266
<i>Support at entry to university job</i>	267
<i>Spousal support during professional career</i>	270
6.5 Conclusion.....	274
CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION	279
7.1 Choice in the Pathways	282
7.2 Navigating the Context.....	285
7.3 Positive Deviance	287
7.4 Agency and Negotiation.....	292
<i>Individual-self and agency</i>	293
<i>Relational-self and agency</i>	294
<i>Collective-self and agency</i>	296

7.5 Policy Implication	299
7.6 Areas for Further Research	303
EPILOGUE	305
SUMMARY OF THESIS.....	307
SAMENVATTING (Summary in Dutch).....	313
REFERENCES.....	319
APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS	329
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	333

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Distribution Of Female Participants By Academic And Administrative.....	42
Table 2.2: Sample Procedure And Distribution In The Four Universities.....	43
Table 2.3: Category Of Senior Administrative Staff In The Four Universities	44
Table 2.4: Category Of Academic Staff By Position And University	45
Table 2.5: Secondary Sample Of Members Of University Management	46
Table 2.6: Distribution Of Contact Persons	46
Table 2.7: Summary Of Sample Distribution	47
Table 3.1: Generation And Education Tracks	88
Table 3.2.:Time Variation Between Bachelor's And Master's Degrees.....	107
Table 3.3.: Location Of Completion Of Master's Degree	113
Table 3.4.: Phd Status Of The Women	116
Table 3.5: Phd Country.....	118
Table 3.6.: Time The Women Took To Start Their Phd	121
Table 3.7: Education Track And Attainment Of Phd	124
Table 5.1: Type Of Primary School	190
Table 6.1: Marital Status Of The Women.....	240

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Education Tracks in Uganda	81
Figure 2: The Educational Pathways: Primary to Bachelor's Degree.....	87

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAUW	Association of American University Women
EFA	Education for All
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
HSET	High School Education Track
ITEK	Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo
MDD	Music Dance and Drama
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda)
MUK	Makerere University Kampala
MUST	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education (Uganda)
NTC	National Teachers College
NU	Nkumba University
PET	Professional Education Track
PLE	Primary Leaving Examination
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PTC	Primary Teachers College
RU	Radboud University
SN	School of Nursing
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UCC	Uganda College of Commerce
UACE	Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education
UCE	Uganda Certificate of Education
UCEC	Uganda Catholic Episcopal Conference
UMU	Uganda Martyrs University
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
SACCO	Savings and Credit Co-operative
VC	Vice Chancellor
VET	Vocational Education Track
UPE	Universal Primary Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My trajectory for the PhD started in 2011. The PhD pathway has been exciting and challenging not only for its intellectual rigour but most especially because of contextual circumstances that had constantly to be negotiated and manoeuvred. At points, the research and writing process also seemed lonely, and the pathway seemed to wind endlessly. I am grateful to the many persons and institutions that supported me along the way. These few pages cannot accommodate the names of all the persons to whom I am indebted. Here, I will mention a few, while being grateful to all persons who have made this PhD venture a worthwhile undertaking.

In the first place, I am indebted to my promoter and co-promoter for their guidance and for the support that brought this work to fruition. I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Paul Hoebink for remaining open and flexible throughout this whole process. Your openness, to find and work with different co-promoters over the last five years, was particularly helpful.

On that note, my heartfelt gratitude goes to Associate Professor Dr. Catrien Notermans for agreeing to take on the daunting work of the co-promoter at a critical moment and when I needed it most. The momentum of the last two years is a tribute to your immense mentorship ability, conveyed through critical and constructive comments, and timely feedback that kept me working and that pushed me ever farther along my PhD trajectory. I particularly appreciate your ability to ‘fire-fight’ my challenges and to settle my head and refocus my thoughts, so I can write. Your great interpersonal skill boosted my moral and made me feel at home. Through your academic network I was able to access academic experience in the University Bayreuth – Nuremburg, which also made a positive difference in the PhD process. It is one thing to be promoter of a PhD student but another to mentor a student through the PhD process. Thanks also to your lovely family members who warmly welcomed me into your home.

To Tine Davids, I appreciate that you were part of this writing. Your insights helped me to tease out the themes that eventually emerged in this manuscript. Thank you.

I am grateful to Anouka van Eerdewijk, who deserves special mention as the first co-promoter in this study. I still recall your very first email in response to my initial

concept paper; your response guided me towards developing a full proposal and won for me the internationalisation Fund of Radboud University. You also oversaw the field work in Uganda. Although a change of employment could not enable you to continue with official co-promotion, you remained open to my questions, and to our lunch hour brainstorming sessions where I discussed what I was writing. Those sessions gave me clarity as I wrote, and I cherish them. Thank you for admitting me into your network of friends in KIT, especially on Africa Day. To your lovely family: my special and very first young Dutch friends since 2011, Kyra and Sven, whom I have seen grow into teenagers. Kyra, thanks for your gentleness and sensibility; Sven, for your playfulness and big heart and for visiting me in the office. Your visits relieved me of the stress of writing. I still remember the day you invited me to visit your school and the joyful moment I shared with your classmates. Thanks to both of you for the lovely moments of play, music, and dance we shared together. I wish you blessings as you pursue your own careers. To Bart, thank you for sustaining the 'pharmacy garden' that kept me healthy all the time. I have very fond memories of your family.

I am indebted to Prof. Deirdre Carabine of Virtual University of Uganda (VUU) for accepting to take the position of the country co-promoter in Uganda. Although the complications of the PhD process made it impossible for me to deal with promoters in two countries, the guidance and insights you offered at the beginning of this study is highly appreciated.

I am grateful to Prof. Willy Jansen, for giving me a sense of direction regarding the overwhelming amount of field data I had to deal with. Especially, thank you for sheltering me among your PhD students so that I could draw inspiration from the vibrant tutorials and presentations. I still remember the one and half hours that you dedicated to talking me through the 'messy field' data that enabled me to begin to write the first draft of my introduction. It was in your family that I first had a taste of the Dutch traditional celebration of Sinterklaas. Special thanks to Prof. Henk Driessen for readily volunteering academic information and input during my presentations.

A special gratitude to Susan Scott, whose professional editorial expertise and competence brought the final text of this thesis to completion. The editorial work reflects your conscientiousness and deep intelligence that went into the final formation of this PhD project. The care and time you invested in the skilful editorial work is greatly

appreciated. I would like to thank the Manuscript Committee, Marieke van den Brink Erdmute Alber and Marjo Buitelaar for taking the time to read and assess my thesis.

My appreciation goes to Prof. Toon van Meijl, the head of department and the entire secretariat of the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies, for your administrative, practical and technical support in the entire process of my PhD. Special thanks to Saskia Bergen for your keenness in all the practical arrangement of my travels, legalities of stay permit, and for passing by the office and always cheering me up, reminding me 'it is about to be ready'. I am grateful to Elvira Janssen as well, for her gentle, calm presence in the secretariat.

Special thanks to the entire staff of CAOS, especially Lau Schulpen and Luuk van Kempen for responding to my numerous queries, sharing literature and useful information that kept me moving. To René Haar for readily helping with final editing of the reference section of this manuscript; Anouk de Koning, for helping me tour Amsterdam; Elayah Moosa, for the common thoughts we shared about Africa and Yemen. I am grateful to Francien van Driel, Martijn Koster, Sara Kinsbergen, Bernadette van Dijck, Sophie Bolt, Boris Verbrugge, Hans Marks, Edwin de Jong, Lucie Bloemberg, Femke Kaulingfreks, Luuk Knippenberg, Irene Nelissen, for the great encouragement I received from each one of you.

This study was carried with financial support from several sources. The first is the Internationalisation Fund of Radboud University. I thank the international office and the Faculty of Social Sciences of Radboud University for acknowledging my academic ability, which led to the award of the internationalisation grant.

On that note I am grateful to the Association Foerdereverein Marian brothers through Dr Ansgar Kessler and Irmgard Kessler. The financial support you gave me subsidized the cost of my study in Uganda and in the Netherlands. You are not only friends to the Marian Family of brothers and sisters, but special friends and foster parents to me. It is through your association that I am able to count myself among women with successful education careers. The financial support of the association since my bachelor's degree has played a key role in supporting my education pathway. As the first beneficiary and alumna of your sponsorship among the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu, I can say that this PhD is an expression of your faith in the African woman and in her academic capacity. I thank the entire Association for the promotion of

the 'Marians'. I also appreciate your children: Christof, Brigitta, Lucas and Moritz, Norbert, Dorthy and Lazar, whom I grew to know over the years.

To Zr Angèle Scamp and the entire Dominican Community of Neerbosch Oost, thank you for the immeasurable spiritual and material support you gave whenever I turned to you. The common mission which our congregations share as educationists binds us very strongly. The concrete gesture of generosity, assisting my congregation in establishing a technical primary school for child mothers and fathers is particularly appreciated. Special thanks to Sr. Herma Bus, the late Zr Marie André, the community of the Medical Missionary Sisters, Fr Toine Frehe, Akbar and all the occupants of Catarinahof. May God continue to bless your generosity. Special appreciation to Srs. Shyny Joseph, Rasika Pieris and Fr Ambrose Bwangato for solidarity and the path we walked together as students and occupants of Catarinahof.

To my own congregation of the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu. Thank you, dear sisters. We share a common life and mission of bringing the love of Christ to the most vulnerable persons in society. I particularly appreciate the career guidance of the congregation leadership team, who 'forced' me into high school instead of branching off into professional teacher training after lower secondary. My special appreciation goes to Mother Tarcisia Lakot (RIP), Mother Saveria Fuathum, and Mother Marrieta Tea. I am indebted to my formators Sr Gabriella Bali and Terezina Nyodoango, who thought I could be much more than what I allowed myself to dream of being. All of you in your various capacities have helped me to map out my academic and professional pathway and to find fulfilment in my religious life. I am forever grateful.

Thanks to the family of Lau Schulpen and Paula Haarhuis for keeping your doors open for me all the time and dressing me up for winter. So, *'here comes the ski-instructor!'* Thanks for the fun we have always enjoyed as well as the social, material support and the practical advice you willingly offered me throughout the PhD process. The pancake boat exposed me to another aspect of Dutch culture. I have fond memories of the fun we had together throughout my stay in Holland.

To Monique Greup, it was always a pleasure to come to your office and get information about policy matters. A chat over a cup of tea in your office brought such refreshment to my tired mind. I am grateful for your generosity and hospitality.

I also appreciate Prof. Yvonne Benschop, and Prof. Marieke van den Brink for sharing your thoughts about the process of this PhD whenever you were called on. Special thanks to Inge Bleijenbergh for listening and getting me involved in the insightful seminars of the Halkes Women Faculty Network, and thanks to Claudia Krops, for the moments we shared together

Special thanks to Anouk Evers and Jelmer Kamstra, Willem Elbers and Bart van Rijsbergen for your support and fruitful advice, which kept me informed about how to go about contextual issues as they arose along my PhD path. Thanks for the light moments of fun we shared.

My sincere thanks to the security personnel of Radboud University, and to Hermien Dung and Woe-Jen Chen, for reminding me that it was time to go home when I got lost in the maze of writing.

To my colleagues, the PhD candidates, Willem Jacobus Smit, Xuefei Shi, Min Zhang, Michiel Swinkels, Simon Kuijpers, Gaffari Ramadhan, Karolina Dalimunthe, Tirza Snoijl, Wiebe Ruijtenberg, Lucrezia Botton, Gerald Kweri, Alexis Rulisa, Patricia Wijntuin and all the PhD candidates of CAOS. It was always enriching and encouraging to share space with people facing similar questions, and it made the PhD journey much more pleasant. Thank you for the cheers and great moments shared together. Special appreciation to Janne Heederik who translated the summary of this thesis into Dutch.

To the Szweryn family, I thank God that we crossed each other's paths through sharing our faith at Maria Geboorte Parish, and for the huge spiritual and social support I received from you in this entire PhD project. Cathy, George, Walter, and Inga, thank you for being such great friends of the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Gulu, Uganda, and for creating for me a home in Holland. Thanks to Renata and Agnieszka, whom I grew to know through your family. May this PhD take our ANC collaboration to its fulfilment.

To Maja and your children Martijn, Laura and their families, thank you for being such great friends. I appreciate it. I also appreciate my friends at the central market of Nijmegen, especially André van Empel for the goods and services you offered to me.

To my family members, who are the strong pillars I have leaned on since my childhood. Beloved Aunt, mummy Rose Anyao, here is the degree you nurtured from kindergarden. I am glad it has arrived when you are still alive and able to read a few pages of this work. Thank you for fostering me and supporting me through my entire

education. You have remained my great role model. In the absence of my parents, you remained that mother that all of us lean on. May God bless you mummy.

To my brother Msgr Dr. Primus Asega and my childhood friend, thank you for being the strong support to my education since I stepped in school. You taught me the art of debate; my first participation in primary school debate was engineered by you. I still vividly recall 'your' vocabulary '*vice versa*', which I crammed and used in that primary five school debate without comprehending the meaning! Since then I have not stopped debating. The analytical skills most needed to produce a work such as this sprang from the seed you planted. Finally, I will be the 'professor' you dreamed that I would be.

Together with my brothers, Gabriel Nyakuni, Lino Ogavu, Fabiano Aluma, and my sisters Letisya Bako and Delfina Obiru with whom we suckled the same breast, thank you for everything. To my nieces Hellena Avako, Gloria Amaniyo, Lucy Ayikoru, Daniela Letaru, Catherine Alapiti, and my nephews, Inyasio Opkodrabu, Amos Candia, Cosmas Aberu, Benard Afidra, Jude Tadeo Palia, Matias Mungufeni Odiki, my grandnieces Gladys Ecoru, Caroline Masia and Francesca Opkodrabu; my grandnephews Fetaa opkodrabu and Darius Asega. Blessings as you trace your own career pathways in life.

I am grateful to Uganda Martyrs University Management Team, especially Prof. Olweny Charles and Associate Prof. Joseph Kisekka (RIP) for granting for me time to follow the PhD on sandwich programme. To my colleagues and the staff of former IEDS and now School of Arts and Social Sciences, the dean, the head of department of Development Studies and the entire staff, I thank you for shouldering my workload so as to give me time to complete this study. Special thanks to Professors Kanyandago Peter, Barnabas Otaala; Associate professors Laura Otaala, Harriet Mutonyi, Maximiano Ngabirano. My gratitude goes to Bro Aloysius Byaruhanga, Dr Albert Luswata, and all the staff of former IEDS (now SASS) for the academic support and spirit of collegiality. May you be blessed abundantly.

Special gratitude to Dr Jimmy Spire Ssentongo the academic, and artist, for designing the beautiful cover page drawing which captures the nexus of this thesis. Thanks to Ms Audes Tiragana for the technical ICT support in page setting. Special thanks to the strong team of staff in the office of the Dean of Students-UMU: Jordan Jacob

Odongpiny, David Busobozi, Sr. Justine Nassali, for standing strong in the office, to give me time to complete the last bits of this manuscript. Thank you.

To Agnes Nabisibo, thank you for being a great friend and for taking care of practical business for me while I was away for study. I am grateful to my friend and your beloved mother Mrs Specioza Ssekatawa (RIP) for the prayers she offered for me. May her soul rest in eternal peace. To all my friends and well-wishers, God bless you abundantly.

Thank you Prof. Paul Thomas. We were not only colleagues but friends at UMU. Thank you for the various supportive insights and for listening attentively to the endless stories of my PhD trajectory. Thanks for being a great friend.

To my community member Sr. Lucy, pwoc keken! We have moved on this road as twins, in the footsteps of *Abbawa*, in whose charism we partake and curve our identity as Little Sisters of Mary immaculate of Gulu. Blessings as you arrive at the finishing line of your PhD trajectory.

I am most indebted to the 41 female academics and 6 senior administrators who actively reconstructed their life histories to generate the knowledge reflected in this thesis. I acknowledge with gratitude your pathways to educational success. Your stories have opened doors for the world to access yet another set of role models that may positively influence upcoming generations. I am forever grateful.

Thanks to my field contact persons, Prof. Micheal of Nkumba University, Mr Bernard, Mr Denis T. Lukaaya and Ms Robinah Nakakeeto of Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mr Sen, Ms Christine of Makerere University. I am grateful for the great field support you offered, by helping me to access female academics and administrators in the four universities. Special thanks to Barbara Nyanzi for the daunting work of transcribing the interviews script accurately and in record time. I am very grateful

The last line is for my beloved mother Julia Akwero and father Yakobo Odiki Palia, who did not live long enough to share this academic success; the fruit of your love and resilience to invest in the education of your daughters and sons equally. May you share this success as your souls rest in eternal peace.

PREFACE

This PhD project on the education pathways of female academics and administrators in Ugandan universities was conceived during my search for a study pathway in the research field. My initial motivation for undertaking this study was the vast body of literature that painted such a grim picture of children's educational opportunities in Africa, particularly those pertaining to the girl child. Often, the disadvantaging of girls in Africa was linked to discriminatory cultural practices in the family that led to girls' inability to access school, or to their dropping out of the education system altogether. My question was, why did my own story and the educational success stories of other 'few' African women never seem to see the light of day? The few women highlighted, especially by the media, are, I discovered, mostly in the political sector. My own experience as an Executive Secretary, Associate Director, and as a lecturer at Uganda Martyrs University showed that quite a number of women accessed academic and senior administrative positions in the university, and yet these stories never got beyond the gates of the institution. I also realised that, although the number of women in top management positions of the university was constantly diminishing, at the lower administrative and academic levels, the numbers were increasing. The very presence of women in such academic and administrative positions implied that, in spite of challenges to accessing and completing education, some women are able to navigate successfully through Uganda's education system. This success led me to conclude that there were more women completing the education cycle and accessing jobs at the university than could be deduced from the grim picture that was assumed to be the norm in Africa.

Initially, I set out to establish the numbers of women working in Ugandan universities to make a case for the positive effect such women would have on academia. However, in all the universities that I contacted, none had gender-desegregated and position-specific statistics regarding their academic and administrative staff. Although I spent a year attempting to build a gender-segregated statistical database from the existing staff lists, this task ultimately proved futile and institutionally inaccurate. Firstly, the inconsistent use of titles such as 'Mr, Mrs, and Ms' made it difficult to segregate the staff list by gender. Second, most of the staff list did not include the position and location of individual staff members. As such, the data I gathered for one

year was not sufficient to conclusively indicate the number of women working in Ugandan universities.

That said, in the process of gathering statistical information, I met with reactions from different offices that helped to shape the final direction of my study. One such reaction which deserves mention here was from a male member in top university management position, who questioned my concern about the numbers of women employed in the university. He urged me to read the 'Ethics of Care' chapter in a book by Carol Gilligan to see why women in the education sector are concentrated in primary and secondary schools rather than in universities. He emphasised that not many women work in the universities because university students do not need as much care as do students in the primary and secondary schools.

In the process of searching for the book 'Ethics of Care' by Carol Gilligan, I chanced on another book by the same author titled '*In a Different Voice*'. Carol Gilligan's classic work, *In a Different Voice*, presents the ethics of care as a 'different voice'— a voice that joins self with relationship and reason with emotion. She emphasises the importance of 'listening to the ways in which people speak about experiences ... and choices that they face'. She underscores the significance of focusing on actual rather than hypothetical human experience. I appreciated Gilligan's approach to studying the women from their own perspective, in contrast to how the institutions perceived the women. Most studies on women's successful careers in Africa, I realised, focused on their experiences in places of work, or their professional career trajectory. None of the studies analysed the women's education trajectory based on the perspective of the women's own experiences.

As a consequence of these and other insights, I changed my direction of study to focus on women's personal narratives of their successful education trajectory, undertaking an ethnographic study in which 47 (41 academic and 6 administrative) women narrated their education pathway from primary school to the last degree obtained in the university. These narratives clearly showed that women's ability to move through the education cycle depended as much on contextual circumstances in the family and education institutions as on their intellectual capacity. The role of positive deviance and the women's agency both stood out as important drivers behind a successful education career of the women.

Having had this rich field experience, I have come to the conclusion that the policy strategies that governments in Africa are grappling with in relation to girls' education should take into account the stories and experiences of women with successful education trajectories. My research shows that the contextual circumstances that lead to girls dropping out of mainstream education system may not differ radically from those who persist in school. What differs are the strategies individual women must constantly employ to negotiate and manoeuvre around social and economic obstacles in the family and at school.

My hope is that this study will underscore the critical importance of accentuating the education trajectory of women who succeed in the education circle and who find employment as academics and as senior administrators in Ugandan universities.

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

In Africa not all school-age children and particularly girls automatically enrol in school, and those who enrol do not necessarily complete the education cycle. A collaborative education report by Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), in conjunction with UNICEF, Save the Children, UNHCR, and ERIKS development partners in March 2014, identified important barriers to children's access and completion of school in Uganda. Among these, the socio-cultural barrier emerged as key in constraining especially girls' education in all four regions of the country. According to this report, girls are expected to fully participate in domestic work, and help with the care of children, elderly and with sick relatives in the family. These barriers lead to exclusion and to the interruption of formal schooling for girls and also to delays along their education trajectory. The basis of these barriers is the socio-cultural perception that girls who are sent to school lose cultural values, for instance, kneeling as a sign of respect for their elders and people in positions of authority. This perception, coupled with pressure for early marriage from both parents and peers, would prevent girls' access to and completion of the education cycle (MoES 2014).

An important piece of research in the field of women's access to education in Uganda is a survey that was carried out by Kwesiga (2002). An educationist and an administrator in one of the country's public universities, Kwesiga identified the low status of women in Ugandan society and the family, in particular, as one of the major obstacles to girls' access to education. She argued that, if the general status of women and their access to other valued resources is low, the premium on their education will also remain low. Kwesiga showed the deplorable ways in which the profitability of boys' education is constantly compared to that of girls. And yet, the comparison obscures the direct and indirect benefit of girls' education to their families. Additionally, Kwesiga observed that, although some women in Africa have received education of some sort, higher education has remained largely the reserve of men. A critical issue that Kwesiga considers important in the trajectory of women who have accessed education are the obstacles that women face in the family, in society, and in the institutions that determine educational access (Kwesiga 2002, 56).

Kwesiga's (2002) research offers important insight into the challenges that prevent women from accessing education. She also exposes the obstacles that women

continue to face as they advance along the trajectory to higher education. For women (and indeed children) who do access school, there are additional academic and social barriers within the school environment. That said, Kwesiga portrays women mainly as victims of gender inequality. She also views social and cultural values of the family and educational institutions as impacting negatively on women's educational careers. She blames practices such as early marriage, dowry, and structures like the family for contributing to the marginalisation of women from formal education more generally and higher education, specifically.

Contrary to Kwesiga (2002), I contend that families do not have only a negative influence on the education of women. In this study, I seek to give a more nuanced view of the family, and to analyse whether relatives and spouses may provide the necessary support to help women succeed in their education career. Rather than focusing on the women who dropped out, as Kwesiga (2002) did, this study contributes to the field of women's education career achievement by focusing on the women who succeeded in their education career in Uganda. Specifically, I will show how women who work in Ugandan universities navigated the education system. To do so I take into consideration personal as well as contextual factors that constrained but also facilitated the women's successful education trajectory.

Academically, the many transition points within the country's education system put particularly girls at risk of dropping out of formal education. Time and again girls have to defend their wanting to gain an education. Navigating through these transition points is not only a matter of intellectual genius and academic excellence. There are dynamic contextual social and financial circumstances that influence women's chances of succeeding, and that put women at risk of dropping out of the education system altogether. Socially, women face challenges ranging from corporal punishment to sexual harassment by teachers and pupils, as well as gender-based discrimination in the classroom, all of which present additional barriers that put girls at a distinct risk of dropping out of school (Devries et al., 2015).

The critical outlook of this study on education institutions contributes to a general understanding of dynamic classroom experience that facilitated and constrained women's education career. The study pays attention to women's agency as a critical point of analysis.

Remarkably, despite these various constraining circumstances, there are women in Uganda who have built successful education careers in the country. Several highly (academically) qualified women are employed in Uganda's public and private sectors, including in the universities. While there are studies that attest to such successful education careers, the studies focus exclusively on women's experience in their places of employment, specifically in terms of recruitment, remuneration, and promotion (Boonabaana 2014). The elaborate works of Tamale (1999), Tripp (2012), and Wang (2014) show women's struggles in parliamentary politics in Uganda. However, in spite of their insightful contribution to understanding women's experience in employment and politics, the authors' work does not address how women move through the education system to obtain the qualifications needed in the first place. These qualifications also made it possible for women to enter various employment sectors in Uganda. This gap is problematic; women's personal experiences as they traverse the education tracks appear to be taken for granted and so remain obscured. This obscurity does not leave room to explain why some women succeed while others do not. While a lot of research attention has focused on women who drop out of school and the struggles of women in the work place, my study concerns itself with successful women and their education trajectory from primary school on into university.

In this study, I examine the education trajectory of women who have completed the education cycle, that is, from the time they joined primary school through to university. My interest is in examining how such women moved through the education system and what motivated them to persevere and to complete different levels of education, while other girls dropped out of school. Motivation, as Eccles and Wigfield (2002, 110) revealed in their study of the psychology of education in North America, stems from the Latin word which means 'to move'. In this basic sense, the study of motivation is a study of 'action' (2002, 110). Understanding motivation as the drive to move offers insight into what inspired the women in my study to advance and to complete their formal education despite considerable challenges along the way. What made the women in my study succeed at completing the formal education cycle in Uganda is the issue I engage with in this study, specifically, women who work in Ugandan universities.

My aim is to highlight the motivation and experiences of women with successful education careers, and to look at how these experiences shaped their career trajectory from primary school to university. The central question I engage with in this study is:

In what ways did women with a successful education career navigate opportunities and negotiate barriers along their educational trajectory in Uganda?

To address this question, I use the education life history narratives of 47 women who work in four Ugandan universities. Among these women are 41 academics and 6 senior administrators. These education life history narratives were generated during field research I carried out at all four universities between August 2012 and June 2013.

This introductory section is structured as follows. The first part relays personal stories of two historical female figures and my own story as a precursor to the success story of women's education trajectory in Uganda. Thereafter, I engage with the theoretical concepts of the 'leaky pipeline' and 'self-selection' as used by various scholars to explain contextual and personal constraints to women's access to and completion of education. This section will be followed by a conceptual discussion of women's agency and how it translates in their successful education careers. The introduction closes with the research approach adopted in this study and a summary of the chapter outlines in the dissertation.

My motivation for carrying out this study is the silence in academia about women who do have successful education careers in Uganda. This silence is particularly stark in relation to women's educational experiences from primary school to university. Occasionally this silence has been broken by the media or in gender-related academic research, such as Oni's (2013, 304) study about challenges and prospects in African education systems. Largely, it is the media that have attempted to cover stories of women with successful education trajectories in Uganda. For instance, it was through the media that I learned that Uganda is home to the first female university graduate, Dr Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro, and the first female medical doctor, Prof. Josephine Nambooze, in the east and central African region. Prof. Josephine Nambooze is also the first female professor of medicine in Africa. The education life of these two female Ugandan graduates is significant, and are among many women's 'firsts' on the African continent. The two women were among the first to access formal education in Uganda during the

colonial period (1887 to 1962), when women were deliberately excluded from formal education by the British colonial government. Nonetheless, academic literature about their education life history and the life history of many other women with successful education trajectories is hard to come by. To give some historical context, I will briefly focus on the education life history of these two women, adding to that my personal story. Taken together, these stories form an important precursor to this study as a whole.

Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro: The First Female graduate 1940s

A story of Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro ran on page 10 of the *Daily Monitor* newspaper¹ on Saturday, 7 April 2012 under the title, '*Dr Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro: A story of a Ugandan Rosa Parks*'. In this article Sarah was compared to the black female social activist Rosa Parks of the United States of America. The *Daily Monitor* captured Sarah's struggle, especially in her education career at the university and in her professional career. Having completed lower and upper secondary school at an Anglican-founded Gayaza High School, Sarah was among the first six women admitted to Makerere University College in 1945. Their entry obliged the university to change its motto from 'Let Us be Men' to 'We Build for the Future'. Unlike other female students, Sarah was admitted to the mathematics course, which was regarded as a men's subject at the university. The newspaper indicated that on the first day Sarah reported to class, a British male mathematics professor asked her if she thought she was visiting a maternity ward. This same professor protested her presence and vowed never to teach the mathematics class unless 'the pollution' was removed from the classroom. For the sake of her male classmates, Sarah obliged and abandoned Mathematics for a bachelor's degree in History, Geography, and English.

Sarah began her professional career as a graduate teacher at Gayaza High School in 1955. Gayaza High School, one of the most prestigious girls' secondary schools in Uganda, was founded by Anglican missionaries in 1905². Sarah soon discovered that that the colonial government paid her less than her male

¹ <http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/full+woman> viewed 31 October 2014, 9:00 hrs.

² <http://www.gayazahs.sc.ug/>.

colleagues with the same qualifications. She protested and offered the school authorities a radical choice: to work as a volunteer teacher, rather than to receive a lower salary because she was a woman. Questioned by the colonial government why she was 'upsetting' the government, Sarah replied that all she wanted was her right: equal pay for equal work on equal merit. She succeeded in reclaiming her right to equal pay and continued with her activism on the political front as one of the first female legislators in Uganda's parliament. In her honour, the Forum for African Women Educationists established the '*Sarah Ntiro Public Lecture and Award*'; the award has been offered in Uganda since 1999 (WOUNGNET 3 December 2007, 4).

Prof. Josephine Nambooze: The First Female Medical Doctor 1950s

As with Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro, Josephine Nambooze's story was also brought to light by a newspaper. On the occasion of the celebration of fifty years of Ugandan independence from British colonial government, the *New Vision* newspaper of Friday, 31 October 2014 ran the headline '*Prof. Nambooze, first female doctor in East, Central Africa, Uganda, Golden Jubilee, 50 years*'³. The newspaper republished an earlier story written by Kyotalengerire (18 April 2012) about Professor. Dr. Josephine Nambooze, who graduated in 1959 as the first female medical doctor in Uganda and East and Central Africa. She is also mentioned in Oni's (2013, 304) study about *challenges and prospects in African education systems* as the first female professor of medicine in Africa. She spent the rest of her life training medical students at university.

Born to poor parents, Josephine's excellent academic performance earned her a scholarship to the prestigious Catholic-founded Mt. St. Mary's College Namagunga for lower secondary. By the time Josephine joined secondary school, the colonial education policy did not allow girls' schools to teach science subjects. Josephine is quoted in the newspaper as having said: '*After realising that I had potential for science, the school made arrangements, and I joined a boys' school for additional science classes and practical work*'. Under this special arrangement, Josephine's girls' school allowed her to commute to the boys' Namilyango College

³ www.newvision.co.ug.

to study sciences. Otherwise, ordinarily, Josephine would not have had a chance to study the science subjects required to specialise in medicine.

In the colonial period, a separate curriculum was designed for girls' schools that aimed at training girls as good housewives rather than for professional careers. In this context, the school administration played an important role in making exceptions for Josephine to study sciences in the nearby boys' school. Josephine was admitted to medical school as the first female medical student in Uganda. Unlike Sarah, Josephine's professors accepted her presence at lectures. Even so, she soon discovered that accommodations were not intended for female students, and a special arrangement was again made to accommodate her in the nurse's hostel while sharing class and meals with her male classmates in the medical school.

These remarkable media stories about the educational and professional achievements of these two historic Ugandan women are only the tip of the iceberg. What the stories leave out are references to the contextual circumstances that defined the women's access and their successful educational trajectory. It is appreciated that these two women opened the doors to formal education and professional careers for women. However, women's stepping through those doors has remained problematic in Uganda and in Africa as a whole. The story of Sarah highlights gender discrimination in the university lecture hall, obliging her to change her career trajectory from mathematics to Geography and English. Although the media story shines a spotlight on Sarah's agency as she struggled against institutional constraints at her university and later at her workplace, it is silent about her earlier school experiences.

By contrast, Josephine's story illustrates two issues. On the one hand it shows institutional support from both teachers and administrators at her secondary school allowed her to take science classes in Namilyango College. This support in turn boosted Josephine's education career in the medical profession. On the other hand, the story of Josephine also shows how gender-biased the Ugandan school curriculum was in the 1950s, in particular, how the British colonial education system restricted science teaching to boys' schools. What is not captured in her story are her primary school experiences and the influence both of her family and society at large. In both cases, the stories of these two pioneering women are abridged versions of their school life, collected through structured media interviews rather than spontaneously narrated

through full life histories. This study corrects that imbalance by analysing the native view of the women's education life history as freely narrated by the women themselves. As well, my study makes explicit what contextual factors and personal attributes the women considered important for their own educational success.

In spite of methodological shortcomings, the media coverage of these women's stories does offer insight into their struggles, most importantly, into the women's ability to confront challenges and to utilise the opportunities at secondary school and at university to build successful education careers. In the next section, where I briefly volunteer my own story, I hope to flesh out the greater social context that may also influence women's education career.

My experience in a rural community in the 1980s

In addition to the constraints and opportunities provided by educational institutions, my own educational story several decades into the post-colonial period underscores the socio-cultural factors that women continue to face at home as they pursue their education career. Born into a family of four boys and four girls and growing up in a rural fishing village, I had the luxury of going to a kindergarten and starting primary school at the age of six, courtesy of my beloved maternal aunt and my parents, in the mid-1970s. My father, a primary school teacher in a school located seven kilometres from our home, commuted daily from home to school on a bicycle, while my siblings and I went to a nearby primary school. My mother, who did not have an opportunity for formal education, was accused by fellow women in the village of 'spoiling' her daughters by keeping us in school and not asking us to do the daily household chores. In the daily absence of my father, my mother became vulnerable to these kinds of socio-cultural pressure. She began to interrupt our school routine in a bid to discourage us from attending school without our 'commuter' father noticing. It was only after several weeks when I, the second youngest of the girls, secretly revealed to our father our mother's interruptions that he came to realise how irregularly we were attending school. Whatever discussion took place between my parents that evening, the following morning, I saw my father break his commuting routine. He asked us girls to get ready, and he personally took us to school. From then on, we continued to study without any interruption from our mother.

That said, the social cultural pressure did not stop. Women in the village discouraged us by calling us names like 'wild cat' or 'British girls'. They also succeeded in interrupting my oldest sister's senior two by arranging her elopement with a man in the city. The women attempted to discourage my other older sister as well, but she resisted their pressure. They then turned on me as the third girl in the family and told me '*when your elder brother fails to shoot an animal during a hunt, you can take a chance to shoot it*', implying I could 'shame' my older other sister by getting married. However, with the support of my parents and the protection of my brothers at school, my sister and I remained resilient and we were able to complete the education circle. I qualified as a graduate secondary school teacher then later moved on to build my career in academia as a university lecturer; my sister qualified and worked as an administrator in local government.

My story highlights the negative socio-cultural influence that girls commonly confront, even with supportive family members. The example also highlights the fact that the experience of women who have built successful careers should be studied; then and only then can real insight be gained into what works differently for girls at home, in the school, in society in general, and in the workplace that may facilitate their education career trajectories.

Taken together, the stories of the two outstanding women in Uganda's education history and my own story highlight three critical areas of focus. First, the school system does not offer automatic access to all children in a uniform way. Each child navigates the school system in unique ways; this fact alone necessitated a life history approach in my study. Second, social context is an important factor individuals must negotiate as well. Third, individual agency is a crucial factor in navigating both the school system and the social context. I will discuss now the relevant literature in each of these three critical areas. From this literature the sub-questions in this study have evolved. The first area I focus on is the school system in Uganda.

1.1 Navigating the School System

Although the school system is expected to be open to all school-age children, there is a difference in the way in which individual students move between classes and between different levels of education. There is evidence within the existing literature that several

contextual factors constrain women's education trajectory and can lead them to drop out of school altogether. These constraining factors have been attributed to structural inequalities that push women out of the school system in what is known as the 'leaky pipeline' effect (Shaw and Stanton 2012).

The pipeline

One explanation for the constraints that women face along their career trajectory, has dubbed the 'leaky pipeline' by scholars such as Shaw and Stanton (2012). The leaky pipeline explanation problematizes the structural underrepresentation of women in academia as caused by 'leaks' in the professional career pipeline. In Shaw and Stanton's notion of the pipeline, the tenured professorship trajectory is seen as 'a linear progression with five discrete stages: undergraduate studies, graduate studies, post-doctoral fellowships, assistant professorships (tenure track) and tenured professorship' (2012, 3737). The writers point out that, on women's journey from undergraduate studies to tenured professorship, certain individuals may leave the pipeline at various stages over the course of their career development in academia. However, Shaw and Stanton caution that the career path of any individual may be influenced by numerous non-academic events than those suggested by the simplistic linear nature of the pipeline metaphor. The authors also acknowledge that the pipeline provides a framework in which the effect of gender-based differences can be tested in academia (Shaw and Stanton 2012, 3737). The leaky pipeline concept is especially important because it explains the structural reasons why universities constantly lose women along their education career. That said, what pipeline proponents overlook are how women themselves counteract the leaky points along the pipe to build and sustain their career trajectory.

Additionally, in Shaw and Stanton's (2012) concept of the leaky pipeline metaphor, women's education trajectory before their bachelor's degrees is downplayed, that is, it is assumed that the leaky pipeline conditions exist only at higher education and in the workplace. In the context of Africa, quantitative studies have implicitly shown that the leaky pipeline condition occurs as much at lower education levels. In Africa, not all children access primary school education and not all children who access school complete the primary education circle. Gender-specific statistics on the progress and problems of education in Africa by Lewis (2014) show that, among six- to eight-year-

olds, 70% of boys and 63% of girls were enrolled in primary school in 2002 and 2003. This means that 30% of boys and 37% of girls remained out of school. Lewis also indicated that half of the children who accessed school did not complete the primary education circle. This data suggests a typical leaky pipeline condition, in which both girls and boys keep dropping out of school from primary school without completing the education cycle (Kwesiga 2002).

My study contributes to the pipeline debate by focusing on the women who have persisted within the education pipeline and successfully completed the education circle up to at least the bachelor's degree level. My interest is in analysing strategies these women have adopted to overcome potential 'leaks' in their education trajectory. The use of personal education life history narratives in this study allows us to visualise these women within the education pipeline, and to show how women manoeuvred around the leaky points to emerge with a successful education trajectory. Van den Brink (2010, 8) argues that unless women with successful careers are made visible and seen as successful, they cannot serve as role models. Without visible female role models, it will be enormously challenging to attract and retain women within the education system. The education trajectories of female role models suggest concrete strategies for how to deal with the complex academic and contextual circumstances that lead to students dropping out of the education pipeline in the first place. 'However, not highlighting successful women deprives us of knowledge about their strength, their agency and ambition to move on with education in challenging contextual situations.

In Uganda, there is statistical evidence to show leaky pipeline conditions in the education trajectory. For instance, it was found out that in 2010, only 32% of the Ugandan children who enrolled in primary school completed grade seven, and the majority failed to complete primary school (Karlan and Linden 2014). This data marks Uganda as having the lowest school enrolment and the highest rates of early school leavers in sub-Saharan Africa (Tukundane et al. 2014, 475; Karlan and Linden 2014, 3). This leaky pipeline situation in education persists in spite of the increased enrolment sparked by the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE). Universal primary education, from the United Nation's framework of Education for All (EFA), is a strategy to democratise the education system; UPE aims at making sure that children's access to school is protected as a right. Leaving school is also an issue. Dropping out of school is

not only between classes in the same level of education. Students can drop out between successive levels of education, such as between primary and secondary school, between secondary school and tertiary institutions, and university.

The challenge to access basic education also emerged in Uganda's recent National Population and Housing Census 2014 Report, released in March 2016. The Census report showed that literacy levels among Ugandan women is 68% compared to 77% among men. Overall the 2014 census report indicated that seven million (19.3%) Ugandans have never been to school. Among these are 12.5% children who belonged to the school-age bracket of six to 12 years of age. As well, 22% of secondary school children left school under unclear circumstances, meaning that neither the Ministry of Education and Sports nor the schools themselves can explain why these children were not in school. These statistics are important because they confirm the fact that although formal education is available, not all children can access and complete the circle because of the contextual circumstances.

Quantitative analysis has shown that a percentage of children in Africa, including in Uganda, constantly leave the mainstream education system (Lewis 2014). However, less attention has been paid to what alternative education routes pupils take if and when they leave the mainstream education system. Instead the pupils are summarily categorised as 'drop outs'. Quantitative analysis has consciously or unconsciously focused less on children who have succeeded in completing the school circle. This focus on out-of-school children is understandable in the context of generating information to inform policy actors to develop strategies to address challenges to children's access to school in Africa.

My study argues that the key to some of the policy strategies that governments in Africa are grappling with in relation to girls' education may actually lie in the stories and experiences of women who have had successful education trajectories. I contend that the contextual circumstances that lead to children dropping out of the mainstream education system may not be radically different from those who persist in school. What may differ is the ambition level and the degree of persistence. Hence, it is just as important to accentuate the education trajectory of women who have succeeded in education as those who have not completed the education circle.

Qualitative studies of Altinyelken et al. (2014) and Kane (1995) have shown that, although African governments claim to be enthusiastic about increasing girls' participation in education, they have done very little in terms of the legal enforcement of girls' education. For instance, the numerous awareness-raising programmes, seminars, and policy statements about improving access to education for girls have not translated into practical implementation programmes. In other words, many of the good intentions have remained theoretical without supporting implementation programmes (Altinyelken et al., 2014, 98; Kane 1995, 5). It is left to the discretion of individual parents and family members to decide whether to enrol a child in school. This approach is problematic because there are contextual social and economic circumstances in the family that may influence parents' decisions to enrol or not to enrol the girls in school. Generally, lack of enforcement of the legal education frameworks affects all children of school-going age. However, for girls, the necessity to enforce the education legal framework is greater as the determinants of women's access to education are more restrictive and not the same as those of men (Acker et al. 2013, 82). Again, the issue of girls' access to school in Uganda is not only about schools opening their doors to educate girls but about larger contextual circumstances in the family and in society.

There are a range of economic and social challenges that affect the education of girls specifically due to the patrilineal nature of families. In patrilineal families, lineage is continued through male children, and, as a result, the economic challenge that families face in meeting the education costs of school fees, school uniform, food, and scholastic materials may spur parents to withdraw girls, rather than boys, from school (Karlan and Linden 2014, 5). Girls are needed at home more often than boys, to gather water and to help run the household (Lewis 2014). The question then is how the women with successful education careers manoeuvred these kinds of social and economic challenges. This study responds to this question by considering the contextual domains that played an important role in determining women's education trajectories.

The qualitative findings listed above expose the kinds of economic and socio-cultural circumstances that negatively influence the education of girls in Africa. However, what the qualitative studies do not focus on is how individual women have remained in school, and how they deal with individual members of the family and negotiated the economic and socio-cultural circumstances. The question that qualitative

studies to date have not answered is what economic and socio-cultural circumstances worked differently for women who have indeed built successful educational careers. My study examines these circumstances from the perspective of the women's own education life history narratives. These narratives offer a broad view of women as they enter the formal education system, and move along the education system to the point where they obtain their academic qualifications. This broad-based view keeps the women in sight even if and when they change direction from one pipeline to another.

Notably, the women do not disappear at all. In this way, my study responds to the pipeline theory by analysing contextual circumstances, especially in the family and educational institutions, that prevented these women from 'leaking' out of the education pipeline. As such, I will highlight the role of individuals within the family and the school who supported the women. In doing so, I will also pay attention to the women's agency as they navigated around various 'leaky' spots to emerge with a successful education career.

Education tracks

Tracks, as referred to in this study, are institutionally established educational frameworks in Uganda that are available to every individual child. In this sense educational tracks follow the same logic as the pipeline metaphor. The tracks are linear and are marked with transition points that are similar to the leaky points along the education pipeline. However, educational tracks differ from the pipeline metaphor in that they offer options at transition points at which students are distributed using school and national examination criteria. The distribution of students within the various track options is value tagged. For instance, the best-performing students at national examinations are expected to follow the mainstream education track from primary school through high school directly to university. Meanwhile, students whose academic performance does not meet the expected grade points are distributed into professional and vocational alternative education tracks that are perceived as less prestigious.

The valuation of tracks is based strictly on written examinations, which is the only assessment criteria at transition points at each level of education. The criteria make the transition points risky for students who do not score enough points to obtain the nationally set grade points for qualification to proceed to the next level of education. In Uganda's education system, the 'cut off' grade points are not fixed. They are based on the

general performance of students in the national examinations in a given year. Depending on how well or poorly students perform in the national examinations, the grade points for qualification for the next level of education can be raised or lowered. This oscillation in the grade points for pass marks puts students at risk at transition points since there is no assurance that a good score in examinations will automatically qualify students for the next level of education. As Kwesiga (2002, 232) established, the Ugandan education structure gets more restrictive at each successive level of education because there are fewer positions and facilities at higher levels of education. Students are at risk of being held back to repeat a class or an education level, or, as suggested by the leaky pipeline concept, drop out of the education system altogether.

Besides academic risks, there are also economic and social challenges that pose potential threats for students at transition points. Each level of education in the track comes with an increased financial cost. This means that students who cannot afford to pay for the next level of education may potentially have to drop out at any transition point. Similarly, students who experience social challenges, especially in the family, may not regularly attend class, and their risk of failing examinations increases. Equally, students who experience less friendly environments in the family or at school may lose concentration and eventually drop out of school (Karlan and Linden 2014, Alderman, Gilligan et al. 2013, Björkman-Nyqvist 2013). These contextual circumstances in the family and in the school pose an additional risk for students at the transition points between classes and different levels of education. However, education track options provide the possibility of a student's changing direction from one track to another, thus creating a possibility to 'stay on' within the education system even when the student fails to continue along what is constructed as the mainstream education track. Therefore, unlike the leaky pipelines, the tracks include movement which in turn enables individual students to forge alternative pathways around the transition points. This means that, potentially at least, each student has a chance to develop a unique education trajectory within the existing education tracks and system.

Pathways

To visualise the women as they move along the education tracks, I adopt the pathway concept which Cornwall and Edwards (2010, 2) used in the context of empowerment in development thinking. Cornwall and Edwards conceptualised pathways as a journey

involving constant negotiations and compromise with uncertain outcomes. Negotiations imply that pathways are not pre-defined but emerge as the individual moves along the existing education tracks. Compromises in pathways refers to the flexibility to adapt to unfamiliar education career directions dictated by examination results and contextual social and economic situations rather than personal career choice. The outcomes of pathways are not certain because career options are not always clear until one has travelled the whole length of the pathway. (There is always the possibility that one can change direction or get delayed at any transition point.) Unlike tracks, which are institutional givens, pathways are circumstantial routes that an individual constructs as a survival strategy against unforeseen educational constraints that pose potential threats to constructing a successful education trajectory. Pathways as journeys involve changes of direction as an individual seeks alternative ways of navigating around obstacles with the aim of moving on. Seeking alternative directions like this requires flexibility, which allows for the possibility of reversing, skipping, and going around given transition points along the education tracks. Flexibility in the concept of pathways allows for a change of direction and a change of speed. Flexibility also allows for stop-overs to re-strategize when the need arises. These possibilities also imply that the speed and direction of the pathways are not uniform but specific to an individual's circumstances along the education tracks. Flexibility also demands the capacity to adopt to unfamiliar pathways.

The advantage of the pathway perspective is that it keeps the individuals in sight as they move, change direction, speed up, or slow down. It also pays attention to women's agency in the context of the contextual circumstances women have to deal with. This is in contrast to the linearity in the tracks and leaky pipeline in which a change of direction creates the impression of disappearing altogether from the pipeline. Working strictly with the logic of the leaky pipeline means it is easy to lose sight of the women as they change direction in the process of negotiating obstacles. Losing sight of the women in the main education pipeline makes it appear that all women who exit the mainstream education pipeline 'drop' and 'leak' out of the education pipeline. In this study I contend that disappearing from the main education track does not always lead to dropping out of the education system. On the contrary, I argue that changing direction in the pathway is a strategy for negotiating alternatives that can still lead to a successful

education trajectory. In this context, the pathways' concept emphasises individual women's agency as they manoeuvre around constraints in order to build their education career. Tracing the education pathways of the women in this study keeps the women in sight. This means that the career direction of the women and the contextual circumstances that influence their decisions to change direction, to accelerate or slow down their movement along the education track, can all be made visible. Engaging with the concept of pathways in this study suggests that women do not just blindly follow the existing education tracks laid out for them. Instead, women make conscious decisions to follow the specific pathways influenced by their individual circumstances. Because it is possible to make decisions all along the pathways, women are able to negotiate opportunities and manoeuvre around constraints to construct their education pathway along existing tracks.

Consequently, the first question I engage with is:

1. *What is the nature of the education pathways of women with successful education careers in Uganda?*

For this specific research question I respond to the leaky pipeline concept of Shaw and Stanton (2012) by mapping out the women's movement within the existing education tracks in Uganda's education system, in chapter three. In tracing the women's movement along the education tracks, I show the transition points between different levels in the system which pose potential risks for women to leak (drop) out of formal education. The nature of women's education trajectories will be revealed when we look at how the women traversed the leaky transition points, what education track options were available to them, and how these options influenced the direction and speed of their movement from primary school to bachelor's degree at university. This specific question will enable us to visualise whether the women took direct tracks from primary school to university or instead meandered or were possibly delayed. Most importantly, by analysing the nature of the education pathways of the women, I make visible how circumstances in the natal family, the school, and in spousal households influence the direction and speed of the women's educational trajectory. These considerations bring me to the next section, on social context.

1.2 Negotiating Social Context

Access to education for women in Africa is thought to be determined by their social context (Kwesiga 2002). As such, women's potential to proceed or drop out of school may depend on which option they choose: to pursue their education career or take care of their families. Similarly, Eccles (1994, 589) in her study on women's educational and occupational choice, posits that individuals continually make choices both consciously and unconsciously regarding how they will spend their time and effort. In relation to educational decisions, Eccles contends that achievement-related behaviours involve an element of choice, even if the outcome of that choice is heavily influenced by socialised pressures and cultural norms (1994, 590).

Self-selection

Related to Eccles' notion of choice is the self-selection theory which takes social context into account to explain why women drop out of school. The self-selection perspective contends that women's inability to access and complete their formal education can be attributed to their personal choice of pursuing parental duties rather than education. This choice is what scholars refer to as 'self-selection' (Nomaguchi and DeMaris 2013, Sheltzer and Smith 2014, Van Anders 2004). In an online quantitative study involving female and male academics at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), Van Anders (2004) conceptualised self-selection as the process by which women choose not to pursue academic careers, and select child upbringing and family roles instead. She argued that women self-select out of academia for reasons of parenting and mobility rather than due to partner-related issues. In this sense, pursuing further education after marriage is perceived as incompatible with and less appropriate for individual women with young children. The self-selection perspective can be traced to the gender-approach research of the 1950s and 1970s, which saw the problems of the female worker as stemming from the women themselves (Britton and Logan 2008, 108). As such, the self-selection perspective appears to be drawn into beliefs that women are so socialised to value marriage and motherhood that non-conformity exposes them to ridicule and stigmatisation.

The socio-cultural conspiracy posits further that personal choices about lifestyle may influence women's decision-making about career planning. Women prioritise responsibilities such as raising a family above their career advancement (Blackmore and

Sachs 2012, 3; Collings et al. 2010). Accordingly, Van Anders argues that although there are no gender differences between couples in their desire to have children, men think that developing a career is more compatible with having children than do women (Van Anders 2004, 518-519). The notion of self-selection presupposes women's judgement and decisions are based primarily on goals, desires, emotions, and needs of the self. In this sense, self-identity, as generally conceived in western societies and by western African scholars, is depicted as personal, private, autonomous, and unique (Sedikie and Brewer 2016, 1). However, self is also relational as evidenced in the case of motherhood in Africa. In the relational-self, an individual's identity is bonded by personal connections to significant others (Kashima and Hardie 2000, 20). This means that the judgement, decisions, and goals of an individual can in some cases be attributed to the concerns, goals, and thoughts of significant others. In the next section I reflect on motherhood from the perspective of relational-self.

Motherhood in Africa

Motherhood in Africa in general and specifically in Uganda is not only bonded to child-bearing and bringing up children. Motherhood is a special social position ascended to by virtue of lineage as well as an individual's social position and responsibility vis-a-vis the society. In terms of lineage, both men and women can be mothers (male mothers and female fathers are elaborated on in chapter 3). Most importantly, for women, beyond biological child-bearing, motherhood is tied to a social place of responsibility and is seen as an outstanding service rendered to the community. Both the biological and social context of motherhood commands respect and can promote rather than impede women's career development.

The question of motherhood in the self-selection perspective becomes problematic for explaining African women's possibilities for continuing their education career. Motherhood in the African context is a relational gender role. Contrary to being an impediment to women's educational career trajectory, motherhood is a site of negotiation of self-identity but also a site of social respect and resistance against discrimination. As such, in Africa, motherhood is a source of solidarity in the family and a source of empowerment for individual women. In the African context, motherhood does not exclude other identities and responsibilities in a woman's life (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010, 618). An analysis of uncertainty in motherhood in schools in Cameroon

by Johnson-Hanks (2006, 196) established that motherhood in Africa goes beyond an individual's biological role to social identity and shared motherhood. The concept of shared motherhood emphasises the active involvement of relatives and friends in giving childcare support. As a common feature of African families, shared motherhood changes parenting styles and reduces the challenge of biological motherhood, which is thought to distract women from pursuing their career aspirations.

Consequently, for working mothers in Africa generally and Uganda in particular, shared childcare has changed the face of motherhood in several ways. Firstly, childcare in Uganda is organized differently. Although women still remain key in the child's upbringing, there is greater possibility of having relatives such as parents and grandparents, as well as domestic assistants, to support bringing up a child. Secondly, childcare is not only about the practical arrangements of having someone else look after the kids. It involves fulfilling the social and psychological needs of the child and educating the child in the values of the family. In relation to pursuing an educational career, shared motherhood gives women space to pursue their career while their children are taken care of by spouses, relatives, friends, and hired domestic assistants. Motherhood in this sense might actually facilitate rather than impede women's educational advancement because of the respect women can expect from society and the family for being a mother.

While self-selection helps explain why some women opt out of education to fulfil parenting duties, it does not adequately explain why other women are still able to pursue higher education even after getting married and becoming mothers. My study will address this inadequacy by analysing contextual circumstances within the domains of the natal family, the school, and spousal relations in the family of marriage, and how these positively influenced the women studied so that they did not self-select away from an education career. Specifically, I delve into how the women negotiated child support from individual spouses and spousal relations to keep on track with their education career. I argue that the fact that the category of women in my study did not self-select away from their education and academic career is highly dependent on the women's agency.

On the whole, the literature on women's education careers in Africa often overlooks women who have not leaked or self-selected out of an education career. I

contend that motherhood and educational careers are not mutually exclusive. This study makes it possible to identify the strategies women adopted to manoeuvre their way through the existing education system in Uganda, and reveals how they balanced their private life as daughters, sisters, mothers, and wives along with their educational life as students, especially at higher education levels. The women in this study are those who have persisted and built an educational career in spite of the socio-cultural and economic constraints in the natal family, the school, and in spousal relations. In particular, the study makes explicit how women may turn instances of marginalisation along their education trajectory into sources of critical insight. To capture the social context of the education pathway of the women, I pose the second specific research question:

2. *In what ways did contextual factors influence the education pathway of women with successful education careers in Uganda?*

To respond to this specific question, my analysis will focus on how the role of individual people in the context of the natal family (chapter 3), in education institutions (chapter 4), and in the spousal households (chapter 5) created educational opportunities but also constraints for the various women. The chapter on the natal family will show how individuals provided checks and balances for one another to create space for the women to pursue their education career. In the family context, I analyse how women negotiated against and around gender discrimination by relatives in the natal family. In the school context, I will show how the women dealt with the hierarchically rigid contextual circumstances in schools, colleges, and universities to pave a way for their education. With respect to the latter I will specifically analyse the women's experiences in the classroom as they interacted with teachers and classmates at various levels along the way. With regard to the spousal household, I will analyse how women bargained for their education career with individual spouses and within spousal relations. I focus on these contextual circumstances to show how they influenced and defined the unique ways in which individual women carved out their education pathway. In this way, the importance of women's identity and their agency in advancing in their educational career can be highlighted (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010, 620). The following sections discuss the area of women's agency in more detail.

1.3 Women's Agency

Besides individual education pathways and women's social context, an important source of success along the pathway can be identified in the women's own agency. A critical academic contribution to understanding agency in Africa has been advanced by De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald (2007, 1). In this study on 'strength beyond structure', De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald traced the historical trajectory of agency across Africa. These authors emphasised the possibilities and the opportunities individual and social groups perceive when faced with the constraints of social life. The study looked at ways in which social strength is created in the hope and expectation of negotiating many of the structural limitations encountered by individuals in daily life. The authors provide an alternative view of people and society in Africa by elucidating the often victimising approaches in exchange for a much more balanced understanding of local processes at work. The central argument of De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald is that, to gain an understanding into the dynamics of social transformation of African societies, it is important to focus 'on agency which ultimately leads to creativity and inventiveness' (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald 2007, 1). I adopt this focus on agency to study how women deploy 'strength beyond structures' along their educational pathways. The radical departure from victimhood is particularly important because it sheds light on how individuals in Africa cope with and negotiate concrete circumstances in life.

That said, De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald (2007), as western scholars in African studies, still treat agency as inherently personal action emanating from the inside core of an individual person. This action is thought to guide the actions of the person towards the social environment (Sorrentino, Cohen et al. 2009, 137). In this sense, agency is restricted to identifying internal attributes and using them to regulate actions, regardless of whether or not these actions are culturally sanctioned.

However, individual agency and agentic actions are not always anchored in personal goals, desires, and decisions of an individual as is commonly perceived, especially in the western world. Agency in the African context can also be constructed and based on the desire and needs of significant others. This is what Piot (1999) and Sorrentino, Cohen et al. (2009) refer to as interdependent agency. Interdependent agency is predicated on the argument that persons (at least in an African context) can never be considered apart from their existing social context, that is, the community of relationships into which an individual is born and raised and within which the person

lives (Piot 1999, 17). In many African communities, the construction of sociality is not about a divide between individual and society. It is about 'being together', which, from the perspective of agency implies a radical reliance on others rather than purely falling back on self-reliance. Interdependent agency therefore carries the meaning of dealing with persons as individuals who are constantly involved with and defined through relations. Rather than 'having' relationships, the individual is regarded as someone composed of and constituted by relationships. An individual in this sense is constituted of 'relations' in their own right (Piot 1999, 18). The implication in the African context is that the desire to sustain family solidarity and interdependent lives often overshadows individual's needs and interests (Abebe 2013, 72).

Moreover, as Sorrentino, Cohen, et al. (2009, 138) observed, interdependent agency is often cast in a perjorative light as unwilling obedience to social expectations. However, more often than not, there may be considerable overlap between an individual's goals and values and those of the significant others to the extent that what the significant others wish also amounts to what an individual wants. In that sense, personal agency depends critically on interpersonal functioning, inferring thoughts of significant others and using them to regulate personal actions to social expectations. Living a relational life implies also living a life in negotiation which, Nnaemeka (2004) argues, is at the foundation of shared values of many African cultures. Negotiation, she explains, carries a double meaning in the context of interdependent agency. Firstly, it is a 'give and take', in reciprocal relationship. Secondly, negotiation is also a strategy for coping with and going round constraints (Nnaemeka 2004, 378). Hence, negotiation in the context of relational individuals calls for an exercise of tactical and strategic agency to sustain and manage interdependent agency. In the next section I focus on the tactical and strategic agentic actions.

Tactical and strategic agency

The concept of agency has been used by various scholars who have carried out studies in Africa, for instance: Gale's (2007) study of women in Bulgur marriages in refugee camps in Guinea; Utas' (2005) study of women in a Liberian war zone; and Honwana's (1999) study of post-war identities of child soldiers in Mozambique. All these authors borrowed Micheal de Ceteau's (1984) concept of tactical and strategic agency. Tactical agency has been conceived of as a short-term survival strategy used by the weak and disadvantaged

members of society to conform to or to resist oppressive structures in the society. Put another way, tactical agency is an individual's response to life's twists and turns in relation to society's structure (Gale 2007, 358; Utas 2005, 407). Tactics are a means of coping with concrete circumstances, even though those means are likely to have long-term effects (Honwana 1999, 4). Kallio, in his study on Finnish children's agency, argues that, due to their socially disempowered position, children as well as socially disadvantaged groups can only participate in or resist the prevailing order in society through tactical agency. The tactics are a way of making 'use of' and 'use on' at the same time. This, according to Kallio, represents both acceptance and manipulation of the prevailing social order to one's advantage (Kallio 2008, 286).

In contrast to tactical agency, strategic agency is perceived as producing long-term benefits. Strategic agency is for those who can forecast the future state of affairs and who have the possibility of making use of other people's tactical agency (Utas 2005, 407, Honwana 1999, 4). At the basic level, tactical or strategic agency is not something an individual possesses or does, but rather something an individual maintains in relation to the social field that is shared with other social actors. By definition then agency is highly dependent on specific social situations (Utas 2005, 407). In relation to my study, a focus on both tactical and strategic agency offers important insights into how women responded positively to opportunities and manipulated constraining circumstances along their career pathways to attain educational success. Most importantly, in the contextual empirical chapters, this study will show how women maximised their educational career chances using diverse strategies, for instance, how women used tactical agency to respond to immediate contextual opportunities and constraints while using strategic agency to launch long-term plans along their education pathways. This dynamic also sheds light on the diverse 'power-saturated' circumstances of the women and how each of them negotiated with, conformed to, and resisted these circumstances to create space for their education trajectory. The different ways in which the women in my study reacted to their circumstances will also make visible variations related to age (mature, middle-aged, and young) and location (urban and rural).

Dialectics of power and agency

Agency has been underscored as the most central of the three dimensions of empowerment (agency, resources and achievement). In her critical analysis of the third

millennium development goal, Kabeer (2005, 14) argued that agency is central to empowerment because it represents the process by which choices are made and put into effect. According to Kabeer, resources are a medium through which agency is exercised, and achievement is an outcome of agency. However, she explains that agency has both positive and negative connotations. The positive aspect of agency is the idea of the 'power to', referring to people's ability to make and act on their own life choices even in the face of opposition and resistance from others. The negative aspect is the 'power over', which alludes to the capacity of some actors to override the agency of others through exercising authority or using violence and other forms of coercion.

However, as Kabeer observes, power also operates in the absence of explicit forms of agency. This is particularly true in cases where institutional biases constrain people's ability to make strategic life choices. Similarly, cultural or ideological norms may deny that inequalities exist or that such inequalities are unjust. Kabeer concludes therefore that agency implies not only an active exercise of choice but also acting in such a way that challenges power relations (Kabeer 2005, 14). Power relations for the women in my study can be identified in every location and context: from natal and marital families to educational institutions, and from villages and peri-urban settings to urban locations. What is of interest for this study is how in this dialectic of power, women's agency unfolded in the fields where other actors' agency is also at play. Therefore, I contend that women's agency is better understood in terms of negotiation in the context of interdependent agency. To facilitate my analysis of women's agency, I pose the third specific research question:

3. How did the women use tactical and strategic agency to negotiate successful education careers in Uganda?

To answer this question, I focus on the women's agency in the context of Africa (De Bruijn, Van Dijk, and Gewald 2007), as manifested along their education trajectory. In particular, I consider how the women navigated checks and balances in the natal family, negotiated gender discrimination with individuals in the classroom, and bargained for their education career within the spousal households. In all this, the women are shown to be determined, focused, and sometimes aggressive and rebellious as they pursue their education career. The response to the sub-question on the women's agency runs

through all chapters. However, the women's agency becomes more explicit as they interact with individuals in the natal family (chapter 4), with teachers and classmates in the classroom (chapter 5), and with spouses and spousal relations (chapter 6).

In the above theoretical discussions, it is evident that the African continent in general and Uganda specifically is still grappling with the challenge to have all school-age children access and complete their education. This challenge is greater for women because of the contextual circumstances that discriminate against women. However, evidence on the ground in Uganda shows that there are women who have managed to build successful education careers and are employed in various sectors. Taking the case of female academics and senior administrators in Ugandan universities, the central question in this study is:

In what ways did women with a successful education career navigate opportunities and negotiate barriers along their educational trajectory in Uganda?

To address this question I engage three specific sub-questions:

1. *What is the nature of the education pathways of women with a successful education career in Uganda?*
2. *In what ways did contextual factors influence the education pathway of women with successful education careers in Uganda?*
3. *How did the women use tactical and strategic agency to negotiate a successful education career in Uganda? ‘*

These sub-questions will be answered in chapters two, three, four, and five, respectively, as will be explained further in the thesis outline at the end of this chapter.

1.4 Research Approach

In making a choice for the research methodology employed in this study, I am in agreement with Crotty (1998, 2) and Nencel (2014, 76) that the choice of methodology is influenced by how a researcher defines reality as well as what constitutes knowledge. To answer the research questions in this study, I adopt the constructivist perspective advanced by Gray, which posits that:

...truth and meaning do not exist in some external world but are created by the subject's interaction with the world. Meaning is constructed not discovered, so the subject construct their own meaning, in different ways even in relationship to the same phenomena. Hence, multiple contradictory but equally valid accounts of the world can exist (2013, 9).

The constructivist perspective gives prominence to social actors who continually make meaning out of social phenomena. This view contrasts with the positivist perspective, which suggests that reality exists as meaningful entities independent of consciousness and experience, although careful research can attain that truth and meaning (Crotty 1998, 5-6). To the positivist, social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence. Knowledge in the positivist perspective is discovered and not produced (Bryman 2012, 32).

Specifically in relation to the life history approach, I adopt social constructivism, which explicates the processes by which people come to describe and explain the world in which they live. Social constructivism also attempts to articulate common forms of understanding as they now exist, have existed in prior historical periods, or as they might exist should creative attention be directed to them (Gergen 1985, 266). To the social constructivist, the realities we study are the social products of the actors, of interactions, and of institutions. Knowledge in this case is perceived as the way people actively organise their experiential world to produce realities and objects through the multiple meanings they ascribe to certain events and individual experiences (Flick 2009, 70; Campbell and Wasco 2000, 780). Put differently, a social constructivist suggests that reality is socially and historically constructed and that the goal of a social scientist is to understand what meanings and patterns people ascribe to that reality (Schutt 2011, 48; Flick 2009, 70; Amin 2005, 43).

Within the constructivist perspective, feminist epistemologists such as Narayan (2004, 213) and Campbell and Wasco (2000, 780) have proposed the need to legitimise women's lived experiences as important sources of knowledge. These authors argue that ordinary and extraordinary events of women's lives are worthy of critical reflection as they can inform our understanding of the social world. According to the feminist perspective, it is only by making women's concrete experience a source of primary investigation that knowledge that accurately reflects and represents women can be successfully gained. This view implies that taking women's experiences as a starting point provides the ultimate criterion for credibility of this knowledge claim on women. In constructing their own stories, women also build knowledge to understand themselves, instead of being defined by factors external to them (Harding 1987, 164; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 56).

The basic proposition that underlines the constructivist approach, even from a feminist perspective, is that any attempt to understand the social reality has to be grounded in people's experience of that social reality. The understanding here is that it is important to revisit personal experiences so that new meanings may emerge. This in turn calls for research that allows for the experience of people to 'speak for themselves so that a renewed meaning can emerge'. The key implication of the constructivist perspective is that we need to gain subjective experience not only from the participants but also from the researcher (Gray 2013, 24). Therefore, the constructivist perspective provides two important insights: firstly, that meaning is created by a subject's interaction with the world; and secondly, that meaning is constructed and not discovered. Engaging with the educational career pathways of the women in this research implies that, together, the women and I initiate a journey into a historical experience so that old as well as new meanings can emerge from said experiences. This journey then required a road map in the form of a research design, which I discuss in the next chapter. The world in which participants interact will then be revealed through themes that emerge from the life history narratives of the various participants.

My study is purely qualitative because I adopt life history narratives as the main source of data. The study is based in Uganda and focuses on the educational and professional life histories of 47 women, drawn from four Ugandan universities. These women are the primary participants. Other participants were drawn from members of university management as well as a contact person; all told, this brought the number of participants to 86. The field research was carried out from August 2012 to August 2013, and unstructured interviews were the main research tool used. An elaborate discussion of the research methodology appears in the methodology chapter (chapter one).

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

To be able to conceptualise and address the issue of how the women in my study managed to access and successfully complete the education circle, I have organised this study in such a way that each chapter discusses risks and opportunities along the women's education pathway. Although the risks are high, given that many children in Africa do not access and so complete the education cycle, opportunities are nevertheless available.

This dissertation is organised into seven chapters. Chapter one focuses on the research methodology that was used to jointly reconstruct the educational life history of the women. The qualitative research design adopted in this study is predicated on Hesse-Biber's (2010) perspective that individuals are 'meaning makers' of the world they reside in. In that respect, the chapter explains: the life history approach that was adopted in this study; the research design; and the population and sample of participants who formed the basis of this study. The chapter specifically highlights reflection on field experience with the life history approach, and the responses that approach elicited from participants.

Chapter two is the first empirical chapter; it constructs the education pathways of the women within the existing structure of education tracks. The major thrust in this chapter is answering the first research question, on the nature of the education pathways of the women in question. The chapter engages with Eccles's (1994) notion of choice in her achievement-related theoretical framework. In the chapter, I map the educational pathways of the women from primary school to university. In the pathway map, I show the transition points between classes and between successive education levels, which posed particular risks for the women to drop out of school. The pathways (road map) provide the basis on which the other three empirical chapters are developed. The chapter concludes by arguing that women's educational pathways are a product of not only their intellectual acuity but, most importantly, of contextual factors and women's agency. The way the women responded to these contextual factors influenced the direction and the speed of the pathways.

Chapter three discusses the natal family as the first contextual domain that influenced women's access to their education pathway. The chapter analyses how women navigated through checks and balances in the natal family. The chapter employs the systems' perspective of Cox and Paley (2003), and the life course theory of Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharma (2003) to analyse the context of the natal family. The chapter also responds to part of research question two regarding contextual factors that influenced the education pathways of the women. The main focus in this chapter is to show how the women strategically navigated opportunities for and negotiated constraints to their education pathways as presented by members of the natal family. The chapter argues that the family is not a unitary whole but consists of individuals who

relate to, as well as negotiate and conflict with, each other with respect to the women's education career. Regarding such negotiations and conflicts, the chapter highlights women's tactical and strategic agency, as they reach out to supportive members and mobilise their supports to counter those people who are unsupportive.

In chapter four, the discussion turns to the classroom as the second contextual domain that influenced women's education pathways. The focus of the chapter is the classroom experience of the women as they interacted with classmates and teachers. The chapter is helped by Delamont's (2012) analytical framework on how the pace and scope of educational reforms have produced unintended gender inequality in schools. The chapter shows the classroom as a space in which women, throughout their education pathway, negotiated not only their intellectual and academic space but also, and more importantly, their identity as female students in male-dominated spaces in schools and campuses. The chapter argues that, although formal education is meant to be a vehicle of empowerment, in practice educational institutions are highly gendered and rigid, that is, disinclined to change the gender status quo. This situation is manifested in school policies which may be gender neutral, while individual teachers and pupils carry gendered attitudes into the classroom. This combination influenced not only the direction but also the speed of the women's education pathways.

Chapter five examines spouses and spousal relations as the third contextual domain in which women bargained for their pathway, especially in higher education. The chapter seeks to understand how individual members of the marital family influenced both the educational and professional pathway of the women. The chapter highlights spousal influence on the speed and direction of the education pathways, especially after upper secondary school (high school), and interrogates the role of the marital family members in the professional career pathway of the women in the university. The chapter engages the cooperative conflict model as used by Jackson (2013) in her analysis of household relationships in eastern Uganda, and argues that spousal financial and social support was critical in propelling the women's educational and professional careers at university. Also highlighted is a discussion of how women tactically bargained spousal support for higher education and for their initial entry into professional careers at universities. The chapter looks at neo-locality as an important residential space to facilitate women's ability to bargain and negotiate.

The conclusion highlights the value of the research to theory, especially in Ugandan universities. The conclusion shows what characterises the women and argues that, although the circumstances under which the women studied are not radically different from children who dropped out of school, both personal agency and individual contextual factors meant the women encountered differential opportunities and constraints along their education pathways. The women's ability to deploy their tactical and strategic agency meant they could utilise opportunities and muster determination to negotiate whatever constraints they faced in the natal family, the school, and in spousal households. The conclusion draws critical insights regarding the women's agency, specifically, their determination to pursue their education career using various strategies of conformity, resistance, aggression, and negotiation. No obstacles in their families, schools, or marriages seemed to stop the women from pursuing their career goals. By engaging with theory, the chapter also shows what worked differently for women with successful education trajectories. The conclusion then ends with questions posed for further research.

CHAPTER TWO - METHODOLOGY: CONSTRUCTING LIFE HISTORIES

This chapter describes the methods used to study the educational and professional life history of 47 women who work in four universities, two public and two private, in Uganda. This study was carried out on the ground in Uganda, which is my home country and where I also reside and work in one of the private universities in question; some of the participants in this study are female colleagues and staff members at this same university. Among the participants were lecturers with whom I shared the same profession and university administrators with whom I interact on a daily basis. Even though I have worked at the university for a long time, this research provided me with a unique opportunity: that of mutually constructing a research relationship wherein the women and I could generate knowledge and jointly release our own voices (Savin-Baden and Niekerk 2007, 463). The research was conducted in a country and a place that was familiar to me, and the women trusted me with their personal stories. Given these details, my methodology and research strategies focus not only on the participants but also on myself, as the researcher.

Given the inter-subjective nature of the study, this chapter is comprised of two parts. The first part gives context to the study's methodological orientation, explaining and justifying the strategies I used to answer the research questions. Also, this part focuses on the research design adopted in the study by describing the research site; relevant information regarding the participants; the process by which participants were identified; and how data was generated. Due consideration is given to ethical issues and how I addressed these issues. The second part of the chapter focuses on my field experience with the women before, during, and after field research. I contextualise this experience with pre-interview reactions and post-interview feedback from 18 women on the life history approach to this study. The 18 represent various academic and administrative positions held by women who can be classified as young, middle-aged, or mature. In the third part of the chapter I offer my reflections, and explain participants' reactions to the research strategies used and how their reactions influenced the narratives of their educational pathways. This influence is reflected especially in feedback from the pre- and post-interview sessions. I also reflect on my own field experience, on how my position as a researcher was perceived, and on how this perception influenced the research process as a whole. The last part of the chapter

draws a conclusion based on the theoretical argument regarding the use of the life history approach.

2.1 Research Design

In this study I adopted a qualitative approach which emerged during the field research process. Initially, I had planned to use mixed methods, taking on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. My first field contact with the universities was to collect gender-disaggregated statistical data on the percentage of men and women staff in Ugandan universities. However, while in the field, I discovered that none of the universities had an up-to-date gender-disaggregated staff record. From the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) office, I obtained a bi-annual publication with a summary of academic and administrative staff in Ugandan universities, yet the NCHE statistics did not provide a lead to detailed records of each university. It was not possible, based on the NCHE's report, to establish in which universities the few female professors are located. I made an attempt to build up some kind of statistical profile from the available staff lists I collected from the universities, but was stalled mid-way due to outdated staff records. This posed a hindrance to my research; I had spent all of 2012 and part of 2013 collecting statistical information with little success, at least in terms of data validity.

I then decided to focus on the women's educational life experiences and, using their experiences, I adjusted my research question. I also chose a qualitative research design with a focus on the education and professional life histories of the women. Using the qualitative approach meant that my research emphasised the 'voice' of the women and focused on the subjectivity and authenticity of their experiences rather than on the collection of ready-made statistical data from university archives (Silverman 2013, 6). Considering the women as individuals who are 'meaning makers' of the world they reside in, it became necessary for me as a researcher to seek an understanding of their lived experiences from their own native point of view (Hesse-Biber 2010, 63). This meant I worked from the premise that events and meanings that emerged from the qualitative research I was conducting represented the meaning of real life events for the participants who lived them, and not my values and preconceptions as a researcher (Yin 2010, 8). This adjustment of my research to focus on qualitative research also

necessitated a change of research tools, from questionnaires to unstructured in-depth interviews.

Life history method

The main research tool that I judged appropriate for constructing the life histories of the women was the unstructured life history interview of each woman, one on one. This was an important choice to make because the life histories that I wanted to consult were not otherwise readily available as data. Furthermore, the life histories had to be collaboratively reconstructed with the women by verbally reflecting on their educational life histories (Creswell 2013, 4).

Scholars who have pioneered life history research in their respective fields have recognised the individual as a window into broader social and societal conditions. Examples include: the psychologists Murray (1938) and White (1952, 1963), who saw individuals as a window into their own psychological conditions; the sociologist Dollard (1935), who regarded an individual's life history as a way of understanding cultural and social phenomena (Cole and Knowles 2001, 12); and the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, who emphasised that the ultimate aim of an ethnographer is to 'grasp natives point of view' (1922, 25 as cited in Whitemore, Langness, and Koegel 1986). The 'native' point of view is especially relevant to my study, because it is on the basis of the way women presented their own knowledge that I am building my knowledge. In this context, the life history was an appropriate method for achieving the goal of my research. Precisely because of this 'native' perspective, I am able to write on the basis of the viewpoints expressed by the female participants in this study.

Life histories are valued for the central place they give to people, and for redressing the absence of marginalised individuals, such as women, in dominant elitist documentation (Goodley 1996, 334). Goodley's position can, I realize, raise the question as to why use the life history approach for women who work in universities. Women who are part of the elite can be suspected of excluding the voices of non-elites from documentation, and it must be said that women who work in universities are not perceived by the general public in Uganda as marginalised individuals. However, as Narayan (2004, 218) observed, although women in professional careers may not be restrained from speaking in public forums, they still have to overcome many conditions in order to learn to assert themselves. For instance, in male-dominated settings like

universities, what women have to say in professional interactions is often ignored or regarded with condescension. (To see the marginal attention given to gender issue by universities in Uganda, we need look no further than to the lack of gender-disaggregated statistics in regards to staff records, as mentioned earlier.) The advantage that life history offers is that it highlights the insider's perspective, which in turn combats a more general frustration with the 'disappearing individual' in the social theory of the larger society (Goodley 1996, 335).

However, the life history approach has not escaped theoretical and methodological criticism, in particular from the positivist perspective. At a theoretical level, positivism has a problem with life history's inductive approach to research. Positivists particularly question the logical justification of drawing conclusions and generalities using a limited number of singular facts. At a methodological level, positivists raise concern over representative sampling in life history. They question how drawing conclusions based on a limited number of observations can aid in predictions and expectations (Popper 1972). One response to this criticism is by Goodley (1996, 340), who argues that attention to individual stories in life history transcends the question of sample. Similarly, Gergen claims that a given meaning (understanding) in a story does not fundamentally depend on the validity of the perspective in question but on the vicissitude (variability) of the social processes involved (Gergen 1985, 268).

The life history approach has also incurred criticism due to the possibility that, in reaffirming individual subjectivity, social aspects behind the story may be overlooked. Emphasis on individual aspects of accounts, as Thomson points out, can easily fail to present the influence of political narratives and the unseen pressures of economic and cultural change (Thompson 2000, 258). Creswell counteracts these arguments by suggesting that subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. Meanings are not simply imprinted in the individual but are formed through interactions among individuals (Creswell 2013, 8). Further insight is offered by Mkhize (2006), who clarifies the point that the view of the individual as an autonomous person detached from the social order is typically an issue raised in the context of the Western world. Mkhize explains that traditional Western cultures regard 'self' as:

A bounded entity...in control of her/his own destiny...exist[ing] independent of the social order, where relationship with others and the social order are thought

to be established through discretionary choice. People are socialised to be unique and to promote their goals and interest (Mkhize 2006, 27).

Yet, the view of 'self' in the African context is quite the opposite of that in the West. A number of scholars have suggested that, generally, the 'self' in African societies is relational. In other words, the 'self' is that of 'a person-in-relation', a 'being-with-and-for-others', and not an isolated atomistic individual (Duncan 2004, 26; Notermans 2003; Mkhize 2006, 29). As a result, individual stories in an African context should be seen as an embodiment of the stories of the community. Mkhize and Duncan maintain that an individual in the African context is extended in space in terms of social network, and in time in terms of ancestral history, embedded in social and community relations. These authors conclude that personhood is an ongoing process attained through interaction with others and one's community (Duncan 2004, 27; Mkhize 2006, 29). Taken together, these perspectives on the individual in the African context makes life history an appropriate method to study women who work at Ugandan universities.

There are four major reasons why I chose the life history approach in this study. First of all, this approach reflects my epistemological standpoint of shared knowledge construction (Nencel 2005, 349). My main research question is to establish '*in what ways do women navigate through opportunities and barriers along their educational trajectories to build career at a Ugandan university?*' I tackle this question from the perspective of collaborative knowledge construction by both participants and researcher. Indeed, the answer to my research question could not come from readily available data, but had to be constructed during the ongoing process of the narratives, as participants explained and reflected on their personal education career experience (Savin-Baden and Niekerk 2007, 463). The collaborative construction of stories enables the growth of inter-subjective fieldwork relations because both the researcher and the participants have a voice, and this voice is embedded in their stories (Nencel 2010, 352; Savin-Baden and Niekerk 2007, 463). I needed the life history approach to facilitate the hard work of recalling and reflecting on experiences in order to bring the data to the forefront and make it present for analysis. Hence the space and time for encounter that could elicit such rich and subtly detailed data could appropriately flow through life history narratives (Nencel 2010, 352). The richness that accrues to life history research is that the participants and I shared our life stories in order to construct new stories.

Secondly, I chose to use the life history method because it provided a platform by which women could narrate their private and public life experiences together as a unitary whole. The public and private domains in life are commonly treated as either incompatible or as reinforcing each other. Incompatibility is manifested especially in institutions that look at women's lives as fragmented into public and private domains. However, the life history method does not ask for such separation; instead it demands that an individual woman's life is viewed as a whole narrative, because women reflect and articulate their life as a whole (Goodson 2001, 133). In this sense, life history makes visible how the public and private spheres intersect practically in the life of individual women as they pursue their education and professional careers in universities in Uganda.

Thirdly, I chose the life history approach in order to appreciate and celebrate the often hidden and 'silent lives' of the women as expressed in their personal narratives. Within the field of education, Goodson (2001, 133) argues that educationists, including teachers and administrators in educational institutions, are treated as marginal in terms of social power. For female educationists and administrators, this marginality not only arises from their professional career but also because of their gender. Female educationists face gender discrimination in the larger society and within the educational institutions. As McLaughlin and Tierney (1993) argue, the life history approach is appreciated because it celebrates and gives expression to 'hidden or silent lives': lives that are lived privately, without public accomplishment (Goodson 2001, 133). The silence about women who work in Ugandan universities is not so much because their lives are hidden. On the contrary, compared to the vast majority of women in rural areas, the public lives of women who work in universities puts them among the elite. These women are perceived as free of the social-economic challenges that women in general face. This perception alone makes it important to gain the women's own perspective so as to reveal what opportunities and constraints they have and continue to negotiate with on a daily basis. The life history method is an important method especially from a constructivist perspective because it brings women to the centre of social power, as they narrate and take ownership (repossess) of their personal life history.

Fourthly, life history narratives make it possible to see the women as actively communal but also as individuals shaping their own trajectories. Contrary to the general belief that the communal concept of self-risk swallows an individual's agency, the communal context in Uganda, as in most African societies, is that 'the community nurtures the individual who in turn gives back to the community' (Mkhize 2006, 29). This situation implies that the community and the agency of individuals reinforce each other. Given the communal context in which the women are socialised, my choice of the life history approach was a way of paying respect to women's agency, especially to how they have shaped not only their pathway but also their communal context. As 'persons-in-relation', as indicated by Duncan (2004) above, the life history narratives served to yield real insight into the women's agency and into context, concurrently.

Population of study

The primary participants in this study are female academics and administrators working in four selected universities in Uganda. As discussed in chapter one, in Uganda research attention has been focused on women who have not succeeded in accessing or completing education, rather than those who have successful educational careers. The few studies that do exist look at professional political careers and not at academia. Generally, in Uganda, women who have gone through schooling and are formerly employed are regarded among the most successful members of the society because education puts them at a level in which they are thought to influence decision-making and policies in the country (Willemse 2007, 128). As such, the trajectories of women in Ugandan academia have been little explored. There appears to be an underlying assumption that these career trajectories were linear and without major challenges. Turning attention to the women's career trajectories makes a contribution just by virtue of the fact that we are finally getting first-hand information from women themselves.

Besides the women, I generated a secondary group of participants from members of the university management committee. These included: University Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Academic Registrars, and Directors of Human Resources. I included members of the university management committee because of their position as employers of these women. I needed the perspective of the members of university management committee so that I might gain insight into what kind of institutional environment the women were working in. I also thought that members of the university

management committee held important information that would help to triangulate information on how the women were building their careers in the university.

In addition, I generated another set of secondary participants as 'contact persons'. These were individual academic and administrative staff members who were resourceful in providing vital information on university policy documents, identifying female staff, and helping me find offices at the university where I could obtain permissions.

Selecting the universities

Given the public and private characteristics of universities in Uganda, I chose to use a maximum variation sampling strategy to select universities that represent the broadest spectrum of the main stakeholders who provide higher education in the country. These key stakeholders included: the government, private religious institutions, and private individuals or groups of entrepreneurs. I limited the selection of the universities to public universities and private universities chartered by the Uganda government⁴. This was necessary in order to focus the attention on women who are working in officially recognised universities of national and international standing. In the final analysis, using the maximum variation sampling strategy, I selected two out of the four existing public universities. Similarly, I selected two private universities from among four private universities that were chartered by the beginning of my study in 2012.

The public universities I selected were: (1) Makerere University - Kampala (MUK), located in the central region of Uganda; and (2) Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), which is located in the western region of Uganda. Makerere is Uganda's oldest university. Founded in 1922, it brought something distinctive to this study: a long history of experiences of women in academia and in the university's administration. Makerere University also hosts the largest number of academic programmes, and has the greatest number of students and staff. Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), the second public university in my study, was founded in 1988 (Kasozi 2003, 4-5). I chose MUST because historically it was the second public university established in Uganda and because, academically, it is the first and only

⁴ Chartered universities are officially and internationally recognised institutions of academic excellence.

purely science university. MUST's context meant I could study women who work in a purely scientific academic environment.

It is important to note that, while the central government is the sole stakeholder in public universities in Uganda, in private universities, the stakeholders are either religious institutions or secular individuals and groups of entrepreneurs. To select the private universities, I kept in mind the two categories of stakeholders who provide private university education in Uganda: religious institutions and private entrepreneurs. I then selected one private university from each category. The first private university I chose was Nkumba University (NU). This private chartered university founded in 1996 by a group of entrepreneurs is located about 30 km from Kampala along the highway to Entebbe in the central region of Uganda. The second private university I selected was Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), a private chartered university established in 1993 by the Uganda Catholic Episcopal Conference (UCEC) (Kasozi 2003). UMU is located at Nkozi, 89 km from Kampala on the highway to Masaka, in the southern region of Uganda. UMU is where I have worked since 2003, first as an executive secretary and later as a lecturer. I selected it based on my own experience, seeing women making a career at the university. The two private universities provided both secular and religious contexts to select participants.

In all, my choice of these institutions reflects the general educational terrain and key shareholders in the university education system in Uganda. The selection criteria also afforded me a broader spectrum. Now I could study women not only in public and private universities but also in purely science, faith-based, and in secular contexts.

Sampling Participants

The final sample size of 86 participants was generated in the process of research. It was not possible to pre-determine the number of primary and secondary participants because the internal arrangements of each university was not clear to me. Given my qualitative approach, it was not possible to establish with certainty the number of participants who would be available for my study. Therefore, I approached the research field knowing the category of participants my study required but without specification of their numbers. I built the numbers based on the participants who gave their consent to take part in the study. Then, as I generated the sample selection, I ensured that a balance was maintained in terms of numbers of participants from each university.

Within a university, I used a maximum variation strategy to ensure a balanced number of female participants from each academic and administrative unit. It was only at the end of the field research that I could establish with certainty the number of participants who were involved in my study as a whole.

At the end of the field research, there were 47 women participating in the study: 41 academics and 6 senior administrators. Within the academic disciplines and departments, the biggest number came from social sciences. This is because in all the universities, social science was the largest academic unit with a variety of programmes to which I could have access. The major academic disciplines and administrative units from which I selected the women are shown in Table 2.1, below.

Table 2.1: Distribution of female participants by academic and administrative units

Discipline/ Position	Academic	Senior Administration	Overall total
Social Sciences	10		
Law	5		
Education	5		
Information and Computer Sciences	4		
Medicine	3		
Gender and Women Studies	3		
Mathematics	3		
Agriculture	2		
Literature and Languages	2		
Religious Studies	2		
Business Administration	2		
Human Resources Officer		1	
Dean of Students		1	
Gender Officer		1	
Assistant Registrar		1	
Assistant Personnel Officer		1	
Legal Officer		1	
Total	41	6	47

Source: Field data 2012-2013

I used three major sampling methods to select individual women: purposive, random, and snowball sampling. Originally I planned to use only purposive sampling but in the field I had to include snowballing in eight of the cases. This shift was dictated by female participants who volunteered information on potential participants in other faculties

and administrative units. Snowballing facilitated a variation in selecting the women especially in Makerere University; because the university is large, it is very difficult to identify participants across academic and administrative units. The information I received from participants and contact persons made it easier to reach the women I would otherwise have missed. For instance, at Makerere University two female participants indicated a similar study done by women in the Department of Education. I followed up on two of the cases. The first was Rakia, who, I discovered, had carried out a longitudinal study on historical representation of female academics at her university. The second case I followed was Gukanu, who had done research for UNICEF on barriers to girls' education at primary and secondary school. Neither of the studies constructed women's pathways or used a life history approach. However, I did request that these two contacts participate in my study. They both accepted and were included in my primary study sample.

A final distribution of 41 academics and 6 senior administrators constituted the primary participants. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the women according to the four universities and the sampling strategy used to select them.

Table 2.2: Sample Procedure and Distribution in the four Universities

University	Purposive	Simple Random	Snowball	Total
Makerere University Kampala (MUK)	7	9	3	19 (40.4%)
Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST)	1	6	3	10 (21.3%)
Nkumba University (NU)	1	6	3	10 (21.3%)
Uganda Martyrs University (UMU)	8	-	-	8 (17.0%)
Total	17	21	9	47 (100%)

Source: Field Data 2012

Table 2.2 shows that the greatest number of women, 19 (40.4%), were selected from Makerere University; 10 (21.3%) were chosen from Nkumba University; 10 (21.3%) from Mbarara University of Science and Technology; and 8 (17.0%) from Uganda Martyrs University. Makerere had a bigger sample because it is the largest of the four.

To ensure a variety of samples, I first categorized the women into academic and senior administrative units. I then split the units into existing positions in each category. For instance, I categorised the administrative staff into senior administrative positions such as Director of Human Resources, Dean of Students, and Assistant Personnel

Officers. The women in middle administrative positions were a Legal Officer, Deputy Registrar, and two Gender Officers. The details of the senior administrative female participants are indicated in Table 2.3, below.

Table 2.3: Category of Senior Administrative staff in the four universities

Position	University				Total	Percentage
	MUK	MUST	NU	UMU		
Senior Administrative Position						
Director Human Resource	-	-	1	-	1	2.1
Assistant Personnel Officer	-	1	-	-	1	2.1
Dean of Students	-	-	-	1	1	2.1
Middle Administrative Positions						
Legal Officer	-	-	1	-	1	2.1
Deputy Registrar	-	-	1	-	1	2.1
Gender Officer	1	-	-	-	1	2.1
Sub- Total	1	1	3	1	6	12.8

Source: Data from interview transcript 2012

I noted that, although senior female administrators were willing to participate in my study, there were time constraints. This was particularly the case for the female Deputy Vice Chancellors at Makerere University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology, so I could not include them in my sample. However, the tight work schedule of the women in top university management positions also gave me a glimpse into how women's time is constrained by university management. As well, it made me pay attention to how women are coping with time constraints as they build their careers at university. Nkumba University provided the biggest sample (3) of senior female administrators (when I went to schedule an appointment, these three women were present in their office), each of whom wanted me to conduct the interview immediately due to their busy schedule. This was exceptional, so the interviews took place on the same day. At UMU there was one woman I interviewed who has a senior administrative position. She was available on the date I requested an interview appointment, so she was also included in my sample.

Similarly, I sampled female academic staff by categorising them according to their academic positions: professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, assistant lecturers, and teaching assistants. This enabled me to draw a sample of women from various academic positions as shown in table 1.4, below. The table indicates that a

majority of the female academics, 21 (44.7%), were lecturers; 8 (12.0%) were senior lecturers; and 6 (12.8%) were assistant lectures. There were 3 associate professors (6.3%), 2 teaching assistants (4.3%), and one professor (2.1%) in the sample.

Table 2.4: Category of Academic staff by position and university

Positions	University				Total	Percentage
	MUK	MUST	NU	UMU		
Professor	1	-	-	-	1	2.1
Associate Professor	3	-	-	-	3	6.3
Senior Lecturer	4	2	-	2	8	17.0
Lecturer	5	6	6	4	21	44.7
Assistant Lecturer	5	-	1	-	6	12.8
Teaching Assistant	-	1	-	1	2	4.3
Sub-Total	18	9	7	7	41	87.2

Source: Field Data 2012

The majority of female academics (18) were from Makerere University, which is the oldest university with the largest number of academic units. This is followed by MUST (9) and then NU and UMU, from which I sampled 7 female academics each. These last three universities are small in terms of staff and academic programmes. A summary description of the women who participated in this study is given in the Appendix.

It is important to mention here that 1 female professor and 3 female lecturers from Makerere University declined to participate in my study. The reasons are discussed later in the chapter. I will only mention here that all the women I came in contact with agreed to participate except these three. To augment the primary sample, I considered it necessary to generate a secondary sample of participants from members of the university management committee and also contact people. The next section shows how I sampled these secondary participants.

In addition to the 47 primary female participants, I generated a group of secondary participants from members of the university management committee. These included the Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, and Directors of Human Resources. My main interest in these members was the office they held as employers of the women. The selection was not based on the members' gender because it did not serve as the purpose of the research at that level. I was more interested in the official positions of the individual members of the university management and also their

experiences working with the female academics and administrators. The distribution of the members of the university management committee across the universities is shown in Table 2.5, below.

Table 2.5: Secondary Sample of Members of university Management

Position	MUK		MUST		NU		UMU		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Vice Chancellor			1						1
Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics					1		1		2
Academic Registrar			1		1				2
Deputy Registrar	1								1
Deputy Director Gender Mainstreaming	1								1
Planning Officer			1						1
Total	2		3		2		1		8

Source: Field Data 2013

The table shows that, although Makerere University is the largest of the universities, I could only access two middle managers at faculty level. This was due to the bureaucracy involved, which was very complicated and time-consuming. In the other universities, it was easier to access members of the university management committee; these universities are smaller, and less bureaucratic.

I generated another category of secondary participants as contact persons who helped me to access vital information on important offices in each university. The contact persons added up to 31 in all, and their distribution according to universities is captured in Table 2.6, below.

Table 2.6: Distribution of Contact Persons

University	Contact Persons		Total
	M	F	
Makerere University (MUK)	5	7	12
Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST)	1	6	7
Nkumba University (NU)	1	4	5
Uganda Martyrs University (UMU)	4	3	7
Total	11	20	31

Source: field notes 2012/13

As in the case of university management, gender was not a variable I considered important when it came to selecting contact persons. The reason that the majority are female, as shown in table 2.6, above, is because the majority of the personnel I found in

the faculty secretariat were women. The summary of the sample of primary and secondary participants involved in this study is presented in Table 2.7, below.

Table 2.7: Summary of Sample Distribution

	Category				
Category	Primary Sample (Women)		Secondary Sample		
University	Academics	Senior Administrators	University Top Management	Contact Persons	Total
MUK	18	1	2	12	33
MUST	9	1	3	7	20
NU	7	3	2	5	17
UMU	7	1	1	7	16
Total	41	6	8	31	86

Source: Field Data 2012/13

The final size of the sample used in the research added up to 86. This was made up of 47 primary (6 administrative and 41 academic) and secondary participants (comprising 8 members of university top management) as well as 31 contact persons.

2.2 Research Process

The research process consisted of a field protocol in which I sought permission from university authorities to access the universities as a research field. This was necessary for me to be able to identify and obtain the consent of primary and secondary participants before I could include them in the study. The research process also included the choice of interview venue, data collecting, and analysis. Each of these processes is discussed below.

The first level of protocol was to seek permission from members of the university management committee to carry out my research at their university. The two letters of introduction from Radboud University (RU) and Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) proved helpful in dissolving the bureaucratic barriers I anticipated with university management. The contact persons were particularly helpful at this level. They gave me information on how to follow permission protocol, for instance. Through the contact persons, I discovered that there was indeed a hierarchy in granting permission for research and this varied from university to university. For instance, while at UMU and Makerere University, the office of the Director of Human Resources was responsible for granting permission, at Nkumba University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology, the office of the Academic Registrars had this responsibility.

I readily obtained written permission from the Academic Registrars of Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) and Nkumba University (NU). In both universities, the registrars directed the deans and directors of various academic and administrative units in the university to grant me access to information and to the female staff. At Makerere University, I got a written note on a yellow sticker from the Records Department to enable me access to staff statistics from over the years. The Deputy Registrar at Makerere University also wrote a note to the registry secretariat to grant me access to whatever graduation booklets and reports were available. In UMU, I got verbal permission from the director of human resources to carry out my research. The challenge I faced at UMU was that it is the university in which I also work. The Director of Human Resources stated that written permission was not necessary since I was an employee of the university. Efforts to obtain a permission letter were futile, so I had to be content with verbal permission.

The second level of protocol was with the Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments in the universities. I approached those at MUST and NU with three letters from Radboud University and UMU, including that of the Academic Registrars. In MUK and UMU, I carried the two letters plus a note on the yellow stickers. I had to mention right away to the deans that I had been directed to them by the Director of Human Resources before handing them the yellow sticker notes. At Makerere University, a head of the department expressed concern over the yellow sticker note, saying, *'How do I know you are authentic without a formal letter from here? This university is very big!'* Even with his concerns, he eventually consented to my accessing the department. Overall, the deans and heads of departments were cooperative and directed me further to the faculty / department administrators, where I received details on how to identify and contact the women for my study.

The third level of protocol was with faculty / department administrators. At this level, I had to give the three letters and also explain my study to them. The administrators at Makerere University especially demanded to know what my study was about and the research instruments I intended to use to collect data from the women. All the faculty administrators who were also my contact persons thought that I would be distributing a questionnaire. However, when I explained that I was using in-depth interviews, they cautioned me that the women would not be particularly comfortable

being interviewed, and that they were too busy. All the same, I explained my study to the faculty administrators and informed them how important it was for my study that I contacted the women myself, to request an interview. However, I left it to the discretion of the faculty administrators to supply me with the names and telephone numbers of the women. Besides giving me potential participants' telephone information, the administrators also indicated the best days on which I could schedule appointments with potential participants.

It took me a minimum of a week in each university to go through these protocols. This is because academic registrars, directors of human resource, as well as deans and heads of departments were not always present in their office for one reason or another. In some cases, I had to wait a few more days before accessing the dean and the heads of departments.

Contacting the women and the life history interviews

After completing the field protocol to obtain permissions, I contacted the women to seek their consent to participate in the study. Although obtaining consent of research participants is an obligation for every researcher, in my case it became urgent for three reasons. Firstly, since my research was about their personal narratives, I needed their consent in order to obtain a subjective record on how the women experienced their educational and professional trajectory (Boschma, Yonge, and Mychajlunow 2003, 129). Secondly, I needed to explain the life history method to the women so that they would have an option to participate or not in the study, or to withdraw from the study if and when they deemed it appropriate to do so. This is an important free choice that a qualitative methodology avails to participants to take control of the research process (Corbin and Morse 2003, 341). In all, I contacted 50 women; three of these were by telephone, and I met 47 in their offices on dates the faculty / department administrators had provided. 35 of the women readily consented to participating in my study, 12 women consented but with some reservations regarding the life history approach; 3 women did not accept and were not included in the research.

In a life history interview, the central 'actor' in the process is the participant. After an initial introduction to the study, I initiated the process of the narratives with an open-ended 'grand tour' question: *What is your educational history from the first time you were dropped in school to your current educational qualification?* After this question,

I reverted to active listening with minimum interruptions, mostly only for clarification. This open-ended questioning gave women considerable control over the course of the narrative. The women could choose where to begin, what topics to include or exclude, and the order in which the topics were introduced, and the amount of details divulged (Corbin and Morse 2003, 339).

The way women started the narrative of their story also indicated the trend the story would take. For instance, I introduced the in-depth interviews using the two storylines on education and professional career history from the main research question. I left each participant to choose how to begin her narrative and what part of the story to start with. It emerged that 25 of the women began their narratives by introducing their natal families. A typical example is Falley, who began her narrative by stating: *'I come from a purely Muslim family of 50 children and it is polygamous'*. The life narratives of women who fell in this category rotated around the natal families. In contrast, 15 of the women began their narratives by introducing their maiden names, detached from that of their spouses. A typical case is Leila, who began with, *'I am Leila, officially married but I do not use my husband's name'*. Women in this category focused their narratives more on their career achievement and natal family and less on their spouses.

Further still, seven of the women began their narratives by introducing their current job position in the university. For instance, Atwari introduced herself by saying: *'I'm Atwari, senior lecturer and head of department of political science'*. Women within this category made the leadership position they occupied in the university explicitly known. They also built their narratives around leadership positions they held in different periods in their lives as a student and a professional. This confirms what Hoffnung accentuated, that increased participation of women in diversified traditional occupations, like leadership, has increased a trend for women to define themselves by their roles outside the family rather than by their marital status (Hoffnung 2006, 817). In general, the style in which the women started their narratives revealed who they are more than what they do. This trend resonated with what feminist historians have observed: that, unlike men who talk about tasks and power reflecting what they do, women traditionally talk about issues that are personal and affiliated with their life, to reflect who they are (Minister 1991, 31).

It was clear from the narratives that the women could only reflect their agency in relation to their families and communities. As a result, they leaned on their agency as if it were a pillar. The women reached deep into their past to construct meaning as they reflected on their experiences in relation to their family, their school, and their community. A typical example is Ripara, who, after an initial introduction to herself, said '*... that is where I am ...*'; the comment depicted the point where she had arrived in her education and professional career. Then she posed questions '*... but where have I come from? And what has made me what I am?*' to depict her historical and social context. This context was fluid and moving as a sphere around her agency. The life history approach thus made it possible to construct both the individual and the communal history of the women, concurrently.

Although I had two topics to facilitate the narratives, the interviews remained unstructured. I introduced these topics, the educational and professional trajectory, then left the interviews to flow uninterrupted, except when I needed more clarity.

Although unstructured life history interviews are criticised in bio-medical circles for generating 'messy information', I found it an appropriate research tool. For one thing, unstructured interviews are interactive and focus on shared experiences in which the researchers and the participants come together to create a context of conversational intimacy, in which participants feel comfortable telling their stories (Corbin and Morse 2003, 335-338). For another thing, unstructured in-depth interviews also give a lot of room for pre- and post-interview 'small talk' that brings out vast details of unedited information (Driessen and Jansen 2013). The interview format provides opportunity for participants to construct their stories with the possibility of adjusting and finding new meaning in them. The interviews also made it possible to perceive and interpret non-verbal responses (Corbin and Morse 2003, 342). I also interviewed members of the university management committee in their capacity as employers of the women.

The interview venue was an important aspect of our contact that the women and I jointly agreed upon beforehand. I proposed the option of having the interview outside the office, at a location of the woman's choice, and I promised to take care of expenses such as transportation. Three women chose to have the interview outside their offices, and two women had the interview in my car because they were going to a meeting at a different location. One woman preferred to have the interview in her home; she had a

six-month-old baby to look after. The remaining 42 women preferred to be interviewed in their offices even though their office space was shared with colleagues who were not involved in my study. I noticed that, while senior academics and administrators had private offices, the junior staff shared office space with one or more colleagues. Even in the shared office space there were differences. In two universities, I noticed that, while each lecturer had her own desk, teaching assistants and assistant lecturers had to share desks.

Although I respected the choice of interview venue, the shared office space presented challenges in the interview process, particularly in the cases of Yeipima and Niabu. In both cases we began the interview when the colleague was not in the office but their return in the course of the interview created a substantive disruption in the flow of the narratives. In the case of Yeipima, her male colleague, on his return, kept responding to her narrative as it progressed, such as saying *'get married before master's degree'*. These comments disturbed the interview process and limited our interaction. In the case of Niabu, her colleagues returned when she was narrating how she planned to negotiate her appointment to the position of associate professor with the members of university management committee. When asked if she also negotiated for her current position as a senior lecturer, I noticed a change in the trend of her narrative. She quickly responded *'No, appointment here is not by negotiation, at least in my case, there are policies that guide appointments'*. In both cases, the arrival of their officemates during the interview immediately deprived us of the cordial environment we had initially created, and I was thus obliged to conclude the interview prematurely. In spite of these inconveniences, it is important to note that the venue where the interviews were held was the stated preference of the participants and I have to presume that the venue reflected where the women felt most comfortable narrating their life history. In these two cases, where the presence of colleagues interrupted the interview session, I utilised the second phase of the interview to fill in the gaps left by the first session.

To generate information on the educational and professional pathways of the women, I carried out field research in two phases. In the first phase, I conducted in-depth interviews in which the 47 women spontaneously narrated their educational and professional life histories. These sessions took between 55 minutes to an hour and a half. In one special case, the interview lasted almost two and a half hours due to an

interruption of 45 minutes when the participant had to attend a meeting. When she returned we re-commenced with the interview. There were three cases in which the interview lasted for 30 minutes and in one case, it took only 10 minutes. In the shorter interviews, the women only gave factual information about the dates of their educational and professional trajectory without sharing any other experiences. Although I missed out on hearing their personal experiences, these women nonetheless made a contribution.

I asked permission from each individual participant to record their interview for the purpose of accuracy during transcription and to help the interviews proceed smoothly without too many interruptions from me. The participants had no problem being recorded. After the first phase of the fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews and carried out preliminary analysis to establish information gaps, which I then addressed in the second phase of the interviews.

The second phase of fieldwork consisted of mostly filling in factual gaps that emerged in the first interviews. I re-contacted 20 of the 47 women because of gaps in their transcripts or because their stories were so interesting that I wanted more in-depth information. Consequently, interviews in this phase were more structured so as to cross-check dates, make corrections to the transcripts, and seek clarification on some of the issues that had arisen in the first interviews. During this second phase, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the university management committee members, particularly to find out their experience working with female academics and senior administrators in their universities.

Data management

To ensure that the data was secure, I transferred the recorded interviews onto my computer at the end of every day and backed them up on an external disk. I transcribed the interviews verbatim then sent the transcript to each of the 47 participants. The purpose of this was to show my accountability as well as to get any feedback the women might want to give me on their narratives. In this way I could immediately acknowledge the women as legitimate sources and co-authors of the narrative we had constructed. Receiving the transcripts also gave the women a chance to correct and fill in gaps with information they thought might be important to add to the transcript. Similarly, the

transcripts enabled me to identify emerging themes from the first phase that then helped me to plan for the second phase of the interview process.

To facilitate the interpretation of stories, I identified factual information from the transcripts, such as years of completion of different levels of education, professional appointments, type of family, type of schools and colleges for entries into the SPSS package. I ran a descriptive statistical analysis to obtain frequencies of the women's ages; academic qualifications; current academic and administrative positions held in the university; type of university the women worked in; as well as type of birth family, and marital status. To obtain differences between the various generations of women, I cross-tabbed age against parents' level of education, type of school attended, and type of education track followed. This method facilitated precision in analysing the factual information, which I then used to construct the educational and professional tracks of the women. Analysis from SPSS provided the descriptive statistics of simple frequencies and percentages that I used to triangulate information from the narratives.

The rest of the qualitative data in the transcripts was analysed using the Atlas TI computer package. I first 'cleaned' up the individual transcripts by deleting my habitual responses such as 'ok', 'hmm', and 'yes' that interrupted the flow of the narratives. I saved the cleaned-up transcripts in rich-text format. These were then fed into the Atlas TI computer programme. I generated codes for each transcript individually based on the themes that emerged from the narratives. I then grouped the individual codes under common themes such as: education tracks and pathways; the natal family; gender discrimination in the classroom; and spousal relationships. It is from these themes that I generated and built my analysis.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

Following the research protocol and obtaining the consent of the women was an important ethical requirement in the research process. I treated the narrative of each woman individually and did not disclose their identities to each other, nor did I make reference to the narrative of previous participants. What did prove to be a major challenge was that I remained the sole custodian of the transcripts. The issue of confidentiality was particularly important when I needed help transcribing the interviews. The question that constantly came to mind was 'who can I entrust with the recorded narratives without compromising the privacy of the participants?' I found that

in dealing with life stories, a great deal of trust is required. I had to explain to the woman who did help me with the transcripts how important it was to observe confidentiality. (It was necessary to seek the help of a transcriber. I needed the transcripts for the story and to stay close to the data during analysis.) It was not enough for the transcriber to sign a confidentiality agreement on paper; as with the women I interviewed, she and I had to build trust and discretion through dialogue.

2.4 Reflections on Field Experience

In this section I offer personal reflections based on my field experience of conducting research with women. These reflections examine why women chose to accept or decline the invitation to take part in the study as well as my experience with the life history approach. Among the 50 women I contacted, 47 agreed to participate and 3 declined. Out of the 47 participants, 35 willingly gave their consent while 12 had reservations. The reasons for their positions varied.

Among those who willingly participated, typical consents were like that of Cirila, who said, *'Here I am, ask me the questions and I will give you the answers'*, or Asema, who responded, *'I am here, what part of my story do you need?'* In both cases, the two women were eager to tell their story. As Corbin and Morse (2003, 342) contended, participants consent willingly to a study because they want something in return even though they may not consciously be aware of what that something is. I suggest that were two major reasons why these women were eager to participate. One was they hoped that, by telling their stories, it would benefit their family members. Aklaus, for instance, said, *'I have a very interesting story by the way! My daughter had written it but then my computer crashed and we lost everything. She was very much interested to know my story since when she was in senior five'*. The interest of Aklaus's children in her story indicated the special bond that she shared with them as a single parent. Aklaus indicated that, although her ex-husband has contact with their children, they call him *'our father'* but not *'our daddy'*. By contrast, her first-born daughter, who was interested in Aklaus's story, told her mother: *'for you, you are our mother but also our mummy'*. Her children make a distinction between motherhood and fatherhood as parental responsibilities, while on the other hand seeing a mummy and a daddy as warm, intimate relationships. The children look to Aklaus as a parent but above all a friend. To Aklaus, to tell her story was to document her life as a *'mummy'* whose struggles in life have been appreciated by her

children and can be their point of reference. It was also good for her own reasons to recoup the story she had lost after narrating it to her daughter.

Some women participated in my study as a social cooperative responsibility. This was reflected by senior female academics like Haparis, an associate professor of agriculture. When I contacted her, she remarked '*I will help you ... we are what we are because someone gave us a chance*'. Her participation in my research was not so much for herself as it was a way to give something back to society in return for what society had invested in her. The sense of social responsibility was later manifested in the narratives when Haparis said, '*you know, we are community children*'; Haparis had been an orphan, and individual members in the community supported her education. In the cases of Aklaus and Haparis, both family and community were featured as prime reasons for the women to narrate their life history.

The 10 women who participated with reservations were mostly from biological and physical sciences departments, and their major reservation was related to the inductive approach of my research. This reserve was expressed by Nella from agricultural sciences:

I can't get anything from this kind of data, because in science, our things are very clear, if this is male, it is male; if female, it is female; if it is dead it is dead – and you write your thing! ... but in arts, you can explain that this (*points at a bulb in her office*) is the sun, not a bulb!

Nella voices an age-old dilemma between qualitative and quantitative approaches to academic research. I explained to her that the two approaches to research are not mutually exclusive; rather, that they co-exist (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, Mertens 2014). Nella was also concerned about how I would conceptualise her narrative alongside that of the other narratives. I clarified this dilemma by explaining to her how I planned to focus on emerging themes rather than individuals in the analysis of the stories.

Similarly, Niabu from computer sciences had reservations about the unstructured nature of the narratives; she said, '*your methodology is very hard! Well, you want me to tell you my educational history with [an] emphasis on what? ... because you know, it can be something broad!*' Similarly, Asema said, '*maybe you will be giving me guiding questions, not like a story*'. With these questions the women indicated their concern about the amount of information an unstructured interview would demand. I noted that it is not an

easy task for participants to attempt to narrate their life histories of 26 to 59 years within approximately 55 minutes. Due to these constraints, there was a general tendency to push me to ask more specific questions, preferably using questionnaires rather than an open-ended, unstructured interview. The issue of having a list of questions to guide the interview process emerged throughout my fieldwork. However, feminist scholars like Minister have argued that a list of topics is 'a hallmark of the male interviewing norm' in which the interviewer has a list to control the interview topics; this approach, Minister claims, 'double blinds the oral historians and deafens them to emergent meanings and to opportunities to draw out narrator's experience' (1991, 37). She argues the 'chaotic and problematic process of two humans thinking and communicating is rich' compared to the impoverished list (Minister 1991, 36). I took time to explain to the women the importance of the unstructured in-depth interview before they finally gave their consent to participate in my study. I saw it as important that the women were openly able to express these reservations prior to the interview. Consequently, we were able to clarify issues raised so the interview could run smoothly. Although I asked some questions during the narratives, these were for clarification and further explanation, not to direct the narratives themselves, or the women's approach to relaying them.

Besides women who had reservations regarding my methodology, there were two women who struggled with the idea of talking about themselves. This struggle was expressed by Sakira, a senior lecturer:

...when you talked about track, I just thought – this is going to be pretty difficult. Even the training from home, you don't talk about yourself, you just do things; you do things for the community, you do things to make others better, yes, you should make yourself better but that is not the major goal. So it becomes very hard to talk about yourself ...

What came to the forefront in Sakira's socialisation into community life is that personal stories are valued because they build up a community story but not for the sake of an individual's own story. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2007, 57), women struggle to put their thoughts and feelings into words because they have not had an opportunity to talk about their experiences with an interested party. My experience is that women are able to tell their story as long as they are not asked to isolate their experiences from that of their community. Hence, the unstructured interviews became particularly

important to create space for women to associate their life history with the aspects of community they considered important. This was evident in the interview transcripts where not only the life histories of the women but also of their family and community could be retrieved. In this context, the life histories of the women ceased to be just individual stories; they became stories of communities as well. Notably, constructing a life history with women is not just about dealing with the relationship between the self and the social sphere but, more importantly, with the conditions and with the representation of the women as they have been shaped by society (Chanfrault-Duchet 1991, 78).

Related to community upbringing was the issue of hierarchy of authority, which played a crucial role in determining who can represent and speak for a group or for the community. This hierarchy stirred reservations, especially among junior female academics in my study. For instance, when I contacted Lucasia, an assistant lecturer in her office, she told me: *'... I think I am not even the right person to talk to, I think I should refer you to Gen or Aga, they are senior to me'*. Socially, hierarchy of authority is based on age. In this social context, old age is associated with better experience while young age is associated with little experience. The challenge then when dealing with hierarchy is that young people may be undervaluing their own experience. In the constructivist perspective, the value of an experience depends on the meaning a person attaches to that experience, regardless of what level of power accrues to that person in the hierarchy. This disposition also relates to socialisation in the women's community, about who has the right to speak for a group or for the community. I took the time to clarify to participants the fact that my study was not about seniority and hierarchy of authority but about individual life histories. I told Lucasia that in my research, her short educational and professional career history would be just as valued as would that of the senior academics. Regardless, in the long run, what is important to note is the women's openness to my study despite their methodological and social reservations.

There were three women who declined to participate in the study. Their main reasons were research fatigue and time constraints. Research fatigue is a condition in which a person feels exhausted or overwhelmed by research, particularly when they do not see tangible results from research activities (Ben-Nun 2008, 3). Research fatigue was especially expressed by senior female academic staff when I went to seek permission to

include them in my study. For instance, a female professor at the School of Gender and Women Studies responded: *'No, no, no. I am tired. I have just received a transcript of a recent interview with another researcher. No, not me this time.'* Nevertheless, she was considerate enough to direct me to two associate professors whom she thought could participate in my study: Haparis in the Faculty of Agriculture and Gukanu from the School of Education. It was from Haparis that I received an explanation about research fatigue among female professors: *'You know we are very few and every research in this university gets us involved ... it is tiresome'*. Haparis' explanation confirms Clark's claim that the experience of earlier research engagement can act as a barrier to future involvement, especially with research groups where requests are common and the research groups are limited (Clark 2008, 956). The fatigue of female senior academics attests to the underrepresentation of women in senior academic positions in Uganda. Female professors are not only few and far between in Ugandan universities, they are also a target for researchers. As Haparis indicated, the research they participate in is related to issues affecting higher education in Uganda but not about their individual life histories. Generally speaking, their opinions are sought after to add a gender perspective. The research is not about the women themselves, as was the case with my research.

Another reason the women gave for not participating was the issue of time constraints. Clark argues that a potential participant can decline because she deems the associated time cost too high to merit engagement in a study (Clark 2008, 955). The issue of costing time emerged from two female lecturers from the College of Computing and Information Sciences who declined to participate in this study. One of them told me *'every single minute in science is money'*; in other words, I would have had to pay her to give an interview.

There was a second phase of the interviews which was carried out after listening to and transcribing the first interviews. The purpose of the second round was to fill in the gaps from the first. As such, the second interviews were more directional and controlled because I only needed to fill in specific information gaps. The gaps consisted mostly of dates of completion regarding different levels of education. It was in the second phase of the interviews that I sought more clarification on issues that had arisen from the first interviews.

Feedback

Life history narratives require constant feedback between the researcher and the participant, during and after the interviews and throughout the research process. Feedback was important to sustain the trust that I promised before the interviews. The feedback from the interviewees came at three points, namely: before the interviews, after the interviews, and upon receipt of the transcripts. The first moment for feedback was just before the interviews began, when I introduced the life history topic at the beginning of the interviews. I received interesting reactions from two of the women, one of whom was Haparis. When I asked Haparis about her educational life history at the start of the interview, she responded *'Ah there you have caught me!'* She had not seriously thought about that aspect of her life. Given this type of response, I was obliged to create an evaluation session after every interview. Post-interview evaluations enabled us both to reflect on the valuable knowledge we had created and confirmed why a constructivist approach is particularly important in research that engages life histories. Put simply, it helps participants to become aware of the important events in their lives throughout the process of the narrative.

The second opportunity for feedback strategy was when I held post-interview evaluations with each participant at the end of each interview session, and asked each participant: *'What was your experience as you narrated your educational and professional life story?'* The evaluations brought out insightful responses from the women. For instance, Niabu, who had reservations about the life history method, said, *'I think it does help because, there are certain experiences in my life I didn't associate with gender. But as I was narrating the story, I could see the gender aspects in them ...'*. This comment indicated to me that, at least at the beginning of the interview, women did not always have a view on gender issues. Even this insight was important: the women did not feel the constraints of having to fit every experience into a gender context. Instead, the gender issue emerged spontaneously, as the women reflected on and gave meaning to their experiences while narrating their stories. This process gave the narrators a broader perspective and the flexibility with which to perceive their life experiences. Niabu's feedback also indicates that one of the empowering effects of the life history methodology is the possibility it affords to deliberately reflect on past experiences, and to appreciate these experiences from a gender perspective. This realization also shows that social constraints arising from gender equality can only be addressed if and when

deliberate reflection has taken place. What surprised Niabu was that she went through some experiences of gender inequality without even being conscious of it. This kind of realization in retrospect made the women appreciate life history. As Siika said, *'It is interesting because I have never asked myself many of these questions!! ... You have asked me questions about things I have never thought of'*. On the same note, Kenzie remarked that, *'It is something I have never even thought about ... It is interesting'*. Focusing on oneself was particularly appreciated by female academics who are actively involved in research but have neither questioned nor reflected on their own experiences. This appreciation was expressed by Cirila, who said that narrating her life history *'has also helped me to rewind some of my things'*. To 'rewind' is a local expression in a number of Ugandan languages which means to 'replay' or 'call to mind and account for' an event or experience, referred to here as *'my things'*. The experiences are her *'things'* because they are events she personally identified with and lived through. Similarly, Nella told me:

I feel happy, because I rarely think about it. You have made me go back into my life! I rarely think about that. And you know what? Sometimes I ask myself, but really what have I done in life? I don't see it! But now I can see it'.

Nella's comment touches on an important aspect of shared knowledge in which two or more people facilitate each other's accounts to generate knowledge. In this case, my presence as a researcher was crucial for Nella to answer questions she had already been pondering herself. This opportunity gave her a chance to discuss and reflect on her life history with a researcher who was interested in this aspect of her life.

Taken together, these responses confirm the advantages of life history narratives, wherein memory facilitates the journey through time and space and the recollection of personal experiences. This journey affords a chance not only for reflection but also stock-taking of important events that have shaped an individual's life. Joint evaluation immediately after the interview sessions was thus very important for assessing how the women felt but also for the repossession of their stories.

The third moment for feedback came after I had finished the transcribing and given the interview transcripts back to the women; the latter was done via email. Most of the feedback I received was through emails. For instance, an email from Annetta, a lecturer, said, *'I can't believe I said all this! But it is really interesting as I read through it'*. Similar remarks were made by Ripara, also a lecturer: *'It is so interesting reading the interview which I had with you.'* Additionally, Enoka, an assistant lecturer, replied: *'Oh! I*

read myself out in the transcript, and Tessy, an assistant lecturer, acknowledged *'indeed those were my words'*. Reading one's own life account brings different levels of appreciation. The transcripts brought out personal meanings about the women's life experiences. Notably, the interpretations and meanings, which were done unconsciously during the narrative, only became clear in the transcripts. This explains why some of the women were surprised at their own stories.

The return of the transcripts also evoked unexpected responses from their family members. The most prominent response from a family member came from Falley, a lecturer, who told me:

In fact the transcript you gave to me, my children also read it. I have a daughter, she is now in senior four (lower secondary). She is the one who sat down and said, *'Mummy it is me to start writing this. We must write it together. Your story mummy, it is so touching'*. So that is what my daughter is telling me. We should sit together, we [should] write it and publish a book and put it somewhere.

The response from Falley's family shows that the value of the women's narratives goes well beyond the individual. I was elated by the profound reaction of Falley's daughter to her mother's story. Here we see how a girl's mother is not only a parent but also a role model, the image of a women's successful educational trajectory. The daughter saw the mother as one who had broken through gender barriers at home and in school to build a career as a mathematics lecturer in the university; for the daughter, Falley was a symbol of accomplished womanhood. This example implies that the transcripts ceased to be a woman's individual story but the story of a family. The in-depth interview was an important avenue for women to document their stories not only for themselves but also so that it could be shared with family members. At the same time, this example also suggests that the women are caught up in the daily bustle of work and do not have the time to share their life stories with their children. The transcripts offered a good opportunity to open those discussions with their families.

Reflection

My observation regarding the feedback is that the construction of life history is a continuous process and does not end with the interviews. More importantly, the value of the life history is appreciated more after the interviews have taken shape in the form of a transcript. The feedback from the interviews showed that the women repossessed their life experiences. Repossession also suggests that there were experiences the

women held very dear but had never had a chance to talk about or to reconstruct for public utilisation. From a researcher's standpoint, I would add that, although the interviews were time-consuming, the feedback I received showed the time invested in conducting and in transcribing them was worth it.

The feedback after the first phase of the interview was more readily perceived than after the second phase. The first phase of the interview was more intensive, with surprises that arose mostly from the detailed accounts and from the intensity with which the women constructed their life histories. The emotional involvement was remarkable for both the interviewees and for me; we got 'caught up' in each other's narratives and in sharing the feelings of loss, grief, anger, and joys together (Corbin and Morse 2003, 343). Actively listening and sharing in the women's high and low moments kept me connected to them, and this connection was very important for my research. I had to pay attention to how the women reacted as they re-lived their life story in the narratives. That said, the interactive in-depth interviews evoked joy but also painful moments we had to deal with until the participant regained composure. My counselling skills as a nun particularly helped when distressing moments occurred during the interview.

I noted that, for an effective interview, both the physical and mental space needed to be secure, safe, and confidential before the stories could unfold. Mental space extended to the kind of privacy and confidentiality that the participants needed to narrate their personal stories. Narratives in unstructured interviews do not follow a strict linear pattern. The quality and duration of narratives varied a good deal. There were women whose narratives evolved spontaneously as they talked and made sense of events of their life (Corbin and Morse 2003, 342). As mentioned earlier, some of the women asked me to conduct the interviews on the spot, without a prior appointment; Leila, the director of human resources, said, '*Sister, we either have the interview now or you will not find me next time*'. I was prepared for these abrupt interviews because I learned my lesson from the first three interviews at UMU. Now I had my recorder and notebook ready whenever I went to an office to seek consent and an appointment. The advantage with on-the-spot interviews is that they brought out spontaneous, 'unedited', and sometimes 'unprocessed' life stories (Etter-Lewis 1993, xxx). Premeditated stories were different. For instance, I often picked up an issue from a previous conversation

then realised the narrator's storyline had shifted or changed completely. A case in point is when I contacted Gukanu, an associate professor, for her consent to participate in my study. Gukanu accepted but spontaneously began to raise accusations against her spouse as we were chatting:

You know, I am supposed to be a full professor. I submitted my papers but I have not got any response from the university. But I know who is behind all these – it is my husband, he does not want me to be promoted. (in low voice) *he wants me to be seated working in his farm, but I will not – if they do not promote me here, I will go to another university*'.

I wanted to pursue this important point during the formal interviews but by then she had already changed her mind and was full of praise for her spouse: *'My husband is good. I have just been talking to him and he has just bought me two tyres for my car'*. Her mind-set in the interim had changed considerably. Given the time lag between the day I went to make an appointment and the date of the formal interview, she had had the chance to reflect on her initial statement and perhaps realized that 'you do not wash your dirty linen in public'. Her story illustrates the contradictions that hold between public and private lives. While Gukanu's spouse was supportive at home, symbolised by the provision of the tyres, he was reserved in supporting her career advancement in public. Gukanu was in effect confronted with the challenge of which 'face' of her spouse to show in public. The shift in her position also points out how life history narratives can be influenced not only by the context of the narratives but also the circumstances of the narrator. This instance brings into sharp relief the issue of validity when relying on an interview method as the basis of research. In some cases, participants like Gukanu tended to 'keep up appearances', which in turn could have jeopardised the information given. On the other hand, the spontaneity of the life history approach allowed for informal chats that enabled participants to divulge details of their life experiences they would have likely muted in formal controlled interviews.

Out-of-interview chats express the most unedited personal reflections of the women. Pre- and post-interview chats are 'small talk' which are 'hidden' but are the engines of ethnographic research in that they provide information that would not be accessed in formal interviews (Driessen and Jansen 2013, 249-250). The 'small talks' bring in information outside the official and formal scheduled interviews, which means they are not influenced, or hampered, by interviewing paraphernalia such as recorders,

pens and paper, notes, or even by the official venue in which the interviews occur. The importance of pre-interview small talks is that they set the tone for interviews and are the beginning of a temporary but important human connection that intensifies over the course of the interview. It is also a period in which the groundwork for reciprocity is established (Corbin and Morse 2003, 342). Although the spontaneity made it very difficult to record the small talks on a digital recorder, I reverted to taking notes immediately after the out-of-interview chats. I incorporated the pre- and post-interview notes as part of the construction of the life histories.

The question of expression is also important. There were women who narrated their life story vividly, with a lot of expression, and there were women who could hardly find words to express their experience. As Corbine and Morse observed:

Some participants are more introspective, thoughtful, and tell their stories better than others, choosing to reveal more of themselves by expressing their inner thoughts and feeling. Other persons tend to limit their conversations to the facts (Corbin and Morse 2003, 342).

As such, life story narratives can also be marked with 'dry' moments that seem to bring in no new information. I realised that this fluctuation requires patience and care so as not to resist the rhythm of the narrative. Most importantly, during these moments, I sought to keep the rhythm of the narratives non-directional; I neither hurried the process of the narrative nor suggested a new storyline after an interruption. I realised that, while narrating, women were also trying to formulate the bits and pieces of their past experiences to add to their life history. This process takes time.

All these moments, whether the information appears void or vivid, have much information to offer when reflected upon. It is important in my experience to take each of these moments seriously so as not to miss valuable input from the participants. In general, the women were pleasantly surprised by their own stories. Telling their own stories re-awakened a sense of appreciation of their past educational and professional achievements. In particular, the women appreciated the fact that their trajectories are a direct product of decisions they made at specific points in their educational and professional career tracks. These decisions seemed obvious but a deeper reflection during the narratives revealed that they were also circumstantial and strategic. The significance of these decisions will be reflected upon in chapter two, where I construct the women's educational tracks.

Feminist scholars appreciate the life history as an approach to research because it emphasises 'women's concrete experiences as a starting point from which to build knowledge' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 56). As Sandra Harding and Kathryn Norberg (2005, 36) argue, it is very important to situate knowledge of women's experiences because women's lives intersect differently in the private and the public spheres. Constructing women's lived experiences was enriching for both the women and me; at the same time, it was challenging. The enriching part of the life history approach is that it dissolved the hierarchy of power between the women and myself as a researcher. (This was true despite the fact that the power to control and construct new knowledge lay more with the women than with myself.) To be entrusted with personal stories, the researcher and the participant have to be at the same level and this balance needs to be maintained throughout the research process. In life history, the basic principle of common sharing of existing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge define the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Consequently, life history research demands deconstruction of the traditional image of the researcher as an information 'digger' and the participants as passive. As a result, the life history method creates the opportunity to establish relationships based on collegiality and reciprocity in the research process.

In my experience of jointly sharing and building knowledge, neither the researcher nor the participant can anticipate what shape this knowledge will take. That said, the choices the researcher and the participants make at the beginning of the interview influence the shape of the knowledge. Open-ended questions in unstructured interviews give the participants the option to begin their narratives in whatever way they consider appropriate. Those beginnings often signal a central theme of the narrative itself. For instance, when a participant decides to begin the narrative with the introduction of the natal family, individuals in the family will take a central place in her narrative. Similarly, if the narrator chooses to begin with the school experience, then teachers, classmates, and school administration will take centre stage in the narrative. In cases where participants begin by introducing themselves, their agency will feature prominently in their narratives. This open-ended aspect of the method brought out common themes in the women's stories, including natal and marital family members,

school, and spousal relationships. By extension, these similarities make it possible to compare and contrast the women's narratives.

2.5 Participants' Perception of the Researcher

The inter-subjective nature of my field experience meant that my relationship with research participants was reciprocal: we identified with and were conscious of each other (Mies 1991, 78-79). Insofar as my position as the researcher in this study is concerned, I agree with Corbin and Morse that by virtue of being present with participants, the researcher does influence the research process,

because participants are telling their story to an audience even if at the time of the interview, there is only one ... the interviewer, participants know their story will be eventually told to others (Corbin and Morse 2003, 339).

Given the interactive nature of the narratives, it was also not possible for me as the researcher to remain utterly neutral in the course of the research. The women identified me as a fellow academic, a mature woman, and a nun. I was deeply involved in this research and my presence in the field impacted the research process. As well, some of the stories made me re-live my own story. For instance, narrated experiences of the armed conflict and war of 1979 to 1985, which interrupted the primary and secondary education of some of the women, was the same experience I faced during my secondary education. I also shared my experiences with cultural norms that pushed against the education of girls, or that promoted gender discrimination in school and workplace. These were experiences I could almost touch and feel. The difference was that these women experienced war within Uganda, while I was forced into exile in the neighbouring district near the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire).

Because of these resonances, I was conscious that my status as a researcher gave me a certain level of power over the interview process as the stories unfolded. For instance, I was the one who initiated the study and asked the questions. To reduce the resulting status difference between me and the women, I sometimes shared information on my own life with participants (Corbin and Morse 2003, 339). These shared experiences built trust and created mutuality between us. We were able to view ourselves as two individuals who were reflecting on our experiences and communicating these reflections to each other (Nencel 2005, 348). That said, this reciprocal sharing took me by surprise; I had no idea that my personal stories would be

needed in the field. However, in the process of interviewing the women, I was compelled by the nature of their narratives to develop my story alongside theirs. In the various transcripts, my own story is therefore evident. In the final analysis, the inter-subjective nature of social life as captured in our joint storytelling meant that the women and I ended up with a shared meaning of our lives (Casino 2009, 85), and, most importantly, confirmation that our shared life experiences reinforced the reconstruction of each other's story. I connected with the stories of the women just as they could identify with mine. The difference between us was that I shared only the parts of my story that resonated with specific parts of their stories. Even so, in the final analysis, the life history narratives of these women helped me to seriously reflect on my own life experiences.

The perception of my position in the research process also changed from one individual to another. For instance, I introduced myself as a lecturer at Uganda Martyrs University and was therefore identified as a colleague. This was good because it gave us common academic ground, as a starting point. As academics, the women felt obliged to make a contribution to my study in the research process; they volunteered information on references, commented on my methodology and the study in general. However, when discovering that I was an insider in academia, they assumed I was already familiar with women's experiences at university. As a result, they said things such as, '*Sister, you know these things even better*'. I think that, to some extent, this presumption of familiarity deprived me of some of the specifics of their experiences, which the women assumed I already knew. Efforts to explain that my own experiences differed from theirs helped to dispel some assumptions. In these kinds of situations, I usually resorted to asking specific questions, especially regarding the participants' personal experiences in the university.

To some of the women, I was a woman with similar experience. From Kevina, a legal officer: '*Sister, you are a nun but beyond that you're a person, a woman, and so our experiences are not very different from each other*'. This statement was important to me, because she considered her personal experience as 'universal', and universal included me. I took such comments to mean that women were beginning to extend their stories, to make them a community story. This step becomes important. Gilligan stresses that unless women speak and shout about their life, their voices will not be taken seriously.

Women's voices play a crucial role in maintaining or transforming the patriarchal world (Gilligan 2003, xii).

The sheer fact that I was a woman broke down barriers that might normally exist between researcher and participants. This relationship reinforced our consciousness of each other's experiences and the need to make this experience count in public discourse in Uganda. Indeed, making women's experience count in the public sphere was the main reason I had engaged in this research.

Similarly, other women identified with me because we discovered over the course of the interview that we went to secondary school around the same year. This discovery helped to build confidence and rapport which in turn helped the women narrate their story with more ease, since we were part of the same education cohort. The disadvantage was that women tended to summarise some of their experiences because they assumed that I understood: *'these were things of our generation'*. Sometimes they used gestures that I did not understand and I had to ask for their meaning. The young female participants saw me as an elder sister and were eager to learn from my own experience within academia. This dynamic points to important aspects of the subjective nature of my study; they needed my story as much as I needed theirs. As Corbin and Morse (2003, 342) pointed out, individuals 'sometimes agree to participate in research because they want something in return', even though they may not consciously be aware of what that something is. The younger women asked me about my lifestyle, my academic career; they asked about how I got a PhD scholarship. I shared with them whatever information I could provide. The older and senior academics saw me as a younger sister, and so advised me what to take into account as I go on to build a career in academia and complete the PhD. These moments were very important in building a relationship of confidence and mutual exchange and dissolved barriers that may have arisen between us due to ethnic, religious, academic, and age differences.

All the women, young and old, identified me by my blue dress and white veil as a nun. Nuns are not strange in the religious and educational system of Uganda. That said, being a nun sometimes aided and sometimes hindered my research. My nun's identity helped in gaining trust when it came to stories that were often very personal and sometimes painful. The women knew they were assured of emotional support and confidentiality from a nun. On several occasions I had to give counselling support during

interviews, when the participants were overcome with emotion while narrating upsetting experiences ranging from domestic violence and war to loss of parents. My identity as a nun evoked some women to spontaneously profess their religious beliefs, although I did not call for such. One stated *'Sister, you know for me, God has seen me through in my life'*.

However, my nun's identity also posed a challenge. For instance, one of the assistant lecturers, Lucasia, looked visibly uneasy and asked me *'what are you doing sister – studying gender? How is that important to you?'* she went on,

... but sister, do you need a PhD to be a nun? What will you do with the money when your salary is increased for a PhD level? How does your family benefit from that money because all your monies go to the church?

I asked her if she wanted me to respond to her questions or if they were her personal observations. She asked me to respond and so we engaged in a discussion before commencing with the interview. These questions gave me an opportunity to clarify some of her assumptions about me and the professional and private life of nuns in general. I kept the discussion short by asking: *'Does getting married prevent a woman from pursuing her career?'* She responded *'of course not'*. From the perspective of career development, I explained to her that being a nun is a lifestyle that I had chosen just like anyone would choose to be married or single, and that I have a career according to my area of interest. In my case, I am interested in gender studies and my background is social sciences. As for financial obligations, I asked her whether all the money she earns goes to her parents, and she answered *'No, because I only give financial support when a need arises'*. I also told her I do the same for my parents and relatives. Then I asked her if she had any more questions for me before we began the interview, and she just laughed. Lucasia's reaction shows that she probably was used to interacting with nuns in religious circles or as teachers in the classroom. What was 'strange' was to interact with a nun as a researcher. It became necessary for me to first unpack the nun-in academia assumptions before building a relationship with Lucasia as a researcher.

These brief insights into my personal life became important to breaking down the barriers between the world of a nun and the world of other women. It was important that I manage the antagonistic tone with which Lucasia confronted me. At the end of the interview, Lucasia acknowledged that she had never met a nun before so she had not been sure how this interview would go. She appreciated the chat before the interview,

which gave her a chance to experience a different image of a nun than the stereotype she had in her mind.

My identity as a nun also restricted the kind of information the women thought they should or not divulge during the interview. For instance, Aklaus, who is Muslim, was struggling to withhold information on an out-of-wedlock pregnancy with a Catholic man while the two were students at medical school. This pregnancy caused her Muslim family to disown her. She was also obliged to repeat a course in medical school because she had concealed the pregnancy from the faculty staff. She suffered deeply. First and foremost, as a Muslim woman, she had broken the code of conduct in her family by getting pregnant with a Christian. In addition, according to the head of the department, she had 'violated' professional ethics by getting pregnant while attending medical school. In the middle of the interviews, she suddenly became quiet and I could see she was lost in deep thought. I prompted her by rephrasing her last comments. She then said, *'Sister, you don't want to hear this! No, this is not for you?'* I then gave her the option of skipping this information if it made her uncomfortable. She responded: *'No sister, it is okay, I will tell you because you are a sister ... you know I got pregnant in the medical school. This was against the medical ethics in the University'*. What she struggled with was significant in two respects. For one thing she had a religious dilemma in that the man with whom she had gotten pregnant shared my Catholic faith. She was not sure of my reaction to the Catholic / Muslim conflict that caused her to be disowned by her family. But she also had a moral dilemma about how I would perceive her since she had conceived a child out of wedlock. These dilemmas are issues that women constantly deal with in Uganda, in both religious and cultural circles. As a nun, I was perceived by Aklaus as an embodiment of the religious institution, so she tried to hold back certain information. I offered her re-assurance and I left her free to choose what part of her story to share and what to withhold. This approach seemed to ease her struggle and she went on to entrust me with her story. The case of Aklaus underscores the fact that, when employing life history narratives, it is important to pay attention to the silences as they may contain hidden messages (Munro 1998, 8).

Dealing with the different combination of identities the women saw in me was challenging and I chose to respond case by case. It was not possible to prepare for some of these questions in advance. At least I was conscious of stereotypes about nuns in

Uganda. I was careful to keep my relationships with the women very informal and spontaneous, which they in turn acknowledged as having helped them to deconstruct the image of a nun, at least for the time being. In addition, I took chances when asked about my own experiences, sharing with them some of my struggles and achievements in my professional and academic career. This I think gave the women a sense of security and assurance of confidentiality. In sum, our time together became an exchange of experiences rather than an instance of my digging out their stories.

2.6 Representation of data

Despite the enormous amount of data and the narratives that the in-depth interview generated, no one story in the thesis is complete in itself. The narratives build on each other. As such, I selected aspects of different individual narratives to complete the story rather than selecting one story as a representative for each chapter. The narratives are thus very much reduced for the sake of analysis. This approach to analysis has been dictated by two reasons. Firstly, because I gave the women the lead, the narratives are not copies of each other. Secondly, the narratives all took different directions due to the spontaneity with which the women narrated and accentuated what they considered important in their education trajectory. As such, in the analysis I do not focus on the description and introduction of individual participants so much as the themes that the narratives generated as a whole. For contextual details of the female participants, please see the appendix.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the qualitative research methodology adopted in this study, a methodology informed by the constructivist perspective of Gray (2013), which posits that truth and meaning do not exist in some external world but are created by subjects' interaction with the world. Consequently, the study adopted a life history approach using in-depth interviews to generate narratives about the education pathways of the 47 women who participated in this study. These women were drawn from four Ugandan universities and from across academic and administrative disciplines and positions. The question that guided the narratives was: *What is the women's education life history from primary to the last degree obtained from the university?* Each of the women was free to begin her narrative at whatever point she thought was important.

The spontaneous nature of the life history approach revealed the native perspectives of the women as primary actors who lived through the events of their education history in the narratives. Life history narratives are not pre-meditated accounts that are ready-made for collection. Rather, participants relive the events of their life as they recall, explain, interpret and assign meaning to their experiences. Interestingly, in this study, as participants re-lived events, they were also able to gain distance from the narrative as well. This distance enabled participants to interpret and give meaning to their education life history in the light of their present knowledge and understanding. In this way, the final content of the spontaneous narratives in this study reflected participants' interpretations of their experience during the research process. In this sense, the education life history narratives of the women generated their own core themes related to the natal family, educational institutions, and spousal relations. It is upon these themes that emerged from the women's narratives that my analysis is built.

Unlike guided studies in which the focus of the narratives is only on the participants, the unstructured nature of the in-depth interviews in this study enabled participants to widen the scope of their narratives: a single narrative covered not only the education life history of an individual woman but also that of the family, the school, the community, and the employment institution. This dynamic confirmed the positions of Notermans (2003) and Mkhize (2006) that individual stories in an African context also embody stories of families and communities. Life history narratives in this study make explicit how the individual, the family, and community life histories interrelate.

The overall experience with the life history approach in this study confirms Gray's (2013) constructivist argument that meanings in life history narratives are constructed during the process of the narrative and are not discovered, as a positivist perspective would suggest. The contribution of this study to that debate is that construction of knowledge through life history involves several facilitating factors. These factors include: establishing rapport between the researcher and the participants; choosing a conducive venue; and having participants who are well disposed to delve into their life experiences. Knowledge, in the life history approach, takes both individual and collective construction of the participants and the researcher. This study has shown that women's narratives are legitimate sources of knowledge (Hesse-Biber 2010). This legitimacy is evident in several ways, not least by virtue of the fact that the stories of

families and communities are embedded in the women's personal stories. An individual women's narrative is like a window through which insight can be gained into the vast picture of society's different sectors.

The research process has shown that life histories are non-chronological in the conventional sense of time (years, days, and hours). Chronology in life history is about the sequence of events that participants perceive as significant in their lives, and not about conventional time. The unstructured nature of the life history interviews in this study gave participants the freedom to start their narratives at whatever point in time or place they perceived to be significant. The sequence of chronology in the life history narratives is constructed on the spot, through participants' recollection of valuable historical experiences and events.

The life history method breaks the silence that surrounds the life of participants. This silence is not only external but also about personal life experiences the participant may not have taken time to seriously reflect on. This observation is in line with Narayan's (2004) argument that, although women in professional careers are not restrained from speaking in public, they still have to overcome many social conditions to make their voices heard. This was evident in the feedback in which the women were positively surprised by their own narratives as documented by the transcripts. These in turn helped the women to appreciate and value their past experiences, attending to details they might formerly have considered insignificant. Life history not only breaks the silence about the individual lives of participants but also the lives of other individuals in their family, school, and workplace. These other individuals are significant in creating circumstances that gave these women opportunities but also constrained their education pathway. This research process indicated that the life history approach makes it possible to access contextual circumstances that influence the life of participants. This finding contradicts Thomson's (2000) view that in re-affirming individual subjectivity through narratives, social aspects behind the story are overlooked. On the contrary, my study shows that the narratives of individual women spontaneously brought social contexts to the fore. This fact confirms that social context is embedded within the personal narratives of individual stories.

The spontaneous nature of the life history process also brought out my life story insofar as it seemed appropriate to share given the context. In the context of subjectivity,

the researcher is indeed not neutral in the research process. The researcher's identity and relation with the participants influences the research process and the outcome. The shared knowledge that characterises life history research surprised me especially with my story, which spontaneously emerged in the transcripts of the women's narratives.

In spite of the advantages of the life history approach, attention must be paid to the issue of validity, especially, because the researcher is heavily dependent on the honesty of the participants' narratives. This is why the pre- and post-interview small talks were important, to triangulate information from the formal interview sessions. The consistency of the small talk sessions and the formal interview sessions helped me to assess when participants were, say, concealing vital information.

The life history approach reinforces commitment to power distribution in qualitative research. As Karnieli-Miller et al (2009, 282) argues, although the researcher possesses the information about the study, the participants own the knowledge and experience needed to carry out the study. Both the researcher and the participants can use their respective powers to negotiate the level of information provided. This negotiation has the potential to change the power relations between the two, giving the participant greater power and more information. An additional argument by Cannella (2014, 595) posits that, in qualitative research, the transformation of power relations arises from the fact that it obliges the researcher to accept that there is no ideal, no utopian knowing or salvation of others. Life history research has the potential to reduce power differences and encourage disclosure and authenticity between researchers and participants. This model departs from the traditional conception of the researcher as the ultimate source of authority. A balance of power also promotes participants' equal involvement in the research process. However, in the process of creating a balance of power, the researcher's inability to control the direction of the narratives can result in academic unease in the researcher, especially in relation to the validity of the information the narrators chose to divulge. This unease puts into question the issue of power in the process of generating knowledge.

What is critical in the life history approach is the issue of management of rapport between researcher and participants. There is a potential danger of familiarity and prejudice in the highly subjective nature of life histories. This familiarity can interrupt the flow of information between the participants and the researcher. Prejudice can bring

to the forefront assumptions that stop the participants from divulging critical information that they assume the researcher should or should not know. This situation is made worse by the unstructured nature of the life history narratives, which do not allow for a lot of questions in the process of the narrating. This situation in turn leads to delays in arriving at critical information quickly: the researcher has to transcribe or listen to the recorded narratives to be able to notice gaps and generate questions which can only be answered in a second round of interviews. The challenge in the second round is that retelling the story does not flow as naturally as it did the first time around. There is an increased possibility that a participant will simply edit the story and change her mind about some sections of the story she had earlier narrated.

In spite of these pitfalls, the life history approach provided my study with great advantages. In regards to my research questions, the approach allowed the women and I to journey back through educational and professional histories. As a result, from the narratives I was able to reconstruct the educational and professional tracks of the women. The unstructured nature of the narrative interview in the life history approach awakened dormant experiences that we were able to relive and reflect on.

The appropriateness of the life history approach in my study was that the personal narratives made explicit not only the women's struggles but also their agency along their education career pathway. In narrating their education life history, women showed agency as they reached out and utilised opportunities and turned their marginalisation in the family, the school, and spousal relations into a source of critical insight. This helped them to develop strategies regarding how to proceed along their education career path – a path marked with challenges but also opportunities (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010, 620). Thus, focusing on successful education careers brings fresh insight into women's agency as they navigate along the existing education tracks.

In the final analysis, the life history approach I used not only answered my research questions but yielded extra information regarding social context of the education history of the women, which in turn called for more reflection and analysis. The subsequent chapters, below, will reflect critically on the social contexts that emerged as common themes. Specifically, I will analyse how women mapped their education pathways (chapter 2), and highlighted the family (chapter 3), education institutions (chapter 4), and spousal relations (chapter 5) as critical contextual

circumstances that provided opportunities but were also constraining. The next chapter will present an in-depth analysis of the women's education pathways.

CHAPTER THREE - STRUCTURAL TRACKS AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION PATHWAYS

The education trajectory of women is often idealised as a linear progression, while in practice their education path gets twisted as they move back and forth, in and out of the education track (Shaw and Stanton 2012). Mapping education pathways of women in a professional career at university means identifying their movement within Uganda's education system from primary school to university. This chapter addresses the first research question: what is the nature of the education pathway of women who work in Ugandan universities as academics and senior administrators? To be able to answer this question, I pose two specific sub-questions. First: What main education tracks exist in the education system of Uganda? With this sub-question I intend to establish which education tracks were available to students at different levels in the education system, and to expose the transition points that may either facilitate or pose potential risk for women wanting to move from one level of education to the next. The second sub-question is: In what ways do women develop their education paths along the existing education tracks in Uganda? I will answer this sub-question by mapping the education pathways women carved for themselves within the existing tracks. This approach will help establish insight into the nature of the women's education pathways along the existing education tracks. It is on the basis of the education pathway map that the contextual circumstances in the next two chapters will be discussed.

The first part of the chapter will focus on the existing education tracks in Uganda's education system to show what education career options were offered to the women. The second part of the chapter reviews literature related to the educational career choice of women based on Eccles' (1994) notion of career choice. In the third part of the chapter, I map the actual education pathways of the women, indicating how they moved from primary school to doing bachelor's degrees at university. I use the cases of 11 women to illustrate women's experiences, especially at the transition points, and to show how these influenced the direction and speed of their education pathways. The third part of the chapter discusses women's pathways from bachelor's degrees to master's and PhDs. In this section I will use nine more cases to illustrate what influenced the women as they moved from bachelor's degrees to master's and PhDs. The intention of mapping the pathways is to show women's movement along the existing education tracks in Uganda's education system in order to reveal the nature of their education

pathways. The last part of the chapter will draw conclusions based on theoretical and empirical discussion, in particular looking at Eccles' notion of choice in relation to the education pathways of the women.

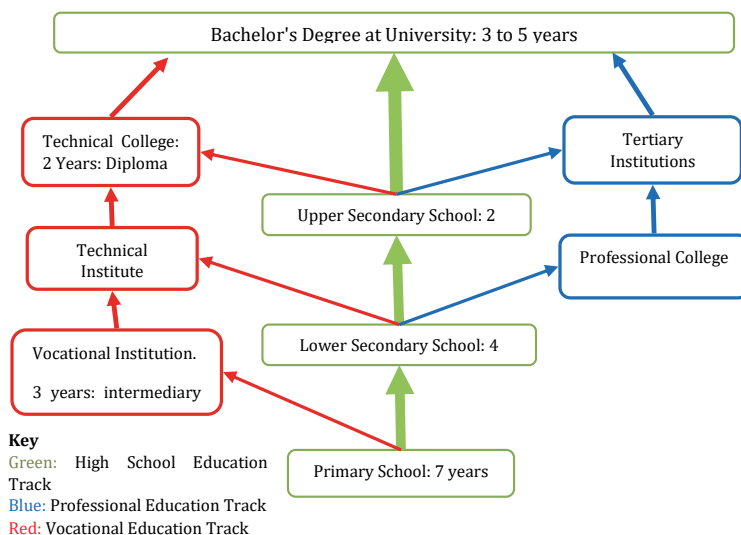
3.1 Education System in Uganda

The mainstream education system in Uganda follows a 7-4-2-(3-5) year structure from primary to higher education. This means formal primary education runs for 7 years for children from 6 to 12 years of age. Even so, it is common to find children who are 15 years and older in primary school because of delays in starting school or interruptions along the education pathway. Lower secondary school, commonly referred to as ordinary level ('O' level), takes 4 years, and is for children 13 to 16 or older. This is followed by 2 years of upper secondary or advanced level ('A' level) for students who are between 17 to 19 years, or who are older. The last phase of the mainstream education system is the universities, where a student can expect to spend between 3 to 5 years, depending on what she decides to study. In Uganda the mainstream education system is basically linear. Various technical and vocational institutions also provide education alongside the mainstream system. These institutions provide equivalent qualifications at the end of primary, lower, and upper secondary school levels for students who are not able to proceed along the linear mainstream education track (7-4-2-3 to 5-year structure) directly to university. In other words, there are alternative tracks that students can follow within the Uganda education system. These tracks are constructed in Figure 1, below.

The 7-4-2-(3-5) year education structure, which I will refer to as the High School Education Track (HSET), runs in a linear mode from primary school, through lower and upper secondary schools to bachelor's degrees at university. The HSET is the shortest way to university and publicly perceived as the mainstream education track in the country. As such, parents encourage their children to follow this track and students also strive to remain on the linear HSET. Parents and students believe that the HSET is the best education path to 'prestigious' degrees and to white-collar jobs. Yet, this track is also accused of being rather theoretical, exam-oriented, elitist, and exclusionary, not equipping students with the necessary skills and life competencies needed for the labour market (Tukundane et al. 2014, 476; Kasozi 2003).

Students who fail to proceed to university for a bachelor's degree through the high school track can branch off into what I refer to as the Professional Education Track (PET). On the PET students can take professional training either at a certificate level after lower secondary school or at a diploma level after upper secondary school. Public opinion in Uganda considers PET the second most prestigious educational route because it provides both theoretical and practical knowledge. This track produces professional graduates such as teachers, nurses, and para-medical staff. The PET is characterised by a 'stop over' period because students must complete a probationary year(s) of employment after the certificate or diploma qualifications before proceeding to university for a bachelor's degree. This stipulation means that professional students who follow this track must wait at least two years before continuing their education at a higher level, thereby delaying the education path of students who fall into this category. It is also during the probation year that some of the students may consider getting married. For women, marriage comes with responsibilities that may delay their education pathways even further. This topic will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

Figure 1: Education Tracks in Uganda



Source: Field Research 2012

Another alternative track that is available to students who fail to proceed along the high school track is what I will refer to as the Vocational Education Track (VET). The VET alternative can be taken by students after primary, lower secondary, or upper secondary education. In vocational training, students emerge with various technical and vocational certificates and diplomas that make it easier for them to gain blue-collar jobs in the labour market. Vocational education is considered to be the lowest form of the education system and is negatively perceived in Ugandan society (Blaak, Openjuru, and Zeelen 2013, 91). The vocational education track is the longest of the three education tracks because it starts training students who have a lower educational level. For instance, primary school leavers begin their vocational training at an intermediary certificate level, and then proceed to a full certificate, diploma, and higher diploma at a tertiary institution before they can access a bachelor's degree at university. The VET is characterised not only by delays due to the probation year of employment but also by compulsory year(s) of industrial training and internship after each stage of qualifications. This means that students who are on VET take a longer time to arrive at a bachelor's degree than those in high school and professional education tracks.

In figure 1 above, the transition points can be viewed between the progressive levels of education. An exit from a specific education track is seen on the high school track (green) and not on the professional (blue) or the vocation education tracks. The transition points along the formal education track are thought to be problematic because they constantly confront students with what choices to make about the available education track (Jayaratne, Thomas, and Trautmann 2003, 395). The transition points, just like the leaky points in the pipeline concept, pose continuous threats to students, especially as regards dropping out from the high school track and before completing the education circle.

In the context of the leaky pipeline model developed by Shaw and Stanton (2012), the education tracks can also be perceived as a leaky pipeline. This is so in two ways. Firstly, Shaw and Stanton's model perceives the pipeline in academia as a linear progression with discrete stages. When an individual leaves the pipeline for whatever reason, the pipeline theorists refer to it as 'leaking out'. Secondly, Shaw and Stanton argue that the educational career path of an individual along the academic pipeline can be twisted and influenced by non-academic events rather than the simple linearity

portrayed in the pipeline concept (Shaw and Stanton 2012, 3737). Although the pipeline does not change, individuals have the capacity to make their way within and around the pipeline without leaking out. This movement is what I refer to as pathways. The model of Show and Stanton offers important insight into understanding that the nature of the existing education tracks in Uganda is linear and somewhat rigid. The linear progression in the first part of the model makes a distinction between the major transition points at the different levels of the educational tracks, mainly: primary, secondary, tertiary, and university. The second part of the model perceives the career path of an individual as twisted within a leaky pipeline due to personal reasons and events. This perception is the basis for understanding how the women in my study developed their pathways within the existing education tracks.

Given this context, it is crucial to understand the education pathways of women who have succeeded in building educational careers in Uganda. Understanding the pathways will lend insight into what opportunities the women utilised and what constraints they had to overcome. This leads us to the second specific sub-question: In what ways do women develop their education pathways along the existing education tracks in Uganda? Based on the life history narratives of the women I interviewed, I will answer this specific sub-question by constructing the education pathways of the women from primary school through secondary school and its equivalent levels, to a bachelor's degree at university and its associated tertiary institutions.

In this chapter I delve into how the women negotiated and manoeuvred around the transition points within the education tracks and emerged with successful education careers at university. This is in line with the concept of the pathways as noted in the introductory chapter, which refers to the education routes the women followed within the existing formal education tracks. In this sense, pathways also denote a movement within and between the existing formal education tracks. Development of pathways involves constant negotiations and compromise, often with uncertain outcomes (Javdani, Sadeh, and Verona 2011, 2). Consequently, in this chapter I argue that the way women construct their education pathways along the existing tracks is not only influenced by their intellectual ability but also by circumstances at any given stage along the education tracks. The pathways the women took determined both the direction and

the speed at which they moved. It should also be noted that the pathways vary between individuals and between the different generations of the women in question.

3.2 Theoretical Discussion on Women's Education

The importance of education for women has been a growing concern for researchers because it is the main key to the struggle for gender equality for women, particularly in Africa. In his study about obstacles to women's higher education in Kenya, Sifuna (2006, 85) observed that education is an ultimate liberator that empowers a person to make personal and social choices. Most importantly for women, education is an ultimate equalizer, particularly in promoting greater gender equality. Similar observations on secondary school education for girls have been made by Adoyo Odhiambo, Simatwa, and Yalo (2013, 190). According to these perspectives, educated women are seen as 'finished' products of an education system who should begin to have an influence on changing the gender terrain in institutions. However, perceiving women as 'finished products' of the education system overlooks how they move through the different levels of the education process, and most importantly what motivates the women to take a specific education pathway.

There is a small but growing body of literature on the factors that influence the education career trajectory of women, especially in American and Europe (Fadigan and Hammrich 2004, 838). One of the early theoretical discussions on women's educational career trajectory in America was the achievement-related choice framework of Jacquelynne Eccles (1994). Eccles' work, which mostly engaged with psychological debates on education in North America, makes an important contribution to women's achievement of education career choices. Eccles investigated the reasons why women and men are concentrated in different occupational and educational programmes in the US. She made the essential point that any discussions on gender differences in achievement must acknowledge the problems of societal influence on the very definition of achievement, as well as the value of various forms of achievement. She asked 'why do women choose particular occupations?' instead of 'why are women not selecting the same occupational fields as men?' (Eccles 1994, 586).

Drawing on theoretical and empirical work associated with decision-making, achievement theory, and attribution, Eccles developed a comprehensive theoretical model of achievement-related choices. Her elaborated theoretical model focuses on a set

of social and psychological factors to understand the occupational and educational choices of women and men. Eccles linked educational, vocational, and other achievement choices to two sets of beliefs. The first is that an individual's expectations for success, their confidence in their own ability to succeed, and their personal efficacy influence the choice of a specific educational activity. Expectations refer to one's beliefs about how they will do in different tasks or activities. Personal efficacy relates to an individual's confidence in their ability to organise and execute a given course of action to solve a problem or accomplish a task (Eccles and Wigfield 2002). The second belief of Eccles is that the value an individual attaches to various options perceived by the individual as available also influence the person's career choice. In this context, values refer to incentives or reasons for doing the activities (Eccles and Wigfield 2002). Eccles predicts that people will most likely enrol in courses that they think they can master and that have specific task value for them.

The underlying assumption of Eccles' theoretical model is that individuals are frequently faced with achievement-related choices. These choices, as Eccles suggests, are made within a context of a complex social reality, which presents each individual with a wide variety of options, each of which has both long-term and immediate consequences. Although Eccles recognises the significance of social reality in relation to the notion of choice, her emphasis on the Western perspective of 'individuals' and 'individual' choice leaves little room for the importance of social context, especially for women in Africa. The central notion of choice in Eccles' theoretical model is problematic in analysing the career trajectory of women in Africa. For one thing, the career choices along African women's education trajectory are not as varied. There are contextual economic, social, and political realities that directly determine if women succeed or not along their education career trajectory. I contend that it is not only up to the individual women and their agency to make choices that determine their successful career trajectory. In Africa generally and in Uganda specifically, women's successful career trajectory depends much more on their context than on the availability of options from which to make a career choice. Success and value attached to an educational career trajectory are the product of a complex mixture of individual women's agency and their contextual experience along that education track. Secondly, the contextual circumstances can provide impetus but also constraints that limit options for an

individual woman to make choice based on personal career preference along her education pathways. Hence, contrary to Eccles' assumption regarding the availability of options and choices, I observed that in some cases women and men in Africa do not have a wide variety of choices along their education pathways. Eccles' theoretical model is contested further in chapters 3-5, below.

All things considered, even though Eccles is not writing about Africa, her theoretical framework is still insightful for analysing the education pathways of the women in two ways. First of all, her theory is significant for determining what characterises the women with successful education career in my study. This helps to establish what education career options women encounter along their education pathways and how they utilise opportunities available to them. Secondly, the theoretical framework sheds light on what the women's agency entails. The issue of agency with respect to Eccles' framework relates to women's values, beliefs, expectations, motivations, and self-efficacy. Eccles' framework offers ways of understanding why women follow specific pathways and what factors drive them along a specific education track.

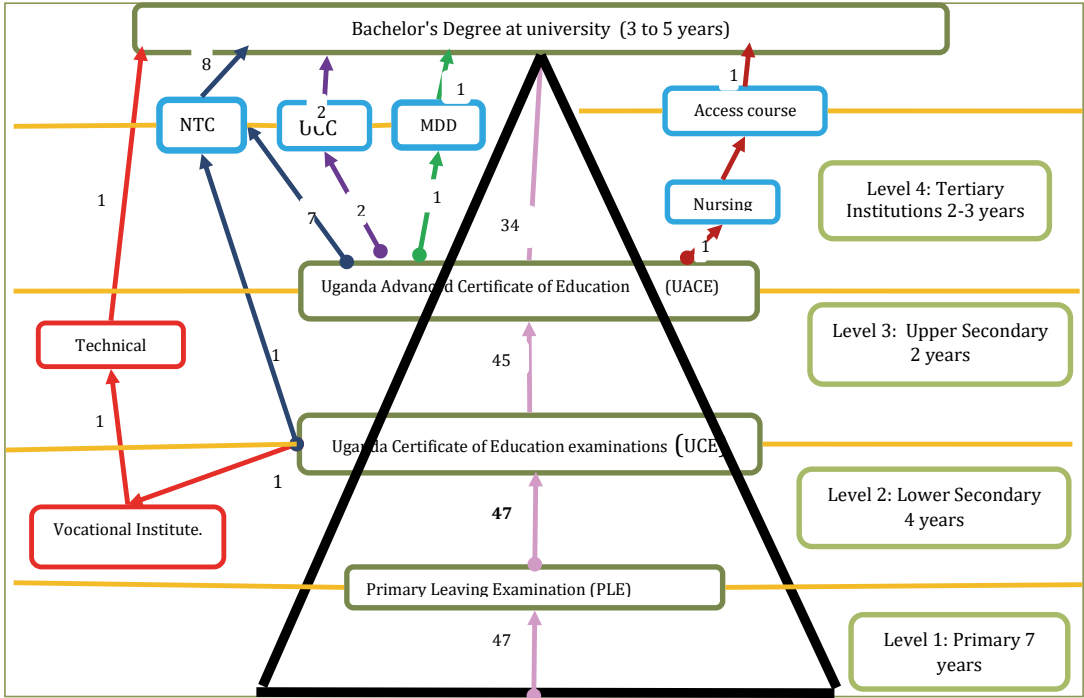
3.3 Education Pathway: Primary to Bachelor's degree

There are three existing tracks in Uganda's education system that women can follow from primary school to a bachelor's degree at university. In the in-depth interviews, I asked the women to narrate their education history from the time they joined primary school to their last degree obtained. The findings revealed that the pathways of the 47 women fall in all three existing tracks in Uganda's education system. The details of the movement of the women along these tracks are shown in Figure 2.

In the narratives it became clear that from primary to lower secondary school, all the 47 women followed a single high school education track (HSET). However, after lower secondary school, differences began to emerge, as Figure 2 shows. After lower secondary school, 45 of the women moved on to upper secondary school on the high school education track, but the remaining two branched off: one to the professional track (green) and the other to the vocational track (red). Similarly, out of the 45 women who went to upper secondary school, 34 proceeded directly to university for a bachelor's degree on the high school education track, while 11 made their way into the

professional education track for various certificate and diploma courses in tertiary institutions.

Figure 2: The Educational Pathways: Primary to Bachelor’s Degree



Source: Field data 2012

Although 34 of the women took the straight path to university, the concept of pathways is still relevant to their situation. The women still negotiated social and financial obstacles that complicated their movement along the education tracks. Even though the education pathway of these 34 on the high school education track seems linear, in reality, the kinds of courses the women were offered along the high school education pathway were negotiated. This means that even with the linear pathway, the women still meandered. Although the high school education track (HSET) provided the shortest and most direct path to university, there was no assurance that women on the HSET would complete the education circle. Movement along the HSET had to be negotiated in terms of what courses to take, as well as what financial and social obstacles within the high school education track had to be dealt with. Thus the pathway

concept is still relevant even when 34 of the 47 women went directly to university through the high school education track.

The effect of the negotiations during high school education is reflected in the distribution of the various generations of women along the education tracks. This is summarised in Table 3.1, below.

Table 3.1: Generation and Education Tracks

Education Track	Generation			Total
	Older	Middle-Age	Younger	
High School	10	8	16	34
Professional	3	8	1	12
Vocational	0	0	1	1
Total	13	16	18	47

Source: Field data 2012

The table shows that the majority of women from the older generation⁵ (10 out of 13) and younger generation⁶ (16 out of 18) followed the high school education track. Meanwhile, those of the middle-age generation⁷ were equally distributed in the high school (8) and professional (7) education tracks. The distribution along the three education tracks is determined by a range of economic, social, and political factors. These factors also influenced the choices of different generations of women to follow pathways from which they expected more success, and which they valued in their educational career. The details of each track are discussed below.

High School Education Track (HSET)

The high school education track was followed by 34 (72.3%) women. In other words, 34 of the women studied went from lower secondary to upper secondary school and then a bachelor's degree at university without any delays along the way. These 34 comprised 10 women from the old generation, 8 from the middle, and 16 from the young generation.

The ten women from the older generation completed their bachelor's degree between 1975 and 1984, a period in which high school and university education was exclusively financed by the central government. These women received full government sponsorship during high school and their bachelor's degrees. Funding from central

⁵ Older generation: 3 of the women were in their 60s, and 8 in their 50s (11 in total, aged 50 and above).

⁶ Younger generation: 12 in their 30s and 4 in their 20s (16 in total, aged 20-40).

⁷ Middle generation: women in their 40s.

government was the main factor that propelled women of the older generation along the high school education track. As a result, nine (90.9%) of the women followed a bachelor's degree on full government sponsorship, and one (9.1%) was sponsored by a university abroad. These statistics suggest that government and university funding determined the speed and direction of the education pathway of the older generation of women both in the upper secondary and for their bachelor's degree at university. For example, Kameo, a beneficiary of the government sponsorship, pointed out that *'for my secondary education, I studied ... free A level⁸, at that time HSC⁹ was government sponsored, so I did not have to pay school fees. Yeah. So I was very lucky'*. Government sponsorship for the older generation meant that students not only had their tuition paid but also received an allowance known as the 'boom' for pocket money (Kajubi 1992, 436). The 'boom' provided a great educational opportunity because expenses such as food, living expenses, and transport to and from home were paid to the university by the central government. Although the government sponsorship guaranteed a smooth transition through high school and university education, it also demanded that the women score the required points in upper secondary to access higher education at university or tertiary institutions.

What remained as an educational challenge for the older generation of women was that between 1922 and 1987 Uganda had only one university, Makerere University. So, as much as the older generation of women had assurance of government sponsorship, it was academically very competitive to get admission to the limited vacancies in a single university. The women had to mobilise their intellectual resources to excel in all the national examinations, to guarantee access to university admission and government sponsorship. Nevertheless, it was the central government sponsorship that facilitated a smooth transition from lower to upper secondary school, and from upper secondary school to a bachelor's degree at university.

On the high school track were eight women of the middle generation who completed their bachelor's degree between 1985 and 1994. Unlike the older generation, the middle generation of women studied during a period in which the government had withdrawn sponsorship for upper secondary education and restricted university

⁸ A'level is an abbreviated form for Advance Level School, which I refer to as upper secondary school.

⁹ HSC is the abbreviation for High School Certificate, obtained at the end of upper secondary.

sponsorship to tuition fees only. This meant that for the middle generation of women, transition from lower secondary to upper secondary, and from upper secondary to university, was financially challenging, especially because most of their parents and guardians were poor and usually involved in subsistence agriculture. Economic constraints deeply affected the education progress of women from poor families. The implication for parents of the middle generation of women was that they were obliged to privately sponsor primary and secondary education and also share in the costs of university education. As such, out of the eight middle-age generation women, four (50.0%) were admitted to a bachelor's degree on government sponsorship, while three (37.5%) were privately sponsored by family members, and one (12.5%) was sponsored by a religious organisation.

The period from 1986 to 1995 also witnessed a significant change in higher education in Uganda. One more public university, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), was established in 1988. In the same year, the first private university, the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), was established in Mbale. The building of two extra universities increased the options for university education for the women from the middle generation. However, while the number of universities increased, government financing for higher education in Uganda was substantially reduced. According to Kajubi (1992, 436), government financing of higher education was reduced from 28.1% in 1986/87 to 11% in the financial year 1988/89. During this period the government made its first attempts to withdraw the 'boom': transport and stationery allowances for university students each year. Instead, cost-sharing for government-sponsored students in public universities was encouraged, and privatisation was introduced. This change of government policy was dictated by the decline in state revenues. Hence, full government scholarships for university students was seen as unsustainable. This decline in state revenue required a review, which resulted in the 1989 Education Sector Review Report (ESRR) and the 1992 government white paper on Education. The ESRR and the white paper, coupled with the influence of the World Bank structural adjustment programme, defined reforms in higher education in Uganda. The ESRR shifted the priority of government financial support from higher education to primary education. It was discovered that for every single university student funded by central government, 508 primary school children could be sponsored

(Kajubi 1992, 437). This finding led to an overall reduction in government financing of public universities. The process of reduction was accelerated by the explosion of staff and student strikes against cost sharing in public universities. These strikes made the government harden its stance, and since the 1990s it has implemented cost sharing in public universities (Mamdani 2007, 6). Despite the reduction of government financing for upper secondary school and university, 8 out of the 16 women of the middle generation still managed to follow the high school education track.

The younger generation who followed the high school track consisted of 16 women who went to school between 1995 and 2007. Out of these women, eight (50.0%) were sponsored by the government, five (31.3%) of the women had to seek sponsorship from private organisations, and three (18.6%) were sponsored by their parents. This shows an increased participation in cost sharing of higher education by parents and private organisations. The younger generation of women went to school in a period in which the government had not only withdrawn sponsorship for upper secondary school but also significantly reduced financial support for university education. This meant it was no longer enough to qualify for admission to university but also to score the required points to gain government sponsorship.

The higher education reforms engineered by the World Bank in the 1990s offered advantages but also disadvantages on the education path of the younger generation. The advantage of the higher education reform was that it introduced market principles into public higher education institutions within a broader framework of globalisation. As a result, between 1995 and 2009 the number of public universities in Uganda increased to 4 and private universities to 24 (Mugisha Baine 2010, 318). The reforms also introduced the dual track tuition policy in public universities. The rules of the policy are that tuition for the most-capable students, who scored the required points for public university entry, was financed by the government. Meanwhile, other students who qualified were allowed admission to public university admissions on private sponsorship (Marcucci, Johnstone, and Ngolovoi 2008, 102). Women of the younger generation not only had a better chance of accessing government sponsorship in the four public universities but also private funding in the 24 private universities. However, the flip side of the higher education reforms for the younger generation of women is that it turned higher education more into a private rather than a public good (Mamdani 2007, vii). That is,

higher education could only be accessed by those who could afford to pay for it. This pressure introduced academic competition among students for the few government-sponsored places at public universities. Gaining access to government sponsorship in a public university was considered a privilege. Students who were unable to access government scholarship felt academically disappointed. For instance, Enoka, an assistant lecturer, said, *'I got 16 points which was not good enough to bring me here (university) on government (sponsorship)... So I did not make it on government'*. The label 'government' stood for excellent academic performance and the label 'private' designated students who had failed to earn government sponsorship. The effect of higher education reform resulted in effectively ranking students on the basis of funding.

There were additional social challenges for the three (18.6%) women of the younger generation who attended university thanks to private sponsorship. Although private sponsorship shows that the women came from wealthy or middle class families, in the university the women were negatively labelled as academic failures: the fact that they did not score enough points to access the prestigious government sponsorship in the public universities meant the women were regarded as academically low performers. Hence, for the younger generation of women, university became a site where social class differences shifted in favour of students who came from economically poorer families. Generally, students from poor backgrounds who accessed government sponsorship were regarded as intellectually superior, while children from rich families who were privately sponsored at university were regarded as academically weak. However, the possibility that poor students in the younger generation of women could access government sponsorship balanced their otherwise economic disadvantage in terms of social class.

The younger generation of women from poor family backgrounds who followed the high school track used their excellent academic performance to keep on this track. They utilised other opportunities as well, such as available social and cultural entitlements, minimal government sponsorships, and resources from parents and guardians to propel themselves along the high school education track. These women also tapped into available opportunities and claimed their legal entitlement from local government bursaries and university scholarships. Therefore, the high school track was

characterised by fast movement with no delays between primary school and a bachelor's degree.

A typical movement along the high school track was described by Sakira, who belongs to the middle generation of women. Sakira is a poet, senior lecturer, and head of a literature department, with two master's degrees as well as a PhD. I interviewed Sakira in her office, where her publications were very visible. She said, *'when you see my education track, it is extremely fast'* compared to the general trend of education for most Ugandan children. She continued,

I started primary school at the age of 5, and by 11 I was done at primary school. I completed ordinary secondary school at 15, and by 18 I had finished A'level and joined university for a bachelor's degree. At the age of 21, I had already qualified for a bachelor's degree. So you see how fast I moved!

Additional factors helped women on the high school track move quickly along their education pathway. Key among these factors were their family or foster parents living in urban centres, who in turn made it easy for the women to access kindergarten and primary school at the right age. Sakira recalled, *'I was coming up to five years of age, I was very young for primary one class. The school wanted only six year olds'*. It is mostly in urban centres, where most parents can access education for their children, and value it, that it makes sense for schools to be strict regarding the age limit for accessing school. In the rural schools, the age limit is not enforced because generally rural children do not have a chance to go through kindergarten as Sakira did. This difference was echoed by Cirila, a senior lecturer and a faculty dean, who grew up in a rural setting: *'I never went to nursery school. In our time it was not there. I just started straight in primary one'*. It is difficult to apply age limit restrictions in rural schools because children's births are seldom registered and so, determining the exact age of a child for joining school becomes challenging. Besides this, entry into school depends solely on the parents' ability to pay school fees and the value they attach to education. The un-uniform enforcement of age limits for starting school points to a lack of legal enforcement of education policy in Uganda, something mentioned in my introductory chapter.

An urban location, as in the case of Sakira, is also associated with good quality education facilities, especially in early childhood education. Etura, a senior lecturer and faculty dean, explained that *'I realised it is important where a child starts from with education ... because I went to Agoa nursery school in town, it was a very good school. But*

the rest of my schooling has been in what are called "third-class" schools'. Third-class schools in Uganda refer to mostly rural and peri-urbans schools, which are known for poor academic performance especially in the national examinations at the end of primary and secondary school. The issue for Etura was that, being born to civil servant parents, she moved and changed schools according to where her parents were transferred, for work. As such, although she accessed kindergarten in an urban centre, she completed primary school in a rural setting in a school she referred to as 'third class'. However, she said 'I have not felt disadvantaged because I had that very good background' in the urban centre.

Etura's narrative introduced a difference between urban schools that generally fall in the category of 'first class' because of good education facilities, and rural schools that are usually referred to as 'third class' because of poor education facilities. The narratives of the middle generation of women also introduce differences between the socio-economic status of parents. Among the middle generation we can see a small group of civil servants emerging among the parents, while a larger group of parents were peasants who depended on subsistent agriculture. Hence, differences in the socio-economic status of the families also determined how quickly the women moved along the high school education track.

At the end of the high school track, the women emerged with various specialisations that indicated their negotiated pathways. The majority of the women specialised in education (9) and social sciences (9); 4 women specialised in law, followed by general science (3), medicine (3), computer science (2), and business administration (2). Development studies (1) and library and information management (1) registered the least number of women on the high school track. These specialisations were not a result of individual women's choice of career preference. The pathways were the limited options that were available for the women to access, with financial support from central or local governments, private organisations, or from their families.

The high school education track was also characterised for constantly discarding students at specific transitions points. As shown in Figure 2, the high school education track discarded two (2) out of the 47 women after lower secondary, and another 12 after the upper secondary school. At these transition points, students who scored the required points and were able to meet the costs of the subsequent levels proceeded

along the track. This meant that academically gifted students who were unable to meet the financial costs were forced to drop out of the high school track into more cost-effective professional and vocational tracks. The linear nature of the high school education track and its three major transitions points is comparable to the leaky pipeline of Shaw and Stanton (2012). As a result, women who exited from the high school education track changed direction in either professional or vocational education tracks, as discussed in the following section.

Professional Education Track (PET)

The professional education track (PET) is an alternative for students who failed to continue along the high school education track. The professional pathway option was taken by the women in my study who were unable to proceed from secondary school directly to a bachelor's degree programme at university due to academic, financial, and/or social reasons. There were 12 women in all: 3 (35%) from the older generation, 8(66.7%) from the middle generation and one (8.3%) younger woman. The distribution figures show the effect of government sponsorship in upper secondary school for the older generation, who were able to make an easier transition to university. Similarly, the increased number of universities sparked by the liberalisation of the higher education sector favoured the younger generation, which was able to attract private funding for private universities if they failed admittance to public universities on government sponsorship. By contrast, the middle generation did not enjoy many possibilities for government sponsorship or private sponsorship; that is because prior to 1988 there was only one university in Uganda.

Among the older generation, the professional pathway taken by 3 (35%) women, saw them branching off after upper secondary school. All three obtained full government sponsorship for a diploma course in a tertiary institution, in different disciplines. Two trained as secondary school teachers at National Teachers Colleges (NTCs), specialising in political science and business studies, respectively. The third woman trained to be a nurse at the School of Nursing (SN). The narratives of the older generation revealed that their decision to take the professional track was influenced not only by academic value but also by the social status of the career that PET would offer. This was articulated by Asema, a senior lecturer, who explained that, '*actually I was admitted on government sponsorship for a diploma in librarianship*' at university, but she

turned the position down because of the low status given to librarians in her former primary and secondary schools. She explained that *'back then I would see [that] teachers are well respected. I could also see how a librarian was treated in the school as support staff'*. The 'support staff' in Ugandan schools work in non-teaching positions, performing vital administrative services that keep the schools running. These service providers include school librarians, accountants, and secretaries, whose levels of education are often the same or higher than those of the teaching staff; even so, these support workers receive lower wages and have lower status in the schools.

Talking about her paternal uncle who was a school teacher, Asema recalled that, *'I would see the kind of life in my uncle's home; the cups they would buy, and the chairs! It was kind of a selected item'*, meaning that the chairs were better quality. Based on her experience of these two role models, of teaching and non-teaching staff, Asema *'... thought, if it is a diploma, then it has to be a diploma of a status. And then I said maybe teaching, not librarianship ...'* at university. Consequently, Asema opted for a professional diploma as a secondary school teacher at a National Teachers College (NTC) rather than a diploma in librarianship at university. Asema was able to make an informed decision based on her career interest thanks to the availability of government scholarships in both courses. Furthermore, her two role models, her uncle and the school librarian, afforded her the insight she needed to make an informed career decision. The social status of the diploma she did go on to obtain thus held more importance for her than just having a qualification from a university.

Among the middle generation, 8 (66.7%) women followed the professional education track, to specialise in various fields: 6 trained as grade 5 secondary school teachers in various National Teachers Colleges (NTC); one specialised in Music Dance and Drama (MMD); and one in business studies at Uganda College of Commerce (UCC). This generation branched off from the high school track in two phases. In the first phase was Atweria, who branched off immediately after lower secondary school to obtain a diploma in secondary school education. In the second phase, 7 women branched off after upper secondary education. At both points, the availability of scholarships was the main factor that influenced the decision to take the professional pathway. For instance, Atweria (first phase) had a chance for diploma training in teaching. As she explained:

There was a special government sponsorship programme that emerged as a temporary policy in the Ministry of Education and Sports (MEoS) to train more teachers of business studies for secondary school. This policy created an opening for senior four (lower secondary) leavers who performed well in business subjects such as commerce and accounting. I benefitted as one of the best students in O' Level¹⁰ examination because I got a first grade.

This was a rare opportunity. Normally it is students who have completed upper secondary school who are admitted to diploma-level training as teachers. Given her good performance and the special invitation from the Ministry of Education and Sports, Atweria could not pass up such a chance. She went on to pass the rigorous oral and written interviews needed to qualify for the competitive scholarship to pursue a diploma in education at the Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK). Scholarship was a defining factor on the professional track of the women in this generation because the cost of higher education was increasing as a result of government reduction of financial support. The struggle of these women was to excel academically in order to access government sponsorship, either at the university or in a tertiary institution.

Relying on the scholarship, though, often landed the women in courses that are generally perceived, academically, as less prestigious. This was particularly the case with Annetta, a lecturer, who followed the path of Music, Dance, and Drama (MDD). Annetta lost both parents and was under the care of her sister who was two years older and was also poor. As an orphan in a child-headed household, Annetta's transition from upper secondary to university was financially difficult. As a strategy, Annetta remained open and was ready to embrace any education path that offered prospects for scholarship. She enrolled for the MDD course at university not necessarily out of career interest but to keep on her education pathway.

I came to Makerere to study a diploma in Music, Dance, and Drama in 1995 ... without knowing exactly what I was going to meet in this course or even how I was going to use it in my life. It just so happened that this is what the government (sponsorship) gave me ... yes, and I had put it as my fourth choice ...'

The socio-economic circumstances of Annetta obliged her to be flexible, in other words, to take a course that was not only available but also economically viable. Flexibility also

¹⁰ O'level is an abbreviation of Ordinary Level which is the same as lower secondary education. The O'level examination is a national examination, which leads students to obtain the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE). The UCE allows students to proceed to upper secondary school or its equivalent, professional and vocational training.

meant that Annetta was prepared to take risks and explore unfamiliar professional territory that would at least offer her financial opportunities that would keep on her educational pathway. These options, as Annetta put it, came with a cost:

Because at the time when I came here this course [MDD] was labelled '*Musiru Daala, Daala!*', meaning 'you are very, very stupid'. And it was so underrated on campus. Nobody really wanted to be a part of it. In fact, you were ridiculed if you did it. But that was largely because people never understood what it entailed; whenever they saw the practical side of it, they never realized there was a theoretical side to it, which was as laborious as any other study ... what took me through the course Music, Dance, and Drama was positivity and an open mind.

The struggle for Annetta was to put up with ridicule without losing focus. She needed to make the best of that course. What she discovered was the value of her pathway as she proceeded. What is noteworthy is the capacity of Annetta to curve her career, and adapt to an unpopular pathway. Her professional track proved to be unique: her path to music, dance, and drama provided a safe haven for her to transition from upper secondary to university. Otherwise she would have risked dropping out of school. Ironically, then, this unpopular education pathway actually afforded the opportunity to navigate into an unexplored career field. Annetta indicates that with the help of her lecturers, she '*got really interested in drama*'; as a result, she has become a specialist of village theatre in Uganda. Annetta explained further that her music, dance, and drama education pathway offered her a rare advantage: '*we were told from the start that if you study hard and excel, the chances are that you can come back as a mature student and go further in your studies on government sponsorship*'. Music, dance, and drama offered her a window of opportunity she grew to appreciate, and went on to develop. She has since built on her academic and professional career, and obtained an international PhD scholarship specialising in gender and theatre at a Norwegian university.

In all, for the middle generation of women, the reduction in government sponsorship increased their economic struggles, especially as they transitioned from upper secondary to university or tertiary institutions. The professional path of the middle generation also introduced socio-economic challenges that arose out of poverty, or being orphaned early in childhood and having to rely financially on a sibling in parental roles. Notably, these challenges kept the women alert to scholarship opportunities. The women also kept their career options open and were flexible about taking a path that offered possibilities for staying on an educational pathway.

Among the young generation, only 1 (5.6%) woman, assistant lecturer Kenzie, followed the professional path after upper secondary education. Kenzie chose this track for two reasons. The first was the availability of government sponsorship: *'my parents were not able to pay tuition because we are eight children in our family ... and my dad is just a primary school teacher ... and my mum is just a farmer'*. Given the low-income status of her family, Kenzie opted for the most financially viable pathway of a National Teachers College (NTC) at Nkozi. Not surprisingly, *'the moment the NTC called me [to say] that I was through on government sponsorship for diploma, I just went for it'*. Taking the professional education pathway relieved the financial burden for Kenzie's family but also allowed her to become qualified as a secondary school teacher quickly; that move, in turn, led to her quickly becoming employed. She envisioned a diploma in education as the shortest route into the job world, because as she indicated, *'[she] desperately needed to be independent'*. The need for financial independence seemed to be an important reason why Kenzie took the professional pathway.

Besides the availability of sponsorships, Kenzie also cited another reason why she took the professional pathway in a tertiary institution instead of a bachelor's degree at a university. She explained that: *'In fact I had scored well to go to campus [Makerere University] on private [sponsorship], but back then I lacked career guidance'*. She also argued that, although her parents were poor, the money her brother spent supporting her at the NTC could have paid for a bachelor's degree in one of the public or private universities. This issue, the lack of career guidance, reflects a lack of access to basic information regarding higher education among Kenzie's teachers and school administration. The information gap could be attributed to the background of the teachers themselves, whose highest education may well have been a diploma in education at a national teachers college. In any case, Kenzie's teachers were either unwilling or unable to guide her on a career path that they themselves had not experienced.

In addition, the rural location of Kenzie's school and family presented specific constraints that made it difficult for Kenzie to access important information on career chances. It is common in Uganda for rural schools to be poor. They may not be able to afford the basic cost of a good communication infrastructure such as electricity and print media that would allow teachers to give proper career guidance to their students. The

lack of career guidance also meant that women were steered into career areas that were not pre-planned. However, what is important, is Kenzie's ability to adjust her education career pathway and redirect it towards teaching, which offered her a better future. Kenzie's example also shows the active way in which the women continuously redefined their education pathways as they rediscovered new options and possibilities. Kenzie's overall pathway shows distinct social, academic, and economic challenges typical of her family's status and her school. These challenges present unique constraints to rural children.

In all, the professional education track provided the women with an alternative to construct their pathway to university through tertiary education. The PET allowed them to explore new educational career pathways that provided the women with financial and academic opportunities that then accelerated their movement along their education path. The professional education track also proved to be a shorter path to employment, which in turn alleviated some of the socio-economic constraints the women had to deal with. Compared to the high school education track, the professional education track was marked with only one major transition point that delayed the women between diploma training and bachelor's degrees at university. Additionally, while delays along the high school education track were negative (they led to the women dropping out of the education system), delays along the professional education track were productive in that they gave the women time to increase financial resources through employment. It was also during the delay that women married and built their own families. Spousal relationships then provided both the social safety and financial support that the women needed, especially for the education pathway into higher education. This point of delay made the professional pathway longer than the high school path. Later on, this delay negatively influenced women's pathways to a master's degree and a PhD. In particular, the women were disadvantaged when it came to accessing scholarships limited to younger people (up to the age of 35).

Vocational Education Track (VET)

The vocational educational pathway was taken by one woman, Leonia, who belongs to the younger generation. Leonia is an assistant lecturer in the department of hospitality management. Although she is the only woman on the vocational education track, her pathway is revealing. Leonia was the only women whose education pathway showed a

regression after lower secondary school. In addition, she went to an academically poor primary school and later took a vocational pathway, which, according to public opinion in Uganda, is perceived as academically less prestigious. Thirdly, Leonia was the only one who was brought up in a female-headed household marked by poverty. In this household, Leonia was both a student and a 'shadow mother' to her siblings. These circumstances both delayed her, and made her regress along her education pathway.

Although the constraints Leonia faced were similar to those of the other women, her strategies were different. The vocational educational pathway emerged as a consequence of financial constraints, in the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary. Leonia: *'after senior four, I don't think it was because I was not very bright but there were challenges that affected my studies'*. The challenge was that Leonia was obliged to attend a non-residential mixed lower secondary school so she could help her mother *'in the work of brewing local beer because that is where fees w[ere] coming from'*. As a consequence, the pattern of education for Leonia right from primary school oscillated between work and study. At an early age, it was clear to Leonia that there was a demarcation between the world of work, which consisted of brewing beer to generate money for school fees, and the world of school where she studied. As a consequence, all Leonia's school-related learning activities had to stop at school; they could not be brought home. This pattern of schooling had an impact on Leonia's general academic performance in the final national examination. She described her performance at lower secondary as *'not very good'*, although she still qualified for entry to upper secondary school.

An additional challenge was being a 'shadow mother' in a female-headed family. This meant she shared in the responsibility of childcare. As such, Leonia's education pathway was conditioned by the education pathways of her siblings. The concern of Leonia about the education of her siblings alongside her own reflects a social obligation that came with her position in the family. Once her older brother died, her position shifted: *'by then we had lost the first born (died) so I now stand to be the first born'*. Being a female, the position of the first-born automatically made Leonia a 'shadow' mother to her siblings. Leonia's social and financial challenges limited her options in choosing which education pathway to take. She recounts:

When I sat back to think as a first born, I looked at those (siblings) that were behind me and then the struggle my mother was going through, I thought like maybe branching to do a course so that I can give my followers an opportunity to also have basic education, to go up to higher level of education.

The high school track was too long in terms of skill acquisition and it was financially too expensive for her mother to afford. The option to take the professional education pathway to primary school teacher training as proposed by her mother was considered by Leonia but she turned it down for two major reasons. Firstly, teaching was not her career interest: *'that was not me ... I never wanted to teach'*. Secondly, she also considered the financial viability of the course she wanted to take and its implication on her professional career. Teaching to her was not viable *'especially I knew in the PTC [Primary Teachers College], you end up a primary school teacher'*. By implication, Leonia did not want to jump on any available career possibility although she was financially and socially constrained. She kept focusing on a career that would put her in a better financial and social position. Given that Uganda's primary school teachers' remunerations are systematically lower than that of other countries in sub-Saharan Africa (MEoS 2014, 101), Leonia turned down the option of becoming a primary school teacher. Education for Leonia was primarily a means of finding a sustainable source of income to finance not only her school expenses but also that of her siblings. Leonia envisioned the vocational education track as the most viable option for her to train in and to acquire practical skills, thereby making a sustainable source of income possible. In sum, among the three education tracks available, the vocational pathway offered Leonia the best prospects to achieve her vision.

As a strategy, Leonia opted to reverse her pathway from the high school track to take intermediary vocational certificate training in a non-formal institute. The move was circumstantial but also strategic *'because of an opportunity for a scholarship from a German-based African Evangelistic Enterprise who were moving to the various parts of the country'*. The institution in which the German organisation sponsored her was a non-formal vocational institute; that is, the training did not fall under the mainstream education system in Uganda in terms of curriculum and enrolment criteria, because the German organisation:

Looked only for needy and orphaned children, to undertake intermediary certificate in vocational training. The organisation didn't even want senior

secondary leavers. They just wanted a needy child, particularly, those who failed to complete senior two, senior three, and primary school.

As a lower secondary school graduate, Leonia was not eligible to access this scholarship. In a whisper she revealed, *'I had to even hide my O' level certificate, to silence it so as to access the scholarship.* Being 'dishonest' to the scholarship organisation was a survival strategy Leonia adopted to avoid dropping out of school. Taking a step back to restart vocational training in catering was a way for Leonia to create space for herself to re-plan her educational pathway as well as that of her siblings. The German scholarship, while offering possibilities for her future, also relieved her mother of a financial burden.

Because we were needy and there was a scholarship that was going to reduce the burden on my mother. So the three years were paid by the Germans. That also offset some of her burden to cater for the others. So it wasn't that I really wanted at that point that line (vocational track) but God brought it in a way that yes, you are a needy child so you are going to get this vocational training.

Leonia's need for a scholarship was the result of growing up in a female-headed household characterised by low income. The German scholarship was a rare opportunity Leonia was not prepared to forego because it offered her prospects for a brighter future. She needed the vocational skills to improve the informal entrepreneurial skills she had developed in her mother's local home brewery. In the path of catering, she saw the possibility of generating at least some income concurrently as she trained in baking and cooking. The vocational skills also offered her prospects for self-employment that would generate much-needed financial support for her education and that of her siblings. Most importantly, vocational skills gave Leonia the freedom to manage her own business; that included employing and training her own siblings.

... My sister Julie is with me. I asked my mother that she joins me at my restaurant during her O' level [lower secondary] and senior six [upper secondary] vacations, because I wanted to train her and to give her skills. I trained her, and now she can manage catering service on her own and I have employed her.

What stands out in the case of Leonia is her ability to rise above her social and financial constraints to pursue her educational career. She also fulfilled the social obligation as a daughter, a 'first born' and 'shadow mother', without losing focus on her educational career and the educational aspiration of her siblings. Leonia's ability to persist with all these intersecting networks makes her pathway unique.

Even though the vocational education track was the most viable for Leonia, she was aware that she was taking an education track that was perceived by the public as less prestigious. She still had to deal with the stigma and negative labelling by peers who advised her *'you know it is good to first go to A'level [upper secondary]*'. However, acutely aware of her financial difficulties, Leonia saw a better option in a vocational training course. As Oketch (2007, 221) argued, the low status attributed to vocational education is an attitudinal and not an academic problem. He explains that vocational education is perceived primarily as an occupational education, initially terminal in nature and undesirable in post-independence Africa (Oketch 2007, 221). Leonia recognised this attitudinal challenge as well, acknowledging that *'actually at that time I didn't know that it was a blessing'* to do vocational training in a technical institute. The 'blessing', according to Leonia, is that her vocational skills have positioned her professionally ahead of her classmates who took the prestigious high school track. This is the case because she is both an employee of the university but also self-employed in her restaurant, an arrangement that gives her a financial advantage as well as practical and academic skills in her professional career. Leonia's example confirms the value of vocational education, which is increasingly seen across the world as 'training for future training; not as a way to facilitate job entry, but as a way to facilitate vocational-specific skills over a lifetime' (Oketch 2007, 220).

Leonia was very critical of the negative perceptions of vocational education among Ugandans. This negative attitude, she observed, makes it difficult for people to believe that she had emerged with a successful career. She was equally critical of the public discourse that has framed high school as the main education track at the expense of other tracks.

People always think it is A'level, and then you go to the university, and then you are now doing a master's. To me I think we just need to make a mind shift that going straight from primary, senior six, to university is not the only formula to career success. If anything, these [vocational] skills and work [in vocational studies] is the best for Uganda; it is what the country needs.

Leonia's success challenges the differential rating of these pathways. She invites education actors to change their perspective, and to appreciate the vocational pathway. During my study, Leonia was pursuing a master's degree in technical education

sponsored by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education¹¹, another fact that disproves the notion that the vocational pathway is an academic dead end.

In Uganda's education system, the high school education track has been constructed as the main and most prestigious pathway. The women's narratives here show that the professional and vocational education pathways emerged as a result of social, financial, and academic circumstances that constrained the women, forcing them to change direction, away from the high school track. As such, the distribution of the women along the education tracks is circumstantial and not strictly an expression of individual preference for one or another education career path. My findings show that the high school education track is not strictly positive: all three transition points along that track negatively affected the women's education pathway, forcing 13 of the women to branch off into other education tracks. Meanwhile, the transitions in the professional path and the vocational path, although marked with delays, positively influenced the women's education pathway on route to a bachelor's degree. These delays were used productively by the women for employment and for building a new family, which in turn provided financial and social stability for the women as they proceeded along the remaining part of their education pathway.

3.4 Educational Pathway: Bachelor's degree to PhD

After a bachelor's degree, the two major transition points that women had to negotiate was between that and a master's, and between a master's and a PhD. At these points, time played an important role in facilitating but also constraining the women. Time in the context of this study refers to the period available to the women to plan their educational pathways between a bachelor's and master's degree and between a master's degree and a PhD. As Eccles argues, people have limited time to do everything they would like to do. Therefore, they must choose which activities to engage with (Eccles 1994, 598). This choice is context-specific and varies from individual to individual.

Time, as a resource, facilitated but also constrained women's education pathways after their bachelor's degree. As a resource in the life cycle, time was used to gain employment, which in turn provided financial leverage for further educational

¹¹ <http://www.siu.no/eng>

advancement, from salaries and from institutional scholarship support. Time was also used to marry, and to build a family. Marriage then expanded financial and social support, be that from the women's natal family, or their spousal unit, or among members of the spousal household. Time constraints came in the form of institutional demands from work, and family-related demands such as pregnancy and parenting. I am going to focus on time as a defining factor after a bachelor's degree because time was a factor that cut across all these contextual circumstances at both the master's and PhD levels. Below I will illustrate the issue of time, beginning with the transitions from bachelor's to master's degrees, followed by the transition of the women from their master's to their PhD level studies.

Transition from bachelor's to master's degree

The education life history narratives of the women revealed that among the 47 women, 43(91.5%) made the transition to a master's degree. I use master's degree as a general term to refer to all the women who qualified with master of arts and master of sciences (MA). Among these, 41 had already obtained the master's degree, while 2 were MA candidates. The remaining 4 women (2 academics and 2 administrators), although they had not started master's programmes, all looked forward to starting them in the near future. That said, in this section, my analysis will focus on only the 43 women who had obtained a master's degree or who, at the time of this study, are candidates in a master's programme.

The transition from bachelor's to master's degree was marked by various periods of delay. This delay was circumstantial and therefore cannot be strictly attributed to specific generation-related factors or education pathways prior to the women obtaining their bachelor's. (Reference to a generation or an educational path will only be used for comparison purposes and not to generalise the results.) In the narratives, it was possible to pinpoint the time that had lapsed before the women could start their master's. There were women who went on immediately after their bachelor's degree, but the other women postponed their master's degree for varying lengths of time, some of them for years. The details of time variations are presented in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2.: Time variation between bachelor's and master's degrees

Time Delay	Frequency	Percent
None	17	36.2
2-4 years	15	31.9
5-7 years	6	12.8
8-10 years	2	4.3
10-12 years	3	6.4
Time off	4	8.5
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field data 2012

In the narratives, 17 (36.2%) of the women moved into a master's degree immediately after their bachelor's degree, facilitated by scholarships they could not forego. These were related either to the women's field of specialisation or to their excellent academic performance.

One of the women who benefited from a scholarship because of her field of specialisation is Sakira. Her specialisation made it possible to obtain two master's degree scholarships in a row, immediately after her bachelor's degree:

... I went on straight to a master's degree (MA) when I was 22 years old. So at about the age of 24 I finished the first master's degree because it was 2 years and then I waited a bit. Then at the age of 25, I went and did the second masters in Literature. At 26 I was back. So I had two master's degrees at the age of 26 and I think in Ugandan terms that was quite fast.

Sakira's academic specialisation offered her a competitive advantage with respect to accessing scholarships because English language and literature has very few graduates in Ugandan universities. Additionally, Sakira's young age also worked to her advantage. (She was far below 35, the age at which universities and organisations especially in Western world normally limit access to postgraduate scholarships.) These factors combined to grant her possibilities for accessing two scholarships from different universities in the United Kingdom.

Merit scholarships were one factor propelling women to a master's degree on the heels of receiving their bachelor's. One of these women, Asema, from the professional education track, belonged to the older generation of women. Asema won a scholarship from the office of the Vice Chancellor at the university where she completed her bachelor's degree. In Ugandan universities, students who have first-class academic performance are normally registered on 'the Vice Chancellor's List'. This list recognises

and confers academic honour and awards onto the students. Asema recalls that the Vice Chancellor invited her and told her '*... we are going to give you a sponsorship, I hope you will maintain this good BA performance at MA ...*' Winning a master's degree scholarship was a prime opportunity for Asema. At that time she was faced with a challenge of having to choose between competing values: her education career and her responsibility as a wife and mother. Coming from a professional track, Asema already had a young family when she joined a full-time bachelor's degree programme. She was not sure if her spouse would agree to take care of the family for two more years while she pursued her master's. Although the scholarship was available, Asema was not ready to take a decision independent of her spouse. That institutional support from the Vice Chancellor helped Asema to make a decision; the Vice Chancellor told her:

You have been here for three years. What your husband has gone through running the family, the children in your absence, is admirable. But if you stop and go back home, your husband will not release you again for studies. So, apply and continue with a master's.

This institutional support was needed to boost Asema's confidence in utilising the opportunity to take on a master's degree. As Eccles (1994, 600) suggests, gender role socialisations could lead women and men to have different hierarchies of core personal values. She argues that girls more than boys are expected to place greater value on the importance of making career sacrifices for one's family. Asema's story describes her using family time for her bachelor's degree while her spouse 'temporarily stood in' to take care of the family. It is indeed likely that she could have lost more time had she returned home after her bachelor's. The Vice Chancellor's suggestion that Asema should proceed straight away to a master's degree program boosted her ambition. Institutional support through the university scholarship also gave Asema the impetus to plunge forward and achieve her educational career goals.

Among those women who proceeded immediately to a master's degree were some from a professional pathway. These women had already had taken time off for employment prior to their bachelor's. The time delay for employment meant that these women were much older than those from the high school pathway. Thus, many of the women from the professional education pathway tried to proceed to a master's immediately after their bachelor's degree. This realisation was articulated by Seema, who said that: '*because of my age, I was then already 41, I decided that I should do the*

master's right away, because it will get me more opportunity to get jobs. So I applied to do a master's at Leeds Metropolitan University in the UK. The time that Seema took off for employment after her diploma in nursing offered her a financial advantage when it came time to do her master's. To sustain this financial source, Seema registered for a work-study programme that meant she could continue to work and earn a salary as she studied. Age would have been a constraint for her had she relied on external sponsorship, which normally limits scholarship beneficiaries to age 35. In this case, the time delay in Seema's professional career proved auspicious in terms of gaining employment experience but also in the ability to finance her studies. Ultimately, this helped accelerate the speed of her pathway from a bachelor's to a master's.

There were 26 (55.4%) women from across the three education pathways who delayed taking their master's directly after their bachelor's. This category of women took various amounts of time off to build their professional career by seeking employment and by establishing and building families. For instance, 15 (36.2%) of the women delayed starting a master's degree between 2 and 4 years while 6 (12.8%) of them waited between 5 to 7 years; 2 (4.3%) other women waited between 8 to 10 years and another 3(6.4%) waited between 10 to 12 years before registering for her master's. Meanwhile, 4 (8.5%) of the women in the study had yet to start their master's degree because they had just secured employment in the university; two of these were teaching assistants and 2 were assistant administrators.

According to the leaky pipeline analogy, the four women who had not started their master's degrees would be described as having 'leaked out' during the transition between a bachelor's and master's. In light of the pathways, delays along a given education pathway does not necessarily lead to dropping out of the education system. In the case of the women in my study, delay along a pathway was strategic in terms of mobilising financial resources through employment and social resources through marriage. From the perspective of the pathways, individual circumstances that led to time delay along the women's educational path show that delays at transitions points do not necessarily affect women's education career negatively. These delays serve as periods in which the women strategically mobilised financial, social, and academic resources to get them to the next level of education; that course of action eventually led to their advancement in both their professional and higher education career.

Delays after bachelor's degrees that were used productively included time used to get employment and to start professional careers in various organisations, including the university. Meanwhile women from professional and vocational tracks used the time after their bachelor's degree to consolidate their professional career through promotion and incremental increase of their salaries. Although searching for work after a bachelor's degree is common among fresh graduates, for women in Uganda, employment improves women's socio-economic status and makes them less dependent on men (fathers and spouses). Details of these contextual factors are discussed in the next two chapters. What I can mention at this point is that employment gave women control over their education pathway between a bachelor's and a master's. Employment after the first degree offered women financial assurance, as Adikini, a gender officer, articulated:

As a Data Entrant in the Registry Department, I was earning 200,000 Ugandan shillings [60 euros] per month, but it was good for the beginning [amused]. It was good because by then I had a family already with one child. So I needed that money for myself [sigh of relief].

Women's savings from their salaries not only financed their education but also helped them fulfil their financial obligations to their natal families. The salary was a financial lifeline. As Bianca articulated: *'because that was my source of income as I was paying for myself. I had a series of sisters I was paying school fees for'*. A stable source of income was crucial for the women to meet family obligations that otherwise would have constrained their education pathways.

Employment was a very important financial source, and women who lost their job or were removed from the payroll by employers felt serious financial constraint. An example is Bianca, a deputy director in one of the units.

When the head teacher deleted me from the payroll 2 months into my master's studies ... now I did not have the money. I was off the payroll. Meanwhile, my master's research proposal was complete but it couldn't be passed by the graduate board because I hadn't paid fees. Now I was struggling to get my name back on the payroll. So you can see.

'Deleting' Bianca from the payroll cut her off from the very financial lifeline that fed her educational career after her bachelor's. That source not only paid for her educational expenses but also financed household costs regarding the children and housekeeping. Although the consequence of being removed from the payroll was devastating for

Bianca, her work experience helped her to build skills, networks, friends, and academic mentors she could fall back on and confide in.

I spoke to one of the lecturers here, those Commonwealth experts. I told her, this is my situation. The home environment is this; the work place is this. I have got study leave but now I don't have money. I do not want to start teaching in another place because I really want to finish my master's. So she told me okay, you can volunteer here, because we have a challenge with the current librarian. She has to pick [up] her kids from school at midday. She only comes back when it is coming to 4pm. So if you could sit there and stand in for her. If there is any project, we can put you on and you earn some little money. So I said okay. So that is how I started getting money again.

A critical issue in Bianca's financial struggle was her determination not to succumb to the mistreatment of the headteacher who removed her from the payroll. Bianca overcame her financial constraints by mobilising financial support from her social network. Investment in social networks is an important characteristic among women with a successful education career. Interpersonal relationships and networks provide the necessary social safety net for women in the form of job opportunities, which are in turn crucial for the education track to a master's.

Women as employees benefited from staff development programmes in their respective institutions in two ways. Firstly, employment institutions allowed women to easily access scholarships from funding organisations. This was the case with women who started their professional careers in universities. For instance, Niabu narrated that after working for one year as a teaching assistant at a university, *'my head of department gave me the forms for the Commonwealth Scholarship'* which specifically targeted junior academic staff in public universities. Niabu won the scholarship and obtained a study leave to take her master's in the United Kingdom. Secondly, staff development programmes entitled women to take a study leave with pay, which they then utilised to pursue a master's. This was the case with Gukanu, who says that by the time she enrolled for a master's, she was entitled to *'study-leave with pay'* as a secondary school teacher under the Ministry of Education and Sports. Leave with pay means that an employee continues to receive salary while on study leave. As Gukanu intimated, it was up to her to decide how to receive her money: *'It will be there- the salary- every month. So I received my money through the school, and I was studying here [Makerere University]'*. Similarly, with Bianca: *'[I] had got a study leave from the Ministry of Education ... So [I]*

had all the time to study for my master's degree'. In these cases, the women could afford to go for full-time master's degree courses at university because of the financial support from their employment institutions.

The flexibility of the master's programmes in Ugandan universities gave the women more incentives to study for and complete that degree. This was particularly the case for women who could not take full-time study leave from work. The women had an option to take a work-study master's programme on a part-time (evening or weekend) basis. This arrangement necessitated planning for a work-study schedule in collaboration with employers and colleagues. The case of Nulla, who followed a work-study master's programme, is informative of how women negotiated their time at work. Nulla first secured her admission for a master's course.

...what I did, I liaised with the timetable master, and he gave me 8 to 10 a.m. to teach. So I would wake up in the morning: 8 to 10 a.m. I am teaching. After 10 a.m., I prepare something to eat from home ... I would go and jump in a taxi to Kampala, continue to Makerere. If I am in time, I look for something else to eat, go for lessons. At 6 p.m., I sent back for the taxi, back to Jinja. So that is how I did my master's...

What worked in Nulla's favour is the flexibility of the master's programme, which helped her to retain her job and to study without antagonising the headteacher, who was against staff development. Nulla's interpersonal skills especially helped to negotiate her teaching schedule with colleagues who could stand in for her without drawing the attention of education officials from the district and the Ministry of Education. Interpersonal skills were crucial in situations where institutions were not supportive.

The work-study programme offered women advantages as well. It helped women who were on contractual employment, to keep and protect their jobs. For instance, Adikini, when she got a job contract as a Data Entrant in the registrar's department, '*also applied for master's degree in gender studies. So that job position helped me. I was working there [pointing to registry], doing gender there [pointing to school of gender and women studies]*' in a part-time evening programme. She managed to retain her job until she secured a permanent position as a gender officer at the university. In addition, work-study programmes reduced scholastic costs for the women because they could easily access educational facilities at their places of work. Adikini narrated:

... for my master's, I had the facilities for doing my research, getting information and, of course, for typing coursework because I was seated right in the computer

lab where we used to enter the data, with free internet. And so that is how I enrolled and completed gender studies in 2008.

Access to free educational facilities significantly reduced financial costs, one of the major hurdles along the women's educational pathways. Furthermore, the work-study programme was significant for the women because they gained experience in educational and professional careers concurrently. The education career sharpened their job skills while job experience informed their choice of which educational pathways to follow. In other words, the two trajectories reinforced each other and helped women become experts in their fields. Employment meant financial leverage. This is evidenced by the fact that 26 (60.5%) out of the 43 women were able to finance and complete their master's degree studies within Uganda, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3.: Location of completion of master's degree

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Uganda	26	60.5
Europe	11	25.6
USA	3	6.9
Canada	2	4.7
Africa	1	2.3
Total master's	43	100

Source: Field Data 2012

This table reveals that 26 (60.5%) of the 43 women who hold master's degrees completed their study in Uganda. That completion rate was facilitated by the women's employment and by the need to establish their young families. The remaining 17 (39.5%) women completed their master's in other universities in Africa, Europe, the USA, or Canada.

The social obligation for marriage

The narratives revealed that, besides employment, women took time off after their bachelor's degree to marry. Marriage was not just about the need to get a partner but the pressure to fulfil the social expectation to have children. Abasili (2011, 555) explains that marriage and procreation in Africa are intertwined and inseparable. She argues that it is always presumed that readiness to get married is also readiness for procreation. Therefore, women and men see marriage as an opportunity to contribute, through reproduction, to the survival of the lineage and society at large. In this context, Abasili concluded that both the societal perception of marriage and sexuality in marriage is

primarily geared towards creating offspring. With respect to my study, the social pressure to marry affected both the older generation of women who had survived early marriage, and the younger generation for whom staying in school was one way of delaying marriage. Although the process of getting married differed, the underlying pressure remained the same. The difference for the older generation was that marriage was largely arranged by natal families, while the younger generation was free from such arrangements.

Marriage in Africa is an obligation into which both men and women are socialised. However, for women, marriage enables them to negotiate their social status as wives, mothers, and senior women in society. Marriage is associated with the obligation to bear children. Pregnancies of married women are perceived with more joy and respect than pregnancies of unmarried women (Johnson-Hanks 2006, 244-247). Marriage in Uganda is obligatory for men as well because it is considered an element of adult masculinity. As such unmarried men are socially ridiculed, suspected of sorcery and theft, and sometimes subjected to violence (Johnson-Hanks 2006, 29). Therefore, both men and women establish their social identity through marriage. However, for women, the social responsibility of continuity of the family lineage and society depends on the ability to bear children. The issue of child bearing increases the pressure for women to wed because, unlike men, women are said to have a potentially pre-determined child-bearing phase in their natural life cycle. Because of this biological pressure, women prefer to marry and bear children in their 20s and then take on their educational track.

Another face of the socio-cultural pressure in the Ugandan context is that as women get higher within education, men begin to shun and fear taking them as marital partners. This fear arises from the socio-cultural framing of power in marital relationships, in which men are expected to dominate women and treat them as subordinates. Education and eventually employment provide women with the key to both personal empowerment and more egalitarian relationships with men (Tichenor 2005, 191). This level of empowerment becomes problematic for women who desire to enter into married life. Women thus prefer to marry immediately after their first diploma or degree qualification, before continuing with their education. These findings from the literature were consistent with the findings in the interviews.

Marriage introduced its own dynamics along the pathways of these women. Gukanu stated that marriage caused a 10-year delay along her education pathway to master's degree. She completed her bachelor's degree in 1976 following the high school track, but she could only proceed to a master's degree in 1985. Marriage introduced the spousal factor that Gukanu had to deal with after her bachelor's degree, because as she said: *'you know that even husbands have a hand [taps on the table]? Once you get married [deep sigh], they have a hand in your decisions'* to study. This position was also emphasised by Bevra, who revealed that she missed an opportunity to take a master's degree and a PhD offer from the University of Dar-es-Salaam after her bachelor's degree, *'because that's the time I got married ... So I had to make a choice to take up master's and PhD, and then come back and lecture at Dar-es- Salaam'*, or to build her young family. She recalls that her partner had to be part of this choice and *'we agreed that I would study later. So I studied at a later age'*. Bevra's decision reveals a hierarchy of value options from which she had to negotiate her position as a wife and as a student. Her decision to take care of her family is not so much an issue of seeking what was personally satisfying, as Eccles (1994) stated, but about social demands of the family. Bevra considers the break she made after her bachelor's degree productive: *'I have achieved both; I have a family at the same time I have my master's'*. Her contentment lies in how she fulfilled both socio-cultural demands and her dream of becoming a university lecturer.

Overall, the women viewed the time they took off after their bachelor's degree as a resource that positively influenced their educational pathways. Most importantly, they appreciated the role of employment as their source of income, and marriage as their source of social support. At the same time, the women also acknowledge the challenges of work-study programmes in situations where there is a lack of support from employers and, in some cases, spouses as well. The women recognised delays along their education pathways due to the spousal factor and to motherhood. Although time was a resource at the master's degree level, at the PhD level, time became the major source of constraint. In the next section I will focus on the issue of time along the PhD pathways.

Transition from master's to PhD

The transition from a master's degree to PhD was completely scholarship-driven, and finances and time were the major constraints along the pathway. Both locally and internationally, a PhD was too expensive to be financed by a salary earned from

employment. This dependency on scholarships made the transition from a master's degree to a PhD programme problematic, and the time constraint manifested itself in several ways. First, searching for a scholarship was difficult and time-consuming because funding sources were not readily available. Secondly, funding organisations have stringent policies on age limits regardless of the contextual circumstances of a prospective candidate. This further reduced scholarship chances as the women became older. Thirdly, for women, the decision to take or not to take their PhD depended not only on their choices and personal resources but also on institutional support from the universities where they worked. In most cases, universities were required by international funding organisations to recommend or nominate a candidate for funding. The gender-biased nature of university culture made it unlikely that women would be nominated for a scholarship. Fourthly, the decision to utilise the opportunity for a PhD also depended on agreement from the spouses of women who were married. As such, out of the 41 women who had already obtained a master's degree by the time of the research, only 18 (43.9%) held PhDs; 4 (9.8%) were PhD candidates in various international universities, while 19 (46.3%) had not yet started their PhD. The details of the PhD status of the women in my study are shown in Table 3.4. below:

Table 3.4.: PhD Status of the women

PhD Status	Frequency	Percent
PhD	18	43.9
PhD Candidate	4	9.8
None	19	46.3
Total	41	100.0

Source: Field data 2012

All 18 of the women who held a PhD as well as the 4 PhD candidates were currently working in academia. The remaining 19 women without a PhD included 4 administrative and 13 academic staff with master's degrees. The 4 women (2 academics and 2 administrators) who had not started a master's programme are excluded from the above table. My analysis in this section will be limited to the 18 female academics who hold PhDs and the 4 who were PhD candidates at the time of my research.

Better prospects for career advancement was the major motivation behind the decision to earn a PhD. The findings reveal that, while a PhD was a prerequisite for advancing in an academic career, it was not required for advancement in a professional

administrative career. This differential explains why women in academia were more enthusiastic about a PhD than women in administration. Professor Sylvia argued that:

If you have chosen an academic career, it goes without saying that you have to, do your master's, to do your PhD. I always wonder why people who are not in academia decide to do a PhD, because it is such torture. You don't really need it.

Female academics who had not obtained a PhD looked forward to getting one in the near future. Undertaking a PhD was perceived as necessary for professional advancement to senior academic positions. Women in administration, on the other hand, indicated that it was experience, much more than a PhD, that was required for professional advancement to senior administrative positions. Not surprisingly, then, none of the women in administration had a PhD or were planning to get one. The major aim of career development for women in administration was focused more on improved financial, rather than academic, status. Adikini, a senior administrator, explained:

I am not in a hurry to do a PhD, because for me now it is about making money for my family. If I can make it with my master's, then better... For me, I feel I have been in school, I have been for my master's, and so shouldn't I also build my working experience? This is another thing, to build my working experience.

In administration, a master's degree with associated years of experience is enough for advancement into senior administrative positions. Developing a professional career by obtaining a PhD is normally linked with rewards such as promotion, increments in salary, and access to research funds, all factors typically associated with academic rather than administrative positions. Low motivation among administrative staff to pursue a PhD has been attributed to structural challenges. For instance, a male deputy registrar I interviewed as a key respondent explained that in his university, women who are the majority *'in administration already have masters. Now there is a problem of promotion, because there is a clogging ... It is clogging the system.'* He explained that, unlike in academia, there are few high-level administrative positions, and cited the position of deputy registrar as the highest level an administrator can attain: *'the next level is the academic registrar ... which is only one position. So even if you have very good ambition, you are limited by the number of places'* available at high-level administration. This 'system clogging' means that female administrators who have high academic qualifications are trapped in lower administrative positions for which they are overqualified. As a result, administrative staff such as Adikini are less motivated to

pursue a PhD; indeed, none of the administrative staff who participated in this study. It only makes sense that certain individuals undertook academics they enjoyed and which then helped them to obtain an immediate or long-term reward (Eccles 1994, 596), but my findings show that by and large the reasons women chose to undertake a PhD were more contextual, that is, to meet professional demands, rather than because of individual career path preference.

PhD pathway

Scholarship from international funding organisations and universities played a crucial role in propelling the 18 PhD holders and 4 PhD candidates into their doctoral studies. As a result of international funds, most of the women registered to pursue PhD programmes in universities abroad, mainly in Europe, the US, and Canada. The distribution of the women according to the location where they undertook their PhD is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: PhD country

Location of PhD	PhDs	PhD Candidates	Total	Percentage
Uganda	2	1	3	13.6
Africa	2	1	3	13.6
Europe	7	1	8	36.4
USA	5	-	5	22.7
Canada	2	1	3	13.6
Total	18	4	22	100

Source: Field data 2012

In comparison to their master’s degree, evidence from the narratives show that the majority of the women studied their PhD in universities abroad, especially in Europe (36.4%) and the USA (22.7%). What is important to note is that even the three (13.6%) women who completed their PhD studies in Uganda did so on the merit of international cooperation between their universities and funding organisations outside Uganda. There were several factors that influenced the women’s access to PhD scholarships across the globe.

Institutional support and networking

One of the most important forms of support for women along their PhD pathways was from the university in which they worked. University support was a requirement by funding organisations from the global north as a condition for cooperation with the

global south. University support for women came in two forms, namely: nominations for funding and affirmative action.

Heads of departments and university administration played a crucial role in facilitating women's access to international funding by nomination. This was particularly so in the case of Niabu, who got a chance to pursue her PhD under the Commonwealth Scholarship (CWS). The Commonwealth Scholarship, which is not gender specific, but rather based on academic qualifications, is normally accessed through nomination by universities; the final selection is carried out in the Commonwealth headquarters in the United Kingdom. From Niabu: *'my head of department nominated me. I filled in the forms, and the university administration seconded me and submitted my application to the Commonwealth. So I ended up doing this stressful PhD'*. This nomination was the result of the university's recognition of both Niabu's academic capacity and her commitment as an academic staff member worth investing in. Niabu completed her PhD in the United Kingdom, and while this study was being carried out she was promoted to the position of senior lecturer.

In some cases, international funding organisations were gender-specific in financing staff development in Ugandan universities. Affirmative action in favour of women by funding organisations includes certain conditions, for example, 50% of the candidates nominated for PhD programme entry must be women. This funding condition opened up a PhD opportunity for Gukanu: *'there were some scholarships in the school of education. The funders, through affirmative action, offered one place for a woman to do a full-time PhD at a university in Canada'*. The advantage with affirmative action was that it limited the competition for the PhD position to women who were qualified. Gukanu recalled that her chance to take a PhD increased when *'the woman who was given that opportunity said she cannot leave Uganda ... she was not even married but she refused. But for me I accepted and decided to do my PhD in Canada, University of Alberta'*. Affirmative action then in and of itself may not be sufficient to propel women into a PhD. The ability of an individual to utilise an opportunity depends on other factors that either support or constrain women's benefitting from an offer. The reality of the situation underscores the fact that women's agency along the educational career path can be constrained by academic and socio-cultural structures.

In some cases, women used their professional networks to negotiate opportunities for a PhD. This was the case for both Nyepe and Timera, who lobbied for and succeeded in securing an extension of their master's degree scholarships. Nyepe was admitted to a master's degree programme at the University of British Columbia with the possibility of continuing on, for a PhD. Given her excellent academic performance and the support of the head of department, she secured an extension of her scholarship to obtain her PhD as well. As a result, for Nyepe: *'for me, the PhD was fast. I went for the master's in 2003 and just joined for the PhD the following year'*. Timera succeeded in negotiating an extension of her master's scholarship with the funding organization. She stated that *'when I was doing my master's, I was able to get a scholarship from the Association of American University Woman (AAUW)¹². I completed my master's and then started my PhD straight away'* on the same scholarship. Obtaining a PhD for the two women not only led to higher academic qualifications but also to promotion to senior academic positions. Nyepe was promoted to the position of a senior lecturer and also associate dean in a faculty. Similarly, Timera was promoted to senior lecturer and was appointed faculty dean. An added advantage for Nyepe and Timera was that both followed the high school education track and did not lose much time along their education track to a PhD. Analysis of promotions is elaborated in chapter six.

Besides institutional support, women professionally networked with their former professors to gain access to PhD opportunities. This network was necessary, as the case of Annetta shows; women on professional pathways often want to do a PhD after 35 years of age, which is the age limit often set by funding organisations as a criteria for selecting PhDs candidates. In other words, the chance of getting a PhD scholarship decreased as the women aged past 35. This explains why Annetta acknowledged that a PhD on full-time basis *'was an opportunity that many female academics have missed'* because of the age limit. However, in Annetta's case, the support of her former professor played an important role in helping her obtain a concession for a scholarship, to pursue her PhD:

Fortunately, this lady [promoter-to-be] knew my old teachers, she kind of did her homework asking about me in my former university, and I had been a good student so I had good recommendations ... So for me that was a breakthrough.

¹² <http://www.aauw.org>.

With the help of her former professor, Annetta managed to access a PhD position at a university in Norway. By the time of the research, she had just returned from her studies abroad. Annetta’s story makes it clear that, besides the official selection process, there is also a background check; not surprisingly, the funding organisations want assurance that the money they invest in a student will be put to good use. As a consequence, women who do not have such networks as Annetta may not easily be selected for scholarships from funding organisations, especially once they turn 35. All these social and economic conditions explain why most women in my study spent a great deal of time looking for a PhD scholarship. A summary of the amount of time the women waited before starting a PhD is given in Table 3.6:

Table 3.6.: Time the women took to start their PhD

Time taken	PhD	PhD Candidate	Frequency	Percentage
Immediately	5	0	5	22.7
2-4 years	6	1	7	31.8
5-7 years	5	3	8	36.4
16 and above	2	0	2	9.1
Total	18	4	22	100

Source: Field data 2012

The table shows that 5 (22.7%) women proceeded to their PhD immediately after their master’s degree. Meanwhile 7 (31.8%) women started their PhD between 2 to 4 years after the master’s degree; 8 (36.4%) women waited between 5 to 7 years; and 2 (9.1%) women could only start their PhD 16 years or more after their master’s degree.

Women from the high school track had an advantage over women who came from the professional track because they gained time between primary school and their bachelor’s degree. As a result, most arrived on their PhD track before the age of 35, as was the case with Sakira.

... [I was] almost clocking 30 years, I was going for PhD. By 33 I was back with a PhD, which in our terms [was early]. Although younger people are going and qualifying even now, the earliest PhD would on average be between 35 and 40 years of age. [So my case] is quite exceptional.

Sakira experienced no time constraints because she went from the high school track directly to her master’s degree. This gave her a rare advantage compared to other women who went via the professional education track and had delays after their diploma qualifications as they entered their professional career. They then arrived at

their PhD well after the age of 35. By the time they undertook their PhD studies, all of the women were already working in the university as academics. These various delays also reflect different financial and social constraints that the women had to deal with along their pathway to secure a PhD.

Constraints along PhD path

The major constraints confronting women along their PhD path was not only the financial cost but also the age restriction policy of the international funding organisations. This policy discriminated against women who were 35 and older, and caused additional delays that made it more difficult for aging women to access financial assistance. The experience of Cirila, who followed the professional education track, captures the uncertainty of pursuing a PhD, given these constraints.

I found it a problem when I wanted to do a PhD. I wrote proposals after proposal. The proposal was passed but I had no scholarship. My first proposal was passed in 2005, I got admission for a PhD, at the University of Leeds. There was no scholarship ... but I never gave up ... I continued to look for scholarship as an individual. I really struggled ... I wrote about 10 letters to different organisations. I got so many addresses. I wrote letters ... in every letter, I would attach my admission... I don't know which country doesn't have my admission letters, CVs and the rest. No, I really wrote: to Australia, the US, Europe, etc. Nothing was coming up. I have some regrets. About 3 others did not even respond. It was painful because I was like an island! Eventually it happened in 2006 - yes 2006. So the search was two years.

The challenge, searching for a scholarship, was due to a lack of local resources capable of financing the PhD. The salaries from employment, while sufficient for a master's degree, were insufficient for a PhD. The only alternative was for the women to rely on funding organisations for scholarships. Cirila relates her experience: *'the Austrian Exchange Service had even written to me that: "your proposal is good but you are above age. You have passed the age limit"...*'. The major challenge of the scholarship policy is that it appears to use age as a parameter for intellectual ability rather than the student's academic record. This approach is problematic because it discriminates against women who start primary school at a later age and against those who suffer delays as they follow professional and vocational education tracks.

What is interesting to note is that, for the sake of her education career, Cirila was ready to challenge this policy. She did not abandon her educational path as defined by the funding organisations without challenging the policy that discriminated against her.

The strategy adopted was to challenge the age limit policy as a condition for awarding the scholarship. Cirila narrates that:

I wrote back to them [Austria] that 'I know I have passed the age limit. But in Uganda it is not so easy to get a scholarship. First of all, we don't have our own money; I mean to study before the age of 35. We study, we work before we complete studies and the rest'. So I gave them my points: reasons why I had not done a PhD by 40. 'It is not because I didn't want to, it is not because I am stupid, but the conditions do not allow it'. So I wrote back, then they wrote back saying 'ok, you are successful'... whatever. And they gave me the scholarship.

Time for Cirila was not only a constraint in the search for a scholarship but also to do the groundwork needed for her PhD while challenging the age-limit policy. Her issue was not that there is a policy but that the policy was 'double-blind'. It did not consider a woman's contextual circumstances such as family responsibilities (e.g., bringing up children) that weigh unduly on women. These social responsibilities lead to delays along the educational pathways. In addition, the age policy was context-blind; it did not take into account that the age to start education in Africa varied from child to child. The age policy is based on the Western context in which a child starts school at a prescribed legal age. However, this is not the case in Africa, where the age of starting primary school can vary from between 6 to 12, or beyond. The policy does not take into account that economic and social constraints cause delays in women's educational pathways. Challenging an established institutional policy on scholarship shows the determination with which the women aggressively confronted the institutional status quo, even from a different continent.

Additionally, family responsibilities prevented women from taking PhD opportunities outside Uganda. These constraints are a product of gender role socialisation such as childcare and domestic chores that affect women's education choices. For Gukanu, an associate professor, her childcare role held her back for ten years before she could start her PhD. Gukanu narrates that: '*I was asking my husband, I want to do a PhD. He said, [deep sigh] "You cannot go away; you have these children, who will look after them?"...*' The issue of gender role socialisation assigns the care of children to women, and this in turn limits women's possibilities to be away from home for a long period of time, especially when the children are still young. Women more than men are expected to make sacrifices regarding their educational and professional careers, for the family. This social challenge makes it preferable for women to take their PhD abroad

than in home universities so they can concentrate fully on their studies without the constant interference of daily family obligations. This situation also explains why institutional support in the form of scholarships also determined when women could take their PhD. It was easier for women on the high school track rather than those from professional pathways to access PhD funding from international funding organisations. The distribution of PhD possibilities for women from different pathways is shown in Table 3.7:

Table 3.7: Education track and attainment of PhD

Education Track	PhD	PhD Candidate	Total
High School	15	1	16
Professional	3	3	6
Vocational	0	0	0
Total	18	4	22

Source: Field data 2012

The findings reveal that 15 (42.9%) of the 18 women who hold PhDs were from the high school education track and 3 (27.3%) were from the professional track. The woman who followed the vocational track has not started her PhD because she was still in the last year of completing her master’s degree. As an academic, she hoped to obtain a PhD, as it is a requirement for her to advance in senior academic positions. These figures also reveal that women experienced more delays between their master’s and PhD than at any other time during their education pathway. The delay was experienced more by women who followed the professional pathway than by those from the high school track.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the women’s education pathway within the existing education tracks in Uganda’s education system. The education pathway is conceptualised in the chapter as an educational journey which involves constant negotiation and compromise, often with uncertain outcomes (Cornwall and Edwards 2010, 2). Education tracks, on the other hand, are institutionally established frameworks, available to every student. This arrangement implies that education pathways are constructed as a student moves along the existing education tracks. As such, education tracks are constant, while pathways can vary depending on the direction and the speed at which a student moves.

This chapter tackled the first specific research question on the nature of the education pathways of the 47 female academics and administrators who participated in

this study. The purpose of the question was to show how the women navigated through the education system in Uganda. I answered this question by mapping out the education path of individual women as they moved within the existing education tracks, from primary school to the last degree obtained from university. I mapped the education pathway based on the women's personal narratives regarding how they moved from primary school to the university.

The findings show that the three existing education tracks, namely: the high school, the professional and vocational education tracks, created space for the women to navigate through Uganda's education system. The different education tracks also acted as a safety net against the risk of dropping out of the education system, because the women could manoeuvre around barriers in one education track by navigating into another track. The education tracks enabled women to construct their education pathways by following the most viable pathway with the least risk of dropping out of the education system. Navigating between the different existing education tracks made the women's education pathway emerge as diverse, varied, non-linear, and marked with delays especially between primary school and university.

The diversity of the women's education pathway between primary school and a bachelor's degree is caused by constraints at two transition points along the high school education track: lower secondary to upper secondary, and upper secondary to bachelor's degree. At these transition points there are school and national examinations, both of which are formal promotion criteria for students to advance from one level of education to the next. Depending on student performance at the transition points, a student is forced either to continue on the same track, change directions to another track, delay, or drop out of the education system altogether. Academically, women who did not score enough points to proceed to the next level along the high school track changed direction, to professional and vocational tracks. As a result, 34 women followed in a linear direction along the high school education track. They maintained speed and moved faster to a bachelor's degree at university without losing time. However, 13 of the women were obliged to change direction as a strategy against dropping out of school. Twelve of these women changed direction towards the professional education track and one (1) turned to the vocational education track. Consequently, women who changed direction constructed non-linear education pathways.

In the process of finding new directions, women were delayed or slowed down in their education pathway. The professional track had a shorter delay because it had only one transition point between diploma and bachelor's degree. Longer delays were along the vocational track because it has three transition points. What made the women with non-linear education pathways succeed is that delay periods were used productively to furnish the women's education pathway. The findings also show that delays at transition points did not necessarily have a negative effect. In the professional and vocational education pathways, the women utilised delays to complete the probation phase of employment and for industrial training, which consolidated their work experience. It was also during the delay period that the women generated money to finance the remaining part of their education.

However, it should be stressed that change of direction at the transition points was not sparked only by academic challenges but also by financial and social constraints. This was evident especially in the inability of some parents to meet the increasing cost of subsequent levels of education along the high school track. There were also family-related and social circumstances of being 'shadow mothers' and first-born among siblings that obliged women to change direction in the pathways, to create room for siblings to obtain basic education as well. Although majority of the women followed a straight pathway through the high school education track to the university, they still had to negotiate for financial and social support to sustain that pathway. The women also negotiated subject combinations for specialisation along the high school track. The subjects selected were not necessarily academic disciplines the women wanted to specialise in but the only viable option to keep the women on the high school track.

The education pathways were also varied in terms of the academic values attached to the varying pathways. The high school education track was the most valued and appreciated, framed as theoretically engaging and only for intellectually astute students. Meanwhile, the professional education track was appreciated for its practical professional skills but not valued for intellectual engagement. The professional education track was thought to be appropriate for students who cannot measure up to the academic rigour of the high school education pathway. The vocational education track was the least valued and appreciated primarily in terms of technical skill training. As such, just like other students, most of the women struggled to stay in the high school

education pathway; a few followed the professional path; only one entered the vocational education pathway. What is interesting is that, in spite of the variation in value, all the women successfully completed their education, and by the beginning of this research in 2012, they were all employed across academic and senior administrative positions at Ugandan universities. What this shows is that the values associated with each education tracks are more myth than reality. Regardless of the education track the women chose, each allowed the women to achieve their education career.

The pathways do show specific characteristics. The women responded creatively to academic and financial setbacks at transitions points, especially along the high school education track. When the women failed to score enough points, or lacked financial support for direct admission to the next level along the high school track, they moved into an available education pathway and changed career direction. Similarly, the women were resourceful and competed for scholarship opportunities within and outside Uganda to overcome financial constraints at transition points. This option made their pathways more diverse, with a touch of national and international education. The pathways show the women's flexibility, their ability to adjust and to scout for chances for new educational opportunities whenever academic, financial, or social setbacks at various transitions points appeared on their education tracks. The women remained open and strategic as they changed education career direction and sped into education pathways they had not initially planned to take. At the same time, the women patiently dealt with delays caused by social and financial setbacks without losing focus on their education career ambition.

The women in my study invested a lot in social networks, which in turn provided a safety net against financial shock and constraints. The women's success can also be attributed to their determination to challenge the institutional status quo, especially against the age limit set out by funding organisations. The women also showed resilience, fighting age-based discrimination in funding organisations located primarily in Western countries, far from their home turf in Uganda. Secondly, the difficulty of accessing the internet for quick communication because of poor electricity infrastructure did not stop the women from fighting for their right to education with funding organisations.

The findings, from the perspective of the pathway, agree with Eccles' (1994) assumption that individuals are often faced with achievement-related choices, which are made within a context of social reality. However, my findings disagree with Eccles' point that social realities present each individual with a variety of choices. The analysis shows that at transition points the social realities were indeed complex but the option, to choose an education pathway, was limited. Taking a specific education pathway was a strategic move around complex contextual circumstances at every transition point at each level of education. The path women took was not simply a matter of personal discretion but of necessity; the women chose the pathway that was available and financially viable. As such, their pathways as a whole reveal education trajectories that are twisted, marked by delay at transition points along the existing education tracks.

Unlike the leaky pipeline, the pathway concept contributes to the view that navigating away from an education track does not lead to 'leaking out' but to a 'leak within' situation. A leak within the pathways enables us to keep the women in sight and to make them visible as they navigate along the education tracks. The findings acknowledge that there are cases of individuals who actually leave the education system completely. From the perspective of pathways, this study suggests that individuals who exit from an education track may take alternative formal or informal training that leads them to higher education in tertiary institutions and universities. Hence, women and indeed students who exit from the main high school education tracks are not necessarily school drop-outs. Rather, the pathway perspective allows for alternative ways of looking at women's education careers, and suggests that, as we deal with challenges to women's access to education, we should not lose sight of women who find alternative pathways to education especially between primary school and a bachelor's degree. In other words, when we ask the common question 'why has an individual left school?' we should consider the pathways perspective's question: 'which direction did the individual go?' This question is an invitation to trace the pathways of individuals, rather than to make assumptions.

Taking on Eccles' (1994) central notion of choice, the findings in this chapter reveal that the specific linear or twisted education pathways were not necessarily shaped by intellectual genius, availability of options, personal choice, or the women's individual agency. The pathways are about how women encountered and reacted to

educational opportunities and constraints to plural contextual and influential factors in the family, the school, and spousal domains. The transition from one level of education to another, or changing the direction of an education pathway, can be attributed to these contextual circumstances, rather than necessarily to academic excellence.

The concept of pathways employed in this study makes a contribution to the leaky pipeline debate of Shaw and Stanton (2012) in three ways. Firstly, using the concept of the pathways, this study has shown that in Uganda, the leaky pipeline conditions exist beyond undergraduate levels of education and professional tenure tracks, as portrayed by Show and Stanton. In the case of Uganda, the leaky conditions in the education pipeline begin right at primary school and exist throughout the education cycle. This situation explains why students keep dropping out of the school system at every transition point along the existing education tracks. The findings confirmed Kwesiga's (2002) fear that in Uganda attending school will not guarantee a child's completion of the formal education cycle.

Secondly, this study has shown that in some cases, entry to the education pipeline is closed to women for social and economic reasons. The implication is that formal education is still denied to girls. In relation to the women in my study, it took the initiative and good will of parents, relatives, and some community members to enrol and sustain the girls in school. As such, this study has shown that education is not a right that every child in Uganda enjoys automatically. The realisation that girls have a right to education is directly influenced by contextual social and economic circumstances in the family, the school, and in marital relationships. These contextual influences strongly determine the possibility that women will or will not access and complete their education.

Thirdly, the pathway concept contributes to the view unlike tracks, education career pathways are not necessarily value-driven as Eccles' (1994) notion of choice implies. In Uganda education pathways for women are not only career-driven but also needs-driven. The notion of choice assumes that there are alternative career track options from which to choose, whereas in fact, often the women's choices were opportunity-driven and not consciously thought through. This finding suggests a different notion of women's agency, specifically, that women did not always have enough information and options available to them to even qualify their decisions as

choice. Changing direction and slowing down movement along the education pathway was a strategic exercise of agency the women used to achieve their greater education goal -- and not a choice of career preference based on adequate information and the rich availability of options. As evidenced in this study, although the 47 women followed different education pathways, they all managed to complete the formal education cycle up to the university.

The transition points in the tracks exposed three dynamic contextual circumstances that were significant along the women's education pathway. These were: the natal family (chapter 3), the classroom in educational institutions (chapter 4), and spousal households (chapter 5). These contexts defined opportunities but also constraints for the women along their education pathways. What made the women in this study succeed? The answer lies in the interplay between each individual's agency with key actors in the family, the school, and in spousal households. I reflect further on these contextual factors in the chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.

CHAPTER FOUR - NAVIGATING CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE NATAL FAMILY

This chapter analyses the natal family as the first contextual domain that defined the education pathways of the women studied. The natal family emerged spontaneously as a major theme around which the women reconstructed their education life history and experience. One of the first studies that drew attention to the role of the natal family in women's education career in Uganda was by Joy Kwesiga (2002). In her study on women's access to higher education, Kwesiga identified three main natal family-related factors that determined women's access to education in Uganda: attitude of parents; socio-economic status of the family; and family division of labour. Kwesiga argued that parents in Uganda objected to women's education on two grounds, namely: traditional practices, and the traditional role of women within the society. Parents feared that formal education would change the cultural gender status quo (Kwesiga 2002, 165-167).

Traditional practices such as family labour, food taboos and dress code are thought to negatively influence attitude of parents towards the education of girls in Uganda. As Kwesiga (2002, 166) explained, given that women carry a heavier load in the family (and society) than men, parents saw formal education of women as depriving them of family labour. Mothers specifically opposed education for girls because they would lose helpers at home. Kwesiga further argues that these parental attitudes were exacerbated by the cultural perception that schoolgirls were more likely to break various food taboos observed in the society. She cites an example of parents in the pastoral communities in the western part of Uganda who feared that the school diet would not contain enough milk, which implied that the traditional process of fattening girls for marriage would be slowed down. The belief in these pastoral communities is that thinner girls would attract a smaller dowry for the family. Similarly, among the Karamojong in north-eastern Uganda, it was feared that schoolgirls would be unwilling to revert to wearing animal skin and would prefer to keep wearing the cotton school uniforms provided at school. Hence, traditional practices negatively influenced family support for the formal education of women. Kwesiga (2002, 166) also argued that the traditional roles assigned to women as wives and mothers negatively influenced parents' decisions about their education especially when resources were scarce. In particular, the normative expectation of marriage for girls convinced parents that girls only need enough education to adequately play their roles as wives and mothers. This

conviction, coupled with traditional son-preference, influenced parents to pay less attention and provided less support for the formal education of girls. As such, fewer girls accessed and completed formal higher education in Uganda.

Kwesiga portrays the natal family as a 'unit-whole' system that has a negative influence on the formal education of women. She also believes that parents strive to maintain traditional gendered roles in the family through practices such as marriage and dowries, which negatively affect women's education. Kwesiga blames family structures in general as contributing to the continued marginalisation of women from specifically higher education. In this chapter, my contribution to the debate on the role of the natal family in women's education is the argument that the natal family may not only have negative influences but may also provide the necessary support women need to succeed in their education career. Kinship is not only a negative factor along the education pathway of the women. Kinship is much more complex, especially when analysed in relation to individual relatives within the nuclear and extended family and kinship.

This chapter engages with the second research question on the contextual factors that influence women's education trajectory in Uganda with a specific focus on the family of birth. To analyse the influence of the family along the women's education pathways, I engage two specific sub-questions in this chapter. The first is: in what ways do individual members of the natal family influence women's education pathways? The second is: how do the women respond to this influence? I address these questions by examining the contribution of individual family members in propelling but also constraining the women along their education pathways. My focus on the natal family in this chapter serves two purposes: firstly, to show in what ways individual members of a family provided educational opportunities for the women and how the women responded to these opportunities; and secondly, to highlight the challenges that individual members of the natal families posed along the women's education pathways, and how the women dealt with these challenges in order to sustain their education careers.

My main argument in this chapter is that women's success along their education pathways is not only determined by their intellectual ability, but also by their capacity to utilise opportunities and to deal with financial and social constraints from individual family members presented along their education pathways. I contend further that the

natal family is an important source of support that influences both the direction and/or the speed at which the women move along their education pathways. My position in this chapter is informed by the education life history narratives of the women. In the narratives, the women clearly differentiated between the role of the natal family (family of birth) and the marital family (family of marriage) in their education pathway. In this chapter I will focus solely on the natal family. The marital family is discussed later in chapter five.

The women described the natal family as consisting of individuals such as parents, siblings, and extended relatives such as paternal and maternal grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. In the narratives, the women clearly distinguished between individual relatives and what role each played in supporting or not supporting their education. The women showed how the interaction between individual members of the natal family directly or indirectly influenced the nature of their education pathway. As such, in the narratives, the family emerged as a dynamic space in which individual relatives supported, negotiated, resisted and raised conflict about formal education for the women. This interaction created a dynamic situation in the family in which supportive and non-supportive members acted as checks and balances on each other in relation to the women's education. I explore these natal family dynamics farther on in the chapter.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents an overview of the analytical framework that informed my analysis of the family context. The second part presents the empirical discussion highlighting the factors in the family that influenced women's enrolment in school and how individual family members were supportive or unsupportive of the women. This second part highlights the father as the figurehead of the family, around whom individual members supported, negotiated, and raised conflict about the education of the women. In this chapter I will use the narratives of 12 women whose stories about the role of the natal family stood out in particular. The experiences of this sample of women captures specific details regarding the theme of the natal family. Hence I will use the 12 cases to show how the women experienced and dealt with support or the lack of support within the natal family. The third and final part of the chapter engages with the research question and the theoretical framework on the nature of the family and draws conclusions about the findings.

4.1. Theoretical Discussion on the Family

Families in sub-Saharan Africa have generally been defined as a unit whole. This is evident in the study of Khavul, Bruton, and Wood (2009, 1223) on informal family businesses in Kenya and Uganda. Khavul, Bruton, and Wood described families in Uganda and Kenya as a unit where there are mutual benefits and reciprocities. In this unit, exchange takes place among members of the extended family. The extended family is also the only safety net in Uganda and Kenya, especially among rural communities. In Uganda, the concept of the family as a unit whole was emphasised in Kwesiga's study about women's access to higher education. Kwesiga argued that as a unit the family embodies various factors that influence women's access to and completion of the education cycle in Uganda (Kwesiga 2002, 52). As a unit whole, the family consists of blood or marital relations that form both the nuclear and the extended family. The perception of the family as a unit contradicts the natal family framework that emerged from the narratives of the women. In this framework, the women described their family as individuals who positively and negatively influenced their education pathway. To give context to their understanding of the family, I consider it important to highlight two existing perspectives that conceptualise the family as a system and as a heterogeneous unit.

Cox and Paley (2003, 246) understand the family as a complex integrated whole, a system in which individual members are interdependent and continuously exert reciprocal influence on each other. The authors argue that any individual member is inextricably embedded in the larger family system and can never be fully understood independent of the context of the system. In the systems perspective, the family is understood as a 'unit whole' and focus is on how interactions between members contribute to the functioning of the entire family system (Cox and Paley 2003, 246). Additionally, in the Ugandan context, Kwesiga (2002, 55) explained that as a 'unit whole', the family structure reflects societal values. These values determine women's roles and responsibilities, level of independence, and their general status. As such, society's values help to shape attitudes, preferences, behaviours, and certain expectations about education. Kwesiga argues that in a patrilineal kinship unit, men are regarded as the most important members of the family, while women are valued mostly for marriage and its associated values of bride wealth, housewives, and being mothers.

This view of the family as a system has been challenged by the life course perspective advanced by Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharma (2013), which suggests that focusing on the family functioning as a 'unit whole' overlooks the agency of individual members of a family. The life course perspective criticises the system perspective on the basis of its static and normative assumptions regarding universal family trajectories and for discounting the life experiences of individual members. Instead, the life course perspective understands the family as a dynamic and contextual heterogeneous unit. This perspective stresses the importance of understanding continuity and change of families over time and explicitly recognises and addresses the heterogeneity of families. The life course perspective looks at not only the normative patterns and processes in the development of the family but also at their inherent diversity (Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharma 2013, 28-32). Although critical of the system perspective, the life course perspective still perceives a family's heterogeneity and a change in the context of individual family as a unit in a specific location. However, it does not go far enough to break the family open to expose the dynamic relationship between individual members and how each distinctly influences decisions about women's education. Hence, life course theorists still view the family as a 'unit' that evolves and changes over time, and do not focus on how individuals in the family interact and relate with each other in specific circumstances.

That said, the life course perspective offers two insights that are especially helpful. The first is the understanding of families as heterogeneous and contextual. The view of the family as heterogeneous yields insight into the type of family (polygamous or monogamous) the women were born into and how this structure influenced their educational pathway. In terms of context, the life course perspective offers an understanding of how the rural or urban location of the family also influences women's educational opportunities and constraints. For instance, rural families tend to be located nearer paternal relatives than are urban families. As such, families in a rural setting might be more influenced by the cultural values that mitigate against the education of women than families in an urban setting. The second insight is that the concept of continuity and change resonates with what emerged from the women's narratives that the family as a unit does not remain neutral as the women construct their education pathways. The dynamics of support, resistance, negotiation, and conflict about the

women's education among family members caused change within the family. Equally important is the fact that women's persistence and resilience to remain in school also changed the attitude of family members who were initially resistant to their education. The key concepts of context, time, and life pathways are informative in understanding how the women utilised opportunities and negotiated support through time, life events, and larger social contexts.

In this chapter I will articulate the heterogeneities, continuity, and change in the family. The family in this case is perceived not working as a unit 'whole', but as individual relatives supporting and constraining women's education. To break open the family as a 'unit whole' and to make the dynamic relationships between individual members visible, I engage with the concepts of support, resistance, negotiation, and conflict between individuals in the family in relation to the women's education career. I consider it important to make these dynamics visible because different relatives adopt different positions towards the women's education at different times. For instance, individual family members can support or resist education for girls. Furthermore, one relative may take up different positions at different stages along the girl's education pathway. An example of this is a male sibling who at first resists but who later provides support for the education of the women through fosterage. Similarly, making the dynamics between individual relatives and the women visible exposes gender relations in the natal family. In the case of Uganda, gender relations in the natal family are dynamic and change according to the individual with whom one is relating. As a result, gender differences between men and women are not relationally distinct in the natal family. Men can be female and women can be male depending on which individual they relate to within the natal family. These dynamic gender identities may influence the education pathway of the women, as some relatives may take up different positions depending on the family.

4.2 Gender Patterns in Ugandan Families

Gender patterns have been conceptualised in varying complexity in different parts of the world. For instance, family structures in Uganda are patrilineal because the line of descent, inheritance, and authority pass through the male line. The male member in the patrilineal society is regarded as the most important member of the kinship unit (Doss et al. 2012, 601; Kwesiga 2002, 55; Otiso 2006, 84). However, gender patterns in

maternal and paternal kinship arrangements in Uganda are more complex. This complexity is comparable to Barriteau's theorisation of gender systems in the Caribbean. Barriteau (1998, 188) argued that gender patterns in kinship arrangement can be reflected in personal and social relations through which women and men are socially created and maintained. He argues that it is through this complex gender patterns that women and men gain access to, or are allocated, status, power, and material resources within society (Barriteau 1998, 188). In relation to Uganda, gender patterns are such that the same person can be constructed into a male or a female, depending on the individual that the person relates to in the family. This complexity of social construction of gender relations in Ugandan families can be distinguished in two major ways, namely from the physiological attributes and along kinship relations.

Gender in the physiological sense is constructed to what researchers have already pointed out as biological givens based on an individual's genitalia (Romero 2009; Ulrich 2013). In this case, a child's genitalia as identified at birth determines the identity of the child as female or male. The characteristic cultural question that relatives and friends ask the mother of a new-born child is not 'is it a girl or boy?' but '*who is it?*' This gendered question demands the mother of a new-born child to physiologically make explicit what sex the child carries at birth. Normally, the mother of the new-born child is expected to define the sex of the child either in relation to the parents or the person asking the question. Hence, a characteristic response of the mother would be either '*it is me*' for a baby girl or '*it is the father*' for a baby boy. Alternatively, she can respond '*it is you or not you*' in reference to the person asking the question. This inquiry determines what specific gender the child will be socialised into. Once a child is defined as a boy or a girl at birth, the family members begin a social process of constructing the child into a female or male. This construction is based on the available social norms on what women and men can or cannot do in society. The process of constructing the gender of a child not only assigns social roles, behaviours, and status but also the assigned privileges for men and women in the family. A role is the expected behaviour associated with a status and is performed according to social norms, which are the shared rules that guide people's behaviour in specific situations. Social norms determine the privileges and responsibilities women and men possess (Jackson and Pearson 2005, 2). For instance, through his status in patrilineage, a boy might enjoy more privileges in

education than a girl by virtue of being a son and heir to his father. By contrast, the responsibility of house chores rests more on the girl by virtue of being perceived as a future mother in her own family.

In addition to physiological constructions, gender patterns within kinship relations are constructed along social roles associated with paternity and maternity. In this case, instead of physiological attributes, kinship relations define what gender a person carries in a given family relationship. This means that socially a person can carry both male and female gender roles at the same time. For instance, in the natal family, while a paternal aunt is biologically considered a woman, she relates to her brother's family members as a 'male'. Hence, depending on her age relative to that of her brother's, a paternal aunt can be a senior or junior *female father* to the children and a senior or junior *female husband* to the wife of her brother. The male status of a paternal aunt gives her special privileges and powers to influence decisions in her brother's family. Hence the pronouncements of a paternal aunt for or against the education of her nieces can have a significant effect on the nieces' education career. Similarly, a maternal uncle who is genitally considered male can culturally relate as a female to his sister's marital family. Depending on his age, a maternal uncle is a senior or junior *male mother* to his sister's children and a *male wife* to her husband. As a male mother, the maternal uncle carries a special privilege in his sister's marital family. For instance, he is considered an important part of the major decisions regarding his nieces and nephews, especially during marriage and conflict in the family. As a male mother, the maternal uncle is culturally believed to be well-intentioned towards his nieces and nephews because he cannot harm what comes symbolically from his 'womb'. Christiansen's study (2005, 176) in eastern Uganda established that maternal kinsmen have always been recognised as having an important role in children's upbringing.

However, it is important to note that the cultural and social contexts in Uganda are not fixed but are often rapidly changing. These changes have been accelerated by the influence of rural-urban migration that has seen particularly many of the families of the younger generation move into urban centres that are culturally fluid and less rigid compared to rural-centred families. Exposure of individual family members to new religions (Islam and Christianity), formal education, and general development of the society over the years have also positively influenced the attitude of family members

towards the education of girls. In this context, a girl might not only be seen as a future mother taking care of the household but also as a working mother and a professional who is financially independent.

However, due to the patrilineal nature of the families in Uganda, female fathers have a stronger position than male mothers in a given family. Firstly, female fathers are considered closer blood relatives in the patrilineal system than male mothers, who are often located far away from marital home of their sisters. Secondly, female fathers have a greater influence and easier access to the families through their brothers (biological fathers), than male mothers through their sisters (biological mothers). This is because their sisters (mothers) do not occupy lineage positions in the marital home.

In Uganda, the most vital function of women in patrilineal marriage is giving birth to male heirs to continue the patrilineage in their marital homes. Hence, the concept of female fathers and male mothers in kinship relations in Uganda makes it possible for a person to constantly carry double feminine and masculine gender attributes in a given family. These gender attributes also embody gender ideologies that benefit boys and girls differently. For instance, a boy's residency in the natal home is considered permanent because it brings assurance of lineage continuity to the natal family. However, a girl is considered a temporary occupant. She is expected to marry and generate a dowry for the natal family and relocate to her marital home. As such, boys enjoy more privilege in receiving support from members of the family than girls. In spite of these differences, kinship ties are considered central to having a sense of belonging. This is important to the human status of individuals within the Ugandan family because kinship regulates social relations among family members (Kwesiga 2002, 56). Thus kinship relations have the potential to impact positively the education of women.

However, construction of a woman's gender itself also presents some of the challenges that women have to constantly negotiate in order to stay in school. For instance, individuals in the natal family and its extended family relations either grant educational opportunities to the women or resist their access to education simply because they are biologically female. Relatives who resist education for women expect the women to belong to the private domain of the family instead. Similarly, kinship gender constructions indicate the positive but also negative influences of extended family members on a girl's natal family, which women had to equally deal with along

their educational pathway. The women deal with such biological constructions as females but also as daughters to negotiate their education and manipulate their kinship relationships, in the hope of rallying support for themselves and making a breakthrough into an educational career. For instance, the women use their filial position to appeal to the parents' duty towards educating children of the home. The gender constructions also provide checks and balances between maternal and paternal relatives within the family that work in favour of the women. For instance, when paternal relatives do not cooperate in regards to educating the girls, the maternal relatives step in to support the girls. Such a move from maternal relatives provokes the paternal relatives to cooperate in a way that reclaims the girl to her patrilineage.

Heterosexual monogamy and polygamy are common family characteristics in Uganda. Research has shown that in practice polygyny, which is the marriage of one man to many official wives, is the most common type of polygamy in Uganda. Polyandry, in which a woman can have many husbands, is officially non-existent in the country. As a result, in both the legal and local definition of marriage, polygamy is synonymous to polygyny in Uganda (Otiso 2006, 83). The Uganda Marriage Act of 2000 pronounces two types of marriages, namely monogamy and polygamy. Firstly, the Act defines monogamous marriage as the type of marriage contracted between a man and a woman, neither of whom has the liberty to enter into any other valid marriage during the existence of such marriage. On the other hand, the Act defines polygamous marriage as one in which a man is married to more than one woman (ACT 19, 12).

However, as Parikh (2007) observes, monogamy in Uganda does not necessarily mean having one partner (Parikh 2007, 1200). In both monogamous and polygamous families, it is common to find the father engaged in extra-marital relationships, from which children can be born to him. This fact implies that there are family situations in which children are not only born 'in-marriage' to an official wife, but 'out-of-marriage' to an unofficial wife, who is commonly referred to as a 'concubine'. The challenge is that, although out-of-marriage children are often kept discrete and invisible, they exert pressure on the family especially through the father. As a consequence, in-marriage children in both monogamous and polygamous families have to compete for resources such as school fees with their 'out-of-marriage' half-siblings. This competition may worsen in polygamous families not only because of the number of children but also

because the father may have a favourite wife, and thus favourite children. Monogamous families tend to have fewer children, while polygamous households are characterised by numerous children living together in the homestead. This competition becomes more difficult for girls if they are not born to the father's favourite wife and if they are not among the father's favourite children.

Child fostering is a marked feature of family arrangements in Africa, and Uganda is no exception. Children under 15 years of age frequently reside in a household other than that of their biological parents, and they also circulate between different social parents and communities (Notermans 2008, 355; Isiugo-Abanihe 1985, 53). Fostering in this case is perceived as an initiative of the community to take care of its most vulnerable members, who are orphaned and from economically poor households. Fostering can also occur when parents in rural locations send children to live with relatives in urban areas. In this case, fostering is undertaken as a means for children in rural areas to access quality education in urban centres.

In Uganda, child fostering is not only a common practice but also highly individualised. For instance, a child is relocated to a family or a household in which the natal family has a kinship or friendship connection to an individual member in the foster family, and the individual kin or friend is directly responsible for the fostered child. Fostering is also a highly gendered practice. It often happens that male children tend to be fostered by individual men and 'female fathers', while female children are generally fostered by individual women and 'male mother' relatives or friends. Fostering among siblings is also a common phenomenon. For instance, older siblings who are already employed can voluntarily pick up younger siblings to sponsor in good schools in different urban centres.

Additionally, Madhavan (2004, 1445) argues that there are situations in which children are fostered in non-kin situations. This is typically seen in boarding schools in which children are entrusted to teachers. Both kinship and non-kinship fostering in Africa are mainly motivated by the need for the children to attend good schools for their educational career development (Notermans 2013, 155). It is not common in Uganda for children to choose their own foster parents except in cases of domestic violence in the household. In this case the child can run to a relative or a friend where they can be in a safe educational environment, free from violence and interference from relatives.

Fosterage therefore plays an important role in averting social and economic situations that can potentially threaten or interrupt educational pathways. Fosterage relations, like biological and social relationships, provide financial and social opportunities for accessing good schools.

4.3 Access to School

Although the women in my study are those with successful educational careers, their access to education was influenced by the circumstances in the family and by experiences of their parents rather than because education is a legal right. As discussed in chapter one, access to education is not a guaranteed and legally enforced right for children in Africa, and specifically in Uganda. As Lloyd and Blanc (1996, 267) argued, while central governments play a primary role in providing schools in Africa, the decision to actually enrol and keep children in school is entirely in the hands of parents and other family members. It was also noted that girls more than boys have the possibility of being denied education for cultural, social, and economic reasons in the family. The question then is: what worked differently in the natal families of the women in my study? There were three factors that influenced the decisions of the parents to enrol the women in school: firstly, the composition of the household (whether there were more girls than boys in the family); secondly, whether the natal families were monogamous or polygamous; and thirdly, the personal interests and conviction of the parents, especially the father and the strong influence of the mother. The conviction of the parents boosted the women's ambition, which manifested itself in the women's agency, in particular, their insistence on enrolling in school, coupled with their excellent academic performance.

The composition of the household in term of the numbers of boys and girls in the family strongly influenced decisions regarding the enrolment of the girls in school. The women pointed out that having a majority of female children in the natal family played an important role in their parent's decisions to enrol them in school. Cirila, the senior lecturer and faculty dean, reflected that females being a majority among the children in the family left the parents with no option but to educate them: '*... because most of us were girls at that time. We [my family] had only one boy, the first born. So we were all going to school naturally, normally*' without restrictions. The importance of having more girls in the family was reiterated by Nyepe, whose father was a civil servant in the

district. She emphasised that, *'we have always called our home "the women's home" much more than men's, because being seven girls out of nine children, we had the majority vote on almost everything at home. So my two brothers actually felt marginalised'*. In other words, having more female children, the parents had no option but to let the girls benefit from educational opportunities. Indeed, where the option existed, some women struggled to access education. This was the case with Falley, who came from a polygamous family of 50 children, with the majority being boys. Falley indicated that *'my father was always [more] comfortable paying school fees for the boys'* than for the girls. The key issue is that a women's position in the family may differ from the gender ideologies and norms for women's power in society. As noted by both Cirila and Nyepe, who both hailed from monogamous families, the politics of numbers is an important factor that influenced decisions regarding women's easy access to educational opportunities in the family. Having a majority of girls in the natal family reinforced women's group agency to demand education.

So, while in the larger Ugandan society women are generally portrayed as subordinate to men, in the family, greater numbers of women appear to offer leverage in favour of educational opportunities for women. In this sense, while gender discourses in the larger society are defined by cultural norms, in the family, gender discourse is being shaped by the politics of the ratio of men and women in the family. This differential discourse offers an important insight into how the majority representation of women in the family shaped the decision of parents to enrol and support them in school. By contrast, in families where women were underrepresented, decisions to enrol and support them in school were differently influenced. The narratives reveal that in monogamous families the politics of numbers was effective because the family was relatively small. In polygamous families, having more girls than boys did not favour girls automatically because the large number of family members constrained resource allocation for the education of the children in general. In this case boys, although fewer in number, were granted privilege over girls to access education in times of resource scarcity. This was compounded by the fact that the lineage of the family is expected to continue through boys, so parents are more willing to invest in boys than girls. The polygamous or monogamous nature of the family played a crucial role in women's enrolment. In the polygamous families, it took longer for the women to negotiate

enrolment in school than it did for women in monogamous families. These women had to reach out for social support from siblings and mothers to convince their fathers to enrol them in school.

Other women pointed to the personal conviction of their father as the motivation behind their school enrolment. The women in this category considered it a privilege to be in school because as Kameo, a senior administrator and dean of students in her 50s, pointed out, *'not many girls at that time had studied and I don't know who my father was looking at as a role model girl in my village. I don't even know for what reason he decided that I go to school'*. Additionally, Asema, a senior lecturer in her 50s, observed that although the few girls in her village who went to school did not complete the full cycle of school, *'... for us, our dad used to say "I want all of you to read" and that is why all of us, boys and girls, went to school ...'*. Both Kameo and Asema attribute their entry into school to the outlook of their fathers towards education, and they attributed the source of this motivation to their parents' exposure to the benefits of education through local religious and political activities. Parental aspiration and inclination in relation to education were both very important to enrol and to keep the girls in school (Kwesiga 2002, 52).

Having looked at the key factors that enabled the women to access formal education, in the next section I will discuss how the role of individual members of the family influenced the education path of the women. I will begin with the roles of the fathers as the central point around which the narratives of educational life histories of the women rotated. It is important to point out that most individual members of the family did not show major resistance to the decision of the fathers to enrol the girls in school. However, continued support to keep the women in school was strongly resisted by some relatives, especially the female father and sibling brothers. In terms of both enrolment and ongoing support, fathers stood out as defining figures. The fathers were central in dealing with individual relatives who held diverse and sometimes conflicting views on girls' education. As central figures, fathers listened to all the individual relatives, and switched their positions according to the most convincing argument that relatives advanced for or against the education of the girls. This dynamic made the position of the fathers difficult but also unpredictable in relation to supporting the education of the women in some of the families.

4.4. The Central Figure of the Father

The patriarchal nature of Ugandan society constructs the father as the head and breadwinner of the family. As the head, the father is also the owner of family resources. As such, capital investments including school fees are assigned to the father. Culturally, the father holds the primary obligation to finance the education of the children: pay school fees, buy scholastic materials and school uniforms, and provide transport to and from school. This financial obligation gives the father specific responsibilities but also enormous powers over the education career of the children. The powers invested in the father also give him the freedom to choose which children to keep in school and which children to withdraw. The women interviewed also indicated that at the initial stages of primary education, most of the fathers fulfilled their obligation of enrolling them in school and paying their school fees. The primary and secondary school levels were the stages in which the women depended heavily on their fathers for financial support.

However, along the education pathway, some of the fathers came under pressure from relatives who saw the education of the girls as a waste of family resources. As head of the family, the father is expected by other relatives, in particular the female fathers, to be the custodian of cultural norms, including those related to the education of girls. Enrolling the girls in school is seen by some female fathers as an abrogation of cultural norms related to marriage and dowry payment. Sometimes these relatives made attempts to negatively influence the fathers against the education of women. As a consequence of the cultural and economic power of the father, women felt their education was at risk in relation to unsupportive fathers and secure with supportive fathers. This was felt especially in the primary and secondary school levels where the women heavily depended on the financial support of the father. Therefore, when a father showed a lack of interest in the education of the girls it raised a lot of concern among supportive relatives. This dynamic was taken seriously by the women because it had a direct negative impact on their educational pathway.

Even when fathers paid school fees, some of the women still felt at risk along their educational pathway. Some of the women had witnessed their fathers giving their older sisters away in marriage before they had completed their education. One of these women is Asema, a senior lecturer in her 50s and born in a monogamous family. She recalled: *'my sister was given away in marriage when she was in senior two. My father said senior two was enough'*. A similar incident was witnessed by Falley, a lecturer in her 40s,

who comes from a polygamous family. Falley remembered that one day as the school term was beginning, her father simply stopped one of her step-sisters from going with them to school: *'...my father said "aha, this one is old enough, she shouldn't go to school"'*. The sister was then withdrawn from school and given out in marriage. These experiences signalled to the women how susceptible they were to their fathers. This susceptibility was also the basis on which women actively built their agency in order to engage in a dialogue with their fathers. In situations when their fathers remained uncooperative, the women solicited for interventions and resources from other members of the natal family.

Given the central role of the father in the family dynamics, in the following section I discuss the specific role of individual family members in the educational pathway of the women. In each case, I take the father as the centre of focus and discuss the role of other members of the family in relation to him. Based on the findings about the fathers, I group the disposition of individual members of the natal family towards the education of the women into three categories. In the first category are individuals in seven families (14.9%) who were not supportive of the women. In the second category are individuals in 21 (44.7%) families who kept shifting positions for or against supporting the women. In the third category are individual members in 19 (40.4%) families who were steadfast in supporting the women along their educational trajectory. In each of these categories, I will discuss the father as the lead person around whom other members rallied to support or resist education in regards to the women.

Unsupportive category of relatives

Unsupportive relatives and extended family were individuals at the core of the study who did not initially value education for girls. Among the unsupportive members in 7 (14.9%) families were: fathers, female fathers, sibling brothers, and grandparents. The unsupportive relatives used different discourses to justify why they resisted supporting the education of the women. These discourses were informed by economic, socio-cultural, and moral arguments.

Among the women who successfully enrolled in school but who begun to experience resistance from their fathers was Falley, a mathematics lecturer. Falley's father threatened to withdraw her from school for mostly economic but also moral reasons.

... being a girl, it was also not easy because my father was not interested. I could go to my father, he gives me fees but with so many words of abuse! He was a businessman. He was saying, *'after all why should I take you to school? You see, I am giving you my money, you'll waste it, I know girls, you will get pregnant on the way!* But I said: *'Please, I want to go to school'*. He said: *'For me I will only manage to give you school fees but the rest of the things I am not interested in them'*. I said: *'No problem, so long as you put me in a school, for me I am willing to go'*.

Although Falley managed to convince her father to let her stay in school, he restricted himself to paying school fees, but not the *'rest of the things'* like scholastic materials, uniform, transport, and pocket money for personal needs. In the dialogue between Falley and her father, what is noticeable is that the father is contesting formal education in school as a site of immorality for girls. Pregnancy before marriage is considered an embarrassment to members of the natal family, because it signals a poor moral education in the home. Secondly, pregnancy out of marriage is considered a loss in terms of the dowry, in contrast to the dowry the natal family would have received in an official marriage of the girl. These moral and financial fears may influence the extent to which a father is willing to sacrifice his scarce resources to educate a girl who is not likely to complete schooling (Kwesiga 2002, 190). It is in this context of embarrassment and loss that Falley's father uses an economic argument to justify his hesitation to fully invest in her education. As a trader, her father made calculations because he did not want to 'waste' his hard-earned resources on Falley's education. The perception of Falley's father regarding the cost and benefit of her education was crucial for Falley's continuing with her education. Two other factors influenced her father's reservation to finance her education. The first was information he received from *'the people he was staying with tell[ing] him about pregnancies of schoolgirls.'* The second was the father's experience:

... Even he could see what was happening to other girls in the village. They were all dropping out of school. Some were becoming pregnant when they were still in primary, secondary. Others could be married off by the time they finish P.7. So, my father was also not in that position to pay my school fees.

In the general community, early pregnancy out of marriage is socially framed as the product of immorality in school. This resonates with Kwesiga's (2002) findings about girls' access to school in Uganda. She observed that, although statistical evidence on teenage pregnancy is not always available, the impact of early pregnancy among girls cannot be ignored in developing countries. She further argued that anxiety about daughters getting pregnant encourages parents to withdraw girls from school once they

reach puberty (Kwesiga 2002, 59). Falley's father saw the school as propagating promiscuity among girls. Therefore, it made no sense for him to continuously invest in his girls' education. The second factor that negatively influenced the attitude of Falley's father towards the education of girls was from relatives, especially female fathers. Falley recounts that: '*I had paternal aunts [female fathers]. They could at times influence my father: "why are you educating the girls?" ...*' They therefore made attempts to influence the father to withdraw Falley from school. Culturally, female fathers are powerful in the household of their brothers. It is the female fathers who are assigned the responsibility of preparing their nieces for marriage through sex education, not school education.

Central to the father's resistance to Falley's plea to pursue her education career was the social discourse advanced by his friends and female fathers. The friends of Falley's father and the female fathers framed school as the site for promoting immorality among schoolgirls. At the core of early pregnancy among schoolgirls was an issue of the gap in sex education between home and school created by the school system in Uganda. This is a system in which children spend most of their time in school, and there is little interaction with family members. This gap is problematic both in sex education at home and also in school. The context is that sex education for girls at home was carried out in seclusion and conducted by female fathers. Formal education interrupted this home education because it kept girls in school most of the time. The school was therefore viewed with suspicion because it was thought to make female fathers lose control over the sexuality of the girls, thus making the girls prone to early pregnancies.

Similarly, although parents allowed girls to enrol in formal education, the school itself was not prepared to provide sex education for young men and women. Firstly, the school administrators and teachers were part of the social culture that treated sex education as a taboo. They were not expected to speak openly about sex education in class, especially in primary schools. Secondly, the school curriculum was heavily influenced by religious (Christian and Islam) teachings that perceived sex outside of marriage as sinful; hence schools emphasized moral codes of conduct such as good behaviour, virginity, and interpersonal skills, rather than sex education. Since it is common in Uganda to find adolescent girls and boys who are sexually active pursuing primary education, the gap between sex education at home and the lack of sex education at primary school becomes particularly problematic. The young people who are sexually

active are left to fend and discover for themselves how to deal with their sexuality. Girls are particularly at risk in this process because they directly bear pregnancy as a consequence of their sexual activity. At secondary school, the women indicated fewer incidences of pregnancy because (as indicated earlier in chapter 2) they studied in single-sex boarding secondary schools, in which there was limited interaction with boys and men in general. Single-sex schools in Uganda were designed by Christian and Muslim missionaries to educate girls and boys in separate schools.

The moral discourses in the natal family were particularly pursued by female fathers in rural families, who took personal responsibility for the sex education of their nieces. An explanation of the resistance of female fathers towards Falley's education is that they saw formal education as depriving them of control over their nieces. At another level, it can be said that schools brought 'risks' that especially affected the status of female fathers. If girls went to school, it affected the responsibility of the female fathers to prepare the girls for marriage. If the girls got pregnant it equally affected the status of the female fathers. As sex educators of the family, a teenage pregnancy among schoolgirls represents a failure on the part of female fathers and reflects their inability to provide sex education to the girls. Given that school-going children spend most of the day (8 hours) and most of the year (9 months in a trimester system) in school, the female fathers have less time to interact with the girls as well. So it is 'logical' that the female fathers are the ones most likely to challenge and resist, rather than support, the education of their nieces. The only way the female fathers could reclaim their power over the girls was to influence their brothers (the biological fathers) to withdraw or stop supporting the girls in school. The fact that the female fathers did not have the authority and power to directly withdraw Falley from school turned out to be an opportunity that she seized and utilised, to engage in dialogue with her father. Falley's father was caught in this space between his daughter and his sisters.

What worked in Falley's favour is that, although her father hesitated to finance her education, he did not physically withdraw her from school. In fact, he resorted to psychologically discouraging her but left the choice of whether to drop out of school entirely up to Falley. She therefore had the time and space to generate strategies for her education trajectory: *'I had a vision and I had determination. And again all my success is about discipline, because I said let me be disciplined, at least everything will follow'*.

Discipline in this context meant avoiding all occasions that would distract her from pursuing her educational goal. Acts of discipline in the local context refer to keeping away from pre-marital sexual relationships that would likely cause pregnancy and early marriage. Falley focused on academia and followed school rules in order not to conform to the social stereotype that educated girls become promiscuous. For Falley, being disciplined was not only about academic success but also about demonstrating to her polygamous father the value of investing in girls' education. Nevertheless, the negative attitude of Falley's father and the pressure exerted by the female fathers, justified on economic and moral grounds, made the father stop paying Falley's school fees for lower secondary school.

How did Falley position herself in this discourse? The opportunity that played in her favour was her ability to directly negotiate for school fees with her father by engaging in dialogue with him. She took advantage of the cultural space because the same cultural norms that mitigated against her education also obliged her father to pay fees as the head of the family. She managed to negotiate and secure her father's commitment to pay school fees, which is the most expensive of the school requirements from primary to lower secondary. Another opportunity for Falley was the fact that the father allowed her to converse with him. This opportunity also confirms the life course perspective, which views the family as a space for interactions much more than a system (Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharm 2013). This interactive nature of the family offered Falley a filial space in which she could speak to and convince her father of her determination to complete the education cycle.

However, since Falley's father restricted himself to only paying school fees, Falley's mother had to step in to provide for scholastic materials:

You can ask me, sister, where did I get those other school requirements from? I had my mother, by that time she was not staying with my father [they were separated]. But luckily enough my mother was staying around in Mbarara. She could come and visit me. My mother bought me some of the requirements, which she brought even later after I had reported to school...

Falley's mother's financial support became explicit as her father withdrew his. Falley's case also shows that, although separated from the father, Falley's mother kept an eye on the social and scholastic needs of her daughter. In the absence of the father's support, Falley's mother became her point of reference. The financial intervention of Falley's

mother to provide scholastic materials was unprecedented because she had not foreseen that the father would withdraw support for Falley's education.

That said, Falley attributes her resilience and the determination to complete her education to the inspirational role played by her brother. The brother was an important support for Falley's education in the absence of her mother and in the face of negative attitudes from her father and the relatives. Falley passionately points out that:

... during holidays, when we are together at home, my brother could tell me stories; how they read novels at school, because by that time, my brother was doing literature at school. He could read *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, all those books! So I got motivated and I said 'really, I must also read and go to secondary, so that I also can read these stories he is reading to me'.

The brother, an older sibling, played an important role in quietly inspiring and boosting her morale to pursue her education career. Falley was born into a polygamous family, and her mother was separated from the father; her older brother remained her sole formidable support for her education. The story is significant. Falley's brother might have realised how vulnerable Falley's education career was in the hands of the father; however, being a young male member of the family, her brother was equally vulnerable because he could not directly influence the father to value girls' education. Consequently, the brother resorted to psychologically boosting Falley's morale within the household of his mother by demonstrating to his sister the importance of education through his literacy skills. Literacy skills were important for Falley; they raised her curiosity to access knowledge as a source of empowerment. The display of literacy skills by the brother gave Falley the psychological support she needed to continue the fight with her father for her rights to education.

Besides inspiring her, when he found employment, Falley's brother took on the responsibility of financing her education especially when her father withdrew financial support. As she recalled: '*my dad only stopped to pay my fees at senior four. He was even convinced I had dropped out of school ... Luckily enough, my brother had finished studies. He just took me up from senior five and six, and he is the one who accompanied me to the university*'. To 'accompany' someone in the Ugandan context means taking full parenting responsibility for a person when they are at the most vulnerable point along their education trajectory. The purpose is to encourage someone to accomplish their goals. In other words, Falley's brother fostered her, especially in the higher education phase of

her trajectory, as she points out: *'I continued staying at my brother's place, [so] I could go and study for a diploma in education.'* Falley had a lot of financial struggles but was determined to complete her education. Fortunately, her brother was not only a fellow sibling but also a source of social and psychological support.

Unlike Falley's brother, Niabu's brother was among the siblings who expressed reservations in supporting the education of Niabu and his other sisters. He used both the economic and patrilocal discourse to advise his widowed mother to stop struggling to educate the girls, because he argued *'these girls are going to get married. Why can't they first get married and then they later add on their studies?'* As heir to his late father, Niabu's brother was culturally considered the owner and administrator of family resources. He engaged the patrilocal discourse to argue against investing in the education of his sisters. Patrilocality is a cultural norm in which sons are considered residents of the natal family, while daughters are valued but considered temporary occupants in the natal family. The sons are expected to provide care for their elderly parents, and daughters are expected to leave the natal family home following marriage to provide care for their in-laws. This custom of care in the context of patrilocality implies that parents with a son will have two caregivers in their elder years (their son and his wife), whereas those with daughters will have no carers, resulting in a significant difference in the expected value of sons relative to daughters (Ebenstein 2014, 3). The daughters are expected to relocate permanently to their marital family sooner or later (Jackson 2012). At the centre of Niabu's brother's argument was the issue of patriarchal economy in which a girl at marriage is assumed to take all her resourcefulness with her, to her marital family. Theoretically, the future husband and members of woman's marital family then become the designated beneficiaries of her education. According to Niabu's brother, it would make more sense to relinquish the responsibility to educate his sisters to their future spouses. Also, the brother did not take the education of the girls seriously because he saw the education of his sisters as depleting natal family resources and siphoning it off to the girls' various marital families.

Another face of the attitude of Niabu's brother is that in a patrilineal setting, girls are given away in marriage early because the brothers are dependent on their sister's dowry for their own marriage (Kwesiga 2002, 55-56). Thus, according to Niabu's brother, keeping Niabu and her sisters in school delayed his own marriage. Valuing girls

for marriage reflects the general perception in society that girls should marry and be looked after by their husbands. In sum, the education of the girls was not taken as seriously as that of their brothers.

In the same vein of patrilineality, Niabu's mother demonstrated an open son-preference. Niabu recalls her mother's words: *'I will sell everything I have but he has to go to a good school'*. Consequently, she enrolled Niabu in a poor school near the village while taking her brother to a school with good facilities. The position of Niabu's mother relates to another discourse regarding the continuity of patrilineage. In setting the priority to educate her son over the girls, Niabu's mother attempted to protect the lineage of her late husband. However, like Falley, Niabu still found filial space to speak with her mother about a chance to go to a good school. Looking at the privilege the mother gave to her brother as a first-born and heir to the father, Niabu decided to remind the mother *'Mummy I have to go to a good school too- remember, I am your first girl too'*. This was Niabu's attempt to claim her birth right as the first girl of her mother.

What emerges from Niabu's interaction with her mother is a sense of Niabu's developing identity and self-awareness. She was beginning to challenge the cultural status quo of son-preference. Niabu was determined to initiate a dialogue to reflect on her status as the first-born girl. Niabu attempted to reclaim her birth right as the first girl, but unfortunately this position in Ugandan culture does not carry the same weight as the first boy in the patrilineage of the family. What is interesting is Niabu's ability to engage the mother to talk about her position in relation to her education. Niabu was not claiming her birth right as a first-born girl, but her right to education as a first-born girl. Niabu had the capacity to separate her cultural position, which is quite different from her birth position, in relation to education.

Among the relatives who pursued the moral discourse against the education of the women were grandparents. At the basis of this moral discourse was the issue of women's virginity. This was particularly the case Asema's grandmother had against her education:

My grandmother was not happy that my father sent us to boarding school. Every holiday, she would be happy that we were back home. When it was time to return to school she would call me in her house and say *'why don't you stop to go to school so that you can help your mother at home? In the school, where are you going to sleep? Your virginity! There are men there, stay home and help your mother'*.

The issue of conflict for Asema's grandmother was the lack of parental control over girls in boarding schools. The grandmother saw the residential nature of the school as breaking the gender norms regarding the domestication of women: keeping girls within the confines of their home to learn gender roles that are considered socially appropriate for their future role as wives, including learning domestic chores such as cooking, caring for the young and old, and for sick members in the family. These gender roles, according to the grandmother, were better learnt at home. Similar to the female fathers, the grandmother envisioned formal schooling as posing a risk to their own status as the symbol of traditional education. For the grandmother, formal education was interrupting the continuity of the long-held tradition of passing knowledge from mother to daughter. The grandmother felt obliged to defend her legacy, which she had faithfully passed onto Asema's mother (her daughter) for the benefit of her granddaughters. As a symbol of these traditions, Asema's grandmother saw the school as a site in which these traditional norms were being contested. She was ready to resist even if Asema's parents did not support her.

The personal responsibility the grandmother took to teach Asema can be attributed to the generation gap developing between the educational values of grandparents and granddaughters. The grandmother seemed to be acutely aware of this continuity gap regarding traditional norms that was developing between her and her granddaughters. She decided to bypass Asema's mother to try to directly convince Asema to leave school. The grandmother engaged with the moral discourse on women's virginity to dissuade Asema from staying in school. Just like the female fathers, Asema's grandmother saw the school as a site of immorality for girls because it was un-domesticating them. Her concern about virginity resonated with the patriarchal construct of sexuality in which women are expected to 'preserve' their virginity until they are officially married to future spouses. This notion of virginity is tied to the idea that the future husband should have a wife who is 'intact' and 'unspoiled'. In many traditional Ugandan societies, this virginity is tested at the time of marriage as proof of proper upbringing. The test was done through the first sexual encounter between the girl and spouse. When the spouse 'declared' her a virgin, it was considered an honour to the natal family; if not, shame and dishonour were visited upon the family, particularly the mother. What is problematic about this gender ideology is that it is based on a

double standard: the preservation of virginity is emphasised for women, while for men neither virginity nor faithfulness to a spouse is emphasized.

The grandmother pursued this gender ideology even when Asema got married and had her own family: *'even when I started my PhD in the Netherlands, she told me "you are going to Ulaya (Europe) for too long! Who are you leaving your husband to? Another woman will take your place" ...'* The issue of a wife 'losing' a husband denotes the construct of masculinity in the Ugandan context. In this gender ideology, men's sexual drive is constructed as insatiable and uncontrollable. As such, in the absence of an official partner, he is expected to seek temporary partners to fill the sexual gap. Socially, such extra-marital affairs are tolerated and they are one reason why there are extra-marital relationships in monogamous families. What is interesting to note is the persistent attempts Asema's grandmother made to dissuade Asema from her education career, in order to try to keep Asema in a culturally defined space, as a future wife at home.

Fortunately for Asema, her grandmother, like the female fathers, did not have authority to directly withdraw Asema from school. Although her grandmother had the opportunity to influence Asema's parents to stop Asema's education, the grandmother could not succeed because Asema's parents had grown to value formal education. As an active member in local politics and religion, Asema's father was exposed to the advantages of education and did not want to compromise the education of his children. Asema's mother had received basic education, which enabled her to read and write. The exposure of the parents laid the groundwork, so that Asema's education would not be interrupted. It should be noted, too, that the pressures to conform to the gender discourses in the community rested more on the fathers, as heads of the family.

Individual members in natal families who resisted the education of women justified their actions on various gendered grounds. On the one hand, some male individuals such as fathers and brothers engaged with economic arguments from business and patrilocal perspectives to explain their hesitation to support the education of women. On the other hand, female individuals like the female fathers and grandmothers employed moral discourses from the perspective of loss of cultural power. The attitude of the female relatives can be understood from the cultural perspective that constructs women as custodians of social and cultural values in society.

However, the interactions regarding the competing values of education for women did initiate reflection in the family. As points of reference in the family, the fathers were most affected by competing values. The fathers had to make a decision to give or not give expression to these competing values. Consequently, among the individuals in the family, fathers were seen to shift positions more often between supporting and not supporting the women along their educational pathways. In the next section, I will present two cases in which fathers shifted their support along the educational pathway of the women, one positively and the other negatively.

Shift in position of relatives

Fathers as the centre of interaction in the family space often found themselves in precarious situations in the process of making choices regarding whether or not to educate their daughters. The narratives reveal that fathers who initially resisted the education of the women eventually shifted positions to support them. The shift was primarily a result of the women's persisting with dialogue, speaking to their fathers, and their resilience, to stay in school. These factors, combined with the intervention and support from mothers, engaged the fathers to change their perspective to positively support the education of women. An example is Falley's father, who changed his mind in favour of girls' education. Falley recalls that her father had initially withdrawn financial support for her at lower secondary school. However, after completing her bachelor's degree her father re-surfaced with social and financial support for her education:

After my bachelor's degree, I was even already married and teaching in a secondary. My father came and encouraged me. He said *'I am happy of what you are doing ... you got a degree, you need to go back and do a master's'* ... When I was doing my master's, he had a car. He said *'Falley, please I am giving you this car, it should take you from where you work to the university, so that you study well.'* He even confessed to the whole family *'you people, I know my girls are best compared to the boys'* ... and now you can't deceive him ... he wants all the young girls to get education.

Although Falley was married and the expectation was that her husband would take care of her, her successful education career and employment as a teacher made her a prominent person in society. She stood out as a symbol of success and resilience against gender discrimination in the family. She also turned out to be the most successful of all the father's children, and her father could no longer remain indifferent to her. Falley acknowledges that: *'among the 50 children of my father, I am the only one who graduated*

... and ... with two degrees ...' At this point, Falley's father wanted to identify with her successful educational and professional career. As the head of the family, Falley's father was obliged to claim her successful career as an honour to his family. Falley's successful education pathway also demonstrates the extra effort girls require to win the favour of their fathers. Falley's father trusted the ability of his sons to succeed in their education more than he did for his girls. He was proven wrong. None of the sons built a successful education career. Similarly, Falley's father did not trust the intellectual capacity of his daughters until Falley proved otherwise. Falley's story also shows how boys in patrilineal families begin their education at an advantage by virtue of being male and are therefore supported by their father, while a girl begins at a disadvantage until proving otherwise with a successful education career.

The positive change of Falley's father brings to light another gender discourse common in Ugandan society in which a child's success is attributed to the father, while failure is blamed on the mother. In this discourse, the success of a child, in this case Falley, qualifies her culturally as a 'father's daughter/son'. Otherwise, if a child fails, the child becomes a 'mother's daughter/son'. This discourse explains the bold move of Falley's father to provide social and financial support for her master's degree. This same discourse was articulated by one of the vice chancellors at a public university in an interview I held with him in his office. He described to me a recent incident in which his family had offered to educate a daughter of one of the male professors who had neglected to educate his daughter in preference for his sons. When the daughter eventually succeeded and won a scholarship to study for her bachelor's degree in Switzerland, the male professor began to identify with his daughter. He said: *'I would like to thank your wife because this daughter of mine has shown what very good genes I have ...'*. The vice chancellor commented on the reaction of the professor:

Now he (professor) says she is 'my daughter'. He forgets that 50% of the genes came from the wife! And yet, he is a professor of bio-chemistry. This gender bias is very deep-seated in the mind of people ... it is part of our upbringing in the home...

In both instances, the male professor and the father laid claim to their daughters only when they proved to be successful in their careers. That is, the fathers were obliged to position themselves appropriately in the face of their daughters' educational success. At the same time the success of the women challenged the basis of personal and cultural

biases and discrimination against the education of girls. What is noticeable in these two situations is the resilience of the women, disproving the prevailing moral and economic discourses against the education of women. Only after the daughters forged on successfully did the fathers want to be at the helm of the positive change their daughters were bringing to the family and to society in general.

Secondly, what prompted some fathers to shift position in favour of the education of the women is the effort the women made to stay connected to the natal family after getting married. The women and their spouses extended financial and social support to the women's parents, especially when they were in need. For instance, Falley recalls that she and her spouse '*... decided to set up a house for my mother because where she was staying was not a good place. Also when my father is sick, I am always the first person to go there ... take him to the hospital, look after him but not his boys*'. The filial gesture from Falley to support her parents also became a platform for self-examination by the father. The social and economic support from Falley and her spouse further deconstructed the patrilocal gender ideology in which the education of girls was considered to only benefit the marital family (Jackson 2012, Ebenstein 2014) and opened Falley's father up to support her younger sisters. He acknowledged publicly that: '*you people, my girls are the best*'. Reclaiming Falley's success was also how the father reclaimed his daughters as children of the family and not as temporary occupants waiting to migrate to their marital homes.

In all, the shift of position of Falley's father signals that Falley's successful educational career had managed to disprove the prevailing moral, economic, and cultural discourses. She had completed the education cycle, married, and was employed. These are signs of an accomplished career trajectory even in the cultural sense. This success inspired Falley's father to ignore the negative influences of unsupportive individuals in the family in favour of those who were supportive. What made Falley convince her father? There are several interconnected factors. The first factor was Falley's courage and determination to engage her father in dialogue. This helped the father to deal with some of the fears about educating women. Secondly, Falley's excellent academic performance convinced the father of her intellectual potential. Thirdly, Falley staying connected to the natal family deconstructed the patrilocal ideology that the education of girls only benefits their marital families. Fourthly, Falley's choice to stay

disciplined so as to be a role model to her sister siblings helped the father to perceive his daughters in a more favourable light.

Succumb to social pressure

Unlike Falley's father, Asema's father shifted from being supportive to being unsupportive regarding the education his daughter, especially in secondary school. Asema indicated that, although her father was not formally educated, he was initially enthusiastic and gave full support towards the education of his daughters. The key factor that earlier motivated Asema's father to educate all his children was his exposure to the benefits of education through religion and local political activities.

Through this exposure, Asema's father realised that the discourse of literacy was a changing requirement for participating in the political and religious activities in the community. This discourse was generated by the new religions and political systems that were introduced in Uganda by the colonial government. Colonial activities in Uganda shifted political and religious relations from a local to a national level. This meant people of different languages and ethnicity were merged into single political parties and religious affiliations. To keep these varied groups of people together, English was introduced as the official language for conducting political and religious activities at a national level (Isingoma, Bebwa; Meierkord, Christiane 2016, 52). This shift meant that successful local leaders who did not access formal education to learn English were pushed to the periphery of political and religious participation in the country. The shift also led to marginalisation and a lack of opportunities for members of the community who were regarded as 'illiterate'. For some of the members of the local community like Asema's father, this marginalisation became a source of motivation to have all his children go to formal schools. Asema pointed out that although her father was '*not schooled*' he had actively participated in local political and religious meetings. However, the nationalisation of political and religious activities marginalised him because he did not speak English: '*my father could not chair any of the national meetings because he did not speak the English language! The political committees he missed to chair got him very angry.*' Hence, he wanted all his children to acquire literacy in English through formal education.

English language in public discourse is perceived by most people in Uganda as a measure of intelligence and civilisation. The level of frustration of being marginalised for not speaking the English language is clearly captured by Phillipson (2003):

No-one pays attention to what you say unless you speak English, because English is the language of power ... The contemporary power of English makes itself felt in many fields. In international gatherings, there is a pecking order of languages. English has the sharpest beak, one that inflicts wounds on speakers of other languages. Discrimination against speakers of other languages is widespread, often without the users of English being aware that there is a problem (Phillipson 2003, 1, 5).

What becomes important for Asema's education is the choice of her father, given his marginalisation from the English language. He took proactive steps to formally educate his children not only to speak English but also for them to access future opportunities without being marginalised. The opportunities as envisioned by Asema's father were to have his children at the helm of leadership. It was the 1970s and he realised times had changed and that high social status did not offer automatic access to leadership positions. A leadership position was important to him, as far as influencing local and national politics and religion were concerned. What stands out in the position of Asema's father was the importance he attributed to literary skills for all his children so they could access leadership and career opportunities. Asema recalled:

So he thought lacking education in his life denied him so many opportunities and so many things. So, in his upbringing, he wanted all his children, boys and girls, to get that opportunity. And that is how, all of us, boys and girls in our family, got an education.

In this sense, Asema's father perceived formal education as the channel of exposure to the English language and thus future opportunities for his children. Educating all the children regardless of their gender was one way in which he could expand their future career options. There was a general realisation by Asema's father that colonialism and its related forces such as religion had come to stay.

That said, Asema's father could not pursue his ambitious education goal for his girls unhindered. He was subjected to enormous social and cultural pressure. For instance, Asema's father began to consider giving her out in marriage. One of the negative influences on Asema's father came from paternal relatives. This pressure could have a significant effect on the family because generally in the rural patrilocal setting, families of the same paternal lineages settle within the same locality. This setting makes

the family susceptible to gender ideologies that hold sway in a particular community. In the case of Asema, paternal relatives such as senior or junior fathers and female fathers are the main carriers of these gender ideologies. Without taking into account the specific experiences of families, the expectations by members of the community is that all families must conform to the prevailing gender and other related ideologies. Being the public face of the family, fathers are generally the main entry points of these ideologies in the family. Asema recalls that the pressure exerted by her paternal relatives swayed her father away from his original motivation to educate all his children:

... there is this cultural belief, the uncles, there are the relatives, they don't see the reason why a girl should remain in school ... and my father too succumbed. And my sister was given away in marriage at 16 ... The other relatives in the family are doing the same ... So now my turn comes, I am the second girl in the family ... actually after P.7, as a normal practice, I think I was 14, or 15 suitors began to come [amused] ... of course at this level the suitors were like maybe grade 3 teachers, businessmen in town ...

In fact, the nature of the suitors who were eyeing Asema as a potential wife motivated the father to withdraw her from school. Teachers and businessmen were preferred suitors because they were considered to have the capacity to pay a dowry for educated girls like Asema. The secondary school education level that Asema had achieved was the highest among her peers in the village. The teachers and businessmen were also considered literate and able to influence education and trade at a national level. These are the skills and traits that motivated Asema's father to send his children to school. Therefore, succumbing to the pressures of his relatives was not only because of the gender ideology but also his personal conviction that Asema had achieved the literacy skills he desired for her. This story resonates with Jackson's (2012, 2-3) observation that the:

Marriage market favours literate girls and thus marital mobility is an important motivation for education of girls ... the education of girls is not necessarily motivated by progressive gender ideas; such as parental ideas of equipping girls for employment, but by improving their chance of making good wives and home managers.

Therefore, the father was ready to give Asema away in marriage as was expected by his relatives. In the case of Asema it is evident that relatives, especially female fathers, influenced her father to shift his position against her education. Two main things helped Asema to survive being given away in early marriage and to continue with her

education: the intervention of her older brother; and her own personality. As Asema recounts: '*... But my brother intervened and I continued with school*', instead of being given out in marriage. The intervention of Asema's brother drew the attention of her father back to his original idea of having all the children educated. Her brother's intervention was crucial in keeping Asema on her education track especially during lower secondary school. In the next section I turn to the specific intervention strategy Asema's brother adopted to convince his father not to withdraw Asema from school.

The 'pen' as a tool for the women's survival

The case of Asema's brother illustrates the important role male siblings in patrilineal settings play in negotiating the education of their sisters. As young patriarchs and heirs to their fathers, boys positively influence major decisions regarding educational opportunities for the girls in the family. As a young patriarch, Asema's brother was conscious of the cultural context in which the family lived. Most importantly, as a university student, Asema's brother had grown to appreciate the value of education for himself and his sisters. When confronted with the plan to give Asema away in marriage, he strongly resisted the idea. The brother drew important aspects from prevailing gender norms and the personality of Asema to make a case against a marriage arrangement. In the meeting in which the plan for Asema's marriage was being discussed, her brother intervened with the following argument:

Mzeei, [in reference to the father] ... this girl, if you give her away at this age, be ready to refund peoples' cows ... because I don't see this girl marrying a man and being submissive to him ... this girl cannot marry and be a housewife and then you think you have finished. She is not tolerant ... it will not work. I don't see this girl being a good housewife! This girl will only survive through her pen, through her education.

Asema's brother succeeded in preventing a cultural arrangement in which she was to be given away in marriage by her father and her relatives. The brother manipulated and used the public construction of an ideal housewife in the community to argue against giving Asema in marriage without disgruntling his father. The brother was aware that the ideal housewife in the larger community is perceived as subordinate to the husband. The brother painted the exact opposite image of his sister, saying that she was not 'tolerant', that she was incapable of making a good wife and taking instructions from a husband. Asema herself acknowledged and confirmed that:

I grew up perhaps as people used to say, I was a naughty girl (laughs heartily), for me I didn't know I was, I thought I was very assertive. You will not force me to do things without my conscious saying 'yah you should do this'. I was a principled person who believed in myself.

Conscious of the father's ego as the head of the family, the brother in cultural respect addressed the father as '*Mzeei*', which literally means 'old wise man.' This title evokes respect but at the same time it appeals to the sense of responsibility, wisdom, and knowledge that is associated with older men in society. The brother's explanation of the possibility to '*refund the cows*' was a direct appeal to the father to reconsider the consequences of his decision to give Asema away in marriage. Refunding cows (dowry) after the marriage of Asema would point to her 'failure' as a wife and it would show the failure of the father as well. In Uganda, the gift of animals from a husband to the natal family of the wife is an honour. Conversely, the refund of animals and failure of a marriage is a dishonour that points to the incompetence of the parents in bringing up a good daughter. Secondly, Asema's failure as a wife would spell misfortune for the younger girls in the family because men would not want to marry them. The brother succeeded in convincing the father that Asema would bring embarrassment not only to himself but to the entire natal family because she was likely to be separated from the husband sooner than expected.

What stands out in the argument of Asema's brother is his ability to manipulate the way Asema was already perceived and formulated in the community as 'stubborn', to back up his argument against giving her away in marriage. Aware of the issue of 'bride price' (dowry) in society, the brother used the same logic of bride price to convince the father that it was not worth giving Asema away in marriage at her age. The logic of a 'bride price' operates on the assumption that the girl to be married off will conform to the expected social construct as an ideal wife in her marital home. Otherwise, the natal family is obliged to pay back the bride price to the marital family. Hence, to psychologically discourage the father, Asema's brother used the social framing of an 'ideal wife' to argue against giving Asema away in marriage.

In the context of public norms, Asema's brother positioned himself ultimately in defence of the public image of the family. He was also conscious that he commanded respect from his father at different levels. As an older sibling of Asema, the brother was aware of the mutual trust between himself and his father, which he could favourably use

to protect Asema. He was a male child who was expected to sustain the lineage of the father and protect it. Secondly, he was a university student in whom the father had invested resources. Therefore, his father trusted his wisdom and intellectual judgement about Asema's maturity and capacity to be a wife. As a young patriarch, Asema's brother 'played' the cultural game from within the public and private discourses to secure an educational career for his sister. In other words, to weaken the strong patriarchal structures that are in place in the family, there was a need to subvert the system using the patriarchs themselves. This was an important stepping stone for Asema, not only to access education but also to sustain her educational pathway. In a very real sense, Asema's brother was beginning to help the father to reflect on a new direction for the women in the family.

The whole argument of the brother demonstrated to the father that there was an alternative way of life for his daughter. The brother then counselled the father and suggested that *'this girl will only survive through her pen, through her education'*. This counsel brings a new perspective on the gender discourses in the family. Firstly, it points to a new direction of livelihood for women through education. The pen in this case is an important symbol of empowerment that shows that the necessary skills such as sourcing for livelihood and decision-making are acquired through formal education. Education becomes a source of freedom for women in terms of gaining financial independence through employment, which in turn gives the women control of their future. This notion of *'surviving with the pen'* questions the dominant gender ideology that men are breadwinners and women are subservient to men. It also challenges the gendered ideology that sees bride wealth as the only benefit the natal family can gain from the education of their girls. Asema's brother succeeded in using the public discourse on an ideal wife and the logic of dowry to shape his family's discourse on the survival of girls through education.

The case of the fathers who shifted their positions illustrated how strong socio-cultural influences can be on a family that is plunged into this kind of environment. Fathers, as heads of the family, were more susceptible to this influence than other individuals in the family, and in some cases caused fathers to shift their position negatively, against the education of the girls. In turn, when fathers negatively did so, women became vulnerable, especially in the early years of their education because they

still depended on their natal families for support. Hence, due to the socio-cultural pressures on fathers, it was never a guarantee that girls would be enrolled in school. Furthermore, if they were enrolled, there was no assurance they would complete the education cycle. As a result, the movement of women along their education trajectory was a process that required constant negotiation, with the help of supportive mothers and brothers. The intervention from mothers, which was the case with Falley, or a brother in Asema's case, became crucial in getting the fathers' attention. This dynamic helped to diffuse negative public influences that found their way into the family. However, there were fathers who took the lead in educating their children regardless of their gender. These fathers mobilised resources from their network of friends, relatives, and workplaces to educate their children. In these cases, the role of the other individuals in the family was supplementary to that of the fathers.

In the next section, I turn to the last category of fathers who were fully supportive of the women. The section highlights the motivations behind the support of fathers and the role individuals in the family have in the education of their girls.

Supportive relatives

Supportive fathers and relatives (including mothers) were those who supported the education of the women regardless of the moral and economic discourses in the family or society. One of the fathers who offered unlimited support for the education of his daughters was Gukanu's father. Gukanu was born in a monogamous Christian family and her father was an Anglican priest. In relation to the economic standing of the family, Gukanu indicated that: *'We were very poor. My elder sisters couldn't go to secondary (school); they stopped at junior (secondary). Then my brother went up to senior (secondary). I followed my brother'*. Unlike her siblings, Gukanu went to school at a time when there was a possibility for scholarship opportunities in the church. Through the position of her father as a priest, Gukanu benefited from a *'church bursary for children of the clergy who were going to secondary school'*. This scholarship enabled Gukanu to sustain her educational pathway especially in primary and lower secondary schools, because upper secondary and university education were government sponsored.

Besides the clerical position of the father that helped her win the church scholarship, Gukanu attributed the direction and speed of her education trajectory to the

inspirational and motivational role of her father. She particularly recalled an incident in which:

... my father one day wrote me a letter and said *'I went for a retreat in Makerere University, and I saw girls at the university, I want you to join the university...'* My dream of being a nurse changed completely. I said: *'my father wants me to become a university person [taps the table to emphasise]! What I study is not his business!'* [Amused]. So I started reading to go to university ...

According to Gukanu, this letter from her father influenced her choice of an education path to the university; she then switched from pursuing nursing following the professional track to pursuing university education through the high school track. This choice enabled Gukanu to move faster along her educational track into the university. Besides changing the direction of her education pathway, her father's letter heralded a broad horizon in which Gukanu saw opportunities for her educational and professional career. Most importantly for Gukanu, her father neither limited her career choices nor defined what track she should follow. What he did was set university education as a target. Behind the inspirational role of Gukanu's father was his exposure to a wider public through his religious activities. It was this exposure that made the father realise how other parents were making choices for a university education for their daughters. He too envisaged the possibility of a university education for his daughter and encouraged Gukanu to aim higher than a certificate in nursing at a tertiary institution along the professional education track.

There are factors that account for why Gukanu's father acted differently. First, since formal education was introduced in Uganda through Christian missionaries, Gukanu's father, an Anglican priest, had an obligation to not only promote formal education but also to educate his children. At a personal level, education for Gukanu's father was not only about knowledge acquisition but also better placement of Gukanu in her future professional career. Gukanu's father had failed to do higher education himself, and could not pay for his older children's higher education due to poverty. He saw the church scholarship for Gukanu as the only prospect to realise his own dream and the dreams of the family. He entrusted his dreams for a prosperous future to Gukanu in these words:

... *'Gukanu, if you ever sleep in a nice bed, it will be me sleeping in that bed! If you ever drive a car of your own, it will be me driving that car!'* He said, *'I have been*

able to get what I am able to get but what you will be able to get, you as my children, it will be me'. So that is the inspiration of my father!

The father envisioned Gukanu's education as a sign of his own prestige and success over poverty. He saw his life continued in Gukanu; a view that is a deviation from the cultural norms of continuity of the family lineage through male children. This is a radical departure, 'stripping' gender from the lineage question so that continuity of the family lineage is through any child and not necessarily boys. A similar perspective from a father was experienced by Kameo: *'to tell the truth, from the beginning, being a first born, my father really wanted me to study.'* Valuing the first-born girl challenges the core of the culture of lineage continuity through boys, especially in a patrilineal setting like Uganda. The fathers of Gukanu and Kameo took the issue of continuity to another level by comparing cultural lineage to career lineage. On the one hand, cultural lineage presupposes a set of cultural structures that limit the continuity of family lineage to boys as permanent residents in the natal home. On the other hand, career lineage as the fathers envisioned is the continuity of the family through education and knowledge. This implies that career continuity is constructed in the process of investing in the education of the children. So while in cultural lineage the status to be continued is pre-defined, in a career lineage, the status to be continued is constructed and unfolds with the education pathways. For instance, whereas the son becomes heir to the father by virtue of being born male, in career lineage the status to be continued is irrelevant. In other words, the father does not know in what form he will be 'continued' along career lines. For instance, Gukanu became an associate professor, while Kameo is a senior administrator. Both academics and administrators are a kind of status that could not have been explicitly envisioned by the fathers as they foresaw their own continuity through the education of their daughters.

At another level, the supportive fathers also envisioned formal education as a means of intellectual, economic, and social empowerment. The fathers saw education as a means to freedom for their daughters to make appropriate choices for self-reliant lives. Gukanu specifically recalled how her father challenged her when she complained to him about her husband:

... I was saying to my father: 'I do not have money, my husband does not give me money'. My father replied: 'I gave you a degree; what have you done with it? You will do anything on earth with that degree!'

To Gukanu's father, formal education offered infinite possibilities, including those of changing gender relations in the household. Most importantly, through education, Gukanu's father expected her to change her attitude of dependence on her husband. He believed that education would enrich Gukanu with knowledge and skills for employment, which in turn would empower her financially.

Nyepe's father also belongs to the category of supportive fathers. The status of Nyepe's father as a civil servant in the Ministry of Education was important. He valued education for himself and for his children without discrimination. Nyepe pointed out that:

I think what dad helped us with is respecting our decisions and encouraging us ... He never made us feel we are less than the boys. If he had done that, I think it would have affected us. But he has been there, I think for all of us at every stage. But also you know as children, you struggle to please your dad anyway. If you gained dad's approval, then you are doing something good [laughs]. Yes. So I think in a way, we have all worked towards making sure he is proud of us and I think it pulls through in all that we do. I am just thinking now ... It was like mummy's happiness and love was guaranteed [laughs]], but the love of dad? You are not sure [amused]! You have to earn it.

Nyepe's narrative raised another issue. Although her father was supportive, he still had to be strategically manipulated to sustain his support. Nyepe did not take for granted her father's support towards her education. She worked hard to confirm and sustain his support. The relationship between Nyepe and her father was 'a give and take'. The father set his name as an educational target for the children to earn. He told them: *'The only time you'll choose to use my name is when you excel in school'*. In Ugandan societies, there are no family names¹³. Each individual has her/his own surname that is coined out of circumstances surrounding the pregnancy and birth of the child. In the case of Nyepe, the father's attempt to set his name as a target was purely for academic purposes and

¹³For instance, Draru is my name and not a family name. It was coined out of the life-threatening bleeding that almost took my life and that of my mother at my birth. My name identifies me within the larger Madi tribe but not my nuclei family because my father's is Odiki and my mother is Akwero. The three of us (me, mother, and father) have no common name. We can only be identified by our tribe, and not family nucleus. What are referred to as first names in western societies are, in Uganda, religious names (Christian/Muslim) given to children several months or years after birth, as an initiation into a religious community, either through baptism for Christians or circumcision for Muslims. The only exception in naming are twins who are born into ready-made names: whether they are born in family A or family B the names remain the same. A few civil servants and educated-class parents have attempted to create a 'family name' but even then, the name of the father will be a third or fourth name added to a child's proper names. For instance, I would be 'Draru Mary Cecilia **Odiki**'. In this additional name, my ancestry line can be traced only up to my father (**Odiki**) but not to my grandfather, who is **Palia**.

not because it was the family name. The name of the father was thus used to bet on academic relationships, and was meant to encourage his children to excel in school.

Nyepe makes another important point. As indicated, while she and her siblings were assured of their mother's love, a relationship with their father had to be earned through academic excellence. This is evidenced by the fact that Nyepe and her siblings were registered in primary school with their own proper names. It was only in final year of primary school, when taking the final national examinations, that the children could take the name of their father if they so wished. In this way, the father's name was an extra identity, associated with academic excellence. At another level, by associating his name with academic excellence, Nyepe's father was claiming a symbol of his success through the academic performance of the children. Failure to excel in academics would be tantamount to a betrayal of the father's name and ultimately the relationship with the father. The difference between the father's name as a relationship and an identity became evident when Nyepe revealed that:

... setting his name as a price for academic excellence was a good and bad thing for him because none of us chose his name, but we excelled in school. It was good in such a way that we knew what he was expecting of us in terms of academic performance and character. It was bad because now he cannot claim us as we don't have his name [laughs].

Striving to earn the relationship with her father was a good strategy that helped Nyepe not only preserve the identity of the family but also in the process retain her own name and identity. This choice also meant that whatever academic success Nyepe achieved would define her identity and not necessarily that of her father. The story also shows patrilineage is contextual in terms of practice. In Uganda, although the children follow the father's lineage, each person retains his or her identity in the family.

Another source of inspiration that helped fathers to appreciate the education of the women was from the male mothers (maternal uncles). These are culturally the father's male wives (brothers to his wife) but conventionally his brothers-in-law. Kameo recalled that:

... my mother never went to school, she did not have formal education, but she comes from a family where there are people [brothers] who studied up to some extent. And so my father said, *"You know, you've seen from your uncles, some people who went to school. It is good to study..."*

Although there were no females as role models from either the maternal (junior mothers) or paternal relatives (female fathers), at least Kameo's male mothers had accessed school. This was important according to Kameo because, like her mother, her junior mothers (maternal aunts) did not go to school. However, among her maternal relatives, men (male mothers) were educated more, relative to women (junior mothers). Kameo's father did not draw Kameo's attention to these gendered aspects of education in the maternal home. Rather, he focused on the educated male mothers (maternal uncles) as role models for Kameo. In this way, he protected Kameo and focused her attention on education and not on gender issues that influenced the education practice of her maternal relatives.

Given the lack of role models among his own family members and in his community, Kameo's father decided to send her off for fosterage to her male mother, as Kameo recalled:

I remember my movement from Layibi Primary to Ireda primary school was because my father said *"if you go to that primary school and live with an uncle of yours in Lira, you will go to a better senior secondary school"* ... It is my father who said: *"primary seven? [Last year in primary school] You can't study here. This school, you know, doesn't perform well. So go and stay with your uncle and definitely you can be sure to join a better secondary school"...*

Fosterage in Kameo's case was a strategy of her father to enable her to access a good school and to live in an environment that supported education for women. Besides being educational role models, Kameo's fosterage by her male mothers can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, in relation to Kameo, her maternal uncle 'ceased' to be male; he is considered a mother figure. Therefore, culturally he is expected to not discriminate against what comes symbolically from his 'womb'. Secondly, symbolically as a male wife to the father of Kameo, the maternal uncle is not expected to contradict decisions already taken by his 'husband' about Kameo's education. In this context, the education of Kameo was more secure in the hands of her male mothers than in her natal family.

Additionally, fosterage was a cultural entitlement in the clan for children who were orphaned or without parental care due to political exile. The narrative of Sakira shows a case in which fosterage was voluntary, with her male mother. She recalled: *'We were children of a single mother (widowed) who benefited from our uncles. My mother was very close to her brothers; one of our uncles who is a teacher at Mengo was our guardian'*.

Sakira underscored the close relation ties her mother kept with the brothers as an important factor that made the male mothers offer fosterage. Otherwise, it was not their obligation since they are maternal relatives and by lineage, the children do not belong to the clan of the mother.

In the absence of supportive fathers, either because of death or because of war, some female fathers (paternal aunts) were obliged by other relatives to step in to foster the girls. The case of a father's death was narrated by Sakira, whose father died when she was four years old. She stated that to support her youthful and widowed mother:

... the clan decided to give the children to people who could help her for some time ... My maternal side was extremely supportive but also my paternal side had to do something. So I went with my aunt, my father's sister. She took me when I was four and a half years old, because I did nursery school with her.

Similarly, Rakia narrated that when her parents were exiled because of political turmoil in Uganda in the 1970s, the clan decided to give them out in fosterage: *'When my parents went away, we had nobody to look after us. So the clan, I would say, decided to sit and distribute the children to relatives. I had to move to stay with my paternal aunt ... who was a teacher and kept on moving'*. In both cases, the clan obliged the female fathers to foster the girls as responsible members of the natal family and next of kin to the father of the girls. In this case female fathers paid fees as fathers but also provided social support along the education trajectories of Sakira and Rakia.

Hence the specific role of the supportive fathers focused on financial support but most importantly on inspiring and setting education targets for the women to achieve. The fathers also adopted fosterage as a strategy to enable their daughters to access good schools and to live in an educationally motivating environment. A study by Notermans (2008) about child fosterage in Eastern Cameroon showed that in some cases children themselves seek fosterage as a strategy to gain access to schools. However, fosterage of the women who participated in this study was organised by clan members or by parents, as was the case with Kameo, not by the children themselves.

In all, fosterage in the narratives was initiated either by parents, clan members, or individuals within the community. Fosterage became necessary especially when the father died or when both parents were forced to separate from their children for political reasons. The main aim of fosterage was to enable children to access good schools and financial, social, and academic support from relatives and community

members. Fosterage in the narratives pointed frequently to the absence of the fathers. Alongside the fathers were mothers whose support was appreciated by the women as crucial along their education pathway. There were some mothers who made specific contributions to the education of the women. In the next section I turn to the specific roles played by the mothers in the education trajectory of the women.

4.5 'My mother was always there for me': Maternal Support

Important support along the women's education trajectories was provided by mothers, regardless of their social or financial status or literacy levels. This situation contradicts Kwesiga's (2002, 53) argument that a mother's lack of education has an adverse effect on a girl's access to schooling. The findings in my research show that actually the opposite was true: a lack of educational opportunity was the basis for which mothers advocated for the education of their daughters. The mothers wanted the girls to be better situated than they had been, through education. As such, some of the women highlighted the financial and social support of the mothers as being key to their educational success. Although as mentioned earlier, the responsibility of financial support culturally rested on the fathers, in some cases mothers stepped in and paid school fees for their daughters. The support of mothers came as an intervention when fathers were either resistant or negligent towards a girl's education or when fathers had died.

One of the interventionist roles can be seen in the story of Oprah's mother, who was an illiterate woman in a rural setting. Oprah recalled that: *'it was actually my mum who paid my fees in primary one, because my father was paying for my brother, as you know the culture at that time'*. Oprah's mother never had formal schooling, but she resisted the gender discriminatory practices of her husband towards the education of the children. It was she who took the initiative to enrol and pay for Oprah to go to primary school. The case of Oprah demonstrates the gendered nature of the cultural discourse that prefers boys to girls. In relation to education, what can be noted is the double standard used by Oprah's father to test the academic ability of boys and girls. For instance, he gave her brother a chance to demonstrate his academic ability in school. Oprah felt it was simply a foregone conclusion that she was academically poor and therefore not worthy of being enrolled in school. Such a discourse not only questioned the intellectual capacity of women but also influenced decisions about their educational

career. The intervention of Oprah's mother to pay for her initial school fees is an example of an active confrontation of this cultural discourse.

The intervention of Oprah's mother, in which she succeeded in resisting and pushing back the influence of the cultural discourses in the family, also meant that, ultimately, her influence created a demarcation between the norms that prevailed in the larger society and the private norms of the family. By convincing Oprah's father to assume his duty of paying her school fees, the mother successfully blocked the main entry point of negative public discourses into the family. The fact that Oprah's father chose not to use his cultural powers to prevent her mother from sending her to school provided another opportunity for Oprah. Oprah's father faced a dilemma: he found himself caught between his family obligation of paying school fees and his social role as the custodian and promoter of cultural norms in the community. The timely intervention of the mother, coupled with Oprah's ability to demonstrate her academic credibility, clarified that dilemma of the father, who turned around and fully supported her education from primary two onwards.

Mothers also intervened when school administrators refused to enrol the girls in school because they were thought to be underage. This was the case of Eturia's mother, who was a nurse in a rural health centre:

My mother organised a regular school programme for me. She would give me exercises and prepare the work for me. I had regular school time at home ... with breaks! She was the one supervising ... I followed that programme; wake up in the morning, bath, have breakfast, go to school at home. Start either mathematics, 40 minutes ... I had lessons, English lessons, I was reading books then break ... go and have some porridge and play a little bit. And then come back, lunch time, after lunch, go and bath and sleep and you know, it was a regular school thing ... for one year I was in school at home ... I cannot imagine the kind of, you know, foresight and commitment that my mother had ... So when I went to P.1., I was above P.1. (Level), because I had done multiplication, I had done division, I had done addition at home. I have always liked reading and studying. And I think I got that from that point.

The intervention of the mother to organise home schooling for Eturia shows that she recognised Eturia as intellectually above her age. The mother counteracted the frustration that Eturia felt, being denied enrolment in school because she was young. Additionally, extra lessons at home helped Eturia to overcome the frustrations she would experience later among her peers who were developing at a normal pace

equivalent to their age. In this way her mother stood as a bridge between school and home education.

Besides interventionist roles, mothers also acted in their own rights as parents to provide social support for the women as they moved along their education trajectory. This support was captured in Lucasia's narrative. Lucasia made a clear distinction between the roles of her parents who were both medical doctors working in urban hospital:

The people who helped me most were my parents, because they were very supportive, especially my mother. My father was in the background much of the time. He wasn't a guy who loved things like visiting me in school ... So my mother was always there for me. Even my father, I can't say he wasn't [supportive] because he paid fees but mummy was always there for me at home and in school.

An important distinction that Lucasia makes between her parents is that her father fulfilled the financial obligations expected of parents. Her mother, besides the daily provision of food and helping with homework, went an extra mile to give her daughter social support by visiting her in school. Visiting children, especially in boarding school, is important. For one thing, during visitation, a parent meets classroom teachers to discuss the academic progress of their child. Parents during visitation have access to the curriculum content of what is taught in class. As well, visiting the child in school helps the parents provide social and other non-academic support. A child spends most of her time in school. By visiting, parents can address relational issues between students and teachers, and among students. This extra maternal support was appreciated by Lucasia much more than the fulfilment of the minimum obligations of school demands such as school fees.

'I want you to be everything that I have never been in life'

Unlike the fathers who saw their continuity in the successful girls, the mothers saw beyond just themselves in their daughters, and set themselves as foundations on which the girls could build their own lives. This important dynamic was captured in the narrative of Miina, whose mother was a primary school teacher in an urban primary school. The mother had stopped in lower secondary school. In spite of her low level of education:

When I was in senior three, my mother told me: *'I don't want you to drop out in senior four; you are a brilliant young girl, you can go as high as I would have wanted to go'* because she dropped out when she had her first child. So that's

where she stopped school. She wanted me to go way higher ... I remember especially in my secondary school when I reached adolescence, she told me verbally and also one time wrote me a letter and in that letter she told me she wanted me to be everything she had never been in life, and that being a girl did not mean my chances are limited. So for me that was very encouraging, to come from a fellow woman, especially my mum!

In the above quote it is evident that Miina's mother offered her personal experience as a script for Miina to read as she developed her own script. The mother's experience showed the disadvantage of a low level of education. She set herself as the foundation upon which Miina could continue to build a better education career. In other words, the mother offered herself as an example of the negative effect of a lower education. She used her life experience to motivate Miina to aim higher in her own education. This was a major role that mothers played, to provide inspiration to the daughters. The discourse advanced by Miina's mother is that education is the key to shape a better future for her daughter. The mother showed solidarity with Miina, not only as a biological parent but most importantly as a 'fellow woman'. She became a source of motivation for Miina to keep to her education pathway.

Additionally, the inspirational role of the mother showed Miina that education is the key to shaping a better future for women. Mothers saw far more than their own image in their daughters and were in fact shifting the discourse in the family away from patrilocality. Mothers were giving daughters a sense of belonging to their own natal family. This outlook was driven by the realisation that the daughters stood a chance to achieve what the mothers had failed to achieve for themselves. Therefore, education for the mothers was not only the route to empowerment but also to a 'new womanhood', which is identified with and built on career development. In this context, Miina's mother was also contesting the dominant image of womanhood. Lucasia¹⁴ described it so:

... a home and iron-roofed houses, and children... The way we are brought up, it is like a woman does not have to struggle so hard. Achieve the minimum: that is enough for you. So I always hear people saying: for a woman, what is a PhD for? Have one degree, have a good job, that's it. The men should study hard because they are the ones who are supposed to make much money ... It is actually part of the cultural beliefs. I think it was because in those days they thought we were weaklings and it still seeps through. But there is more to life than that.

¹⁴ Lucasia is an assistant lecturer in her 30s. She is married and has two children.

This image confined women strictly to the domestic realm. Hence, although the dominant public discourse about women was still unchanged, in the family the discourse was rapidly changing. Mothers particularly of the older generation of women played an important role in deliberately resisting public norms that mitigated against the education of women. Mothers of the younger generation of women presented themselves to their daughters a model of womanhood that was based on professional public career development and financial independence, rather than simply homemaking. Therefore, anchored onto their private domain and using it as a springboard, the mothers were able to positively influence their daughters' education pathway. They did this through their own participation in the life of their family and through launching and encouraging their daughters to pursue education for a public career. The most crucial role mothers played was to prepare the daughters to stand firm against the dominant public norms against women. Some mothers of the older generation of women actively confronted the public norms, especially if they were having a negative influence on the girls in the family. To the women in this study, mothers were not just parents. They were friends, fellow women, and role models who motivated and inspired.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the natal family as the first contextual factor that significantly influenced the women's education pathway and responded to the second specific research question regarding the context of the natal family. Cox and Paley's (2003) concept of the family as a systemic 'unit whole' was unpacked to make visible the contextual dynamic relationships and interactions therein. The relationships show personal bonds that individual relatives built to connect to the women in the family, while the interactions relate to how individuals within the family reacted to decisions regarding the women's accessing formal education. The contextual dynamics are a product of these relationships and interactions between individual relatives with respect to specific issues within the family. In this case, the specific issue included the contextual beliefs and norms in the natal family that defined both educational opportunities and constraints for the women.

Contrary to Cox and Paley's (2003) notions of the family as a stable 'system whole', the findings in this chapter demonstrate that within the family there is a complex network of relationships and interactions that do not allow the family to function as a

unit-whole. The outcomes of these relationships and interactions are uncertain in relation to the education pathways of the women. This uncertainty creates a fluid situation in the family, which then allows room for exploring opportunities and for change, positive or negative, in attitudes regarding women's education. In other words, the fluid nature of the family allowed members to function as individuals who related to the women at different levels. The fluidity of the family also allowed individuals to deviate from the existing set of norms and beliefs about the education of women. In this interaction, individual relatives have the possibility of supporting, negotiating, resisting, conflicting with and shifting positions on educational opportunities for the women along their education pathway.

The fluid nature of the family was triggered by the changing social context of the larger society. Increasingly, individual members in the natal family were being directly or indirectly exposed to the benefits of formal education. In this regard, the role played by Christianity was particularly remarkable (45 of the 47 women were born in Christian families). As pioneers of formal education in Uganda, Christian churches emphasised formal education for their followers. Religious influences on parents were, in sum, changing family relationships. As a result, religious affiliation took precedence over blood relation in regard to education, which in turn eliminated, to some degree, the negative influence of cultural bias that would have obstructed the education pathway of the women. Experiences of social discrimination due to illiteracy especially among some parents of the older and middle generation of women also made these parents appreciate the value of formal education for their children. Consequently, exposure to the benefits of formal education inspired parents to create stimulating family environments that encouraged the women and their siblings to pursue education careers despite opposition from individual relatives.

Consequently, three categories of individual relatives emerged in the natal family. These were: the supportive, the unsupportive, and the wavering relatives. The first category included individual relatives who supported and sustained the women's education career through financial, social, and psychological means. This category of family member was motivated by their own experience of educational exposure, or deprivation, and by religious affiliations. The supportive category of relatives focused on the personal connections with the women and not on the prevailing negative social

norms against the education of women. The second category, the unsupportive, adhered to strict norms, beliefs, and practices that mitigated against women's education. Changes of attitude among these resistant relatives were slow. As such, they were a major constraint in the natal family, which the women could only overcome with the intervention of supportive relatives. To be fair, the resistance towards the education of women by unsupportive relatives was their attempt to keep the family as a stable single 'unit whole' system. To offset this influence required the intervention of supportive relatives and the women's sheer persistence that obliged unsupportive relatives to eventually call into question their long-held assumptions and beliefs. In the third category were wavering individuals who shifted positions for or against the education of the women at some points along the education trajectory. The wavering individuals were in constant negotiation with the conflict between personal beliefs and adherence to cultural norms. The impact of these individuals created both opportunities but also constraints at specific points along the women's education pathway.

The differences of opinion individual relatives held in relation to the women's education did not allow the family to function as a unit whole. Rather, within the natal family several maternal and paternal relational units intersected, which influenced family relations differently. The culturally powerful 'female fathers' who resisted women's education were neutralised by culturally authoritative 'male mothers' who were in full support of the education of the women. These contextual dynamics in the family determined the direction and speed of the women's education pathways. This dynamic confirms Kwesiga's (2002, 55-56) notion that the family is an important institution in the life of the women because it determines their opportunities and, most importantly, the constraints in life. Kwesiga's focus on the negative influence of the family on women's education career is confirmed by the presence of unsupportive individual relatives along the women's education pathways. However, Kwesiga paid insufficient attention to the complexity and the diverse dynamics within the family and, as a result, in an undifferentiated way blames society as well as families for women dropping out of school.

In relation to Kwesiga, the findings in this study confirm that the social family context can negatively affect women's education pathway. That said, differences in disposition in individual relatives actually generated educational opportunities for

women's education. Negative influence from unsupportive relatives may have disturbed or disrupted the process but they did not necessarily lead to a 'leak out' of the education pipeline. The reasons why are significant. Firstly, the fluid and dynamic nature of the family also generated supportive individuals who championed women's education. Secondly, this fluidity created an unstable context that was changing at the same time that individual attitudes and social norms were also changing. At every critical juncture along the education pathway, the fluid family situation provided opportunities for negotiation with individual relatives who shifted positions in favour of the women's education.

Male relatives in particular played a crucial support role. Among these was the father, who remained a focal person through whom individual family members coordinated interactions, as they sought to express their views for or against the education of women. Supportive and unsupportive members of the family also received feedback from each other, which better prepared them to forge new reflections on the education of women. With respect to fluidity, the father figure became an important symbol of competing checks and balances between supportive and unsupportive relatives. This influence was more explicitly evident in rural families with fewer educated members than in urban families in which most members had gone to school. Urban family members, because of their own appreciation of formal education, were better positioned socially to support the education of the women.

Another point of significance is that men in the family context, especially in a rural family, had dual roles, what in a Ugandan context would be called 'two faces'. On the one hand, men were patriarchs, an embodiment of the tradition of the family and a custodian of gender ideologies in society. On the other hand, men were parents, siblings, and male mothers responsible for the daughters in the family. This situation put fathers at a crossroads most of the time. They were not typical patriarchs in whom all powers in the family resided. Instead, the fathers were points of negotiation for both supportive and unsupportive members of the family. Thanks to these two 'faces' of the men, the father in particular, the women and supportive relatives were able to derive the opportunities for the education of women. For instance, the women positioned themselves appropriately to deal with the two faces of the fathers. Women appealed to the parental face of their fathers to claim their filial entitlement to education. The

women dialogued with their fathers and questioned practices of individuals within the family that mitigated against the women continuing their education. In addition, the women proved their prospects in education were excellent through superior academic performance. Navigating between the two 'faces' of the father, supportive members of the family checked and controlled the excessive pressure from unsupportive members by emphasising the parental rather than the cultural face of the father as a strategy to sustain the women along their education pathway.

Although centred on the fathers, the boundaries of the natal family remained fluid. Individual members moved in and out of the family, floated ideas and comments, and ignited a discourse for or against the women. In the family, discourses were generated but also dissolved, and when all was said and done, it was primarily the father who had to sort out the various perspectives that relatives brought to bear upon the subject of women's education.

As a consequence of these dynamics, the women experienced the natal family as an environment in which they were both protected but also vulnerable, especially since educational opportunities were not a matter of personal choice based on career preference but a result of constant negotiations among individual relatives. Their experience brings into question Eccles' (1994) central notion of choice in relation to career achievement for women in Uganda. Given the fluidity of the natal family, the women's choice as articulated in this chapter was in fact limited. Education opportunities for these women depended on supportive relatives and their ability to negotiate and resist the negative influences of unsupportive relatives. These contextual dynamics either slowed down or increased the speed and even changed the direction of the women's education pathway. Hence, the education pathway the women took was not simply a matter of individual or private choice based on career preference. What is notable here is the capacity of the women and supportive relatives to deal with the contextual challenges within the natal family. These contextual dynamics, rather than intellectual gifts, determined not only women's choices but also the speed and direction of their education pathways.

That said, the women's agency was also crucial in propelling them along these pathways. The women reacted tactfully and strategically to discouragement and to blocks or impediments along the way. If anything, the women embraced occasions that

posed threats to their education pathway as critical moments for dialogue and reflection and as a way of resisting negative influences against their education. In specific instances, the women were also prepared to compromise and to follow cost-effective but undesired pathways as a strategy to keep on track with education. This strategy resonates with the neo-feminist stance of Nnaemeka (2004), which depicts women's agency as the ability to know when to resist, negotiate, and compromise social influences without losing focus on their career aspirations. In sum, the nature of the women's education pathways was more an expression of the women's ability to navigate between negotiable and non-negotiable family circumstances than it was the expression of simple personal choice and individual career interest.

With respect to the life course perspective of Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharma (2013), the findings in this chapter concur that the family is indeed heterogeneous. The heterogeneity in this study consisted of the different relationship positions individual relatives held in the family in relation to the women, and, as such, the capacity of an individual relative to positively or negatively influence the women's education pathways differed. This was evident in the position of 'female fathers' and 'male mothers' in relation to the women. While 'male mothers' remained generally positive towards the education of their nieces, 'female fathers' changed position depending on whether they themselves had been formally schooled or not. The more educated 'female fathers' in urban locations tended to be more supportive than their less educated counterparts in mostly rural settings. Heterogeneity in the family is also reflected in the diverse perspectives and values individual family members held as they related and dialogued with each other about women's education. There is a pragmatic note here as well: it was easier to speak to and negotiate with individuals than it would have been to address a whole family system. Personal relationships thus played a crucial role, generating the possibility for individual members to develop their own personal discourses and to appreciate the value of women's education. These discourses were either based on an individual's own experience of the disadvantages arising from a lack of education, or the advantages enjoyed as a result of education. Either way it was in the heterogeneous relations that the women claimed and negotiated their entitlement to education with individual relatives in the family.

The findings also show that cultural and social contexts are not fixed. The women's narratives make explicit the kinds of changes that were occurring in society and in the family. These changes were facilitated by the neo-local context of families who settled in distant locations, far away from close family relations. This distance reduced the influence of and pressure from patrilocal relations. Additionally, the influence of progressive and liberal neo-local contexts and the influence of religions, especially Christianity, had positive impacts on the support for women's education. This change is evident in the narratives of women from different generations. Those 50 years old and up faced more obstacles from cultural ideas and beliefs against women's education than did the younger generation of women, those in their 20s at the time of the research.

The actual formal education process of course was the responsibility of schools, colleges, and universities, and what is striking is that, in the domain of educational institutions, women could not mobilise support as easily as they had in their families. If anything they had to reach for opportunities and negotiate constraints single-handedly. Thus women's agency became an important tool for resisting and challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination in educational institutions. This domain is discussed in depth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE - '*SHE IS THE ONLY BOY IN CLASS*': NEGOTIATING GENDER

DISCRIMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Gender in the classroom emerged as a second recurrent contextual theme in the narratives of the women in my study. In different ways, women pointed to gendered experience especially in their interaction with teachers but also with their male classmates in science classrooms. This gendered experience is captured by the phrase: '*she is the only boy in the class*', articulated by Falley, a lecturer of mathematics who is married and in her 40s. The phrase expresses the gendered reaction that Falley met with when she joined a mathematics class, the only girl among 13 boys in the National Teacher College (NTC). Falley's experience is similar to the majority of the women who pursued a career in science-related subjects, which have generally been constructed as being masculine (Pollack, E., 2013). Even in non-science-based classrooms, women still narrated experiences with gender discrimination. This chapter is built on the classroom experience as a contextual factor that influenced both the direction and the speed of the education pathways of the women in my study.

One of the most common functions of a classroom is as a space for teaching and learning. A sociological perspective on the function of the classroom by Parsons (in Ballantine and Spade 2014, 35), in his study of schools in Boston in the USA, speaks of the classroom as an agent of socialisation. He recognised that although there are many socialising agents, such as the family, religious institutions, and peer groups, the classroom remains an important agent of the education system. Parsons argued that motivationally, it is in the classroom that an individual's personality is trained so as to fit in with the larger society. As such, the classroom trains an individual child to gain not only academic knowledge but also to gain the practical skills needed to perform adult roles in society. Parsons also recognised that classroom learning becomes increasingly complex as one moves from primary school to university. For instance, while the lower levels of primary school are less complex because pupils of the same grade are placed together under one teacher, in the upper primary and higher levels of education, students work on different subjects under different teachers. Each of these teachers brings their own gendered values and beliefs about what girls and boys can or cannot do into the classroom. As such, Parsons argues from an American context that having different teachers for different subjects increases the complexity of gendered differences

between students throughout the classroom learning process. This is because some teachers may be insensitive to the gender diversity in the classroom (Parsons in Ballantine and Spade 2014, 35-36).

The idea of the classroom as an agent of socialisation makes it a complex space where gendered values and practices continue to influence learning in schools. I argue that whether pupils are guided by one or several teachers does not make a significant difference in terms of the social background and beliefs which teachers and pupils carry into class. Each teacher brings into the classroom her or his own set of social beliefs about boys and girls in relation to the subject, which in turn influences how the teacher will motivate or discourage students regarding building a career in that same subject. Similarly, each pupil (boy or girl) also carries his or her own gendered values and beliefs, which influence their interaction with each other and with their classroom teachers. Teachers' and pupils' beliefs influence formal and informal learning in the classroom. As Colclough (2015, 2) contends, both male and female teachers can be role models and provide a sense of direction to boys and girls in the classroom. However, Colclough cautions that teachers cannot be expected to easily separate themselves from the powerful cultural influences and social norms in which they themselves were raised. Teachers carry their cultural influences and social norms into the classroom, and these influence classroom learning. Given these considerations, the classroom becomes an important unit for analysis to understand the gendered experiences of women in educational institutions and how their experiences influenced their education pathway.

In this study, I will analyse the classroom interaction between the women, their teachers, and fellow students from a gender perspective. I will argue that women in the classroom are not just victims of the school's gendered values and practices. The women interact in the classroom but they also have the capacity to confront gendered practices through strategies that are keyed to what circumstances in the classroom permit. One such strategy according to Tyson (2014) is for women to look at their relationship with patriarchal ideology in the classroom as a dynamic situation, against which they must constantly struggle to understand and against which they must resist how patriarchy dictates their lives. Tyson observes that patriarchy is the basis from which influential cultural and social norms generate their legitimacy. Theorising ways out of patriarchy requires women to think about their immersion in it not as an all-or-nothing situation

but as a dynamic situation that can change. Tyson argues that although patriarchy dictates women's lives, the profound degree of influence may or may not be individually or collectively apparent. Therefore, there is a need for women to move forward even if in some cases they experienced backsliding or remained static. Women must continue to move forward: to understand and resist patriarchal ideology wherever and whenever they can (Tyson 2014, 93). Engaging with gendered practices in the classroom means ultimately assessing how women in my study understood and confronted dictates of patriarchy in the classroom as they moved from primary school to university. This task is particularly important because it highlights women's agency rather than perceptions of the women as victims of structural gender inequality in educational institutions.

In sub-Saharan Africa the United Nations (UN) has placed a lot of emphasis on primary schooling and a commitment to gender equality, with a focus predominantly on girls' access to education. A key concern of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was that schooling would be a vehicle for economic development. This concern led to a macro perspective in education that has seen a number of largely quantitative studies around access to and effectiveness of schooling for girls. In consequence, however, this concern has ignored the processes of education, the affective dimensions, local specificities, and micro-level studies that affect education, especially of girls (Easterly 2009, Nelson, 2007). The economic imperatives that construct schooling as an unequivocal social good have provided little space for the consideration of the possible adverse effects of schooling on students. As a result, schooling tends to inscribe gender inequalities rather than reduce them (Dunne, Humphreys, and Leach 2006, 77; Neema 2015, 6). In schools, students learn about their on-going place in gendered society. Formal lessons learned in the classroom and informal lessons learned outside the classroom teach children about their social location based on their gender and sexual identity. Women in particular are socialised into inequalities as they encounter deep forms of social and academic subordination in schools. In this sense, school classrooms are a more gendered space, more hierarchical and less fluid than the families discussed in the previous chapter. As such, patriarchy-inflected classrooms have specific negative academic and social consequences for girls as they navigate through the education system (Moore 2016).

The introduction and development of western formal education in Uganda traces its history to the European Christian missionaries in 1877, when Uganda fell under colonial rule. Right at its introduction, formal western education in Uganda was gender discriminative in its approach, beginning with targeting sons of chiefs in royal households (other men were included later). Women remained excluded from the education system until the 1930s when some women were able to access formal schooling. Even then, women remained at the margins of formal education and were limited to the elementary level (Neema 2015, 34-35; Kwesiga 2002, 62).

The colonial legacy of excluding women from formal education continues to be reflected in the gender discriminatory practices in the classroom. The phrase '*she is the only boy in class*' was an honorary male identity conferred on Falley by her male college mates at the National Teacher College (NTC) to integrate her into the mathematics class. Being a woman in a mathematics class was regarded as outside the norm. Hence, Falley's feminine identity was contested and she was re-branded as an honorary male to fit into class. What is of note is that this 'rebranding' took place five decades after Sarah's experiences of exclusion from the mathematics class at university referred to in my introduction. This continuity shows that women struggle to retain their feminine identity. Potentially, this struggle can twist or block a woman's education pathway. The possibility that she will drop out of the course or the school altogether is quite high. The women in this study are those who have remained resilient in the face of gendered experiences in the classroom. As such they have succeeded in not only creating space for themselves in such classrooms but also occupying that space. Therefore, it becomes necessary to interrogate how differently the women managed the education process and emerged with a successful education career. Analysing the education process should yield insight into how the women reacted to the opportunities and responded to the constraints that they experienced in the classroom in schools, colleges, and universities.

In this chapter I interrogate the educational process with a specific focus on the classroom as a second contextual factor that influenced the educational pathway of the women. The chapter addresses part of the second specific research question. Further sub-questions I address are: In what ways do women experience gender discrimination in the classroom? How does this experience influence their education pathway? Interrogating the education context and its gendered outcomes distinct from the

perspectives of its beneficiaries is important. Using the life history narrative of the women, important insight can be gained into how gender discrimination is invisibly enacted in the classroom and how women with successful educational careers dealt with these gendered experiences. I argue that, although education is thought to be an equalizer in terms of gender equality, classrooms are particularly gendered, especially in the formal and informal practices of individual teachers and students within schools, colleges, and universities.

This study does not assume that school simply offers positive learning experiences for women (and men). I begin by recognizing the research that already examines schooling in Africa. Two notable examples are the analysis of institutions, resource schools, and organisational effectiveness from the perspective of management (Zoogah, Peng, and Woldu 2015); and schooling for girls in Tanzania from the perspective of teachers (Willemsen and DeJaeghere 2015). These studies, while they provide insight into how schools function, do so from an institutional perspective, and dealing with specific levels of education rather than the education process as a whole. None of the existing studies focus on the classroom experience of women with successful education careers. My study makes a contribution to the greater discussion of education in Africa by examining the gendered dynamics in the classroom from the experiences of the women who successfully completed their education. Using the longitudinal life history approach, I am able to pay close attention to the interaction between women, teachers, and fellow pupils in the classroom and to examine how these interactions defined the women's education careers, and how they propelled or constrained the education pathways of the women.

The first part of the chapter reviews the literature on how education institutions are perceived by various scholars. The second part is an empirical discussion that uses narratives from 12 of the women studied, and their classroom experiences at each level of education from primary school to university. This section will highlight the teachers and pupils as carriers of gender ideologies in the classroom and consider how the women interacted and counteracted these ideologies. The final part of the chapter will draw conclusions based on the findings and show how these contribute to a theoretical understanding of women's educational experience along their education pathways.

Globally, schools as educational institutions are proclaimed by community stakeholders as women's entry points to full equality. Education is seen as a portal to opportunity for individual women who are seeking to improve their lives (Moore 2016, 7). As such, schools are perceived as vehicles for the development of society and are expected to positively influence pupils' lives and career achievement (Delamont 2012, 2). There is considerable evidence that access to education enhances cognitive ability, which is essential for women and men to be able to question, reflect, and act on the condition of their lives. Education is also thought to grant women and men access to knowledge and information that empowers them to make choices for their lives (Kabeer 2005, 16). More than the acquisition of facts and skills, education is thought to provide a socialising experience that 'helps to make the people who make society' (Shor 2012, 15). Particularly for women, education is thought to play a formative role. This notion was advanced by Johnson (2014, 842) in his study about female administrators in Malagasy universities. She argues that education not only empowered African women to survive in an oppressive context but also inspired them towards their professional career. Johnson concludes that education was a source of personal autonomy for the women, enabling them to assert agency in their choices.

Although formal education has had a positive influence on the career of successful women, there is also evidence that the process of education is not gender neutral. Epstein and Morrell (2012, 474) in their study of gender in schools in South Africa observed that schools are important sites that both legitimize and reproduce a dominant culture. The authors advance the view that schools are places where femininities and masculinities are made, enacted, reproduced, and contested. Epstein and Morrell argue that while schools have the potential to transform gender relations, they often fall short and produce the opposite in the practices of individual actors. The authors explain further that schools fail to promote gender equality because the schools' accepted practices and legacies combine to entrench an unequal status quo between girls and boys. Epstein and Morrell make an important contribution towards seeing the school as a gendered institution. They also offer insight into the fact that the school is made of different constituencies, among which are classrooms. My study focuses on the classroom as one of these constituencies, and I argue that the gendered practices in the classroom are not necessarily instituted legally in the school's policy. Gendered practices

are the informal and culturally motivated practices that find their way into the classroom through the attitudes and practices of individual teachers and pupils. Gendered utterances such as 'you are the only boy in class' reinforces the perception of women as deviating from the classroom 'norm', which has ring-fenced science subjects strictly for men. For women, the challenge is that these informal gender practices taking place in classrooms remain almost unnoticed at the same time that they deeply affect women's learning and the pathways they take in their educational career.

An important framework that facilitates analysis of the classroom experience of the women is offered by Delamont (2012). Delamont analysed reasons why the pace and scope of education reforms in Britain have not produced the intended gender equality in British schools. She identified five major ways in which British classrooms differentiate between boys and girls in the process of formal education: the organization of the school into different units; teachers' strategies for controlling and motivating pupils; the organisation and content of lessons; informal conversations between teachers and pupils; and leaving the pupils' own stereotyping and self-segregation unchallenged (2012, 3). Although the contexts of Uganda and Britain are different, the fact that the existing formal education system in Uganda was adopted from the British colonial government makes the classroom situations comparable. I will keep in mind these five major ways in which schools differentiate between girls and boys in mind as I analyse the women's experiences, and return to these five points in the chapter's conclusion.

5.2 Primary School: Launching Education Pathway

The primary school marks the beginning of formal education in Uganda and, as mentioned in chapter three, consists of seven years: primary one (P.1) to primary seven class (P.7). Primary one (P.1) to Primary four (P.4) classes, referred to as infant classes, are generally for children between the ages of 6 and 9 years old (sometimes older). Primary five (P.5) to Primary seven (P.7) are upper primary school classes, generally for children between the ages 10 to 12 years (sometimes older). Although primary schools in Uganda are generally non-residential (day), there are a few residential (boarding) schools at this level. The women I interviewed attended various types of primary schools: 41(87.2%) attended a mixed day primary school, which means they commuted daily from home to school, while 3 (6.4%) went to a mixed boarding primary school; the

remaining 3 (6.4%) went to a girls' boarding primary school. The details are summarised in Table 5:1, below.

Table 5.1: Type of primary School

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Mixed day	41	87.2
Mixed Boarding	3	6.4
Girls' Boarding	3	6.4
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field data 2012

What emerged from the narratives is that the women's experience in the classroom was specific to the type of school they attended. Their experiences in the primary school classroom were both positive and challenging. However, the women also developed their own strategies to benefit from the positive experiences and to strategize against the negative experiences. Following the division indicated in the table above, in this section I take three cases: Cirila and Asema, who studied in mixed day (non-residential) primary schools, and Nulla, who went to a girls-only boarding (residential) primary school. I selected these three women because their narratives capture not only the variety of positive and challenging experiences of the women in the classroom but also their agency in response to these experiences.

Cirila and academic excellence

The first case is Cirila, a senior lecturer and faculty dean in her 40s and thus belonging to the middle generation of women. Cirila started formal education in a little rural mixed day primary school. She mentioned that '*I did not go to nursery school because during that time it wasn't there*'. She described herself as '*a tiny active singer*' whose life in her little rural primary school was '*just enjoyable*', and her school performance was very good. In Cirila's little rural primary school, boys and girls participated equally in all classroom activities. However, because the little rural primary school had only three lower primary school classes, Cirila was transferred by her parents to St Joseph's mixed and day primary school to complete the remaining four years of her primary education.

At St Joseph's primary school, Cirila appreciated the sitting arrangements in her classroom, as girls and boys sat mixed on every bench. Cirila does not recall any incidences of gender discrimination that targeted girls in particular because

'there was no consciousness about who was treated how'. However, she noticed that in the pupils' leadership structure, the head prefect was referred to as *'head boy, so it had to be a boy in that position'*. She points out that it was not common to have girls as head prefects in mixed schools, as *'though there was always a "head girl", her role was to assist the "head boy"'*. Cirila further noted that in the allocation of daily outdoor tasks, teachers separated boys from girls: *'the boys slashed the lawn while girls swept and cleaned the compound ...'* Similarly, in the allocation of class teachers in the school, Cirila noted that teachers of lower primary classes (infant classes) were women, while upper classes were taught by men.

Cirila remembers her primary school learning experience as intellectually vibrant because of academic competitions. As such, moving up from one class to another was automatic for her. She recounted that:

By the way, in primary school we used to compete academically; serious competition, especially in mathematics and English. We [pupils] would set questions for ourselves, we had a group: there were two boys and we were three girls. We set exercises for ourselves. Then we see who passed best. And we would come up with vocabulary for English. So you come and give a word which they [other group members] didn't know. We used to also collect words in English, dictionaries - and I think it gave me a strong background. Because we used to challenge ourselves with English, so there was competition, boys, and girls in our small group. Who does better? Even when it came to class exercises.

Cirila's narrative captures the mixed sitting arrangement as an important aspect of her classroom experience that facilitated a degree of academic vibrancy. However, she raised important issues regarding the gendered division of labour, pupils' leadership structure, and the allocation of classroom teachers, all of which characterised her primary school.

In spite of the above-mentioned gendered practices, Cirila did not feel particularly disadvantaged or targeted. Conversely, there were women who experienced specific challenges because of their gender in the primary school classroom. Among these was Asema, a senior lecturer. Hers is the second case I present in this section.

Asema the fighter

Asema is a senior lecturer in her 50s, which placed her in the older generation of women. Asema and her brothers and village mates trekked long distances to the nearest primary school of their Catholic religious affiliation. Asema also studied in a mixed day primary school, in which boys and girls sat in a mixed sitting arrangement. She narrated that *'I didn't find it very strange because it was one way of controlling discipline'* in classroom. She remembered that *'the teacher always found us, boys and girls, interacting freely and so well'*. Asema's challenge came from boys in the upper classes who came and disturbed her class. She vividly recalled, *'you know boys! P.5, P.6, P.7, they are fond of tickling girls' breasts [demonstrates on me]. But for me, whoever tickled my breast, knew my slap [amused]!! In fact, I would not finish a week without fighting with a boy'*. Asema demonstrated how in the process of physically fighting with the boys, they rolled under the chairs and on top of the tables while other students cheered them on. The scuffle of fighting often attracted the attention of the class teacher who would come with canes and ask, *'who is fighting? Asema again is fighting! What is the problem?'* She demonstrated how the teacher would punish the boy by giving him several hard strokes while saying, *'I know you were trying to tickle her breasts!'* while Asema would chuckle and look on in amusement *'aha, they have managed you!'* However, the teacher would not spare Asema from the cane either. Although Asema would attempt to run away from the teacher by jumping through a window or door, the teacher tactfully found a way of getting hold of her, and scolding her *'you! How do you fight with boys!? ...'* and he would punish her as well. And yet the punishment from the teacher prevented neither the boys nor Asema from fighting.

Asema found protection from the older boys mostly from her male siblings and village mates who were pupils in the same school:

... the bigger boys who teased me began to fear that *'if you touch that girl, her brothers will fight you'*. So because of that family support, I had that strength, even in the fighting, I did not fear any man. I would fight, well knowing that if the fellow overpowered me, he would get his share of beating at an opportune time from my brothers and village mates. But I defended myself very strongly!

Central to Asema's primary school experience was the issue of sexual teasing of younger girls by older boys in the upper classes and how this degenerated from personal into inter-class and also inter-sibling and village conflict. More importantly, instead of stopping the boys, the teacher's attempt to restrain Asema from fighting with the boys because she was a girl sent gendered signals through the classroom. Yet, fighting was the strategy Asema used to create a space in which she could demand respect for her feminine identity. The presence of her brothers and extended relatives in the same school reinforced her will to defend her identity and demand respect from bigger boys. In the narratives Asema's agency stands out, both as an individual but also as group, given that she got support from her siblings.

Nulla the silent struggler

An additional narrative on sexual teasing in schools was offered by Nulla, a lecturer in her 30s, who belongs to the younger generation of women. Nulla started primary one class in a mixed day primary school. However, in the second year of her primary education, Nulla's father transferred her to an all-girls' boarding primary school which had better quality education and more facilities¹⁵.

As a new pupil in the school, Nulla experienced two major challenges. Firstly:

... there was a lot of sexual teasing. The P.1 to P.3 [class] were staying in the same dormitory and the P.3 girls [older girls] would do a lot of injustice at night to young girls in P.1 and 2 girls. They [girls] would beat you up, they would actually go to very nasty experiences of saying they are practising science on you [painful laughter]! They began [gesture of touching] from the eyes, [then] every part of the body! And you were not allowed to say this to the matron¹⁶.

The second challenge was the sexist comments Nulla's male English teacher made about her dimples. He said '*the girl with the dimple is my girlfriend!*', which made Nulla uncomfortable in class because '*I didn't know whether it was fun or teasing*'. Although the teacher kept saying, '*girlfriend does not mean anything much, you are my girlfriend, and you have dimples!*', Nulla stated that '*the comments were enough to put me off*' in the classroom. The context of the teacher's comments was interpreted by Nulla's classmates as '*Mr English [pseudonym] is in love with you! He is saying that you are his girlfriend?*

¹⁵ Boarding schools in Uganda are known for the best education facilities and best performing students in national examinations.

¹⁶ A matron is an adult female staff member assigned to take care of the welfare of pupils in boarding school dormitories.

You are finished! These remarks from her classmates made Nulla even more scared of the English teacher because being 'finished' meant there was nothing Nulla could do about the teacher's sexist comments. Although the English teacher realised Nulla's discomfort about his comments and *'he let it go and it passed like that'*, the effect of the comments remained among Nulla and her classmates.

Nulla's narrative draws attention to the issues of same-sex physical and sexual violence among pupils in single-sex boarding primary schools. She pointed out the dormitory as another location where sexual teasing occurred on the premises. Her story also testified to sexual teasing by teachers and how this went unreported because there were no supportive structures in the school to fall back on. Additionally, Nulla's story contributes to the fact that in far-away girls-only boarding schools, the women got no support from male siblings and village mates. They therefore had to fend for themselves.

The three cases above raise pertinent issues on the gendered nature of school and particularly the classroom as the centre for gendered practices of teachers and pupils. This was explicit in the interaction of women with other pupils and teachers, as these relationships in turn bred physical and sexual teasing and violence. The cases represent the larger group of women who went to the same kind of schools. As such, in the next section, I will use the experiences of Cirila and Asema to represent the 41 (87.2%) women who studied in mixed day primary schools and the 3(6.4%) who went to mixed boarding primary schools. Meanwhile, I will use the experience of Nulla to represent the 3(6.4%) women who attended an all-girls' boarding primary school. This approach allows me to bring in the experiences of other women to support the three cases when necessary.

In the next section I will turn to more specific sub-themes that emerged from the narratives of the three cases above. To begin with are positive experiences that defined the classroom as a space in which the women developed life skills, which also led to self-discovery for them. This is followed by the challenging experiences in the classroom space in terms of gendered and unequal power relations and the sexualisation of the women by teachers and fellow pupils. Throughout these positive and negative experiences the women developed strategies of self-defence, confidence, and silent defiance that enabled them to move on with their education. The following section discusses the classroom space as defined by the women.

Defining the classroom space

In the narratives of Cirila, Asema, and Nulla, all three women contextualise their primary school experiences mainly in the classroom. The dormitory was featured as an additional space by Nulla in the boarding school. The women conceptualised the classroom not only as a teaching and learning space but also, and more importantly, as a transit and interactive space to develop life skills. As a transit space, the classroom in the primary school provided a safe transition between home and school. It is in the classroom that pupils are first received and helped by teachers to become familiarised with the school environment. Delamont suggests that the teachers' 'strategies of classroom control and pupil motivation can either reduce or create differences between boys and girls in the classroom' (Delamont 2012, 3). I will now turn to these strategies.

A prominent feature of the primary school classroom that was appreciated by the women was the sitting arrangement, in which boys and girls sat mixed on each bench in the classroom. This is consistent with the sitting arrangement in a family-like environment and facilitated a smooth 'landing' of the women in the school, effectively launching them in the public space. As a strategy for class control, the women appreciated the sitting arrangement as child-centred and friendly because it did not target or discriminate against them as girls and because pupils learned the importance of being orderly and respectful towards each other. The sitting arrangement also facilitated pupils' taking responsibility by creating a pleasant learning environment for each other in the classroom. Accordingly, this led to the appreciation of the classroom as an interactive space between pupils and teachers. Such heterogeneous classroom sitting arrangements influenced inclusiveness and reduced the prominence of gender stereotypes in the classroom (Martin, Fabes, and Hanish 2014, 154).

As an interactive space, the classroom facilitated the learning of interpersonal skills, which helped the women to manage group dynamics. Interaction enhanced academic vibrancy in the classroom, which was psychologically and academically healthy for the pupils' development. Psychologically, the classroom created freedom to socialise and to develop an atmosphere of trust among boys and girls. Although pupils came to school embodying gendered values learned at home, these would not necessarily translate into negative relationships between boys and girls were they not reinforced by teachers in the classroom. This is evidenced by the diversity of informal learning groups like Cirila's English spelling groups of boys and girls. The significance of

the informal learning groups, as Cirila indicated, was that they were heterogeneous in nature, and competitively '*serious but not gendered*'. The unintended effect of group diversity taught the women important interpersonal skills and group dynamics not only in the classroom but also, and more importantly, for life after school. This effect is consistent with what Martin, Fabes, and Hanish (2014, 152) found, that peer interaction established an independent component of classroom life not directly regulated or even fully observable by teachers. Although unregulated, peer interactions have enormous influence on whether students feel comfortable in school and if they are successfully engaged in learning.

The benefits of academic vibrancy in the primary school extended beyond the group to individual creativity. This was particularly captured in the narrative of Bevra, a lecturer and head of department in her 40s. Bevra recalled that in the primary school:

I was good at mathematics, because I even reached a point of writing a book! In primary! ... I wrote a maths book with questions and answers, and I showed my teacher, and what I realised when I was in primary school is I used to read newspapers; I used to read these books of history, of higher level. But later on I don't know where mathematics has gone [laughs] but I was good ... I don't know what happened to me!

Bevra's academic innovations show that in a conducive classroom environment, girls are just as capable of academic excellence in mathematics as boys. However, if the classroom is not well managed, it can turn into a space in which academic innovations from high-performing students can be stifled and lost, as became the case with Bevra. In this particular incident, the classroom environment was not as stimulating for Bevra as it should have been. The case of Bevra points to the central role of teachers in supporting or discouraging academic innovations of pupils in the classroom. As Shor argues, children begin school as motivated learners who engage older people with questions and requests. However, every year this dynamic curiosity to learn gets eroded in a passive classroom environment, where teachers are not responsive to students (Shor 2012, 11). This trend was evident in Bevra's narrative about the mathematics book project she developed in the primary school eventually stalled because '*I think the teacher was too busy to edit and produce it ... and so the project did not go further*'. The lack of response from Bevra's teacher cannot be assumed to be due to a lack of time. It is possible that the teacher felt personally challenged by the academic vibrancy of the

young Bevra and her avid book-production, or he underrated her as a girl in his mathematics class. There is also an aspect of institutional sexism in which girls are not expected to innovate or perform well in mathematics. Generally though, even if there was not much encouragement from some teachers, the classroom was an important space for academic vibrancy and innovation for the women.

Self-discovery, sexual agent, and a pupil

The narratives also revealed that the classroom interaction with teachers and fellow pupils helped women to discover and develop their identity as females and as pupils. It was in the primary school classroom that agency emerged more distinctly. The women (then girls) knew their duties as pupils but also demanded respect for their identity when they experienced gender-based discrimination. This was captured in the narrative of Asema who revealed that it was in the struggle to defend her feminine identity against the boys in class that:

... this issue of being assertive and naughty came out kind of clearly. Now that you ask that question, maybe I also see that, for me I didn't know I was naughty. I was very assertive; you could not force me to do things without my [being] conscious. I was a principled person who believed in myself.

In Asema's narrative, aspects of women's agency became more explicit, especially their ability to draw the positive from otherwise negative experiences. For instance, at a young age in primary school, the negative sexual advances of bigger boys triggered in Asema the need to defend her identity and to create a space for her learning in the classroom. She challenged the boys who contested and challenged her identity. The primary school was a very important stage for pupils for self-discovery and for carving out their own identity. Whereas the process of identity formation and self-discovery for boys followed its normal pattern of growth without major social disturbances, girls, to safeguard their identity, had to struggle to resist social interference regarding their feminine identity from bigger boys and teachers in the classroom.

The narratives of Asema and Nulla reveal that sexualisation in the classroom was one of the major constraints experienced in primary school. Sexualisation is the imposition of adult sexuality on children and young people before they are capable of dealing with it mentally, emotionally, or physically. In other words, sexualisation is about valuing a person based on their sex appeal at the exclusion of other characteristics. It involves sexually objectifying a person, making them into a thing for

another's sexual use, rather than viewing the other as a person with the capacity to independently act and decide on their sexuality. Sexualisation is therefore not self-motivated and is age-inappropriate (Papadopoulos 2010, 22).

Sexualisation also pointed to the power of hierarchy and the domination of older pupils and male teachers over the girls. The narratives of Asema and Nulla reveal that sexualisation was manifested in the school through physical sexual advances by older boys and girls in the upper classes, as well as verbal comments from male teachers in the classroom. As Asema expressed, older boys tickled her breasts, while older girls played with Nulla's genitals. The male English teacher commented on Nulla's dimples and announced her as his 'girlfriend.' In whatever form it manifested itself, sexualisation in the primary school for Asema and Nulla led to sexual harassment. This sexual harassment displayed unequal power relations between boys and girls in the upper and lower classes, in new and old pupils, and between teachers and pupils, thus setting the girls aside as objects of domination and discrimination.

The display of power in the classroom was complicated for Asema and Nulla to deal with because of differences in age, academic, and profession levels in the classroom. The intersection of power with age and academic level made the young girls vulnerable before the older and academically senior boys. Similarly, professionally, the teachers were more senior and therefore more powerful than their female pupils. In all these cases, it is evident that the older pupils and male teachers attempted to control and manipulate the bodies of the younger girls for their own sexual pleasure. Although sexual curiosity is normal among children, the factors of age and class difference made it problematic for young girls, as it contradicted their identity as pupils and as girls in the school.

Unequal power relations between Nulla and her male English teacher are evidenced by the reaction of other pupils who thought she was '*finished*' because of her teacher's sexual advances. This comment of being '*finished*' positioned Nulla in a state of helplessness in relation to the teacher's powerful position. Besides the age and professional difference, the teacher was hierarchically above his pupil in the school. Being on staff and a class teacher, he stood between the school administration and the pupils as an autonomous authority in the classroom. Additionally, as a subject teacher, Nulla's academic fate rested in the hands of her English teacher because he could choose

to fail or pass her. As such, the teacher's sexual comments put Nulla in an awkward situation among her peers. For instance, whether Nulla performed with excellence or not in English examination could be interpreted as favouring or not by the teacher. In any case, Nulla's academic achievements in English risked being underrated or overrated because they were always linked with her relationship with the English teacher before whom she was a '*finished*' case. Depending on her response to his sexual advances, hierarchically, the teacher had powers to isolate, humiliate, and even sabotage Nulla's education pathway. Vulnerability in the hands of a teacher was therefore a marked feature in Nulla's experience in the primary school. Sexualisation of the women was a manifestation of unequal power relations, in which the young girls were subjected to the domination and hierarchical power of the older pupils and teachers.

The narratives also revealed that sexual harassment in the primary schools took both heterosexual and same-sex forms. Heterosexual harassment was common in the mixed primary school classroom of Asema, while same-sex harassment occurred in Nulla's single-sex boarding primary school dormitory. However, the difference was that heterosexual harassments were publicly carried out in the classroom. The same-sex harassments were carried out in the dormitories under the cover of darkness, with stern warnings to the young girls not to report anything to the dormitory attendant. These differences of location also meant that it was easier for the school administration to notice and control heterosexual harassment than same-sex teasing.

At another level, gendered and sexualised harassment in the class or dormitory revealed an underlying male hegemonic moral discourse, which draws a boundary between what women and men can or cannot do. This harassment privileges male students over female students (Moore 2016, 7). It can be noted that while it was acceptable for boys to express their hyper-sexuality freely and openly in the classroom space, girls had to hide under the cover of darkness and exclusionary space in the dormitory to do so. The hyper-sexual conduct of the boys showed a socialised aspect of their life that seemed more acceptable than female hyper-sexuality (Mirembe and Davies 2000, 402). In terms of discipline and the control of behaviour, it is a lot easier for teachers in the school to protect girls from unsolicited sexual advances from boys as in the case of Asema than from fellow girls as in the case of Nulla.

This double-edge morality was more explicit in the teacher's inability to address and challenge the male pupils when they tickled Asema's breast. For instance, the teacher's reaction to the boy that '*I know you were trying to tickle her breast*' singles out the inappropriate sexual behaviour of the boy as the cause of the fight. Therefore, the punishment administered to the boy was appropriate to the offence committed. In contrast, the teacher's feedback to Asema, '*You! How do you fight with boys?*' sent a contradictory message to her and to the class. It questioned instead of rewarding Asema's efforts to defend herself. By punishing both Asema and the boy, the act of self-defence was seen as equivalent to sexual harassment. This sent a wrong-gendered signal that fighting in self-defence against boys is inappropriate for girls, thereby reinforcing the gender stereotype in the classroom that girls are weak and thus should not fight boys. The teacher's reaction gave the boy an upper hand because he was not held solely responsible for his sexual misconduct. This process of restraining the fight between the boy and Asema without strongly reprimanding the boy for his inappropriate sexual advances created a double-edged moral code; it denied the girls their right to self-defence when treated inappropriately by men. This norm in effect disempowers girls against unsolicited sexual advances by boys and prevents them from 'stand[ing] their ground' in gendered classes or campuses (Moore 2016, 7). In this way, the teacher reinforced the subordinate position of girls and the dominant role of boys in the class. This situation confirms Delamont's argument that administration of rewards and punishment are one of the teachers' strategies for controlling and motivating pupils in the classroom (Delamont 2012). The way the teacher applied reward and punishment in the case of Asema clearly differentiates between girls and boys.

At an institutional level, male hegemony found expression through restraining girls from leadership roles in primary school, as expressed by Cirila. By framing boys as leaders and girls as followers, the school succeeded in reflecting the prevailing patrilineal culture in the society in which men are heads of households. This in turn denied girls with leadership capabilities a chance to occupy the position of head prefect. Cirila explained that the pupils' leadership structure could not be questioned due to a lack of consciousness about gender issues. Raising the question of consciousness is an important factor in relation to detecting discrimination based on gender in the school. Why was there no consciousness about gender discrimination? First of all, schools like

any other educational institutions hold themselves up as modern institutions that are free of gender discriminative practices. As such, the school environment is expected to offer equal chances to women and men. However, schools have shown themselves to be one of the spaces in which gender discrimination is so institutionalised that there is no conscious effort to confront it. To be conscious of discrimination requires a creation of institutional awareness, for which the school is responsible. This becomes more important at the primary level, where the children are relatively young and less conscious of how to deal with experiences of gender discrimination.

Related to the issue of leadership was the gendered division of labour, which is a key symbol of gender identification and differentiation in the school (Dunne, Humphreys, and Leach 2006, 78). The narrative of Cirila revealed gendered division of labour in schools such as co-curricular activities and staff arrangement. In the division of labour, the primary school perfectly intersects with the social norms around division of labour in the larger society. Indeed, the division of labour in the schools seems to replicate what takes place in the society, where cleaning is done by women and slashing the lawn is done by men. The fact that work has to be done is expected, but assuming that certain jobs are to be done by specific genders is deeply problematic.

What is evident in the narrative is the reproduction of male hegemony in the professional hierarchy especially within primary school. The fact that women taught mostly lower primary classes emphasised their expected (and thus more accepted) gender role of caregiver. As Clarricoates contends, in practice female primary school teachers are seen as 'child-minders rather than as high status professional teachers' (Clarricoates 1981, 189). As such, female teachers cluster at the bottom of the professional pyramid, with few chances of promotion. This position of female teachers presents a problematic image of a role model for girls in primary school. Hence, the presence of the female teachers in the school did radically change the negative classroom environment for the female students in the school.

Although the education curriculum is generally gender-neutral, some teachers, especially of science and maths, organised and taught their lessons in a gendered manner. Their personal prejudices were evident in their underrating women's academic ability in learning science and mathematics prior to testing their intellectual capacity. The teachers explicitly set academic boundaries about what girls should do or not do.

The border was particularly rigid between arts and science subjects. The belief among teachers underrated girls' performance in sciences, and teachers used the classroom to dissuade them from taking science subjects seriously. On this note Kabeer (2005), in his study on gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa, was very critical of African teachers and argued that they tend to be dismissive of and discouraging towards girls. Kabeer reiterated that even when girls are encouraged to pursue a career, teachers expect them to opt for care- rather than science-related professions.

The case of Nyepe, a senior lecturer and associate faculty dean, is particularly informative here. Like Nulla, Nyepe went to an all-girls boarding primary school. She narrated that, even in a purely feminine school environment, male science and mathematics *'teachers made you know that there were some things girls could not do'*. She cited particularly the mathematics teacher who would beat them, saying *'you know, mathematics is for boys'*, thereby associating mathematics with masculinity (Leslie and Mendick 2013, 49). Nyepe recalled how the mathematics teacher used to reinforce this gender ideology by beating them for every sum they failed. This, according to Nyepe, made the girls develop a phobia for mathematics at an early age. She also recalls that her male science teacher treated the girls harshly in class on the basis of the same gender ideology that girls cannot do science. Nyepe remembered that, although the female teachers confronted the male teachers in defence of the girls, their intervention emphasised the same logic of the gender ideology by comments such as *'but don't you know they are only girls?'* Thus the support of the female teachers was counterproductive for the girls because it confirmed the masculine gender ideology around mathematics and science subjects, hence creating further stigma against girls who wanted to build careers in mathematics and sciences. As a result, the visibly amused Nyepe sarcastically said, *'the girls resorted to performing well in social studies and English!!'* The girls only tried to get some credit in mathematics and science to secure better grades but not for a career. The reaction of Nyepe depicts the phenomena of 'stereotype threat', which means that when people are reminded of a stereotype about themselves, they perform in such a way as to conform to it (Leslie and Mendick 2013, 52). Punishment based on performance in sciences carried perhaps an unintended effect of scaring girls off sciences and conversely stopping boys from opting for arts.

How did the women deal with male hegemony at primary school? For Asema, when she was young the only option immediately available to her was to physically defend herself against being sexualised by the boys. Physical fighting for the women served as an effective defence in two ways. Firstly, it showed the girls' active agency, making a statement to the boys that their unsolicited sexual advances would not be tolerated. Fighting was also a way of demanding respect from the boys for female identity. Secondly, fighting was a call to the teachers to protect the girls against this gender-based bullying by boys. In a way, physical engagement of the girls was a call for the school to transform the gender discriminatory practices within its structures. In the narratives, none of the women revealed having reported their experience of violence and stereotyping to their parents. Perhaps, as Cirila mentioned, the girls at the primary school level were too young to consciously realise the gender and academic injustices fellow pupils and teachers committed against them. It is also possible that the girls took these experiences as a normal part of school culture.

Looked at as a whole, primary school was a period of academic vibrancy and innovation. However, it was also marked by gender-based threats and insults against women who took mathematics and other science subjects. A male-dominated school prefect system, and sexualisation of women by both teachers and fellow pupils, were also characteristic features of primary school. In all cases, the disciplinary actions taken to protect the girls and the ways male and female teachers were allocated to teach in classes in the school further entrenched these gender ideologies in the setting. The opportunities for the girls lay in their ability to manage their classroom interactions. They strongly claimed space for their identity as pupils. The women confronted fellow pupils and teachers whenever they could. The strong sense of self-defence and determination transformed the interpersonal relations of the women with teachers and their fellow pupils. However, these ideologies continued on into lower secondary school. In the next section I will focus on the lower secondary school as a level in which women responded in various ways to situations of gender ideology in the school.

5.3 Lower Secondary School: Active and Passive Resistance

The transition from primary schools to lower secondary was remarkable for the women in terms of a change of environment: 32(86.1%) of the women moved from day mixed primary schools to single-sex lower secondary schools. Asema and Cirila were among

the 32 women who studied in single-sex lower secondary boarding schools. They both revealed that academic life in the lower secondary was less exciting. This shift was captured by Asema:

... having come from a mixed primary school and mixed family, I then found myself in a girls' only school in St Nulla Gorretti in Fort Portal! Incidentally, I found it boring. Boring with activities [trying hard to put the context]; there were no challenging opportunities to say ... it was full of routine. You would wake up, go for prayers — every day we had mass — then from there you would specifically come for breakfast, then go for classes ... we never had social [events]... at the weekend we never went for a dance, we never brought in other people or boys to come. Our life was routine, programmed. But then in a way, eventually we would also fit in it. It was not very exciting, but it gave [us] a reading environment...

A lack of academic vibrancy in an all-girls' lower secondary school points to an important gendered aspect of school life. Academic vibrancy in purely girls' school ceased to be negatively competitive and was not gendered. The competition was purely academic and among equal on the basis of being female. This is because in the primary school, academic competition for the women was an act of self-affirmation against boys. In the all-girls' school, the women did not have to negotiate their feminine identity as they had in primary school. It is possible that the women had other issues to overcome related to ethnicity, class, and religion, but gender was no longer an issue. The women-versus-men aspect of competition was missing in the all-girls' secondary school programmes, which were described as 'routine', meaning there was nothing out of the ordinary.

Interestingly, the women turned their intellectual energy to generating inter-school academic competitions, which particularly targeted all-boys' lower secondary schools. This initiative was captured in the narratives of Tarika, a medical doctor and lecturer in a teaching hospital. She recounted that although there was nothing academically '*eventful*' in her all-girls' school, they built up a culture to compete nationally with leading all-boy's lower secondary schools:

... in Gayaza high school, we had to really remind ourselves quite often — and also our teachers reminded us — that we've always been a good school. So we had to do a good job when it came to education, and we had to make sure that we beat the boys' schools in the national examinations. And at that time, the top boys' secondary schools we competed with were: Namilyango, St Mary's College

Kisubi, and Buddo. Happily enough, in those years I was in secondary school, we kept doing well and better than the boys' schools in the national examinations.

In Tarika's narrative, negotiation of female identity shifted from individual identity in the classroom to group identity in all-girls' schools at national level. Tarika shows how the women as a group continuously pushed academic boundaries and widened academic frontiers to claim a national intellectual space and to occupy it. What is evident is how women utilised their agencies to network and pull their energies together in what Kabeer (2005) called transformative agency. The women developed the ability to act as a group in order to challenge the restrictive aspects of gender ideologies in education at a national level (Kabeer 2005, 15). At secondary school, the women were more gender-conscious and developed solidarity rather than competition among themselves. Solidarity was an important strategy to fight gender stereotyping not only at an individual level but also at a national level. At lower secondary school, the women became more ambitious as individuals and as a group to improve their academic performance and were happy to accept academic challenges at local and especially at national examinations.

All-girls' schools tended to have female head teachers. This arrangement was essential in two ways. Firstly, as a principle administrator of the school, the female head teachers used their prerogatives to encourage the girls and the teachers to focus on academic performance rather than social stereotypes. Nyepe explained that:

In Tororo Girls School, the head teacher was female, and she made it her point to encourage the girls to do well in all subjects. She kept urging us that we could do anything as long as we set our minds to it. She also tried to get the teachers to talk to us in that manner.

The female head teacher did not take it for granted that teachers would be more gender sensitive. She took it upon herself to give an extra push to the girls and to raise awareness among the teachers to curb their prejudices against the girls. The opportunity for Nyepe was the fact that the head teacher stood between the science teachers and the girls in order to encourage the former to focus on teaching and not to promote negative gender ideologies in the school. Secondly, the female head teacher's position provided the essential role model of a woman with a successful education career. She had probably walked the education pathway at a more socially difficult time than her pupils. Not only had she emerged successfully from the education pathway, she

had also succeeded in a professional career trajectory leading to an education institution. The position of the female head teacher was therefore an important symbol in the school for both the girls and the teachers.

On the other hand, in Annetta's mixed lower secondary school, it was a male head teacher who played a significant role in shaping her education trajectory. Annetta is a lecturer, one of 15(31.9%) women who went to a mixed boarding lower secondary school. Annetta appreciated the male head teacher because he personally supervised the students and was strict regarding academic activities in the school. She associated his strictness with the military: *'He was like a soldier. It really shaped us! My God! You had to wake up at 5 a.m. and everything had to be done within the allocated time'*. The strictness of the male teacher left little room for laziness in the school. The male head teacher's mixture of punishment and counselling appeared to have a positive influence on focusing the attention of students and teachers onto academic matters, as Annetta recalled:

He had many ways of punishing — some psychological, some physical. Sometimes he would make you pack up all your things and then he would bring you to the parade, and then he would explain to everybody how awful and irresponsible you were! Sometimes he would refer to you as an 'academic dwarf', things like that; and then he would put you in the car [threat of exclusion] and drive you all the way to Kampala and you were really worried that you were being taken home. You know, obviously in the process, he was talking to you as he was driving. So then somewhere in the middle [of the journey] he decided he has forgiven you and brought you back to school. But psychologically he had punished you. But he had a good fatherly side; when he found us playing *'dodge ball or Kwepena'*, he joined in.

What Annetta found interesting about the male teacher is his mentorship skills and the priority he gave to academic activities in the school. For instance, he personally supervised evening 'preps' (personal readings) and would never compromise; if a student was found not studying *'he would do all sorts of things'* to punish the student. As a result, Annetta acknowledged that, *'for me, because of that, I see life as [something where] one does not permit time wastage and that is largely because I went through his training'*. She recalled the head teacher *'always said for him he is training future leaders'*. Annetta observed that even though she is not interested in leadership positions, she still feels responsible for accomplishing whatever duties have been entrusted to her.

The important aspect that can be noted in the narratives is the positive and gender-neutral positions of the male head teacher. Although his soldier-like approach created a kind of 'militant' environment in the school, it kept teachers and students focused on the school program. In interacting with the 'militant' head teacher, Annetta shows that the women wanted to be challenged to bring out the best in themselves. The ability to stand and face positive challenges and to measure up to the high expectations was a marked feature of the women's response to challenges along their education pathway.

The narratives of Nyepi and Annetta above highlight the gender-specific administrative style of their head teachers. Nyepi's female head teacher was persuasive and sensitive in urging the girls to believe in their academic potential and to convince the teachers to discard their gender prejudices. Annetta's male head teacher, conversely, adopted a more militant and soldier-like approach to encourage academic excellence and discipline in the school. It is interesting to note how, whether consciously or unconsciously, these two head teachers embraced 'normative' femininity and masculinity in their management style. The norms attribute gentleness and kindness to women, while men are generally thought to be rough, militant, and confrontational. In whichever way these norms manifested in the head teachers, their effect was to propel the women along their education tracks. Most importantly, both head teachers deviated from the negative gender stereotype in the school. The women found in the two head teachers the positive deviance support they most needed along their education pathway.

Unlike in the primary school, head teachers in the lower secondary were more directly involved in the education of the women. At another level, as a symbol of authority in the school, the head teachers utilised their position of power to regulate gender relations in the school. They also had the possibility, where necessary, of changing gender-biased cultures prevalent among students as well as teachers.

The response of class teachers towards the efforts of the head teachers differed; some were positive and others negative. Among the teachers who responded positively was a physics teacher. Zepha, a teaching assistant in her 20s, who studied in a mixed lower secondary school, recalled that:

I was one of the girls from senior one to senior two who really performed very well in physics. I remember in one of the classes in senior two, the student

teacher, who was for school practice, told me that I was one of the girls he saw with the potential to take on physics as a major in senior three.

We can note from this teacher's comments the positive attitudes of young student teachers in regards to school practice. However, it is not explicit in Zepha's narrative if the positive attitude of the physics student teacher was due to changes in his personal attitude or the training he had received in college; however, the fact that he was able to acknowledge Zepha's potential in physics was in itself an affirmative gesture that contributed to her pursuing sciences along her educational pathway.

Although officially the school curriculum and the teaching syllabus does not discriminate against women, the way teachers organize and teach their lessons can have a gendered effect. As Nyepe indicated, *'definitely, of course there were some teachers who really did not speak that kindly to us in class'*. She cited the chemistry teacher in particular who would dismissively say, *'ah, even if I taught you for a whole year, you'd never understand chemistry.'* This teacher insinuated that no amount of time or mental capacity could enable the girls to understand chemistry. In other words, he presupposed that girls were irredeemable and nothing that could be done about it.

The narrative makes clear that in spite of the gender-sensitive school environment that the head teachers attempted to create, the classroom space remained a hotspot of gender discrimination. Certainly the classroom interaction during science lessons remained gender-biased. The vulnerability of girls left to the power of the teacher in the classroom still persisted from primary to lower secondary schools. The classroom continued to be a space in which teachers exercised maximum power, especially in their statements, even during official contact hours with pupils. The women's vulnerability in science class increased due to the lack of female role models in the science classroom. The male science teachers also reproduced negative gender ideologies, even in the classrooms of all-girls' schools. And, not surprisingly, the negativity and violence that science teachers rigorously enforced had a profound effect on the education pathway of the women.

The subtle ways in which the science teachers reinforced gender stereotypes in the classroom was captured by Adikini, a senior administrator. She narrated that in the lower secondary school she was exposed not only to the gendered nature of the science subjects but also to the violence with which it was enforced. She describes her senior

two science teacher as '*tough and terrible!*' Bamboo sticks were used to beat students who did not understand the subject content. As Zepha added, the intensity with which the corporal punishment was administered was also gendered. Zepha explained that,

... boys used to get the greater beating ... But you would notice some teachers beat boys so hard ... just because they are boys. They can give *boys and girls* the same *number of strokes*. But you feel the energy on the boys — the first stroke, the stick breaks! ... and they get another one, and they used to have a heap of sticks in the staff room.

However, the impact of corporal punishment produced gendered reactions from boys and girls. This was captured in the narrative of Adikini: '*whereas the girls easily lost and were easily discouraged*' from sciences because of the beatings, for the boys a beating was '*what makes them men! They persisted! ... For them, they persisted. But for us, oh maama, maama! The punishment was just too much. I wished it was digging or slashing! But the cane!*' Adikini demonstrated further that normally after receiving the beating from the teachers, boys would rise up with gestures of victory such as giving the 'thumbs up.' They would be cheered by other boys with hand claps:

... you know, boys want to show that they are strong! But for us!!!! ... I think it is the socialization ... for us girls, when they beat ... a girl will weeeeeeeep!!! And get discouraged. A boy is not to cry and show discouragement!

Adikini's narrative indicates that, whereas corporal punishment boosted the masculine ego of boys and reinforced their power, or at least their will to show that they were strong, for girls this kind of punishment generated traumatic effects that discouraged them and made them fearful of the science subjects. In using corporal punishment, science teachers succeeded in drawing an academic red line between boys and girls. Corporal punishment reminded the boys of the teachers' high expectations. By contrast, corporal punishment for girls in science subjects was a reminder that girls were in the wrong academic space.

The description of science teachers as 'harsh', 'not so kind', 'tough', and 'terrible' depicts the socially constructed masculine label that was associated with only 'science' subjects. The subtle reminder to the women through corporal punishment was that it required masculine characteristics to be able to wade successfully through sciences. In the mixed schools of Zepha and Adikini, the male hegemony in science was reinforced as these academic disciplines were constructed as masculine fields. In such academic fields, girls were treated as guests and therefore not much accountability was required of them

in terms of academic performance. This was another way of discouraging the girls, as no academic standard was set for them to measure up to. In other words, girls were not rewarded for excellent performance; only their failures were noticed.

In mixed schools, corporal punishment was a way in which gender discrimination in school was reinforced. The discriminatory effect of corporal punishment on girls can be noted by the kind of phrase Adikini used to differentiate between boys and girls. She refers to things for the boys as *'for them,'* while things for the girls were *'for us'*. These phrases point to a gendered effect that corporal punishment generated, to make boys and girls perceive themselves as different in the classroom. The issue is that for girls, this difference carried a negative connotation of being physically and academically weaker.

'For them' and *'for us'* phrases point to another level at which the disciplinary strategies succeeded in building a border between what Adikini perceived as being male and what she perceived as being female. As she indicated, the operating norm in the school reflected that of wider society, namely, *'a boy is not to cry and show discouragement'*. The problem is that this perception worked negatively for the girls because it led them to drop science subjects early, when the opportunity arose. The *'persistence'* of the boys with pain, in effect at least, showed that they were *'real men'* and so expected to keep on the science pathway. Conversely, crying would be interpreted as feminine and thus false behaviour for men. In this way, science teachers actually sustained and reproduced male hegemony in the classroom and indeed the school culture.

The subtle display of discrimination by teachers ingrained gender ideology against girls in the school and made the school learning environment more and more gendered for women. This impact influenced the choice of subject specialisation as women transited from lower to upper secondary. There were women who succumbed and gave up their pursuit of sciences as they transited from lower to upper secondary school. Among the women who gave up sciences at upper secondary school was Adikini:

... do you know, it was because of the beatings that we got discouraged from the science subjects? We dropped the science subjects, not knowing their value ... if I could go back to that time, I would pick it up again ...

By using corporal punishment, teachers not only beat girls out of science but in some cases destroyed the prospective future career the women were dreaming of. Adikini asserted that corporal punishment:

... affected me, it ruined me! I was, you know, I was looking at being an engineer; that was my dream, from the word 'go', I wanted to be an engineer that is what I wanted to become ... sister, I was a brilliant girl; I would have done science. I would have been an engineer.

Adikini also attributed her choice of dropping sciences to a lack of career guidance in lower secondary school. This lack left her with no space to negotiate her future dream of being an engineer, as she indicates, *'I had nobody to encourage me! Nobody to guide me — you have to do this, you have to do this- nothing!'* The only space she had available to her was to trade off sciences and the associated physical violence for art subjects in which there was no punishment. In effect, violence coupled with the lack of career guidance weakened Adikini's resilience to pursue sciences at upper secondary level. She took the path of passive agency because the trauma of the physical punishment left her with little choice but to abandon sciences. Adikini associates her dropping out of sciences strongly with the traumatic experience of violence in lower secondary science classes. She not only changed her education pathway but also moved away to an all-girls' school to pursue arts.

The passive agency that helped Adikini to take a compromised education pathway also helped some women to avoid dropping out of school. However, there were other women who built resilience in the face of the violence and remained on the science pathway. One of these was Nyepe, who strongly resisted being pushed out of sciences by the teachers. Nyepe employed her agency to purposely resist the push of the teachers. As she explained, *'for me, if someone pushes me against the wall, that's when I say: okay, let me prove myself to you!'* Nyepe silently defied the negative attitude of science teachers by excelling in science subjects at a lower secondary level. The silent defiance of Nyepe at lower secondary was sufficient for her to keep on the science pathways for two major reasons. Firstly, teachers could only restrain but not stop a student from taking national examinations in science. This limited teacher power meant there was an important window of opportunity that Nyepe could utilise. Secondly, at lower secondary the women were too young (12-16 years old) to clearly determine if their academic strength was in the sciences or the arts. The women needed to wait for the results of the Uganda

Certificate of Education (UCE) national examination at the end of the fourth year to decide their academic pathway. Hence a silent defiance towards lower secondary science teachers was sufficient to keep the women on track at a lower secondary level. However, the transition to upper secondary school was critical in terms of choosing a subject of specialisation. As such, a more active resistance was evident in upper secondary school than in lower secondary, as the following section will demonstrate.

5.4 Upper Secondary School: Active Resistance

The upper secondary, the third level in the educational track, was followed by 45 of the women studied. The other two women branched off to certificate training in professional and vocational tracks. In the upper secondary school, the women were approximately between 16 and 19 years old. The number of the women who went to an all-girls' boarding school at upper secondary fell to 29 (61.7%) compared to 32 (68.1%) at lower secondary. The remaining 16(34.0%) went to a mixed boarding upper secondary school.

The upper secondary level is an important stage in the educational pathway of students. It is the stage in which students are expected to specialise in three or four subjects, not only for an educational career but moreover for a professional field. The subjects are selected either from the arts or science-based disciplines. The list of art-based disciplines includes subjects such as: History, Economics, Geography, English Literature, Religious Studies, and Fine Art. Meanwhile, science-based disciplines include subjects such as: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics (Kwesiga 2002). The challenge of selecting a discipline in the transit to upper secondary school is that the choice of an arts or science combination does not entirely depend on a student's interest. The prerogative to select a subject combination for specialisation in upper secondary lies with the school administration. Normally, this selection is based on the three or four subjects in which the student has performed best during the national examinations at lower secondary. Ironically, the difficulty in selecting subjects for specialisation at upper secondary is worse if a student has performed well in both arts and science disciplines. The school administration easily allocates subject combinations for students who distinguish themselves in either the arts or science pathways. Students who fall in both science and arts specialisations require more career guidance to make specialisation choices that best suit their career aspirations. However, the women's

narratives reveal that the process of career guidance on subject specialisation is not gender neutral. Whereas male students are normally asked to choose which option to go for, female students are restrained by career masters and told to stick to arts specialisations.

Nyepe is one such woman who faced the challenge during her transition from lower secondary to upper secondary. Although she had an option, the career master attempted to restrict her to taking an arts subject specialisation. Nyepe joined upper secondary at the same school where she had completed lower secondary. She had experience in how teachers underrated the ability of girls in science classes and had silently resolved to prove the teachers wrong about their gender bias against the ability of girls in science. Nyepe's excellent performance in both arts and sciences provided an excellent opportunity for her to challenge gender stereotypes at school. Nyepe recalled that, when she opted to take science specialisation at upper secondary, the career master advised her to switch to an arts discipline. She refused:

I surprised the career master and even my parents. They expected me to do history, economics, and literature at 'A' level, because I was very good at reading the novels and discussing. But I was also good in sciences. Then I insisted that I wanted to do sciences -- Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. Yes, that was rebellious Nyepe!

Nyepe's stand was diplomatic as well as ambitious and rebellious. Nyepe persevered and refused to change her education career pathway even when the circumstances of what course to choose were tough at the school. Nyepe's decision to pursue sciences at upper secondary generated dialogue between the school and her parents. She recalled that, after failing to dissuade her from pursuing sciences, the career master invited her father to the office to help convince Nyepe to drop sciences for an arts subject combination. Nyepe recalled that, *'my father came to the school and the career master called me from in senior five class. In the presence of my father he said: we want you to do arts because you are good at it – I told him, no!'* At that point, she recalled her father's intervention: *'if science is what she wants, then that is fine, let her go for it'*. She narrated this scenario in amusement because, although she successfully negotiated her way into science, it came with a cost. Her responsibility towards the school and the family increased: *'... definitely, I had to now work doubly hard because both at school and at home, they were not sure I had made the right choice ...'* She committed herself to her studies and succeeded in

sciences. She was later admitted to the university for her bachelor of sciences, specialising in biology and physics.

The resilience of the women to persist in science shows how they turned their otherwise disadvantaged position into an advantage. Nyepe especially appreciated the harshness of the science teachers as a critical driving force that made her deliberately dare to specialise in sciences at upper secondary. She asserted:

I think in a way that is what pushed me actually into sciences. I used to do very well in the arts. But because of that negative attitude of the science teachers towards girls in science, I just decided I would specialise in sciences. Actually I credit the two teachers for pushing me into sciences. It was the chemistry and the maths teacher. Because those two really made us feel like we cannot perform in sciences. So I credit them.

In the narrative it is evident that some of the women positively responded to the negative experiences in their science class. These women decided to turn around their disadvantage to fight back and disprove their teachers. They mostly relied on their inner intellectual power, which gave them self-confidence, and an intrinsic sense of rights and entitlements to generate academic excellence and to persist against all the odds in the classroom (Green, 2016). The inner power or 'power within' as Green (2016, 33) calls it, is particularly important, because it is not easily controlled or influenced by external factors.

The narrative of Nyepe shows the persistence of gender bias against girls in science, with the teachers as the main carriers. Unlike in the lower secondary school, the experience of being pushed out of science was institutionalised in the admission process to upper secondary. However, it is at the upper secondary that an upsurge of individual action was explicitly expressed, as in the case of Nyepe. The experiences of the women in the lower secondary school played an important part in the way the women positioned themselves for subject combinations in upper secondary. There were women such as Nyepe who persisted, but there were other women who gave up the pursuit of sciences along their educational pathway.

The active resistance of the women to the gender ideology as they transitioned from lower to upper secondary school was facilitated by time constraints as well. There is only a one-month transit period between the upper and lower secondary school. This time constraint proved critical for the women because it required quick decision-

making, as the upper secondary defined not only the educational but also the professional pathways. Additionally, the women had the advantage of age (17-19 years old), which gave them the right to actively confront gender-biased ideology in school. They had to urgently engage with the career masters to negotiate their desired educational paths. The decision-making process was facilitated by two main factors. The first factor was the personal consciousness of the women regarding gender issues in the classroom and the school. This consciousness made the women build resilience, which also expressed their effort to curve their educational pathways. Secondly, the support of the women's families, especially their parents, was crucial in negotiating the subject combination at the upper secondary school level. For instance, the strong stand taken by the women such as Nyepé against gender bias made the school administration and family reflect, and discuss together the educational pathways of the women. However, in cases where family support was lacking, such as for Adikini, women with doubts conformed to the gender-biased ideologies and pursued careers in arts; this in turn changed both their educational and professional pathways.

5.5 Tertiary and University: Negotiating Gender in the Classroom

The tertiary colleges and universities are at the fourth level of phase one of the educational track. The narratives show that 13 (27.7%) of the women went to tertiary institutions after upper secondary school for various professional diploma courses. This category of women marks the ones who followed a professional and vocational educational tracks. The remaining 34 (72.3%) joined university directly from upper secondary, following the high school educational track. Although the tertiary institutions offered women opportunities such as scholarships, the classroom experiences of gender ideology were not radically different from those in lower and upper secondary schools.

At the tertiary institutions and at university, the women got opportunities through government sponsorships to take professional courses. They had a chance to choose the kind of tertiary institutions and universities they wanted to go to. However, by this level, the male hegemony had succeeded in discouraging a number of them from pursuing sciences. As a result, the few women who persisted with sciences emerged as 'academic loners' in male-dominated science courses. Women who specialized in education at tertiary institutions *experienced* the gender ideology in two types of classrooms. The first is the college classroom in which the women were students. The

second is the classroom in which the women were student teachers on school practice, as part of their training. In both classroom contexts, the main actors were male students who were classmates of the women and students who were learners in the class taught by the women.

Initiation as honorary male

When the women were in male-dominated science classrooms, male students attempted to initiate them as honorary males to integrate them in the class. In the case of male students as classmates, the experience of Falley, a lecturer, shows how the male hegemonic culture manifested itself in the mathematics course at the National Teachers College (NTC). Falley was the only female student in the mathematics class. When I spoke with her, she could vividly recall the surprised reaction from the male students on her first day in that class. Although the male students were not particularly rough with her, they initiated a discussion on how to integrate her among them. Falley became amused when her male classmates decided to perform a ritual to re-brand her; as she recalls: *'the boys decided to say that "Falley is not a girl! She is the only boy we have in this mathematics class"'*. This re-branding was symbolically an identity-stripping ceremony. Falley was stripped of her feminine identity, so she could be integrated into the male-dominated class. In turn, the male students also stripped their masculine identity to symbolically invest it in Falley as an 'honorary male,' in a kind of 'protest' against having a girl in their mathematics class.

The stripping of identity means the presence of Falley in the classroom initiated a kind of reflection on how men generally perceived women in sciences. The stripping also shows how men, just like women, were struggling to deal with the gender ideologies they had been socialised into. Most importantly, identity stripping also demonstrates that the structurally rigid nature of educational institutions made it difficult for men as much as women to deal with gender differences in a school, college, and university setting. Falley especially recalled that whenever her classmates went for informal mathematics discussions, they would ask her, *'please our boy, we need to go for discussion. That's the name they gave me, our boy"'*. Falley explained that at first she felt 'small' with the label 'our only boy'. However, she 'got used to it' and employed her agency strategically to deal with it and *'even to live with the label and with the boy'* in

order to pursue her educational pathway in mathematics. Her strategic agency won the boys over and earned her respect as a mathematician.

Although Falley was alone in the mathematics class, she was not the only woman in a science discipline at the college. She discovered that the chemistry, physics, and biology classes each had a female student. Falley and the three other women connected with one another and relocated to the same residence. Falley and her female colleagues created time not only for studying but also to share experiences regarding how they dealt with gender ideologies in their male-dominated classes. Through sharing, the women helped and networked with each other to build group agency as a support strategy for resilience to pursue sciences. The women pledged to support each other and resolved that, *'when we finish this diploma, we should all go back for further studies in the same science specialisations'*. Falley was content that they all kept their pledge and progressed to bachelor's and master's degrees in sciences. The group agency emerged as the most important aspect of the women's strategy at the tertiary institution. It strengthened the ability of the women to confront and overcome the male hegemony in the science classes. The group agency also helped the women to effectively use their few numbers in science to build resilience that then facilitated their educational pathways. Gender discrimination in the primary and secondary schools had an effect of creating 'lone female scientists' along the educational pathways. In sum, survival for women in sciences particularly depended on strategic individual and also close group agency.

The women who followed the professional track faced an additional gender bias at tertiary institutions during internship training and school practice. This was revealed in Asema's narrative on school practice in a senior two classroom at an all-boy's secondary school¹⁷. As a female student teacher, Asema's experience on the first day in a senior two classroom of religious studies was challenging¹⁸. She asked me to imagine her as *'a young female student teacher ... You know S.2, how stubborn they are!'* Asema recalled with disappointment that the young boys attempted to familiarize with her in a

¹⁷ School practice is in the first and second years of teacher training in which student teachers are sent to primary schools (for those in Primary Teachers Colleges (PTC)) or secondary schools (for those in National Teachers Colleges (NTC)) to practice how to teach. The school practice lasts for three months, is supervised by both internal and external examiners, and is the basis by which one becomes officially registered by the Ministry of Education and Sports to teach in Ugandan schools.

¹⁸ A student teacher is a student in a teacher training college who is placed in a school to practice teaching before fully qualifying as a teacher. A student teacher is normally placed under the supervision of a qualified teacher in the school.

disrespectful manner. For instance, she humorously imitated how, on her first day in the class, the senior two boys kept passing kisses, '*mpki, mpki*' (imitates the sound of kissing) whenever she turned to write on the chalkboard. She remembered how the behaviour of the students was confusing for her, especially because they were male. She remembered contemplating, '*how do I turn to show seriousness and reprimand these boys? They must see me as a teacher*'. Asema dramatically illustrated how she turned to the class with a '*dangerously tough*' face to discipline and call the boys to attention.

The strategy Asema engages is what Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998, 187-188) referred to as face negotiation. Face, according to Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, refers to a claimed sense of favourable social self-worth that a person wants others to have of her or him (1998, 187). The face, the authors argue, is a vulnerable identity-based resource because it can be enhanced or threatened in any uncertain social situations, such as initial interpersonal interaction and relationship building. Facework, according to Ting-Toomey and Kurogi, which also refers to a set of communication behaviours that people use to regulate their social identity, is also linked to compliance gaining (1998, 188). Compliance-gaining was particularly effective in the case of Asema, because as she realised: '*even the boys who were looking at each about what to do next would get organised and sit and wait and see what she was going to do*'. She acknowledged that the boys saw in her '*a young girl they thought they would intimidate. They [also] thought they could even start a relationship with me*'. This assumption was because the age gap between a secondary school student and a student teacher in a tertiary institution is minor. At high school, students are on average 19 years old and in the tertiary institutions they are usually 20 or 21. Asema thought the boys were not used to being taught by a woman because it was not common to find female teachers in all-boy's schools. She explained that while the boys were used to the idea that '*a male teacher can cane them, for a woman, they wanted to see how confused or emotional you became*'. Asema thought that, as students, boys also embodied the gender ideology that women are soft and men are tough. Ultimately, as Mio (1999, 125) argued, face and face works are about interpersonal self-worth issues and mutual respectability issues. Hence, using a strategy of face and facework, Asema effectively claimed her space and respect as a woman and a female teacher in an all-boys' classroom.

Asema's narrative highlights the fact that in the classroom women were not only sexualised as pupils but even as professionals. This fact is consistent with the argument of Lahelma, Palmu, and Gordon (2000, 477) that sexualisation is one means students use to order, challenge, or confront a teacher's position of power. The authors argue that even young boys can challenge a female teacher's authority by treating her as a woman and not as a teacher. Power in the classroom is intertwined with hegemonic masculinity. Sexualisation for Asema was particularly challenging since she was a student teacher under examination by moderators. Asema initiated dialogue with the senior two boys as a strategy to create gender awareness in the class but also to save her future profession as a teacher. This dialogue was crucial, as Asema realised that the negative attitude of the boys could jeopardise her possibility of passing the school practice examination with external examiners. This move on her part was crucial, because besides lesson content, school practice moderators also examined class control and discipline. Dialogue was crucial to sensitise the boys to the consequences of their bad behaviour and to convince them to conduct themselves respectfully in class at all times. Asema eventually won the boys' cooperation, and they agreed to be very active in class when external examiners came for school practice moderation. The boys agreed that *'If she calls a name that does not even belong to any boy in class, you simply accept, to show that in this small time she has already gotten our name so that our teacher gets a credit'*. Asema's experience captures the influence of gender in classroom interactions and shows that male students' characteristics and teachers' feminine attributes may shape teacher-student interaction in the classroom (Wilkinson and Marrett 2013, 6).

A reflection on the experiences of Falley and Asema in National Teachers College (NTC) reveals that the male hegemony persisted even at this level. The difference with women's experiences at secondary school is that at tertiary colleges, their classmates and their own pupils were the main actors and carriers of gender ideology and the sexualisation of women. At the tertiary level, one important factor that played positively for the women was that they had already gained the maturity of age required for their classmates and teachers to take them seriously. In general, the women at the tertiary level were 'unstoppable' in terms of the gender bias in science and in education. They had also trained as professional teachers and would soon be proving the current gender ideology wrong not only as students but as active professionals in the field of education.

Sexualisation

Lahelma, Palmu, and Gordon (2000, 464-68), in their study of teachers' experience of being sexualised, observed that there are power relations involved when students sexualise teachers. Although a female teacher such as Asema is in a position of power in relation to her students, male students could challenge her power by sexualising her, thus naming her 'a woman' rather than a 'teacher'. The challenge for female teachers is that, unlike male teachers, they cannot evoke masculinity to retrieve their superior position in the power relationship. According to the authors, women are less likely to subvert sexualisation by evoking their femininity. This reticence is due to social and cultural practices especially in patriarchal societies, which represents masculinity as more powerful than femininity. Asema's presence in the boys' school generated a reaction because it was challenging the male hegemony rooted in the schools.

The case of Asema as a student teacher shows one face of male hegemony in the educational institutions. The students that Asema taught did not want to accept her because of their beliefs that a woman could not teach men (even if the men were boys). Her entry into the class as a student teacher generated contradictions not only for her feminine identity but also for the masculine identity of the boys in her class. Their reaction was a hard and perhaps unexpected reminder to Asema that she was intellectually trespassing in what the boys saw as an all-male world. On the other hand, the boys also struggled with the idea that they would be taught by a woman. The reaction of the boys was in effect a strategy to protect their '*masculine intellectual integrity*', which was being provocatively challenged by Asema as a '*woman-teacher-in class*'. These kinds of contradictions present specific challenges for women teachers in an all-boys' setting. As a young female student teacher, it was a struggle for Asema to maintain both her feminine and professional identity. What was most significant was the encroachment of the boys on her privacy in the classroom, and the disrespectful way in which the boys treated her. The central issue for both Falley and Asema was that men felt the women had 'invaded' their space and so should be pushed back. Men's power in the school particularly rested on their active monopoly of the science disciplines. The arrival of women in sciences challenged this monopoly.

Understanding the gender norms from a social perspective, it is clear that, while the women suffered disappointment, at the same time they turned around these gender norms to build their professional career. In the first place, both Falley and Asema were

aware that the gender norms they were dealing with were a wider societal problem that could not be solved by individual women. For instance, Falley chose to accept and live with the label 'our boy', which was not a resignation or conformity to the gender ideology in her class, but rather a conscious challenge to the male monopoly of sciences without losing focus on her career as a mathematician. The choice of silent resistance was a necessary strategy for women to use effectively in the science class. Another aspect of the context was that both women and men carried this ideology. Falley probably saw that vocal and physical resistance would only be counterproductive to her educational pathway. In her silence, Falley also developed a strategy against being defeminised (masculinised) in her mathematics class by looking for and building strong networks with female scientists who faced similar gender ideologies in their classes. By discovering fellow female scientist in other classes, Falley mobilised and gained the courage to face the male world in her class. Finding women with similar interests became a strategy for Falley to challenge the gender norms in science, as well as through academic excellence and staying on the science track. These women also realised the importance of challenging the system of male hegemony in science, and so resolved to pursue higher degrees in science together.

Networking is not always possible, however. For instance, Asema was a lone teacher in the class of boys, which meant she had to improvise in situ to incorporate the boys into her teaching practice and thus ensure her safety. She first adopted the 'masculine stance' of looking at the boys in a '*dangerously serious*' way in order to intimidate them into not invading her personal space. Green (2016, 30), referring to Foucault (1980, 155), discusses this as 'talking by gaze' and argues that power may not require physical violence. Material constraint is just a gaze, an inspecting gaze, which each individual will end up internalising to the point that they are their own overseer. Green suggests that invisible power causes the relatively powerless to internalise and accept their condition. However, Asema effectively used her invisible gaze to silence the disrespectful boys in the classroom. In this way she reclaimed her personhood and her sexuality by redirecting the boys' attention in such a way that they would see her as a professional teacher. In other words, Asema had to '*masquerade*' as male to control the boys in the classroom. Secondly, she fell back on her feminine characteristic of dialogue and friendship to win the boys over and to make them part of the construction of her

professional career in education. In a way, she also silently resisted gender ideology in class by positively manipulating the boys who were the agents of gender ideology in class. Unlike male teachers, whose authority is guaranteed by their position in the masculine hierarchy, female teachers like Asema had to struggle to create, claim, and then occupy a space for themselves. As Lahelma, Palmu, and Gordon (2000, 472) suggest, teachers sometimes use a side-stepping strategy when sexually harassed by students for fear that a reaction would provoke students further, because attention is what they are looking for.

At tertiary institutions, students became the main carriers of the gender ideology but with a twist. Instead of fighting, they incorporated the women into sciences by symbolically 'stripping' themselves of their own masculinity and vesting the women with an honorary initiation into 'manhood'. The repositioning of the male hegemony was a tactical survival strategy to maintain the male status quo in sciences. To succeed on the education pathway, the women realised they needed to network and cooperate with each other as a safety net against the gender bias at tertiary institution and universities. The women were equally strategic in proving the flaw in the discriminative gender ideology in science by insisting on specialising in sciences at tertiary institutions and universities.

Unlike the integrationist approach at the tertiary institutions, women who specialised in sciences at university experienced rejection from their male classmates and isolation from other students. Nyepe is among the women from the high school track who was admitted into a private university to take a Bachelor of Science degree with education. Nyepe's class had 2 women among more than 30 men. Her experience shows that gender ideologies at this level were similar to those at lower levels of education. However, the dynamics of enforcing the norms and the actors changed. Nyepe narrates an experience in which she and two of her female classmates were rejected by their male classmates at the university. The men in her class:

... had it that they were supposed to be the best in class. So, we were supposed to be working in groups, and the men didn't feel comfortable to pick any of us girls for group discussions. It was after the first semester when I excelled in class that the men started to pay attention to the fact that I actually knew much more than they did. But that also just increased the level of competition among us; men versus women.

As Nyepe observed, this rejection shocked her because, as a Christian joining an Islamic university, she knew that women had to wear the 'hijab'¹⁹. However, she had no idea what else to expect from the lecture room. Nyepe came to realize that religion in the university was *'highly gendered, because you couldn't fail to see that women were expected to do this and men that'*. Nyepe thought that religion had a strong influence on the repulsive attitude of her male classmates towards female students in science class. She recalled that, even when her male classmates attempted to include the women in their discussion groups, their motive was *'more competitive in nature; they wanted to find out how much we knew'*. Therefore, it did not make a difference in terms of their gender-biased attitude.

As a strategy, Nyepe took the initiative to collaborate with the two other women in her class to overcome the gender bias:

... we all worked together much more than working with men. As female students, our relationship with each other changed from competition to collaboration. I worked towards telling the women that we would work in different schools anyway, and we were not going to compete for the same jobs. Besides, we were from different districts. So in the end we won't even have to fight for positions. So competition among women doesn't work at that level. They understood.

The position of Nyepe and her colleagues shows a move forward, towards building collaborative agency. They were not only strategizing as women in science but as women on the same course and in the same class. Collaborative agency for women goes deeper than networking; it is about supporting each other against the day-to-day academic and social experiences of discrimination in the lecture room. What helped Nyepe to take the initiative to organize the women in her class is her family background, because as she said, *'coming from a large family, it has always been one thing that we do in my family. We are always working together for the good of the family, so, I applied that'* in my class. Nyepe explained that organizing and networking with people is the way she does her work. She does not believe in acting on her own, if she knows that all the people in the group can make a contribution and can benefit.

Nyepe's group approach to working, she recalled, *'took the men by surprise'* because in the university there was a strong culture of competing by *'hiding knowledge; not wanting to share'*; this ran contrary to her openness. Ironically, men in her class

¹⁹ The Hijab is worn by some Muslim women to cover themselves from head to toe.

thought that by being open to share, Nyepe was not competitive enough because she did not have the: *'killer instinct [laughs]. So that was some of the things I had to wade through but in the end I found out that sharing knowledge was more helpful because you learn much more if you are willing to share than holding information.'* Collaboration distinguished the nature of competition between male and female groups in Nyepe's class. Men in Nyepe's class appeared to be set on competing against the women but also among themselves. This working style also manifests the construction of masculine attributes associated with aggression and, at its worst, destruction.

Social isolation in the university

Nyepe not only struggles against men in her class but also against the patriarchal ideology about *'girls in science'* among students at the university in general. This patriarchal ideology carries a discourse in which women are valued in terms of marriage and not professional careers. Students believed that *'girls in science will not get boyfriends'* because they were studying subjects, *'which threaten men in science and scared men in arts disciplines'*. Women in science were constructed as 'scare crows' or 'monsters' who defied the gender norms in academic discipline. This construction isolated and potentially discouraged some women from specializing in the sciences. Nyepe recalled that:

... one of the ladies in my class really had a moment there! She got so affected and struggled with the idea of changing to an arts course after the first semester of our first year at university. I talked her back into science. I told her *'you won't change course now. So? ... you have to gear up and just do your job'* just to boost her morale, because otherwise even the other girls would run away from the science class, and I didn't want that to happen.

The issue of not gaining a future marriage partner is controversial. Tyson (2014) argues that, although not all women would want to get married, patriarchal ideology tells women they are unfulfilled if they do not wed. Tyson further argues that patriarchal ideology has a psychological influence on both men and women. As such, women who also internalize gender roles view marriage as the only desirable reward for 'right' conduct (Tyson 2014, 88-89).

This discourse against girls in science was advanced by male students and by female students. A number of times Nyepe was reprimanded by female students from arts classes for insisting on specialising in sciences:

... there was particularly one lady who was doing a bachelor's degree in public administration. She really urged me to change from science to economics or any arts degree to save my future for marriage. Even I had a roommate [who] was doing bachelor of Finance and Accounting. She told me '*Nyepé, you are too bright, so I don't think any man will come near you!*'. Then I told her '*that is good, because then I can concentrate on what I want*' ...

The position of Nyepé's roommate illustrates what Tyson (2014) points out, that patriarchal ideologies manifest themselves in what appear to be even the most innocent of women's activities and choices. The pervasive nature of patriarchy, according to Tyson, is that it can programme us without our knowledge or consent, thus constructing us into patriarchal women and men (Tyson 2014, 93). At another level, as Giroux observes, class and power connects with a dominant patriarchal culture not only in an institutional structure but also in the disposition of the oppressed themselves who actively participate in their own subjugation (Giroux 1983, 88).

Internalized oppression by female students is just one challenge Nyepé had to deal with. Nyepé struggled with male students whose masculinity put them in a powerful position in science class. At the same time she had to deal with building the morale of her fellow female students while also challenging them to wake up to the reality of patriarchal ideologies and gender discrimination in the university. Nyepé was acutely aware that, '*both men and women embody those gendered ways of looking at knowledge, academia and life. So I think that is one thing that we keep sorting through as we make decisions*' about what educational pathway to follow, even at university. This view is consistent with Kabeer's (2005) observation that in patriarchal societies, where a women's role in society is defined purely in reproductive terms, the perceived aim of the education of girls is to equip them to be better wives and mothers. Education also increases women's chances of netting a suitable husband rather than enhancing their own career development (Kabeer 2005, 17). Nyepé graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree, a master's degree, and subsequently a PhD in gender studies. Ultimately, Nyepé's resilience in the sciences was consistent with feminist critics who, according to Tyson (2014), consider the possibility that no ideology succeeds in fully programming all of the people, all of the time, and who see that every ideology has a point of self-contradiction, which permits us to understand its operations and decrease its influence on people.

Nyepe's narrative also shows how gender equality issues for women are complicated by being grounded in a religious setting. In Uganda, this factor is of interest because religious institutions are key stakeholders in providing education services from primary to university level. While at the private religiously founded universities women in science faced rejection, at the public universities women fell victim to moral discourse on pregnancy. The case of Aklaus, a medical doctor and lecturer, is particularly informative. Aklaus fell in love with her current husband while both of them were medical students at the same university. When Aklaus, a Muslim, conceived, she took advantage of the free-flowing Islamic hijab to conceal her pregnancy from the faculty and administration. She did so because she was aware of the intolerance towards pregnant female students in the medical school. Aklaus recalled that, *'nobody saw the pregnancy. I was a young girl, I didn't grow so big a belly. Nobody knew I was pregnant'*. Aklaus succeeded in hiding her pregnancy, giving birth, and completing her final written examinations without drawing the attention of the lecturers or the department administration. However, when she went for an oral examination for a paediatric paper, she recalled that:

The head of department looked at me and asked *'Aklaus, what is wrong? You seem to have lost a lot of weight ... what is happening?... did you abort?'* I told him 'no I did not, I actually had a baby' (*speaking softly with fearful expression*). The head of department said *'you had a baby? And we didn't know? I am not examining you!'* ... So I got a supplementary in paediatrics ... just because I gave birth ... and I [had] not told them I was pregnant.

The narrative of Aklaus also speaks to the experience of the two other women who said they had been victimized due to pregnancy at university. The troubling aspect of the moral discourse at the medical school was that Aklaus' partner, who was a medical student in the same department and responsible for the pregnancy, never came to anyone's attention, nor was he called to account. The moral discourse being constructed in Aklaus' case relates to the 'sanity' of the medical school. The face of this morality was constructed as feminine because men never carry a pregnancy. In a further discussion on whether this was a policy in the university, Aklaus responded:

I don't think it was a policy; those are some of the silent policies we had in medical school that targeted female students. You were not supposed to conceive and have a baby. It was really bad for you to give birth when you were still at medical school.

She narrates that one of the silent policies in the medical school targeted female students, as they were told they should not conceive during medical training. Aklaus was targeted personally by the head of department, who chose to punish her for her pregnancy. It was exclusively the women who were targeted; male students in the medical school were at liberty to have children. However, it is important to note how the cultural belief system of the head of department translated into an informal institutional culture. On the other hand, while pregnancy in the overall society is celebrated when conception occurs for officially married couples, in the institution the same pregnancy becomes a source of discrimination against women. Additionally, as a medical school it would have been expected that the head of department would have appreciated Aklaus, as a grown-up medical student, making a choice to keep the baby instead of aborting the pregnancy.

At the university, while women like Nyepe found a way either to challenge the gender ideology and discrimination in class, either directly or indirectly, other women did not have the option to do the same. The case of Aklaus presents another face of this ideology's transformation into an informal institutional culture. This culture was difficult to notice and difficult to deal with for the women and for other lecturers in faculties. The difficulty arises particularly from the fact that the carriers of the ideology were not only classroom teachers but also held positions of power in the faculties. This power made it complicated to call such lecturers to attention and to discipline them. For instance, Aklaus was victimized by her lecturer, who was also the head of the department. The challenge for Aklaus confronting this gender ideology was that her professor was not acting as an individual but as a representative of the institution. Aklaus felt vulnerable in his hands and opted to comply with the punishment and repeat the course as a survival strategy, rather than abandon medical training. This policy turned out to be one of the factors that delayed Aklaus' education pathway: instead of five years, she was forced to take six years to complete medical school.

Nyepe and Aklaus bring to light two important facets of gender culture in the university. Firstly, their stories show that the culture among students against girls in science is not limited to the university but is a way of thinking that students (men and women) have been socialized into along their entire educational track. At the university level, just like the tertiary institutions, this culture against girls in science occurs more in

the classroom with students and as the main actors. At another level, it is clear that the gendered ideology against women is not static but is transformed as the women move along their education track. In the primary and secondary schools, gender ideology is embedded in teachers, who are the main carriers. In the tertiary institution, gender ideology is transformed within the classroom in such a way that students become the main carriers of the ideology in the class.

Secondly, in university, the patriarchal ideology is further transformed into a silent policy that discriminates against women based on their gender and feminine characteristics such as pregnancy. At the university, lecturers and students once again become active carriers of the gender ideology. This process of transforming the gender ideology works like a conveyor belt that passes on gendered ideology from one level of education to another. The conveying nature of the educational institutions makes it difficult to deal with gender inequality within the institutional structures. Gender inequality issues in the curriculum in terms of textbooks, teaching material, teachers, and school policies are noticeable and subject to revision. What is difficult to deal with are the implicitly and informally expressed attitudes and practices of teachers and students.

Overall, at the level of their bachelor's degree, the major challenge for the women was discrimination based on their feminine attributes and also the gendered nature of the subjects. What made the women succeed at this level were both their individual and group agency, which enabled them to defy the odds of discrimination in science and to specialise in these same off-limits subjects. The women adopted strategies to network with and encourage each other. In a few cases, conformity was a strategy that became important, especially where there were no supportive individuals to defend the women.

5.6 Postgraduate Pathway: Resisting Gender-Based Discrimination

While at the bachelor's degree level, women both actively resisted and also conformed to the gender ideology, their master's and PhD levels were marked with pure resistance against gender-based discrimination, for example, against being victimized and rejected for pregnancy. The narrative of Niabu casts light on the circumstances of women at a master's level. Niabu narrated how excited she was to take a master's degree in Computer Science in the United Kingdom under the Commonwealth Scholarship. However, she was immediately faced with a challenge when she arrived in the UK: *'Oh!*

There is another gender issue that appeared there! I left Uganda a few months after my wedding, so by the time I went to the UK, I was actually 3 months pregnant'. On realising her pregnant status, the administrators in the Computer Sciences' department advised her to return to Uganda because 'you can't do a one-year course, which is very intensive, with a pregnancy'. They in effect advised her to deliver the baby before taking the course. Niabu laughed and said, 'I did not want to hear that!! You know after leaving home and saying farewell, you have gone abroad to do something [study]! And you return home without a degree? I did not want to hear anything like that!' She remembered that, because of her objection to the department's proposal, an arrangement was made by the scholarship administrator at the University, for her to see the scholarship administrator at the Commonwealth Scholarship head office in London.

So I went there and, you know they were talking to me to go back home and come back the next year! I insisted 'No ... It is easier to carry the baby in the womb than on my lap during my study!' So finally, of course as always I did some of my things by force. They said 'okay, if you have committed yourself to do so. In case there is anything pregnancy-related issue, we shall not stand by you'. I said okay.

Niabu's struggle with the university and the Commonwealth Sponsorship offices was also influenced by the realization that whether she remained at university or went back to Uganda to give birth, it would not make a difference. Whatever she did, she was caught. On the one hand, giving birth to a baby would tie her down for the next five or more years. However, on the other hand, she was also aware of the rigorous academic demands of the master's course. The decision caused her many sleepless nights. She was very much aware of the gender issues she was struggling with and that they could not be fixed by simple solutions, such as giving birth before proceeding with her studies. The issue was an institutional gender bias that she was set to challenge because it required an institutional solution. Meanwhile, because the institution had declined to take care of any pregnancy-related illnesses, she knew her only survival strategy was to continue to be brave in her situation. She went to the extent of hiding her pregnancy-related health conditions from the institution in order to save her education career. Therefore, although Niabu undertook her masters in the United Kingdom, she still had to fight against discrimination on the basis of her pregnancy. Her situation confirms that even in 'mature' democracies where legal gender equality frameworks are in place, women still

have to fight against gender-based discrimination, especially in institutional practices (Van den Brink 2010).

Caught up in the cross fire

Niabu's determination to go on with her studies instead of returning home to have her baby was not just a matter of a strong desire to have the scholarship at any cost. The issue was to confront institutionalized gender-based discrimination based on pregnancy and also to avoid falling back into the gender ideology trap at home. Niabu realized that either way she would compromise her educational pathways. On the one hand, pushing her back home to have her baby shows that the university was not ready to admit women as students without their feminine attributes. What is problematic is that the university attempted to explicitly compartmentalise a woman's life as a student and as a mother. The university and the Commonwealth Sponsorship office presented to Niabu the impossibility of being simultaneously both a mother and a student. The two institutions perceived pregnancy not as a normal part of a woman's life cycle but as a sickness to be treated; on the other hand they looked at Niabu's pregnancy as an extra financial burden they were not prepared to carry. The institutions viewed Niabu's pregnancy as a problem they did not want to take responsibility for. From a gender perspective, Niabu continued with her studies as a student but not as a female student.

The alternative of returning to Uganda was not viable for Niabu's education either. She was conscious that Uganda would be a trap for her because the social expectation is that women nurture children, especially when the children are young. In regards to financial and time costs related to taking care of a baby, Niabu realised that it was easier to carry *'the baby in the womb than to have it on the lap'*. As shown in chapter 2, women's education pathways grow complicated when the women marry. Decisions related to education are not made just by the women themselves, as the case of Gukanu illustrates. Depending on spousal support, a married woman's education path could be delayed for ten or more years.

At university, the gender ideology became so institutionalized in some faculties that it silently informed their practice on women's sexuality. Unlike at the primary and secondary schools where women were sexualized by fellow pupils and teachers, at university the women became victims of their sexuality and feminine attributes. The women were forced to fail and repeat courses for getting pregnant. Yet their male

partners who were also students were left alone to go ahead with their studies with no consequences. At the master's and PhD levels, women saw the convergence of the university and the funding organizations as institutions in which gender ideology discriminated against women in terms of both age and sexuality. At these levels, the universities and funding organizations covered up their silent discriminative policies by turning women's sexuality and feminine characteristics such as pregnancy into objects of sympathy and problems to be dealt with.

At the end of it all, my position is that educational institutions and the teachers who work in them need help to reflect on the way they think of gender ideology against women and how it is being produced, especially in the classroom space. There is also need for the women to speak up early enough to be helped in order not to lose their career path or their footing on the educational track. However, the conveyor belt nature with which gender ideology is passed from one level to another is the core issue that needs to be confronted along the women's educational pathway.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed how women experienced and negotiated gender discrimination in the classroom in educational institutions, and how this experience influenced their educational pathway. The findings show that the education institutions were non-discriminatory in the formal admission process. This is evident in the women's access to and formal enrolment in schools, colleges, and universities. None of the women narrated any experience of being denied enrolment by school administration on the basis of their gender. The findings also show that the school curriculum was generally open and officially students were not denied the chance to take any subject or course of interest. This openness motivated the women to explore options that were available in the educational institutions and to specialise in disciplines that matched the women's interest. In this context, the findings are consistent with those of Delamont (2012, 2) that educational institutions are a vehicle of development that positively influence pupils' lives and career achievement.

In addition to Delmont's (2012) five ways in which teachers differentiate between girls and boys in British schools, the findings in my study show teachers as a decisive element in education institutions. The teachers and their approach and management of school curriculum can create a conducive learning environment for

pupils and students in the classroom. The creative way in which teachers interacted with learners and the heterogeneous sitting arrangement of the classroom in mixed schools was appreciated by the women as conducive for learning. In the classroom, teachers possess tremendous power to make a student feel included or excluded in the class. Teachers are a source of inspiration and bear responsibility for making learning interesting to or detested by students. The way the educational institution arranged learning so that different teachers conducted different subjects and courses in the same classroom was experienced by the women as enriching.

However, compared to the natal family (chapter 3), the women experienced educational institutions as highly gendered spaces, especially in informal practices. These findings are consistent with the view of Epstein and Morrell (2012) that education institutions are places where femininities and masculinities are made, enacted, reproduced, and contested. Concretely, the findings in my study singled out the classroom as the 'epicentre' of informal gendered practices in the schools, colleges, and universities. In the classroom, gender inequalities were continuously generated and reproduced, and this created gendered experiences for the women throughout their education pathway from primary school to the university. It was in the classroom that the gendered practices of especially male science teachers and pupils found expression in explicit ways. Indeed, the classroom was vibrant with gender ideologies carried in the attitude and practices of particularly male teachers and pupils. Yet, as Epstein and Morrell observed, the classroom is the space where the actual business of formal education takes place. This tension becomes particularly problematic when women are perceived as outsiders in the classroom and limits their opportunities to learn in the classroom.

The constraining classroom experiences of the women bring into question Eccles' (1996) notion of choice. Gendered practices of teachers and pupils in the classroom influenced the patterns of the education pathway of the women in my study. In particular, the violence and threats associated with science subjects scared off some of the women and obliged them to change their career path from sciences to arts. A few of the women who dared to pursue a career in sciences did so out of defiance against gender discrimination in the classroom rather than pure career interest or choice. Hence, the decision to take a certain education pathway was not gender neutral. The

women's education pathways were influenced by gender dynamics in the classroom. What makes the women succeed despite this gender discrimination is their determination and ability to confront and defy discrimination through academic excellence. In self-determination, the women changed strategies appropriately from resistance to conformity, as they navigated through the few options along their education pathways. The change of strategy was particularly dictated by the informal gendered practices that the women found more difficult to deal with than formal discrimination. The strategies of resistance and conformity were not pre-planned but generated out of the women's day-to-day struggles against gender inequality in the classroom.

The gendered attitudes in the classroom are not legitimized in the school as Epstein and Morrell (2012) insinuate. However, these attitudes persist in schools, colleges, and universities because of the autonomy of the teacher within the classroom space. In relation to male teachers and pupils, the classroom as presented in the women's stories was a space in which patriarchal structures of power relations actively attempted to contest and redefine the women's education pathways. The findings agree with Parson (in Ballantine and Spade 2014, 35) that having more teachers makes the classroom a complex space of learning, especially for women. In the classroom, girls got more frequent negative comments about their feminine identity from teachers than boys did about their identity. Male science teachers in particular informally contested women's feminine identity but also questioned their intellectual capacity in the classroom. Hence the way science teachers organized teaching and lesson content directly segregated the girls. Male teachers' gender stereotypes of women in sciences was found to be the same, regardless of whether the women were in an all-girls' classroom in a single-sex school or in a heterogeneous classroom in a mixed school. That said, it was these challenging gendered situations that awakened in the women a sense of awareness of gender discrimination, which obliged them to respond proactively to secure their education career.

Gendered attitudes and practices in the classroom also awakened the women's agency. They became more sensitive to and critical of the taken-for-granted formal and informal classroom interactions. The women ambitiously confronted male teachers and pupils who attempted to obstruct the women from pursuing their educational goals.

Intellectually, they fought and defied prejudices of science teachers by excellent academic performance in science examinations at school and at national examinations. Additionally, the female students disproved the teachers by specialising in various science disciplines at high school, at university (bachelor's, master's and PhD levels), and in their professional career at the universities. The women challenged male classmates in inter-school and national examinations through their excellent academic performance, which won them respect among male teachers and students nationally.

Even in situations when the women seem to succumb to the violent enforcement of gender discrimination in the science classroom, they strategically navigated other possible educational pathways to avoid dropping out of school. In this sense, the women resisted repression of their intellectual creativity through comments from male science teachers and rejection by male classmates. In other cases, the women diplomatically accepted being 'branded male' in a bid to secure their space in the science classroom. This was a tactical strategy to overcome the possibility of being thrown out of the classroom, as was the case with Sarah's story in the introductory chapter.

The findings also indicate that the women from an early age in primary school actively contested gender inequality in the classroom. The women were obliged to use multiple approaches to pave the way for their education career. These approaches ranged from engaging in physical fights to diplomatically confronting the teachers as well as classmates. In the classroom, women independently fought their way through the education system by confronting male pupils who challenged the women's feminine identity. Even in cases that indicated a teacher's unwillingness to challenge gender stereotyping in the classroom, the women made a breakthrough by mobilizing their intellectual and sometimes physical energy to deal with these stereotypes. In primary school, the women adopted aggression and rebellion as a survival strategy to defend their feminine identity and demand respect. In the upper secondary school levels, and at colleges and universities, their approach was more diplomatic and silently defiant. The women accepted honorary male titles without losing their feminine rigour in academia. These findings are consistent with the views of Kabeer (2005, 16) that education enhances cognitive ability, which is essential for women to question, reflect, and act upon. The findings show that women were actively involved in managing gender discrimination against them in the classroom, right from primary school. As young girls,

they physically fought to protect their integrity and to resist being sexualised by fellow pupils. Furthermore, they strategically reacted against teachers by showing displeasure at being sexualised by teachers.

Experiences of discrimination reawakened in the women a sense of self-worth, which helped them to reclaim and occupy a feminine space in education institutions. The women's variance of their agency was a strategy to deal with the super patriarchal structure, so as to successfully construct their educational pathway. The women used individual agency to strategically counteract sexualisation and, when faced with discriminatory gender ideologies in the larger school population, they employed group agency and collaborative agencies. Group agency involved networking with women in other faculties to confront gender ideologies, while collaborative agency was used in situations to awaken women who had fallen victim to the gender ideologies. In spite of the constraining circumstances in education institutions, the women in my study, both individually and with support from their female colleagues, managed to traverse the leaky education pipeline to construct successful education pathways.

CHAPTER SIX - BARGAINING CAREER PATHWAYS IN THE SPOUSAL HOUSEHOLD

Actually to tell you the truth, if my husband was a bad man then I would have got married at S.6 (senior six in upper secondary). But I think he was somebody who was interested in me and my studies. By the time I met him he was already working and I was still a student, but still, he didn't interrupt me and I finished my S.6 and came to the university, I continued studying and got a lot of encouragement from him.

This quote from the narrative of Rakia, a senior lecturer in her 40s, represents the introduction of spouses into the education pathway of 31 (66%) of the 47 women participants. Rakia's narrative shows that as the women progressed through higher education, they met partners who positively influenced their higher education pathway, especially from upper secondary school to the PhD level. In the narrative of Rakia, the premarital influence of her partner is evident. What emerges in the other narratives is the fact that most partners were already employed when the women were at high school, pursuing diploma training in colleges, or bachelor's degrees at university. This means the spouses were older and professionally more experienced than the women were when they married. This age gap and experience reduced competition and fostered cooperation between the women and their spouses. As Rakia suggests, a spousal factor was important in the women's education pathway, especially from upper secondary school to their PhD.

In her study of women's access to higher education in Africa, based on experiences of women from Uganda, Kwesiga (2002, 58) established that women and men cannot opt out of marriage in African communities. She found that it is not the norm in Africa, and especially Uganda, for any mature person to remain unmarried. Marriage is one of the most important social institutions into which boys and girls are socialised. Boys and girls grow up knowing that marriage is an ultimate duty that endows them with a social identity in the community. Kwesiga observed that the expectations of society lead women to see themselves as incomplete unless they have the tag of 'wife' or 'Mrs'. This tag, which they make explicit in everyday experience is very important for women to command respect in society. Kwesiga's position is confirmed by an experimental study carried out on bargaining within households in eastern Uganda by Iversen et al. (2011). The results of the experimental studies led Iversen's group to conclude that men in eastern Uganda depend on their wives to

maintain their reputation and masculine identity, and vice versa. As such, men anxiously struggle to sustain their marriage because unmarried or divorced men are socially ridiculed, suspected of sorcery and theft, and in extreme cases may be subject to violence. Another conclusion of Iversen's group is that, although gender relations in marriage are formally controlled by men, in reality women in eastern Uganda have considerable freedom to marry whomever they choose. Women can divorce and readily remarry when marriage is unsatisfactory (Iversen et al. 2011, 571).

The studies of Kwesiga (2002) and Iversen et al. (2011) have shown the considerable cultural premium attached to marriage in Ugandan society. At the basis of this cultural premium is the perception of marriage as a means of continuing family lineage through childbearing. Therefore, women marrying before completing the education cycle is nothing out of the ordinary in a Ugandan context. However, the arrival of spouses in the lives of the women did have implications for their education and professional career. Marriage has the potential to interrupt the women's career pathways in Uganda in two ways. Firstly, in the context of patrilocality, women are required to relocate and reside with their spouse and spousal relatives. The process of moving and settling into marital households requires time. Women often have to interrupt their studies or employment to get settled in their marital home. Secondly, marriage brings into the life of women not only spouses but also motherhood, a role which goes beyond childbearing and upbringing to caring for the young, sick, and old members of both marital and natal households. The arrival of children may pose a unique challenge in the life of women trying to combine the role of a spouse with that of motherhood and career development. This situation can potentially delay or interrupt a women's educational career. That said, such implications are not uniform for every married woman, which is why it is important to interrogate the ways in which spouses and spousal relationships influence educational and professional careers.

Unlike the previous chapters in which I focused exclusively on the education careers of the women, in this chapter I also reflect on the women's professional careers. I do so for several reasons. After their first academic qualification for a diploma or at bachelor's degree levels, the women gained formal employment, which in turn influenced the speed and direction of their education pathways. Secondly, 31 out of the 47 women entered into marriage after their first diploma or bachelor's degree

qualification. The higher education career pathways the women pursued after marriage was thus influenced by their spouses. In short, the spousal household presents the third contextual factor, which spontaneously emerged as important in the education life history of 31 out of the 47 women studied.

The specific question I engage with in this chapter is: In what ways did the marital family members influence the women's educational pathways? What role did spousal relationships play in the professional path of the women on route to university? These questions help to generate a response to the second research question under the domain of contextual factors that influenced the women's education and professional pathways. These questions are important because the women in my study are ambitious and career-oriented. Marriage in the patrilocal context of Uganda extends women's social relations and responsibility to include spousal relatives. It then becomes necessary to analyse how the arrival of spouses and spousal relatives influenced the women's education and professional career path.

It is important to keep in mind that in Uganda, women do not necessarily complete an education cycle from primary to university (master's and PhDs) before getting married. As a matter of practice, many girls attempt to enter into spousal relationships at upper secondary school, before joining the university. Taken as a transition point from a girl to a wife and to motherhood, marriage can accelerate educational and professional pathways but can also delay them or stop women from pursuing them altogether. In fact, marriage has been identified by Jackson (2012, 4) as one of the major factors constraining women's education and professional careers. However, such a study neglects the trajectory of women who have made breakthroughs into professional and academic careers in spite of marital constraints. How women bargain and negotiate their career with spouses and spousal relatives becomes an important focus of analysis. The main argument in this chapter is that marital relationships are an important factor that married women have to negotiate along their education and professional pathways. This is taking into consideration the fact that marital relationships can positively but also negatively influence women's education and professional pathways.

In this chapter, I set out, briefly, the context for marital families in Uganda, followed by reviewing related literature on the marital family. This is followed by the

empirical section, which will first examine the role of spouses and spousal relatives in the educational pathway of the women, followed by the spousal role in relation to a women’s professional career pathway to the university. I will use the narratives of 16 women whose stories represent the range of supportive, wavering, and unsupportive spouses of the 31 women who were married. Regarding both educational and professional pathways, I pay attention to the point at which the spouses arrived in the life of the women, and what influence this arrival had on the educational and professional pathways of the women. Specifically, I point out what challenges married women experienced with the arrival of spouses in their lives and what the negotiable and non-negotiable career options were available to the women in relation to their spouses. These issues will be analysed based on interviews with 31 married participants, as summarized in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Marital status of the women

Marital Status	Generation			Total	Percentage
	Older	Middle	Younger		
Married	10	10	11	31	66.0
Unmarried	2	3	6	11	23.4
Nun	1	2	0	3	6.4
Separated	1	0	1	2	4.2
Total	14	15	18	47	100.0

Source: Field data 2012

As shown in the table above, the analysis in this chapter will focus on the 31 (66.0%) women who were officially married and living with their spouses. Among these were 10 each from the older and middle generations, and 11 from the younger generation. The remaining 16 (34%) are excluded: 11 (23.4%) participants were not officially married; 3 (6.4%) of the women were nuns (who do not marry on religious grounds); and 2 (4.2%) were separated from their spouses. One of these women was Atwari, a lecturer and head of department, who belongs to the older generation. Atwari separated from her spouse because he denied responsibility for her first pregnancy, which was disrespectful to her. Therefore, she decided to separate from him. The second woman is Leonia, an assistant lecturer belonging to the younger generation of women. She walked away from her spouse because of domestic violence and never returned to him. The examples of these two women who had separated show that, although women entered marriage as a cultural obligation, they had the ability to initiate a separation if the marriage was not

viable (Iversen et al. 2011, 571). Separation in these instances was possible because although married, the women retained their personal and economic independence from their spouses especially after becoming employed. All but one of the 31 women entered into the marriage contract immediately after earning their first professional diploma or bachelor's degree qualifications. In sum, analysing marital experiences can clarify spousal roles in education and professional careers after the first diploma or degree qualifications.

6.1 Theoretical Discussion on Women and Spousal Household

Literature on the support of spouses and spousal relatives towards women's education and professional careers in Africa is hard to come by. However, there is a study by Jackson (2013) on the household relationship between spouses in eastern Uganda, which is informative. Jackson analysed results from experimental games using money (cash) played in subsistent agricultural rural households among the Bagishu tribe in 2005. The games were designed to understand how husbands and wives in these agricultural rural households managed funds using Sen Amartya's model of cooperative conflict, which is widely used to understand intra-household bargaining. Sen's cooperative-conflict model predicts three elements in intra-household bargaining among couples:

[T]he party with the stronger actual and perceived self-interest; greater contribution to the household; and more favourable breakdown position in the household, enjoys more bargained outcomes closer to their preferences than those to the other party (Sen 1987).

Sen's model implies that in a patriarchal society like Uganda, where marriages are patrilineal, husbands are more strongly positioned in the household than wives. The model associates men with a stronger perception of personal self-interest and individualistic tendencies and women with altruism and self-sacrifice for the interest of the family. Similarly, in a patrilineal setting, men as heads of the family are perceived as breadwinners and therefore are expected to contribute more to the livelihood of the family and to influence decisions in the household more than their wives. This situation fosters women's dependence on men for the livelihood of the family, and means women have fewer possibilities for divorce and remarriage. This dependence is thought by Sen to influence women to stick to marriages even when said marriages do not work in their

favour. Hence, the three elements in the model of Sen capture the nature of the unequal power relationship in a patrilineal household.

However, from a gender perspective, Jackson (2013) questioned all three elements of Sen's model in her analysis of the results of the experimental game. This analysis revealed that in rural households in eastern Uganda, individuals pursue separate as well as joint interests. It is the preferences of individuals in the household and not simply those of the head of the family that affect livelihood strategies, resource allocation, and wellbeing outcomes. Further, Jackson argued that personal attributes of selflessness and a weak sense of personal self-interest are by no means confined to women. In relation to the contextual nature of conjugal relationships and gender representation in Uganda, Jackson's analysis showed that men may *talk* (italics mine) in more self-interested styles. This display occurs in specific contexts where certain forms of masculinity such as being a breadwinner are appropriate, whereas the men may act differently in the household. Similarly, women may talk in an altruistic manner in contexts where certain forms of femininity such as dependence on spouses are expected, but they act differently in the household. Jackson concluded that, contrary to the representation of men as strong and powerful, men in eastern Uganda show uniquely different gender relations in the household. As mentioned before, although marriage in eastern Uganda is formally an authoritarian regime of male control, in practice, men depend a lot on their wives to manage their reputation; indeed, this is an important element of adult masculinity, associated with the provision and maintenance of marriage. As such, men in these rural households trust their wives more than they trust their relatives. A man's well-being in eastern Uganda depends on his ability to sustain a social relationship with women, in particular the wife. This dependency, according to Jackson (2013) shows a more uncertain balance of power within marriages than the cooperative-conflict model suggests.

Additionally, Jackson's (2013) analysis reveals that the men valued their wives not only for their farm labour but particularly for their biological reproduction capacity, in other words, the ability to sustain lineage. Lineage that comes through a married women's fertility is highly valued personally by men but also culturally in society. Marriage and giving birth to children is one cultural requirement for men and women to achieve as adults. As a result, although marriage instability is common in these

communities, divorce is unlikely because men make all attempts to sustain their marriages for the sake of managing their reputation and status. As Jackson argues, the threat posed by divorce may be unrealistic in western marriages, but in Uganda divorce threatens the very basis of mature masculinity in married men more than it threatens femininity in married women. In effect, men's dependence on marriage gives women a stronger position in household bargaining than would be expected in patrilineal households.

Although Jackson's (2013) analysis was based on an experiment in one particular (rural subsistence farming) context, it offers an important insight into spousal relationships in Uganda as a whole, and demonstrates how women personally manage gender and power relations in the household. Jackson's analysis also offers insight into the positive contribution Ugandan male spouses make towards their wives. Women do not lose their autonomy and power to bargain in the household by virtue of marriage, even in a rural setting. This too offers an important insight into the experiences of the married women in my study. However, in contrast to rural agricultural women in Jackson's analysis, the women in my study are career-oriented and financially independent. All of them are in dual-earning marriages, which means their husbands are also employed. Some of the women are in dual-career marriages, where they and their husbands are academics and university staff. This, coupled with their neo-locality residences, makes the women's household context unique from that of rural eastern Uganda, where the residences are basically patrilocal. My study additionally extends the household bargaining concept to examine how a man's general dependence on his wife for his reputation translates into a husband's support for a woman's educational and professional career in public.

To put the support of spouses in perspective, I will use the typology developed by Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009) in their analysis of spousal support from the narratives of female managers in Finland. Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos distinguished five types of spouses in relation to the support they offer their spouses in their public professional career. The first type is the 'determining spouse', constructed as the man who has a determining influence on the woman's career: his work situation sets the boundaries and takes priority over the woman's career choices. In other words, she adjusts her career path to that of the husband (2009, 602). The second type, 'the

supporting spouse', is the husband who helps and encourages his wife in her public career. He discusses her work issues, challenges her, and backs her up at various stages of her career; he treats his wife as his equal and they cherish, respect, and speak positively of one another (2009, 604). Third is the 'instrumental spouse'. This type of spouse is constructed as valuable because of his ability to offer advantages and add value to the woman's career. He contributes to the social image that allows the woman to be taken seriously in her public career, and provides financial security and a comfortable living environment for her (2009, 605). The fourth type, the 'flexible spouse', is willing to put the woman's career before his own. The flexible spouse is envisioned as the one in charge of domestic duties, like taking care of the household and family members, which in turn allows the wife to fully invest in her career (2009, 606). The fifth type is the 'counterproductive spouse'. These spouses are constructed as having a negative effect on and dismissive attitude towards the women's career. These men have difficulty accepting their wives' higher status, income, and career success. These men are uncertain about their position and feel inferior to their wives. They also face outside pressures and stereotypes for failing to prove themselves or become the main breadwinner in the family (2009, 607).

Although developed in Finland, this typology is helpful to my study. Firstly, the Finnish study focused on women in heterosexual marriages, like the women in my study. The Finnish study is also about women with successful management careers in small, medium, and large organizations in the public and private sectors. My study also deals with successful women, albeit with various academic and administrative positions in both public and private universities. My study offers a wider spectrum in terms of generational and work experience of women, and it speaks to a different cultural context. In Uganda marriage is mandated for both women and men. Secondly, the age at which women marry in Africa is different from the women in the western world. Women in Africa generally marry young and do not necessarily wait to complete school before getting married. I also take into account the personal context, to analyse the spousal relationship. Moreover, I expand the analysis of the spousal support to include the spousal relatives. I also expand the field of influence to include the women's educational careers.

6.2 Context of Marriage in Uganda

Studying girls' access to higher education in Uganda, Kwesiga (2002, 58) explains that in African communities, marriage is one of the most important institutions that girls and boys are socialized into. Marriage, according to Kwesiga, is an ultimate duty to continue the life of the community through a couple's reproductive activities. Having children is the principle life event that marks the passage to adulthood for most couples in Africa (Animasahun and Fatile 2011, 192). Uganda's Marriage Act of 2000 legally recognizes three forms of marriages: customary, religious, and civil. In practice, customary marriage takes precedence over religious or civil marriages. However, it is very common in Uganda for couples to add religious and/or civil marriages to their customary marriage (Doss et al. 2012, 605). The customary marriage consists of ceremonies in which the groom's family offers gifts to the bride's family. These gifts have been loosely termed a bride price or dowry. I use the term 'loosely' to differentiate between the cultural and the commercialized meanings attached to the exchange of gifts in a customary marriage in Uganda. Culturally, the exchange of gifts is a way to gain a legal right to the children and to establish a relationship between two families. It is a commitment on the part of the marital family to accept and integrate the bride as a full member of her marital family. Conversely, the bride's family grants her formal permission to permanently reside in her marital home. In that context, marriage is not between two individuals but between two families. The commercialized version of the exchange of gifts limits marriage between two people and gives the husband unlimited rights to lay claim to his wife as his property. This becomes problematic because it constrains a women's ability to bargain for welfare within the marital household.

Marriage arrangements in Uganda are patrilocal, and the bride is expected to permanently reside with or near members of the husband's family. Patrilocality in Uganda is premised on the dowry culture that integrates women into the husband's family. However, the patrilocal pattern of family residence has been changing in Uganda in recent years. A number of married couples live separately from the kin of both spouses in what is called a neo-local residence system. This shift is due to increased urbanisation and employment, especially among middle class couples. Neo-locality is a neutral residential location in which employed couples reside in temporary homes, sometimes provided by their employers, or in a permanent residence acquired by the couple in a non-kin location (England 1995). This change has been attributed to

increased dual-career marriages in which both spouses are formally employed, often in urban centres or far from marital and natal family members. The implication of the neo-local residence is that the families receive less social support but are also less negatively influenced by the natal and marital families. Neo-local residence is thought to benefit women in marriage because it gives them a greater degree of autonomy than patrilocality, in particular, freedom from constraints and the supervision of in-laws (England 1993, 75). That said, from the women's perspective, they also miss the support and the childcare facilities offered by their families. Neo-locality also makes it difficult for spouses to seek mediation and social support from family members in the case of marital conflict. The women in my sample are all neo-located due to employment, although they still keep in touch with both their natal and marital family members. Due to the location of the women in neo-localities, the influence of their spouses on their education pathways was greater than the influence of members of the marital family. Similar to the fathers in the natal family, spouses in the marital family played a major role in the educational and professional pathways of the women. Similar to the natal family context in chapter two, there were spouses who were supportive, those who wavered, and those who did not support the women.

6.3 Spousal Role in the Education Pathways

The role of the spouses in the life of the women emerged as a major theme in the narratives of the 31 women who were married. At the beginning of the narratives, the women made their marital status explicit. For instance, Leila, a Director of Human Resources, introduced her narrative thus: *'To start with. I am called Leila Semama Kabura ... I am officially married and in the church'*. The emphasis of Leila on the official status of her marriage underscores the importance she attached to her marital and religious identity. Her emphasis points in principle to the permanency of her marriage, which suggests she has accomplished the mandatory customary marriage with an additional religious wedding. The religious wedding is generally perceived as a seal of permanence. This marital identity was strongly expressed in women's educational path, after upper secondary and the first diploma and certificate qualifications. Additionally, like Leila, married women in this study linked their professional identity to their marital status.

However, unlike in natal families, women's narratives about their marital family did not emphasize the influence of members of that family except in the pre-marital phase of the couple's relationship. As a result of this my focus will be mainly on the spouses, although I will point to the influence of spousal relatives at specific points. I will discuss how they positively or negatively influenced the direction and speed of the women's educational pathways. However, the spousal influence did not begin at the same time or level for all the married women. The narratives revealed two points in the women's educational pathway where the spousal influence was significant. The first point of spousal influence is at upper secondary school, which marks the pre-marital phase of a women's relationship. At these pre-marital points, some individuals from the marital family have some influence too. The second point is after the first certificate, diploma, and degree qualification, which marks the marital phase of the relationship.

Pre-marital phase

The pre-marital phase is the period before men and women are officially under contract, in marriage. With respect to the women studied, there was a difference in time between when spouses and their relatives began to influence the educational path of women who followed the high school track and those who followed the professional track. This difference was also manifested in the type of spousal support the women received. (I discuss these differences, below.) Pre-marital spousal support on the education pathway of women who followed the high school track can be traced to upper secondary school. This support was mostly financial help or career advice from fiancés and members of their family.

Haparis, an associate professor of the older generation, was one of the women who benefited from direct financial help from members of her fiancé's family, or in the pre-marital period. Haparis described her spousal family as '*very supportive, because when I was at HSC [upper secondary], my husband's brothers used to send some money to me before we got married. That's why I am saying they were very supportive of me*'. Haparis pointed to the support of her brothers-in-law as one of the reasons she accepted marriage before starting a bachelor's degree. In other words, the brothers of Haparis' fiancé were already actively 'grooming' her as his partner through financial support of her education. As such, they also influenced her decision to marry early. For instance, Haparis revealed that she was obliged to contract for an early marriage because her

fiancé had to travel to study in Canada under a Commonwealth Scholarship. His brothers proposed *'why don't you get married first and move together, rather than you staying there and she is here at home?'* Both Haparis and her fiancé decided to marry. Haparis' fiancé's brothers can be said to have supported Haparis for instrumental purposes to add value to and to improve their brother's social status as a mature male. Firstly, it was important that their brother who was at university married an educated girl. Secondly, grooming Haparis was to help their brother get married so that she could help him settle into his PhD studies in Canada. That said, Haparis also indicated the instrumental value she saw in relating to her fiancé and his brothers. The financial support they offered her helped her to complete her upper secondary school. The motivation behind the support of her fiancé's brothers for her education was to prepare the ground for their brother to marry an educated woman. This was important for the husband's reputation in the family but also for travel abroad (for his PhD) as an adult male, capable of taking care of a wife. Incidentally, Haparis and the husband both hail from the eastern part of Uganda.

Marriage, according to Haparis, was also an instrumental option available for her and her fiancé on several grounds. Haparis explained that the Commonwealth Scholarship was going to take her fiancé to Canada for a good number of years and *'we were both afraid to lose each other, because he thought if he left me behind, someone else would grab me from him. I also thought he would go for a muzungu [white] lady in Canada'*. Therefore, it was more convenient to get married after upper secondary school and then continue with a bachelor's degree. As a consequence, both her marriage and her husband's educational career caused a delay in Haparis' own educational pathway. The most important strategic instrumental value of marriage for Haparis was this: *'since I saw that his brothers were giving me prospects for my education, I said well, these were better prospects than me staying behind in Uganda'*. The prospect for Haparis was that her husband's scholarship package included the welfare of his spouse. Haparis would be able to travel to Canada, as a dependant of her husband, because the scholarship provided for just such an arrangement. The assurance by the brothers of the spouse that he had to facilitate Haparis' education was key in influencing her decision to accept marriage before taking her bachelor's degree. Haparis vividly recalled that in a family meeting, her brothers-in-law:

... warned him [her husband] in front of me: *'don't make this lady to go to Canada and sit there and look after you [amused]'*. At that time I was still very young actually [a teenager]. And they knew whatever he said I would do [amused]. He was slightly older than me. He had just finished the bachelor's degree here, and I had just finished HSC (upper secondary). I was slightly younger, so he would be the one to direct me. So they told him, *'make sure this girl also studies'*. So that is how I studied.

This caution was important for Haparis because it assured her not only of education but also of a point of reference, should her husband fail to cooperate. The marital family members showed they still had control over the young couple even though they were relocating abroad. Managing the spousal relationship was not only the duty of Haparis and her husband but also the responsibility of members of the marital family. This caution also served to counteract the discourse of marriage as an *'Obufumbo college'* for women²⁰. Members of the marital family ensured that Haparis' husband would not confine her to the home as a housewife to cook for him. They obliged him to facilitate her pursuit of higher education. In Haparis' case, spousal relatives were not only involved in her premarital education but also in allowing the husband to continue supporting her after upper secondary school. This explicit financial and social support influenced not only the speed but also the direction of Haparis' educational pathway. So in Haparis' narrative, it is evident that a pre-marital spousal relationship played an important part in influencing the speed and direction of her education pathway.

In terms of speed, financial support from Haparis' brothers-in-law facilitated her at upper secondary school. This support was significant, given that she had depended a lot on community fosterage (non-kin) in her primary and lower secondary school levels. In other words, Haparis attributed the success of her education pathway in upper secondary school to a kind of spousal 'fosterage' by her marital family. In terms of the direction of the education pathways, Haparis attributed her decision to specialise in a bachelor's of economics and commerce to her marriage. She reflects that, while still in Uganda, she had envisioned a professional career in nursing. However, the opportunity to travel to Canada with her husband changed her perspective to commerce and economics. In Haparis' case, we can see both the supportive and instrumental type of

²⁰ 'Obufumbo' literally means 'people who cook' in the local Luganda language. Combining the local expression with the English word 'college', the 'Obufumbo College' refers to the 'college of cooks'.

spouse (Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos 2009, 604-605), not only in her husband but also in her personal response to the spouse regarding her education and career path.

One category of fiancé, the 'determining type', were fiancés who offered career advice to the women but who set their own education and career pathway as the boundary to determine what education career direction the women could take. In bargaining with the fiancés, the women accepted advice that was consistent with their career aspirations but resisted those that were contradictory to their career aspirations. One of the women who accepted the advice of the fiancée was Lucasia, an assistant lecturer who belongs to the younger generation of women. She and her fiancé both came from the central region of Uganda. Lucasia attributed her social science background to the influence of her boyfriend. She recalled that her mother, a medical doctor, had suggested that she do a bachelor's of medicine or law. Lucasia did not want to take medicine because she had a fear of surgery. At the same time, she was hesitant to take law because her brother whom she rivalled in terms of academic performance was already taking law. *'I just didn't want to pull ropes with my brother anymore. I really wanted to be my own person'*. Caught up in a dilemma of an educational decision, Lucasia decided to consult her boyfriend, who was already a student in the university:

I just told him, *'oh, by the way, I am thinking of doing sciences at university'*. Then he told me, *'since I am a scientist, and you never know what might happen between us, why don't you do arts?'* [laughs]. So I changed my mind and I told my mother, I think, let me do arts. Then she was like why, why? Then I was like *'fine'*, and I just decided to do arts at Makerere University.

Although in his own interest, the career proposal of her boyfriend clarified Lucasia's struggle to find her own career pathway. She willingly took on social sciences because she did not want to submissively accept her mother's proposal that she be a doctor or a lawyer. Lucasia's choice led to satisfaction: *'I am very happy ... I have learnt so much about culture. You know social work is something that really looks at what is happening in society. I am happier'*. Lucasia allowed her fiancé to have an influence, because his advice corresponded to her educational aspirations; otherwise she would have followed her mother's proposal. Consulting him also helped her to navigate towards an educational path that gratified her because social sciences created an academically safe distance between her and her rival sibling who was specialising in law.

There were also situations when the proposal of the fiancé did not suit the women's career aspirations, and the women resisted the influence of their fiancés without losing the relationship. A case in point is Bevra, a lecturer of the middle generation. She is originally from Tanzania and her fiancée was from the northern part of Uganda. Bevra had a plan for after upper secondary school.

I wanted to take [a] bachelor of education and my fiancée said '*why don't you apply for law? I am already specialising in Education!*' and we kind of disagreed because I wanted teaching. Teaching is something that had been with me, maybe because my father was a professor, and my mother was a secondary school teacher. There is that inspiration that I got from my parents. So I wanted to teach and so I specialised in education at [the] bachelor's degree [level].

In contrast to Lucasia, Bevra actively resisted changing the direction of her education pathway to follow her fiancé's advice, as it significantly departed from her career aspiration. Although women sought advice from their 'determining fiancées', they did not lose control over their own educational goals; indeed, these women pursued their goals in the face of risking their relationship with their fiancées. This aspect of the narratives also portrays women's agency. The women weighed the options and reconciled them with their personal career aspirations. The women negotiated and compromised when pre-marital advice served their career purpose but resisted when it was contradictory. A strong fall-back position is evident in the women's agency, which propelled their convictions regarding which career pathway the women wanted to take.

One common aspect that deserves attention in the narratives of Bevra and Lucasia is why their fiancés set boundaries and attempted to persuade the women not to specialise in the same kind of qualifications the men had. An explanation resides in what Agarwal (1997, 5) refers to as 'separate spheres' in household negotiations. He argues that couples may opt for separate spheres of activities as a measure of the lack of cooperation in the future household. The central logic in the separate spheres theory is that, instead of conflict, couples may withdraw into separate spheres by defining the division of labour without an explicit need for bargaining. However, among employed couples the division of labour is pushed to separate specialisations in the public domain, so that the men and women are not rivals in the public sphere (Jackson 2013, 36). There is also the discourse of power relations in the household. For instance, by advising their fiancés to take different career directions, the fiancées were struggling to protect their

own autonomy and power in the household and in the professional field. Counter-advice then could be seen as a way of avoiding future competition in the household, and thus conflict between spouses.

It is fair to speculate as well that, at some point, the men realised they were not marrying 'ordinary' women, and that both spouses would need a space in which they enjoyed a monopoly of knowledge. A multi-disciplinary academic household was a survival strategy in the competitive job world. In this sense, separate spheres serve as security against job losses, and avoiding situations such as a single-job track, in which spouses could work in the same institution. This is particularly important for managing institutional politics so that, in the case of conflict, the other partner would not be affected. Hence in the process of influencing the future careers of the women, fiancés attempted to keep their future wives away from their own fields of specialisation. This divergence was possible because women who followed the high school track were still at the point of identifying their professional career after upper secondary school.

In some cases, women set ground rules at the pre-marital phase and pre-negotiated their education career at the marital phase. The necessity for negotiations at the pre-marital phase was to diffuse any future barriers that might arise from the spouses because of the culturally disadvantaged position of being a married woman. This was the case with Falley, who acknowledged that, prior to entering into marriage, she told her fiancé, *'I am getting married to you but I still need to go back for further studies'*. It was not until *'he agreed and said "I don't need to interfere with your education, you will go for bachelor's degree" ...'* that Falley accepted his offer of marriage. As the head of the family, major decisions such as proceeding with education would require his consent. Therefore, securing his consent early on was important. As such, setting the ground rules for the future household before marriage was necessary for the women's education career development in the pre-marital phase. Otherwise, as Ripara put it, *'you would either have him or academia but not both!'* What Falley was attempting to do at the premarital phase was to clearly establish the position of her fiancé in relation to her education career. Only after she found him to be supportive and flexible was she willing to marry him.

The pre-marital phase shows that young fiancées' were influential in determining the direction and the speed of the women's education pathways. They offered financial

help and career guidance, and gave their commitment not to obstruct the education of the women during marriage. Even so, the women did not blindly follow their fiancés. Instead, they were focused, and weighed career option advice from their fiancés before agreeing with their decisions, or resisting any option that put their education career at risk. In this way, women did not lose control of the direction or the speed of their education pathway but responded appropriately to the advice and support of their fiancés when it served the purpose of the women's education career.

Marital phase

The marital phase marks the period during which the women were officially married and residing in their marital homes. It is important to mention at this point that women in Uganda generally marry men who are older than them. Marriage of a woman who is older than the man is culturally resisted; the woman is not fully accepted into the marital family, and is sometimes negatively labelled. At the core of men's reluctance to marry women who are older is the fear that they will not bear children, or that the women will overrule the men. I will not go into this cultural discussion here, but simply clarify that all the women in my study married men who were older than them.

Large age gaps between women and their spouses is thought to indicate unequal power relations and a trade-off by women for greater material wellbeing at the cost of lower equity. However, the advantage for young women who marry older men in Uganda is that the women have a stronger fall-back position in terms of re-marriage than do their older husbands (Jackson 2013, 42). The young age therefore worked in favour of the women to boldly negotiate their career options with their spouses without fear of losing the relationship. In the marital phase there was no significant difference between women who followed different education tracks.

Unlike in the pre-marital phase, in the marital phase spouses showed variation in their response to women's educational and professional career aspirations. As a result, the type of support they offered along the women's education pathway also varied. While the spouses in the pre-marital period were largely cooperative, those who arrived on the education pathway after marriage differed with respect to their support. At the marital phase of their relationship, out of the 31 married women, 27 (87.1%) indicated that their spouses were supportive, 1(3.2%) wavered between supporting and not supporting, while 3(9.7%) were not supportive of the women in their educational and

professional careers. Two of the latter women had separated from their unsupportive husbands but the other was still married.

Positive spousal response

A positive spousal influence on the education pathway of the women was manifested in the economic, academic, and social support that women received from their spouses. Economically, women benefitted indirectly from scholarship opportunities granted to spouses and direct financial remittances from family savings. Haparis was one of the women who indirectly benefited from the Commonwealth Scholarship granted to her husband. She attributed her successful bachelor's and master's degree path to this scholarship:

He had a Commonwealth Scholarship that supported him and I. So the support for me is what I used as tuition for my Bachelor of Science in Economics and Commerce in Canada. Then when I finished my bachelor's degree, he was still pursuing his PhD. He said, *'now you can't find a job in Canada, you continue with studies'*. And he even assisted me in looking for a place for a master's degree, because I moved from one university to another. I did my masters without losing time after my bachelor's degree.

The insistence of Haparis' husband that she should continue with a master's degree immediately after her bachelor's accelerated her education pathway between the two degrees. It also compensated for the time she had lost between upper secondary and a bachelor's degree when she got married. Most importantly, Haparis did not take it for granted that her husband willingly supported her with part of his scholarship, *'because at least [as far as] I remember, while we were in Canada, other spouses sent their wives to go and look for jobs so that they get more money. For my husband, he said "no, for you, you have to study" ...'* Sharing in the scholarship fund for her bachelor's degree was for Haparis the major support that sped up her educational pathway, especially between upper secondary and the master's degree. In this case, Haparis' husband fits the category of 'supportive spouse' in the typology of Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 604).

Besides scholarships, supportive spouses offered direct financial support from savings to support the education of the women. This was possible because the women also contributed to the family savings through their own salaries. However, the decision about how to use the family savings required the cooperation of their spouses as heads of the family. This was the case with Falley, who comes from the western part of Uganda, just like her husband. Falley attributed her education path from bachelor's to master's

degree to her husband's cooperation: *'we set aside my salary for my education'*. Although Falley's employment as a secondary school teacher gave her an added advantage of access to her own money, in household dynamics every decision has not only to be negotiated but also permitted by the husband. In patriarchal settings the husband is head; he also owns the household resources, including any salary his wife earns. In that sense, Falley's salary ceased to be a personal resource; this is evident in her use of the term *'we'* in the decision about her education.

At another level, the choice to allocate Falley's salary for her education shows reciprocity in the process of bargaining for her education in the household. This contradicts the assumption of Sen's household bargaining model: that a person who wields more power in the household will use it for their own self-interest. (Jackson was also critical about this projection in relation to Uganda (2013, 37). Otherwise, it would be expected that Falley's husband would have allocated the money for himself, as the head of the family, rather than for her education.) Additionally, allocating Falley's salary for her study was a way in which the spouse could give her unlimited access to financial resources whenever she needed them. This access gave her a lot of power and autonomy to manage the money. That said, the logic of the common pool in the bargaining model does make some sense here, because it appears that Falley and her spouse budgeted for the household together; that much is shown by the decision they reached to set aside her salary for her education. This decision helped to reciprocate the decision for financing Falley's education. Economic support in the form of a scholarship or direct financial savings of the family (which may be traced to her salary) was crucial in determining the speed of her education pathways in the marital period.

Apart from the economic benefits, Falley's husband might have also realized that a higher qualification would be important if his wife were to try for a better job at university. This would be similar to the argument of Adikini's husband, who told her *'you know what? You have to go and do a master's degree. This world has become very competitive. To get a better job, you have to do master's. So that is how I started doing the master's in gender ...'* Adikini's husband, just like Falley's husband, helped his wife with tips about how to fit into the public career, which is structured on male norms of competition. These tips were particularly helpful, given that women had to generally depend on male mentors who are the majority in the public sphere.

Besides economic leverage, the women indicated receiving substantial academic support from their spouses along their education pathway. The academic help came in the form of suggestions, and in sharing information regarding possibilities for continuing along their education pathway. This was evident in the case of Falley's husband. Falley recalled that, after obtaining a bachelor's degree, she had decided to teach in the secondary school while taking a part-time job as an assistant lecturer of mathematics in a nearby university. However, her husband reminded her that *'you can't teach in the university when you have only a bachelor's degree'*. Although Falley indicates that she was reluctant to take a master's degree because, *'you know, I have children, the children want school fees, and we have got even dependants on top of that to look after'*. She told her husband *'one degree is enough for a woman'*. This response would resonate with Sen's idea that women might have a lower level of perceived personal welfare and a more familial sense of well-being (Sen in Jackson 2013, 32-33). The disposition of Falley indicates that, ambitious though women may be, marriage and its roles such as motherhood and care-giving can slow down career ambitions. At some point, women may have different priorities, in particular when being a good mother is as important for the woman as being a good academic.

Supportive spousal relations are an important factor in revitalising the education ambition of the women. This was evident with Falley's husband, who *insisted 'you must prepare and go back for master's'*. To further convince Falley to take up a master's degree course, her husband used economic discourse to emphasise the importance of her higher qualification for the family, to which she was very dedicated.

... 'you see the salary we are earning? It's not enough. We are both secondary school teachers. This salary is not enough unless one of us goes to another level of education'. That is how he saw it. Then I said: okay, let me apply and see. I completed my master's, and then he told me *'you should go for a PhD'*. Yet he remained with his bachelor's degree.

Falley's is what Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 606) refer to as the flexible spouse, willing to put the women's career before his own. This flexibility was not motivated by the desire to take on domestic responsibilities but rather by the desire to give Falley time for her career. The decision to push her ahead of him educationally could rest on the assumption be that he saw more prospects for a better job for her as an academic at university than for him as a teacher in secondary school. A better job would also

increase their household income. The argument of Falley's husband shows that there was a realisation at the household level that it was no longer sustainable, relying only on the husband for financial support. In any case, it was also a move to demystify the cultural belief that a husband is the only breadwinner in the family. The argument of Falley's husband, encouraging her to proceed with her education, made perfect economic sense to Falley and she obliged by taking a master's degree.

Additionally, Falley's husband seemed to realise that, although socially men's status and identity are taken for granted, women need extra education to guarantee their social identity and status. As such he did not mind that she would be more academically qualified than him. The perspective of Falley's husband also points to a shift of viewpoint regarding marital families in general: husbands wanting partners who were at the same or better level of education. Supporting the education of Falley implied that, socially and economically, the husband's own status and the status of his family were also improving. Another explanation for his behaviour is that, given women's maternal role in the household, Falley's husband could have realised the importance of completing the education cycle early enough, before childbearing began to impact her professional career. Generally speaking, when children are born, married men in Uganda have more time at their disposal than do women.

Supportive spouses also shared important information regarding scholarship opportunities with the women. This information gave some of the women access to funding organisations. For instance, Didam, an assistant lecturer in her 30s, appreciated that:

When my husband sees a scholarship, he forwards it to my mail. Even this Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), because he has a master's in it, he sent it to me and actually I applied and got the scholarship. Maybe it's because he is also an academic, I don't know.

Certainly the dual academic career nature of Didam's family provided her husband with a better level of appreciation of her education. However, the fact that he had access to more information than her also points to how much more diverse married men's networks are than married women's. Married men also have more time to search for opportunities since they are not strictly tied down by parenting and household chores. Women benefitted from the men's network by getting information from their spouses. Didam's husband backed up her career at every stage, and did not attempt to overrun

her career. According to the description of Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 604), the relationship between Didam and her husband was equal. They cherished and respected each other's careers. In addition, the husband was encouraging and helped to create self-confidence in his spouse.

The spouses supported the women through their flexibility to take on more domestic duties such as parenting and care-giving within the household. Although the women appreciated motherhood, they faced a challenge both as students and professionals with a lack of institutional structures to facilitate their parenting role. Childcare, especially for young or sick children, is one of the gender roles that interrupts or delays women along their educational pathway. Childcare also restrains women from pursuing an educational career far from the household. The willingness of spouses to take care of children was one of the most significant social supports the women appreciated. For instance, Rakia, a senior lecturer from the northern part of Uganda, describes that when she got a chance to start her PhD, her husband:

... even accepted to look after our baby who was only two months old. I went away and he looked after the baby. So that support for me is what has made it easy. You are able to sit and do your work while somebody is taking care of something else that you should be doing.

In another instance, Siima was visibly uneasy when she recalled the dilemma she faced when her child fell sick on the days she had to travel for her PhD: *'I do not want to remember that time ... My baby was sick, but I had already booked the flight to South Africa'*. She was considering cancelling her flight, *'but the father said: "You go, I will take charge of the child"'*. *I left the baby, who was admitted in the hospital that night, but my husband was there'*. Siima's spouse took care of the baby for one week in the hospital, after which the baby was discharged.

The dilemma for both Rakia and Siima is not about dealing with the right to pursue education and parental responsibility. It is about cultural expectations. A lactating mother like Rakia would not be expected to contest and de-prioritise breast feeding, because she is the only source of breast milk for the child. Similarly, as a mother, Siima, and not the father, would be expected to stay at the bedside of her sick child. These are responsibilities that have not only been constructed exclusively as feminine, but are also embraced as duties by the women themselves. This meant that for Rakia and Siima, delegating childcare responsibilities to their spouses risked degrading their

own maternal identity, especially if they lived in a patrilocality. However, being located in neo-local residences often far away from marital and natal family members, the spouses seemed to realize how crucial their support was in the absence of social support from relatives. As Siima argued, parenting is one *'of the challenges that causes conflicts between family responsibilities and career for women'*. For women, the social construction of these parental duties as gendered presents special difficulties. As Siima pointed out, *'it takes a lot of courage and determination to proceed, as well as proper planning together with partners'*, to deal with the conflicting roles of parenting and the pursuit of their career. For the two women to leave the young children in the hands of their spouses shows a high level of trust in the household. Additionally, the neo-local residences helped the spouses of the two women to defy the social gender order and take charge of the children so as to release their wives to pursue their PhDs. The important role that the spouses of Rakia and Siima played helped the women break their social role as conventional mothers and to trust their husbands with the care of the children.

The narratives of Rakia and Siima underscore the good will and flexible personality of their spouses as important factors in household negotiation. In other words, it takes a good spouse to have the courage to step out of his cultural boundary to take care of a young baby so the mother can pursue her career and travel abroad independently. Hence sharing a parental role in the household was an important support spouses offered to the women as they pursued their educational career. Spousal encouragement, along with financial, social, and academic support, explains to a large extent women's successful careers in academia in Uganda, and is shown by the fact that 27 of the 31 women spoke positively of their husbands' support towards their careers. While economic support may fall within the mandate of husbands as heads of the family, the husbands' social support exceeded cultural expectations. This support was made easier by the neo-local residences in which the women and their spouses lived. The neo-local environments are not culturally restrictive because they are neutral and often located in culturally diverse areas such as urban centres or institutional staff quarters (residences).

In all, positive spousal influence was shown by the financial, social, and academic support that husbands offered to the women. The flexibility of the spouses to take on

domestic chores such as childcare gave the women motivation to pursue their educational careers. The reciprocity of the positive spousal influence on the women's advancement in their educational career reflected a positive image of the spouses in the community. It boosted their status as responsible adult men, and earned them respect as masculine adults. However, as the narratives show, not all spouses were consistent in their support of the women in the marital period. There was one spouse who wavered. After offering initial support, he turned and began to resist the career advancement of his wife. In the next section I present the case of spouses who wavered in the process of supporting the women.

The wavering spousal support: 'stop talking about your trip to Israel'

While the educational success of women led to celebrations among some spouses, it led to resistance among others. This latter category falls within the counterproductive type of spouses in the typology of Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 607). These spouses are described as negative, dismissive, and uncomfortable with women's career success. This was evident in the experience of Nulla's husband, who, like his wife, was from the eastern part of Uganda. In 2011, Nulla won a study trip to Israel under the Ministry of Education and Sports. At the end of the study trip, she won an award for excellent performance during the training, and the director of the training institute commented, *'This Ugandan has a smart brain!'* This award pleased Nulla and she telephoned from Israel to share her achievement with her husband: *'Now, for me, I thought that was good n-e-w-s!! So I kept my mouth wide o-p-e-n! and immediately informed my husband!'* Nulla said the response of her spouse was initially encouraging: *'when I returned from the study strip, at first my husband was very, very happy. I don't know whether he was pretending but he made a big party for me in the house with a big cake and with friends'.* However, Nulla noted that, in the days that followed the party, her spouse told her *'stop talking about your Israeli trip, it's not new'.* In other words, he dismissed her achievement as nothing out of the ordinary. The context, according to Nulla, was that, while the spouse publicly welcomed her back with a party, he did not allow her to share her study experience with him in private. Therefore, she could not share any extra information about the experiences of her trip in the household. Nulla recalled in disappointment that *'somehow, I stopped talking and left it at that ... and we cooled it that way'.* The contradictory reaction of Nulla's spouse created a dilemma: in the public he

showed a positive face while privately in the household he trivialized and overlooked her career achievements.

While Nulla's spouse maintained public acknowledgement of her achievement, he restricted any talk about it in the household to avoid further conflict in the family. This reaction obliged Nulla to retreat into her 'intellectual cocoon' to avoid conflict with her spouse. Nulla in effect had to separate her identity as a housewife from that of an academic. She could only manage this by keeping her academic activities silent. Nulla concluded that, although *'I have seen very many good things in this relationship, but the worst thing I have seen is - my husband always called me "dense!"* In other words, unintelligent. He constantly underrated her achievements and treated them as non-intellectual. Nulla noted that while her husband freely shared his academic and professional achievements with the family, he limited what Nulla could talk about in the family. In a way, Nulla's husband found himself facing a genius wife to whom he felt inferior, and had difficulties accepting and coping with her higher academic and career achievements. Nulla's achievement touched the intellectual power relation in their house. He downgraded her intellectual gifts and used derogatory comments 'to shoot her down' in order to curtail her intellectual ambition.

This behaviour resonates with what Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 607) argue is typical of a counterproductive spouse, someone who feels uncertain about his own position in the household and among other men, who might stereotype himself as having failed to prove himself the breadwinner in the household. In the Ugandan context, the uncertainty of Nulla's husband also indicates his fear that Nulla might opt for other men who are intellectually smarter than he is. Thus his negative reaction depicts a desperate attempt to protect his marriage at all costs (Jackson 2013, 40). Although Nulla's husband showed some level of cooperation to protect his reputation, at the same time he experienced a threat to his own position as a husband, even though Nulla gave no indication that she wanted to end the marriage. Nulla indicates that the lack of support from her husband greatly affected her progress to complete her PhD.

Wavering by a spouse is generated by uncertainty in managing his reputation and his status as an adult male in relation to his wife. The crisis for the wavering husband is how to support the woman in public to sustain his reputation as a responsible husband without losing control over her as his wife. It is maintaining this balance over the two

identities of the wife as a public and private figure with which the wavering husband struggles. However, the steadiness with which the women pursued their career aspirations without neglecting their spousal responsibilities ameliorated spousal relations and stabilised the spouses. The strategy of women in situations of wavering spouses was multi-faceted: to assure their spouses of their security as a husband, to carry out their maternal and spousal responsibilities, and to keep focus on their career. In this way, although the women were delayed by these strategies, they still maintained their educational career pathways.

Unsupportive spouses

Unsupportive spouses can be labelled as 'counterproductive spouses' in the typology of Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos (2009, 607). The unsupportive husband is one who behaves like a rival in relation to the woman's educational career achievement. Unlike the wavering spouses, the unsupportive husband not only feels uncertain about and inferior to his wife but also exhibits psychological and physical violence. In this study, 3 (9.7%) spouses fit into this category.

The rivalry that these men showed in the household led two of the women to separate from their spouses²¹. Atwari, who belongs to the older generation of women, and is a lecturer and head of department, separated from her spouse because of his irresponsible and unsupportive behaviour when she got pregnant. He did not accept the pregnancy even though the child was his. Therefore, Atwari decided to leave and settle in a residence that belonged to her. The second woman who separated from her spouse is Leonia. She is an assistant lecturer who belongs to the younger generation, and separated from her husband because '*physical violence and verbal abuse was too much*' in the marriage. The violence was associated with her husband's attempt to stop her from pursuing her master's degree in technical education.

These two women who had separated from their spouses had ample experience of what it means to be both without and with a spouse. Both indicated that, although they felt happy as individuals because they were free from marital negligence and

²¹ I use the term separation deliberately because in Uganda it is generally difficult for spouses to divorce, especially after contracting customary marriage. Customary marriage is the first and most important marriage because it builds marriage ties between the family members and that relationship is very difficult to get rid of. Other religious or civil marriages are secondary to the customary marriage. Besides, spouses culturally are given space to separate and fall in love again. It is common to see couples reunite after years of separation. Additionally, children born to the spouse (if any) are allowed to invite and resettle their mother back into the marital family, even without the permission of their father.

violence, they still suffered social stigma. Separating from their spouses made them lose the social status of wife and mother: *'people do not take me seriously'*, as the lecturer put it. This was confirmed by professor Lamego, who argued that:

... women live in [a] society which tells them that the most important thing is to get married. It doesn't matter how important or how educated you are, if you are going to be a respectable member of society, a respectable woman, you must be married. Not only must you be married, you must have children. All these pressures. So it doesn't matter that your marriage is horrible, you know, your religion is telling you, once you have been married, nothing can put you asunder.

Divorce is not an option that is appreciated in society. However, for the two women who separated, the extreme situations of negligence and violence justified their decisions, and they were supported in these decisions by their natal family members.

Bianca is the third woman whose husband was unsupportive, but she was still in the marriage at the time of the research. Bianca is a senior administrator and belongs to the older generation of women. She married her husband after her bachelor's degree. She revealed that when she started her master's degree programme, it was *'a tug of war with my husband'*. The major issue for Bianca was regarding allocation and management of personal and household resources. Related to resources is the issue of power relations in the household that sparked aggression by Bianca's husband.

Bianca financed her master's studies using her salary as a secondary school teacher. She did not require financial support from her spouse, who was also a secondary school teacher. However, although he did not have control over the amount of salary she received, he wanted to be in charge of the finances. He felt that Bianca's paying her tuition fees without a contribution from him amounting to usurping his power as the head of the family. To reclaim his power as head, he set new house rules for use of the common family resources. One of the rules, according to Bianca, was that *'I was only to use the light [electricity] for what I am expected to do as a wife and mother and nothing related to reading or my study, nothing'*. This was a non-negotiable house rule. Bianca recalls that, when she insisted on using electricity for reading, her husband *'would switch off the main switch'*. This caused a bigger problem for Bianca as a lactating mother. When the main electricity switch was off, *'the fridge was off, meaning the baby's milk would go bad, and if that happened, the child would be affected and I would also get affected'*. Controlling the electricity switch was the husband's way of distracting Bianca

from her master's degree. It controlled her maternal role and made her feel powerless as a wife. Any efforts that Bianca made to find another source of energy for her studies and to save the baby's milk and food in the fridge were futile:

I bought a torch for reading. When I come home with a torch, he said '*don't switch on that torch in the house*'. When I bought a paraffin lamp and started using it for reading, he came and broke all the paraffin lamps in the house.

At the heart of this conflict is the attempt of Bianca's spouse to subordinate her to his control. One way to subordinate her was to deny her access to family resources and also to constrain her from acquiring resources on her own. He saw a master's degree for Bianca as a threat to his own position of power in the household. She already had a bachelor's degree, and he saw her gaining ground in financial independence. A postgraduate degree for the spouse might bring additional career benefits and advancement to Bianca that would make her academically and professionally equal to or higher than him. The spouse could not cope with this development in his household and adopted all sorts of strategies to block her career aspirations.

On realizing that his restrictions in the house could not stop Bianca from pursuing her education, the husband changed strategy. He shifted the restrictions onto her public professional space by devising another means of cutting off her source of income. According to Bianca: '*my husband had now connived with the male head teacher to delete my name from the pay roll and to make sure I don't get back on the pay roll. So you can see*' my struggle. The source of the conflict seemed to be the economic independence of Bianca that enabled her to finance her education without the help of her husband. This independence challenged the very basis of the discourse on male hegemonic power in the household, which frames the husband as head of the household, source of power, and in charge of family resources. The fact that Bianca paid her fees from her salary challenged the basis of male power in the household. Education was changing gender relations in the household, and Bianca's spouse could not easily accept that face. He therefore resorted to restraining her, even using the baby as a shield to hurt her maternal instinct, and cut off her financial lifeline, the salary. To keep his grip, he needed to control the source of Bianca's financial power, by influencing the male head teacher to cut off her salary. This example shows how intra-household conflict influences women's public life through networking men.

Bianca had to come up with a strategy to counteract her husband's psychological aggression. This strategy had to save her baby's milk and her education: *'I had to look at my time and say what time should I put to this studying? And what should I do for the family?'* These questions were fundamental for Bianca to reorganize her family and study timetable in such a way that the two could operate separately:

I would wake up very early at 4:00 a.m. prepare things for them (baby and spouse) and the maid, then leave so that I was at university before the main library opened at 7:00 a.m., so that by the time my lectures began at 9:00 a.m., I would have had two good hours of personal reading or finishing an assignment. At the end of the lectures at 1:00 p.m., I would move to the library to study until it closes at 11:00 p.m. Then I would travel back home, and would find all the children sleeping. If their father was there, he was also sleeping. I ate, I bathed, said my prayer, jumped into bed, and at 4 o'clock I was up, so that I got to the university before the library opens. So that was my pattern during my second year of my master's degree. My child stayed mostly with the maid; that is when I realised I sacrificed him in the process of my study.

Bianca's strategy was a silent resistance to her husband's aggression. It deprived him of any other source of aggression to use as an excuse against her education. The cost of the compromise strategy that Bianca adopted was also paid by the children, who had to remain under the care of the housemaid as she pursued her master's degree.

Besides reorganising her study and family timetable, Bianca made use of her personal network, particularly her lecturers. She shared her family struggles with one of the visiting Irish professors, who helped her to get a part-time job at the department of gender studies while she studied. The salary from this job provided the financial resource Bianca needed to complete her master's degree. It also enabled her to continue to employ a house helper to take care of her baby and other household chores. Bianca's ability to reorganise her timetable was key in keeping her on her master's degree programme. She also had the possibility of accessing the library up to 11:00 p.m., which gave her the opportunity to read and complete her course work. Hence Bianca had a good fall-back position with her network, which helped her to sustain both the speed and the direction of her education pathways, despite the constraints and lack of cooperation from her husband. The strength of a person's fall-back position, or outside option, often determines how well off a person would be if intra-household cooperation were to fail (Agarwal 1997, 4).

In the final analysis, spouses played a significant role in influencing the speed and direction of the women's education pathways. The spouses provided not only economic and social support but also academic support. That said, like fathers in the natal family, some spouses wavered in their support and others were completely unsupportive. The difference between the spouses and the fathers is that, while fathers had a lot of influence from other members of the family, the marital family members appear to have had minimal influence. This minimalism can be explained in terms of residency of the married couples. Given that both the women and their spouses were employed, they did not live in a strictly patrilocal setting. They were settled in urban centres permanently, or stayed temporarily in residences that were rented by them or their employers. As such they were far from marital family members. This offered advantages in the sense that it gave the spouses autonomy; they could manage gender relations in the household without influences from marital family members. However, the challenge in the neo-local residences is that couples could not easily access necessary social support in times of conflict and lack of cooperation. The ability of the women to utilize and negotiate opportunities for their education, and to overcome spousal constraint along their education pathways, is a product of their agency and favourable fall-back position. The women enjoyed social and network friends and workmates who cooperated and encouraged the women along their education pathways.

6.4 Spousal Support on the Professional Pathway

Spousal support on the professional pathway depended on what stage the women were in their educational and professional career. The women who followed the professional and vocational education pathway got married immediately after their professional qualification in tertiary institutions, before proceeding on to bachelor's degrees. This means the women married at the beginning of their professional career as employees, particularly in schools and other educational organisations. Women in this category needed support to proceed on to a bachelor's degree and postgraduate studies and for professional advancement, for promotions, or to find better jobs. Conversely, women who followed the high school pathway married after their bachelor's degree, usually when looking for employment. This situation implied that the women needed spousal support not only during their schooling but also during their search for employment. In this section, I will focus on the role of spouses in the professional careers of the women.

Although all the men (spouses) initially cooperated with the women's finding jobs at the university, not all of the men sustained that support. I will first present spousal support at the entry stage to women's university jobs and the support during the course of that job. I will discuss situations in which spousal support influenced both the direction and the speed of entry into the women's university career. This analysis will be followed by spousal support during the course of working, a phase in which spousal support varied. While the majority of spouses continued to support the women, others withdrew their support. In the process of the discussion I will show how women responded to the support but also the constraints imposed by their spouses.

Support at entry to university job

Spouses played a determining role in women's entry into professional careers at universities. The cases of Bevra, Nulla, and Ripara show how academic positions held by spouses at the university determined women's employment at the same institution. One of the major reasons the married women identified for moving into university employment was to re-unite with their spouses who were already employed there. Bevra's move to the university, for instance, was initiated by her spouse. After her bachelor's degree, she became employed in a rural secondary school. Then, when her husband got a teaching position at the university after his master's degree:

... he immediately talked to the Vice Chancellor, saying '*I have my family [on] the other side, my wife is qualified with a degree in education*'. Then the VC said '*I think she can come to the university and we [can] find how to place her*'. So, from secondary school, the children and I came here in 2004, and that's when I started teaching in this faculty as a volunteer assistant lecturer for eight months, without an official salary.

The important aspect of this part of Bevra's story is that her spouse did not invite her to join him as a wife (that is, for household support); rather, he negotiated university employment possibility for her before she would need to leave her previous job. He also tapped into administrative support offered by the university management committee to employees' spouses. The level at which Bevra's spouse negotiated her employment also shows that he had good standing and could network well within the university administration. The Vice Chancellor (VC) is the most senior member of university management. Securing the consent of the VC meant overcoming all possible institutional barriers that could have posed a challenge to Bevra's employment. So both the speed

and direction of Bevra's entry into a university academic position was significantly determined by her husband.

In the second case, of Nulla, she decided to join her husband at the university because she had lost her job at the school where she was teaching. Nulla was rendered jobless after her master's degree. She narrated how the head teacher of the secondary school told her: *'you don't need a master's to teach in a secondary school. So that already made me irrelevant in the secondary school setting'*. She therefore decided to join her husband, who was a lecturer at the university. The husband welcomed Nulla and the children and decided to look for a teaching position for her at the university. As Nulla recalled, after writing an application:

... my husband started pacing a-r-o-u-n-d, [searching] through the dean [of the] faculty of science, through who... who ... who..., things were not shifting! Actually till after sometime ... that is how they looked at my application and called me to teach as a teaching assistant but with a full teaching load.

The personal involvement of Nulla's spouse in searching for a job for her shows his good will and that he also supported her professional career. The network of her husband within the university facilitated Nulla's quick entry to teaching at there because he knew which offices to contact, to secure her some employment.

In both the cases of Bevra and Nulla, the change of professional pathway was not extensive; each woman moved from teaching in a secondary school to teaching at university. What changed was the level, what amounted, professionally, to a promotion from secondary to university level teaching. However, the challenge was that at the university, the women took on full-time teaching loads as volunteer teaching assistants without commensurate remuneration. This reduced their source of income and ability to finance their education.

Ripara is the third case whose professional career at university was influenced by her husband. Unlike Bevra and Nulla, Ripara's professional pathway had to radically change, from offering secretarial services at an internet café to teaching at university. She began seriously underemployed: the secretarial position at the internet café did not require a bachelor's degree qualification. Ripara's move to the university was at the invitation of her spouse, *'because my husband was working here at the university, so he helped me to settle in'* the house with the children and also complete a master's degree.

She recalled that she never aspired to teach at the university but her husband obliged her to make an attempt, and try. Ripara vividly recalled that:

... one day, my husband asked me '*Ripara, you can teach, can't you?*' I said '*me? How can I see myself in front of students? I can't!*' [amused]. He said: '*Try it. Go to the dean of faculty of Development Studies and see whether you can be taken on*' ... I said '*In class? No!*' but he replied '*try it*'. So I obliged and went and met the dean. The dean didn't know me of course. I introduced myself and then, after finding out that she knew my husband [the dean], said '*you're Mrs so and so? That's interesting. There is no official position for teaching but you can volunteer!*' she gave me an office on the spot and I began to work as a volunteer immediately.

The major role of Ripara's husband can be seen in the way he inspired her to consider a career in academia, which proved to be professionally beneficial. Ripara not only got a teaching position but has since advanced to become head of the department and also director of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies. Her husband was also instrumental in pointing Ripara to the right offices to approach. Her job search effectively began with the network he had already created for himself at the university. This arrangement facilitated Ripara's entry to university teaching, albeit as a volunteer. Allowing Ripara to search for the job while he remained in the background was also empowering for her, as it made her own the process of her employment at the university.

The instrumental role of being a 'Mrs' was also notable. Regardless of whether the spouses looked directly for a job, or if the women used the spousal networks to search for one themselves, the women needed this marital identity if they were to be taken seriously in the male-dominated world of academia. Happily, their spouses were generally supportive and influenced the entry of the women into professional careers at the university level. Had the spouses not been supportive, it is likely that the women would not have had access to the university jobs in the first place. Given the gendered nature of the selection criteria in recruitment, in which women's qualifications are undervalued (Van den Brink 2010), spousal involvement was important in influencing both the speed and direction of the women's professional pathway into the university. Even so, this entry came with less pay and a disproportionately heavy teaching load for the women.

In addition, spousal support was required throughout the women's professional career at the university. The spouses of course were more experienced in the professional field. However, although all the spouses were supportive of the women's

university employment, not all the spouses were able to sustain support for the women throughout their professional career. In the next section, I will present instances of both: when the spouses remained supportive of the women in the course of their professional career at the university, as well as instances where spouses constrained the women.

Spousal support during professional career

Spousal support throughout the professional pathway of the women at the university was mainly academic and social. Regarding academic support, spouses encouraged the women to research and to publish. For instance, Didam said, *'my husband is all the time challenging me to write; that is him. He has actually forced me to write. He is supportive in my research'*. Similarly, Rakia said, *'my husband would always quarrel with me that I was not progressing, saying: What's happening? Why can't you publish?'* And Rakia's spouse is not even in academia.

Whether in academia or not, the spousal concern about the need for the women to publish underlines the importance the men attributed to the women's professional advancement. The major issue for the spouses was not research; the women were already involved in this. The issue was publication. Publication is core for academic promotions, and was a challenge that the spouses realised the women needed support in. In this case we see the spouses trying to orient and motivate the women towards an academic direction that could help them make career moves and breakthroughs.

The spouses not only encouraged women to do research and publish but also provided the necessary social support the women needed in the household to relieve them of domestic duties that would allow them to concentrate on their professional career. The social support that the women appreciated most was the participation of their spouses in household chores and parenting. In particular, spouses took on household chores that are generally considered feminine. This was particularly captured by Annetta:

... what is more interesting is that my husband is a very down-to-earth person, because he will do anything, including bathe the child. He will do all these things just to support you to settle down and do what you have to do. It was like that in the past and it is still the same. Whenever he feels that my workload is just too heavy, he will do anything, and that is what [I] am so thankful for him for, because many men feel they can't do anything domestic.

Annetta cherished the initiative of her spouse to break from the cultural gender order in the house. She further observed that, *'there are some really good men out there behind these strong women, very good men, and I think most academics have had support from their husbands in that way'*. Although cultural gender order pervades couples who live in neo-local residences, Annetta's narrative highlights the tacit support that husbands give their wives and the secure foundation they provide for the women to build their careers. She also shows that, although some men remain mostly in the background, they take initiatives to improve gender relations in the household. The men are getting involved in household chores and care of the children, both which are considered women's work. Specifically, for female professionals, Annetta argues that *'as long as the husband allows you to be away for so long from him you will be comfortable'*. This statement implies that time away from the house to pursue educational or professional careers is easier to negotiate with supportive spouses than with those who are not supportive. Spousal support is a decisive factor that Annetta acknowledges influences women's professional careers. Clearly, spousal support is needed both at home and in the workplace.

One of the challenges that constrains women's relationships with spouses in the household is balancing household duties with professional demands. A spousal intervention into parenting and chores is a step forward in facilitating women's ability to balance not only their private and public life but also to re-organise gender roles in the household. Reorganising gender order means making a clear distinction between gender-specific roles like reproduction and non-gender specific roles like parenting and care for the sick. Re-organising gender order in the household becomes even more significant when it is a deliberate choice of a spouse. This is because changing the gender order requires courage and good will to negotiate. Annetta observes just how the good will of spouses has contributed to successful academic careers of married female professors:

Many of these female academics have to attend conferences, many of them have to go away to study, many of them are absent in the evenings, etc. There are things you cannot do for the child, for example, you need to be in hospital with the child but sometimes you don't have the time to do it, so he will do it.

However, Annetta was also quick to mention that the support offered by spouses comes at a cost to their masculine identity. Men's participation in childcare and household chores does not conform to social norms in the larger society. As such, Annetta indicates

that, for many women, spousal support in the house is '*obviously not something you want to talk to the public about because sometimes spouses don't feel comfortable, the public can easily criticize them*'. The cultural assumption is that household duties rest solely with the women and explains why men's support of their spouses in the household is never accentuated publicly, at least not in the context of Uganda. The challenge is that cultural restrictions affect both men and women. However, as Annetta indicates, although in the larger society gender order has not significantly changed, men in individual households are acting differently. She also points out that the attitudinal strides some men have made towards gender equality is silenced:

I think that in many ways many men have changed as well. But you don't want to talk about it because you haven't got the consent from your husband, for him to get published as a good man in town. It is the society where we still have a lot of work to do in terms of making people understand what gender is and gender relations and obviously ... it is something you have to do carefully, otherwise you can easily offset what you have achieved so far ...

Annetta brings out an important issue regarding the challenges that social norms place on men, limiting their freedom to provide support in the family. She shows how spouses have attempted to break through gender barriers at least in their own household, which makes a difference to the life of the women. Given that the women and their spouses are living detached from their own parental settings, male spouses find some space to overcome some of the cultural barriers to gender roles in the household.

The social circumstances under which the women and their spouses have settled in places of work also leave the spouses as the only viable social support. The opportunity for male spouses is that the neo-local residences provide an ideal environment for changing gender relations in the household. The compromise that the women and their supportive husbands reach is the willingness to negotiate gender representation of their husbands in public. So in public, spouses portray the expected and culturally appropriate form of masculinity, while in the household, their gender relations often do not comply with the socially accepted norms.

In spite of their supportive influence, men do struggle to cope with the rate at which the women are developing in their professional career, and for some men, that triggered insecurity. For instance, Nulla narrated that '*when I started teaching at MUST, I think even my husband was also not very comfortable*'. She cited an incident of a research

dissemination conference in which one of the male speakers was interested in the paper she presented *'and this alone did not send good signals to my husband in the family!* He questioned *'Why is this person even emphasising your presentation?'* This reaction took Nulla by surprise: *'... sure for me, I looked at how much we could exchange at the level of academics at the conference'*. Nulla's effort to explain to her husband the importance of exchange of knowledge at the research conference was not fruitful. He insisted, *'you see, women are like babies. You never know what will swallow you up! You cannot tell. Now, I am telling you this person is like this ... and you, you are just saying there is no trouble'*. The central issue for Nulla's spouse was the insecurity he felt because of the perception that Nulla's professional activities would threaten his marital status. This is a phenomenon that Jackson (2013, 29) attributed to the anxiety of Ugandan men to sustain their marriage because failure to do so has a dramatic effect on men. He argued that bachelors and divorced men in Uganda are socially ridiculed, and suspected of social disorder.

Similarly, Silvia pointed out that spousal restraint on academic progress is a challenge that is gender-specific to women:

I talked to a few of my colleagues, and it was shocking to find that for some of them, if they are invited, or get an opportunity to do a short-term course to better their skills, or to attend a certain conference in their field, [they] have to seek permission from their husbands. And some of them told me that *'mine will look through the papers and he will tell me "no, you can't go to this one" without any reason'*. If a husband tells them you can't go, they won't go ... Now men don't face those kinds of disadvantages.

This makes it crucial for women, as they build their professional career in academia, to keep their spouses in the picture as they bargain with respect to professional activities. The women have to find a balance between going their own way and not losing their husband's support. As Agarwal argues, although in non-rural households social norms may be treated as an external factor, in practice these norms are as endogenous as in rural households. He argues further that social norms can impinge on household bargaining by limiting what can be bargained for. Norms can also determine constraints and bargaining power in the bargaining process, and are therefore constitutive of what is to be bargained for (Agarwal 1997, 15).

All in all, supportive though the spouses were, some of them lived in constant fear of losing their wives. As such they put unnecessary constraints on the professional pathways of the women. Similarly, the wives would also lose much if there were no

support from their husbands. Hence, bargaining in spousal relationships was among the most important contextual factors that women had to deal with. Ultimately, the way the women negotiated their education and professional career in spousal households determined the women's success in pursuing higher education.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the spousal household as the third important contextual factor that influenced the women's education pathways. The chapter specifically highlighted how the spousal factor defined the educational and professional pathways of the 31 married women who participated in this study. The findings show that, as a group, the women's education career ambition was not put off by marriage, even when they experienced delays at some point. If anything, the women moved strategically into marriage. Individually, women laid career strategies by involving their fiancés early in their education career decisions, at the pre-marital stage. Women consulted and sought their would-be spouses' advice on specific higher education career decisions such as what courses to enrol and specialise in. The women put their career ambition as a pre-condition to be negotiated and agreed upon before accepting a marriage proposal from their fiancés. This was a tactical move on the part of the women to diffuse any possible future spousal resistance to their career advancements. The majority of the spouses kept their word and remained committed to their pre-marital promises.

Similar to the nature of the natal families, the spousal households remained fluid and flexible. Overall, 27 out of 31 spouses remained supportive to the women's education career. Spousal support was facilitated by the women's initiative to pre-negotiate terms for their education career as a precondition to accepting a marriage proposal from their fiancés. The women argued on the basis of the fact that they had met their would-be spouses along their education pathway, and thus expected marriage to facilitate, not end, their education career. As a result, the women demanded commitment on the side of their spouses, particularly with respect to time to complete their education. The ability to pre-negotiate enabled the women to create space for themselves in the marital household before accepting entry into marriage. However, by virtue of marriage, the women also compromised the speed with which they could move along their education pathways. Breaks of various time lengths were needed to resettle in the marital home and to have children before continuing on with the education.

Through negotiation, women who were married challenged their spouses to become equal partners and not just 'husbands' in whom all power in the marital household was concentrated.

The findings show spouses deviating from the social norms and participating in childcare and household chores that, socially, are expected to be carried out by women. This was made possible because settling in neo-local marital residences after marriage, spouses remained a major source of support for the women. Major opportunities for the women were the financial, academic, and social support the spouses provided along the education pathways. Social support with childcare and domestic chores was particularly appreciated by young mothers engaged in the process of pursuing higher education. In the professional pathway, spouses facilitating the women's entry into university jobs through their already established networks made a substantial difference.

The dual-career nature of the spousal households, in which both partners pursued professional careers outside the home (Silberstein, 2014, 1), necessitated flexibility in managing gender roles in homes. The implication of this arrangement was that formal employment triggered movement of the women and their partners into urban and peri-urban centres. This relocation of couples changed settlement patterns of families. More neo-local than patri-local family pattern emerging in urban centres thereby increased the fluidity of the family. These shifting circumstances changed the landscape of gender roles and relations in spousal households, and effectively re-arranged the traditional gender roles and shaped inter-dependency of spouses, especially with respect to caregiving needs in the household.

In neo-local residences, kinship relations and networks were less robust compared to patrilocal settings. There were no family members readily available or willing to take care of children and the household chores for a long period of time. This missing support from other family members required the women's spouse to adjust to share household responsibility, especially caring for the children. Neo-locality influenced change in the expected role of the women in the household. Although physical distance from patrilineal family members created social isolation for the couples, it also reduced the negative influence of unsupportive spousal relatives with respect to the education of the women. The women had space to negotiate their education career direction with their spouses without much external influence from

relatives. Hence, supportive spouses played a crucial role especially in motivating the women to pursue higher education in the university. In sum the dual nature of the spousal households speaks to the fact that an evolution of gender roles is indeed underway.

The findings make an important contribution by exposing the positive contribution of male spouses to the careers of their wives in Uganda. This image of a supportive male spouse is contrary to the authoritarian and controlling image of a husband that is commonly portrayed or assumed to be the case for men in patrilineal societies like those in sub-Saharan Africa (Jackson 2013, 29). The findings also reveal how both men and women are silent about spouses who deviate from the social norms to protect them from social ridicule. This finding is especially important because it shows that there are 'disturbing' silences about spousal contributions to women's career paths in Uganda in order to protect expected masculine identity.

The findings also show that, although unsupportive (counterproductive) spouses managed to constrain the education pathways of the women, they were not able to stop the women from pursuing their educational and professional career. In bargaining about their career path with spouses and spousal relatives, women were diplomatic with their career aspirations; they used household resources wisely and fulfilled their obligations as mothers and wives. In whatever household situation the women found themselves, they managed to directly and indirectly bargain for their education career pathway without losing focus on their career aspirations. These findings are consistent with the bargaining approach, which posits that intra-household interactions contain elements of both cooperation and conflict.

Important to note, however, is this: the suggestion that men as heads of families are driven to cooperate because of self-interest while women are driven by familial interest does not apply to the women in this study. Instead, the life history narratives indicate spouses stepped out of their cultural boundaries to support the education and professional careers of the women without any imminent self-interest or public recognition. The narratives show the restrictive nature of gender discourse in the public does not pay attention to how men are changing gender relations in their own households. Culturally, men's efforts towards gender equality are still largely ridiculed and silenced in society. However, through life narratives, the agency of both women and

their spouse is made visible in household bargains. This does not rule out the existence of male hegemony in the household, but it does suggest that when taken individually, power relations in the household are not sharply divided along gender lines, as Jackson observed (Jackson 2013, 44). Even in situations where spouses showed a lack of support, they did so more under the influence of social pressure than pure self-interest. What is certain is that not only women but also men have to cope with society's ideals of manhood and masculinity, which may clash with their personal pro-women goals.

With respect to Välimäki, Lämsä, and Hiillos' (2009) typology of spousal support, the findings in my study do not show a linear demarcation in the type of support spouses offered. Instead, spousal responses for or against the women's career aspirations were circumstantial. Spouses showed support and flexibility and they networked according to the career needs of the women at specific times. In effect then all the spousal support types can be represented in a single spouse at different points along the women's education and professional career. The findings also show that the cultural context of spousal households is rapidly changing in Uganda, and this change is influencing spousal relationships in more positive ways. Rural-urban migration for formal employment has generated neo-local urban families that are less influenced by the cultural contexts of their paternal and maternal relatives in rural areas. As well, religion and formal education have each had their positive influence on spousal relationships.

However, it was another element, that of the strong fall-back position, that offered insight into why, in unsupportive spousal relationships, women still managed to push forward with their career pathways. The fall-back position for women can be characterised as material finance and, most importantly, the women's social network in places of employment and in the universities the women attended. The strong fall-back position was also built on the women's own exposure through education, which in effect gave the women the determination needed not to yield to unnecessary cultural pressure from ideas, beliefs, and convictions of spouses and spousal relatives. The fact that spouses arrived later on the scene, sometime during the women's dedicated pursuit of their education and professional pathway, gave the women an upper hand to negotiate and bargain on behalf of their educational career in spousal households. That said, it should be noted that this fall-back position was stronger among the younger generation

of women, whose cultural context was more fluid than it was for the older generation. All told, spousal relationships were one of the key contextual factors that influenced the married women's education and professional pathways.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

This dissertation has analysed the education pathway of 47 highly educated women employed in 4 Ugandan universities as academics and senior administrators. Using life history narratives, the study makes explicit women's struggles and agency along their education career pathway. The women in this study are those who navigated the 'leaky' education pipeline and who emerged with successful education careers. Drawing on women from across academic and administrative disciplines (see Table 1.1, chapter one) means there is now a sample that can help paint a broader picture of women's education experiences in Uganda as a whole.

The notion that every child in Africa can not only access but also complete the formal education cycle remains an illusion. Success still eludes women, in particular, for whom contextual social and economic circumstances in the family, the school, and in spousal households constrict women more than men. In addition, what we know about women's experience is, at this point, limited. The little research there is on women's education career in Uganda tends to focus on the negative rather than the positive impacts of family circumstances to explain why a majority of women in Africa have not accessed or completed their formal education (Kwesiga 2002). To date, studies of women with successful education careers in Uganda focus exclusively on the women's experience at their places of employment, specifically, in terms of recruitment, remuneration, and promotion (Boonabaana 2014). Alternatively, the studies focus on women's struggles in Uganda's parliamentary politics (Tamale 1999, Tripp 2012, Wang 2014).

In spite of their insightful contributions to understanding women's employment experiences, these studies remain silent when it comes to the trajectory of women with successful education careers. As such, there remains a knowledge gap about how women move through the education system to obtain the right qualifications necessary for success in various employment sectors. This gap is problematic. A full understanding of why some women succeed, while others drop out, is vital. This study directly addresses this knowledge gap by taking women with successful education careers as the starting point; and by looking at the strategies, they adopted to successfully navigate their education trajectory.

Consequently, this study delves into the taken-for-granted education pathway of female academics and administrators in Ugandan universities by probing how these women survived in school despite social and economic odds in their families, schools, and marital households. The central question driving the study is: *In what ways did women with a successful education career navigate opportunities and negotiate barriers along their educational trajectory in Uganda?* The study was based on the personal education life-history narratives of 41 female academics and 6 female administrators who work in 2 public and 2 private universities in Uganda. The 41 women were drawn from across academic disciplines and positions. Similarly, the six were drawn from various levels of administration. Each woman was interviewed twice, during a year of fieldwork that lasted from August 2012 to August 2013. The first round of interviews generated the education life histories; the second session filled in the remaining gaps. The life-history approach created an opportunity for me, as a researcher, to jointly trace, with the women, their education pathways, specifically, how the women navigated the education system. Taken together, the narratives of the 47 women generated the themes that guided my analysis as a whole.

The personal education life history narratives explicitly shed light on women's struggles and agency. All the women demonstrated agency: they reached out and utilised opportunities, turning their marginalisation in family, school, and spousal relations into sources of critical insight. Women's narratives also showed which strategies they developed to proceed along their education career path (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010, 620). The central argument in the dissertation answers the main question, cited above; namely, that a successful education career for women in Uganda is not about individual choice but that success is the product of the interplay between intellectual capacity, contextual factors (within family, school, and spousal relations), and women's agency. These contextual circumstances define opportunities but also constrain individual's options to make education career choices based on personal preference.

The narratives of the women in this study do show variations in both the education tracks and the education pathway. However, these variations cannot in a general way be ascribed to a specific generation (old, middle-aged, young) or to the women's professional niche (academic and administrative). The variations, I would

argue, are instead linked to individual characteristics, contextual circumstances, and changes in these circumstances. The value attributed to the women's education tracks were varied, and their pathways diverse. This is evidenced by the fact that, across generational and professional groupings, the women followed the same three education tracks, namely: the most valued high school education track, the appreciated professional education track, and the less valued and less appreciated vocational education track. Movement of the women within and between these education tracks has shown that the nature of the women's education pathway is non-linear and marked with delays. These delays occur at various transitions points between classes as well as between different levels of education. Clearly, the nature of women's education pathways needs further reflection. Energy should be invested in studying the notion of choice and the contextual factors that propel women to success through diverse education pathways.

As such, in answer to the central research question, this concluding chapter has four distinct parts. In the first part, I reflect further on Eccles' notion of choice in relation to the women's education career achievement. This reflection is situated in the nature of the women's education pathways as formulated in sub-question one: *What is the nature of the education pathway of women with successful education careers in Uganda?* The second part focuses on contextual influences of family (natal and spousal) and on educational institution contexts along the women's education pathways. This second part responds to my research sub-question two: *In what ways did contextual factors influence the education pathway of women with successful education careers in Uganda?* In this part, I examine how the unfolding of women's experiences contests common assumptions about family and educational institution contexts. I particularly call for recognition of the fluidity of the family and for acknowledgement of the rigidity of the school setting in relation to gender equality. This claim is followed by highlighting positive deviance to show how some individuals in the family (natal and spousal) and in educational institutions digressed from dominant social norms to support women in their education pathways. Part three offers an in-depth discussion of women's agency in answer to sub-question three: *How did the women use tactical and strategic agency to negotiate a successful education career in Uganda?* This part builds on the notion of nego-

feminism to characterise how the women exercised agency in their African (Ugandan) context. Part four points out areas for further research.

7.1 Choice in the Pathways

My findings challenge two key beliefs of Eccles' (1994) important study on achievement-related choices in educational psychology. The first belief is that an individual's expectation for success, confidence in one's ability to succeed, and personal efficacy all influence a specific educational activity. The second belief is that the value an individual attaches to various options also influences career choice. In other words, people will enrol in courses they think they can master and that have specific value to the person. Although Eccles' study is rooted in another disciplinary (psychology) and methodological (quantitative) angle and is set in another cultural context (American), nonetheless I consider her study important in relation to my own. Firstly, Eccles' analyses of achievement-related career choice from a gender perspective is important to understanding the gendered experiences, which informed the women's decisions to take specific education pathways. Secondly, Eccles' focus on the influence of subjective value on individual choice is insightful in that it helps to accentuate individual agency along a career trajectory. My study adds to Eccles' study a more culturally sensitive approach by engaging with qualitative narratives as told by the women themselves. These narratives show not only women's intellectual astuteness but also the contextual influences and the women's agency exercised along their entire education pathway. My study also contributes perspective by focusing on women in Uganda (Africa), which moves beyond the western context studied by Eccles.

My findings challenge the first belief of Eccles regarding expectation and confidence in one's ability to succeed. The narratives of the women show that the nature of their education pathways was not necessarily a product of personal choice based on expectations of success. The decision to take an education track was related neither to the value nor to the career option preference women attached to that particular track. Rather, the pathway that the women in my study took was the only possible one available to them at a given transition point. Nor were these options pre-set and readily available. My findings show that for most of the women the options were limited and in some cases non-existent. Moreover, excellent academic performance was not the only determinant of what education pathway could be taken at transitions

points. The interplay of academic excellence, contextual social and economic factors, and women's agency shaped the direction and speed of the women's education pathway.

Most importantly, diversity in the education pathways is a product of women's attempts to manoeuvre around multiple barriers at various transition points. These barriers obliged 13 (27.7%) of the women to navigate from the high school education track to professional and vocational education tracks to find their education pathway. Again, this movement between education tracks was not a choice: it was the sole alternative if the women did not want to drop out of the education system. These findings contradict Eccles' (1994) western notion of 'individual' and 'individual's' choice, a notion which assumes that individuals may simply select any available career options, even in constraining social contexts. The women in Africa, and specifically my study sample, attributed a great deal of importance to social context, and social context did not always constrain women's education careers. In fact, above all, the social context was valued as a source of women's agency and strength. This strength arises from the evidence that social contexts are diverse; while it is true that some individuals oppose education for women, there are other individuals who cooperate and even facilitate the women's choices along the way. As such, no social context can be reduced to a homogeneous group of people acting in the exact same way.

The most important choice for most of the women studied was the determination to struggle and to fight for their right to education, and to do so without necessarily being assured of success. This choice, which was an intrinsic motivator, helped the women believe in their personal ability to sustain the fight against social and economic forces that mitigated against their education, in collaboration with supportive relatives in both natal families and in spousal households. The power of intrinsic motivation was clearly evident in the majority of the women's courageous engagement in negotiating with individuals from various contexts. Self-confidence and intrinsic motivation encouraged 31 (65.9%) of the women to resist the gendered practices of teachers and classmates in the classroom and 29 of the married women to bargain with spouses, again with determination. This characteristic also points to self-efficacy; a term, which refers to an individual's perceived capabilities for learning and performing behaviour at designated levels (Schwarzer 2014, ix). Self-efficacy is said to influence the choice of activities, effort, persistence, and achievement (Schunk 2001). However, generally

speaking, for the women in my study, self-efficacy not only consisted of various abilities and competencies but also of leaning on the abilities and competencies of supportive individuals along the women's education pathways. Self-efficacy in this case was not only about an individual woman's belief in her ability to organise, execute, and accomplish a task. It was about the women knowing their context. In this study, self-efficacy for the majority of the women consisted in their ability to navigate opportunities and negotiate around obstacles within the specific contexts of their own families, schools, and spousal households. Self-efficacy for 40 (85%) of the women consisted of the determination to move on even when the outcomes of their struggle along their education pathways were not certain.

This study also challenges Eccles' (1994) second assertion that the subjective value an individual attaches to various options influences choice. The personal narratives show that the education pathways of the women are not necessarily value-driven, as Eccles' notion of choice implies, but rather opportunity-driven. For instance, 33 (70.2%) of the women opted for arts courses not because they valued the course, but because they were escaping violent corporal punishment meted out in the science courses. Similarly, 13 (27.7%) indicated they had taken less valued and less prestigious education tracks to avoid dropping out of school altogether. Such education tracks offered the only option for these women to achieve their ultimate educational goal of academic qualifications, regardless of the academic field. In this regard, the decision of these 13 women to change direction and to delay or slow their movement along the education professional and vocational education pathway was an exercise of strategic agency so that the women could achieve their greater education goal. The choice, in other words, was not about career preference based on adequate information and the availability of a range of options. In any case, the majority of the women in my study did not always have enough information about which options were available to even qualify their decisions as some kind of value-driven choice. As a result, women often chose a particular education pathway just so they could keep on the education track. My study, then, places choice in the context of a range of dynamic opportunities within both familial (natal and spousal) and educational institutions.

The importance of context in relation to women's career choices is also underscored by the life history methodology I used. Life history narratives are both

situated in, and reveal context. This is a key point because, while the life history narratives seem to fit with Eccles' notion of choice and confirm the notion that women as individuals make choices and judge the value of different options and strategies, the narratives I collected show that none of the women spoke as isolated and autonomous individuals. Instead, the women positioned their narrative in the context of a relational-self. In other words, the women did not identify themselves as individuals who 'have' relations but who 'are' relations in their own right (Piot 1999, 18). These relations define the nature of the women's context and its influence on their education pathway.

Surprisingly, the narratives did not reveal substantial evidence of internal differences between the women, or at least not differences that could explain variation, diversity, and the non-linear nature of the pathways. Differences based on ethnicity, religion, social, and economic status cannot adequately explain change of direction and/or delays along the pathways. If anything, the personal narratives show that the pathways were so specific, individualised, and dependent on context that no commonly shared characteristic such as religion, ethnicity, class, and generation could adequately explain any variation. Differences in individual contexts were more decisive in the pathways than were other social and economic differences. All internal differences flowed from a particular combination of contextual factors in family, school, and marriage as well as from the women's own characteristics, strategies, and agency. In the next section, I discuss the influence of these contexts in relation to research sub-question two.

7.2 Navigating the Context

The most important contexts that emerged from this study were familial and educational. The family context includes both natal family (discussed in chapter 3) and the spousal household (discussed in chapter 5), while the educational context is comprised of schools, colleges, and universities (discussed in chapter 4). Each of these contexts was characteristically diverse and non-homogeneous in terms of their nature, and the disposition of individual actors. Each of the women carefully navigated both the family and educational contexts for the sake of exploring greater educational opportunities. The personal narratives of the women also challenge common assumptions about the family as culturally rigid and about educational institutions as progressive and modern. In the next section, I discuss these assumptions in more detail.

I begin with family context (natal and spousal). The findings in this study challenge the common assumption that families, especially in Africa, are constraining factors with respect to the educational achievement of women (Kabeer 2005, Delamont 2012). The narratives of all the women in my study illustrate that families in Uganda do not operate as a 'unit whole' to constrain women's education, not as Kwesiga (2002), nor as Cox and Paley (2003), envisioned. On the contrary, the narratives highlight the family (natal and spousal) as fluid, consisting of several individual actors who hold diverse views about women's education. This family context is non-monolithic and constantly changing throughout the course of a woman's education; there is an emergence of neo-local residences and there is the dual-career nature of various households. These shifting social circumstances changed ideology-inspired gender and power relations in both the natal and the spousal families, thereby making the boundaries of the family and its members both porous and fluid. This fluidity in turn enabled the women to connect to individual family members at a more intimate level. The women were able to go beyond normative gender boundaries between men and women; they could relate as parents, daughters, sisters, nieces, and partners. This fluidity allowed for positive shifts in the perception of education for women, especially by those individuals who were initially unsupportive. Regardless of the nature of support, the majority of the women studied had to keenly negotiate for social and financial support in this fluid space.

Similarly, in relation to educational institutions, the findings in this study challenge the view of Kabeer (2003) and Delamont (2012) which unilaterally perceive schools as modern and liberating institutions for women. My findings concur with Van den Brink's (2010) assertion that educational institutions may in fact be highly gendered and overtly discriminatory against girls. Additionally, in contrast to the family context, my study revealed formal education institutions as rigid and as unwilling to change the gender status quo within their structures. Specifically, the classroom emerged as the epicentre of this rigidity and gendered practice, sustained through overt psychological and physical violence against girls, including corporal punishment. This rigidity can be attributed to two historical factors that formed a hybrid patriarchal culture in formal education institutions. The first is the British colonial legacy, which introduced formal education as a gendered social service initially restricted to male members of royal families in kingdom areas in central and in parts of western Uganda (Ssekamwa

1997:29). The second factor is the local cultural gender discriminatory practices against women, carried into the classroom by the attitudes and practices of both individual male teachers and male pupils. As a result, in response to Kwesiga (2002), this study problematises the unilateral blame cast on Ugandan families as a major source of constraint in women's education careers.

Each woman in this study was faced with these contrasting contexts of both fluid family and rigid educational institutions. Dealing with these contrasting contexts concurrently was a daunting task, especially at the level of primary and secondary school education. To understand how women navigated opportunities and manoeuvred around constraints, two concepts are important. The first is positive deviance, a concept I apply to individuals whose uncommon behaviour propelled the women towards successful education careers. The decisions regarding the women's education pathways were situated within the context of supportive others. These individuals, in both the family and school settings, not only offered the women material support but also boosted their agency, encouraging them to pursue their education career. The second concept is that of self, which relates to how women perceived themselves and how other individuals in different contexts perceived the women along their education pathway. I use the concept of self to explain how the women exercised agency in contexts where other people's agency was equally active. Taken together, these two concepts illustrate how the women responded appropriately to opportunities and strategically managed constraints. In the final analysis, both positive deviance and the concept of self in various contexts defined the nature of the women's education pathway. In the next section, I reflect on each of these concepts.

7.3 Positive Deviance

Positive deviance is predicated on the observation that in every social setting there are individuals or groups whose uncommon but successful behaviours and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their neighbours who face the same challenges and barriers and who have access to the same resources (Marra et al. 2011, 1). Among the positive deviants were the 47 women in this study, whose successful education careers mark them among the first females to obtain high academic qualification in their families. Fourteen (29.8%) of the women also dared to achieve academic specialisations in science despite explicit resistance from their teachers. The

31 married women were among the first female partners to give their spouses room to participate in household chores and to develop dual career spousal households as well as to reside in neo-localities.

The women, however, did not deviate simply as individuals but in a context in which other individuals were able to exercise deviance as well. These deviant others included individual natal and spousal family members who took social risks to create education opportunities that kept the women moving along their education pathway.

I now turn to reflect further on the women and other individuals co-currently as positive deviants. I begin by pointing out categories of positive deviance in my study.

Two categories of positive deviants emerged from the family and education institutional contexts: the self-motivated and the context-motivated. In the first category were the 47 self-motivated women and other individuals in the family (natal and spousal) and education institutions. These self-motivated positive deviants seized the first opportunity to do things differently without counting the cost. This category of positive deviants is what Pascale and Miller (1998, 1) labelled as individuals who 'act their way into a new way of thinking'. Self-motivated positive deviants demonstrated that it was possible to find solutions to challenges to women's education regardless of whether or not the underlying causes of gender discrimination have been addressed. Employing both tactical and strategic agency, the 47 women and other individuals who supported them deviated even when they were not sure what implication such a decision would have, either on the natal family or on the spousal relationship. As self-motivated deviants the women persisted in school despite resistance from unsupportive relatives. Direct or indirect exposure of fathers to the benefits of formal education made them strategically invest in the education of their daughters in equal measure with that invested in their sons, a situation that runs contrary to patrilineal norms. There were sibling brothers in 15 natal families who valued and who tactically negotiated the education opportunity for their sisters. One of the siblings engaged the symbol of a 'pen' as source of livelihood rather than bride wealth generated through marriage. In spousal households, 24 of the deviant spouses got involved in childcare, which is a normative gender role constructed around women; these men did so at the risk of social stigma.

The second category, that of context-shaped positive deviants, included individuals who initially hesitated to support women's education. However, changing

social contexts obliged these individuals to reflect on and to reconsider their position. In other words, this category of individuals needed time for 'thinking their way into new way of acting' (Pascale and Miller 1998, 1). Among these were: wealthy fathers; fathers with negative attitudes towards women's education; rival male siblings who thought girls' education would deplete meagre family resources; and spouses who attempted to subjugate the women and discourage them from pursuing an education career. However, with time and in response to the women's strategies and convincing talks, these figures came to appreciate educating the women. For the women, the gendered and rigid context of the school they attended shaped their strategically deviant behaviour. These women were able to resist dominant beliefs about girls in school through academic excellence and through success in their own education career.

Positive deviants in my study manifested certain important traits. Firstly, positive deviants capitalised on energizing factors based on the belief that for any given problem, someone in the community already had a solution (Green 2016). In this sense positive deviants emphasised opportunities, rather than constraints, in difficult social contexts. They perceived social and financial challenges as critical junctures for rethinking discriminative social practices and for acting differently to reduce the marginalisation of women. The women as positive deviants emphasised their personal connections with supportive individuals in the family; the women also relied on their academic excellence, building networks and alliances with other female students, especially in colleges and universities. The deviant others in the family inspired women to focus on education through financial support and social opportunities such as fosterage. Energising factors in school included the inspirational role of head teachers. Characteristically, in positive deviance, norms and values are perceived as negotiable, non-monolithic, and constantly evolving. As such, innovative ideas and practices take precedence over social and cultural risks.

Secondly, positive deviants builds on their unique personal agency, especially the determination to stand out from the crowd. These were women and deviant others who courageously stood out as role models to effect the change they desired in the family and in the educational institution in question. Notably, although in this study positive deviance was not necessarily aggressive, it was nonetheless radical, with a high level of consciousness in the changing social context, and a keen desire to read the signs of the

times as changing. Positive deviants paid respect to social values and norms without compromising the women's education career. In the family, the move by fathers to see their own continuity in their daughters through education amounted to a radical turn in a patriarchal society, where lineage is rooted in male off-spring. In the schools, the women's insistence on specialising in science radically changed gendered tradition in the classroom that had, to that point, held up science as a strictly male domain. Positive deviants in this study were characterised by individual outliers who legitimised the new way of acting in way that was unusual (Green 2016, 25).

Thirdly, positive deviance relied on boosting the women's agency to enable them informally to negotiate their way into education success (Green 2016, 26). Positive deviance in this context was characterised by deviant others who remained in the background while pushing the women to fight for themselves. For instance, the silent and inspirational role of the 15 sibling brothers pushed the women into negotiating for financial support from their respective fathers. The majority of the mothers utilised their lack, or low level, of education as an inspiration for their daughters to pursue higher education. Most of the spouses silently encouraged and counselled the 31 married women on the necessity for higher qualification if they wanted better employment. As a result, 25 of the married women pursued master's degrees, while 5 had already obtained PhDs and 6 were PhD candidates in various universities. The encouragement the women got from these individuals along their education pathway boosted their agency, that is, their ability to struggle and negotiate their education. This in turn helped the women to build themselves up and become positive deviants. Consequently, positive deviance in my study reproduced itself through mentoring and empowerment. This in turn created opportunities for positive deviance in the family and in the respective educational institutions. Therefore, in all its facets, positive deviance in this study is an act of agency.

That said, in my study, positive deviance emerged as gendered behaviour. Apart from the women themselves, the majority, and most significant number of deviant others in the women's education pathways, were men. This study also responds to the dichotomies so often created about patriarchal societies in which men are generalised as oppressive to women. The narratives of all the women reveal positive contributions by

specific individual men towards the successful education career of the women. In the next section, I reflect briefly on men in the women's pathways.

Men in the pathways

This study points to men as an integral part of the struggle for women's gender equality. The finding in this study is contrary to the commonly held view that men are simply pitted against women, especially in a patriarchal society like Uganda. In such a society, men's identity is limited to powerful heads of households and important members of a kinship unit (Kwesiga 2002, 55; Doss et al. 2012, 601). However, in all the narratives I collected, men's identity in relation to women was multi-faceted. Men were not simply patriarchal figures who posed a continuous threat to women's career. Men were parents (fathers, paternal uncles and male mothers), siblings, spouses, and partners whose relationship with women was personal, intimate, and not necessarily regulated by social and cultural norms.

Although 46 of the women in my study did not explicitly identify themselves as feminists, there are stunning resemblances between their narratives and discourses of African feminism(s). Specifically, for the women in my study, the male was not the 'other' but simply human. This finding resonates with various facets of Africa's feminisms: that in Africa, men are an important and necessary part of women's struggle against social inequalities and discriminations (Nnaemeka 2004, 379-380). Clearly, African women's realities demand a more holistic perspective that does not pit men against women but that seeks to root out unjust social arrangements between men and women (Ngunjiri 2010, 757).

That said, men need to be empowered to make their support socially more explicit and to deal with the social stigma that comes with deviating from social norms in their support of women. For instance, the 29 married women whose spouses lived far away from their own natal families could more easily support the women in household chores and child care than the three married women who lived within a vicinity where spousal relatives could still control the men. It is important to keep in mind that, although African feminists as well as the women in my study are not necessarily antagonistic to men, they are nevertheless aware of women's subjugation by men and they challenge silent aspects of this subjugation. Hence, African feminism, while anti-separatist and pro-male, still seeks female agency and autonomy (Mekgwé 2008, 12).

In addition, Piot's (1999) dichotomy of western women as individualistic, unbounded selves and African women as relational and bounded to their society is not fair either. Most importantly, for African women, the self is about how women identify themselves, and how individuals within various contexts identify themselves in relation to the women. In the narratives that form the basis for my study, women showed multiple characteristics of self in the dynamic contexts of the natal family, the education institutions, and the spousal households. This notion of self was evident in the various ways in which the women exercised agency. In the next section, I elaborate further on women's agency, and how it manifested in contexts and spaces where other people's agency was equally active.

7.4 Agency and Negotiation

Women's agency surfaced as the conviction to fight whenever they had made the least headway and as the ability to negotiate when there was space to do so. In some cases, women exercised agency by the willingness to 'let go' when there was no room for manoeuvring around constraints. To gain further insight into this agency, I use the notion of self to depict how women perceived themselves as individuals and in relation to other actors within their given context. Conversely, the notion of self also links to the way other persons perceived themselves as individuals and in relation to the women in specific contexts, namely the natal family, educational institutions, and the spousal households.

Although the notion of self is well grounded in important anthropological studies such as that of Piot (1999), three classifications of self in the psychological studies of Sedikides and Brewer (2015) and in that of Kashima and Hardie (2000) are more informative when it comes to understanding the overarching theme of women's agency insofar as it pertains to sub-question three of my study. The notion of self in psychology refers to the way persons seek to achieve self-definition and self-representation (identity) in a given context (Sedikides and Brewer 2015, 1). Sedikides and Brewer (2015, 1-2) and Kashima & Hardie (2000, 20) have identified three fundamental levels at which 'self' is manifested, namely: individual-self, relational-self, and collective-self. In the women's life narratives each of these three domains emerged not as dichotomies but more as the different ways in which the women identified themselves and the ways in which others identified the women in different contexts. In this way, the findings in this

study rise above the dichotomy which so often characterises the 'western' women as an individual and 'African' women as relational (Piot 1999). I will reflect on each of these three dimensions of self in relation to how women exercised agency in the specific contexts of the family and education institutions.

Individual-self and agency

The notion of 'self' as an individual relates to the conception of oneself as unique and different from other persons. Individual-self suggests autonomy, uniqueness, independence, and the belief that the self is generally dissimilar to others within a given social context (Kashima & Hardie 2000, 20). In all the life history narratives I collected, women's individual selves emerged as they exercised agency by claiming space for their education, especially in the family (natal and spousal). The majority of the women not only questioned but also dialogued and pleaded with individual relatives to support their education career. Contrary to the notion of the so-called relational African women, all the women in my study displayed high levels of ambition and the self-confidence to push their demand for education. The women backed up their ambition with intellectual adroitness and academic excellence, both of which won for the women respect not only in the family but also in educational institutions and in spousal households. As a consequence, the 47 women traced their way from the periphery to the centre of intellectual recognition, a space generally constructed as a male domain, certainly in Uganda. Hence, right from childhood, women's individual agency was an integral part of their successful education career, from the primary stream through to university.

Still, it is important to note that while the women remained proactive, they were also rooted in a context in which other people exercised agency as well. As such, women's agency was not always characterised by fights and resistance. In most of the cases, the effectiveness of the women's agency entailed their ability to negotiate through dialogue with important actors in various contexts. The women were cognisant of the fact that, to succeed in their education career, they needed to draw support from individuals in multiple contexts. As such, the women exercised agency in relation to other actors. This then leads us to the second level of self-conception, that of relational-self, which corresponds to how women exercised agency in relation to other actors. These actors, in the context of positive deviance, maintained their autonomy with

respect to decisions to create educational opportunities and thus to support the women's education careers.

Relational-self and agency

Self-definition as relational-self accentuates inter-personal connections, intimacy, and inter-dependence, and is derived from ties with significant others in a specific context (Kashima & Hardie 2000, 20). Relational identity elicited positive responses from actors in different contexts, which in turn facilitated women's education careers. For example, relational-self-identity as daughters and nieces called for filial protection and for support from parents, siblings, and relatives. Similarly, the women's relational identity as students in the classroom generated respect for their intellectual prowess from teachers as well as from other students. A student's identity obliged teachers to take responsibility for protecting the women's rights and freedoms to learn in the classroom and for fellow students to reckon with the women's academic excellence. The identity of the 31 married women as partners and mothers evoked respect and honour, and demanded support from spouses in the household. All the women in this study were thus in constant dialogue with elements of custom and tradition on the one hand and their education career on the other hand.

In this dynamic context, women exercised agency in both a tactical and a strategic manner. The women engaged tactical agency for achieving short-term education goals, for instance, the request for tuition and for scholastic materials, especially from the natal family. The 31 married women solicited spousal involvement in domestic responsibilities. Besides dialoguing with significant individuals, the women also manipulated their relational-self to build and strengthen social safety nets they could then fall back on with respect to the day-to-day challenges they would meet along their education pathway. To achieve their long-term education goals, the majority of the women employed strategic agency, that is, they keenly identified relational spaces that created room for dialogue to explain and plead for their education. To sustain their relational-self, the women utilised negotiation as a key strategy to sustain relationships, especially in natal family and spousal households.

In dealing with women's agency in relation to negotiations, I am helped by Nnaemeka's (2004) concept of nego-feminism, which depicts core features of Africa's feminisms. Nnaemeka defined nego-feminism as the 'feminism of negotiation' and a 'no-

ego feminism' (2004, 376). In her critical article, 'Theorisation, Practicing and Pruning Africa's way', Nnaemeka coined the term 'nego-feminism' to depict principles of negotiation, give and take, compromise and balance, which she believes are foundational to shared values in many African societies. Negotiation, according to Pruitt (2013), is a form of decision-making in which two or more parties talk with one another in an effort to resolve opposing interests. Opposing interest refers of course to differing needs, which lead the parties to incompatible preferences among the alternatives under consideration. Negotiation then is necessary when there is a change in the structure of affairs, and when a new order must be created or problems managed in the absence of order (2013, 1).

Not surprisingly, negotiation in this study was not a one-time occurrence. Negotiation for the 47 women was continuous, strategic, and an interactive process to nurture and sustain interpersonal and reciprocal relationships with significant individuals. Part of the nego-feminist perspective is the ability to know when, where, and how to detonate or to go around patriarchal landmines in different social contexts. Negotiation, as displayed in my study, was multi-faceted. It involved manoeuvres at transition points in education tracks; the manipulation of relationships in the family; compromises regarding time delays in the spousal household; and letting go of opportunities to specialise in specific courses in educational institutions.

A remarkable feature of the women's agency along their education pathways is that negotiation has a double meaning. It is a 'give and take' exchange, and thus an exercise of strategic agency, either to successfully cope with, or to circumnavigate, constraints. Negotiations depicted in the women's narratives include women's ability to stay connected with important actors, such as parents, siblings, relatives, and spouses who were positive deviants along the women's education pathway. Staying connected relates to Brett and Thompson's (2016, 69) concept of integrative negotiation, which refers in turn to sharing information about interests and priorities then fashioning trade-offs to generate high gains. Tactically, the majority of the women used integrative negotiation as a short-term approach to shift the power base by neutralising dominant actors, especially fathers, in the natal family and partners in spousal households. This was done primarily through dialogue. Engaging in dialogue is an important strategy to deal with contextual power relations and to change attitudes.

Through negotiation most of the women calculatedly moved to create alliances and networks with supportive individual relatives and with head teachers and female colleagues in schools, colleges, and universities. The manipulation of these alliances and networks allowed women to challenge gender discriminative practices and the status quo within the social space of the family, the school, and spousal relations.

That said, women did not always come out with gainful outcomes of said negotiations. It is important to realize that women's agency also entailed 'letting go' and accepting temporary losses in favour of long-term gain. This strategy of letting go and accepting losses also resonates with the no-ego feminist approach in nego-feminism thinking (Nnaemeka 2004, 376). Certainly, compromise was a strategy the women utilised to anticipate and deflate potential constraints before they substantially distracted the women from pursuit of their education career. Consequently, 13 of the women took less prestigious professional and vocational education pathways so as to gain quick access to employment and financial autonomy. The 31 married women took short and long breaks at transition points to take care of their family as the social norms required but in anticipation of a better arrangement down the road, at which point they could resume their education career. Letting go and accepting temporary losses was an important strategy for women to achieve their education career goal. Although all the women capitalised on their relational-self, they did not take for granted that they also bore a collective gendered identity as girls in the family, women in the classroom, and wives in the spousal household. This collective identity required a different strategy to keep the women on track, in their education pathway.

Collective-self and agency

The collective notion of self that emerged in this study was as a commonly shared identity of the women in a given context. The collective notion of self relates to being a 'girl' in the natal family, a 'female' in the classroom, and a 'wife' in the spousal household. Unlike the relational-self, bonding in the collective notion of self is impersonal and contextually interchangeable (Sedikidie and Brewer 2015, 2). Depending on the context, an individual female can be a 'girl', a 'female', and a 'wife'. The collective-self then relates more to gender-inscribed labels and less to the collective strategies of the women.

The collective-self adheres to strict, socially acceptable values, norms, and expectations, which regulate opportunities and behaviours in the lives of men and

women. It is through the collective-self that preassigned roles (of what women and men can or cannot do) in the family, the classroom, and in the spousal household are constructed. The collective-self feeds on normativity, which in turns assigns low status to women. Collectively, women are expected to be subordinate to men as girls, women, and wives (Kwesiga 2002). Consequently, when they were girls, all the women were seen as temporary occupants in the natal family, awaiting relocation to a permanent residence after marriage. In the school, the collective notion of 'a-female-in-class' generated resistance, as evidenced in the sexualisation, discrimination, and honorary male titles accorded to some women in the classroom. In the classroom the, majority of women were expected to perform poorly in academics, below that of their male colleagues; this was particularly true for science subjects. It was in colleges and universities that the women were most discriminated against on the basis of their feminine characteristics (for instance, pregnancy) and their age. Similarly, the collective notion of self as a wife in the marital household is associated with control, the submission to husbands, and general subordination. As wives in spousal households the 31 married women were expected to take on more domestic responsibilities and to focus less on their professional career in the public sphere. As a result, the collective-self evoked more external resistance for the women I studied than did either the individual- or relational-self.

Although the narratives in this study show that the women's collective-self evoked resistances in all social contexts, it was in the education institutions that this self was most resisted. Consequently, while negotiation and compromise were sufficient tools for most of the women to deal with challenges to their education in the family (natal and spousal), an additional strategy of conformity was necessary for the women to employ in their educational institutions. Conformity as an act of agency is a powerful strategy in complex situations where no personal connection exists with important actors, as would be the case in the context of educational institutions. Conformity in a tactical sense amounts to 'agency in incubation' for most of the women who did not find room for negotiation, manoeuvres, and compromise, especially at primary and secondary school. It is important to note that silence and 'voicelessness' in the context of this study reflect strategic ways in which some women mobilise their agentic position to refocus on their final education goal (Kiguwa 2006, 16). Conformity in this instance is

a way of undermining oppression by not fanning the ego of oppressors, and by using non-provocative approaches in the context of nego-feminism.

Conformity as a pattern of strategic agency was the case for the four women who abandoned science subjects as an antidote against the cruel corporal punishment meted out in science classes that would have pushed the women out of school. Conformity became necessary in educational institutions where more than half of the women's agency consisted of the ability to remain flexible and responsive to any small windows of opportunities that would usher the women to the next level of education. This explains partly why the majority of the women moved on with their education regardless of the value of the education tracks and pathways.

What is interesting is how women exercised agency in the management of their collective-self. Women turned this collective self into a source of critical insight, to mobilise and network and build solidarity with fellow women in every context. With respect to family, 44 women looked to their own mothers as role models and sources of inspiration. With respect to school, women saw the low status of female teachers as a compelling reason to pursue higher education. In relation to female classmates, the narratives as a whole showed that the women ceased to compete with each other. Instead the women networked and collaborated to support each other towards their educational goal. With respect to higher education, the 14 women who specialised in pure science disciplines (Table 1.1) built a stronger sense of agency. They mobilised and networked among themselves to propel each other into educational success.

In the final analysis, the women in my study were stronger in their individual- and relational- than in their collective-self. The relational-self manifested in daughterhood and motherhood are special sources of female solidarity and empowerment; both are cultural roles that give women the chance to make claims over their right to education but also their relational rights in the natal, educational, and spousal domains. Contextually, the women recognised that the relational-self was more respected and appreciated because it created the grounds for negotiations and because the women could manipulate those grounds for their educational success (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010). This observation is in agreement with Odhiambo's (2011, 673) argument that African women's power rests within indigenous relational worlds that celebrate motherhood, sisterhood, and friendship. All the women in my study utilised

the relational-self as daughters, students, partners, and mothers not only as sites of negotiation but also as sites of resistance against discriminative social practices in the family (natal and spousal) and in educational institutions at large. What makes the women succeed is their ability to invest more in their individual- and relational-self which appeals to personal consciousness and judgement than in their collective-self that is rooted in social norms and values. This ability to invest in individual and relational 'self' was a key strategy to the women's overall success.

In all, this research has demonstrated that just performing well in school does not in and of itself safeguard the education career of women. All the strategies of academic excellence, including the negotiation of relationships and identities, needed to be managed simultaneously for women to secure a successful education career. This means that although the contextual circumstances in the family and the school are discriminatory and constraining, they also present opportunities that individual women could tap into to secure their education career. Women's agency then is embedded in, rather than separate from, social contexts. Not only was the women's agency characterised by autonomy and resistance it was also coloured by negotiations, conformity, and by compromise. Women's successful education pathways are embedded in dynamic social contexts. Educational success and breakthroughs in these contexts is not always a simple matter of choice but rather a series of negotiations involving an interplay of many actors within various contexts and sub-contexts, including women's intellectual capacity and their agency.

7.5 Policy Implication

This study shows that Uganda cannot afford to miss out on the intellectual capacity of women in the country's development plan. For one thing, women make up more than half the population (2014 National Census). For another, the personal narratives of the women on the pathway to successful education careers raise pertinent challenges to women's education in Uganda that require policy attention. These narratives show that women are most vulnerable at two points. The first is the point of girls' access to education, a point at which families play an important role. The second are the transition points that pose continuous threats to the retention of girls and thus the completion of their education. General national policies such as affirmative action in article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) and in the National Gender policy (1997) can only be effective if and when there are practical education policy implementation strategies in

place at schools, colleges, and universities. This study also shows that what happens at the family level often eludes the eyes and ears of policy makers. Individual actions in the family are often considered private and require more negotiations than legal sanctions. Clearly, at a policy level, schools, colleges, and universities have a critical role to play with respect to access points by reaching out to families and at retention points by keeping girls in school, and on track to complete their education pathway.

Girls are most vulnerable and likely not to access education at primary school level because they are young and dependent on the choices of parents in the family. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), through primary school management committee and head teachers, needs to develop strategies to get girls and indeed children to access school. At the beginning of every school year primary schools, in collaboration with local political, cultural, and religious leaders, can scout for school-age children who are kept home by their parents. Parents of such children can be invited for a conversation and tour of the school so they can see and appreciate what takes place in school and why it is important that their child(ren) be in attendance.

The financial considerations that make parents choose to pay for boys over girls is often not limited to a lack of cash but to challenges in the mode of payment for school dues. The women's narratives in this study reveal that, while parents may have no cash in the bank, they often do have animal and crop resources which could effectively be used to offset school expenses. Thus in-kind, rather than strictly cash payments, should be an option for such families. Education institutions need to be creative and flexible to allow at least the possibility for parents to pay in-kind. These products can be locally consumed in school meal programmes, for instance. Excess food could then be on the open market, in which case schools would stand a better chance to negotiate prices than would individual farming families. The financial profit that accrues from such sales could form the basis for an endowment fund, which schools could then use to offer bursaries to attract more girls, and to offset the financial burden for their families. Alternatively, schools, colleges, and universities can take the lead in developing savings and credit cooperatives (SACCO) involving parents and teachers (staff) associations (PTA) to facilitate parents' saving for the education of girls. This arrangement could well help to circumvent financial constraints for girls (and also boys) along their education pathway.

As the women's narratives stressed, there are several contextual factors in the family and school that put girls who have accessed school at risk of dropping out, especially at transition points. The practice and attitude of teachers in the classroom emerged as a key factor in retaining girls, or pushing them out of school. The challenge is that gender discrimination in the classroom is often invisible and perhaps even unintended by the teachers. The invisible nature of such gender discrimination in the classroom requires more than formal policy pronouncements. Head teachers, management committees, and boards need to be vigilant and strategic in addressing and challenging gender discrimination in their institutions. The head teachers especially at primary and secondary schools need to be more proactive and direct about gender equality in their institutions by engaging with teachers and parents at several levels. There is a real need for educating teachers, and for supervising them, if we hope to see a reduction in gender discrimination in the classroom.

Firstly, school staff meetings and seminars are a critical forum in which to engage teachers about their classroom practices in the school. Such gatherings mean that it is possible for the head teachers and school management committee to disseminate messages on gender equality and to encourage teachers to engage in positive deviance.

Secondly, the head teachers and school management committee can take advantage of the legal entity of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) as a means of reaching out to parents and teachers about prevailing constraints to girls' education in Uganda. The PTA meeting is an important forum for school administrators to influence teachers and parents about gender issues as well. A special forum for the PTA could be convened once a year to engage parents and teachers to discuss and to forge a way forward for gender issues affecting especially the education of girls (but also boys) in school and in the family. The school could develop a network of teachers and parents which will follow up on girls (and boys) who exit from the school. This arrangement will help verify whether the children have dropped out of school altogether or whether they have changed direction and moved into another education pathway. The strategy needs to include the possibility for re-entry into the education pathway for girls and boys who do drop-out or who are delayed at transition points.

Thirdly, the school head teachers and management committee in primary schools and boards in secondary schools can encourage peer counselling and mentorship. There

is need for stronger extracurricular activities such as sports; school clubs such as girl guides and scouts; debating clubs in which gender issues can be openly debated; and music dance and drama clubs, in which pupils perform gender specific themes together. These clubs can improve interpersonal relationship between students and teachers. The extra- curricular activities could also potentially foster an environment for positive deviance that can give boys and girls a more positive experience in the classroom and the school in general.

Fourthly, colleges and universities need to be more deliberate and stronger in community outreach programmes that target schools (primary and secondary) and families with respect to gender equality and the importance of retaining children in school. The colleges and universities could use their open- days to invite and engage with the community and to show an appreciation for higher education. Similarly, inviting schools to participate in higher education open- days can raise the curiosity of the primary and secondary school children, who may in turn fight for their right to remain in school and complete their education. College and university outreach programmes can focus a lot more on empowering schools and families through mentorships and networking. This model would also ease the constraints at transition points and enable women to construct their pathway to successful education careers.

In their outreach programs to schools, it is important for colleges and universities to highlight the positive images and stories of successful career women in both academic and administrative structures. This approach will increase the number of female role models that both girls and boys in primary and secondary schools can look up to. Education sensitisation campaigns using live images of women who have succeeded will encourage more parents and individuals in society to appreciate the enrolment and retention of girls in school. These live images and stories refer of course not only to the women themselves but also to members of their family and to individuals at school who were actively supportive of the women. What more effective way than to show how, within the same contextual circumstances, there are all kinds of women and men who have changed, and who have positively influenced women's pathways to successful careers.

7.6 Areas for Further Research

This study has focused on the pathway of women who succeeded in building educational careers and are now working in four Ugandan universities. Excluding women who have not enjoyed a successful education career, it is fair to say, could well mean that I have overlooked other contextual factors that might also affect women's education career. I leave to other researchers the investigation of factors that relate to war and political instability, to the HIV/AIDS scourge that in turn leads to child-headed households that in turn increase girls' vulnerability at key transition points in their education. A comparative study of women who pursue successful and unsuccessful education pathways is needed if we want deeper insight into all of the contextual factors that affect women's education careers as a whole.

That said, the women in this study not only passed through the education system in Uganda but have remained there, and built on their professions in university settings. Another compelling direction for future research would be to establish how these women have positioned themselves in the very classrooms and offices in which they faced discrimination. In particular, the question should be asked: how have the women integrated their personal experiences into the university, and, most importantly, how women's experiences influence not only their academic and administrative practices but also their professional practices as a whole.

It would be helpful to see a similar study of men's education career pathways. There is evidence that there are early school leavers among men just as there are among women. This suggests that there are gender-specific situations that influence boys more than girls. Certainly, a comparative study that shows the similarities and differences between men and women's pathways would yield important insights into what may be needed if effective gender-specific interventions are to be created and implemented to enable girls and boys to their complete education.

At a methodological level, a combination of a longitudinal life history study would also be extremely helpful, whereby individuals are followed as they make their way through the education track. This approach would increase an understanding of context as well as how individuals construct meaning as they move along their education pathway. A longitudinal approach would also help researchers map instances of resistance, discrimination, but also opportunity as they occur rather than after the fact.

EPILOGUE

Entering the field with the life history method came with fascination and uncertainty in part because the method revealed classroom practices in Ugandan schools, colleges, and universities. These education institutions emerge as important sites in which gender discrimination is perpetuated and contested. The women in my study experienced gender discrimination by both teachers and fellow pupils in the classroom. This discrimination was implicit, invisible, and often unintended and yet it had negative implications for the women who were on the receiving end.

Nevertheless, as academics, the women have turned the classroom into their working environment and have found space to redefine academia. Firstly, by virtue of their sheer presence in academia, the women have recreated a space that has long been dominated by men. Secondly, being in the classroom gives the women an opportunity to make a difference at the level of academic practice. As a consequence, both in academia and in administration, women have the possibility of making the classroom experience more positive for both girls and boys. Gender issues are such an important part of the journey of any Ugandan woman who sets out on the education pathway. I myself have walked this education pathway from primary school to university. As a teacher in the secondary school, and as an academic and senior administrator at the university, I find myself in the classroom and lecture halls and in the senior administrative office, both in the secondary school and at the university. Together with the women in this study, I am positioned in the university because of a certain pathway. It is for exactly this reason that we, collectively, have the enormous possibility of creating a gender-sensitive environment in educational institutions and in support of ambitious young women and men in pursuit of their own pathways to career success.

SUMMARY OF THESIS

This dissertation analysed the education pathways of 47 highly educated women employed in 4 Ugandan universities as academics and senior administrators. Using life history narratives, the study makes explicit an understanding of women's struggles and agency along their education career pathway.

The assumption that every child in Africa can access and complete formal education is illusory to children in Africa. For women, this illusion is even greater due to contextual social and economic circumstances in families, schools, and spousal households that constrict women more than men. There is little research into women's education careers in Uganda, and what there is focuses on negative rather than positive impacts of family circumstances to explain why a greater number of women in Africa have not accessed or completed formal education (Kwesiga 2002). Studies on successful women mainly focus on those who drop out of school. The few studies of women's careers focus exclusively on women's experience at their places of employment, specifically, in terms of recruitment, remuneration, and promotion (Boonabaana 2014), or they focus on women's struggles in parliamentary politics (Tamale 1999, Tripp 2012, Wang 2014).

In spite of their insightful contribution to understanding women's employment experiences, these studies remain silent on the trajectory of women with successful education careers. As such, there remains a knowledge gap regarding how women move through the education system and secure whatever qualifications required to move into various employment sectors in Uganda. This gap is problematic. It is important to understand how and why some women succeed in completing the education cycle, while others drop out of school. This study addresses that knowledge gap, by taking women with successful education careers as its starting point, and by examining the strategies women adopted to successfully navigate their education trajectory.

The question central to this study is: *In what ways did women with a successful education career navigate opportunities and negotiate barriers along their educational trajectory in Uganda?* The study was based on personal education life history narratives of 41 female academics and 6 female administrators in 2 public and 2 private universities. The life history approach created the opportunity for me to work directly with women, to jointly trace and reconstruct their education pathways and to discover

how the women navigated what proved to be a complex education system. The narratives of the 47 women generated the themes that then guided my analysis.

These life history narratives shed light explicitly on women's struggles but also on the women's agency along their education pathway. In narrating their education histories, women showed agency as they reached out and utilised opportunities, and turned constraints in family, in educational institutions, and in spousal households into a source of critical insight. This insight in turn helped the women to develop strategies for proceeding along their individual pathway (Chilisa and Ntseane 2010, 620). The central argument in the dissertation is that a successful education career for women in Uganda is not about individual choice but is rather a product of the interplay between intellectual capacity, individual choice, and contextual factors within family, school, and spousal relations and in relation to women's own exercise of agency. The dissertation as a whole is organised into seven chapters. Each chapter discusses a domain particular to opportunities and risks along the education pathway.

Chapter one focuses on the methodology used to jointly reconstruct the educational pathways of the women. The qualitative research design adopted in this study is predicated upon Hesse-Biber's (2010) perspective that individuals are 'meaning makers' of the world they reside in, and the life history approach adopted for this study benefitted the research in more ways than one. For one thing, the life history narratives brought to light the women's education pathways in detail, while also exposing contextual influences, both positive (opportunities) and negative (risks). Most importantly, the narratives also made explicit women's agency as they tactfully negotiated opportunities and strategically manoeuvred around constraints. The chapter concludes with the assertion that, while there were some drawbacks to the subjective nature of the life history approach, on the whole it offered important advantages that kept participants in control of the research process.

Chapter two, the first empirical chapter, constructs the education pathways of the women within the existing structure of education tracks in Uganda. The major thrust of the chapter is to answer the first research question: *What is the nature of the of the women's education trajectory?* The chapter engages with Eccles' (1994) notion of choice in her achievement-related theoretical framework. The chapter maps the educational pathways of the women from primary school to university, and shows the transition

points between successive education levels that posed particular risks for the women (whereby they might drop out of school). The pathways also provide the basis on which the other three empirical chapters are developed. The chapter concludes by arguing that women's successful educational pathways are a product not only of intellectual ability but, most importantly, of contextual factors and the women's own agency. The way the women reacted to these contextual factors influenced the direction and speed of the paths completed. Consequently, a realistic view of pathways is that they are diverse, non-linear, and marked by delays at transition points.

Chapter three discusses the natal family as the first contextual domain within research sub-question two: *In what ways do contextual factors influence women's education trajectory?* The chapter analyses how women navigated checks and balances in the natal family, and employs the family systems perspective of Cox and Paley (2003), and the life course theory of Melin, Nordqvist, and Sharma (2003). The chapter shows how the women strategically navigated opportunities and negotiated constraints to their education pathways with different members of the natal family. Contrary to Cox and Paley (2003), the chapter argues that the family is not a unitary whole but consists of individuals who negotiate and conflict with each other vis-a-vis the women's education career. In these negotiations and conflicts, women's tactical and strategic agency and the role of supportive members of the family defined the nature of the pathways.

In chapter four, the discussion turns to the influence of the classroom as the second contextual domain within the second research sub-question, above. The focus here is women's experience interacting with classmates and teachers, and the chapter is helped by Delamont's (2012) analytical framework on how the pace and scope of educational reforms have produced unintended gender inequality in schools. The chapter shows the classroom as the epicentre of gender discrimination against women throughout their education pathway; this situation meant that women negotiated not only their intellectual and academic space but, more importantly, their identity as female students in male-dominated spaces in schools and campuses. The chapter argues that, although formal education is meant to be a vehicle of empowerment, in practice educational institutions are highly gendered and rigid regarding change to the gender status quo. This situation is manifested in school policies which are gender neutral, but

in which individual teachers and pupils carry gendered attitudes into the classroom. These attitudes ultimately influenced not only the direction but also the speed of the women's education pathways.

Chapter five examines spouses and spousal relations as the last contextual domain under research sub-question two and shows how women bargained for spousal support, especially with respect to higher education. The chapter tries to understand how individuals in spousal households influenced the educational and professional pathway of the women. Engaging the cooperative conflict model used by Jackson (2013) in her analysis of household relationships in eastern Uganda, the chapter argues that spousal financial and social support was critical in propelling the women's educational and professional career at university. The chapter highlights how women tactically bargained for spousal support for higher education and for initial entry into professional careers at universities. The chapter points to neo-locality and to the dual career nature of the spousal households as important factors in facilitating partnership and co-dependence between women and their spouses. This co-dependency facilitated women's ability to bargain and negotiate their education career.

Each chapter pays close attention to women's agency in response to the third research question: *How did the women use tactical and strategic agency to negotiate a successful education career in Uganda?* The narratives show that women exercised agency in context, that is, where other people's agency was equally active. As a consequence, women's strategy for a successful education career had to be multi-faceted: women both negotiated and manoeuvred around obstacles while remaining open to changing direction and even to conforming as a strategic approach when there was little space for negotiation. Throughout their education pathways, women's agency was visible in all three domains: the natal family, the educational institution, and the marital household. In a very real sense, women in this study were not helpless victims of gender discrimination but agents who exercised a range of tactics and strategies to keep on track with their education career.

The conclusion highlights the value of my research to theory. I question Eccles' (1994) notion of choice and argue that the pathways were not a product of choice based on career preference; rather, they were the only options available to the women in question. The conclusion also shows the interplay between family, educational

institutions, and women's agency in shaping successful education pathways for the women. Although circumstances did not differ radically from those facing children who dropped out of school, the women's personal agency and individual contextual factors meant that differential opportunities and constraints presented themselves along the education pathways. The women's ability to deploy their tactical and strategic agency, and to utilise opportunities, as well as the women's determination to negotiate constraints inherent in the natal family, the school, and in spousal households defined the successful nature of the women's education pathways. The conclusion offers critical insights into women's agency, specifically, their determination to pursue education careers using strategies of conformity, resistance, and negotiation. These expressions of agency resonate with the concept of nego-feminism that places agency in context, that is, women's differentiating between opportunity and constraint (knowing where each lies), and knowing what strategy to apply, and when. This study found that not only did women explore and negotiate opportunities but that no obstacles in their families, schools, or marriages ultimately stopped the women from pursuing their education career goals. In sum, the interplay of contextual factors and individual agency proved critical in the women's education pathways as a whole.

SAMENVATTING (Summary in Dutch)

In deze dissertatie worden de educatieve loopbanen geanalyseerd van 47 hoogopgeleide vrouwen werkzaam als academici of senior-managers aan vier Oegandese universiteiten. Door middel van levensverhalen geeft dit onderzoek inzicht in de strijd en het handelingsvermogen (*agency*) van vrouwen in hun educatieve loopbaan.

De aanname dat ieder kind in Afrika toegang heeft tot regulier onderwijs en de kans heeft dit af te ronden, is een illusie voor kinderen in Afrika. Door contextuele sociale en economische omstandigheden in families, onderwijsinstellingen, en huwelijken die vrouwen meer beperken dan mannen, is deze illusie voor vrouwen nog groter. Er is weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de educatieve loopbanen van vrouwen in Oeganda, en bestaand onderzoek exploreert voornamelijk de negatieve in plaats van de positieve impact van familieomstandigheden om te verklaren waarom een groter aantal vrouwen in Afrika geen regulier onderwijs heeft genoten of afgerond (Kwesiga 2002). Studies naar succesvolle vrouwen richten zich hoofdzakelijk op vrouwen die vroegtijdig zijn gestopt met hun opleiding. De weinige studies gericht op carrières van vrouwen bestuderen uitsluitend de ervaringen van vrouwen op de werkvloer, en meer specifiek kwesties rondom werving, beloning, en promotie (Boonabaana 2014), of ze richten zich op de strijd van vrouwen in de parlementaire politiek (Tamale 1999; Tripp 2012; Wang 2014).

Ondanks de bijdragen die deze studies leveren aan het verkrijgen van inzichten in en begrip van de werkervaringen van vrouwen, gaan zij niet in op de weg die vrouwen met succesvolle educatieve loopbanen afleggen. Zo blijft er een kennis-hiaat bestaan over de wijze waarop vrouwen zich door het onderwijssysteem bewegen en de benodigde kwalificaties voor verschillende arbeidssectoren in Oeganda bemachtigen. Dit kennis-hiaat is problematisch. Het is van belang om te begrijpen hoe en waarom sommige vrouwen slagen in het voltooien van hun onderwijsloopbaan, waar anderen vroegtijdig stoppen met hun opleiding. Deze studie adresseert dit kennis-hiaat door vrouwen met succesvolle educatieve carrières als uitgangspunt te nemen en door de verschillende strategieën te onderzoeken die vrouwen hanteren om hun onderwijsloopbaan succesvol te sturen.

De centrale vraagstelling in deze dissertatie luidt als volgt: op welke manieren maken vrouwen met een succesvolle educatieve loopbaan gebruik van de hun aangeboden mogelijkheden en hoe ruimen ze hindernissen uit de weg tijdens hun educatieve traject in Oeganda? De studie is gebaseerd op de persoonlijke levenshalens over de opleidingstrajecten van 41 vrouwelijke academici en 6 vrouwelijke managers in 2 publieke en 2 private universiteiten. De benadering om met levensverhalen te werken, creëerde voor mij de kans om rechtstreeks met vrouwen te werken, om gelijktijdig hun educatieve loopbaan te traceren en reconstrueren, en om te ontdekken hoe deze vrouwen zich bewogen in wat een complex educatief systeem bleek. De verhalen van de 47 vrouwen brachten de onderwerpen naar voren die vervolgens mijn analyse stuurden.

Deze levensverhalen belichten nadrukkelijk de worstelingen van vrouwen tijdens hun educatieve loopbaan, maar ook hun handelingsvermogen. In het bespreken van hun educatieve geschiedenis toonden vrouwen handelingsvermogen door tactisch gebruik te maken van de mogelijkheden, en door belemmeringen in de familie, onderwijsinstellingen en hun huwelijk om te zetten in een bron van kritisch inzicht. Dit inzicht hielp vrouwen strategieën te ontwikkelen om hun individuele loopbanen voort te zetten (Chilisa en Ntseane 2010, 620). Het argument dat centraal staat in deze studie is dat het educatieve traject van vrouwen in Oeganda niet alleen gebonden is aan individuele keuze, maar een product is van een wisselwerking tussen intellectuele capaciteit, individuele keuzevrijheid, en contextuele factoren binnen de familie, de onderwijsinstellingen, en het huwelijk in relatie tot het handelingsvermogen van de vrouwen zelf.

Het proefschrift is verdeeld over zeven hoofdstukken. Elk hoofdstuk bediscussieert een specifiek domein rond mogelijkheden en risico's van de educatieve loopbaan die zich daarbinnen voordoen.

Het eerste hoofdstuk bespreekt hoe het onderzoek de educatieve trajecten van de vrouwen reconstrueert met behulp van de levensverhalen-methodologie. Het onderzoek maakt gebruik van een kwalitatief onderzoeksdesign dat gebaseerd is op Hesse-Biber's (2010) overtuiging dat individuen 'betekenismakers' (*meaning makers*) zijn van de wereld waarin ze leven, en het gebruik van levensverhalen heeft het onderzoek op meerdere manieren geholpen. Ten eerste hebben de levensverhalen in detail de opleidingstrajecten van deze vrouwen uiteengezet, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd contextuele

invloeden blootlegden, zowel positief (kansen) als negatief (risico's). Belangrijker nog, de focus op persoonlijke levensverhalen benadrukt expliciet het handelingsvermogen van deze vrouwen en belicht hoe zij kansen tactvol tot stand moesten brengen en strategisch moesten manoeuvreren rond barrières. Het hoofdstuk besluit met de constatering dat deze methodologie de deelnemers inspraak gaf in het onderzoeksproces, ondanks het feit dat er ook een aantal nadelen waren aan de subjectieve aard van de benadering met levensverhalen.

Het tweede hoofdstuk, het eerste empirische hoofdstuk, construeert de onderwijstrajecten van de vrouwen binnen de bestaande structuur van de opleidingswegen in Oeganda. Het hoofdstuk concentreert zich hoofdzakelijk op het beantwoorden van de eerste onderzoeksvraag: Wat is de aard van de opleidingstrajecten van de vrouwen? Dit hoofdstuk gebruikt Eccles' (1994) notie van keuze in haar prestatie-gerelateerde theoretische context. Het hoofdstuk geeft een overzicht van de opleidingstrajecten van de vrouwen vanaf de basisschool tot aan de universiteit en laat de omslagpunten zien tussen de opeenvolgende opleidingsniveaus die specifieke risico's voor de vrouwen met zich mee brachten (waardoor ze vroegtijdig hun opleiding zouden kunnen verlaten). De andere drie empirische hoofdstukken zijn ook ontwikkeld op basis van deze opleidingstrajecten. Het hoofdstuk concludeert dat de succesvolle educatieve trajecten van vrouwen niet alleen een product zijn van hun intellectuele capaciteiten, maar voornamelijk van achterliggende contextuele factoren en het handelingsvermogen van de vrouw. De wijze waarop de vrouwen reageerden op deze contextuele factoren beïnvloedde de richting en snelheid van de voltooide trajecten. Een realistische kijk op deze trajecten benadrukt daarom dat ze divers en non-lineair zijn en getekend worden door vertragingen tijdens omslagpunten.

Hoofdstuk drie behandelt het eerste context gebonden domein van onderzoeksvraag twee, de familie. De onderzoeksvraag luidt: Op welke manieren beïnvloeden contextuele factoren de educatieve loopbaan van vrouwen? Het hoofdstuk analyseert hoe vrouwen de 'checks and balances' in de familie hanteerden en maakt hierbij gebruik van het gezinssystemen-perspectief van Cox en Paley (2003) en de levenslooptheorie van Melin, Nordqvist, en Sharma (2003). Het hoofdstuk toont hoe de vrouwen op strategische wijze de mogelijkheden en barrières van hun educatieve loopbaan hanteerden en hoe zij onderhandelden met verschillende leden van de familie.

In tegenstelling tot Cox en Paley (2003) stelt het hoofdstuk dat de familie geen uniform geheel is, maar daarentegen bestaat uit individuen die verschillende visies hebben op de educatieve loopbaan van de vrouwen. Het strategisch handelingsvermogen van de vrouwen en de rol van ondersteunde familieleden zijn bepalend voor de aard van de educatieve trajecten.

Hoofdstuk vier bespreekt het tweede contextuele domein van de onderzoeksvraag, de invloed van het klaslokaal en specifiek de ervaringen van vrouwen in hun interactie met klasgenoten en docenten. Het hoofdstuk beschouwt deze ervaringen aan de hand van het analytisch kader van Delamont (2012), dat bespreekt hoe het tempo en de reikwijdte van onderwijshervormingen onbedoelde genderongelijkheid op school bewerkstelligen. Het hoofdstuk toont het klaslokaal als het epicentrum van genderdiscriminatie tegen vrouwen gedurende hun opleidingstraject. Hierdoor onderhandelen vrouwen niet alleen hun intellectuele en academische ruimte, maar, belangrijker nog, hun identiteit als vrouwelijke studenten in door mannen gedomineerde ruimtes op scholen en campussen. Het hoofdstuk beweert dat, ondanks dat regulier onderwijs bedoeld is als middel van 'empowerment', de praktijk uitwijst dat onderwijsinstellingen nauwelijks gender-neutraal zijn en rigide ten opzichte van het veranderen van deze ongelijkheid. Dit manifesteert zich in gender-neutraal schoolbeleid, waarbinnen individuele docenten en leerlingen zelf toch gender-ongelijkheid het klaslokaal in brengen. Deze instellingen beïnvloeden uiteindelijk niet alleen de richting, maar ook de snelheid van de onderwijstrajecten van de vrouwen.

Hoofdstuk 5 behandelt het laatste contextuele domein van de onderzoeksvraag, echtgenoten en huwelijksrelaties, en laat zien op welke wijze vrouwen steun van hun echtgenoten onderhandelen, met name inzake het hoger onderwijs. Het hoofdstuk streeft te begrijpen hoe huwelijkspartners en aangetrouwde families de educatieve en professionele weg van de vrouwen beïnvloeden. Het hoofdstuk gebruikt hierbij Jackson's (2013) analyse van huishoudelijke relaties in Oost-Uganda en beargumenteert dat financiële en sociale steun van echtgenoten cruciaal blijken in het voortstuwende van de educatieve en professionele carrières van de vrouwen op de universiteit. Het hoofdstuk besteedt aandacht aan hoe vrouwen op tactische wijze steun van hun echtgenoten onderhandelen voor hun deelname aan het hoger onderwijs en voor toegang tot professionele carrières aan de universiteit. Dit hoofdstuk verwijst naar neo-

localiteit en het feit dat beide echtgenoten een universitaire carrière nastreven als belangrijke factoren in het faciliteren van partnerschap en samenwerking tussen vrouwen en hun echtgenoten. Deze wederzijdse afhankelijkheid vergemakkelijkt het vermogen van vrouwen om hun onderwijs carrière af te dwingen en te onderhandelen.

Het onderzoek besteedt in elk hoofdstuk nadrukkelijk aandacht aan het handelingsvermogen van vrouwen, waardoor er antwoord gegeven wordt op de derde onderzoeksvraag: hoe hebben de vrouwen tactisch en strategisch handelingsvermogen gebruikt om een succesvolle educatieve loopbaan te bereiken in Oeganda? De verhalen tonen aan dat vrouwen handelen in contexten waar andere mensen even actief zijn. Deze situaties vereisen een veelzijdige strategie van vrouwen om een succesvolle onderwijs carrière te verwezenlijken: vrouwen onderhandelen en manoeuvreren zich langs obstakels, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd open staan voor een alternatieve strategische benadering indien er weinig ruimte is om te onderhandelen, zoals het eventueel veranderen van richting of zelfs het conformeren aan de omstandigheden. Tijdens hun opleidingswegen was het handelingsvermogen van vrouwen in alle drie de domeinen zichtbaar: de familie, de onderwijsinstellingen, en het huwelijk. De vrouwen in dit onderzoek kunnen daarom niet worden afgeschilderd als hulpeloze slachtoffers van genderdiscriminatie, maar als actoren die een reeks tactieken en strategieën uitoefenen en benutten om hun educatieve loopbaan te verwezenlijken.

De conclusie benadrukt de theoretische waarde van mijn onderzoek. Ik bevraag Eccles' (1994) notie van keuze en beargumenteer dat trajecten geen product zijn van keuze op basis van carrière voorkeur; in plaats daarvan zijn ze de enige mogelijkheid die de vrouwen in kwestie hadden. In de conclusie blijkt ook de invloed van de wisselwerking tussen familie, onderwijsinstellingen en echtelijke relaties op het vormen van succesvolle onderwijstrajecten voor de vrouwen. Hoewel hun omstandigheden niet radicaal verschillen van die van vroegtijdige schoolverlaters, resulteerden hun persoonlijk handelingsvermogen en individuele contextuele factoren in afwijkende mogelijkheden en beperkingen in hun onderwijswegen. Het vermogen van de vrouwen om hun tactisch en strategisch handelingsvermogen in te zetten en om hun kansen te benutten, evenals de vastberadenheid van vrouwen om te onderhandelen over beperkingen die inherent zijn aan de familie, de school, en het huwelijk, definieerden het succesvolle karakter van de onderwijstrajecten van de vrouwen. De conclusie biedt

kritische inzichten in het handelingsvermogen van vrouwen, en in het bijzonder hun vastberadenheid om educatieve loopbanen te volgen met gebruik van strategieën van overeenstemming, weerstand, en onderhandeling. Deze uitingen van handelingsvermogen zijn in overeenstemming met het concept van nego-feminisme die het handelingsvermogen in context plaatst, waarbinnen vrouwen actief onderscheiden tussen kans en beperking en inzien welke strategie toepasbaar is en wanneer. Uit deze studie blijkt ook dat vrouwen niet alleen kansen verkennen en daarover onderhandelen, maar daarnaast dat belemmeringen in hun families, scholen, of huwelijken hen er niet van weerhouden om hun loopbaandoelstellingen te verwezenlijken. Samengevat blijken de contextuele factoren en het individueel handelingsvermogen essentieel te zijn in de onderwijstrajecten van vrouwen.

REFERENCES

- Abasili, A.I. 2011. "Seeing Tamar through the Prism of an African Woman: A Contextual Reading of Genesis 38." *Old Testament Essays* 24(3):555–573.
- Abebe, T. 2013. "Interdependent Rights and Agency: The Role of Children in Collective Livelihood Strategies in Rural Ethiopia." In *Reconceptualizing Children's Rights in International Development: Living Rights, Social Justice, Translations*, edited by K. Hanson and O. Nieuwenhuys, 71–92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Acker, S., J. Megarry, S. Nisbet, and E. Hoyle. 2013. *World Yearbook of Education: Women and Education*. London: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Adoyo Odhiambo, R., E.M. Simatwa, and A. Yalo. 2013. "Role of Principals in Promotion of Girl-child Education in Mixed Day Secondary Schools in Kenya: A Case Study of Rongo and Ndhiwa Districts." *Educational Research* 4(2):190–217.
- Agarwal, B. 1997. "Bargaining and Gender Relations: Within and beyond the Household." *Feminist Economics* 3(1):1–51.
- Alderman, H., D.O. Gilligan, and K. Lehrer. 2013. "The Impact of Food for Education Programs on School Participation in Northern Uganda." Available at <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/>.
- Altinyelken, H.K., S. Moorcroft, and H. van der Draai. 2014. "The Dilemmas and Complexities of Implementing Language-in-Education Policies: Perspectives from Urban and Rural Contexts in Uganda." *International Journal of Educational Development* 36:90–99.
- Amin, M.E. 2005. *Social Science Research: Conception, Methodology and Analysis*. Kampala: Makerere University Press.
- Animasahun, R., and E.F. Fatile. 2011. "Patterns of Marital Instability among Married Couples in Lagos, Nigeria." *Journal of African Studies and Development* 3(10):192–199.
- Athenstaedt, U., C. Heinzle, and G. Lerchbaumer. 2008. "Gender Subgroup Self-categorization and Gender Role Self-concept." *Sex Roles* 58:266–278.
- Barriteau, E. 1998. "Theorizing Gender Systems and the Project of Modernity in the Twentieth-century Caribbean." *Feminist Review* 59(1):186–210.
- Ben-Nun, P. 2008. "Respondent Fatigue." In *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, edited by P.J. Lavrakas, 743–746. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Björkman-Nyqvist, M. 2013. "Income Shocks and Gender Gaps in Education: Evidence from Uganda." *Journal of Development Economics* 105:237–253.
- Blaak, M., G.L. Openjuru, and J. Zeelen. 2013. "Non-formal Vocational Education in Uganda: Practical Empowerment through a Workable Alternative." *International Journal of Educational Development* 33(1):88–97.
- Blackmore, J., and J. Sachs. 2012. *Performing and Reforming Leaders: Gender, Educational Restructuring, and Organizational Change*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Boonabaana, B. 2014. "Negotiating Gender and Tourism Work: Women's Lived Experiences in Uganda." *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 14(1/2):27–36.
- Boschma, G., O. Yonge, and L. Mychajlunow. 2003. "Consent in Oral History Interviews: Unique Challenges." *Qualitative Health Research* 13(1):129–135.

- Brett, J., and L. Thompson. 2016. "Negotiation." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 136:68–79.
- Britton, D.M., and L. Logan. 2008. "Gendered Organizations: Progress and Prospects." *Sociology Compass* 2(1):107–121.
- Bryman, A. 2012. *Social Research Methods*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, R., and S.M. Wasco. 2000. "Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 28(6):773–791.
- Cannella, G. S. 2015. "Qualitative Research as Living Within/Transforming Complex Power Relations." *Qualitative Inquiry* 21(7):594–598.
- Casino, V.D. 2009. *Social Geography: A Critical Introduction to Geography*. Sussex: John Wiley and Sons.
- Chanfrault-Duchet, M.-F. 1991. "Narrative Structures, Social Models, and Symbolic Representation in the Life Story." In *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by B.G. Sherna and P. Daphine, 77–92. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Chilisa, B., and G. Ntseane. 2010. "Resisting Dominant Discourses: Implications of Indigenous, African Feminist Theory and Methods for Gender and Education Research." *Gender and Education* 22(6):617–632.
- Christiansen, C. 2005. "Positioning Children and Institutions of Childcare in Contemporary Uganda." *African Journal of AIDS Research* 4(3):173–182.
- Clark, T. 2008. "We're Over-researched Here! Exploring Accounts of Research Fatigue within Qualitative Research Engagements." *Sociology* 42(5):953–970.
- Clarricoates, K. 1981. "The Experience of Patriarchal Schooling." *Interchange* 12(2/3):185–205.
- Colclough, C. 2015. "Gender Equality in Education – Increasing the Momentum for Change." Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty. Available at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/> (accessed 23 May 2016).
- Cole, A.L., and J.G. Knowles. 2001. *Lives in Context: The Art of Life History Research*. Walnut Creek: Altamira.
- Collings, S., L. Conner, K. McPherson, B. Midson, and C. Wilson. 2010. "Learning to be Leaders in Higher Education: What Helps or Hinders Women's Advancement as Leaders in Universities." *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 39(1):44–62.
- Corbin, J., and J.M. Morse. 2003. "The Unstructured Interactive Interview: Issues of Reciprocity and Risks when Dealing with Sensitive Topics." *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(3):335–354.
- Cornwall, A., and J. Edwards. 2010. "Introduction: Negotiating Empowerment." *IDS Bulletin* 41(2):1–9.
- Cox, M.J., and B. Paley. 2003. "Understanding Families as Systems." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12(5):193–196.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Crotty, M. 1998. *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. London: SAGE.

- De Bruijn, M., R. van Dijk, and J.B. Gewald. 2007. *Strength beyond Structure: Social and Historical Trajectories of Agency in Africa*. Leiden: Brill.
- Delamont, S. 2012. *Sex Roles and the School*. Oxon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Devries, K.M., L. Knight, J.C. Child, A. Mirembe, J. Nakuti, R. Jones, and E. Walakira. 2015. "The Good School Toolkit for Reducing Physical Violence from School Staff to Primary School Students: A Cluster-randomised Controlled Trial in Uganda." *Lancet Global Health* 3(7):e378–e386.
- Doss, C., M. Truong, G. Nabanoga, and J. Namaalwa. 2012. "Women, Marriage and Asset Inheritance in Uganda." *Development Policy Review* 30(5):597–616.
- Driessen, H., and W. Jansen. 2013. "The Hard Work of Small Talk in Ethnographic Fieldwork." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 69(2):249–263.
- Dunne, M., S. Humphreys, and F. Leach. 2006. "Gender Violence in Schools in the Developing World." *Gender and Education* 18(1):75–98.
- Easterly, W. 2009. "How the Millennium Development Goals are Unfair to Africa." *World Development* 37(1):26–35.
- Ebenstein, A. 2014. "Patrilocality and Missing Women." Available at <https://papers.ssrn.com/>.
- Eccles, J.S. 1994. "Understanding Women's Educational and Occupational Choices." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 18(4):585–609.
- Eccles, J. S., and A. Wigfield. 2002. "Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals." *Annual Review of Psychology* 53(1):109–132.
- England, P. 1993. *Theory on Gender: Feminism on Theory*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.
- Epstein, D., and R. Morrell. 2012. "Approaching Southern Theory: Explorations of Gender in South African Education." *Gender and Education* 24(5):469–482.
- Fadigan, K.A., and P.L. Hammrich. 2004. "A Longitudinal Study of the Educational and Career Trajectories of Female Participants of an Urban Informal Science Education Program." *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 41(8):835–860.
- Flick, U. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE.
- Gale, L.A. 2007. "Bulgar Marriages and 'Big' Women: Navigating Relatedness in Guinean Refugee Camps." *Anthropological Quarterly* 80(2):355–378.
- Gergen, K.J. 1985. "The Social Constructionist Movement in Modern Psychology." *American Psychologist* 40(3):266.
- Giroux, H.A. 1983. *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey.
- Goldsmith, A.H., S. Sedo, W. Darity, and D. Hamilton. 2004. "The Labor Supply Consequences of Perceptions of Employer Discrimination During Search and On-the-Job: Integrating Neoclassical Theory and Cognitive Dissonance." *Journal of Economic Psychology* 25:15–39.
- Goodley, D. 1996. "Tales of Hidden Lives: A Critical Examination of Life History Research with People Who Have Learning Difficulties." *Disability and Society* 11(3):333–348.
- Goodson, I. 2001. "The Story of Life History: Origins of the Life History Method in Sociology." *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 1(2):129–142.
- Gray, D.E. 2013. *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: SAGE.

- Green, D. 2016. *How Change Happens*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Harding, S.G. 1987. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Harding, S., and K. Norberg. 2005. "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction." *Signs* 30(4):2009–2015.
- Hesse-Biber, S.N. 2010. *Mixed Methods Research: Merging Theory with Practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S.N., and P. Leavy. 2007. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Hoffnung, M. 2006. "What's in a Name? Marital Name Choice Revisited." *Sex Roles* 55(11/12):817–825.
- Honwana, A. 1999. "Negotiating Post-war Identities: Child Soldiers in Mozambique and Angola." *Codestria Bulletin* 1(2):4–13.
- Isingoma, B., and C. Meierkord. 2016. "Ugandan English – Challenges to, and Input for, Current Theories." In *Ugandan English: Its Sociolinguistics, Structure and Uses in a Globalising Post-protectorate*, edited by C. Meierkord, B. Isingoma, and S. Namyalo, 1–16. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U.C. 1985. "Child Fosterage in West Africa." *Population and Development Review* 11(1):53–73.
- Iversen, V., C. Jackson, B. Kebede, A. Munro, and A. Verschoor. 2011. "Do Spouses Realise Cooperative Gains? Experimental Evidence from Rural Uganda." *World Development* 39(4):569–578.
- Jackson, C. 2012. "Introduction: Marriage, Gender Relations and Social Change." *The Journal of Development Studies* 48(1):1–9.
- Jackson, C. 2013. "Cooperative Conflicts and Gender Relations: Experimental Evidence from Southeast Uganda." *Feminist Economics* 19(4):25–47.
- Jackson, C., and R. Pearson. 2005. *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Javdani, S., N. Sadeh, and E. Verona. 2011. "Expanding our Lens: Female Pathways to Antisocial Behavior in Adolescence and Adulthood." *Clinical Psychology Review* 31(8):1324–1348.
- Jayaratne, T.E., N.G. Thomas, N.G., and M. Trautmann. 2003. "Intervention Program to Keep Girls in the Science Pipeline: Outcome Differences by Ethnic Status." *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 40(4):393–414.
- Johnson, A.T. 2014. "Performing and Defying Gender: An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Women Higher Education Administrators in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 42(6):835–850.
- Johnson, R.B., and A.J. Onwuegbuzie. 2004. "Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm whose Time has Come." *Educational Researcher* 33(7):14–26.
- Johnson-Hanks, J. 2006. *Uncertain Honor: Modern Motherhood in an African Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kabeer, N. 2005. "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal 1." *Gender and Development* 13(1):13–24.

- Kajubi, W.S. 1992. "Financing of Higher Education in Uganda." *Higher Education* 23(4):433–441.
- Kallio, K.P. 2008. "The Body as a Battlefield: Approaching Children's Politics." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90(3):285–297.
- Kane, E. 1995. *Seeing for Yourself: Research Handbook for Girls' Education in Africa*. Washington: World Bank.
- Karlan, D., and L.L. Linden. 2014. "Loose Knots: Strong versus Weak Commitments to Save for Education in Uganda." National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/>.
- Karnieli-Miller, O., R. Strier, and L. Pessach. 2009. "Power Relations In Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Health Research* 19(2):279–289.
- Kashima, E.S., and E.A. Hardie. 2000. "The Development and Validation of the Relational, Individual, and Collective Self-aspects (RIC) Scale." *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3(1):19–48.
- Kasozi, A.B.K. 2003. *University Education in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities for Reform*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Khavul, S., G.D. Bruton, and E. Wood. 2009. "Informal Family Business in Africa." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 33(6):1219–1238.
- Kiguwa, P. 2006. "Narratives of Gender and Identity Constructs." In *The Gender of Psychology*, edited by T. Shefer, F. Boonzaier, and P. Kiguwa, 12–28. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Kwesiga, J.C. 2002. *Women's Access to Higher Education in Africa: Uganda's Experience*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Kyotalengerire, A. 2012. "Prof. Namboozee, First Female Doctor in Eastern and Central Africa, Uganda, Golden Jubilee, 50 Years." *New Vision Uganda*, April 18:10. Available at <http://www.newvision.co.ug/> (accessed 6 May 2016).
- Lahelma, E., T. Palmu, and T. Gordon. 2000. "Intersecting Power Relations in Teachers' Experiences of being Sexualized or Harassed by Students." *Sexualities* 3(4):463–481.
- Leslie, D., and H. Mendick. 2013. *Debates in Mathematics Education*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Lewis, S.G. 2014. *Education in Africa*. Broomall: Mason Crest.
- Lloyd, C.B., and A.K. Blanc. 1996. "Children's Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Fathers, Mothers, and Others." *Population and Development Review* 22(2):265–298.
- Madhavan, S. 2004. "Fosterage Patterns in the Age of AIDS: Continuity and Change." *Social Science and Medicine* 58(7):1443–1454.
- Mamdani, M. 2007. *Scholars in the Marketplace*. Kampala: Fountain.
- Manderson, L., B. Ellen, and M. Nolwazi. 2016. "Fragility, Fluidity, and Resilience: Caregiving Configurations Three Decades into AIDS." *AIDS Care* 28(4):1–7.
- Marcucci, P., D.B. Johnstone, and M. Ngolovoi. 2008. "Higher Educational Cost-sharing, Dual-track Tuition Fees, and Higher Educational Access: The East African Experience." *Peabody Journal of Education* 83(1):101–116.
- Marra, A.R., L.R. Guastelli, C.M.P. De Araújo, J.L.S. Dos Santos, M.A.O. Filho, C.V. Silva, J.Y. Kawagoe, M.C. Neto, O.F.P. Dos Santos, and M.B. Edmond. 2011. "Positive

- Deviance: A Program for Sustained Improvement in Hand Hygiene Compliance." *American Journal of Infection Control* 39(1):1–5.
- Martin, C.L., R.A. Fabes, and L.D. Hanish. 2014. "Gendered Peer Relationships in Educational Contexts." *Advances in Child Development and Behavior* 47:151–187.
- McLaughlin, D., and W.G Tierney. 1993. *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and Processes of Educational Change*. New York: Routledge.
- Melin, L., M. Nordqvist, and P. Sharma. 2013. *The SAGE Handbook of Family Business*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Mertens, D.M. 2014. *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. Fourth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Mies, M. 1991. "Women's Research or Feminist Research? The Debate Surrounding Feminist Science and Methodology." In *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, edited by M.M. Fonow and J.A. Cook, 60–85 Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Minister, K. 1991. "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview." In *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by S.B. Gluck and D. Patai, 27–41. New York: Routledge.
- Mio, J. S., J.E. Trimble, P. Arredondo, H.E. Cheatham, and D. Sue (Eds.). 1999. *Key Words in Multicultural Interventions: A Dictionary*. Westport: Greenwood.
- Mirembe, R., and L. Davies. 2001. "Is Schooling a Risk? Gender, Power Relations, and School Culture in Uganda." *Gender and Education* 13(4):401–416.
- Mkhize, N. 2006. "Communal Personhood and the Principle of Autonomy: The Ethical Challenges." *Continuing Medical Education* 24(1):26–29.
- Moore, H.A. 2016. *Schooling Girls, Queuing Women: Multiple Standpoints and Ongoing Inequalities*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
- Mugisha Baine, E.M. 2010. "Privatisation of Higher Education in Uganda and the Global Gender Justice Ideal: Uneasy Bedfellows?" *Educational Review* 62(3):315–328.
- Munro, P. 1998. *Subject to Fiction: Women Teachers' Life History Narratives and the Cultural Politics of Resistance*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Narayan, U. 2004. "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Non-western Feminist." In *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and political Controversies*, edited by S. Harding, 213–224. New York: Routledge.
- Neema, C.M. 2015. *Women's Empowerment and Decision-making at the Household Level*. PhD dissertation, Tilburg University.
- Nelson, P. J. 2007. "Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Future of Development Cooperation." *World Development* 35(12):2041–2055.
- Nencel, L. 2005. "Feeling Gender Speak Inter-subjectivity and Fieldwork Practice with Women Who Prostitute in Lima, Peru." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 12(3):345–361.
- Nencel, L. 2010. "'Que viva la Minifalda!' Secretaries, Miniskirts and Daily Practices of Sexuality in the Public Sector in Lima." *Gender, Work and Organization* 17(1):69–90.
- Nencel, L. 2014. "Situating Reflexivity: Voices, Positionalities and Representations in Feminist Ethnographic Texts." *Women's Studies International Forum* 43:75–83.

- Nnaemeka, O. 2004. Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way. *Signs* 29(2):357-385.
- Nomaguchi, K.M., and A. DeMaris. 2013. "Nonmaternal Care's Association with Mother's Parenting Sensitivity: A Case of Self-selection Bias?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 75(3):760-777.
- Notermans, C. 2003. "Nomads in Kinship: Fosterage and the Self in Cameroon." *Focaal* 42:89-103.
- Notermans, C. 2008. "The Emotional World of Kinship Children's Experiences of Fosterage in East Cameroon." *Childhood* 15(3):355-377.
- Notermans, C. 2013. "Children Coming and Going: Fostering and Life-time Mobility in East Cameroon." In *Child Fostering in West Africa: New Perspectives on Theory and Practices*, edited by E. Alber, J. Martin, and C.D. Notermans, 155-176. Leiden: Brill.
- Oketch, M.O. 2007. "To Vocationalise or not to Vocationalise? Perspectives on Current Trends and Issues in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa." *International Journal of Educational Development* 27(2):220-234.
- Oni, S. 2013. *Challenges and Prospects In African Education Systems*. Bloomington, Indiana: Trafford.
- Otiso, K.M. 2006. *Culture and Customs of Uganda*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Papadopoulos, L. 2010. *Sexualisation of Young People Review*. Available at <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10738/1/sexualisation-young-people.pdf> (accessed 6 April 2013).
- Parikh, S.A. 2007. "The Political Economy of Marriage and HIV: The ABC Approach, 'Safe' Infidelity, and Managing Moral Risk in Uganda." *American Journal of Public Health* 97(7):1198-1208.
- Parsons, T. 2015. "The School Class as a Social System: Reading 3." In *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education*, edited by J.H. Ballantine and J.Z. Spade, 35-39. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Phillipson, R. 2003. *English-only Europe? Challenging Language Policy*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Pollack, E. 2013. "Why Are There Still So Few Women in Science?" *New York Times* October 3.
- Popper, K.R. 1972. *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Revised edition. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Pruitt, D.G. 2013. *Negotiation Behavior*. Kindle edition. New York: Academic Press (Elsevier).
- Ratele, K., N. Duncan, D. Hook, N. Mkhize, P. Kiguwa, and A. Collins. 2004. *Self, Community and Psychology*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports. 2014. *Teachers Issues in Uganda: A Shared Vision for an Effective Teachers Policy*. Dakar: UNESCO - IIEP Pôle de Dakar.
- Savin-Baden, M., and L.V. Niekerk. 2007. "Narrative Inquiry: Theory and Practice." *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 31(3):459-472.
- Schunk, D.H. 2001. "Self-efficacy: Educational Aspects." In *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, edited by J.D. Wright, 13820-13822. Oxford:

- Elsevier. Available at <https://www.mysciencework.com/publication/show/selfefficacy-educational-aspects-bb1c2624?search=1> (accessed 11 January 2017).
- Schutt, R.K. 2011. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Schwarzer, R. (Eds.). 2014. *Self-efficacy: Thought Control of Action*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Sedikides, C., and M.B. Brewer. 2015. "Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self: Partners, Opponents or Strangers?" In *Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self*, edited by C. Sedikides and M.B. Brewer, 1–4. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Sen, A. 1987. *Gender and Cooperative Conflicts*. Helsinki: World Institute for Development Economics Research.
- Shaw, A.K., and D.E. Stanton. 2012. "Leaks in the Pipeline: Separating Demographic Inertia from Ongoing Gender Differences in Academia." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 279(1743):3736–3741.
- Sheltzer, J. M. and J.C. Smith. 2014. "Elite Male Faculty in the Life Sciences Employ Fewer Women." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(28):10107–10112.
- Shor, I. 2012. *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sifuna, D.N. 2006. "A Review of Major Obstacles to Women's Participation in Higher Education in Kenya." *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* 11(1):85–105.
- Silverman, D. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Fourth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Sorrentino, R.M., D. Cohen, J.M. Olson, and M.P. Zanna. 2009. *Culture and Social Behavior: The Ontario Symposium*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Thompson, P. 2000. *Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Third edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tichenor, V. 2005. "Maintaining Men's Dominance: Negotiating Identity and Power When She Earns More." *Sex Roles* 53(3/4):191–205.
- Ting-toomey, S., and A. Kurogi. 1998. "Facework Competence in Intercultural Conflict: An Updated Face-negotiation Theory." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 22(2):187–225.
- Tripp, A.M. 2012. *Women and Politics in Uganda*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Tukundane, C., J. Zeelen, A. Minnaert, and P. Kanyandago. 2014. "'I Felt Very Bad, I Had Self-rejection': Narratives of Exclusion and Marginalisation among Early School Leavers in Uganda." *Journal of Youth Studies* 17(4):475–491.
- Tyson, L. 2014. *Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide*. Third edition. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Utas, M. 2005. "Victimcy, Girlfriending, Soldiering: Tactic Agency in a Young Woman's Social Navigation of the Liberian War Zone." *Anthropological Quarterly* 78(2):403–430.
- Välimäki, S., A.M. Lämsä, and M. Hiillos. 2009. "The Spouse of the Female Manager: Role and Influence on the Woman's Career." *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 24(8):596–614.

- Van Anders, S.M. 2004. "Why the Academic Pipeline Leaks: Fewer Men Than Women Perceive Barriers to Becoming Professors." *Sex Roles* 51(9/10):511-521.
- Van den Brink, M. 2010. *Behind the Scenes of Science: Gender Practices in the Recruitment and Selection of Professors in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Wang, V., 2014. "Tracing Gender Differences in Parliamentary Debates: A Growth Curve Analysis of Ugandan MPs' Activity Levels in Plenary Sessions, 1998-2008." *Representation* 50(3):365-377.
- Whittemore, R.D., L.L. Langness, and P. Koegel. 1986. "The Life History Approach to Mental Retardation." In *Culture and Retardation: Life Histories of Mildly Mentally Retarded Persons in American Society*, edited by L.L. Langness and H.G. Levine, 1-18. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Wilkinson, L.C., and C.B. Marrett. 2013. *Gender Influences in Classroom Interaction*. Revised edition. Orlando: Academic Press.
- Willemse, K. 2007. *One Foot in Heaven: Narratives on Gender and Islam in Darfur, West-Sudan*. Leiden: Brill.
- Willemsen, L.W., and J. DeJaeghere. 2015. "Learning to Negotiate Sexual Relationships: A Girls' School in Tanzania as a Restrictive and Agentic Site." *Gender and Education* 27(2):183-197.
- Yin, R.K. 2010. *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: Guilford.
- Zoogah, D.B., M.W. Peng, and H. Woldu. 2015. "Institutions, Resources, and Organizational Effectiveness in Africa." *Academy of Management Perspectives* 29(1):7-31.

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Identity (Pseudonym)	Age range	Position	Marital Status	Other comments
Atwari	40s	Lecturer and Head of Department	Single mother and has one child	Parents separated and she grew with the father and step mom.
Miina	30s	Lecturer and Ag Head of Department	Single	Monogamous parents and civil servants interviewed in her office
Niabu	40s	Senior Lecturer Computer Sciences	Married and two children	Orphaned and brought up by single mother
Memwasa	30s	Lecturer business administration	Married and two children	Orphaned and brought up by single mother
Desire	30s	Lecturer and Head of Department	Single	Monogamous parents and both were civil servants
Tessy	20s	Lecturer	Single	Monogamous parents. Got BA in medicine and Criminal Justice
Timera	50s	Senior Lecturer and Dean of faculty	Married, has two children	Orphaned and brought up by single mother
Didam	30s	Assistant Lecturer -School of Adult Education and	Married , has two children	Monogamous parents and civil servants
Thaimara	60s	Deputy Registrar	Married and number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Lucasia	30s	Assistant Lecturer - Faculty of Social Sciences	Married, has two children	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Annetta	40s	Lecturer – Gender Studies	Married, has two children	Polygamous family but orphaned and brought up by step mother
Rakia	50s	Senior Lecturer and Dean of Faculty	Married, has four children	Monogamous parents both civil servants. Political exiles, brought up by the clan and paternal relatives
Stima	40s	Lecturer Gender studies	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents. The father was a veterinary officer and mother was a teacher
Severina	40s	Lecturer	Married, number of children not specified	Orphaned and brought up single mother
Chaima	40s	Senior Lecturer and programme Coordinator	Single	Refugee from Sudan and lost both parents and brought up by missionaries in Uganda
Nyeye	40s	Senior Lecturer Associate Dean	Single	Harriet comes from a monogamous Christian family in which seven of the nine siblings

Identity (Pseudonym)	Age range	Position	Marital Status	Other comments
Donge	40s	Assistant Personnel Officer	Married, has two children	were girls. Monogamous parents, orphaned and brought up by step mother
Hapiris	60s	Associate Professor	Married, number of children not specified	Polygamous father and peasant. Orphaned and brought up by mother and help of community.
Nella	40s	Lecturer	Nun	Monogamous parents. Father was civil servant and mother peasant
Adikini	30s	Gender Officer	Married, has two children	Polygamous family, separated parents and brought up by different step mothers
Gukanu	60s	Associate Professor	Married, has two children	Monogamous parents both civil servants. Father was Anglican priest and mother was housewife
Falley	40s	Lecturer	Married, number of children not specified	Polygamous family- parents separated and brought up by step mothers among 50 children
Enoka	20s	Assistant Lecturer	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both peasant
Kenzie	30s	Assistant Lecturer	Single	Monogamous parents father was a teacher and mother a peasant
Sakira	50s	Senior Lecturer and Head of Department	Single	Monogamous parents both civil servants. Orphaned and brought up by mother and relatives
Lamika	30s	Assistant Lecturer	Married, one child	Monogamous parents both peasants
Etura	50s	Senior Lecturer and Dean of Faculty	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Safina	50s	Lecturer	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Marici	40s	Lecturer	Single	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Aklaus	50s	Lecturer	Married, number of children not specified	Polygamous family and peasants

Identity (Pseudonym)	Age range	Position	Marital Status	Other comments
Asema	50s	Senior Lecturer	Married, five children	Comes from a monogamous Christian family, born in a family of ten of which three of them are girls and seven were boys Monogamous parents both civil servants.
Tarika	30s	Lecturer and Head of Department	Married, has two children	
Siika	40s	Lecturer and Director	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both civil servants. Orphaned and brought up by paternal aunt
Nulla	30s	Lecturer	Married, has three children	Polygamous family
Leila	40s	Director Human Resources	Married, number of children not specified	Monogamous parents both peasants
Leonia	30s	Assistant Lecturer	Separated, has two children	Monogamous parents father was civil servant and mother, housewife
Atweria	40s	Lecturer and Head of Department	Married, has two children	Monogamous parents
Kameo	50s	Dean of Students	Married, number of children not specified	From a monogamous family and first born of her parents.
Cirila	40s	Senior Lecturer and Dean of Faculty	Nun	Monogamous parents father was civil servant and mother, housewife
Lamego	50s	Professor	Married, has two children	Monogamous parents father was civil servant and mother, housewife
Yeipima	20s	Teaching Assist	Single	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Oprah	60s	Associate Prof	Nun	Born and raised in a monogamous Christian family
Zepha	20s	Teaching Assist	Married, has four children	Monogamous parents father was civil servant and mother, housewife
Kevina	30s	Legal Officer	Single	Monogamous parents both civil servants
Ripara	30s	Lecturer and Director	Married, has two children	Monogamous parents father was civil servant and mother, housewife
Seema	50s	Lecturer	Single	From Scotland, monogamous family
Bevra	30s	Lecturer	Married and has two children	Born in monogamous family, studies primary school in Tanzania

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Draru Mary Cecilia, PhD, is an educationist with a great passion for the education of women in Africa. She holds two diplomas, one in education and another in educational planning and management from the Institute of Teacher Education – Kyambogo (ITEK). While training as a grade five secondary school teacher in the National Teachers College-Muni (NTC) (1992-1994), her research focused on how girls manage to negotiate early marriage to remain in school and how the culture of dowry influences girls' resilience throughout their primary school education. After teacher training, Draru worked as a secondary school teacher in Sacred Heart Senior School in Gulu, Uganda (1994 to 1997), after which she relocated to Italy as a youth coordinator in the Milan diocese, focusing especially on young African women trafficked to Italy as sex slaves. She returned to Uganda (1999) to teach at secondary school, and to take her bachelor's degree at Kyambogo University (2003), where she built on her research to include the role of secondary schools in building women's capacity for leadership in Uganda. She was employed at Uganda Martyrs University as an Executive Secretary in the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies (2003) before enrolling in postgraduate studies. Her research for her master's degree in Development Studies (2007) examined the role of local governments in mainstreaming gender in sub-county and parish levels. While working as a lecturer and associate director of the Institute of Ethics and Development Studies (2008-2012) at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), Draru started her PhD, using extensive ethnographic fieldwork in four Ugandan universities to focus on the education pathways of female academics and administrators. From 2011 onward, Draru combined teaching and administration at UMU with her PhD Studies and was promoted to the top management position of Dean of Students (2016). In 2017, she was chosen as Executive Director of the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) and will relocate to Scranton, Pennsylvania (USA) to take up this position, effective January 2018.



The vast body of literature regarding girls' lack of access to and completion of education careers casts a grim picture in part because the stories of women with successful education trajectories are kept in the dark. Contextual social and economic circumstances in the family, especially, have been perceived as major obstacles to women's education in Africa. 'Education Pathways' unveils the successful education trajectory of women through the personal narratives of 47 female academics and administrators in four Ugandan universities. The study, which is based on extensive and rich field experience, concludes that the policy strategies that governments in Africa are grappling with in relation to girls' education should take into account the stories and the experiences of women with successful education trajectories. My research shows that the contextual circumstances that lead to girls dropping out of the mainstream education system may not differ radically from those who persist in school. What differs are the strategies that individual women must constantly employ to negotiate and manoeuvre around social and economic obstacles in the family and at school. My hope is that this study will underscore the critical importance of accentuating the education trajectory of women who succeed in the education cycle and who find employment as academics and as senior administrators in any university system.



The vast body of literature regarding girls' lack of access to and completion of education careers casts a grim picture in part because the stories of women with successful education trajectories are kept in the dark. Contextual social and economic circumstances in the family, especially, have been perceived as major obstacles to women's education in Africa. 'Education

Pathways' unveils the successful education trajectory of women through the personal narratives of 47 female academics and administrators in four Ugandan universities. The study, which is based on extensive and rich field experience, concludes that the policy strategies that governments in Africa are grappling with in relation to girls' education should take into account the stories and the experiences of women with successful education trajectories. My research shows that the contextual circumstances that lead to girls dropping out of the mainstream education system may not differ radically from those who persist in school. What differs are the strategies that individual women must constantly employ to negotiate and manoeuvre around social and economic obstacles in the family and at school. My hope is that this study will underscore the critical importance of accentuating the education trajectory of women who succeed in the education cycle and who find employment as academics and as senior administrators in any university system.