SOCIAL (IN)JUSTICE AND GENDER:

The COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to study the themes of social justice in the reporting of the Ugandan newspaper *New Vision* about women during the COVID-19 lockdown. The study focuses on the challenges faced by women during the lockdown, the representations of women in *New Vision*'s reporting, as well as how these issues reflect the themes of social justice. The theoretical background is formed by the theory of the dimensions of social justice by Nancy Fraser as well as the issues raised by post-colonial feminists. The context of Uganda is also presented as background. The research data consists of selected articles from the *New Vision* within the time frame of six months from the beginning of the lockdown. The research data is analyzed with content analysis and discourse analysis and the findings are reflected against Nancy Fraser's dimensions of social justice through discussion. The analysis identified four themes of challenges faced by women during the lockdown: girls' issues, sexual and reproductive health, violence and access to justice, as well as paid and domestic work. The representations of women in the research data identified the roles and responsibilities of women as mainly mothers and caretakers of the home, their simultaneously active agency and passive position as receivers in the face of the crisis, and established mainly men and the prevailing conditions as guilty for the women's struggles during the pandemic. The aforementioned issues reflected all three dimensions of Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice: economic, cultural and political injustice. The study sheds light on the discourses of one major Ugandan newspaper about the challenges and representations of women during the COVID-19 lockdown and illustrates the presence of varying and often overlapping forms of injustice that women may be subjected to. No generalizations can be drawn from the study, but it offers an interesting basis for further research on a topic which has not been widely studied before.

Keywords Social justice, postcolonial feminism, Uganda, women, COVID-19

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Tiivistelmä

Tämän gradun tarkoitus on tutkia sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden teemoja ugandalaisen *New Vision* -sanomalehden kirjoituksissa naisista COVID-19 -lockdownin kontekstissa. Tutkimus keskittyy naisten lockdownin aikana kohtaamiin haasteisiin, *New Visionin* kirjoituksissa ilmeneviin representaatioihin naisista, sekä siihen miten nämä aiheet heijastelevat sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden teemoja. Tutkimuksen teoreettisen taustan muodostaa Nancy Fraserin teoria sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden dimensioista sekä joidenkin post-kolonialististen feministien näkemykset. Myös Ugandan kontekstia on avattu taustoitukseksi. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu valituista *New Visionista* kerätyistä artikkeleista puolen vuoden ajalta lockdownin alkamisesta. Aineisto analysoidaan sisällönanalyysilla ja diskurssianalyysilla, ja tuloksia peilataan Nancy Fraserin sosiaalisen oikeudenmukaisuuden teoriaan pohdinnan avulla. Analyysi eritteli neljä teemaa koskien naisten kohtaamia haasteita lockdownin aikana: tyttöjä koskevat haasteet, seksuaali- ja lisääntymisterveys, väkivalta ja pääsy oikeuden piiriin, sekä palkka- ja kotityö. Naisia koskevien representaatioiden osalta analyysi eritteli naisille osoitettuja rooleja ja vastuita ensisijaisesti äiteinä ja kodista huolehtijoina, heidän samanaikaisesti aktiivista toimijuuttaan ja passiivista rooliaan kriisin aikana, sekä miesten ja vallitsevien olosuhteiden osuutta syypäinä naisten kohtaamiin ongelmiin. Nämä teemat peilasivat jokaista Nancy Fraserin teorian dimensiota: taloudellista, kulttuurista ja poliittista epäoikeudenmukaisuutta. Tutkimus valottaa yhden Ugandan tärkeimmän sanomalehden diskursseja naisten kohtaamista haasteita ja heistä esitetyistä representaatioista COVID-19 -pandemian aikana sekä havainnollistaa naisia koskevien moninaisten, usein päällekkäisten epäoikeudenmukaisuuden muotojen olemassaoloa. Tutkimuksen perusteella ei voida tehdä yleistyksiä, mutta se tarjoaa mielenkiintoisen pohjan lisätutkimuksille aiheesta, josta ei juuri ole tehty aiempaa tutkimusta.

Asiasanat Sosiaalinen oikeudenmukaisuus, postkoloniaali feminismi, Uganda, naiset, COVID-19
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto
Muita tietoja

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1 INTRODUCTION

In spring 2020 the world was halted by a global pandemic of a novel coronavirus-borne respiratory disease, called the COVID-19 due to having been detected for the first time in late 2019. To contain the unknown virus that spread rapidly from its origin of detection in China, several countries around the world took measures such as closing national borders, restricting the movement of people, closing non-essential businesses and imposing curfews, among others. These measures soon became publicly known as a "lockdown". As defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, a lockdown means "an official order to control the movement of people or vehicles because of a dangerous situation" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2020), although the specific definition as well as the measures related to a lockdown can vary between countries and situations. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, different types of lockdowns have been utilized for example to contain the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone (Peak et al., 2018), during the hunt for the Boston marathon bomber in the USA (Bump, 2013), and after the terrorist attacks in France and Belgium by the Islamic State and the 9/11 in the United States (Chakrabarti, 2020).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the themes of social justice in relation to challenges faced by women in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda. The reason to focus on gender and more specifically on women is the limited scope of the research: the pandemic has had several interesting impacts on social justice, but the analysis would be too broad if all of them were to be investigated. Moreover, the gender perspective already includes several different aspects in itself, such as domestic violence, sexual and reproductive health, and the issue of paid and domestic work, among others. In this sense this topic has a sufficient amount but not too much content to be explored for the purpose of this type of study. Uganda presents an interesting context for a case study due to its location in the Global South and the diverse realities in which Ugandan women live, as discussed in the following chapters. The research is conducted as a media research studying newspaper articles from one of the main newspapers in Uganda, the *New Vision*, and analyzing the found articles through content analysis and discourse analysis.

The lockdown also offers an interesting context of study, since strict lockdowns such as the ones imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic disrupt the normal life and functioning of a society in several ways. It is widely acknowledged that in crisis and disaster situations those

who suffer the most tend to be the vulnerable groups, including the poor, the disabled, migrants and refugees, and socially disadvantaged groups (for example Donner & Rodriguez, 2011; Hadjimichalis, 2011). Although women can't be considered a homogenous group and as such can't be labeled essentially vulnerable, it should be noted that crisis situations might have differing effects in relation to gender. For example, Donner and Rodriguez (2011) note that traditional gender roles and the fact that in general women tend to be poorer than men may have an impact on their vulnerability. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) defines gender as the "characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed", as opposed to biological sex, and including "learned behavior that makes up gender identity and determines gender roles" (WHO, 2021). The WHO (2021) also acknowledges that gender can have an impact on the risks that an individual faces and how their needs are met by the institutions in the society.

Gendered vulnerabilities intertwine with poverty, which creates a need for studies that focus on the effects of a lockdown in poorer regions of the world such as the Global South. This further directs the focus of this study to Uganda. Since epidemics and disease outbreaks such as Ebola and the Marburg virus have been fairly common in regions such as Africa (Biryabarema, 2020), earlier experience and research also exist on harsh disease control measures and their often gender-specific consequences. For example in the case of lockdowns caused by Ebola in Africa, some gendered difficulties included accessing contraceptives, increase of unintended and teenage pregnancies due to the closure of schools, and a sharp rise in gender-based and sexual violence at home and in the communities (Davies & Bennett, 2016; Parkes et al., 2020). For clarity, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines gender-based violence (GBV) as "harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender" (UNHCR, N/A).

However, the cases of violence during the Ebola outbreak were rarely processed since priority was given to emergency response, and several healthcare centers were unwilling to receive victims of gender-based or sexual violence due to fear of the personnel getting infected (John et al., 2020). Reporting of such incidents might also be more challenging in situations of lockdown and reduced mobility in a country where not all households have phones or Internet access: for example in the case of Uganda, the Internet penetration rate of the country stood only at 36.8% in 2018 (UBOS Ugandan Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

In general, violence seems to be a rather significant consequence of any strict lockdown. Although crisis-related mortality rates tend to be higher for men, the risk of suffering from gender-based violence increases for women (Guidorzi, 2020). At the time of writing this study, the UN Women has also paid attention to the increasing GBV caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns by launching a public campaign for raising awareness, labeling the rise in violence as "the shadow pandemic" (UN Women, 2020). Guidorzi (2020) notes that this development might be more severe in the Global South due to already existing gender inequalities, economic struggles and challenges related to protective infrastructure, such as legal systems and healthcare. Moreover, the fear over girls' and women's security in relation to sexual abuse outside of the house might result in their stronger confinement in their homes compared to men, who might have more freedom to roam around (Parkes et al., 2020). This type of confinement can expose the victims of violence to perpetrators at home, not to mention the potential impacts it can have on their mental health and freedom of movement. As Kay (2020) puts it, "home" is not always a place of safety and love for everyone.

The closure of schools due to a crisis and the related demand for more childcare might cause gender imbalances in relation to paid work and home duties, since the responsibility for childcare often tends to rest more heavily on women (Alon et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Méndenez et al., 2015). In addition to childcare and other informal care work, women are often in charge of most of the formal care work as well (John et al., 2020), which can result in even more difficulties in balancing between childcare and working life and expose women disproportionately to health risks during epidemics and lockdowns. Reduction of paid work can obviously cause financial difficulties, and as Copley et al. (2020) and Ssali (2020) note, the most affected by lockdown-induced job losses are informal and service sector workers, many of whom are women. Since economic struggles may already force some women to engage in transactional sex (Ninsiima et al., 2018), a strict lockdown is likely to increase this phenomenon. Moreover, due to closure of schools and the aforementioned financial difficulties some children might face the threat of child marriages when their families seek to reduce expenditure or gain income to survive (Guidorzi, 2020). These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 in relation to the gender-specific challenges in Uganda.

Recommendations and guidelines on how to handle health-related crises and possible related lockdowns might not consider sufficiently the existing gender inequalities in a given context, as argued by Davies and Bennett (2016) in case of recommendations concerning the Zika virus and how to avoid its consequences on pre-born babies. In this case, the WHO advised

women to avoid or delay pregnancy and not to travel to areas affected by the virus, while a public health adviser in Brazil claimed that in one of the worst affected areas of the country the majority of women use contraceptives to avoid pregnancy. However, these notions presupposed that women have access to contraceptives, sufficient information on sexual and reproductive health and real possibility to decline sexual intercourse or engage in it safely, which was not true in the aforementioned cases. According to Davies and Bennett (2016), this shows a lack of adequately addressing or recognizing the real options that many, especially poor, women possess regarding their lives.

Thus the gendered nature of the impacts of crises and lockdowns might not be sufficiently acknowledged on the decision-making level. Since there are already gender-specific challenges in Uganda considering participation in decision-making (Guma, 2015; Ndidde et al., 2020), discussed later in Chapter 3, a strict lockdown might complicate these matters even further. Moreover, Ugandan post-colonial researchers such as Sylvia Tamale (2000, 2018) note that the gendered social structures of today should always be interpreted in the light of historical and social contexts, such as the period of colonialism.

At the time of writing this study, some evidence of the gender-specific impacts of the COVID-19 lockdown already exist from Uganda as well. Ssali's (2020) research article argues that the lockdown has disrupted antenatal and family planning services which were not considered as emergency services that could keep running, possibly increased maternal mortality through transport restrictions, and similar to the case of Ebola, increased domestic and sexual violence, early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Ssali (2020) further notes the rural/urban inequalities in relation to school closure: in rural areas children have less access to online and distance learning than in the cities, which can cause more difficulties for rural children to continue studying during the lockdown.

Moreover, a heavier burden of domestic work tends to fall on girls, and long walking distances for example to collect water or sell products for income can expose them to sexual exploitation (Ssali, 2020). Since the lockdown has affected the formal justice system in that criminal justice has been prioritized over civil justice within which many women's issues are situated, or the justice institutions have been closed altogether, access to justice services has significantly reduced (Ssali, 2020). Along with the eroding of traditional social structures such as the family as the context for making claims of justice (Porter, 2015b), the closure of formal justice institutions may leave women without platform to seek justice.

In light of the discussion above, during crisis situations women can face challenges such as sexual and domestic violence, unwanted and teenage pregnancies, limited access to justice and contraceptives, child marriage, increased childcare burden and difficulties to balance between domestic and paid work. These issues are used in this study as a basis for drawing a code list for the first phase of the analysis and presentation of the research data, introduced in Chapter 4. The aforementioned notions also suggest that the earlier experience of crises and lockdowns predicts well the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well.

Obviously, a lockdown that disrupts the normal functioning of a society also has consequences regardless of gender. For example in the case of COVID-19 in Uganda, some general challenges already identified are loss of income and related economic stress, disruption of education which can result in children entering working life at a young age, overall restricted access to healthcare, family tensions, food insecurity, restrictions on mobility on a larger scale, and exaggerated police violence for allegedly breaking the rules and restrictions set to control the epidemic (Parkes et al., 2020). In authoritarian countries such as Uganda there is also a fear that the lockdown can be used for political purposes, restricting freedoms or violating human rights, and that people with connections or money to bribe can avoid quarantine or the consequences of breaking the rules (Akumu, 2020). In general, the current Ugandan government is already facing criticism for simply shutting down the country without offering alternative solutions to combat the problems caused by halted public transport, curfews and the closure of businesses (Akumu, 2020).

Most previous research on the gender-specific challenges during (health-related) crises globally and in Africa focuses on health and medicine and less on the social justice aspect of the issue. Social justice is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, focusing especially on the notions of Nancy Fraser. Moreover, there is little research about this issue from Uganda. For example, at the time of writing this study the existing research on gender issues and COVID-19 in the country only includes studies on practices of midwives (Pallangyo et al., 2020), the vulnerable position of sex workers (Adebisi et al., 2020), domestic violence (JohnBosco & Ggoobi, 2020), and mentions of women's issues in relation to refugees (Bukuluki et al., 2020). Therefore this study contributes to understanding crises from a social justice perspective and adds to the existing small body of knowledge about the lockdown in Uganda. The topicality of the current COVID-19 pandemic adds more importance on the research on social justice and gender in the context of a crisis, since this type of study could aid in avoiding or preparing for certain challenges in case of future crises.

The research problem of the study reads as follows: **what kinds of discourses about the themes of social justice are present in *New Vision*'s reporting about women during the COVID-19 lockdown?** To answer the research problem, the following research questions are analyzed in two stages, in which the first two questions form an empirical basis for the discussion on the third:

- What kinds of themes emerge in the research data around the challenges faced by women during the COVID-19 lockdown?
- What kinds of representations of women are present in the research data?
- How do the findings from the analysis reflect the dimensions of social justice?

The thesis begins with introducing the theoretical background of the study, namely social justice, and focuses especially on the interpretations of Nancy Fraser. She introduces the theory of parity of participation and the three dimensions of social justice, namely maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation (Fraser, 2007). Fraser's theory is complemented by the work of some post-colonial feminists to sensitize the study of gender in the Third World when the researcher is a white Western female. The third chapter offers a more detailed description of Uganda, including the political and social situation in the country, specific gender issues present in Ugandan society, as well as a description of the type of lockdown utilized by the government to contain the COVID-19 epidemic. The fourth chapter presents the methodology and research data of the study as well as a short description of the newspaper utilized in the study and the position of newspaper media in Uganda.

Chapters 5 and 6 present the results of the analysis in light of the first two research questions. The fifth chapter uses abductive content analysis to present more in detail the content of the research data by formulating common themes around the challenges faced by women during the COVID-19 lockdown. The sixth chapter elaborates on the representations of women in the research data through critical discourse analysis and a tool called the naming of social actors, exploring the roles and responsibilities, agency and the issue of guilt in *New Vision*'s representations of women. These two chapters do not utilize the theories of social justice, since this discussion takes place in Chapter 7, which explores the findings of the preceding analysis in light of Nancy Fraser's conceptualization of social justice. Finally, the analysis and discussion chapters are followed by a short conclusion in Chapter 8. Since it is important to first understand the general background before moving on to details, the next chapter begins with introducing the concept of social justice.

2 SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social justice is a rather broad and vague concept, and over the years since the term first emerged several academics have presented their interpretations on its meaning, principles and basic components. Therefore several interpretations and definitions of the term exist instead of a single coherent one. The first section of this chapter discusses shortly some of the main notions and theorists within the field of social justice to offer an overview of the relevant theories. The second section presents more in detail the theory of Nancy Fraser, which is the theoretical tool utilized in this study. The final section complements Fraser's notions by discussing the work of some post-colonial feminists and further considers the writer's position as a white Western woman studying gender issues in a Third World context.

2.1 Brief overview

On a more general level the term *justice* is often divided into three categories: distributive justice, which concerns the distribution of resources in a society; procedural justice, which means the fairness and transparency of the decision-making process; and retributive justice, which entails sanctions and compensations for injustice (Tyler et al., 2019). Traditionally, social justice has been situated within distributive justice, since it has been understood to deal with the distribution of the good and bad in a society and the question of who is included in this distribution (Miller, 1999). One of the pioneers of social justice since the 1970's, John Rawls, shares this understanding.

According to Rawls (2009), social justice is the most important virtue of all social institutions and it targets the basic structure of a society, in other words how the social institutions of a society distribute resources. These resources, as formulated by Rawls (2009), include so-called *social primary goods*: basic rights and freedoms, social bases of self-respect, economic prospects, as well as social positions of power and opportunities. The members of a society decide on the principles of social justice and the distribution of the named resources through social collaboration, starting from the *original position*, which is the current state of affairs in which no one knows their position in the society, and as a result everyone participates in formulating the principles of social justice from the same position (Rawls, 2009).

However, as Miller (1999) argues, general concepts of justice such as the one formulated by Rawls and many early theorists of social justice can be problematic. He notes that general theories might offer little practical guidance in varying situations, and that according to individual or societal and cultural differences disagreements may arise in what is seen as a just outcome or process (Miller, 1999). He proposes that theories of social justice should instead be formulated in such a way that they can be applied to different cases.

This type of a theory is offered by another famous theorist in the field of social justice, Amartya Sen. Sen (2009) sees justice as freedom, in other words the freedom of individuals to make choices on things that they perceive important in a society. Freedom translates to *capabilities*: what people can be or do in order to have more freedom to live the kind of life they want to live (Robeyns, 2005). Sen's theory, called the *capability approach* (Sen, 2009), includes a notion of means and ends. Means such as a bicycle are meaningful to individuals for their characteristics since they allow the individuals to achieve certain ends, such as mobility, and only the ends have intrinsic value (Robeyns, 2005). Thus Sen (2009) does not agree with Rawls's notions on social primary goods, which he sees merely as means and not as ends themselves.

Sen's theory has been criticized for being more of a tool to evaluate situations and processes of wellbeing rather than a theory of social justice (Robeyns, 2005) as well as not being very practical outside the academic world (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Nevertheless, Sen's theory is worth mentioning for its significance within the field of social justice, since it has been used as a basis for the definition of social development by the United Nations Development Program: social development is defined as "a process of enlarging people's choices" (United Nations, 1990, p. 1).

The aforementioned theories are rather descriptive and tend to focus more on formulating the model of a just society. In contrast, Nancy Fraser takes a more proactive standpoint by drawing theoretical models that can be utilized to change and challenge the prevailing conditions which create injustice, such as social institutions and dominant discourses (Fraser et al., 2004; Fraser & Naples, 2004). She analyzes contemporary social developments from the intersection of critical theory, feminist theory and post-structuralism (Fraser et al., 2004). Fraser proposes a three-dimensional theory of social justice consisting of the economic, cultural and political dimensions of justice and their corresponding forms of injustice labeled

maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation, respectively (Fraser, 2007a). Fraser's theory is explored in more detail in the next section.

2.2 Nancy Fraser: maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation

The cornerstone of Nancy Fraser's (2007a) theory of social justice is the *parity of participation*, which means that every member of a society should possess an equal opportunity to participate in social life and interaction. Fraser herself places her theory within Sen's capability theory in that parity of participation concerns the capability to act in a society, although she points out the difference that her theory focuses on interaction rather than the individual capacity to function (Chhachhi, 2011). Thus, her key question reads as formulated in an interview with Dahl, Stoltz and Willing: "how fair or unfair are the terms of interaction that are institutionalized in a society?" (Fraser et al., 2004, p. 378).

There are three kinds of institutionalized obstacles that prevent some individuals from participating equally in a society: first, economic structures can limit the individual's access to resources, creating the obstacle of *maldistribution*; second, cultural and institutionalized hierarchies do not recognize the individual's position in the society, leading to *misrecognition*; and third, the individual might be excluded from the community in decision-making and claims of social justice, resulting in *misrepresentation* (Fraser, 2007a; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). These three concepts form the economic (maldistribution), cultural (misrecognition) and political (misrepresentation) dimensions of social (in)justice (Fraser, 2007a). This model suits to recognize all types of social differentiation, including injustice arising from class, religion, "race", sexuality or ethnicity (Fraser, 2013).

In Fraser's (2008) view, maldistribution can include injustices such as exploitation, deprivation or economic marginalization, while misrecognition entails injustices like disrespect, cultural domination and non-recognition. Originally, Fraser's theory only included these two forms of justice. When formulating this theory she challenged the prevailing view of the aforementioned two as opposing concepts, proposing that they should rather be considered together since neither form of injustice can be resolved without the other (Fraser, 2007a, 2008, 2013). Fraser (2008) argues that issues of maldistribution are more related to Marxist understanding of class, while issues of misrecognition resonate more with Weberian notions of status, but neither paradigm alone is sufficient in erasing injustice

in cases where the roots of the injustice are simultaneously traced to both economic and cultural structures.

Fraser later added misrepresentation in her theory in order to better incorporate injustices arising from political organization. To Fraser (2007a), misrepresentation is of special importance, since it is the precondition of maldistribution and misrecognition. Misrepresentation itself contains three forms of injustice: the ordinary-political misrepresentation, misframing and the politics of framing (Fraser, 2007a). The ordinary-political misrepresentation is the most common of the three and concerns the question of who is included in or excluded from the community in which claims of justice take place, and how these claims are formulated and stated (Fraser, 2007a). According to Tikly and Barrett (2011), misframing concerns the way in which the borders of a society are drawn, including the question if this way of bordering or framing excludes some social groups from participation. Misframing is important, since it can be the source of inequalities or injustice itself, which Fraser (2007a) illustrates with an example.

She criticizes the common understanding that social justice takes place in limited societies, often perceived as national territories, a thought she calls the Keynesian-Westphalian frame (Fraser, 2007a). Instead she argues that in a globalizing world the impacts of social justice or injustice cross the national borders, generating the need to reframe the context in which social justice takes place (Fraser, 2007a). This leads to a thought of a border-crossing *transnational public sphere* in which different types of discourses take place (Fraser, 2007b). This leads to the last dimension within political justice, the politics of framing, which argues that the aforementioned framing process needs to be democratic and just in terms of who is included in the process and how the frame is drawn (Fraser, 2007a). However, this dimension concerns a larger scope than that of this study and thus is not introduced further.

Moreover, Fraser (2010) poses the question of who is the subject of justice, since a wrong way of framing the issue could wrongly include or exclude some people from the scope of justice. To overcome the question of "who" she proposes the *all-subjected principle*, in which "all those who are jointly subject to a given governance structure have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it" (Fraser, 2010, pp. 292–293). Thus according to Fraser et al. (2004) the principal subject of justice is the individual rather than a social group. Fraser (2010) further argues that the said governance structures set the rules for the social interaction of its subjects, and that the relation between the two is political in nature. This

goes further from the thought that social justice only concerns those living within the boundaries of a certain nation, as argued by the Keynesian-Westphalian frame, or everyone globally, in which case the scope may be too broad to be relevant (Fraser, 2010).

In light of the aforementioned notions, Fraser seeks a more comprehensive understanding of social justice which would better entail the different causes and contexts of injustice. To sum up, her main point is the notion of parity of participation in social interaction as the basis of justice, blocked by maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation. This interaction takes place in transnational public spheres crossing national borders, in which the subjects of justice are all those subjected to a certain governance structure. In the case of this study, the interaction takes place in Uganda in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown. Although the model is detailed and comprehensive, it does not go without criticism. For example, Fraser's theory has been criticized for considering the three dimensions of justice as too separate from each other, as well as downplaying the importance of economic inequalities while focusing too much on issues of recognition (Xu & Hong, 2015). Similar criticism about dismissing everything that is included in distributive justice has been made by Robeyns (2003), who also claims that Sen's capability approach, introduced in the earlier section, is equally useful in addressing questions of social justice as Fraser's notion of parity of participation.

Despite the criticism, Fraser's definition is relevant to this study because of its all-encompassing and detailed nature. Her theory of social justice concerns a broad range of possible sources of injustice while at the same time taking into account the various contexts in which injustice can take place. Therefore the model is suitable for examining situations or phenomena that affect various or heterogenous groups and individuals. For example, the all-subjected principle fits the research setting of this study in that everyone subjected to the government-imposed lockdown in Uganda can be considered as subjects of justice or injustice, while the different dimensions in Fraser's model allow for a more nuanced elaboration of the different forms of injustice affecting different individuals.

However, it is worth noting that Fraser, although writing from a feminist standpoint, is an author from the United States. As Mohanty (1984) notes, what she calls Western feminism carries the risk of portraying and representing women in the so-called Third World as a homogenous group through hegemonic discourse, whether intentional or unintentional. Since this thesis is also a form of discourse that produces certain type of reality and

represents women in Uganda in a certain way, it is important to reflect on the kind of discourse produced in the study. For this reason it is important to consider the work of post-colonial feminists to illuminate the impact of Western thinking and the period of colonialism on the Third World and the studies carried in its context. These notions are discussed in the following section.

2.3 Post-colonial feminism on the Third World

Mohanty (1984) suggests that in Western feminism there is a tendency to make a "Third World Difference" in which there is an assumption of patriarchy of men as a coherent group that oppresses all women equally. This leads to two problems. First, it results in considering Third World women as a homogenous group and portrays the individual as an "average Third World woman": someone who is oppressed due to her gender and being from the Third World (essentially sexually constrained, poor, victimized, illiterate and uneducated), and at the same time self-representing (implicitly) Western women as free, modern, educated and having control over their sexuality (Mohanty, 1984). According to Mohanty (1984), it is this discourse that "colonizes" the lives and characteristics of Third World women while not even considering their own experiences. Thus, the way in which women are portrayed as a category of analysis focuses mainly on their object status, namely the way in which certain institutions or systems affect or do not affect them, when instead different social, historical and political contexts should be taken into account (Mohanty, 1984).

Mohanty (1984) further argues that viewing "Third World women" as a coherent homogenous group across countries and cultures assumes that all of them have similar problems and constraints and as a result similar needs and goals. However, differences exist between them even within a single country, for example in terms of class or region (Tamale, 2018). Moreover, Tamale (2018) argues that it is not only gender that constructs a woman, but also characteristics such as ethnicity, sexuality and age, in which case gender alone is not a sufficient means to determine a person or a group. The second problem arises with presenting women as oppressed and lacking power in contrast to men as oppressors and possessing power, a thought that could simply reinforce the said division rather than solve the problems that come with it (Mohanty, 1984). It is also important to understand that it is not necessarily the institutions or systems themselves that create similar oppression across

cultures, but the meaning and value attached to these institutions, such as marriage or domestic work (Mohanty, 1984).

Similarly, Kapoor (2004) argues that assuming Western superiority in relation to developing countries and portraying the relationship between the two as Western people saving Third World or its women from oppression results in silencing the voices of these individual women. Fatima et al. (2017) join Kapoor's notions, arguing that when Third World women may be included for example in feminist conferences, it may actually offer a false sense of diversity than actually give them voice. Moreover, it is important to note if these women identify as "Third World women" or "women of color" themselves before labeling them as such (Fatima et al., 2017), a thought that is in line with Mohanty's (1984) notions of social and historical contexts in which each woman lives. However, in Fatima et al. (2017), Ranjoo notes that sometimes Third World women may identify themselves as such in order to oppose all types of Western domination or to highlight their geographical or socio-political context in a formerly colonized country. This notion, again, emphasizes the importance to consider the local or national contexts of feminist struggles.

In addition to portraying the Third World as "other" compared to the West, Kapoor (2004) notes that the representation of the Third World or its women often happens on Western terms and for Western purposes, such as to justify the position of a good helper or to support Western jobs or ideologies, instead of focusing on these women themselves. For example in colonial Uganda men's education was valued over that of women's, who were instead taught to be good housewives and consumers according to Victorian European ideals (Tamale, 2018). Kapoor (2004) thus claims that largely the West produces the "Third World" and often does it according to its own needs. Like Fraser (2007a), who sees the Keynesian-Westphalian frame as a colonialist understanding of the world, Kapoor (2004) also notes the misframing of the discourse about Third World and its women, resulting in the aforementioned misconceptions.

This type of creation of the Third World by West is also evident in the writings of Uganda by Tamale (2018), who questions why important female figures in Ugandan politics are often completely omitted from the depictions of history. Tamale (2018) also notes that in precolonial Uganda women's opinions were listened to in politics even though they did not always participate physically, and it is the Western view of political participation and the division between public and private that upholds the image that women have always been

suppressed in Ugandan politics. Although women were not equal to men in precolonial Uganda, they were still not as marginalized as they are in the country today, and for example their share of the gendered division of labor was as valued as that of men (Tamale, 2018). In many occasions, according to Tamale (2018), it was Western colonialism and its understanding of the world that brought about changes in the social structures of Uganda as well as the meanings attached to these structures.

From the discussion above it can be noted that generalizing or grouping women under certain labels can be highly problematic, especially if it is done from a Western point of view in relation to Third World women or women of color. Moreover, as illustrated by the examples from Uganda, colonial practices and mindsets can have an influence in shaping the so-called Third World and its gender dynamics. To conclude, emphasis should be placed on the experiences, characteristics and circumstances of the individual women in question, formulated by them and valued as they are. The work of postcolonial feminist scholars sensitizes the analysis to some potential blind spots and brings focus on the role of power and preconceptions in media representations as well as the analysis of them in this study, since Fraser's core theory does not fully incorporate these themes.

In light of these notions, the next chapter introduces Uganda and its COVID-19 response in more detail to offer a context for this study.

3 BACKGROUND: UGANDA

Uganda is a land-locked East African country that used to be a British colony until gaining independence in 1962, with English and Kiswahili as the official languages (Alava et al., 2020). The country is bordered by South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Uganda is a diverse country in many aspects: the country's population is comprised of several ethnic groups speaking more than 50 languages (Alava et al., 2020), and the climate varies from mountains to tropical rainforests and savannas as well as arid regions with little rainfall and high temperatures (BakamaNume & Matete, 2010).

This chapter offers a more detailed presentation of Uganda for the context of the study. The first section discusses the current demographic and political situation of Uganda, followed by a section presenting gender issues in the country and bearing in mind the relation of these issues to Fraser's dimensions of social justice as well as the work of postcolonial feminists. The final section concerns the COVID-19 imposed lockdown in Uganda and how it compares to neighboring countries.

3.1 Demographic and political situation

Alava et al. (2020) offer an overview of the post-colonial political developments in Uganda that have lead to the present situation. The years following independence from Great Britain saw some dictatorial and violent regimes under the leaderships of Obote I, Amin and Obote II. The main force behind the resistance of the violence of the Obote II regime was a group called the National Resistance Movement (NRM), whose conflicts with the ruling regime resulted in a rise of resistance named the Bush War (1981–1986). Eventually, the NRM took over capital Kampala and established their leader Yoweri Museveni as president in 1986. He remains president to this day, although according to Alava et al. (2020), experiences of his regime are mixed across the country. In the regions that suffered from violence during the previous regime, Museveni was considered a savior and a relief to the chaos of the preceding years. On the other hand, especially in the North where Museveni's soldiers resorted to retributive violence towards civilians, reactions to his coming to power were the opposite and inflicted some conflicts between government soldiers and rebel groups, most notably one called the Lord's Resistance Army or LRA (Alava et al., 2020).

The current political organization of the country can be called a hybrid regime, which means that there are forms of democracy such as some liberties and a multi-party system, but at the same time authoritarian practices are maintained together with violence and repression (Alava et al., 2020; Arnould, 2015). For example, the government has introduced a tax on social media both to control growing opposition voices among the citizens as well as to increase state revenue (Titeca, 2019). Moreover, President Museveni continues utilizing the armed forces to enforce his political power (Arnould, 2015). He is also reluctant to abandon the patronage system that supports him, although this might cost him the legitimacy of his regime in the eyes of young Ugandans, who are largely born after his coming to power and thus do not remember the war that preceded his presidency (Titeca, 2019).

According to the UBOS Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (2019), 55% of the population in Uganda is young and the country's population is expected to grow at the rate of about 3% a year. Recently there is a strong growth in urban population, but in addition to rural-urban movement this change can mostly be attributed to the designation of new urban areas (UBOS, 2019). Nevertheless, UBOS (2019) notes that most of the population in Uganda still lives in rural areas, where unemployment and poverty are more common than in urban regions: it is estimated that 21% of Ugandans live below the internationally defined poverty line. The United Nations Development Program UNDP (2019) places Uganda in the low development category of the human development index, which measures a country's long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: access to knowledge, a long and healthy life, and a decent standard of living. In the low development category, Uganda's position is above the average of all countries in the group, but below the average for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP, 2019). In addition, Uganda hosts the largest population of refugees in Africa and the third-largest in the world, amounting at 1.35 million people, most of whom are women and children from the neighboring countries (Bukuluki et al., 2020).

According to UBOS (2019) the main field of industry in Uganda is Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, followed by Trading. The official unemployment rate in the turn of 2016/2017 was 9.2%, although the amount of employed people living below the poverty line (called "the working poor") stood at 13%, and the amount of unemployed youth aged 18-30 years similarly reached 13%, which is above the national average (UBOS, 2019). According to Williams and Pompa (2017), outside of agriculture the majority of Ugandan youth work in the informal sector with poor working conditions and rights, since work in the formal sector can often be hard to find. Therefore care should be taken when interpreting the

unemployment numbers, since they might not entail working poverty or inadequate working conditions. Moreover, Ssali (2020) notes that the neoliberal economic reform led by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund has reduced the size of the Ugandan public sector and highlighted the importance of the private sector, resulting in negative impacts on healthcare and social services such as pensions.

The pressure for income is also reflected on children. According to UBOS (2019), in 2016/2017 60% of Ugandan children attended school exclusively, while 24% were involved in economic activities in addition to school and about 10% were not involved in either. In the aforementioned statistics, "economic activities" entails all market production as well as some forms of non-market production for private use, such as construction, production and processing of primary goods, and production of fixed assets (UBOS, 2019). It is estimated that at the same time period 15% of Ugandan children were engaged in some form of child labor, although the statistics exclude light work by children of 12-13 years and only take into account hazardous or excess work by children of 14-17 years (UBOS, 2019). Uganda offers universal Primary and Secondary level education, and in general education up to the University level is mainly funded by private parties in accordance with the government's educational liberation policy formulated to combat the state's failure to fund all educational institutions (Twebaze, 2015).

Healthcare in Uganda is organized in a decentralized manner, with about 44% provided by the government and the rest by private bodies, non-profit organizations as well as traditional and complementary practitioners (World Health Organization, 2018). However, according to UBOS (2019), healthcare facilities in Uganda are not evenly spread, and as much as 45% of them can be found in the central region. The share of healthcare in the government budget in the last five years has only stood at about 8% and is showing a downward trend (UBOS 2019). According to the WHO (2018), 50% of the disease burden in Uganda is generated by communicable diseases, and leading causes of death and illness include for example malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diarrhea and vaccine-preventable diseases, as well as maternal health issues. Similarly, the WHO (2018) points out that the Ugandan healthcare has improved over the years and for example the life expectancy has risen to 62.2 years for males and 64.2 years for females, although challenges in healthcare remain for example related to human resources, the quality of service delivery and health information, stock-outs of medical supplies, and lack of proper control of prescription and circulation of medicine.

According to the UBOS (2014), the majority of the people in Uganda are Catholic and Protestant, although there is a significant minority of Muslims (about 14%) alongside with smaller amounts of other religions. In Uganda religion plays a central role in national politics as well as in local mobilizing, since the religious leaders participate in and influence public debates and are often respected as public authorities on a local level (Alava et al., 2020). For example the Born Again churches, which have seen a strong rise after the current president came to power and have generally supported his regime, have had a political influence in relation to some bills passed in the legislation (Isiko, 2019). Especially Pentecostal churches have an influence on Ugandan print media and for example on how sexuality is depicted in the public discourse, since religious leaders are often seen as important opinion makers (Bompani & Brown, 2014). Moreover, religious institutions provide arenas of participation and active citizenship for traditionally marginalized groups, such as women and youth (Omona & Kiriaghe, 2020).

To sum up, Uganda is largely an agrarian and rural country, where the political environment is such that ordinary Ugandans have a limited possibility to participate in and influence the politics and decision-making of the country. Uganda also has a diverse and rather young population, where differences between regions and groups of people can be large. Since this study focuses on the gender perspective, the gender-specific issues present in Ugandan society will be discussed separately in more detail in the next section, reflected against Nancy Fraser's dimensions of social justice where relevant.

3.2 Gender issues

In the context of Africa, Uganda is often praised as one of the pioneers in advocating gender equality through policy formulation and legislation: women's rights as well as affirmative action towards them on behalf of the state are already articulated in the constitution, while several ministries collaborate with the civil society to ensure sector-specific policy frameworks to improve the status of women and girls in the society (Ndidde et al., 2020). In the years following the coming to power of President Museveni and his NRM party, there used to be a strong feminist movement as well (Guma, 2015). In its golden era the movement was politically powerful and socially influential and indeed achieved a lot, although its power has diminished especially since 2005 when President Museveni begun to dispense the multi-party system (Guma, 2015).

Uganda, like many other countries in the world, is largely a patriarchal society where gender and sex education towards traditional gender roles begins from a young age. Masculine behavior is encouraged for boys whereas weakness and responsibility are the norms for girls, and especially in rural areas many children and adolescents grow into these roles and beliefs about fundamental differences between the sexes, such as physiological strength and socially acceptable behavior (Ninsiima et al., 2018; Porter, 2015a). For example in Northern Uganda having sex is tied to the expected gender roles – a provider for boys and a mother for girls – and the responsibility of avoiding early sexual encounters or sexual violence rests heavily on girls (Porter, 2015a). Moreover, Porter (2015a) notes that many children learn about sex by doing and that it is mostly initiated by boys, which can result in sexual encounters for which the girls are not prepared, or even unwanted pregnancies. In some regions of Uganda girls are attached less value than boys, since traditionally girls leave the family to live in the husband's home and thus no longer contribute to assisting their family of origin (Ninsiima et al., 2018).

It is estimated that as much as 46% of girls in Uganda are already married before the age of 18, which is a factor concerning early pregnancies and related consequences as well (Ninsiima et al., 2018). Adolescent pregnancy, especially before marriage, can cause stigmatization, expulsion from school or shame of continuing to attend school, and even domestic violence since parents sometimes consider the girl to have wasted their money on unfinished education and might even chase them away from home to live with the man who impregnated them (Maly et al., 2017). Girls who get pregnant while living with their parents are considered unsuitable for marriage, "spoilt" (Maly et al., 2017). The abovementioned notions reflect Fraser's (2008) dimension of misrecognition, in which cultural structures formulated in a certain socio-political-historical context prevent some women from participating equally in the interactions of a society.

Moreover, Maly et al. (2017) argue that the financial security for a pregnant (especially adolescent) woman rests almost entirely on marriage, which leaves the woman struggling if the man denies paternity. Porter (2015b) notes that at least in Northern Uganda the practice of paying dowry upon marriage can both protect the woman from abuse when the man's family feels that they have a stake at her wellbeing for having invested in bringing her into the family, but also undermine her chances to leave an abusive marriage depending on the kindness of the man's family and the willingness of her own family to return the dowry. However, it is worth noting that the colonial period changed the meaning attached to dowry

and thus undermined the traditional social and kinship structures that offered gender-based protection in marriage (Porter, 2015b; Tamale, 2018). Parikh (2004) also notes that for example certain laws meant to protect the rights of women and girls, such as the law on raising the age of consent, may in fact work against them for example when parents prefer to settle defilement cases out of court in order to obtain compensation from the perpetrator. Similarly, the aforementioned law can be used by parents to control their daughters' sexual relations (Parikh, 2004). These examples illustrate the impacts of the old and new moral codes on the realization of women's right in today's Uganda.

Porter (2015a) argues that for example in Northern Uganda women tend to be submissive and not really able to say "no" to sex, which leaves them with little control over their bodies and sexuality. Consent is not discussed in sexual education, and a man's sexual desire is seen as a biological need that can only be satisfied with a woman's body (Porter, 2015a). Abortion is restricted in Uganda, and women or girls who conduct it can face stigmatization in the community (Cleeve et al., 2017). Controversially, especially adolescent girls feel that they have little or no control over having sex and getting pregnant (Maly et al., 2017). Although maternal mortality and unmet need for family planning are slowly declining across the country, mainly in urban areas, for example the unmet need for contraceptive use remains high at almost 30% (UBOS, 2019). Maly et al. (2017) argue that some false beliefs exist about modern contraceptive use, for example that they can cause cancer or infertility, which sometimes forms a barrier for using them.

Around 56% of women in Uganda report experiencing intimate partner violence (Amegbor & Rosenberg, 2019), although the perpetrators are also often teachers or peers at school (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). According to UBOS (2019), domestic violence along with child neglect are the only types of crimes that are on increase, whereas the overall crime rate is slowly decreasing. Moreover, poverty, lack of basic needs and unequal power relations can cause women to easily resort to transactional sex to fulfill their needs (Ninsiima et al., 2018; Porter, 2015a), although transactional sex may also be a form of exercising sexual authority (Parikh, 2004). For example, some adolescents are negotiating sexual relationships from a young age, perceiving them as means to obtain resources or experience with the idea that having many partners is a sign of sophistication and a way to get in the groups of peers (Kinsman et al., 2000; Nyanzi et al., 2001). The issue of transactional sex also concerns men: Porter (2015a) notes that in conflict-stricken Northern Uganda men might have lacked the traditional means to obtain resources for sustaining a wife or a family, rendering them unable

to fulfill the expectations of masculinity, which only leaves them transactional sex as means to "have a woman" without the social responsibility attached to marriage.

In situations of wrongdoing such as rape, there are gendered challenges in relation to obtaining the needed support and justice to solve the issue. For example in Northern Uganda it is common for women to remain silent after cases of rape due to reasons such as to not wanting to disturb social harmony by reporting, fear of shame or stigmatization, or being forced to marry their rapist (Porter, 2015b). Moreover, Fiske and Shackel (2016) argue that official justice systems might simply be too far or too expensive and thus not accessible, and it is not uncommon for officials to ask for bribes in order to process a case. Many women's own experiences reflect their thoughts that they are ignored simply because of their sex (Fiske & Shackel, 2016). Although support systems such as non-governmental organizations (commonly known as NGOs) might exist, women are often not informed about them or refrain from utilizing them, mainly since the extended family and kinship structures are considered the right arena for settling such matters (Porter, 2015b). Moreover, Parikh (2004) notes that formal justice systems might not offer women similar help and security as the family and social structures, thus as traditional justice structures erode with the emergence of formal ones many women are left with little or no protection in cases of wrongdoings.

In terms of education, about 8% less women than men have secondary education (UNDP, 2019). The proportion of women who possess a low education level face more challenges in overcoming certain economic and socio-cultural barriers, such as unequal rights to own and manage land or restricted access to justice, which would enable them to have greater political and social agency in the Ugandan society (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). Women also participate less in working life and suffer from unemployment more often than men (UBOS, 2019; UNDP, 2019). When in working life, women earn lower average wages, are employed in low-paid jobs, face poverty and are sexually harassed in the workplace more often than men (Guma, 2015). The economic struggles faced by some women reflect Fraser's (2008) maldistribution dimension, although together with the questions of marriage and dowry this dimension is intertwined with misrepresentation.

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2019), only a third of the parliamentary seats in Uganda are occupied by women, making their political participation rate rather low compared to men. Tamale (2000) notes that women have a specific quota in the parliament in order to increase their participation, although solving gender equality issues

has not been the ultimate goal of the ruling party upon formulating the quota. Moreover, gender equality issues might not be prioritized in decision-making neither by the government nor the opposition. For example, legislative bills such as the Domestic Relations Bill and the Marriage and Divorce Bill seeking improvements in the lives of women and equal rights between men and women have circulated in the parliament for years without actual progress (Guma, 2015). As Tamale (2000, 2018) notes, the period of colonialism changed the country's political arena by enhancing a stronger division between the public and private, thus further marginalizing women in terms of participation.

The parliament is not the only political arena in Uganda where gendered differences exist. For example in the peacebuilding in Northern Uganda after the conflicts between President Museveni's government and the LRA, women were initially not included in the peace talks and only after some time women's NGOs were given observer status (Fiske & Shackel, 2016). Moreover, Ndidde et al. (2020) argue that especially in rural areas the local officials might not even be aware of the legal rights of women, or the laws might be ignored altogether. This may be due to the aforementioned notion that the extended family and social context are considered the right place for seeking justice rather than the formal institutions (Parikh, 2004; Porter, 2015b). Fraser's (2008) political dimension of injustice is thus apparent in Uganda as well, although as noted before, these three dimensions of injustice are often intertwined due to the complex nature of issues such as gender-specific challenges.

Different types of crisis situations can further deepen the gendered inequalities and challenges in the society. One such example is the COVID-19 pandemic, which also hit Uganda in spring 2020 causing the country to go into lockdown. The next section offers an overview of what this lockdown meant in Uganda.

3.3 COVID-19 lockdown

Uganda's President Museveni announced a lockdown starting from 18 March 2020 in order to control the spread of COVID-19. The most important measures included in the lockdown were for example closing all educational institutions, places of worship, shopping halls, markets and free-time activities such as bars, cinemas and music events; banning large gatherings; halting cross-border movement as well as public and private transport and restricting the movement of other vehicles; and placing a night-time curfew (Museveni, 2020a). Operations were permitted to food sellers, construction sites and cargo transport,

although the employees were not allowed to move between different districts within Uganda (Museveni, 2020a). The public was also advised on hygiene measures and good nutrition (Museveni, 2020a). The country's first COVID-19 case was recorded shortly after on 21 March 2020 (Worldometers, 2020).

Later in June 2020 some relaxations on the restrictions were made, ending the strict phase of the initial lockdown. Public and private transport was resumed with restrictions on passenger capacity, market vendors were allowed to commute between their home and workplace, and hotels, restaurants, shopping malls and general merchandise shops in safe locations were allowed to reopen provided that they practice social distancing (Museveni, 2020a). President Museveni (2020a) promised that if people follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of social distancing, hand washing, wearing face masks and not exceeding the carrying capacity restrictions of any type of transport, the activities would be allowed to continue. In September 2020 more relaxation measures were taken. For example, schools for finalist classes of all levels as well as religious institutions were reopened on the condition of following the SOPs, and tourism was allowed with some conditions (Museveni, 2020b). However, most free time activities remained closed, public gatherings were still prohibited, most classes continued to be out of school, and the night curfew remained (Museveni, 2020b). The government also promised to provide free face masks to everyone aged six or over and deliver food aid to vulnerable people, although private persons were not permitted to conduct these measures (Sawlani, 2020).

Uganda's measures to prevent the epidemic proved fruitful in the beginning. Until the first relaxation of restrictions in June there were only a handful of infections and no deaths in the country: the first death only occurred in late July (Worldometers, 2020). This development reflects President Museveni's repeated emphasis on life rather than economy in battling the virus (Museveni, 2020a, 2020b). According to Biryabarema (2020), the strict restrictions allowed the government to prepare the country's health system to the virus and learn more about it beforehand. Moreover, some control measures were already in place as a preparation to an epidemic of Ebola in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (Biryabarema, 2020). Biryabarema (2020) argues that these two things – the strict measures to limit the spread of the virus as well as experience of other epidemics of infectious diseases – facilitated Uganda's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of these measures, it is hard to know exactly how strictly the lockdown and related restrictions were actually

followed in different parts of Uganda, considering for example the amount of rural regions and relative poverty, discussed before.

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind the context in which the official numbers are published. In the context of Africa, Uganda has conducted a rather large amount of COVID-19 tests (Biryabarema, 2020). However, in comparison to international levels Uganda's testing rate is quite low with the capacity of 500 tests per day as of May 2020 (Ajari et al., 2020). The global shortages of COVID-19 test kits, general unpreparedness of laboratories to run tests as well as logistics troubles caused by widespread lockdowns might undoubtedly have had their impact on Uganda's amount of confirmed positive cases as well especially in the beginning of the pandemic. Since August 2020, certain groups of individuals and organizations have been required to pay for the test, which has caused uproar especially among truck drivers and even led to presenting fraud negative COVID-19 certificates (Athumani, 2020). Therefore a certain amount of positive cases might remain undetected. The following graph presents an overview of the confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in Uganda, bearing in mind the context of testing in the country.
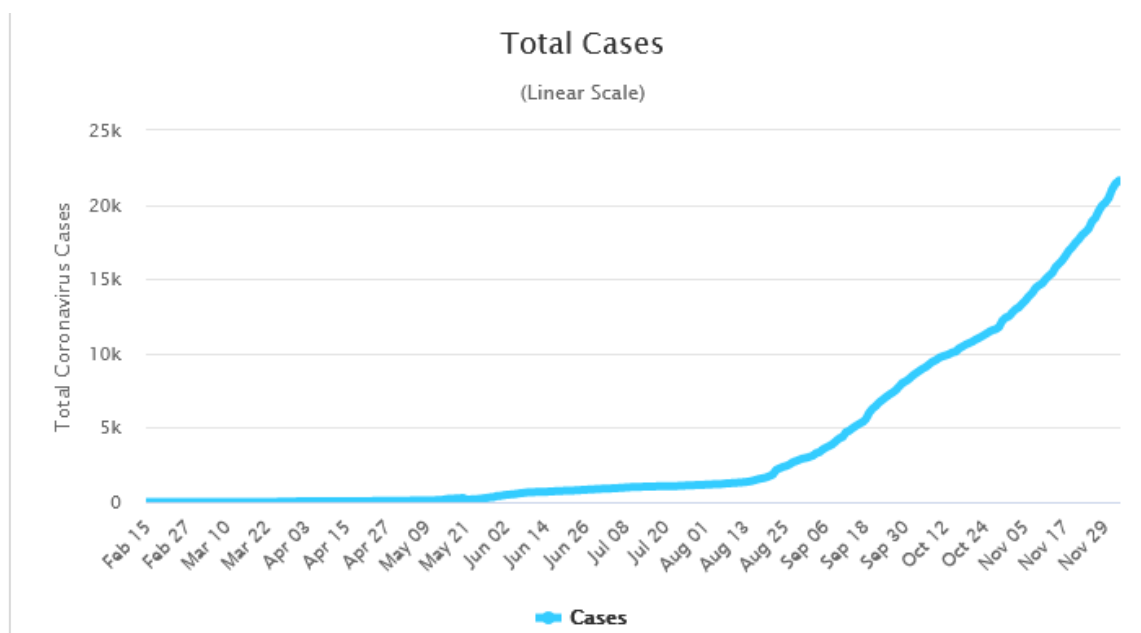

Figure 1. Total Coronavirus cases in Uganda as of 04 December 2020 (Worldometers, 2020).

From mid-August 2020 the COVID-19 cases in Uganda haven risen sharply, with the total amount in the beginning of December 2020 standing at 21,612 cases and 206 deaths

(Worldometers, 2020). In an address to the nation in September 2020, the President (2020b) blamed the people of Uganda for disobedience regarding the SOPs, causing the virus to spread more rapidly. He also warned his citizens of "false prophets" who claim that COVID-19 does not exist but is a plot by the government to silence the opposition (Museveni, 2020b). Despite the rising number of infections, the President did accept that the lockdown can't continue forever, but it is the responsibility of everyone to prevent the spread of the virus in the new normal situation (Museveni, 2020b). This kind of commentary implied that returning to a strict lockdown was not likely to occur.

Similar to Uganda, the neighboring East African countries also imposed lockdowns at a very early stage of the pandemic. However, many of them started reopening their economies and institutions quite soon after, while the lockdown in Uganda lasted for much longer (Sawlani, 2020). Birybarema (2020) argues that the reason behind quick reopening elsewhere was the protection of the fragile economies of the countries in question as well as responding to pressure from opposition parties. While Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya were stricter in their COVID-19 measures, fellow East African countries of Burundi and Tanzania resorted more to prayer as a cure for the epidemic (Sawlani, 2020).

The different stances of Uganda's neighbors on the virus had an impact on Uganda as well: for example truck drivers from Tanzania, where the COVID-19 measures were much more relaxed, were obliged to test for COVID-19 at the border and were not allowed into Uganda before receiving the results (Sawlani, 2020). Indeed, Sawlani (2020) notes that according to Ugandan Ministry of Health, the truck drivers have played a part in the rise of COVID-19 infections in the country. Uganda has also been transparent in publishing information on new infections and deaths on a daily basis, on the contrary to for example Tanzania, which stopped publishing COVID-19 related information already in April after the President accused the test kits to be faulty (Sawlani, 2020).

The discussion in this chapter has offered an overview of Uganda including a separate section on gender issues as well as an introduction of the type of lockdown realized in Uganda to prevent the spread of COVID-19. With the theoretical and contextual background now presented, the next chapter moves on to introduce the methodology of the study: the research questions, the research data and the research method.

4 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to explore the themes of social justice in relation to challenges faced by women in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda. These challenges are reflected against Nancy Fraser's three dimensions of social justice, discussed in Chapter 2. The method of the study is media research utilizing one popular Ugandan online newspaper, the *New Vision*. The research data retrieved from the newspaper is analyzed with content analysis and discourse analysis. The research problem of the study reads as follows: **what kinds of discourses about the themes of social justice are present in *New Vision*'s reporting about women during the COVID-19 lockdown?**

To answer the research problem, the study proceeds in two stages. First, to form a basis for the discussion of social justice, the research data is analyzed through two empirical research questions:

- What kinds of themes emerge in the research data around the challenges faced by women during the COVID-19 lockdown?
- What kinds of representations of women are present in the research data?

Second, on the basis of the analysis conducted to answer the abovementioned research questions, the study will move on to discuss the following question:

- How do the findings from the analysis reflect the dimensions of social justice?

The first section of this chapter introduces the research data, namely newspaper articles from the Ugandan newspaper *New Vision*, and offers a brief background information on the position of print media and the said newspaper in Uganda. The second section presents the research method and discusses the research and analysis processes.

4.1 Research data

The research data consists of newspaper articles about women in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda. The newspaper articles were collected from one of the major Ugandan newspapers, the *New Vision*. The original plan was to use another popular Ugandan newspaper as well, called the *Daily Monitor*. However during the research process it became

evident that *New Vision* contains a wider variety and more comprehensive articles about the theme in question, thus *Daily Monitor* was dropped out of the research. In addition to its popularity, *New Vision* was chosen because it is published daily and written in English. An important point to remember is that *New Vision* was established around the same time when the current government came to power and is mainly state-owned, which means the content of the newspaper is mainly supportive of the ruling regime and against its opposing ideologies (Semujju, 2018).

According to Bompani and Brown (2014), *New Vision* is the most socially conservative of the Ugandan newspapers and closely related to the Pentecostal church, although the prevailing social norm in Ugandan media in general is to discuss certain issues such as sexuality in a certain, "morally acceptable" way. This often means avoiding topics such as homosexuality and sex outside of the context of marriage, equally to appeal to religious leaders and to what is perceived to be the content that the readership wants (Bompani & Brown, 2014). The aforementioned notions might have an impact on the way the said newspaper reports about issues related to women.

Moreover, it is worth noting that although the freedom of speech and press is written in the Ugandan constitution, the country's governments – including that of President Museveni – have a history of repressing media freedom (Tabaire, 2007). Although Museveni's government has been more allowing to the press than its predecessors, there have been cases of intimidation, harassment and criminal charges against the media and journalists, especially in cases of criticism towards the government or the military (Tabaire, 2007). As a result, individual journalists or the management of media in Uganda may experience pressure to self-censor or write in a certain way in fear of government action, such as court hearings or banning the newspapers (Semujju, 2018; Tabaire, 2007). Restrictions on the Internet and the recently introduced social media tax may also have an impact on the freedom of speech and press in Uganda (Selnes, 2021).

However, mass media does have an influence on the Ugandan society. Although the country's print media distribution is somewhat limited, the circulation statistics do not tell the whole truth. The owners of *New Vision* also own several radio stations and two television channels, since this kind of multi-ownership of several media outlets is not uncommon in Uganda (Bompani & Brown, 2014). Print media content is widely used as a basis of discussion on radio and television in Uganda, and it is also common to share and circulate

newspapers between people (Bompani & Brown, 2014). Therefore the impact of print media on Ugandan public sphere is significant, and using newspaper articles as research data can be considered relevant. Semujju (2018) further notes that *New Vision* possesses more resources in comparison to other media outlets in Uganda, which makes it an important influencer of public opinion and thus a relevant object of study.

The articles used in this study were collected from the ProQuest database due to the instability of and constant changes on *New Vision*'s own websites. ProQuest offers access to archives of daily issues of the newspaper as well as a comprehensive search tool. After an initial browsing with different combinations of search words, the final combination used in the data collection was "lockdown + women + Uganda", since this combination returned a precise and sufficient amount of relevant data for more specific selection. The final research data was hand-picked using the following criteria: 1) the main focus of the article is on the consequences or impacts of the lockdown; 2) the article does not only present one specific case as a piece of news about something that happened, but also explores the issue further to have a more comprehensive picture of it; 3) the issue is specific to women according to the focus of this study; for example, violence by the police and the defense forces is directed at everyone, thus the issue is left out of the study. This selecting criteria ensured a relevant set of research data for the focus and scope of the study.

Since many of the consequences of the lockdown can't be immediately assessed, the time range for the data collection was extended to six months after the start of the lockdown, namely from 18 March 2020 until the end of September 2020. This time range offers a broader view of the potential challenges related to the lockdown, but is not too broad given the limited scope of this study. This way it is also possible to avoid the pitfall of determining whether or not Uganda is still in lockdown at a given time, since interpretations of how to determine a lockdown vary greatly in literature, public discussion as well as within the Ugandan media itself.

The total number of articles retrieved from *New Vision* was 13, the list of which can be found at the end of the study in Attachment I. For clarity, each article is given a code number for reference during the analysis. The length of the articles varied from two to seven pages depending on the content and layout, amounting to about forty-five pages of material in total. Many of the articles considered a general issue or challenge applicable to the whole nation such as the general increase in gender-based violence, but some also presented the issues on

a local scale such as the especially high increase in teenage pregnancies in certain regions. Sometimes individual cases were used in the articles as an example or an introduction to illustrate the broader issue, for example telling the story of an individual woman's experiences about sexual violence and then moving on to discuss the issue on a larger scale. In general, the research data presented the lockdown as a necessary means to control the epidemic, but simultaneously highlighted its harmful impacts on people and called on the government and other authorities to take action to mitigate these impacts.

For the analysis, each newspaper article was saved as a separate .pdf file to be analyzed using the coding program atlas.ti. The research method and analysis process are presented in more detail in the following section.

4.2 Research method and analysis process

The analysis process was realized in stages according to the research questions, in which abductive content analysis was applied to the first research question and discourse analysis to the second question. These parts of the analysis were intended to form a basis for later discussion of social justice, for which reason the themes of social justice were not yet incorporated into the analysis. According to Silvasti (2014), content analysis can be considered a basic tool in qualitative research, for which reason it is a natural choice for introducing the research data as presented in the first research question. Thus the analysis began with coding the research data: due to the prior knowledge on gender-specific challenges during crisis situations presented in the Introduction and the self-selected research data it was possible to draw a code list before conducting the analysis. Each code represented one challenge faced by women during the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda.

However, the code list was open to findings from the research data. According to Silvasti (2014), this type of analysis method in which the researcher's prior knowledge can direct the coding, but the code list is allowed to fluctuate during the coding process, is called abductive content analysis. In this study as well the final list formed during the actual analysis in which a few codes were either added or dropped, resulting in a final list of the following codes: access to justice, child marriage, domestic work and childcare, family planning, gender-based violence, sexual abuse, sexual and reproductive health, teenage pregnancy and work/income. After coding, abductive content analysis was further utilized to formulate

themes around specific issues by grouping similar codes. Altogether four themes emerged from coding: 1) girls' issues; 2) sexual and reproductive health; 3) violence and access to justice; and 4) paid and domestic work. This phase of the analysis is presented more in detail in Chapter 5.

The next part of the analysis to answer the second research question was conducted with discourse analysis. According to Jokinen et al. (2016), discourse analysis in general analyzes the linguistic acts by which people produce shared social realities in a collaborative manner. Moreover, Jokinen et al. (2016) note that discourse analysis focuses on observing social conventions rather than the individual. In short, discourse analysis is a study of language and the use of it. This is relevant because the use of language not only describes the world, but also constructs, organizes, modifies and creates meaning into the social realities in which we live (Jokinen et al., 2016). Therefore the way in which certain issues are presented for example in media may facilitate a certain type of thinking about these issues on a larger scale in a society. Since print media plays an important role in Uganda, as discussed before, media research and discourse analysis provide a relevant method for studying different representations of women.

The theoretical framework of this study directs the analysis method towards critical discourse analysis. As Risdaneva (2018) writes, critical discourse analysis is related to the study of power and the use of linguistic acts to maintain and reproduce relations of inequality and domination, which is why it is often used in studies of gender representation as well. To examine the second research question, this study utilized an analysis tool within critical discourse analysis called the naming of social actors, formulated originally by Leeuwen (2003) and modified for the purposes of this research from Leeuwen (2003) and Risdaneva (2018). According to Risdaneva (2018), naming is utilized to investigate the portrayal of social roles in different contexts through categories that concern the representations of social actors. Examining social roles in newspaper articles can aid in exploring the power relations present in the discourse of the said newspaper and shed light on the way in which this specific newspaper constructs shared reality.

This study utilized the following categories to explore representations of women: functionalization, classification, relational identification, agency, and exclusion/inclusion. These categories and their meanings are introduced more in detail in Chapter 6 before the analysis for which they were utilized. Each category was used as a separate code to conduct

a second coding of the research data, but attention was also paid on the context in which the naming of social roles occurred as well as the word choices and the tone in which the articles wrote about women and their situation in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the social reality that the *New Vision*'s discourses construct. The aforementioned categories were chosen as a deconstruction of the following guiding questions: 1) What kinds of roles and responsibilities are allocated for women in the research data? 2) To what extent are women presented as victims, and to what extent is their agency emphasized? Do these two views coexist in the research data? 3) Who or what is seen as guilty for women's struggles during the pandemic?

After conducting the two parts of the empirical analysis of the research data, the results of this stage were utilized as a basis for discussion on the themes of social justice in Chapter 7. No separate analytical tool was used for the discussion, but the theories presented in Chapter 2 provided the lens through which the findings of the analysis were interpreted. The most important lens was Nancy Fraser's theory of the dimensions of social justice (Fraser, 2007a), although the post-colonial feminist notions were also present throughout the discussion. The following chapter will begin with the first part of the analysis by presenting the themes formulated from the research data in more detail.

5 GENDERED CHALLENGES IN NEW VISION'S ARTICLES

The contents of the thirteen articles retrieved from *New Vision* are presented in this chapter with the help of abductive content analysis, including coding and theme formulation. This chapter forms the first part of the empirical analysis of the research data and will be utilized together with Chapter 6 as a basis for further discussion in Chapter 7, which reflects the findings of the empirical analysis against the theories of social justice. Therefore the questions of social justice are not yet explored in this chapter.

The research data suggests that aspects of the lockdown such as the closure of schools, restrictions of movement such as the transport ban and the curfew as well as the closure of non-essential businesses and services have led to impacts on income, food security, health and safety, and home dynamics, all of which can have consequences for women. It is important to remember that many of these issues are complex and largely intertwined, but for clarity and easier organization of the analysis, they are presented in the following sections as separate themes. These themes were formed by grouping codes that referred to similar issues, as explained in Chapter 4. After coding the research data, four broader themes were formulated: 1) girls' issues; 2) sexual and reproductive health; 3) violence and access to justice; and 4) paid and domestic work.

5.1 Girls' issues

It is important to note that while some challenges concern females of all ages, some are more specific to adult women or young girls. This section presents the issues of the latter group as presented in the research data and includes challenges such as child marriage and teenage pregnancy as well as challenges arising from school closure, such as increased domestic and paid work and risk of sexual harassment. Of course, challenges such as the closure of schools and its consequences concern both girls and boys equally, but the research data presents some specific concerns for girls. For example, it is noted that girls who are sent by the parents to work or forced to stay at home instead of the supervised school environment are in a higher risk of sexual abuse, or defilement as formulated in the articles. Several mentions are also made of girls having been defiled by their guardians at home. Another article mentions

how a girl is harassed while grocery shopping, since without school uniform men in her community see her as an adult:

> According to Christine, whenever she goes to the shops to restock for the family, she finds young men redundantly seated in small groups talking about anything that comes to their minds. They always utter vulgar words and insults at her. "They begin telling me how my body looks attractive and a real girl without a uniform. But I always do not pay attention to them. I quickly pay for the items and run home to avoid contracting the virus," she says. (NV5)

The risk of sexual abuse is also mentioned in cases where the families can't provide for their children and send them elsewhere to live. One girl describes how she was abused by her uncle with whom she lived after public transport was halted and his father couldn't provide for the family, but her father refused to intervene unless the girl wanted to "return home and suffer" (NV5), while a stepmother of other four girls refused to take them home for failure to feed them, leaving them to wander around and look for a place to stay. One article tells about a girl who was lured by a broker and smuggled from her home to be married off with a man shortly after the schools closed; the man had promised her to pay the dowry to her family soon and take her to a vocational school once the schools would reopen.

The articles also mention that some men are taking advantage of the financial difficulties brought about by the lockdown, demanding sex from girls in exchange for taking care of them or meeting their basic needs, although Parikh (2004) notes that transactional sex may be a form of exercising sexual authority for young women whose sexuality is often controlled by parents or traditional kinship structures. However, for example for young refugee girls transactional sex may be the only option meet their basic needs due to the sudden scarcity of resources brought about by the lockdown.

The issue of early pregnancies and their increase during the lockdown is another great concern that the research data presents. In addition to defilement and transactional sex, early pregnancies are attributed mostly to the closure of schools and how as a result children have more "idle time" to hang around without supervision. Moreover, one article refers to early pregnancies in relation to difficulties to access sexual and reproductive health services and menstrual hygiene:

> "The pandemic has made it hard for women and girls to access relevant menstrual hygiene management (MHM) related information as the mothers and fathers are not empowered to confidently discuss the seclude subject," says Kiiza. "This presents a risk for girls making

inappropriate decisions about their periods & bodies increasing risks of infections and teenage pregnancies," he says. (NV6)

Early pregnancies often go hand in hand with early marriages, which are also noted to be on the rise in the research data. One article suggests that girls prefer to choose early marriages than stay at homes with increasing domestic violence, discussed later in section 5.3. Other articles state that it is the parents marrying girls off for dowry: this is attributed to either avoiding or escaping poverty, or because marrying and bearing children are expected of girls rather than continuing with their education. The articles also note that the increase in early marriages and pregnancies during the lockdown means an increase in the amount of girls who will not return to school once they reopen. As discussed in Chapter 3, Uganda is already struggling with early marriages and pregnancies and their consequences (for example Maly et al., 2017; Ninsiima et al., 2018), and the research data recognizes that the impacts of the lockdown might deepen these challenges even further. In any case, it is hard to know the actual magnitude of the issue of early marriages and pregnancies, as formulated by an officer of the child and family protection unit of a district called Buliisa:

> He also estimated early marriages at 17% but the number could be higher than that since most parents do not report the cases, but only insist that the man responsible takes care of the baby and its mother. They normally choose to report the cases to the Police if the father of the baby sends the girl back to her family without any support. (NV10)

The abovementioned example also illustrates the complex social and historical context of the meaning of dowry and official justice systems in offering protection to women and girls (Parikh, 2004; Porter, 2015b). In short, the articles present several issues that girls can struggle with due to the lockdown. Much emphasis is placed on the children's need to be supervised as well as poverty; these issues are explored more in detail in Chapter 6. It is also evident in the research data that although the closure of schools has a huge impact on children in general, the risks seem to be much higher and complex for girls than for boys. Moreover, one article states that girls might not be encouraged to study the same way as boys, thus as a result they can face a heavier pressure for paid and domestic work or early marriages while not at school. Early pregnancies are also related to issues of sexual and reproductive health, presented in the next section concerning women of all ages.

5.2 Sexual and reproductive health

This theme concerns issues such as contraception, maternal health, access to health services and menstruation. According to the research data, women and girls have had difficulties in accessing sexual and reproductive health services during the lockdown. Several articles point out the shortages in items for contraception or menstrual hygiene, challenges in getting to the clinics for sexual and reproductive health services due to transport restrictions, or the closure of these types of services altogether. One article even points out that *"some women who were using contraceptives in secrecy, could not continue to do so when their spouses were around"* (NV13). Therefore the research data suggests that the lockdown worsens the problem of unmet need for family planning in Uganda, discussed in Chapter 3 (UBOS 2019). Moreover, the articles mention that some women prefer not to visit the clinics due to fear of the COVID-19 control measures or contracting the virus. These issues, according to the articles, result in the risk of unwanted or unsafe pregnancies, contracting diseases, unsafe abortions or being left without treatment to existing diseases such as HIV. In one article, the coordinator of a provider of family planning services, Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), elaborates on the vast impact of the lockdown on these types of services:

"We suspended all our outreaches. We cannot observe the four-metre social distancing with the large clientele we have, we need a huge playground to be compliant which is not possible." (NV3)

"Their [Village Health Teams] work involves home visits to distribute family planning items and educate locals on sexual and reproductive health. The challenge is we do not know who they interact with before the home visits, so we suspended the activities." (NV3)

"We are unable to deliver [to regional clinics] because our vehicles and staff have not been cleared." -- "We cannot deliver because we use pick-ups. When returning it is difficult to prove they were carrying family planning items." (NV3)

In addition, one of the articles concerns especially refugee women and children and their limited access to health services due to the large sizes of many refugee settlements:

"They are always more than the available services and to access the services they have to trek long distance. And now with the lockdown, they have to endure the long journeys to the few available health facilities." (NV6)

Especially the articles published shortly after the beginning of the lockdown present several cases in which pregnant mothers have been unable to reach the hospital in time for childbirth

or to be treated for complications, resulting in increased maternal deaths. This is mainly attributed to the halted public transport, leaving women without means to access hospitals. One article also mentions that the amount of maternal deaths could be higher than stated by official records, since some mothers die of childbirth at home or on the way to the hospital. The transport restrictions have further heightened the difficulties in the health sector due to their impact on essential health workers, as stated in one article:

> There have also been reports of mistreatment of frontline workers including those in health by security agents tasked with enforcing the lockdown. Some health personnel who are classified as essential workers have failed to access stickers for their vehicles that prove they are authorized to move to their work stations. (NV3)

Several articles mention how family planning and sexual and reproductive health services are vital and the need for them continues high even despite the current crisis. As earlier research suggests (for example Davies & Bennett, 2016; Parkes et al., 2020; Ssali, 2020), crisis-related lockdowns seem to have a great impact on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and family planning, and the findings from the research data align with this notion. Another issue that the earlier research presents in relation to lockdowns is increased violence in different forms (for example Guidorzi, 2020; Parkes et al., 2020), elaborated in the next section.

5.3 Violence and access to justice

The issues encompassed in this theme include gender-based, domestic and sexual violence as well as access to justice. Gender-based and domestic violence are noted to be on the rise in the research data. Several articles point out how men have become frustrated over losing their jobs and not being able to provide for the family, or because their wives are not able to offer food due to the lockdown, which results in violence. Many articles also refer to the fact that since families are not used to spending much time together, they don't really know each other or there are some unresolved issues, which cause tensions at home. Housework, childcare and dealing with stepchildren are also mentioned as common causes of disagreements, and in general, all types of accusations seem to potentially lead to violence according to the research data. The articles also mention how the lockdown has worsened existing difficulties, as described by the case of a woman who was severely injured by her husband after enduring domestic violence for years:

She says she had found a way of living with the husband, but his behaviour became extreme during the lockdown. From the beginning of the lockdown, the husband became increasingly difficult and quarrelsome. In addition, he would beat her and the children up for no reason. (NV13)

The abovementioned frustrations of some men are also attributed to not being able to continue life as usual, not only due to failure to provide:

One of the elders in Tororo said, traditionally, women are the breadwinners in most rural communities. Men wake up each morning to go to the drinking joint till night while women and children go to the gardens. However, with the current lockdown down, men are "locked up" in homes, alcohol joints were all closed! Out of this frustration, men have become violent battering women and girls over any small issue. (NV5)

The same issue is mentioned in relation to refugees, whose food ratios were cut due to the lockdown. One refugee woman from South Sudan explains how her husband beats her over lack of food:

She says while it is true that in South Sudan women provide food for the family, men in the refugee camp still expect women to play the same role even though women cannot produce food. "It is like they are not aware that food here is rationed and worst of it all, the food was cut by 30% yet it has to take us for a month. He sometimes sells the food to buy local gin yet when he returns he wants food," says Flora. (NV6)

However, in one article a male counsellor – his workplace or organization is not revealed – urges women to *"be understanding and supportive of their husbands in cases where they have been breadwinners and are unable to provide now"* (NV1). This is related to a wider discourse present in some articles in which families are encouraged to resolve their issues through open conversation rather than violence, a common and accepted practice in Uganda in order to resolve disputes and find solutions (Porter, 2015b). Through this type of discourse, however, the research data hints at women's responsibility in avoiding tensions at home that can escalate into violent encounters.

As with the case of defilements related to girls, the articles mention that sexual and domestic violence cases have worsened during the lockdown due to the fact that the victims – most of whom are women, as noted in one article (NV13) – are trapped at homes with the perpetrators. In case of adult women in the research data, sexual violence seems to concern them more in their homes in comparison to younger girls, who also face it in the wider

community. Sexual and domestic violence often go hand in hand, as illustrated by the case of a woman who was raped by her husband:

> On the day the President announced a 14-day lockdown, late in the night he crept in, held my mouth tight and took advantage of me," she says. She adds that he threatened to kill her if she resisted his advances. (NV1)

Despite the increasing challenges, the articles state that the lockdown has hampered women's access to formal justice systems. One frequently mentioned issue is the closure of courts and uncertainty about their reopening, resulting in having to release the suspects in cases where the crimes are handled in court rather than within the community. Similarly, many NGOs and other service providers have had to suspend or limit their services. The transport restrictions and curfew have also left many women unable to access shelters or reach police stations for reporting their cases. It is important to bear in mind that personal visits to such services can be the only option for many women in a country where phone and Internet access is rather low (UBOS 2019). One article sums up the issue of access to justice as follows:

> "Worst of [the increased GBV and sexual violence] is that the victims will die in silence because many of the places where they would run to such as medical facilities, police, gender offices, local council leaders are all scrambling now to respond to the coronavirus pandemic." (NV1)

The issue of violence is by far the most widely quoted challenge brought about by the lockdown in the research data, which is in line with earlier research as well (for example (Guidorzi, 2020; Parkes et al., 2020). As can be noted from the analysis, the research data presents the issue as a complex one, affected by various factors such as the impact of the lockdown on income, mobility and access to formal justice institutions. Similar to the challenges related to sexual and reproductive health, child marriages and early pregnancies, the research data seems to suggest that the lockdown is worsening the difficulties concerning domestic and sexual violence and access to justice that already exist in Uganda. The next section explores the final issue presented by the research data, namely the challenges of paid and domestic work in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic.

5.4 Paid and domestic work

As the name suggests, the main issues of this theme are challenges related to income as well as the balance between paid and domestic work. One of the articles states that the closure of businesses due to the lockdown has affected more women than men, since women are more involved in the informal sector as well as hospitality and tourism, which have suffered the hardest impact. Many women, especially those involved in small-scale business or informal cross-border trade, have seen their businesses come to a halt and are forced to use their income and savings to buy items for the house, which may render them unable to continue with their businesses after the lockdown, as elaborated in the articles. This is significant, since the research data recognizes the impact of the informal sector jobs not only on the livelihoods of these women, but on the general economic development of Uganda as well (for example NV2). It is also acknowledged that vulnerable women and girls such as refugees are more likely to engage in high-risk work for survival during economic hardships such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which also exposes them to abuse and exploitation. The *New Vision*'s stance on the impact of the lockdown on women's work and income are in line with earlier research as well (for example Copley et al., 2020; Ssali, 2020).

Moreover, the research data suggests that women who could keep their jobs despite the lockdown have faced difficulties due to increased domestic work and childcare responsibilities resulting from the closure of schools, which in turn has had a negative impact on their ability to work from home. According to earlier research, this is an expected trend during crisis-related lockdowns (for example Alon et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Méndenez et al., 2015) One entire article (NV8) cites the experiences of mothers working from home: although there has been a positive impact on family bonding in these women's experiences, they have also had to reschedule their work, balance between work and household duties, organize activities and teaching for their children, and sometimes hire extra help. In general, these women's stories suggest that home is mainly the responsibility of the woman and she is to organize and supervise whatever happens there. A closer look at the duties of a mother working from home is well illustrated by the following example:

> Working from home has not been easy for Namulwana. She says the lockdown was effected at a time when she did not have a maid. "It has not been easy. I have to juggle being a mother, an employee and a teacher. On top of my office work, I have to cook, clean the house and take care of the children when they need my attention" she says. (NV8)

The issue of paid and domestic work in the research data mainly seems to reflect the traditional gender roles or expectations – a provider for men and a mother for women (Porter, 2015a). Several articles point out how men have "abandoned their responsibilities" (for example NV4, NV7). These responsibilities, although not always explicitly elaborated in the research data, refer to the role of men as breadwinners: either they fail to provide income or abandon the family altogether, leaving the women alone to care for their children. The articles also present some cases where men have already abandoned their home before, but return when the lockdown leaves them without employment or food. The main responsibility for women indeed seems to be food: in the research data men tend to expect that women provide them with food even when they have not provided the income to buy it. The following example illustrates these struggles:

> "Men are demanding especially for the good food they didn't buy and women end up shouldering the responsibility of being home providers using their small savings." (NV7)

However, it is worth remembering that the article NV8 introducing career women only focuses on women living in capital Kampala who are mainly employed in office work and able to work from home. The realities of these women may be very different from women living in rural areas and working in low-wage or informal jobs. Moreover, one article (NV5) explicitly mentions how women act as breadwinners in the region or Tororo while men mostly spend their days out drinking. In such cases women perform both the roles of the caretaker of the home as well as the provider for income. The same notion is true for the many households led by single mothers in Uganda (Alava et al., 2021), which are rarely mentioned in the research data. Therefore the traditional gender roles presented before are not completely straightforward throughout the country.

To sum up, the research data suggests that women and girls have suffered not only from loss of income due to the impact of the lockdown on the sectors they dominate in working life, but also from increased childcare and household duties, which in turn can affect the jobs they have managed to maintain. Increased job loss due to the lockdown may have increased the amount of men abandoning their families, resulting in more women having to overtake the traditional role of men for providing income to ensure the family is fed, or face the risk of domestic violence if they do not offer the food. The roles and responsibilities allocated for women and girls in the research data concern the more general issue of representations of women in these articles, elaborated more in detail in Chapter 6.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research data by introducing four themes related to the challenges women faced during the COVID-19 lockdown that were formulated from the selected *New Vision*'s articles with the help of abductive content analysis. These themes include girls' issues, sexual and reproductive health, violence and access to justice, as well as paid and domestic work. As mentioned before, the main drivers behind these challenges according to the research data include loss of income, food insecurity, tensions in the family, fulfilment of responsibilities and health-related issues. These challenges are brought about especially by aspects of the lockdown such as the closure of schools, restrictions of movement and the closure of non-essential businesses and services.

In addition to acknowledging the challenges as well as the possible reasons behind them, the research data also presents some solutions in the form of explaining existing actions or voicing pleas for the government or other authorities to intervene, direct resources or sensitize the public in order to overcome the issues. However, it is useful to bear in mind that the pleas for government action are not necessarily meant as criticism, but rather reflect the political image of the president as a well-wishing father of his nation (Alava, forthcoming).

Many of the challenges that emerged from the research data reflect issues already found in earlier research about the impact of crisis-imposed lockdowns on women. These include for example increased domestic violence, increased household and childcare duties due to closure of schools, difficulties in accessing products and services related to sexual and reproductive health or formal justice institutions, impact on work sectors dominated by women, as well as increase in early pregnancies and marriages, among others. In addition to bringing about new challenges, such as maternal deaths or missed check-ups due to transport restrictions and fears of contracting the virus, the research data suggests that the lockdown has worsened already existing challenges, such as domestic and sexual violence as well as the issue of early pregnancies and marriages.

Some of the challenges introduced in this chapter are also related to social roles such as expected gender roles, for which reason it is important to explore the issue further. The next chapter presents the second part of the analysis, which examines the different ways in which women are represented in the research data. The findings from these two parts of the empirical analysis will be reflected against the themes of social justice later in Chapter 7.

6 REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE RESEARCH DATA

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the representations of women in the selected *New Vision*'s articles. The analysis was conducted through a critical discourse analysis tool called the naming of social actors. Risdaneva (2018) writes that naming investigates the portrayal of social roles in varying contexts through categories related to the representations of social actors. This allows for the exploration of the ways in which the discourse in the research data may represent and reproduce relations of inequality and power. This study used the following categories to study representations of women: functionalization, classification, relational identification, agency, and exclusion/inclusion.

Risdaneva (2018) and Leeuewen (2003) explain the categories utilized in this study as follows. In *functionalization*, the naming of social roles is based on occupations such as teacher, businessperson etc. *Classification* occurs when social roles are categorized through rather fixed characteristics, for example age, gender, religion or ethnicity. In *relational identification* the roles are categorized through relations such as mother, aunt, or guardian. *Agency* is a category formulated by the author of this study which entails von Leeuwen's (2003) division into active and passive roles, in which the social actors are represented either as an active force or a passive receiver in an activity. Following the notions by Jungar and Oinas (2011), agency in this study refers to the acts of women in the socio-economic-cultural context of the lockdown in Uganda rather than to a description of an individual woman. Finally, *inclusion/exclusion* concerns the question if all social actors of an activity are present or if some are in some way omitted, for example the actual perpetrator in the passive "a woman was raped".

It is important to remember that although the categories are presented here as somewhat separate, they may overlap to a certain extent and for example the cultural or academic background of the researcher may have an impact on how the categories are used to name social actors in a certain research data (T. Leeuwen, 2003). The categories used in this study were chosen to help answer the following guiding questions: 1) What kinds of roles and responsibilities are allocated for women in the research data? 2) To what extent are women presented as victims, and to what extent is their agency emphasized? Do these two

representations coexist in the research data? 3) Who or what is seen as guilty for women's struggles during the pandemic?

The chapter is divided into three sections according to these questions, followed by a short summary. The findings from this part of the analysis will be discussed in light of the theories of social justice later in Chapter 7.

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

The first guiding question utilizes the categories of functionalization, classification and relational identification, formulated from Leeuwen (2003) and Risdaneva (2018), in exploring the representations of women in light of the roles and responsibilities allocated to them in the research data. In terms of **classification**, which concerns rather fixed characteristics of the social actors in question, the women are mainly identified by their age in numbers or by words such as woman, girl child and schoolgirl, as well as the place where they live or where they are originally from, such as the name of the village or identifying them as refugees. Often these classifications coincide with functionalization and relational identification, introducing a woman by her age, place of living, the number of her children or her work where applicable, such as the following:

Concy Ayot, 22 years old single mother of four Children (3boys&1girl) and born of Lamogi sub-county but currently living in Amuru Town Council --. (NV4)

Shamim Nakibogo, a Girls Advocacy Alliance champion based in Buyende district --. (NV5)

19-year-old Margret, who was training for hairdressing before the lockdown at Uganda Youth Development Link training centre --. (NV5)

Nakawunde Faridah (not real name), a mother of five and resident of Kalagala village --. (NV1).

The abovementioned examples are a great illustration of the recognition of different characteristics and situations that construct these individual women instead of solely focusing on gender as the defining factor for all women (Mohanty, 1984; Tamale, 2018). These examples also reflect **relational identification** in a way that women in the research data are largely presented as mothers, indicating the number of their children when introducing them. In a few cases the articles state if the women are single mothers, which

seems to assume that by default the women mentioned in the research data are married or live with a partner. However, bearing in mind the large amount of single mothers in Uganda (Alava et al., 2021), the aforementioned assumption does not completely grasp the diverse realities in which Ugandan women live. In any case the discourse in the articles seems to place women first and foremost in the role of mothers, which reflects the existing situation in Uganda (Ninsiima et al., 2018; Porter, 2015a), as discussed before. For example, the articles that concern sexual and reproductive issues tend to use the word "mother" slightly more often than "pregnant woman".

Jobs and other similar roles are also largely used to identify women, which leads to the category of **functionalization**. For example in relation to sexual and reproductive health services, women are often referred to as clients in addition to mothers and women in general. Sometimes the women's relation to a certain association is presented, such as in the example above mentioning how one girl is a Girls Advocacy Alliance champion or presenting a group of women as members of Elegu Women Traders (NV2). Several articles also identify women through their specific jobs or more general positions, using expressions such as "women leaders", "cross-border women traders" and "career women". These issues are illustrated by the following examples:

> According to Diana Kabahuma Muhwezi, the communications co-ordinator at Reproductive Health Uganda --. (NV13)

> Women church leaders decry rising cases of GBV. (NV7)

> Policies have been instituted to increase the participation of informal cross-border women traders to boost their incomes, improve living standards, and contribute to the country's overall economic development. (NV2)

In some articles women are also functionalized through offering sexual favors in order to meet their basic needs or help support the family:

> Amusugut explains that there is a lot of poverty in this community. She revealed that there are two girls aged 13 and 14 who shared with her that their father has asked them to look for boyfriends so they could get money to support the family. (NV5)

> "The scarcity of resources in refugee communities during the lockdown has culminated into heightened sexual violence and risky sexual behaviours of young girls in exchange for money to meet family needs." (NV6)

In addition to being a mother, the main responsibility that the articles establish for women according to the categorizations of classification, functionalization and relational identification is that of the caretaker of home in the form of providing food and other home necessities as well as taking care of the household chores and childcare. Although the articles mainly establish men as providers of income, there are several mentions of cases where women act as the providers in addition to attending to the home and children. Such occasions present an unequal burden in the responsibilities related to sustaining the family. The following example illustrates these varied responsibilities women may have in relation to the family as well as the impact of loss of income on them:

> "We are now using our savings to buy necessities at home. We are even getting some of the stock we had stored to feed our families. This means we are encroaching on the capital which we had generated, Auma said. "We might not be able to take our children back to school and the living standards of members' families will deteriorate because it is women who toil to look after their families." (NV2)

However, women's position in the working life and their contribution to the economy and development of Uganda is also recognized given the several occasions in which their job and the importance of the education of girls are mentioned. Therefore it should not be assumed that women are essentially marginalized and repressed in Uganda, although there are social and historical factors that may play a role in the inequalities they face today. Another form of functionalization largely present in the research data is the representation of women as victims, which is explored in more detail in the following section.

6.2 Women as passive victims and active agents

The second guiding question, "To what extent are women presented as victims, and to what extent is their agency emphasized? Do these two representations coexist in the research data?" explores the extent to which women in the research data are presented as passive victims or active agents, and if these two views coexist. Therefore the categorization that helps answering this question is **agency** (active/passive). Here the term "agency" refers to a category formulated by the author of this study to accommodate Leeuwen's (2003) identification of social actors as active or passive, but focusing on the context or the circumstances in which they act according to Jungar and Oinas (2011). In general, the research data seems to portray women more often as passive receivers or victims of the

actions of others or the prevailing conditions. This line of discourse seems to apply equally to the conditions created by the COVID-19 lockdown as well as specific cases in which women are subjected to the actions of for example men or parents:

> The struggling mother of four has now become a victim of domestic violence as she reports being battered by her husband whenever the food ration given to them runs out. (NV6)

> She is trying her level best to survive while waiting for the government to call off the lockdown so that she can go and report her case [of domestic violence and failure to provide by her husband] to the police. (NV4)

> Girls are left home alone to take care of their siblings which puts them at risk because there is no adult to guide and correct them. (NV10)

> Uganda enjoyed a booming cross-border informal trade, 80% of which was being done by women as their sole source of income. However, the inevitable closure of borders because of the dangerous COVID-19 is threatening to drive the women out of business, writes Faridah Kulabako. (NV2)

In case of sexual encounters, family planning and sustaining the family and the children in general, the research data presents women as very active agents. They actively seek contraceptive services and try to avoid unwanted pregnancies and diseases sometimes against their husbands' opinions, find new ways of working when the lockdown interrupts their normal employment or when men fail to provide for the family, use their savings to ensure that the family obtains home necessities, or balance effectively between work and household management. However, even when the women's active agency is articulated in the research data, most often the articles seem to emphasize how difficult their situation has become, how they have to fight hard to survive or how there is no solution despite their attempts:

> Ayot disclosed that she is grappling to feed her children by babysitting other people children and doing casual labour in order to obtain foodstuffs for them to survive during this time. (NV4)

> He [a refugee commission officer] says women and the girl child facing severe economic shocks are more likely to take on high-risk work for their economic survival. (NV6)

> She requested her to intervene and call the GBV victim's husband. However, she says, he arrogantly refused any form of mediation, saying the victim was his wife and he could do with her whatever he wanted, and that no one could stop him. (NV1)

The abovementioned cases recognize the importance of the situation within which the women act as well as its impact on their capability to exercise agency. This way the victimhood caused by social situations is not overshadowed by active agency focusing on behavioral choice that would hold the women solely responsible for their challenges (Jungar & Oinas, 2011). While the discourse in the articles seems to emphasize more the women's struggles especially when generalizing them, there are some cases in which the women's active agency manifests more as a praise or advocacy for larger issues. These occasions concern mainly women who act from expert positions, such as religious women leaders (NV7) or personnel of an organization or a ministry (for example NV6, NV13), but in some cases also common individuals with strong mindsets. These examples concern cases where, contrary to presenting agency in the context of the wider social situation, agency is more related to the women's behavioral choices:

> "I will not keep quiet about this case I will walk to the GBV shelter at Amuru trading centre to report my cases I know they will support me since a friend of mine said the office is open," she said. (NV4)

> She requested that the government reconsiders both the negative and positive consequences of this lockdown towards youths, especially girls. "Prioritise our needs such as sanitary pads among other things," she said. (NV5)

Family planning and sexual encounters are an especially interesting issue in relation to women's agency. On one hand, women and girls are portrayed as passive victims of sexual abuse and harassment and their consequences. On the other, the articles present the issues of contraception, protection from diseases as well as pregnancies – planned or unplanned – as largely the responsibility of women and an arena of active agency. The type of discourse illustrated before is present in notions such as the following:

> The situation puts women in the line of picking unwanted pregnancies. (NV3)

> -- women still very much need SRH products and services. (NV9)

> Uganda chose to scale up the use of modern family planning methods to ensure that every Ugandan woman can choose when and how many children to have. (NV3)

Similar representations can be noted in relation to children and girls, who are simultaneously portrayed as active agents who do whatever they want when no one is supervising them, but who at the same time passively suffer the consequences of the actions of abusers or ignorant parents:

-- children walk close to 30 miles to and from the landing sites and meet many temptations on the way. (NV10)

"I usually find them at the borehole with boys. If schooling was going on, these girls would be busy with their education, instead of roaming about in the community. These girls face risks of teenage pregnancy or early marriage," she explained. (NV5)

Parents prefer settling defilement cases out of court because they fear losing out on bride price once the defiler is jailed. (NV12)

The abovementioned notions suggest an interesting intertwining of the representations of women as victims or passive receivers and active agents in the research data. As discussed before, the situational context of action is often recognized in the research data, although women's and girls' active role in relation to certain issues – mainly related to themes of sexuality such as contraception and the consequences of early sexual relations – is also emphasized. The situations in which women exercise agency can be varied and complex, constructed by social and historical factors and affected by issues such as the woman's employment and family status as well as the region where she lives. The interplay of active agency and passive receiving leads the analysis to the question of who or what is to blame for women's struggles during the pandemic, elaborated in the following sub-section.

6.3 The guilty parties for women's struggles

The third guiding question concerns Leeuwen's (2003) and Risdaneva's (2018) category of **inclusion/exclusion** to answer the question of who or what is seen as guilty for women's struggles during the pandemic. The cases in which the guilty party is included, i.e. the text explicitly states who is to blame, mostly concern the struggles of girls as well as domestic and sexual violence. In the case of girls the main culprits expressed by the articles are the parents who do not control and supervise their children, encourage them to marry in order to obtain dowry, or send them to work to sustain the family. Poverty and social structures such as the aforementioned role of women and girls as mothers are mentioned as the root cause for the parents' decisions regarding their daughters. Some of the blame is also attributed to school closure and the increased free time that the children spend unsupervised around the community. The following example elaborates on the relationships between the

root causes, guilty parties and possible solutions to women's struggles according to the articles:

> The community development officer Ngwedo sub-county Godfrey Tumusiime suggests urging women leaders in the district to organize counselling sessions with the parents and girls to discuss the benefits of educating the girl child. This process, he adds, requires continuous sessions in order to change the mindset of the entire community. (NV10)

In the case of domestic and sexual violence regarding women of all ages the articles establish men as the clear perpetrators. When the articles refer to a story of an individual woman, often the perpetrator is also specified, such as a violent husband or abusive father. When talking about the matter in general, the offenders are more often omitted and instead a passive *was raped* or *became a victim of domestic violence* is used. Interestingly, in case of adult women the articles use the word "raped", whereas concerning children the most common word is "defiled". The difference seems to be related to the age of the women, although the specific contents are not elaborated in the research data. Moreover, despite the common use of passive voice, several articles explicitly mention "men" in general as the perpetrators:

> Out of this frustration, men have become violent. (NV16)

> However, it was barely two weeks when she started being sexually harassed by men in her community. (NV17)

Similarly, in cases of teenage pregnancies the perpetrators are often omitted altogether and a passive tense is used instead. Some articles also state the matter as girls "facing the risk of consequences" of early sexual encounters (NV16, NV17). Other such consequences that the articles mention include sexually-transmitted diseases, early marriage or gender-based violence. This type of discourse together with the active agency of young girls, discussed earlier, seems to establish the girl as the main responsible party for issues arising from sexual encounters. Therefore there seems to be an interesting interplay between establishing the girls as active and responsible parties regarding sex and its consequences, but at the same time presenting them as victims of all kinds of abuse from men in the community, echoing the aforementioned notions about women as simultaneously active agents and passive receivers. The following example illustrates the complexity of the guilt and responsibility over pregnancy:

> He [a lawyer for health rights], however, said during the Covid-19 period, there will be two things: unwanted pregnancies or unsafe abortions, and yet the legal regime does not allow abortions under

Section 141 of the [Penal] Code. "This means very many people will end up being criminals". (NV9)

The strict COVID-19 guidelines are also established as a reason for several challenges, such as the consequences of closure of schools, maternal deaths and the confinement of families in their homes, which according to the articles has led to increased domestic violence. Therefore the articles seem to blame both specific agents such as parents or men, but also underlying socio-historical structures and existing challenges that interact with the lockdown and lead to struggles for women and girls. This is an important illustration of the complexity of the issue in order not to blame only one party such as men or parents for the struggles of all women an girls, as argued by Mohanty (1984). In general, there is no large difference in the amounts in which the guilty party is explicitly included in the texts and in which they are excluded or written in between the lines. To sum up, the following quotation illustrates the complexity of the issue of the guilty party by elaborating on the responsibilities on both sides:

> On that note, Namigadde urged women who experience problems to seek help from local leaders, the Police or trusted members of the community. On the other hand, Idro urged the Government and stakeholders to respond to emerging issues related to COVID-19. (NV13)

In the abovementioned quote, both the responsibility of women to seek help as well as the responsibility of the government to handle issues related to COVID-19 to mitigate their impact on women are highlighted. The urging of women to seek help from trusted members of the community also reflects the writings of Porter (2015b) about the role of the extended family and the community in solving disputes or wrongdoings. The findings from this part of the analysis are shortly summarized in the following section before moving on to explore both parts of the analysis in the light of the themes of social justice in Chapter 7.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has explored the varying representations of women in terms of their roles and responsibilities, agency and the issue of the guilty party present in the research data. In general the articles tend to present women mainly as mothers and caretakers of the home, most often passive victims or receivers of certain actions or conditions but at the same time active agents in certain realms, and establish mainly men, parents and the prevailing

conditions as the reason for the struggles of women and girls during the pandemic. The discourse in the articles also suggests that underlying socio-historical structures as well as the COVID-19 control measures and their consequences have further undermined women's possibilities to exercise agency during the pandemic.

The research data does not only cite experts such as law enforcement officers, medics or employees in NGOs and trade unions, but also gives voice to individual women to present their experiences. Even though these individual women are often introduced through very specific identification of their characteristics, most articles tend to talk about women in a generalizing tone, using expressions such as "most women" or "women and girls" and thus establishing them as a homogenous group with similar issues and needs. This is an interesting notion in light of the post-colonial feminist discussion in Chapter 2, which encourages avoiding this type of generalizing discourse (for example Mohanty, 1984). However, as Leeuwen (2003) mentions, state-owned newspapers such as the *New Vision* tend to generalize the wider public and specify experts, which to some extent is present in the research data as well.

A wider prevailing tone in which the articles write about women seems to be that of a group of people who need support, care and protection. For example, several articles mention how women deserve to have certain rights and safety in terms of violence or sexual and reproductive health, and call on measures to help support and empower them in different areas of life such as education. In addition to offering sensitization as a solution, calls are made on the intervention and help from the government, community leaders and men as active participants. Issues such as domestic violence and early pregnancies are defined as "vice" or "bad elements" in the society. This type of discourse reflects a rather paternalistic attitude towards women in the research data, further emphasizing the representation of women as more passive receivers and reinforcing the existing power relations.

The representations of women in the research data seem to reflect the general socio-historical context of Uganda in relation to gender, discussed in Chapter 3. Although the developments in Uganda during the COVID-19 lockdown as presented by the research data seem to follow a trend similar to previous crises, relatively little research exists on the relationship of these challenges to social justice. These issues are elaborated further in the following chapter, which explores the findings of the analyses in chapters five and six in the light of Nancy Fraser's dimensions of social justice.

7 DISCUSSION

In this discussion the themes of social justice are explored in relation to the analysis conducted on *New Vision*'s reporting about the challenges that women faced during the COVID-19 lockdown as well as the ways in which women were represented in this reporting. The theories presented in Chapter 2 provide the lens through which the findings of the analysis are interpreted. The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which concerns one dimension of Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice: maldistribution, misrecognition and misrepresentation, respectively. These three dimensions form the economic, cultural and political forms of injustice that can obstruct individuals from participating equally in the interactions of a society or another type of transnational public sphere, in which the subjects of justice are all those subjected to a certain governance structure (Fraser, 2007a, 2010; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). In the context of this study, the subjects of justice are all the women who are subjected to the lockdown measures of the Ugandan government to contain the spread of COVID-19. The following section begins the discussion with the economic dimension.

7.1 Economic dimension: maldistribution

In light of the analysis, a number of economic obstacles have prevented women from participating equally in the interactions of the society during the COVID-19 lockdown. The most notable is the issue of work: according to the analysis, the lockdown had the greatest impact on jobs dominated by women, such as the informal sector, tourism and informal cross-border trade. Many women either lost their job altogether, struggled to find a new job, had to use their business capital to ensure home necessities, or had to take on the role of the provider when their husbands lost their jobs. In Fraser's (2007a) terms, many of these issues concern obstacles in accessing economic resources that would enable a more just participation in the society for these women. Since many women in Uganda already tend to participate less in working life than men and face more difficulties such as lower wages, inequality in the rights of ownership and inheritance, as well as sexual harassment at work (Guma, 2015; Ndidde et al., 2020; UBOS 2019; UNDP 2019), the developments reported by the *New Vision* can possibly deepen the economic injustices that many women already struggle with.

The economic difficulties mentioned above also had an impact on the women's ability to perform the traditional roles expected of them, most notably in terms of providing food for the family. According to the analysis, failure to perform the expected gender roles can expose women to gender-based violence, which is already rather high in Uganda (Amegbor & Rosenberg, 2019; UBOS 2019). Economic difficulties brought about by the lockdown can also place some women in a higher risk of sexual exploitation, for example having to resort to transactional sex in order to meet their needs, as presented by the analysis. These risks can be especially true for refugee women, who might already struggle with limited food ratios, unemployment and limited access to healthcare. Thus economic hardships can place women in a very vulnerable position, resulting in other forms of injustice arising directly from economic injustice.

Moreover, the financial difficulties of the family reflect directly on their children, forcing them to take on jobs to aid sustaining the family, help in household duties or stay out of school due to failure to pay tuition fees. This in turn exposes them and especially girls to several other types of consequences or injustices, such as sexual abuse, child neglect especially in case of stepchildren, early marriages and early pregnancies. The analysis suggests that for example the issues of early pregnancies and marriages have their roots simultaneously in poverty and socio-historical developments, reflecting existing challenges in the realms of maldistribution and misrecognition that the economic hardships brought about by the lockdown can worsen. Girls also tend to have limited control over decisions regarding their lives, discussed further in relation to the political dimension of injustice. The struggles of girls are significant, since Uganda already faces high rates of early pregnancies and marriages (Maly et al., 2017; Ninsiima et al., 2018), and the increase of these challenges as presented by the *New Vision* can further exposes girls to all types of injustices.

The economic dimension of injustice is quite straightforward and it is easy to note how the economic obstacles as formulated by Fraser (2007a, 2008) and reported by the *New Vision* can have far-reaching consequences for women and girls during a lockdown. However, it is useful to bear in mind that the existing societal structures such as the differences in participation to working life are the result of long historical processes that involve both tradition and colonialism. For example, according to Tamale (2018) the colonial ideals of gendered labor and women's position as good housewives may have pushed women more into the realm of home rather than into working life. These kinds of developments may have enforced and cemented certain characteristics of tradition in a way that further weakens

women's position in the society. The economic difficulties faced by women may not only present challenges in participating in the society, but also create an environment and basis for other types of consequences and forms of injustice, as expressed by the following sections.

7.2 Cultural dimension: misrecognition

First, it is important to note that Fraser's understanding of cultural forms of injustice does not simply mean that a particular culture or tradition is to be blamed for injustice. Rather, it is a term that describes one of the three dimensions of social justice, and as Mohanty (1984) argues, wider social and historical contexts should be taken into account when examining phenomena related to a certain society or culture. As discussed before, past traditions intertwine with the changes brought about by the colonial period in today's Uganda, creating conditions than may further enhance the marginalization of women (Parikh, 2004).

The issue of work mentioned in the previous section also concerns the dimension of misrecognition. The fact that women mainly dominate informal sector jobs presents an existing injustice in that their role or effort in the working life is not fully recognized. As a result, they have suffered the hardest consequences regarding employment during the lockdown, further deepening the injustice of misrecognition. The intertwining of maldistribution and misrecognition regarding the issue of work is a great example of what Fraser means when she writes that the different forms of injustice are best considered together, since often it is not possible to resolve one without the other (Fraser, 2007a, 2008, 2013). Moreover, the analysis shows that while the role of informal cross-border women traders is recognized, the focus is highly economical in stressing their input to the country's whole economy or the impact of their jobs in their livelihoods, leaving out for example the impact of these jobs on these women's empowerment or independence.

In some parts of Uganda women are primarily expected to take care of the home and children, while men act as providers (for example Porter, 2015a). Therefore women's participation in working life in these regions might not be expected the same way as men's. However, the analysis shows that even when women do participate in working life and live with their husbands, they are still expected to bear the responsibility of the home and children, which has caused them extra burden during the school closure brought about by

the lockdown. The same struggles concern single mothers as well as women living in other regions where they are expected to take care of both the income and the household duties. These are more concrete examples of a cultural form of injustice in a way that the consequences of the lockdown interact with women's misrecognized position in the society, constructed by the intertwining of tradition and colonial understandings of the values of gendered labor.

Several challenges regarding the availability of sexual and reproductive health products and services are also articulated in the analysis. The provision of these products and services has either been interrupted or the transport restrictions have made them inaccessible for many women. The issue concerns contraception, medical check-ups as well as pregnancy and delivery related services. These issues reflect misrecognition (Fraser, 2007a, 2008) in which services specific to women are not prioritized or deemed necessary during the pandemic, which is an expected outcome in light of earlier research on crisis-related lockdowns (for example Davies & Bennett, 2016; Parkes et al., 2020).

The issue of sexual and reproductive health services for women coincides with the responsibility and active agency that the *New Vision*'s articles place on women regarding sexual encounters and pregnancy. Contraception and protection from diseases and unwanted pregnancy are largely seen as women's responsibility, although the analysis also suggests that some men do not respect the choices women make on these issues. This responsibility is particularly visible in case of young girls both in the analysis as well as in earlier research about Uganda (for example Maly et al., 2017; Porter, 2015b). This unequal responsibility as well as women's limited control over their bodies and sexuality on many occasions (for example Maly et al., 2017; Porter, 2015a) reflects an existing injustice arising from misrecognition which, according to the analysis, is heightened by aspects of the lockdown such as the closure of schools, pressure to gain income and restricted access to contraception.

The issue of inaccessibility mentioned in relation to sexual and reproductive health services also concerns access to justice institutions, such as courts, police stations or NGOs in cases of wrongdoings such as domestic or sexual violence. Even though the *New Vision* reports these problems to be on the rise during the lockdown, at the same time many justice services have been temporarily suspended or access to them restricted. These notions reflect the reality that the existence of justice systems itself does not guarantee the realization of social justice in practice, and as discussed in Chapter 3, several socio-historical and economic

factors can prevent women from using them (Fiske & Shackel, 2016; Porter, 2015b). Moreover, although the articles largely present formal justice institutions as a solution, it is important to bear in mind that in Uganda the main arenas for seeking justice are the family and kinship structures rather than the formal systems (Parikh, 2004; Porter, 2015b). Thus the issue of violence falls mainly in the scope of misrecognition in that women's struggles are not fully recognized, although it also somewhat reflects injustice arising from maldistribution in relation to accessing justice systems when the women prefer to do so.

Moreover, what is considered a just solution may vary between different contexts. In the research data women are strongly encouraged to report their cases, which may be due to the fact that as a state-owned newspaper the *New Vision* might support more the idea of turning to formal institutions for justice, as well as the fact that many of the experts interviewed in the articles are personnel of such institutions. However, several articles also articulate that there is no other solution than conversation with the perpetrator, and women are encouraged to avoid tensions at home by being understanding of their husbands who might have lost their jobs due to the lockdown. This discourse in turn reflects the abovementioned notions about the family and kinship structures as the main distributor of justice. Moreover, according to Porter (2015b), many women in Uganda indeed consider the issues justly solved when the solution is agreed upon within the family or wider community. Thus as Mohanty (1984) argues, instead of offering solutions from the outside it is important to consider the women's own experiences of justice in order to not only recognize their position and opinions on the issue, but also allow them to be represented, mitigating the cultural and political forms of injustice they may face.

As noted from this part of the discussion, challenges concerning misrecognition in the context of the lockdown concern mainly the failure to recognize the roles, experiences and specific needs of many women and respond to them accordingly. The discussion shows that issues of misrecognition are often intertwined with issues of maldistribution and misrepresentation, the latter of which is discussed further in the next section.

7.3 Political dimension: misrepresentation

As in the case of the cultural dimension of injustice, it is worth noting that the political dimension is a term that encompasses wider issues of exclusion from the decision-making

and claiming justice in a society (Fraser, 2007a; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Thus the wording should not be confused to only include the sphere of formal politics, but understood as the individuals' – in this case women and girls – capacity to participate and be represented in the wider social context in which they live.

Girls in particular seem to struggle with misrepresentation according to the findings from the analysis. Often they are represented as active subjects that need a large amount of supervision and control to maintain them on the perceived right path and prevent them from being abused in any way. The research data mainly talks about the issues of girls from adult point of view, interviewing experts or presenting the general situation in a somewhat judging tone, and only rarely the voice is given to these girls themselves. Early pregnancies are also largely presented as the girls' issues and to some extent their responsibility, which is a rather common thought in some parts of Uganda (for example Porter, 2015a) but contradicts the young girls' own experiences of having little control over sexual encounters and getting pregnant (Maly et al., 2017). At the same time, it is often the parents who decide and control the lives of their children in terms of whether they should work or study and what to do when a young girl falls pregnant. This represents Fraser's (2007a) ordinary-political misrepresentation, in which girls are largely excluded from the decision-making regarding their own lives.

The way in which the analysis presents women mainly as passive receivers who need support, protection and empowerment reflects misrepresentation in that the women are presented as rather dependent on the intervention of the government or local leaders to resolve their issues. Often the experts interviewed in the articles call on sensitization of the communities on issues such as the education of girls, sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, which reflects a top-down model of intervention. The analysis shows that mainly it is the experts who provide and call for solutions and only rarely individual women are truly presented as active agents that possess the necessary means to improve their situation. This way of representing women as a homogenous, essentially oppressed group carries a risk of reproducing existing power structures and ignoring the various other characteristics and wider social factors that determine individual women (Mohanty, 1984; Tamale, 2018). As discussed before, this type of discourse can be related to the *New Vision*'s emphasis on expert voices or the prevailing political image of the president as the father of the nation (Alava, forthcoming) to seek help from.

In addition to passive receivers, the analysis shows that women are mainly allocated the role of mother and the caretaker of home. Following the colonial understandings of the strong division between the public and private (Tamale, 2018), this role places the woman in the private realm and thus easily excludes her from participating in the public arena. These roles assume that women have little power to influence the society and their lives. Following the notions of Kapoor (2004) it could be argued that certain type of discourse about a group of people, for example the discourse in *New Vision* about women, can act as a basis for misframing and excluding the said group from the society. The aforementioned ways of presenting women in the light of their roles and responsibilities reflect this type of misframing, which carries a risk of further marginalizing women from participation in the society.

As Fraser (2007a) argues, the political dimension of injustice is of particular importance since it precedes the economic and cultural dimensions. This section of the analysis shows that in *New Vision*'s discourses women of all ages seem to struggle with having little control over decisions regarding their lives or the possibility to voice their opinions and suggestions. This type of misrepresentation can lead to viewing the challenges specific to women as well as the solutions to them through a somewhat false lens that might not fully represent the experiences of these women themselves. However, to avoid what Mohanty (1984) calls creating a Third World difference, it is important to remember that it is not necessarily men in general or authorities at large that oppress and exclude women, but instead varying social, historical and political contexts have an impact on the complex issues that individual women in Uganda struggle with. The reflections in the following section elaborate more on the complexity of the issues of social justice presented in this discussion.

7.4 Reflections

This discussion has elaborated on the two parts of the analysis conducted on the selected *New Vision*'s articles in relation to Nancy Fraser's dimensions of social justice. The economic dimension is rather straightforward, and the analysis reveals several economic obstacles brought about by the lockdown which have posed challenges to women's participation in the society. These economic obstacles can create environments for or intertwine with other types of injustices, which is the case for example with the issue of paid and domestic work. The cultural and political dimensions of injustice may be more complex

to grasp, but their importance regarding the women's struggles during the lockdown is evident in the light of the discussion. These two forms of injustice encompass issues of recognizing the women's role and input in the society as well as placing importance on their struggles, not only from the point of view of the government or other authorities, but acknowledging how these women themselves experience the challenges and the solutions to them.

Since the context of this study is the government-imposed lockdown in Uganda, Fraser's (2007b) notion of transnational public sphere is not relevant in this case, although it can be very useful in studying the questions of social justice in other contexts. Similarly, the dimension of politics of framing related to misrepresentation (Fraser, 2007a) mainly concerns wider and more international themes, which is why it is understandable that this form of political injustice did not appear in this analysis. However, all three dimensions of social (in)justice formulated by Fraser (2007a) were present in the findings of the analysis, often in an overlapping manner, as illustrated by the following two examples.

First, the issue of gender-based violence is particularly interesting, since the articles attribute it to several factors such as the failure to adhere to expected gender roles due to economic hardships, failure to access formal justice systems due to transport restrictions or the closure of such services, and the limited scope of available solutions apart from talking within the family. Therefore the issue seems to reflect all of Fraser's (2007a) three dimensions of social justice. Economic and cultural forms of injustice such as income loss, socio-historical gender roles or division of responsibilities can partly cause the issue, whereas cultural and political forms of injustice such as access to formal justice systems, availability of solutions and the value of the victims' opinions can hinder the attempts to resolve it. Therefore gender-based violence offers a great example of the intertwining of different forms of injustice, further underlining the notion by Fraser (2007a) that the issues of social justice are best treated when all forms of injustice are simultaneously taken into account. The way in which gender-based violence and the role of justice systems is presented in the research data collides with the realities in which women live as well as the socially accepted ways for seeking justice (Porter, 2015b), which also illustrates the complex socio-historical context in which women may face injustice.

Second, the issue of the guilty party as well as the representation of women's simultaneously active agency and passive role especially in relation to sexuality reflect the same intertwining

of different forms of injustice. Economic hardships can drive some women to take risks that may involve a possibility of sexual abuse in order to meet their basic needs, while at the same time women and especially young girls are seen as responsible for sexuality-related issues due to misrecognition. On the other hand, establishing men as the guilty actors in sexual encounters shifts the responsibility from women to men. The unequal responsibility over sexuality represents misrecognition, but the blaming of men or the prevailing conditions and calling on outside intervention may exclude these women from being part of the solution apart from being sensitized about their rights and possibilities; instead, higher authorities are given the power to decide how to handle the issue. This type of discourse leaves women's active agency constrained by misrecognition and misframing. Moreover, the simple allocation of passive and active roles and pointing at men or authorities as the guilty party may easily lead to reinforcing the divisions between men and women and maintaining prevalent power relations intact. For this reason the critical examination of the discourses present in major newspapers can be significant in reinforcing or deconstructing forms of injustice.

Although Fraser's (2007a) arguments on the importance of the political dimension of injustice are very true and relevant in relation to the participation of women in issues that concern their lives, the analysis and discussion in this study are not completely in line with her notion. This also reflects some of the criticism directed at her theory for not considering sufficiently the dimension of maldistribution (Robeyns, 2003; Xu & Hong, 2015). Instead, the findings from the analysis suggest that poverty as well as the social structures constructed by tradition and historical developments act as the underlying factors in many of the challenges that the lockdown has brought about or worsened in the lives of women around Uganda. Obviously the context of the study or the situation has a great impact on which dimension of social justice appears the most prevailing, and as discussed before, the three dimensions are best considered together as they are in many ways intertwined and overlapping.

The aforementioned notions lead the discussion back to Fraser's key question in terms of her theory: "how fair or unfair are the terms of interaction that are institutionalized in a society?" (Fraser et al., 2004, p. 378). Obviously, the topic of this study concerns a very limited context rather than the case of a whole society, and the object of study is only one specific media. However, it can be argued that in the discourses of the *New Vision* the terms of interaction in order to participate equally in the society during the COVID-19 epidemic

are not very fair for women. Instead, many women face several economic, cultural and political obstacles to participation that are worsened by the aspects of the lockdown interacting with the social and historical context in which these women live. Although Fraser's theory may be best suited to more large-scale issues of social justice, it has provided a useful analytical tool to explore the themes of social justice in the discourses about women and the COVID-19 lockdown in one of Uganda's main newspapers.

Many of the issues presented in *New Vision*'s articles are predictable in the light of earlier research on similar situations as well as the knowledge on the general context of Uganda. While the analysis also presents completely new challenges brought about by the COVID-19 lockdown, the more prevailing discourse seems to be that of existing difficulties that the lockdown is worsening. This supports the notion that already vulnerable people often face the heaviest impact of all types of crises (Donner & Rodriguez, 2011; Hadjimichalis, 2011). However, although generalizing can be helpful in some contexts, it is important not to view women as one homogenous group and essentially vulnerable. In the context of Uganda the amount of different ethnic groups and related social structures, as elaborated in Chapter 3, may result in a great regional variation in relation to the struggles that women face, the responses to these struggles, as well as the possibilities for active agency of each woman.

Although Fraser's (2007a) theory of the dimensions of social justice offers a very comprehensive lens through which to examine the discourses on the gendered challenges caused by the lockdown in Uganda, and although the analysis conducted for this study has successfully shed some light on these themes, the study involves some constraints. Moreover, there is still need for further research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the topics in question. These issues are shortly presented in the conclusion in the following chapter.

8 CONCLUSION

This study has examined the discourses in the Ugandan newspaper *New Vision* in terms of their reporting about women in the context of the COVID-19 lockdown and reflected these discourses against the themes of social justice as formulated by Nancy Fraser (2007a). After introducing the theoretical background of social justice and post-colonial feminism as well as presenting the context of Uganda, the study has moved on to elaborate on media research and the particular newspaper from which selected articles were retrieved as research data. The study has analyzed the themes that were formulated around the challenges faced by women as presented in the selected *New Vision*'s articles as well as the ways in which women are represented in the said articles in terms of their roles and responsibilities, agency, and the question of the guilty party for their struggles. These themes and representations have then been explored in the light of Nancy Fraser's economic, cultural and political dimensions of justice through a discussion following the empirical analyses.

All three research questions introduced in the beginning of the study were answered through the analysis and discussion. First, the analysis identified four themes that emerged around the challenges faced by women in the *New Vision*'s reporting about the COVID-19 lockdown: 1) girls' issues; 2) sexual and reproductive health; 3) violence and access to justice; and 4) paid and domestic work. Second, the analysis explored representations of women in terms of their roles and responsibilities mainly as mothers and caretakers of the home, their simultaneously active but somewhat more passive position in the face of the crisis, as well as placing the guilt of their struggles mainly on men, parents and the prevailing conditions. Third, the discussion revealed that the analysis reflects all three dimensions of social justice formulated by Nancy Fraser, and that these dimensions are highly intertwined and often exist simultaneously. Thus the study has successfully answered the research problem it was set to explore and offered more information on the aspects of social justice in the *New Vision*'s reporting about women during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Since the study utilized public media as research data, no ethical considerations regarding the anonymity of informants were necessary. However, according to Jokinen et al. (2016), it is important for the researcher to reflect her or his manners of presenting issues or phenomena in order to note if these issues are being reconstructed in a customary manner and thus hiding the actual discourses taking place in a given context. It is also important to

note that discourses construct social reality whether or not this is the intention of the discourse (Jokinen et al., 2016). Thus the researcher's own position as the author of the discourse in this study should be considered, bearing in mind the notions of post-colonial feminism in Chapter 2.

It is worth remembering that the author of this study is a white Western female, for which reason the study is written from outside of the actual context it wishes to study. The author is not fully acquainted with the social reality and the socio-historical context of Uganda, and due to the limited scope and time to conduct the study, gaining an in-depth understanding about the topic was not possible. For these reasons the analysis might be affected by the author's own perceptions and the Western cultural lens through which she views the topic. Therefore the discourse in this thesis should not be taken as an actual representation of the issues in question without critical examination. In the future it would be interesting to read a study on the same topics explored here written by Ugandan female researches to gain a more comprehensive and relevant picture of the theme.

The research validity is good in light of the discussion about Ugandan media and its role in the country, elaborated in Chapter 4, as well as the relevance of this type of context to the purpose of this study. The research reliability is good in terms of transparency and the detailed introduction of the analysis process, although it is worth bearing in mind that since the research data was largely hand-picked, different researchers might have chosen slightly different articles according to their scientific, cultural or personal background. The study was conducted using only one newspaper, and although this particular newspaper has a significant role in Ugandan public discussion as elaborated in Chapter 4, there is a risk of biased representation of the issues. For further research it could be useful to study more than one newspaper to gain a more comprehensive picture of the topics or compare the discourses between different newspapers.

The data collection process revealed some interesting notions that were not considered in the actual study due to its limited scope and the pre-established data collection criteria. For example, within the time range used for data collection there were almost no articles about gendered effects specific to men, although this may also be due to the final combination of search words used to collect the research data. However, violence in general was reported to be on the increase. Although gender-based violence tends to mostly concern women, crisis-related mortality seems to affect more men (Guidorzi, 2020), which places a gendered aspect

on violence in general as well. This notion of course raises the question if women's challenges during a crisis are more often reported because women simply face more challenges than men, or if men's challenges are overshadowed by those of women for one reason or another. It is an interesting issue and definitely worth further research in light of the themes of social justice as well as gender equality. Moreover, due to the limited time frame within which the research data was collected, there might be more issues in relation to the challenges faced by women that have been reported later and thus were not considered in this study. These issues also present an interesting field for further research.

Due to the limited scope of the research, the study is small in size and therefore not very comprehensive, for which reason no generalizations can be drawn from the analysis. The limited scope of the study also calls for further research on similar topics about the themes of social justice in relation to gender and crises. Although this study has concentrated on Uganda, issues of social justice and gender are applicable to any context and may provide fruitful and interesting grounds for further research and development. Moreover, the topic of this study is significant, since although not all crises that may lead to lockdowns are necessarily health-related, the predicted trend is that epidemics and outbreaks will increase in the future as the human population grows and becomes increasingly connected (Whiting, 2020). Learning from previous crises may help in preparing for future ones and mitigating their potential gendered impacts to enhance social justice and gender equality on a larger scale and thus construct a more just world for everyone.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. Articles retrieved from *New Vision* as research data

NV1: The New Vision. 20.04.2020. Gender Based Violence: When staying at home isn't safe.

NV2: The New Vision. 23.04.2020. COVID-19 brings informal cross-border trade to a standstill.

NV3: The New Vision. 01.05.2020. Women lose access to family planning services due to lockdown.

NV4: The New Vision. 05.05.2020. COVID-19: Gender based violence on an increase.

NV5: The New Vision. 16.05.2020. Lockdown: When staying home is unsafe for school girls.

NV6: The New Vision. 25.05.2020. Refugee women and children affected the most by COVID-19 lockdown.

NV7: The New Vision. 10.06.2020. Women church leaders decry rising cases of GBV.

NV8: The New Vision. 18.06.2020. How career women balance work at home.

NV9: The New Vision. 30.06.2020. COVDID-19: Activists urge govt to improve sexual and reproductive health services.

NV10: The New Vision. 04.07.2020. Early pregnancies escalate during COVID-19 lockdown.

NV11: The New Vision. 15.07.2020. Why March registered upsurge in pregnant women deaths.

NV12: The New Vision. 09.08.2020. 2,372 Girls defiled, married off during COVID-19 lockdown.

NV13: The New Vision. 11.08.2020. How COVID-19 has affected women in Uganda.