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Whose servants?

The Dilemma of Four Tanzanian Umbrella and Quasi-umbrella NGOs

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

This master's thesis is a case study of four Tanzanian umbrella and quasi-umbrella non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE), Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), and the National Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NACONGO). These organizations are "serving" and "offering support" for local civil society actors and NGOs. They are running projects through their members, local NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) and concentrate on the "building capacities" of the local civil society. There are fewer studies on these kinds of intermediary organizations in Africa, and this thesis founds how the context poses constraints and opportunities on these organizations and how these organizations use their room for manoeuvre and legitimize their roles as support organizations. The study is slightly aslant towards the two national umbrella NGOs (TANGO & TACOSODE), while still recognizing that some of their realities cannot be understood without giving attention to the quasi-umbrella NGOs (FCS & NACONGO).

The data for this study was collected by doing interviews, as well as doing participant observation and document analysis in Tanzania for two and a half months. The interview material consists of 24 recorded interviews and notes on 14 interviews among the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs and their stakeholders: members, donors and government officials. The face-to-face interviews were between semi-structured and theme interviews and the interview material were coded in themes by using ATLAS.ti computer programme.

It was found that the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs have different kinds of inter-dependencies between the state, donors and members/beneficiaries. The study also shows some isomorphic forms among the umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies, although some points of divergence are noticed as well. All the organizations are working for the same goals (poverty reduction and social development) and are doing some similar activities (capacity building and advocacy) but do not actively work together because competition over resources, members, political power and organizational legitimacy does not enhance cooperation among the organizations. Even though umbrella NGOs work mostly country-wide, support their members and highlight their intermediary roles, sometimes their work cannot be separated from other well-established and donor-funded Tanzanian NGOs. This suggests that these organizations are not serving their members as they are supposed to. Yet, the survival of the organization depends on its abilities to play the intermediary role between different sectors successfully. The most important thing then is to maintain a balance between different actions: serving members, serving donor agendas, their own interest as an organization or other stakeholders' interests depending on the situation.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
non-governmental organization – civil society – umbrella NGO – intermediary organization – DOSTANGO – new institutional theories – resource dependency – Tanzania

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANGOZA	Association of Non-governmental Organizations in Zanzibar
GAPVOD	Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development
CBO	Community-based Organization
CSCI	Convention of Ivorian Civil Society (Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDT	District Development Trust
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation Tanzania
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FCS	Foundation for Civil Society
FHI	Family Health International
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSW	International Council on Social Welfare
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MKUKUTA	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umaskini Tanzania)
MVIWATA	National Network for Farmers' Groups (Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania)
NACONGO	National Council of Non-governmental Organizations
NACP	National AIDS Control Programme
NANGO	Zimbabwe's National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations

NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PF	Policy Forum
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation, Tanzania
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
TACAids	Tanzania Commission for Aids
TACOSODE	Tanzania Council for Social Development
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TANGO	Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
TANOFA	Tanzania Network of Organizations of People Living with HIV/AIDS
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TCCIA	Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
UN	The United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZSCO	Zambia Council for Social Development

Map of Tanzania

Source: http://images.nationmaster.com/images/motw/africa/tanzania_pol_2003.jpg [Accessed December 22, 2011]

1 Introduction

> *We umbrella organizations are like representatives of NGOs so the big role is: building capacities, NGO coordinating, having a one voice.* (Francis July 2010)

This master's thesis deals with Tanzanian national umbrella non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and so-called quasi-umbrella NGOs and some of their characteristics. The umbrella organizations as development agents and their practices, strategies and contextual constraints and opportunities are in the focus. By an umbrella NGO I mean national NGOs that are, by their own words, "serving" and "offering support" for local civil society actors and NGOs, and have a membership-base consisting of local NGOs. These organizations are running projects through their members, other NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) and concentrate on the "building capacities" of the local civil society. In Tanzania there are several national umbrella NGOs as well as other NGOs or organizations that act similarly to the umbrella NGOs which I will call 'quasi-umbrella NGOs'. I am focusing on four active organizations in Tanzania: Tanzania Council for Social Development (TACOSODE), Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), and National Council of Non-governmental Organizations (NACONGO).

In this chapter I will briefly go through the background, purpose and scope of this master's thesis. The second part will introduce methodology and methods which I have chosen for this study. It explains the reasons for choosing the methods and includes a paragraph reflecting on my own role and on the reliability of the study. Chapter three introduces theoretical and empirical literature concerning civil society and NGOs but also takes steps towards understanding NGOs as organizations *per se*. The fourth chapter will look at the Tanzanian context in terms of civil society and NGOs: introductions to the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs that I am focusing on are part of this chapter. Chapters five and six are based on my empirical findings and address the contexts and environments where umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs work, operate and create strategies as active agents. Chapter five concentrates on common constraining roles of the environment for the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs whereas chapter six tries to explain the multiple reactions and heterogeneous ways of twisting power relations for the organizations' own good. The last chapter concludes some of the issues from the previous chapters concerning the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs, but also tries to situate this study as a part of NGO research in the wider context and introduces some possibilities for further research.

1.1 Background and relevance

Non-governmental organizations have increased in their number and gained more power in the past decades. Igoe and Kelsall (2005, 5) see that two global political transformations are associated with this phenomenon: 1) "the Reagan/Thatcher revolution" with the emphasis on free markets and the downsizing of government regulation, and 2) the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of civil society in Eastern and Central Europe.

Keane (2001, 26) writes that there has been a two-hundred-fold increase in the number and variety of civil society organizations during the past century. He estimates the number of NGOs being 40,000, planetary wide, in 2001 (ibid.). Besides number, the scale of funding given to the NGO sector worldwide has also increased tremendously even though there are some opposing views (see Igoe & Kelsall 2005, 2). For members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which forms the OECD's forum for aid coordination, civil society organizations are essential partners in development and especially "in delivering services, stimulating public debate, encouraging democratic processes and accountability, and strengthening civil society" (OECD 2011, 14). In 2009 DAC members and EU institutions allocated $17 billion (about € 12.2 billion) to and through NGOs which is 13 % of total aid disbursements in that year (OECD 2011, 19–20). The amount of disbursements has increased by billions from the year 2001 (ibid.).

Soon after the growth in the number of NGOs and the funding to them, more and more researchers also started to be interested in the ongoing phenomenon. The early research on NGOs that emerged from the late 1980s was, according to Tvedt (2006, 678), "more propaganda than science" and was boosted by the idea that NGOs have "comparative advantages as a group compared with states". The more extensive writing on NGOs emerged from the early 1990s onward (Opoku-Mensah 2007, 10). However, the literature was still largely "based more on faith than fact" (Fisher 1997, 441) and the field was mainly characterized by a combination of an over-identification of NGOs, an excessive emphasis on technical issues and a lack of theorization and contextual analysis (Lewis & Opoku-Mensah 2006; Opoku-Mensah 2007, 11). Tvedt (2006, 680) argues that "historiography of research on NGOs in development can be summarized as a history of NGO activism, producing ideology in favor of what has been conceived as a progressive NGO agenda". Furthermore, the dominant funding structures for research have prodded for analysis based on a political or ideological mission, since the research has been financed either by the NGOs or the donor states (ibid.). In other words, much of the published literature in the field has been written either by "reflective practitioners or by engaged academics wearing an activist or consultancy 'hat'" (Opoku-Mensah 2007, 12).

Articles and books on civil society and NGOs in Africa (see e.g. Hearn 2007; Igoe & Kelsall 2005; Lewis 2002; Michael 2004; Pinkney 2009) and in Tanzania (see e.g. Kelsall 2001; Kontinen 2011; Mercer 2003; Tripp 2000) are plentiful, usually more context-specific and including different amounts of theorization. They provide a good basis for my study but neither these nor other studies on Africa cover umbrella NGOs as primary research topics. The reason cannot be that there are only a few umbrella NGOs, since many African countries besides Tanzania have their own: Zimbabwe's National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (NANGO), Zambia's Zambia Council for Social Development (ZSCO), Ghana's Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development (GAPVOD), Ivory Coast's Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI) etc. Although researching African umbrella NGOs has not been popular, there exists studies and research covering umbrella organizations in the 'western' context (e.g. Gumz 2008; Ohanyan 2009) and research concentrating on global social movements' networks (see e.g. Global Civil Society yearbooks with different authors), and NGOs' networking skills and networks at the local level in other parts of the world (e.g. Bano 2011; Kilby 2008). However, these studies are too far from the realities of Tanzanian umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs.

Besides that these NGOs have been less researched, focusing on umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs is important, since they could be seen as *intermediary NGOs* or *support organizations* (see Brown & Kalegaonkar 2002; Sanyal 2006). They can be distinguished from conventional NGOs by being located between local groups, national bodies and international institutions/donors and providing support and services to civil society organizations (Sanyal 2006). They can be seen as part of the aid chains formed by donors, ‘northern’ NGOs, ‘southern’ NGOs, and beneficiaries at the local levels (Bebbington 2005), and have a crucial role on how development projects are implemented in practice. If we want to know how these intermediary NGOs play their roles, are affected by and affect the environment around them, then research on umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs is needed.

1.2 The purpose and scope of this study

The purpose of this master’s thesis is to study four Tanzanian non-governmental organizations: two national umbrella NGOs and two so-called quasi-umbrella NGOs. I try to understand how these organizations operate and build their roles as umbrella NGOs or service NGOs affected by the complex social environment in which they operate. On one hand, I am interested in how the environment shapes the umbrella NGOs and, on the other hand, how the umbrella NGOs structure their context. For this purpose, attention has to be drawn to the organizational side of NGOs. This is important, since in the research of civil society and NGOs the question of what is *non-governmental* about NGOs is widely debated while the *organizational* side has been largely ignored (Hilhorst 2007, 297). The same thing is also noticed by Opoku-Mensah (2007, 11), when he asks:

> *what are the best ways to challenge the normative emphasis apparent in much of previous research; how can a broader range of disciplinary perspectives such as historical ethnography, organizational studies, critical theory, and anthropology best be introduced to the NGO research field; what kind of approaches can increase understanding of the contextual embeddedness of NGOs beyond the familiar aid and development project settings, including both micro- and macro-levels.*

Encouraged by these remarks, I am trying to avoid any normative, out-of-the-context approaches, and highlight the embeddedness of the organizations in this study and also put great emphasis on empirical evidence. However, I will not go beyond the traditional development aid setting for two reasons: firstly, donors are the most important stakeholders for (umbrella) NGOs since they form the organizations’ financial basis and secondly, (umbrella) NGOs work in and for development.

In order to discover some issues in and around the umbrella NGOs I will construct my theoretical framework from 1) organizational approaches, known from both political science and organizational and management studies and 2) development related civil society theories. Originally, organizational theories have a base in business studies and studying profit-making organizations but they have also become popular in analyzing the non-profit sector. Yet, most of the studies made on non-profit or non-governmental organizations are focusing on the 'developed' world (see e.g. Callen et al. 2009; Frumkin & Gelaskiewicz 2004; Guo & Acar 2005; Leiter 2005; Ramanath 2009; Verbruggen et al. 2011). However, at least Elliott-Teague's (2008) article on coalition lobbying in Tanzania marks an exception. I am trying to bring these theories into the development field and combine them with some theoretical ideas from the development studies and of NGOs – to be more precise – with Terje Tvedt's (1998, 2006, 2007) systemic theory of donors, states and NGOs (DOSTANGO system) and Hilhorst's (2003, 2007) ideas of 'NGOing'.

Tvedt's system theory concentrates on explaining the wider links and interconnectedness of the NGOs with the different stakeholders at the macro-level and highlighting the emphasis on development aid. In organization theories and specifically in open system theories, that I am going to use in this study, organizations are constantly interacting with the environment and are far from being independent from it. Tvedt's NGO context specific approach will be combined with these organizational theories and it will form the environment for the research organizations in question. The inside politicking of the NGOs is also relevant. Dorothea Hilhorst puts emphasis on organizational legitimation and power and seeks to explain intra- and inter-organizational issues; how the organizations are 'NGOing' which will complete some of the gaps of the previous theoretical views. I believe these theoretical and empirical approaches provide tools for me to understand the context in which the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are embedded in, but also to understand the ways in which NGOs are organized.

Reflecting on the previous paragraphs, this study aims to

1. understand and analyze the context – circumstantial, material and institutional constraints and opportunities – where umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs exist

and work in Tanzania and find some common dominators and distinctive features for these organizations; and

2. analyze how umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs perceive and act upon the context where they live: how do they use their room for manoeuvre they have and how do they legitimize their roles. In other words, how they are ‘NGOing’ in Hilhorst’s terms.

My purpose in this study is not to provide a perfect or comprehensive picture of all the realities of the NGOs in question. I try not to generalize about these organizations or the civil society field in Tanzania, which is complex and diverse. Rather my aim is to explore selectively some different aspects of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. I am trying to dive into the organizational properties of NGOs and place my findings into a wider context of the international aid system and the national characters of Tanzania. I will use systemic approaches as lenses to see and understand the organizational features of NGOs but I will also try to give space for inconsistencies and heterogeneity. The focus of this thesis is slightly aslant towards the two national umbrella NGOs, while still recognizing that some of their realities cannot be understood without giving attention to these newer quasi-umbrella NGOs.

2 Methods and Data

2.1 Some starting points for my study

My drifting to the topic of this study was a half accident and a half choice guided by my previous study which was about a Finnish development NGO in the final essay of my bachelor's degree. When I began working on this master's thesis I contacted a Finnish umbrella NGO that is undertaking a development project together with a Tanzanian umbrella NGO, and asked if they would be interested in having me doing research on a certain topic of their interest. We agreed that I would be contributing to the project in the form of my master's thesis but also that they could use my working hours in the 'field' for their project's financial balance-sheet as they needed a certain amount of voluntary working hours. The voluntary working hours is a condition from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for development project funding. I also got some support from the project in terms of local travels in Tanzania but this study is mostly funded by me and the University of Helsinki which provided me a travel grant to cover the flying costs to Tanzania and provided support for getting a research permit.

2.2 Research methodology and methods

I have chosen *qualitative research* as my approach in this study since I am interested in people's and organizations' everyday life and how they perceive the world around them. *Quantitative research* is based on a positivist and post-positivist ideal or functionalist paradigm whereas qualitative methods might be informed by all possible epistemological positions (Metsämuuronen 2006, 88; Symon & Casell 2004, 2). Qualitative research is an umbrella term for many kind of research and includes different traditions, approaches and methods. According to Metsämuuronen (2006) qualitative research is an appropriate way to approach research when the research concentrates on happenings or events and the interest lies in detailed structures, in single actors' meanings and/or when the researcher wants to get information on situations that cannot be organized in a test environment or cannot be controlled (ibid.). All these things mentioned are relevant in terms of this study and I am using typical methods of qualitative research which are e.g. observing, text analysis and interviews (see Metsämuuronen 2006; Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka 2006).

The concept of *meaning* is important in qualitative research (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 51). I am interested in meanings which refer to the people's ways of being (ibid., 45). Meanings are always present, permeate our understanding, and change according to the cultural context (ibid.). People picture the world through meanings and the meanings of actions, speeches, or things do not exist as such but develop in relation to a context (ibid.). This does not mean that my focus in this thesis is on symbols or notations but on understanding how things and issues are perceived and act upon in the research NGOs and around them. It is important to understand what we can perceive from the reality. People have their own life-worlds and talk from within these worlds (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 104). The idea behind this is that there is no place or point where a human could see more than s/he could understand through his/her experience (ibid.). The reality is about understanding a human way of thinking i.e. reality does not exist as such (ibid.) but is socially constructed and a collective conception. Language in this process is then a product of a social reality as well as a producer of it (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 138–139).

Before leaving for the 'field trip', I decided that I would concentrate on a few things guided by my research questions but also be ready for unanticipated happenings and issues. My palette for this study was sort of open then: I had only read some NGO literature and had become acquainted with Tvedt's and Hilhorst's views plus some others' perspectives on NGOs in 'developing' countries. Also, I did not have any previous experience in voluntary work, development projects or NGO work in reality or in action. I was a novice in many ways which gave me an opportunity to look at the NGO sector and donors from the outside, in a way with 'uncorrupted eyes'. The focus of the study was affected by the field visit and I only started to read organizational theories after I came back and went through my materials and data. Even the research questions have changed a bit during this process. By mentioning this I want to express that I did not have any strong preprogrammed ideas or pictures of how things are in these organizations and that the related concepts were found on an empirical basis. This is important since my purpose is to rely as much as possible on empirical material and I have tried to avoid a priori conceptions. Yet, the downside of choosing this approach was that I also noticed that my knowledge on NGOs in Tanzania was quite confined and I sometimes had to spend quite lot of time to gather basic information.

Also, I decided that I would try to see different actors through ethnographic lenses and try to avoid *ideological and populist views* which include various participatory and "bottom-up" approaches where "a romantic vision of popular knowledge" is painted (Olivier de Sardan 2005, 9). I wanted to apply a more useful approach to my case studies: *methodological populism* which considers that grassroots groups and actors have knowledge and strategies that should be explored without commenting on their value or validity (ibid.). My premise is that organizations are constantly re-bargaining and re-negotiating the conditions and contexts they are embedded in, although some material constraints seem to stay unchanged.

2.3 Case studies

In Tanzania there has been major growth in the number of NGOs during the past decades and there are many supporting and coordinating organizations established for the local NGOs. This thesis is a case study of two national umbrella NGOs and two quasi-umbrella NGOs. I have left out all the various thematic networks and smaller, regional or district umbrella bodies. I will explain now why I have chosen these four organizations as my case studies.

In Tanzania there are three NGOs that claim the status of an umbrella NGO: TACOSODE, TANGO and ANGOZA (Association of Non-governmental Organizations in Zanzibar). TACOSODE and TANGO work only in the Tanzanian mainland whereas ANGOZA targets the island of Zanzibar. In this thesis I will only concentrate on the first two umbrella NGOs, TACOSODE and TANGO, because they have the same geographical coverage and also appear to share many other similarities. They both are membership-based organizations that accept NGOs or NGO networks as their members from all over the Tanzanian mainland and from different sectors. They support their members and civil society and offer services such as trainings in organizational development.

The umbrella NGOs are not the only actors that carry out these kinds of activities in Tanzanian civil society but there are other organizations that I will call 'quasi-umbrella NGOs'. The Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) belongs to this group although it is a foundation and does not have a membership base. However, it provides services to the local civil society and NGOs and I argue that it acts quite like the umbrella NGOs, TANGO and TACOSODE. Although the differences between these three organizations need to be noted, their common denominators are also noteworthy: they work at the national level, are located in Dar es Salaam, they build the capacities of local NGOs and are planning to focus more on supporting local networks in the future.

The two umbrella NGOs are rather old organizations from the 1960s (TACOSODE) and the 1980s (TANGO) and have a long history, but the FCS is a newer organization which was founded at the beginning of the 21st century. The FCS started as a basket fund for the local NGOs but later on it also started to concentrate on capacity building activities and implementing programs. The FCS has become a strong actor in the Tanzanian civil society field in recent years because of its active role taken in promoting civil society in Tanzania and its huge budget, especially compared to other local umbrella NGOs, due to the massive donor support behind it. It has also become an important stakeholder to the umbrella NGOs that cannot be bypassed when trying to understand the context of these NGOs.

Besides these organizations there are many other NGOs which are membership-based and provide services to the NGO field in Tanzania and could be included in this study, such as Policy Forum and many thematic umbrella NGOs or networks of NGOs, like Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA), Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) or National Network for Farmers’ Groups (MVIWATA, Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania). However, all these differ from the organizations mentioned in the previous paragraph by working in a specific sector, even though covering geographically the whole country, or having international NGOs or individuals as members in addition to local NGOs. For example, Policy Forum has members like Oxfam Tanzania and Norwegian Church Aid. One of the workers of an umbrella body also explained the difference and told me that they as an umbrella body would not take up issues that the thematic members or networks work on and their role would be uniting these thematic networks and other member NGOs when there is a single national interest or a need for representation of civil society at the national or international level (Selemani June 2010).

However, there is one interesting 'new' player in the Tanzanian NGO field that I will include into this study and that is the National Council of NGOs (NACONGO) which was established around the same time as the FCS. NACONGO is an organization established by the government and having a mandate to coordinate the Tanzanian NGO sector. However, I will argue that it is changing its focus a bit and it is becoming more like the two umbrella NGOs – doing capacity building and serving the NGO community and so on.

I am aware of that covering more than one organization in a study the size of a master's thesis is quite a challenge and it would have been maybe wiser to concentrate on only one NGO to have a more in-depth picture and analysis of the organization. Nevertheless, I think this kind of outline made it possible to compare these organizations and find some similarities and differences and understand how the politics of aid work around these kinds of intermediary organizations.

2.4 Data sources and data analysis

Material for this master's thesis was mainly collected during the 'field trip' which was undertaken in Tanzania between April 29th, 2010 and July 9th, 2010. I was situated predominantly in Dar es Salaam where most of the (umbrella and quasi-umbrella) NGOs have their offices but I also took part in a two-week field trip to Southern Highlands in Mbeya region with one of the umbrella NGOs and its funding donor, an umbrella NGO from Finland. This trip to Mbeya region was a part of the Finnish-Tanzanian development project between the two organizations.

Data were collected by using participant observation, interviewing and doing document analysis. It is typical for case studies to combine different data gathering methods to get versatile material (Laine et al. 2007, 10). Participant observation involved descriptions of interviews, speeches, chats, events, behavior, artifacts and surroundings seen by me as a researcher. I spent most of the time during my fieldwork in one of the umbrella NGO's offices following daily activities and taking part of the daily discussions. I attended as an observer a field trip to Mbeya region organized by one umbrella NGO and its donor and took notes on 14 stakeholders' interviews made by the umbrella NGO and its donor which supports my own interview data introduced below. The purpose of the field trip was to meet the members of the umbrella NGO and see how they are doing: ask about their needs and current issues in their area and the expectations towards the umbrella NGO. Besides the meetings with the members of the umbrella NGO, other stakeholders such as community development officers from the local municipalities were also met and interviewed. I was mainly attending this two-week trip as an observer although I ended up being part of the umbrella body's and donor's ongoing project a few times which I will elaborate more a little further on (see section 2.5). I also attended a one-day seminar organized by the same umbrella NGO and the donor in Dar es Salaam and I followed their budget negotiations and follow-up discussions of the field trip to the Mbeya region.

A total of 24 interviews were recorded of which 22 interviews were held by me and in two the representatives of one umbrella NGO and the funding donor were interviewing the members or stakeholders of the umbrella NGO. In the interviews organized by me, the informants were selected based on their roles in the organizations but some of them were also suggested by the previous interviewees utilizing the snowball effect. I interviewed more than one person from each umbrella or quasi-umbrella organization but from one of these organizations I got hold of only one person. However, this organization has a great variety of documents published and produced which fills the gap of not having more than one interview from the organization. The persons that I interviewed from the member organizations of the umbrellas were mostly chosen by one umbrella NGO. This might have affected the information provided to me in the interviews although during the member interviews I found out that the members had many other contacts than the particular umbrella NGO and could be members of more than one umbrella organization. The interviews with donors, government officials and others were made to support the data on stakeholders' views gathered by observing and in the trip to Mbeya region. The stakeholders of the NGOs in question in this study were selected in the line with the theoretical approach and based on the findings from the 'field'.

The face-to-face interviews made by me were between semi-structured and theme interviews. The objective of the interview was to allow flexibility and a natural flow of discussion. I have changed all the names of the interviewees into pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees in this study. This was also explained to the interviewees and the purpose was to create an atmosphere of confidentiality during the discussions. The interviews lasted from half an hour to an hour and a half. I had an interview outline (see Appendix 2) which I used as a support for the themes that I wanted to go through in the interviews. All the interviews were pre-arranged events and were mostly held at the offices of the NGOs.

Position of Interviewee	Number of Interviewees
Umbrella/quasi-umbrella NGOs	
Executive Director	2
Accountant	2
Program Officer	7
Executive Committee Member	2
Assistant	1
Members of umbrella NGOs	
Executive Director	5
Project Manager	1
Government bodies	
Director	1
Others	
Donor	1
NGO Representative, Non-member	1
Total	23*

Table 2.4: Details of the interviewees from the recorded interviews

*) One executive director was interviewed twice which makes total of 24 recoded interviews and 23 interviewees.

The principal documentary data included records such as annual reports, strategic plans, brochures, magazines, researches and guidelines published by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs and other publicly available information such as seminar presentations collected and kept by the local research institutes i.e. Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) and Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF).

In qualitative research, data analysis is analytical and synthesis generating (Kiviniemi 2007, 80). Organization and classification of data in systematic themes or codes are examples of the ways of interpreting and analyzing the data (ibid.). According to Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009) in *qualitative content analysis* contents can be themed, typed or classified and in that way analyzed systematically and as objectively as possible (ibid., 103–104). Qualitative content analysis gives the tools for organizing data and the organized data should be used for inferring (ibid., 103–104). It is both a method and a loose theoretical framework and it can be defined as an analysis of written, heard or seen contents (ibid., 91). In content analysis focus is on the meanings of the research content (ibid.).

Content analysis as a term is about 60 years old and the technique has initially journalistic roots where communicated material was analyzed through classification and tabulation (Krippendorff 2004). This was called *quantitative newspaper analysis* (ibid.). Content analysis has later on evolved to different research strategies from traditional counting frequencies of all coded features in the text to more descriptive and ethnographic content analysis. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) differentiate between quantitative content analysis where content of the text is illustrated in numbers and qualitative content analysis where the content is verbally analyzed.

Taking influence from the qualitative content analysis I have used the ATLAS.ti programme for structuring and organizing in themes my interview material to get hold of the subjects and also parse my thoughts and those of my informants. I have a total of 59 codes (see the list of codes in the Appendix 3) for different citations from the interviews varying from one sentence to paragraphs. Most of the codes are used one on the other so single quotation can be coded by several codes.

After coding the data the overall structure of the research, that creates synthesis and supports the data, needs to be ‘found’ (Kiviniemi 2007, 80). I identified central points from my data that illustrate the research organizations and their environment on the basis of the theoretical and empirical viewpoints from the previous researches (see chapter 3) which helped me to piece together the structure of this study. This also meant that some of the codes became irrelevant, since they were formed on the basis of the interview data without any strong pre-conceived theoretical ideas. The focus and scope of the study finalized only at this point because I tried to rely on the interplay of empirical findings and theory in the analysis process.

2.5 Reflections on my own role and on the reliability of the study

The reliability of the qualitative study can be analyzed in many ways. Varto (2005) has suggested that there are four canons for interpreting qualitative research. Firstly, the intention is to understand another person's life-world which means that the 'object' of the research is independent from the researcher (ibid.). This is the principal of autonomy of the research object. Secondly, interpretations of the meanings must be coherent which means that the ensemble of understanding needs to be taken into account (ibid.). Different meanings cannot be separated from the life-world as a whole. Thirdly, the researcher interprets and understands the research object's life-world in light of his/her own experience. Lastly, the researcher should differentiate between the research target and his/her own way of thematic understanding and bring these up (ibid.).

During this whole study I have had to consider the coherence of meanings and understanding ensembles carefully. I have to say that, clearly, less than three months in Tanzania is not enough to find out and understand completely the realities of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. This would have needed a deep and thorough ethnographic research spanning a longer time period. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to financial and time constraints of a master's thesis. Yet, for increasing the reliability of the study, I used different data gathering methods and achieved saturation points and noticed reiteration especially in my interviews and interview themes.

My own role as thesis writer in the different phases of the study and especially while I was in Tanzania has not been crystal clear for me and probably not for the others that I have been in contact with. In research ethical terms I have a feeling that I should have involved the umbrella and quasi-umbrella organizations more into my study, shared more information about what I was planning to do and why, and asked their opinions about these things. I feel that my study was mostly me- and donor-induced in the way that I only discussed my ideas with the Finnish partner and simply introduced my topic to its Tanzanian umbrella partner even though the project partners had had some previous experience of thesis writers as a part of their project.

Moreover, my intentions should have been made clearer to the interviewees, since some people seemed to lack the understanding of what a thesis writer does (could not provide funding) and how the interviews will be organized or what happens in them (interviewees did not show up for the arranged interviews as agreed or organized interviews at their working place e.g. in a hotel during a shift). For example in one of the interviews when I was asking about the funding of the projects, the interviewee told me the current sources of funding and added at the end interrogatively: "- -and next maybe we might get it [funding] from Sara", after which I made clear – again as I did in the beginning of every interview – that I am a student doing a master's thesis, not a donor. However, perhaps this was only a joke to lighten the ambience.

Either way, my different background, cultural and material differences, and the whole interview set-up had an effect on how the interviewees perceived me and probably also how they answered my questions and explained the work of the NGOs. This means that I also need to keep in mind that the real story of another person can never be reached completely, since it is always attached to the previous historical-social relations that I know nothing of (see e.g. Oinas 2004, 223). Different power relations between me and an interviewee were also present but I was trying not to presuppose anything since power relations are never static and it would be too simplistic to assume that the interviewer would always and automatically have the power because s/he is asking the questions. In terms of the interviews, as a whole, we must consider, who is speaking, what is the point of view and status of the speaker and what is her/his relationship with others mentioned (Metsämuuronen 2006, 127). However, sometimes these things are not brought up for a reader in order to secure the anonymity of the interviewee in this study.

My role in the Finnish-Tanzanian development project was also sometimes a bit confusing to me and also to the others involved. I wanted that the internship as a part of the project would include only me doing my thesis which was my condition for taking part in the project. I did not know how clear this was to all partners since the previous interns had had very different roles in the project. I wanted to keep my role as an observer especially during the two-week fieldtrip that I attended with the representatives from the Finnish NGO and the Tanzanian umbrella NGO. However, I did not remain entirely in this role, since I participated in some discussions concerning the project when it was asked from me. This happened probably because I felt that I should contribute somehow to the project because the project partners gave me the great opportunity to take part in their fieldtrip and let me use the office of an umbrella NGO. I was using the project resources so I felt that I should also contribute somehow.

There was also one incident that was very confusing and probably undermined my role as an observing thesis writer but also maybe brought me closer to the Tanzanian partners. During the trip with project partners to the Tanzanian Southern Highlands our car broke down and the Finnish partner wanted to stay and fix the car with the driver from the Tanzanian partner organization while the other two from the Tanzanian umbrella NGO and I continued with arranged meetings with the members and stakeholders of the Tanzanian umbrella organization. For some reason the Finnish NGO project manager thought it would be good if I would take the small grants to the meetings which were to be given to the registered members as a gesture of good will from the visit. The reason behind this was my Finnish citizenship since the money in the end came from the Finnish citizens, tax payers, so I would represent a Finnish taxpayer in the meeting. This led me into a situation during one of the meetings where the Tanzanian partners gave me the turn to "speak on behalf of the Finnish project manager" which I was not prepared for and did not think was my role at all.

It also turned out in the meeting that this particular member we visited was not a registered NGO. The members of the organization were saying during the meeting that they would actually need money for registering to be able to start their work and ensure funding from donors which mostly prefer registered NGOs as their partners. In the previous meeting I had found out that the small grant was not given to a "member" that was not registered and it was explained to me that this was due to the rules of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where the project funding was coming from. So, in the meeting when the Tanzanian partners turned to me and asked me to say something on behalf of the Finnish project manager I felt that I was left with responsibility and the decision to balance between the member NGO which seemed to be very in need of the small grant and on the other hand the rules of using the project funding. All of the sudden I was very involved in the project. I had to interrupt the meeting to have a small chat with one of the workers of the umbrella organization to say that I cannot make decisions on behalf of their project but even after the chat the workers said that I should explain to the organization members the reason why the small grant was not given to them. Then I realized that I should have refused to take the grant money in the first place, but it was too late.

Later on, I tried to explain to the Tanzanian umbrella NGO workers that I did not think my role was to represent the project or project manager or take any active role in the project. I think they understood my point of view but I could not stop thinking how this event would affect the picture of me in their minds and on the other hand how my own picture of the whole context might have changed. Besides taking an active role, I felt that the meeting had led me to a moral dilemma of doing “the right thing”. At the time I did not feel good about my role in the meeting nor the fact that I had to explain why the organization could not get the small grant and also because I felt some pressure from the umbrella NGO’s workers’ side that I should have reacted differently compared to what I actually did.

All in all, this incident was a reminder for me that different backgrounds, feelings and emotions have an influence on me and others which affects the ‘objectivity’ of the study: I might have missed something essential or interpreted wrongly etc. and this I try to take into account (see Pösö 2006). On the other hand, feelings could be used as tools for analysis since they might tell something about the issues that are being researched (ibid.). Also, the language of communication, English, is not the mother tongue of any of the people that I interviewed, nor mine, which obviously might have an effect on different interpretations of situations and sayings. For example, some interviews and events organized by the umbrella NGO that I was mostly involved with were held in Swahili (not necessarily the first language of the locals either) and then interpreted into English for my and donors’ purposes which might have had an influence on how things were understood and interpreted.

I have used quite a lot of quotes from the interviews in this thesis which can be seen as increasing objectivity and giving a voice to the interviewees. On the other hand “giving a voice” to somebody as such is very problematic and it needs to be taken into account to whom voices are given and whose voices are neglected.

3 Theoretical and empirical steps towards understanding the concepts of civil society, NGOs and umbrella NGOs

3.1 Conceptualizing civil society and NGOs in the African context

The conceptualization of civil society and civic activity has roots already in ancient Greece but the origins of the term “civil society” can be traced back to 18th century Scottish liberal thoughts in which the term is associated both with the developing conceptualization of society as a self-regulating mechanism, and with concepts of natural law (Ferguson 1998, 46; Hakkarainen et al. 2003, 6). The Hegelian usage of the term is one of the best known and refers to an intermediary sphere between the state and the family (Ferguson 1998, 46). This view not only includes the economy but also “uncivil” parts of society that deny or destroy common causes (Hilger 2006, 8). In addition to Hegelian usage, there are many other famous views and theories about civil society; for example, de Tocqueville sees associations of citizens as a safeguard against the states and Gramsci sees civil society as a sphere of ideological competition for hegemony distinct from political society, the economy and the family, to mention a few (ibid.). Today, the term often comes up in discussions of democracy and refers to ‘voluntary’ or so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which seek to influence or claim space from the state (Ferguson 1998, 46) in ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries.

However, there have been questions raised about the historical specificity of the concept of civil society, “which has clear roots in Western European experience and which may therefore have only limited relevance to non-Western contexts” (Lewis 2002). Lewis (ibid.) provides four different answers to the relevance question in terms of Africa. The first one is ‘yes’ – the term has clear relevance in Africa and elsewhere. This view is based on the positive and universalist view of civil society as part of building and strengthening democracy around the world (ibid.). Another possible answer is the opposite, ‘no’, based on the argument that the idea of civil society is part of a distinctive European history and has little meaning outside that context where the cultural and political settings differ (ibid.). In this view, the civil society concept is “just another in a long line of attempts at misguided policy transfer from the West” (ibid.).

My view in this thesis is an adaptive view (the third answer) which means that the concept has relevance in non-Western contexts but it takes local and different meanings. I also consider the fourth answer, where the idea of civil society, whether or not there is an explicit reference to the words 'civil society', has long been part of Africa's colonial histories and has always been relevant to questions of African governance and citizenship (Lewis 2002; Gibbon 2001). Makumbe (1998) also points out that popular participation in decision-making and governance (e.g. widespread consultations among people before making major decisions) has been recognized already in pre-colonial African political systems.

Reflecting on these ideas, the concept of civil society has undergone a huge revival in the past two decades after the nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers such as Hegel, de Tocqueville and Gramsci (Lewis 2002). The rise of such ideas as good governance and democratization in the development discourse has led to donors uncritically and ahistorically embracing civil society and NGOs in 'developing' countries (Eade 2000, 11). There has been flourishing and romantic notions of the self-provisioning and self-regulating community versus the intrusive and normative state (ibid.). The NGOs have been portrayed as independent voices of the people and heralded as the development panacea (Tvedt 2006, 678–679; Mercer 1999, 247). Ideologically, the interest towards NGOs was fuelled by the global dominance of neoliberal economic policy in the international development field and beyond (Opoku-Mensah 2007, 9). NGOs were seen as "a key pillar of strategies which roll back the state and seek to privatise service delivery systems" (ibid.). On the other hand, the NGO sector concurrently constituted a site of resistance by some citizens to privatization and rolling back the state, and all together NGOs have arguably contributed to the building of alternatives *per se* (ibid.).

Despite the ideological views of the roles of the states and NGOs, the empirical fact of the 1990s shows that the great majority of the influential organizations were financed by 'developed' states and worked in accordance with state regulations (Hearn 2007, 1095; Tvedt 2006, 679). The civil society is also largely made up of international organizations or at least linked with transnational-level entities (Ferguson 1998, 57). At the time of the greatest 'invasion' of international NGOs in the 1990s, most of them worked with local NGOs, either with existing organizations having similar identities or with new organizations created for their own purposes at the local level (Hearn 2007, 1101). This came up very clearly in one of my interviews as a worker from an umbrella NGO stated: “We sometimes go into implementing activities which are favorable to donors, not to the organizations, because we need money. So they [donors] say ‘this we are not funding but we are funding this and this’, so we go for that” (Benjamin May 2010). The African NGO sector seems to be characterized by an external financial dependence and an external orientation (Hearn 2007, 1103) – to some extent at least.

Besides the external dependence on funding, civil society and NGOs do not exist in a social vacuum within the countries either. State dominance in the areas of investment and employment means that key social groups can be considerably dependent on government (Gyimah-Boadi 1996, 127–128). When the working and middle classes are tied to government through employment and the private sector is dependent on government contracts, subsidized credits, foreign exchange and protection from foreign competition, the basis for individual and associational autonomy can be relatively weak (ibid.). Ethno-regional, religious and other cleavages also exist in the formation of civil society and NGOs, and these are important sources of collective action (Gyimah-Boadi 1996, 119–120; Howell 2000, 15). Associational life in Africa can often, although not always, be dominated by “ascriptive and kin-based groups” and “their neotraditional urban counterparts such as home-area improvement” (Gyimah-Boadi 1996, 128–129). Gyimah-Boadi (ibid.) writes that these kinds of associations are usually good at aggregating the interests of large numbers of people and providing viable non-state networks of social interaction, cultural expression and economic subsistence (ibid.).

The question ‘What is an NGO?’ is asked many times and gets as many answers as there are questioners. The term NGO is often used as synonymous or meaning almost the same as, for example, a civil society organization (CSO), a nonprofit organization or a third sector organization and it might be difficult sometimes to understand what is meant by these terms. Vakil (1997, 2057) suggests that this can inhibit a better understanding of the functioning of the NGO sector. According to Lewis (2007, 46–47), there are two strands to the attempts to define NGOs: the first one is a general legal definition and the second type of definition is focused more on the idea that NGOs are organizations concerned in some sense with social or economic change. This emphasizes the term “NGO” as an agency engaged in development at local, national and international levels (ibid.). Fisher (1997, 449), on the other hand, argues that instead of concrete and reductionist uses of the concept NGO, it needs to be concentrated on various forms of organizing and NGOs should be conceived as an arena within which battles from society at large are internalized. Hilhorst (2007, 310) builds on this view and conceives the term NGO as having become a claim bearing label (see 3.4). It is more important to find out who can and how they can claim the status of an NGO, than it is to reduce the definition to technical or functional characteristics.

3.2 Describing the framework for NGOs: DOSTANGO system

Terje Tvedt has formulated the concept of *DOSTANGO system* which refers to DOnors, STAtes, and NGOs. [1] This concept draws the attention to relational issues between states, organizations, civil‾societies, and changing institutional, financial and conceptual interactions that take place between donors, states and NGOs (Tvedt 2006, 684). Tvedt criticizes constructivists, who reject the idea that actors are calculating or optimizing units and explain organizational acts only by the social contexts (ibid., 2007 31). He states that NGOs and states are calculating and optimizing units at the same time as they operate within a field. Tvedt also wants to distance himself from systems theory or particular theories of social systems even though he uses the term “system” (ibid., 27). By system herein he wants to explain both continuity and change and avoid a strong focus on processes of differentiation (ibid.). It is a concrete and substantive content based on empirical observations and should be testable empirically (ibid.).

Terje Tvedt (1998, 3–5) has examined the dominant *functional explanations* of NGOs and has found these insufficient in analyzing NGOs. In functional theories, NGOs are regarded collectively as a natural phenomenon and being a functional response to the shortcomings of other sectors (ibid., 41). This kind of zero-sum model has had a strong influence in many aid discourses but the empirical data have shown that the situation is not often about confrontation or competition for different niches but more a situation of overlapping functions (ibid., 53).

[1] Donors can refer to states as donors or to multilateral organizations like the U.N. for instance and states can refer both to donor states and to aid-receiving states. Also, NGOs are not any kind of NGOs but development NGOs defined by their relation to the other two mentioned.

The concrete historical background and actual societal role of development NGOs have been of marginal interest (Tvedt 1998, 3–5). There is an alternative, *the national-style approach*, which focuses on the importance of national political and cultural traditions for existing landscapes and relationships with the state and market. However, Tvedt (1998, 4) finds this not so fruitful in the context of development aid. NGOs need to be placed in a concrete historical context but as an intermediary between national traditions and history and various kinds of international influences (ibid.). In other words, NGOs should be analyzed not only within a national, third-sector perspective, but rather as "an outcome of complicated processes where factors like international ideological trends, donor policies and NGOs' agendas interact with national historical and cultural conditions in complex ways" (ibid.). This is called as an *international social system approach* (ibid., 64).

The focus on this system provides an entry point for analyzing how actors in different organizational traditions have adapted to and influenced access to various resources available throughout the international system (Tvedt 2007, 27). This system is both a foreign policy instrument and a way to organize international relations (ibid., 34). The process that needs to be understood and reconstructed forms the new relationships among the units that take place within the system (ibid.). The material boundaries of this system worldwide is the flow and transfer of funds but in addition to financial resources there are also flows of social, cultural and political capital (ibid., 37–38). According to Tvedt these boundaries of the material flows have created a closed system in the sense that new members have to apply to be included in or invited into it, and the sign of membership is that the organization receives, uses, and dispenses donor state money. In this sense boundaries are not only being socially constructed as tend to be seen in social sciences, they are also very material ones. Moreover, they are normatively and socially justified (ibid.).

This borderline can also be called a "donor-line" where donor's direct and indirect power affects the organizations' accountability mechanisms, organizational formalities, reporting mechanisms and the language they employ to justify their existence and policies (ibid., 38). However, Tvedt reminds that "it is wrong to conceive of this system as a one-way transmission belt of power, influence and legitimacy, from the core to periphery". Each actor within the system has different resources and a different amount of resources and all are unevenly distributed (ibid., 40). Terje Tvedt (2007, 50) also notes that the DOSTANGO system and NGOs that are part of it are dependent on how the rest of the society perceives the system and supports it.

This Tvedt's aid system is related or should be understood in the context of another development framework which can be called for example a '*developmentalist configuration*' in Olivier de Sardan's (2005) terms. The developmentalist configuration defines the very existence of development: development is not something to be sought for in the populations but it exists merely because there are actors and institutions who take development as an object or an end to which they devote money, time and competence (ibid., 25). Yet, in this study the focus is on the DOSTANGO system.

3.3 Organizational aspects of NGOs and open systems theories

Tvedt's DOSTANGO system explains why NGOs in developing countries seem to take the same shape, goals and methods of working while considering different NGO histories and practices in each country. The focus is on the NGOs' external social environment and the basis of the theory actually seems to resemble some of the *open systems theories* which started to develop from the 1960s and 1970s onwards (see e.g. Handel 2003; Scott 1991). Open systems theories swept aside previous readings that focused on the internal structure and functioning of organizations and considered the organization to be closed off from the outside world (Handel 2003, 225). Concentrating on theories which have been formulated for organizations working in public and private sectors raises the question: do open systems theories work as well in the NGO and 'developing' country context?

I argue that there is relevance, since open systems theories deal with inter-organizational processes, explain the relations between the environment and the organization and focus on external forces that shape and support different organizational forms – all of these relevant to NGOs. Tvedt has also described inter-organizational processes but he takes a step further and explains relational mechanisms between the NGOs, donors and states in the more NGO/aid context manner than the open systems theories. Tvedt's approach does not focus on the organization-environment dualism but on the relational aspects between different actors. The term 'system' is also used differently in these theories: in

Tvedt's view the system is the DOSTANGO as a whole and in open systems theories the organization forms a system that is open to its environment (usually interpreted as the society). I argue that these theories can still be consolidated since I will use the DOSTANGO as *the* system because it includes the relational aspects between other actors that can be described as part of the organizational environment in the open systems theories. Open systems theories then become a tool to understand some of these relational processes within the DOSTANGO system. Hence, in this study I will still use the terms organization and its environment and they will refer to NGOs and to their social environment which consist of donors, states but also the society as a whole. By the society I mean what is outside the DOSTANGO system: the system is highly dependent on how the rest of the society perceives the system since it rests on popular legitimacy in the dual form of local participation, altruism and efficient use of tax payers' money in the developing countries and the appeal for charity in the developed countries (Tvedt 2007, 50).

Non-governmental organizations are part of the web of organizations which can be private, public, religious, political etc. Defining the term *organization* precisely is a difficult task and definitions are not axiomatic, since organizations vary to a great extent and also change over time (Handel 2003, 1–2, Tvedt 2007, 35). The typical textbook examples stumble with their over-simplifications – just as is the case with the NGOs. One typical example would be Handel's (2003, 1–2): organizations can be 1) deliberately planned groups 2) with some specific apparent goal or goals; 3) they are generally designed to outlive the participation of the particular individuals who participate at any one time; 4) they have a more or less well-developed set of formal rules and 5) a relatively fixed structure of authority, roles and responsibilities that is independent of the personal characteristics of those filling the roles at any particular time.

As said, the diversity of organizations makes the defining very difficult since they vary e.g. in the nature of their aims, size, formality and governance. The above definition may overlook also the fact that all organizations have an informal social life that develops spontaneously within them. Individuals and groups within the organization also have differences and they might pursue different and conflicting goals so it might be even misleading to think of the organization itself as a real actor with goals of its own. Organizations may develop goals that are off track from their original mission, such as a strategy for survival of the organization for its own sake rather than for a larger purpose. (Handel 2003, 1–2) Yet, the informal side does not exclude the fact that the organizations have a formal side as well. It depends on the case how these two sides act together.

Open systems theories shift attention from the internal structure of organizations and functional forms to the organizations' external social environment (Handel 2003, 3). There are many theories which form part of the open systems family and I mention here a few: *organizational ecology* (also called population ecology), focuses on birth and mortality of organizational forms in the long term by emphasizing natural selection of the organizational environment (Hannan & Freeman 1989); *network theory* highlights social networks and personal relationships which impose opportunities and constraints for rational behavior (Granovetter 1985); *structural contingency theory* in which decision-makers try to adapt to contingencies (e.g. strategy, size, uncertainty, technology) in the organizational structure to adjust to the environment better (Donaldson 1996; 2001); and lastly there are *resource dependency theory* (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978; 2003) and *new institutional theories* (Meyer & Rowan 1977; DiMaggio & Powell 1983) which I will introduce below. All these theories share the view that organizations are shaped by the societal environments and provide an important insight into an organization's external environment which may be a critical source of resources, constraints, ideas, standards and opportunities (Handel 2003, 225–226). Relevant features of an organization's environment can include labor force, clients, competitors, other organizations, professional associates, government, communities in which the organization operates, the existing stock of knowledge and technological resources and the boarder social and cultural environment (ibid.).

Nevertheless, the attention should not be totally shifted from the internal environment of the organization to the external environment. There is relevance in both. Thompson & McHugh (2002, 58) remind us that open systems theory gives a role to management and leadership "to maximize a bounded rationality" even though it seems that the attention is only shifted to outward realities and issues. The environmental uncertainty and dependency are connected to the issues of decision-making and decision-making is never freed from unevenness in the informational, technological and environmental conditions, in other words power relations (ibid.).

In this thesis I will focus on the resource dependency theory and new institutional theories because they are the most relevant in terms of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs for few reasons. The resource dependency theory focuses on the patterns of transactions and exchanges that form the resource dependency between organizations and NGOs in question have depending relations with other organizations. The theory also touches on issues of power and interests that are neglected to some extent in the new institutional theories. The new institutional theories, on the one hand, emphasize social rules, expectations, norms and values as the sources of environmental pressure for organizations and these are mostly neglected in the resource dependency theory. The new institutional theories also explain isomorphism among organizations and the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs seem to have some isomorphic forms. Together these theories explain physical and social boundaries but also opportunities caused by the environment relevant to the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs.

3.3.1 Resource dependency theory

Resource dependency theory focuses on the consequences of power differences between organizations (Handel 2003, 226). The perspective was developed by Pfeffer and Salancik in 1978 within the framework of business thinking. The central thesis of their theory is that "to understand the behavior of an organization you must understand the context of that behavior" (Pfeffer & Salancik 2003a, 233). The premise of the resource dependency theory is that no organization is self-contained or independent (Hudock 1999, 23) and "the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources" (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978, 2). Resources are drawn from the environment of the organization whether it is for their labor force, physical inputs, clients, information, funding, legal permission or normative legitimacy to operate (Handel 2003, 226).

Organizations are embedded in an environment comprised of other organizations and they must transact with others in their environment to acquire needed resources (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978, 2). How the organization responds to external constraints and possibilities is critical, since constraints have an influence on organizational behavior

(Hudock 1999, 23). Nevertheless, organizations themselves also exercise a degree of control because "one of the most important influences on an organization's response to its environment is the organization itself" (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978, 13).

The dependency "results from exchange processes and from the requirements of organizations to acquire resources and engage in exchange with their environments" (Pfeffer & Salancik 2003a, 237). Three elements are critical in determining the dependence of an organization on another. First, there is the importance of the resource to which there are two dimensions: the magnitude of an exchange of resources and the criticality of the resource (ibid., 235–237). For example, an NGO that offers only one service is more dependent on its members than an NGO that offers several services to different sectors and beneficiaries. The criticality of the resource refers to the ability of the organization to cope when there is no access to the resource. This may vary from time to time. The second element is the extent to which the interest group has power over the allocation and use of the resource (Pfeffer & Salancik 2003a, 235–237). Resources can be controlled by possession of or regulating access to a resource, or by the ability to make rules. Lastly, dependency derives from the extent to which there are few alternatives to the resource (ibid.). These three elements together determine the organization's dependency on any other group or organization.

This model has been criticized since it tends to focus attention on direct rather than indirect flows and connections among organizations and does not observe larger networks or connections of organizations (Scott & Meyer 1991, 109). Later on Pfeffer & Salancik (2003b) have amplified that dependencies are often reciprocal and sometimes indirect, and also that organizations are embedded in networks of interdependencies. All in all, resource dependency theory coheres with Tvedt's point on clear material boundaries that exist in the DOSTANGO system but also the flows of social, cultural and political capital. Both Pfeffer & Salancik and Tvedt agree that the allocation and amount of resources vary from time to time.

3.3.2 New institutional theories

In new institutional theories organizations try to adopt organization models that are socially legitimized and indicated by the institutional environment (Houtsonen 2002, 41–42). This improves their success rate as organizations (ibid.). I will quickly introduce how an institution is perceived within this new institutional framework before going into two of its approaches: Meyer's & Rowan's organizational structure as myth and ceremony and DiMaggio's & Powell's institutional isomorphism.

It is common for all new institutional theories that an *institution* is seen as an enabling and constraining rule of action or as established practices and generalized operation models which consequently provide organized and regular rules for social action (Houtsonen 2002, 42). New institutionalism also includes different traditions and points of divergence in varying definitions of an institution: for example the new institutionalism in organization theory defines institution as a result of human activity but not necessarily as a conscious design (DiMaggio & Powell 1991, 8). Institutions are seen as cognitive and symbolic information structures, created in interaction among the actors, which are primarily viewed as external structures defining social reality but internalized categories through learning (Houtsonen 2002, 42; Peters 2005, 113; Scott 1991, 165). How this is related to organizations and NGOs then? Within the new institutional theory in organization theory there are difficulties in differentiating between an institution and an organization. Peters (2005, 116) suggests that in this approach the interest is in the process of creating values and cognitive frames within organizations – not in the end conditions or states. This is the same point brought up by Fisher (1997; see 3.1) in terms of NGOs: they are in some way structural features of the society.

3.3.2.1 Formal structure as myth and ceremony

Meyer's and Rowan's article *Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony* (1977) sets out many central and new aspects of institutionalism (for old institutionalism and the differences between the 'old' and the 'new' see e.g. DiMaggio & Powell 1991, 11–15; Selznick 1996). They suggest in their article that institutional theories, in their extreme forms, define organizations as "enactments of the rationalized myths pervading modern societies" which goes beyond the interrelation exchange between organization and environment described in open systems theories (Meyer & Rowan 1977, 346). By *myths* Meyer and Rowan mean institutionalized rules "which organizations incorporate, gaining legitimacy, resources, stability, and enhanced survival prospects" (ibid., 340–341). In other words, organizations include practices and procedures into their work which are constructed as prevalent and rationalized concepts of organizational work and are also institutionalized in society (ibid.). Examples of such concepts in the NGO field could be the terms ‘capacity building’ or ‘accountability’ which have become widespread within the ‘developmentalist configuration’. Institutionalized rules may be simply taken for granted or may be supported by public opinion or the force of law (ibid.). The formal structures of many organizations reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the demands of their work activities (ibid.). This seems clear when looking at many development NGOs who are stuck with their blueprint projects which are remote reflections of the realities happening in the field.

Organizations also seek *ceremonial conformity* which means that institutionalized products, services, techniques and policies function as powerful myths that are adopted ceremonially, in other words by using external assessment criteria (Meyer & Rowan 1977, 340–349). For evaluating external worth, ‘ceremonial awards’ become important, such as the CSO Excellence Awards given by the Foundation for Civil Society every year, endorsements by important people, or merits given in external social circles. To maintain ceremonial conformity and legitimacy, organizations build gaps between their formal structures and actual work activities (ibid.). They argue that formal structures stem from institutional sources, ceremonial myths. Meyer and Rowan, however, do not pay much attention to where these concepts of myth and ceremony come from and whose interests they serve (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 157).

3.3.2.2 Institutional isomorphism

DiMaggio and Powel asked in 1983 in their article *The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields* what makes organizations so similar. Building on the work done by Meyer and Rowan (1977) on isomorphism they suggest that organizations are becoming more and more homogeneous and the concept that best captures the process of homogenization is isomorphism. Isomorphism “is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 149). Factors that organizations need to take into account are other organizations which means that “organizations compete not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness” (ibid., 150).

DiMaggio & Powell (1983) identify three mechanisms through which organizational isomorphism occur. *Coercive isomorphism* stems from the political influence and pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent (ibid.). A common legal environment affects an organization’s behavior and structure in many ways, but some powerful private organizations may also issue binding rules. This view goes together with the resources dependency theory in which organizations are dependent on other organizations. Handel (2003, 227) gives an example of community organizations that interface with more hierarchical donors and find themselves under pressure to become more bureaucratic to satisfy the donor’s demands for accountability and regularity. The second source of isomorphism is *mimetic isomorphism* which results from the responses to uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powel 1983, 151). Organizations imitate successful organizations even though there is little understanding of the reasons for that success (Handel 2003, 227). The last source is *normative isomorphism* which refers to professionalization and to organizational practice that reflects “societal concepts of what are natural and appropriate, especially if championed by a particular group of advocates” (Handel 2003, 228). This is close to Meyer’s and Rowan’s ideas of external legitimacy and assessment criteria which creates isomorphism and advances organizational survival.

In practice, these three mechanisms of isomorphism are often all present at the same time. Organizations are rewarded for being similar to other organizations in their fields, because this similarity makes it easier for the organization to transact, to attract professional staff, to be acknowledged as legitimate and reputable and to fit into the administrative categories of the donors (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 153). External legitimacy is so important that the organizations seek it in a purely technical sense which might not even bring any benefits to them, but the opposite (Handel 2003, 228). Some practices may make strong claims to rationality and effectiveness but these do not guarantee technical efficiency. Institutional theory views that an organization’s success depends on its external legitimacy although internal operational efficiency cannot be bypassed (Handel 2003, 229). The theory is not very clear in its arguments for why organizations follow certain steps – is it because they are part of the culture or coerced into doing so? – and it gives little attention to power and conflict within organizations (ibid.).

How do these two new institutional theories work together with Tvedt's DOSTANGO system? Meyer and Rowan sees the organizational environment as symbolic material in which the content consists of rational myths, beliefs and rules (Houtsonen 2002, 44; Scott 1991, 165). Scott (1991) notes that Meyer and Rowan do not see norms of rationality as general values but as being attached to institutionalized social structures. Organizational actors are seen as passive in terms of normative and cognitive rules, but when considering ceremonial acts, the actors seem to be able to strategically manipulate symbolic rules (Houtsonen 2002, 44). DiMaggio and Powell, on the other hand, describe an organizational field that means "those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 148). There is a variation of how much and what kinds of structure are present in different organizational environments and therefore this has to be determined empirically (Scott 1991, 171).

The connection between material boundaries and symbolic and cognitive rules is not very clearly explained. Common for both of these perceptions is that environments "are more subtle in their influence; rather than being co-opted by organizations, they penetrate the organization, creating the lenses through which actors view the world and the very categories of structure, action, and thought" (Scott 1991, 171). However, social actors can change institutional rules because material characters do not determine totally interpretations of symbolic features and there can be struggles over the construction of structural definitions (Houtsonen 2002, 50). These cohere with Tvedt's views on rational actors and the existence of material boundaries. Even though Tvedt criticizes constructivist views, he sees flows of social, cultural and political capital among different actors within the organizational environment as important. DiMaggio & Powell and Tvedt also highlight the importance of empiricism.

Resource dependence theory and new institutional theories have been criticized for being environmentally deterministic, concentrating only on technical aspects of the environment, ignoring the existence of multiple contingencies and overlooking the internal realities and managerial aspects of organizations (see e.g. Handel 2003; Scott 1991, 164–182; Thompson & McHugh 1996, 71–79). Some of these criticisms are a bit overstated, but get to the point: focusing on the external environment has been more or less at the expense of the internal environment. However, the assumption that environments do affect organizations and pose constraints while at the same time bring opportunities is salient, but organizations and especially actors within these organizations are not passive or homogenous either. Organizational theories also often have business management view on organizations' internal realities (see e.g. Thompson & McHugh 2002) and this is why I now turn attention back to the 'sub-category', the NGOs, and I introduce Hilhorst's views on NGO politicking, which also have congruencies with the theories introduced so far.

3.4 From systemic approach towards the inner politics of NGOs – politics of 'NGOing'

Dorothea Hilhorst (2003, 3–5) argues that Terje Tvedt's DOSTANGO approach cannot explain diversity among NGOs in countries, and more importantly, it fails to explain contradictions and inconsistencies within NGOs as well as different NGO histories and practices in each country although it explains why many NGOs in developing countries take the same shape, goals and methods of working. Moreover, Tvedt's work is limited by the implicit assumption that NGOs constitute a single reality (ibid.). This criticism also hits problematic assumptions of organizational theories that do not pay enough attention to the inner politics of organizations. Hilhorst applies a more dynamic approach which consist of multiple realities and in which more attention is given to the discourses within NGOs and to the questions of how actors in and around NGOs deal with the local, international and global complexities that affect NGOs' shapes, values and practices (ibid.). This is where the member organizations of umbrella NGOs are also discussed as part of the actors in and around NGOs. Dorothea Hilhorst argues that much of what NGO actors do is related to the everyday politics of organizational legitimation (Hilhorst 2007, 298). This what Meyer and Rowan argued already in 1977 but Hilhorst takes this further with her more empirical and ethnographic approach.

The attention cannot be limited only to organizational features and structures but the everyday practices of the social actors in and around the organization need to be taken into account (Hilhorst 2007, 299). NGOs are not things but processes, so then, instead of asking what an NGO is, the more appropriate question is how 'NGO-ing' is done (ibid.). The NGOing leads to the study of language and discourse, and knowledge and power (Hilhorst 2003, 8). These Hilhorst approach through the *politics of power* within the organizations, the *politics of organizational legitimization* and the *politics of development* which all have linkage with everything that is happening in and around NGO work (2003, 4).

The politics of power has to do with the everyday politics of NGOs: "Much of what NGO people do is inspired by and affects the power politics of the internal and external control and allocation of NGO resources, ideas and activities" (Hilhorst 2003, 4). At the same time NGOs have to legitimize their actions and activities in order to convince others of their appropriateness and to find clients and supportive stakeholders (ibid.). Finally, NGOs are the product of interrelating international and national developments and politics but they also have an active role in such politics (ibid.).

Few words about power relations need to be mentioned here, since in studying NGOing language, knowledge and power are important concepts. Power cannot be simply attributed to a person or a group but it needs to be analyzed in a relational way differing in time and space. Power can also be subjectless in the sense that "power is not exercised by any actor over another but emerges in discoursive and practical apparatus through a variety of techniques and forms of governmentality over all the actors considered" (Kontinen 2007, 137). For Foucault (Foucault 1984 in Ebrahim 2007, 145) knowledge and the right to create and decide what counts as knowledge is a form of power. Foucault's idea of what is 'true' and 'false' at a certain point of history can interpreted in development discourse as what is defined as 'good' and 'bad' in development at a certain time, and how 'good' development should be practiced (Kontinen 2007, 137).

Power in development is also diffused and fragmented, and donors, 'southern' NGOs or beneficiaries cannot be simplified as monolithic actors where donors are seen as powerful and 'southern' actors powerless (Kontinen 2007, 139). There are different positions, power struggles and diverse points of views among and within these groupings (ibid.). Relationships are more that of interdependency in which financial, material and symbolic resources, information and reputation, are exchanged in mutual relationships between donors, NGOs and other actors (Ebrahim 2007, 143–144; Kontinen 2007, 139). This is somewhat neglected in open systems theories but noticed within the DOSTANGO system as relational links between actors.

Furthermore, Hilhorst (2007, 310) conceives the term ‘NGO’ as a claim bearing label. NGOs are part of the politicking process where they attribute ‘genuineness’ or ‘fakeness’ of the organizations to themselves and others (ibid., 305). The process is conflicting and power ridden and the outcome has consequences for funding, room for manoeuvre and even the very existence of organizations (ibid.). NGOs need to acquire legitimation of ‘doing good for the development of others’ which means that, on one hand, they need to convince others that the situation or population needs development and, on the other hand, it requires convincing others that the intervention of the NGO is appropriate and it has no self-interest in the project or program (ibid., 310). Besides these things, the NGO also needs to convince others that it is able and reliable, capable of handling the project and trustworthy (ibid.). The legitimation of the organization is a matter of organizational survival (ibid.). Controlling and upholding the reputation of an organization then becomes a crucial aspect in NGOing (ibid.).

Dorothea Hilhorst approaches the legitimation and reputation issue from the view that NGOs’ relations with stakeholders can be conceptualized as “social interfaces of power and mutual enrolment” (Hilhorst 2007, 311). There are two important interfaces for NGOs, which are the interface with the local people they serve and the interface with their funding agencies, although other interfaces and stakeholders cannot be excluded. This view adds to Tvedt’s DOSTANGO system by dividing NGOs into smaller parts and including umbrella NGOs’ members (i.e. local people in Hilhorst’s terms) as a part of the environment. The interesting point is that stakeholders of NGOs usually operate in different domains and know each other only through the NGO (Hilhorst 2007, 314). This complicates the NGO’s legitimation process, since the NGO needs to accommodate to the changing conditions and values of each stakeholder (ibid.). On the other hand this can also give room for manoeuvre because stakeholders (e.g. donors and local people) have only fragmented information and knowledge about each other so they rely on NGO representations to know what happens in other domains (ibid.).

4 Tanzanian NGO sector, donors and the state

4.1 Historical perspectives

Tanzanian civil society has a long history which can be traced back at least to the colonial period when the Tanganyika Territory African Civil Servants Association was established in the 1920s for securing the welfare of native civil servants during the British colonial rule (Haapanen 2007, 4). During that time, there were also pastoral movements focusing on land ownership and professional and welfarist associations (Haapanen 2007, 4; Kiondo 1993, 164–165). However, many of these were often local branches of mainly European NGOs/associations (ibid.). The colonial government gave almost no space for the development of civil society (ibid.). In addition to this, low levels of economic development among the majority of people and the very small professional class “meant that the development of ‘modern’ NGOs was racially restricted” (ibid.). In urban centers ethnic associations were created to help new migrants adjust to urban life (ibid.).

In the late 1940s, labor and nationalistic movements started to emerge as well as a number of laws that enabled the heavy control and restrictions on civil movements that were feared to be a challenge to the colonial administration (Haapanen 2007, 4). In 1954, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) with his leader Julius Nyerere managed to become a central actor which led the Tanganyika to independence in 1961 (Lange et al. 2000, 4). The previous civic movement itself became the leading force of the state apparatus and a political party (ibid.). Nyerere’s socialist one-party rule inherited most of the laws and institutions from the colonial period and the political environment at Nyerere’s time was very restrictive for non-governmental associations (ibid.; Michael 2004, 70). Nyerere’s *ujamaa* policies where peasants were forcibly moved into villages on the basis of ‘African socialism’ were not conducive to an autonomous civil society (Pinkney 2009, 35).

Tanzania’s economy started to worsen from the mid-1970s onwards and a sharp decline in agricultural performance was registered (Kiondo 1993, 167). The failures were not corrected and, together with the war with Uganda and some external shocks, led to an economic crisis (ibid.). The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the World

Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) led to privatization and rapid downsizing of the public sector in Tanzania during the 1980s (Haapanen 2007, 4). Many people were left without employment and a living. At the same time donors started to see the 'third sector', instead of the 'corrupt' and 'inefficient' state, as a development panacea which led to an increase in funding for civil society organizations in Tanzania. Forming NGOs was seen as one way of employment and self-help in the current poor situation. This also came out in my interviews and affected the role taken by TACOSODE in the NGO sector (see 4.3.1):

> *The mushrooming of local NGOs actually appeared after 1974; following there was a huge economic crisis, following the increasing oil price, also we had a war with Uganda but also there was a drought so there were lot of problems and also adding up was the World Bank, the IMF, this economic structuring, so leaving other people outside the workforce. People started to organize themselves into NGOs as a way to alleviate poverty, like to create self-employment so there were lots of newer and smaller NGOs coming up.* (Rose June 2010)

The number of registered NGOs increased in the 1980s. According to the source from TANGO, there were 41 newly registered NGOs in 1980s, whereas in the 1970s this number was 18 and in the 1960s seven (Kiondo 1993, 169–172). These numbers also include professional associations but they do not cover District Development Trusts (DDTs) which started to emerge towards the end of 1970s (ibid.). DDTs, which could also be called self-help NGOs, seemed to respond to the political weakness of the government to provide services at the local level and most of these organizations started to work in the education sector (ibid.). According to Kiondo's estimate in the 1990s in more than 80 districts (currently about 120 districts) in the Tanzanian mainland there were found at least three DDTs per district (ibid.). Besides and maybe also among the registered NGOs and DDTs, Tripp (1997 cited in Pinkney 2009, 35) also noticed the creation of voluntary neighborhood groups and rural grassroots movements "that produced alternative institutions of political decision-making and political obligation". These organizations worked in the sectors of farming, fishing and policing (ibid.).

In the mid-1980s the Tanzanian government was facing an internationally changing political climate, demands from the donor community and an emerging NGO sector that required the government to enact legal reforms that enabled NGOs to organize and operate (Maral-Hanak 2009, 43–44). Public sector, including civil service, parastatals, co-operatives and local government, also carried through some reforms and the governance was changed to a multi-party system in the 1990s (ibid.). Regardless of this prominent political reorientation the NGOs legal situation remained complex as they could be registered in several ways, involving different amounts of bureaucracy and waiting periods (ibid., Michael 2004, 82–83). Numbers of NGOs were founded by people working in the public sector which was making cooperation with the government officials easier and "secured the amicable ties of mutual trust" in some cases (Maral-Hanak 2009, 43–44). Kelsall (2001, 141) suggests, however, that these local elites forming NGOs was a way to continue to exploit the masses and the patron-client relationship remained untouched – which is a criticism of the views that civil society organizations were providing alternatives to political decision-making, as suggested above by Tripp.

Nevertheless, both the government and the NGO sector consist of heterogeneous individuals and interest groups but the government left no doubts about its power and determination to stay in control when it was needed (Maral-Hanak 2009, 43–44). Gibbon (1993, 22) sees that self-help groups and organizations became detached from the political party but relations to the political centre still seem to be essential and mediated through individuals rather than the party machine. It seemed that the government welcomed the economic benefit that it received from the NGOs working in the service sector but was more suspicious about their political roles and attempts to represent the interest of the poor (Maral-Hanak 2009, 43–44). Some organizations have been de-registered and accused of being 'political' and others were denied the permission to hold meetings or rallies especially during the 1995 first multi-party elections (ibid.). However, from the early 1990s onwards number of political parties, independent media organizations and other social organizations has increased in Tanzania, as has the number of NGOs (Michael 2004, 71). The government compiled an official directory on NGOs in 1993 and counted 200 organizations (Kelsall 2001, 135–136). In 1995 the number had risen to 813 (ibid.).

4.2 Recent developments in the NGO sector

4.2.1 NGO Policy and Act

In 1996 the government started to reform the legal framework for the NGOs but it took until 2002 to pass the law called the Non-Governmental Organizations Act (Maral-Hanak 2009, 44). It started as a consultative process where the government and national and international NGOs were involved and part of the drafting of several versions of the 'NGO Policy' (ibid.). Especially the three umbrella organizations, TACOSODE, TANGO and ANGOZA were active and they organized workshops for NGOs to contribute to the content of the policy (Gugerty 2009, 12). However, the process was not moving for some years and in the end the government enacted the law that "largely ignored the draft's progressive input" (Maral-Hanak 2009, 44). The government saw that the law would be beneficial to NGOs and would create an enabling environment for NGOs whereas many local NGOs and donors saw it as a government attempt to control the sector (Michael 2004, 84).

The law sets the context and rules for registration, institutional framework, reporting and NGO coordination by the government (The Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2002). It defines what an NGO is and what kind of features and structure it should have. According to the Amendment made in 2005 to the Act, an NGO means:

> a voluntary grouping of individuals or organizations which is autonomous, non-partisan, non profit sharing–
>
> (a) organized at the local, national or international level for the purpose of enhancing or promoting economic, environmental, social or cultural development or protecting the environment, lobbying or advocating on such issues; or
>
> (b) established under the auspices of any religious or faith propagating organization, trade union, sports club, political party, religious or faith organization or community based organization,
>
> but does not include a trade union, social club, a religious or faith propagating organization or community based organization (Amendment of the Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2005).

Besides meeting this definition, an NGO must also be registered at the NGO Registrar's Office situated in Dar es Salaam, have a board of directors/executive committee, a secretariat and a constitution. The constitution needs to explain the objectives, structure, members and financial resources of the NGO. The structure of the NGO includes a *General Assembly* which is the highest organ and comprises of all members and meets once every year (Mmanda 2008). The General Assembly should have the power to admit new members or expel members from the NGO, to approve strategic plans and budgets as well as, any amendments to the constitution or policy of the NGO, to elect board members, to decide on mission and vision and have the right to receive the audited report of the year (ibid.). The *Board of Directors* or *Executive Committee* then forms the governance organ the purpose of which is to oversee the organization and ensure effective organizational planning (ibid.). Its responsibility is to select the chief executive officer and monitor the functioning and effectiveness of the organization (ibid.). The board membership should be independent and not be staff members, donors or government officials (ibid.). The actual implementation organ is the *Secretariat* or the *Executive Office* which should be mostly composed of employees and volunteers who implement day-to-day activities of the NGO (ibid.). Activities are organized and implemented under the supervision of the chief executive officer/executive director (ibid.).

Some positive aspects were seen coming out of the law, as one of the umbrella NGOs workers elaborates:

> *I don't know but I think there must have been lot of NGOs coming out, what they call 'briefcase' NGOs or 'flash disk' NGOs etc., so to cut this I think that's why we had to have this Act, to have these regulations so that we know at least the physical address, you can come and visit there, you have the members, you have the leadership, placed leadership. We are supposed to submit the CVs of all leaders of the NGO, at least their photographs so that we know [who are running the NGO].* (Gideon June 2010)

However, NGO Act 2002 has been criticized, also by the umbrella bodies, because it fails to provide benefits for those NGOs that do register while also imposing penalties for failure to register (Irish and Simon 2003, 72). Moreover, it requires periodic re-registration which creates a high degree of lawlessness in the NGO sector (Irish & Simon 2003, 72; Maral-Hanak 2009, 44). The government has also not clarified why it wants the NGOs to register except for central control (Maral-Hanak 2009, 44): if it wants them to be considered as "important partners in the development process" as suggested in the NGO Policy (2001) it has been proposed to give advantages to NGOs if they do register and comply with the Act (Irish & Simon 2003, 72–73). This view also came up in my interviews from the umbrella NGOs side:

However, in the current set-up the NGO Act is mostly punitive in nature in the sense that there are no incentives within the registration for people to register under the NGO Act. For example, we would have wished to have some tax exemptions; we would have also wished to have an incentive in terms of building capacity of civil society. (Selemani June 2010)

Moreover, the possibility to appeal from administrative decisions is also troublesome (Irish & Simon 2003, 72–73). However, after the passage of the bill in 2002, some kind of consultative process continued which led to amendments to the act in 2005 “that reduced some of the more restrictive components of the original legislation” (Gugerty 2009, 12). Also it is interesting that besides the strict definitions of NGO’s features and structures, the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children responsible for the NGO registration and coordination still acknowledges for example CBOs and FBOs as stakeholders or collaborating partners in their current strategic plan (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children 2011) even though they are lawless to some extent.

From the government side, there is more than one organ overseeing adherence to the NGO law (see figure 4.2). The government registers, coordinates and monitors NGOs at the NGO Coordination Department which includes the NGO Registrar under the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children. The Director of NGO Coordination and Registrar is appointed by the president and serves as a link between the government and NGOs (The Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2002). The Director advises on policy matters concerning the NGOs, ensures the implementation of the NGO Act, registers, keeps and maintains registers regarding NGOs and appoints public officers under the Act (ibid.).

Besides the Registrar of NGOs, under the same Ministry works the NGO Coordination Board which consists of government and NGO representatives. The NGO Coordination Board approves and coordinates NGO registration, suspension and cancellation, facilitates the implementation of the NGO Policy, coordinates activities among the NGOs, counsels the government on the issues related to NGOs, examines the annual reports of the NGOs and provides policy guidelines and advises on strategies for NGOs (The Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2002). The NGO Coordination Department also mediates conflicts within and between NGOs and provides certifying for NGOs e.g. for opening a bank account.

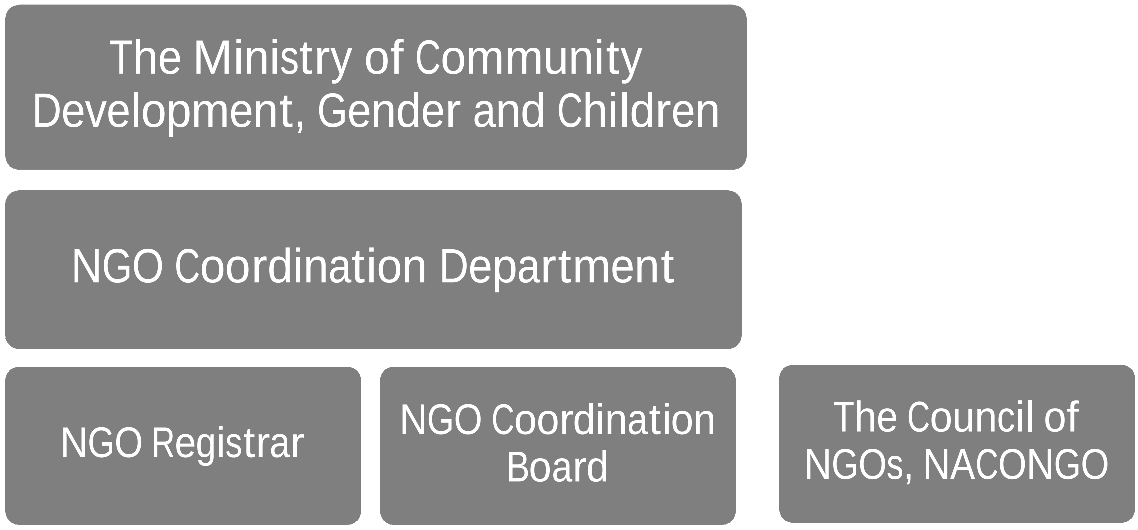

Figure 4.2: Organs established by the Tanzanian government for the NGO coordination

4.2.2 Diversity in the civil society

Besides the strict definition of an NGO and conditions for NGO structure in the law enacted by the Parliament of Tanzania, in reality there is much diversity among the civil society actors in Tanzania, as acknowledged at the ministerial level as well. A major part of Tanzanian civil society consists of informal groups and small community-based organizations (CBOs), professional associations, trade unions and numerous faith-based organizations (FBOs) (Haapanen 2007, 5–8). These can also be registered, but only at the local community level.

It is uncertain how many civil society organizations there are in Tanzania in total, since many of them are not officially registered (Haapanen 2007, 5–8). However, the Tanzanian government has estimated that there were about 3000 local and international NGOs in Tanzania in 2001 (The Vice President's Office 2001). Some other estimates (see Tripp 2000, 200; Kelsall 2001, 135) have suggested that there have been even about 8,000 NGOs. This number probably includes DDTs and unregistered CBOs (Kelsall 2001, 135) but it is also estimated that the actual number of NGOs that can be accounted for as active must be lower (Koponen 2008, 3). Recent estimations, mostly by the foreign embassies, suggest the number is around 4,000 (Pinkney 2009, 18).

Nevertheless, the number of NGOs has increased drastically in Tanzania during and after the 1990s. Most of the NGOs are urban based and engaged in poverty and development related issues (Haapanen 2007, 5–8). Service delivery still has a more established role than political advocacy although, recently, there have been shifts away from this (ibid.). The substantial funding to local NGOs comes from foreign and international donors. This also means that foreign donors have a significant impact on local civil society and can be seen as a major force in the formation of 'modern' civil society in Tanzania (ibid.).

4.2.3 Donors and the idea of capacity building

In 2008[2], Tanzania received $2.3 billion (€ 1.8 billion) net official development assistance (ODA) and aid, when the GDP (gross domestic product) in Tanzania was $20.72 billion (€ 16.00 billion) (The World Bank 2010a). Net ODA was 11.2 % of the gross national income in 2008 (OECD 2010). The biggest sectors where the aid was allocated were health and population, infrastructure and services, program assistance, and to other social sectors (ibid.). In the same year, according to one estimate, the total annual expenditure of NGOs in Tanzania has been around 15 million Euros (Koch 2008). The number suggests that the NGO funding is only about one thousandth of Tanzania's GDP which seems quite a small number. An earlier estimate from the year 2000 measures the expenditure of NGOs to be around $260 million which equates to 2.9 percent of Tanzania's GDP in that year (Kiondo et al. 2004, 127). This number sounds more reasonable but can be still taken as a rough estimate since more updated statistics and research are needed on the NGOs' expenditures.

All in all, the importance of NGOs and funding for civil society has increased tremendously during the past 20 years or more in Tanzania and elsewhere. For instance, the World Bank mentions its funding of many NGO projects in Tanzania as an example of its civil society engagement in its publication *The World Bank – Civil Society Engagement: Review of Fiscal Years 2007 to 2009* (The World Bank 2010b). Besides assistance from multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank and the UN agencies,

[2] The year 2008 has been used in order to compare the information on official development assistance with the expenditure of NGOs from the same year. The latest data is from the year 2010 when the net ODA in Tanzania was $2.9 billion and it formed 12.9 % of Tanzania's gross national income (OECD 2010).

Tanzanian NGOs mainly receive funding from the embassies or foreign aid agencies, which is usually short-term support, but also through more strategic partnerships with selected (international) NGOs.

Pumping money into civil society in Tanzania, where locals have been forming and representing NGOs as one avenue for self-help and accumulation, has not come without ‘un-wanted’ side-effects such as ‘suit-case NGOs’ mentioned already earlier. According to Kelsall (2001, 140–144) some if not most of the NGOs, especially those run by the middle-class Tanzanians, quickly learned the language spoken by donors and succeeded in applying and obtaining large amounts of funding. Yet, only few of these organizations had established links with grassroots CBOs and communities either in urban or rural areas. These developments have made the civil society sphere to sometimes appear – at least to an outside observer – as an endless round of workshops and trainings on democratization, capacity building, gender or any type of minority group empowerment held in luxury hotels in Dar es Salaam and attended by “attendance-allowance-seeking journalists and the well-heeled occupants of air-conditioned NGO offices” (ibid., 140). Kelsall (ibid., 140) argues further that the sector is “a donor-driven circus in which participants mouth the latest buzzwords spawned by the international development community on the way picking up their pay-cheques”. Even though Kelsall is highly skeptical, he admits that this is not the whole picture of people involved in the NGO sector.

Civil society, ‘the magic bullet’, has not delivered all the expectations created mostly by the donor community for the sector’s ability to enhance good governance, democratization and poverty reduction in ‘developing’ countries. It needs to be kept in mind that the NGOs have not ‘failed’, but the expectations towards them have been unrealistic (Igoe & Kelsall 2005, 7). NGOs account for the funding to donors and not necessarily to local grassroots communities, and bilateral agreements between donors and NGOs seem to increase competition among the field and even weaken the ability of the local NGOs to speak with one voice in some cases (Kelsall 2001).

Yet, since NGOs have not been able to deliver results in the way donors were expecting they would, it has led donors to be more careful with NGOs nowadays in Tanzania. Kelsall (2001, 140–144) reports that some embassies are cutting down the project funding for NGOs because of the administrative burden caused by many small projects. Others think that there are “a lot of lousy NGOs” in Tanzania (ibid., 143). Kelsall’s interviews with international NGOs (INGOs) in the 1990s have revealed similar thinking, and it was recognized that NGOs which were successful in gaining funding did not have the capacity to make good use of the resources especially in the way donors would have liked them to. According to donors NGOs were lacking proper accounting, book-keeping and reporting mechanisms and at the same time donors did not have the administrative capacity to adequately monitor the use of funds at the community level (ibid.). Kelsall (ibid., 143–144) writes:

> *Donors and INGOs have a real problem in that at the same time as wanting to see NGOs getting their hands dirty at the grassroots, they also want sophisticated accounting and reporting systems in place, systems which one assumes would be facilitated by a well-equipped office.*

A solution was found from the donors’ side as they proposed *capacity building* (Kelsall 2001, 144). It was also thought that better results would be ensured if the capacity building interventions would be owned by the local NGOs (ibid.). NGOs and umbrella NGOs have also noticed the new magic word when applying for funding as turned out in my interviews. The first one is working for the government and the second quote comes from the umbrella NGO’s worker.

> ME: *I was just wondering because - - they [umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs] all seem to have these capacity building aims?*
> EMMANUEL: *You know why?*
> ME: *Why?*
> EMMANUEL: *They must use the catching word. If you want to get the money from the donors: capacity building!*
>
> *Then donors want the systems about keeping records, about auditing, about internal controls, about external controls so at least those are the issues that we try to make them [member NGOs] to understand because they are important for their organizations to be strong, to grow, to be sustainable and even to be credible in the eyes of the other stakeholders out there. So at least those are the areas we are focusing on in capacity building. That is what we mean in our context: building the capacities of member organizations to be able to manage the organizations sustainably and credible.* (David June 2010)

Capacity building seems to be related to systems of control, sustainability, credibility, keeping of records etc – legitimizing organizational practices (see Goddard & Assad 2006). In general it can mean many things and for some it is just “a sloppy piece of aid jargon”, for others it means institutional or organizational development and often it is used not more than an alternative to training (Eade 2007, 630–632). In any case, the term is usually loaded with positive value whether or not the meaning is assumed or explicitly defined (Kenny & Clarke 2010, 3) and even though it is defined, it always takes local meanings and interpretations in the context where it is used.

According to Eade (2007), the idea behind the capacity building has its roots in South American *capacitación* of Liberation Theology which is a Christian movement against poverty and social injustice and *conscientization*, development of critical consciousness, theorized by an adult educator Paulo Freire. Also the ideas of empowerment and social inclusion have had an effect on the term as well as the well-known Nobel Prize winner and economist Amartya Sen’s (see e.g. Sen 1999) work on entitlements and capabilities (ibid.). Eade suggests that the term originates from the “left-leaning range of intellectual and political traditions, but is today commonly used to further a neo-liberal ‘pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps’ kind of economic and political agenda” (ibid.). In addition, new organizational and managerialist principles which cohere with the neo-liberal agenda are seen behind the idea of capacity building (Kenny and Clarke 2010, 4–5). New managerialism involves the enhancement of managerial leadership, a focus on output and outcomes rather than process and a competitive attitude (ibid.). Common for both neo-liberal and new managerialist activities is the appearance of value neutrality (ibid.). In other words, in capacity building usually an outsider educates and supports the capacity of local people or organization and is seeking to build organizational, social, political, cultural, material, technical, practical or financial or a combination of these capacities, many times only in a technical sense (Eade 2007; Kenny & Clarke 2010).

The capacity building trend seems to also go hand in hand with the tendency toward an increasing coordination and harmonizing of actions and projects. Donors want to ease their administrative burden in development aid and projects management and are willing to decrease the number of projects, while increaseíng the outsourcing of these projects and their management to other organizations such as international and local organizations and NGOs. At the same time donors expect formal structures and organized working methods from these organizations. Donors want the development aid to be focused and effective (see e.g. DFID 2011; Kauhanen 2012). This kind of thinking produces bigger units of coordination and promotes formal structuring of activities.

Yet, it needs to be noticed that donors are not solely imposing new trends and practices and that the local NGOs are just passively absorbing them. The relationship is strongly inter-dependent and this will elaborated later on in this study (see 5.2).

4.3 Tanzanian umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs

4.3.1 Tanzania Council for Social Development – TACOSODE

The Tanzania Council of Social Welfare Services (which later changed its name to Tanzania Council for Social Development) was established in February 1965 and it started under the auspices of the government's department of social welfare (Salma & Rose June 2010). The initiative to form the Council came from different levels and was influenced by the department of social welfare, the local voluntary sector, as well as the International Council on Social Welfare which was aiming to establish national councils of social welfare in every country (Rose June 2010). The reason behind the establishment of the Council of Social Welfare Services goes back even before the independence of Tanganyika when most of the voluntary work was based on provision of social services and then the Council's major objective became to facilitate the coordination of the voluntary sector in the provision of social welfare services. For example at the times of a disaster, the Council would go, assess the situation and call its members from the voluntary sector to help. The aim of the Council was to strengthen the relationship between the NGOs and the government but also coordinate and facilitate information sharing. (Ibid.) Especially coordination role was important in the beginning:

> *When people started to establish NGOs, many NGOs were coming and the government said no; 'How can we monitor these NGOs?' Ok, let's look on how we can talk to the NGOs themselves, establish a mechanism which can control the NGOs. This is how the umbrella organization came. - - But now, things have changed a little bit, because now we have NACONGO which has the mandate to coordinate. So this umbrella organization remains building the capacity of their member organizations.* (Francis July 2010)

Until 1974 the minister responsible for the social welfare issues was also the chairperson of the Council. This changed, according to one estimate, after the NGOs became more exposed to other (international) NGOs and found out that maybe it is not so fair that the minister should become their chairperson automatically. So the members demanded a change in the constitution and they succeeded in this although the transition was not very smooth and the government wanted and tried to maintain control. Revisions in the constitution made it possible for the members to mandate and elect a new chairperson for the Council among the NGOs themselves.

In 1987 the focus of the Council and its name changed when it was realized that the current approach of the Council, giving bread and waiting for the disaster to happen and then go and assess and assist, had its limitations. The Council changed its focus from social welfare to social development and a new name, the Tanzania Council for Social Development, was adopted. The Council continued with the coordination and linking of the government with the NGOs but it also advised the government especially in registration of new NGOs. It was the only umbrella organization by that time in Tanzania. The Council also started to promote a professional competence within the NGO sector and this was done through trainings. (Rose June 2010)

Regardless of the alterations in the constitution in the mid 1970s and the change of the focus in the late 1980s, the Council was still receiving government subventions and even people who managed the day-to-day activities at the Secretariat of the Council were seconded by the government. Furthermore, the Council was housed by the Ministry in the Department of Social Welfare. This changed in the early 1990s when the Council started its first intervention and a donor funded programme. The programme was funded by USAid and concentrated on HIV/Aids issues. USAid promoted the idea of the Council having its own bigger work place and also thought the Council would need some autonomy from the government. As explained by one of the workers of TACOSODE: “Everything was there [at the Department of Social Welfare]. Even our letters were opened by the Registrar and then they were directed to us so USAid said it’s not right so we moved to another place.” (Rose June 2010) Slowly, the government withdrew the funding from the Council and it was replaced by donor money. The government, however, continued to be an “honorary member” of the Council because of the contributions it had made. (Rose June 2010)

The membership base and relationship with the members also altered over the years. The members in the early age of the Council were only from Dar es Salaam and mainly foreign and international NGOs, e.g. Caritas Tanzania, Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service, which came into the country already in the colonial era and later on registered in Tanzania. However, the changes in the surrounding environment had a huge impact on the services of the Council: economic crisis and restructuring left many people without work and NGOs became a way to alleviate poverty and create self-employment.

> *So there were lots of newer and smaller NGOs coming up. So in our work, actually, our changing from the social welfare to social development, I think it was the time to meet the demand of these new people who were coming into the sector. They did not know how to manage, they could not write a proposal, and they didn't even know how to organize themselves as an organization so the Council's activities started to respond to these newer needs of the newer established NGOs. It changed to be more of capacitating but also continued to represent the government. I mean the NGO concerns over the government forums, also to be the advisor, major advisor to the government especially during registration or if they wanted to de-register someone if it went against the regulations.* (Rose June 2010)

The Council had a double role between the government and the voluntary sector and not all of the members were happy about the role the Council had at the end of the 1980s. Some of the members felt the Council was more an arm of the government than an independent organ and they wanted more autonomy and were also influenced by some of the foreign donors with their ideas of an independent umbrella organization. This led to an establishment of another organization, Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, TANGO (see 4.3.2). (Rose June 2010)

TACOSODE has 17 staff members and some few volunteers working for them and it has about 250 members in the Tanzanian mainland. The members are working in different thematic areas e.g. health, education, gender, children and youth, and HIV/Aids. The main source of funding for TACOSODE is external donors (e.g. USAid/Global Fund, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland through the Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health and the Foundation for Civil Society) and in 2009–2010 it had a budget of 272,388 Euros for six projects. Members have to pay a subscription fee of 10,000 TZS (about 4 Euros) when they join the umbrella NGO and an annual fee of 20,000 TZS (about 8.5 Euros). However, only 38 members paid the annual fee in 2009 which means that the members contributed about 320 Euros to the budget (Idrisa July 2010). The main activity of TACOSODE is “empowering local NGOs/CBOs and communities to be able to master the environment” (TACOSODE 2011). It is “aiming at improving the capacities of NGOs and CBOs to deliver quality service through training, networking, policy analysis, lobbying and advocacy” (ibid.).

TACOSODE is a member of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) which is an international NGO supporting members working on social development and social welfare issues. At the international level TACOSODE’s workers have attended, for example, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 (Heinonen et al. 2008) and the international ICSW conferences, the latest one in Hong Kong in 2010.

4.3.2 Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations – TANGO

The Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) was established in 1988 with “a view of being a uniting platform and mouthpiece for Tanzanian NGOs” (TANGO 2008). It was established by 22 non-governmental organizations and was registered as an NGO in 1989 (Benjamin May 2010). The boost for establishing an organization for NGOs came in 1985 from the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi where the Tanzanian NGOs who took part in the conference found out that there was a need for a common representation from the Tanzanian NGO side and a need for speaking with one voice (ibid.; Michael 2004, 78). Other reasons for establishing the umbrella body were also mentioned by the workers of TANGO; these included having an association at the national level and coordinating the work done by the NGOs (David June 2010).

Originally, TANGO was meant to bring together only women NGOs but later on it assumed the status of an umbrella body (Michael 2004, 79) because, according to some views, there was a vacuum at the national level and a need for an umbrella organization which would make sure that the NGO issues are coordinated by themselves (Emmanuel June 2010). At first, the establishment of TANGO was not welcomed warmly at TACOSODE and this caused some ruptures between the two organizations in the beginning (Rose June 2010). TANGO was established by some of the old executive committee members of TACOSODE and after the registration of this new organization, it was also soon de-registered following an outcry from TACOSODE as to why another umbrella body with the same objectives was registered (ibid.). There were some changes in the focus of TANGO but later on they both seem to have taken the same road of being umbrella bodies.

There are ten people working for TANGO and they make a strategic plan every three years where the guidelines for action are created. It also directs the work, although it depends on the donors and the allocated funding whether the strategic plan will be completed as it was planned by the end of the three year period. The main activities of TANGO are “capacity building for the members”, “advocacy work”, “coordinating the collection and sharing of information for the NGOs” and to “act as a representative and report back to the members on what’s going on and they can take that back and be involved” (David June 2010). At the international level TANGO has been active in issues related to the EU’s Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and other trade issues, but also trying to be actively involved in aspects of the East African Community (EAC) integration.

TANGO has currently more than 650 NGOs as members all over the Tanzanian mainland and on top of that it is also collaborating with regional and district networks and has been involved in forming these networks. All the members are registered local NGOs but TANGO also offers services to and collaborates with other civil society actors.

TANGO gets its funding mainly from the donors and by implementing projects and programs. In 2010 it had a yearly budget of about 270,000 Euros (Selmani June 2010). The donors who have given grants to TANGO are for example UNDP, The Foundation for Civil Society and Kepa, an umbrella NGO from Finland. Members are due to pay an annual subscription fee of 30,000 TZS (about 15 Euros). Membership can be revoked if the member does not pay for five years in a row. Other reasons for ending the membership includes breaking the law or isolating oneself from TANGO’s activities.

4.3.3 The Foundation for Civil Society – FCS

The Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) is a non-profit company, designed and funded by a group of foreign donors and governed by a local board. It was registered in 2002 and started its operations in 2003 (FCS 2011). According to its website (ibid.), the aim of the FCS is to be an "intermediary support mechanism for civil society organizations in Tanzania which will enable effective engagement in poverty reduction efforts as set out in the Government of Tanzania policies". The FCS' core activities are "delivering grant aid" and "supporting capacity-building initiatives" (ibid.). The activities have been spread all over the Tanzanian mainland but also on the islands, Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia, in the coastal areas (FCS 2009, ii). There are 28 people working and implementing day-to-day activities at the FCS (FCS 2011). It has no members but it works through different civil society organizations and NGO networks (Emmanuel June 2010).

The FCS is funded by six donors, with a yearly budget of 8,384,227 USD (6,342,936 Euros) in 2009 (FCS 2009, 71). Donor funding has increased constantly every year from around 2 million Euros in 2003 to 6 million Euros in 2009 (ibid., 73). Most of the funding goes to grants provided to the civil society organizations (ibid., 70). The Foundation has four types of grant programmes: 1) registration grants (up to 90 Euros) for small unregistered groups or organizations that wish to become formalized, 2) rolling small grants (up to 2,200 Euros) for small organizations to build their capacity in managing projects in an accountable way from three months up to one year, 3) medium grants (up to 47,600 Euros) are for three-year projects for organizations that already have some experience and are able to "deliver projects with a potential for high impact", and 4) strategic grants (up to 136,000 Euros) are for three years projects "for well-established civil society organizations with a proven and demonstrable track record in poverty reduction" (ibid., 4; Godfrey May 2010).

Capacity building activities at the FCS include trainings in financial management, organizational development, project design, fundraising and public policy dialogues between the civil society organizations and the government representatives, as well as networking events between different stakeholders and sectors (FCS 2009, 29; 2008, 20–26). The FCS is also conducting research on civil society to provide data to itself and its stakeholders and disseminate information on civil society e.g. through exhibitions and media (ibid.).

The FCS has been especially welcomed into Tanzanian civil society because of its grant-giving role and many of the NGOs in various parts of Tanzania, including TANGO, TACOSODE and NACONGO, have benefited and received funds for their projects and activities (FCS 2009, Selamani June 2010). However, some reservations still exist towards the FCS especially among the other organizations doing capacity building activities as elaborated by the staff members from the umbrella bodies:

> *The Foundation, basically, is supposed to be a grant-maker but now it is changing to program implementation. It is dealing with capacity building but previously that wasn't the role of the Foundation for Civil Society: it was supposed to give us grants to implement. Now, I find that because there is nobody who can say anything. There is nobody who is on top who can say: 'Listen, there is enough people who can implement. Why don't you be the grant-maker?' Now we can see that we are competing. How can you compete with a grant-maker?* (Benjamin May 2010).

> *In fact the issue with the Foundation for Civil Society, the problem I personally see is that it's currently acting as an implementing organization, like a network. That's why lot of people nowadays think the Foundation is a network, an umbrella organization, because it's almost everywhere in the country. - - They have dialogue with the members of the parliament and so forth. - - They are everywhere but they should be in Dar es Salaam providing grants for the NGOs to do that work, but not as you find them. They are everywhere, policy forums, exhibitions, which should be done by the NGOs themselves.* (David June 2010).

It seems like the other umbrella organizations feel that they are competing with the FCS and are not very satisfied with the situation. They have a strong opinion about the organization that it is doing something incorrect as one of the workers put it when referring to the Foundation's role as an implementor: "Whatever they are doing it is ethically incorrect" (Selemani June 2010).

There are few reasons given by the other organizations as to why the FCS has its current status and activities. Firstly, the biggest difference between the umbrella bodies and the FCS is the funding capacity. The FCS has 'ensured' its funding from the donors for the foreseeable future but the umbrellas need to apply for funding for almost every project and activity they are planning to implement. One of the workers of an umbrella body explains this when talking about some of the problems in the civil society:

> *Another one which is very big is the capacity. You might think that we have the capacity, but - - when we compare us with the Foundation, the Foundation has more capacity in terms of funds and even if they don't have the capacity within, they can use the funds to eliminate that. - - in our case we cannot, unless we get funds for that specifically. So that is another problem.* (Benjamin May 2010)

Secondly, one of the employees from an umbrella organization sees that there has been a leadership vacuum in the civil society field which has made it possible for the FCS to become quite a dominant actor, besides the funding factor:

> *I think it could be because of the vacuum, leadership vacuum or lack of presence, as I said, in terms of certain issues that the FCS took the role of being now a leader, funder and leader themselves, which is not good because you cannot be a funder and also an implementor by yourself. You need to leave the proper civil society organizations to do that.* (Selemani June 2010)

This view also has some self-criticism in it, since the older umbrella bodies or other organizations have not been able to fill this 'gap' before the FCS.

What is this gap? Who determined it and how did a solution come about?

> The decision by the Development Partners to provide basket funding for the Civil Society Organizations in Tanzania through the organizational mechanism of the Foundation for Civil Society represents a prudent and visionary intervention in the development dynamics of Tanzania. Such a move balances the parallel general budget support provided to the Government of Tanzania by a number of donors. (Kassam & Mutakyahwa 2006 in a consultancy report ordered by the foreign donors providing funding for the Foundation for Civil Society)

DFID, Great Britain's Department for International Development, started the Foundation for Civil Society (Sorensen & Giles 2009). DFID's idea was to provide funding for the FCS which then increases the capacity of local CSOs to engage in decision-making (ibid., 16). Clearly, in DFID they saw that there has been a lack of capacity and policy engagement in Tanzanian civil society, since the Department interpreted this as a need for establishing a new organization from the outside. Even though the staff members of the FCS are all Tanzanians, one of the staff members from an umbrella NGO says that the organization cannot be described as Tanzanian:

> ME: *What I have understood that all the people who are working for the FCS are Tanzanians so the donors are just giving the money, but there are Tanzanians who are*

deciding where the funds go? What do you think?

FRANCIS: *No no, not Tanzanian. It's just a donor. No, it's not that we say that all the funds should go there.*

Even though the FCS' role has been criticized, the amounts of funding are welcomed by the other umbrella bodies and NGOs in general. The grant-giving activities of the FCS are seen rather positively. However, there is also a downside to it. According to one view, the FCS' registration grant has helped to establish and register new NGOs which do not know how to 'stay alive' and keep their organization active (Rose June 2010). These kinds of organizations are occupied for only a few months or a year and then collapse (ibid.). On the one hand, by pooling all the funds through one organization, the funding criteria are simplified and organizations are all put on the same line. On the other hand, this might be a challenge to some organizations, since harmonizing may cause a decrease in the variety of NGOs and organizations in the Tanzanian field (Francis July 2010).

4.3.4 The National Council of NGOs – NACONGO

The National Council of NGOs is a national body established under the Tanzanian NGO Policy 2001 and the NGO Act 2002 (NACONGO 2008) which means that its creation has been pushed by the government and assured by the law. The National Council of NGOs started its operations in 2003 (Juma June 2010) and it has "the responsibility of coordinating and self-regulation of all NGOs that operate in Tanzania" (NACONGO 2008). One of the people who have been much involved in NACONGO explains the reasons behind the establishment of a national council:

> *There happened a lot, mushrooming of so much NGOs and the way they are formed: like they are not coordinated, they are not having systems and structures for themselves to have or to be in guard, to enhance integrity and having formal structures and guidelines so that's where the government and CSOs themselves jointly vote of having a certain mechanism, a certain body that could enhance NGO coordination and self-regulation and that is where it was started, that's a point that made NACONGO to be established.* (Juma June 2010)

All NGOs in Tanzania are automatically members of the National Council after they have registered as NGOs (NACONGO 2008). This gives a lot of authority to the organization in terms of membership base. Nevertheless, not all were happy about the establishment of this new organization since it was established by a law and not on the voluntary basis of coming together as stated by one of the NGO workers: “this [establishment of NACONGO] was not very much positively received by many developed partners including the donors and even some local NGOs” (Rose June 2010).

According to the NACONGO brochure (2008) NACONGO is “governed by 30 people who are drawn from 21 regional representatives” who were elected by the NGOs in each region. The other nine are drawn from the international organizations (one representative from the WWF), national umbrella organizations (two representatives from TANGO and TACOSODE), regional networks (two representatives), national NGOs of people with disabilities (two representatives) and NGO networks dealing with thematic issues (two representatives) (ibid.). The Council also has an executive committee which oversees the work of the Council and a secretariat which is responsible for the daily issues (ibid.). The main goal of NACONGO is “to ensure NGOs’ self-regulation countrywide, networking, accountability and interface with the government and other national and international bodies” (ibid.). Funding is a big problem for the Council, since government is not providing funding for it and it tries to get funds from the international donors (Juma June 2010). So far, NACONGO has got funding from the Foundation for Civil Society which in 2008 was 34,079,600 TZS (about 21,665 Euros) and in 2009 the FCS supported NACONGO by printing 6,000 copies of the Code of Conduct which includes the rules and recommendations for the registered NGOs in Tanzania (FCS 2008, 2009). There are only three people working at the Council’s office currently.

Why is NACONGO relevant in terms of umbrella NGOs in Tanzania? NACONGO was established to be a coordination organ of the NGOs for the government but I think it is now slipping or at least widening from that role mostly because of lack of funding from the government. The government decided not to fund the Council, one reason being the fear coming from the NGOs and especially umbrella NGOs that it will take their roles which will lead to de-registering of existing organizations. The government had to assure that this was not suppose to be the Council’s role even though it is said in the NGO Act (2002, part V) that “there shall be established an *umbrella* organization for Non Governmental Organizations to be known as the National Council for Non Governmental Organizations” (italics mine). Be that as it may, the whole concept of the

Council is interesting: the law requires the existence of the Council but the government does not provide funding to it which actually undermines the whole existence of the organization as such. Because of this, NACONGO has now turned to donors in order to secure its funding and due to this, I argue, it has changed some of its foci or at least widened its focus from coordination and self-regulation also to capacity building and advocacy (see 5.3.2).

5 DOSTANGO and open system theories in the context of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs

5.1 Umbrella NGO-state relations

The umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs have different relationship with the government than with donors. The biggest difference is that state funding for these organizations is close to zero or even zero. Yet, there are other aspects that have effects on the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs and this chapter will discuss the relationship between the two sectors.

According to the NGO Policy and highlighted by the NGOs Coordination Department when I visited the place, the government and NGOs are partners in development. This vision is also strong among the umbrella NGOs as expressed by a staff member from an umbrella NGO: "- -we are serving the same people. It's not that we are serving some people and the government is serving others. They are the same people" (Benjamin May 2010). Umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are categorized as stakeholders of the NGO Coordination Department and the recognition seems to be mutual; for example, the Director of the Department has been invited to many events of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs.

In general, the Department promotes NGO networking and linking organizations from the grass root level to the national level where umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs play an active role. This objective also seems to be shared between the two, the Department and the umbrella NGOs. Especially at the district level, where umbrella NGOs communicate with their members and organize trainings and discussions, communication between officials and civil society usually happens through the local NGO networks which umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are trying to build. The cooperation with municipal officials is usually easier and they are more available than for example ministers or parliament members according to the umbrella NGOs.

However, it still seems that mostly the cooperation between different government officials and the umbrella NGOs depends on the individual relationships. It is easier to organize a meeting with a government representative or a member of the parliament if a staff member of an umbrella NGO has met the person before and the representative is aware of what the particular NGO is doing. General elections and circulation of elected representatives every five years makes permanent relationships sometimes difficult. Some more permanent relationships still have been formed; for example, the former head of TANGO, the executive director, has been a member in the NGO Coordination Board two times from 2004 to 2010 and TACOSODE has been closely working with the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare by implementing projects as a part of the Tanzanian National AIDS Control Programme (NACP).

The government officials still have reservations towards the (umbrella) NGOs, as do the umbrella NGOs towards the government, and relations between the two are not all rosy. Partnering in development sometimes means that these reservations are also manifested. Officials criticize generally Tanzanian NGOs’ management and financial skills and their dependence on donor money. Creativity is missing and most of the NGOs are just waiting for the donors to come to fill their bank accounts, stated by more than one government official. It was also noticed by the officials that the donor money is needed but Tanzanian local NGOs and the umbrella NGOs could do some income generating projects or fund raising activities themselves for expanding their activities and ensuring the continuation of the work if the donor money is being cut. The NGO Act (Amendment of the NGO Act 2005) prohibits profit sharing which means that staff members cannot use funds raised as dividends but they are “entitled to engage in legally acceptable fund raising activities” (NGO Act 2002). One of the government officials highlighted as a good example an NGO that has done consultancy work in order to gain funds.

The government officials also presented some reservations in terms of NGO leaders – on the general level – who assume that NGOs are owned by them, not by the members, but also in terms of missing transparency in financial issues. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, under which the NGO Coordination Department functions, mentions in their Strategic Plan for the years 2011–2016 that they will develop an action plan for preventing and combating corruption in the NGO sector (Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children 2011). Some of these reservations or issues seem to be shared among umbrella NGOs as well since one worker raised an issue of quality in the civil society and told that: “the quality of participation of civil society leaves a lot to be desired. So I think you would have hoped that the government would also contribute towards the building of capacity so that we get quality participation" (Selemani June 2010). From the NGOs' side, it seems that they feel that they do not get as much support from the government as they would like, but on the other hand they notice that more self-criticism should be in place within the NGOs and civil society.

When considering the relations between the state and the umbrella NGOs, one must remember that the umbrella NGOs have expressed advocacy and lobbying as one of their main activities. A staff member from an umbrella NGO explains about their organization's advocacy work which includes affecting national policies, for example by commenting on policy documents, empowering member NGOs to engage with the local politics or purely protesting:

> *So speaking from the policy and advocacy function, our main work has been around getting to engage with mostly national policies, but also recently from 2005 we have been doing advocacy work by empowering civil society, especially NGOs, member NGOs to acquire skills that they can use in advocacy work. So in terms of advocacy, I can say what we do is, we take a policy or a document, or strategy or policy framework or whatever that policy document is and do analysis* - - *and then we prepare what we call a decision paper or we can do what we call face-to-face meetings* - - *with the appropriate authority so that we can present our issues. Sometimes we also do what we call protest advocacy: the government or donors, or development partners decide to do something that we as local civil society are not happy with and then we come up with a protest advocacy.* (Selemani June 2010)

Umbrella NGOs have been involved in and have affected policy documents such as the NGO Policy (see 4.2.1) and MKUKUTA which is a Swahili acronym for National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty. The same umbrella NGO worker continues about advocacy work and tells how they are affecting the MKUKUTA process. Similar processes are also on the way in other intermediary organizations, as we find out in the second quote:

> *In the national context or in the local context, we look at MKUKUTA.* - - *We actually look at the targets which were set by MKUKUTA and see how far we have gone, what is the progress and we also provide a shadow report in terms of MKUKUTA.* (Selemani June 2010)

We come up with strategies like now we are in the process of, I mean the country is in the process of developing the national strategy for growth and reduction of poverty, we called it MKUKUTA. So we are coordinating, we are facilitating the involvement of CSOs in the process of developing this strategy and we bring together the government and civil society to share information and come up with resolutions, come up with the inputs, with strategies. (Godfrey May 2010)

Umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs' advocacy work seems to be targeted to specific areas and policies or local levels. Too harsh criticism against state policies or the state systems in general is avoided, even though protesting is mentioned by one umbrella NGO's worker. There might be few reasons for this: Firstly, it might be an organizational suicide to criticize the political systems of the country too harshly, as NGOs have been de-registered when criticizing the government. During the first multi-party elections in 1995 a high-profile women's NGO, BAWATA, was de-registered since it had provided voters information on women's policies of contesting parties and urged women to use their vote accordingly (Maral-Hanak 2009). The government accused BAWATA of being in favor of the opposition and de-registered it (ibid.). Other organizations were also de-registered during the time because they were accused of being 'political' (ibid.). In 2005 an educational NGO, HakiElimu, published and disseminated a critical report considering the primary education programme and policy formulation process in the education sector, and the NGO was threatened with de-registration and was banned from undertaking any studies or publishing any reports (Ewald 2010, 236).

Secondly, organizations might benefit financially from having good relations with the state apparatuses. Umbrella NGOs have been implementing state programmes and to one organization the government has provided land for establishing an office place. One umbrella NGO's worker explained how NGOs' role is "to contribute to the government", and that the NGOs are actually like "the second hand of the government" (Francis July 2010). Thirdly, thinking of advocacy work as a path to democracy, if understood in a Western sense, can be seen as something alien to many people and/or as a continuation of the colonial times in the sense of adopting western systems.

Advocacy seems to be more like a tool for sporadic pinpointing of problems and giving feedback but not a comprehensive strategy for changing political systems. Political stands seem to be adopted more on an issue basis in these organizations. I also found out that the aims and effects of advocacy work are not (yet) focused and crystal clear as posed by one of the workers from an umbrella NGO:

> *So advocacy is just one of the roles because, as civil society we are supposed to be the watchdogs of government, private sector and development partners. But that is an area where we are still very young in terms of what, how effective or what is the impact towards the government. However, we provide lot of support in terms of providing feedback to the government in what they are implementing, providing inputs.* (Selemani June 2010)

All in all, it is clear that the government has authority over the policy issues and the (umbrella) NGOs in spite of the advocacy work done by these NGOs. For instance, NGO participation and giving feedback in the process of forming the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) offer little real opportunity for influence since agenda and the terms of debate are defined elsewhere (in powerful financial institutions and the government machinery) (Maral-Hanak 2009). This does not mean that advocacy work could not bring some results as well and that there are growing opportunities to voice criticism publicly.

Regardless of disagreements and/or reservations between the government and the umbrella NGOs there is still one matter that unites them: protecting the 'national interest' vis-à-vis the international community. Defending national autonomy and contending against the donors' or other multilateral institutions' power makes the government and the umbrella NGOs sometimes join hands. A worker from an umbrella NGO elucidates this:

> *In some cases we have been attending the government against the donors when the donors are proposing or pressuring the government into something that we believe is wrong for our country. We believe it's not right for the sovereignty of the country. We have always to do with the government saying no to the donors, we can't accept this.* (David June 2010)

I heard the same from the government representative side, when an official said that, for example, at the municipal level where the donors sometimes have their own policies which do not necessarily meet the needs of the people or the priorities of the officials and this is a problem that should be tackled together.

5.2 Dependence on donor money – dependence on symbolic resources

The umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs in Tanzania are highly dependent on their environment especially in terms of funding which is vital for their existence. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) described three critical elements determining dependence: 1) the importance of the resource in terms magnitude and criticality of the resource, 2) power over the allocation and use of the resource, and 3) alternatives to the resource. Even though labor force, information etc. can be related to resources, in this paragraph I will mostly concentrate on dependence on donor funding, since this was the issue that came up constantly and from different informants. Below are two different persons from different NGOs (one from an umbrella NGO) stating the importance of donor money as a resource.

> *Lack of reliable sustainable permanent sources of income, it's a challenge for many organizations.* - - *like we are now more than 20 years old, depending on donor money more than 20 years and hoping to still be alive*. (David June 2010).
>
> *Most of the NGOs are donor-dependent NGOs. When the donor says no money today, the NGO dies tomorrow so they are dependent all the time. They are dependent on donors.* - - *So this is a challenge, their sustainability is very limited.* (Fredy June 2010).

The money from donors has become the main source of funding for the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. The umbrella NGOs also try to gain some resources from the members by collecting membership fees annually and trying to offer their expertise for consultancies. These are ways to decrease the criticality and magnitude of funding. However, these contribute very little to the overall budget of the umbrella NGOs and all the projects are run by donor contributions.

Besides the criticality and magnitude of funding, the umbrella NGOs' power over the resources is sometimes minimal. The donors seem to make most of the rules and put pressure on which way the organizations should go – at least on the formal side. A worker from the umbrella NGO confirms this:

> *Because of our capacity and the lack of funding, we sometimes go into implementing activities which are favorable to donors, not to the organizations because we need money. So they [donors] say this we are not funding but we are funding this and this so we go to that.* (Benjamin May 2010)

Also, donors do not only have power over the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs but they affect the whole environment and other stakeholders such as the government which is an important stakeholder for the NGOs. Donors can regulate resources and change foci and make resources become scarce. One umbrella NGO's staff member highlights this:

> *I think maybe another challenge; it also has to do with the dependence on donors, the changes in donor priorities. They usually affect, not only us, but sometimes they affect even those stakeholders and partners we are working with – the government. You know like - - in the past two years it has been this movement over the world: global warming, climate change etc. so even the government, it's been pressured by the donors that now we are focusing on climate change. So the government is like, they will forget what you have been doing for the past five years - - with health, education, infrastructure - - That affects of course: the issue of financing but it distracts even other stakeholders who are key for us to be able to achieve our objects, particularly the government. When the government is distracted to something else, it is difficult for us to see the change we want because most of the changes we want, can only come through the government so this change of policy focus affect our work.* (David June 2010)

There seem to be very few alternatives to the donor money as the umbrella NGOs' different attempts (member fees, consultancies) to decrease the criticality of the donor funding contribute only little to the overall budget. Even though there are few alternatives to donor money, there are quite a few active donors in Tanzania (the governments, international NGOs, multilateral institutions etc.) to 'choose' from. The concentration of resource control is not high although the practices and ideas of donors in the development field resemble one another (see 5.3.1).

Yet, it needs to be noticed that the NGO-funder dynamics are not centered only on one resource, money, but that there are other crucial forms of resource exchange as well. These can be called as symbolic resources, such as status, prestige, information and reputation (Ebrahim 2007). If the money is flowing from donors to the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs, then the information is flowing to the other direction. According to Ebrahim (ibid., 143–146) the funds are not simply transferred to NGOs, but are exchanged for information and reputation. For the information provided by NGOs to be useful in generating funds, it must demonstrate the successfulness of the funded activities (ibid.). This means that the success of an NGO enables its funder to take a credit for that success and to build a reputation for finding and supporting projects that are good investments (ibid). The key resource what the funder needs is a good reputation or “more specifically, the status or prestige associated with that reputation” (ibid., 145). It is thus the reputation that is needed, and the presentation of information in ‘successful’ terms transforms information into reputation, and thus into a form of power (ibid.). The intermediary NGOs’ survival then depends on the ability to perform a ‘dual conversion role’ between donors and the end beneficiaries: the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs use their reputation to secure funds from donors and use the money to implement activities, providing services to, and acquire information from members and other NGOs. The intermediary NGO also has to have an ability to market its added value to this conversion process (Ebrahim 2007). The umbrella NGO’s worker elaborates this dual role and donors’ needs:

> *Because donors, they also need us. Because they want us to collaborate with them so they will be watching who is the right partner, you know. So they will be following up the relationship between you and the community…* (Rose June 2010)

In Pfeffer’s and Salancik’s terms the information provided by these umbrella NGOs is a critical and important resource and the NGOs have power over the allocation of this resource. Yet, there are alternatives to this resource, since there are many organizations that play this intermediary role.

5.3 Patterns of similarity

How similar or different are the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs from each other? I started to think that there must be some similarities after listening to interview after interview of staff members from umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs all telling me about capacity building activities, lobbying, advocacy, networking and information sharing. Some of the workers from the umbrella NGOs disagreed with me, although not so strongly in terms of the two national umbrella NGOs:

> ME: *What about then, there are TACOSODE, TANGO, the FCS and also NACONGO who is trying to coordinate NGOs and then there is PF [Policy Forum], so many big organizations which are kind of having the same activities as well?*
>
> SELEMANI: *I wouldn't say so. That's the beauty of civil society: our diversity. First of all, I wouldn't say that we are doing the same thing although on the surface, someone could see that we are doing the same thing.*
>
> - -

SELEMANI: *So in a nutshell, I have already said what the role of each of these organizations is: So NACONGO is basically a place where the NGOs go and represent their issues to government because that's what the law provides. PF is basically policy analysis and stuff like that. FCS is purely a donor, so they are not supposed to be doing any of the things they are doing. TANGO and TACOSODE, they are umbrella organizations, they have a constituency behind them and they are supposed to be serving their constituency as a first priority and then wider civil society as a second priority.*

The NGO worker is in the beginning of his answer clearly stating that all the organizations I am asking about are doing different things and they are not similar. Later on, when he is summarizing, he states the *original* purposes of the mentioned organizations: NACONGO is for NGOs to present their issues to the government and FCS is purely a donor. I argue that besides these roles these two organizations have taken other tasks that are similar to the umbrella organizations. After all, in the end TANGO and TACOSODE are categorized in a similar vein – as umbrella organizations – and the interviewee makes no distinctions.

Another worker from the same umbrella body as above admits that he does not know what the other organizations are doing and is not sure if there exist any differences between the two umbrella bodies and if there are, he presumes the differences are not big:

About [the other umbrella NGO], I don't know what they are doing, if it's quite different from what we are doing or is it similar. Maybe the difference is just on the approaches, on those 'hows' and maybe its policy influence. There can be different approaches to do the same thing. Maybe they use this way and we use this way. Maybe that can only be the difference but I don't think there are any other big difference with these three umbrella organizations [TACOSODE, TANGO and Policy Forum] at the national level. (David June 2010)

This view is also supported from the other umbrella NGO. Differences seem to be minimal:

There are no secrets so we know what they are doing but we will not have the details and likewise for them, maybe they will not have our details. But we do meet in meetings, now under the NACONGO but also under various other forums and maybe in the government forums, because we are still the giant umbrella bodies so we do meet but I cannot say what we are doing differ very much. (Mary July 2010)

By comparing the aims, objectives, activities and structures of the all organizations I also found some conformity. Even though the organizations were established around some other purpose and have different stakeholders, they have become more similar as the time has passed and I suggest that this is because of the interaction with the environment, although room has to be left for the organizations' inner actions and points of divergence as well. Also, I do not argue that the organizations are completely similar and do exactly the same things in the same way. They obviously have different histories, realities, ways of understanding, and emphases in their work but I think there are some patterns of homogenization and similarity that can be discovered, the two older umbrella NGOs having the most isomorphic forms.

I have decided to concentrate on visions, missions and main activities described by the organizations to define some of the similarities. Yet, it is clear that the definitional confusion surrounding the ideas such as capacity building and advocacy, i.e. these terms can mean many things, does not really conceal the real actions of the organizations, which can be diverse. Does capacity building mean same thing to all of these organizations? Are these organizations doing capacity building in a similar way? I argue that the use of these terms reveals the reaction to the environmental conditions and the context. Then, in emphasizing the use of the terms and language, it does not become so significant if the reality appears to be more complex (as it always is).

Starting from the mission statements (see Figure 5.3), TACOSODE's mission statement reads: "TACOSODE is an umbrella NGO aiming at improving the capacities of NGOs and CBOs to deliver quality services through training, networking, policy analysis, lobbying and advocacy" (TACOSODE 2011), whereas TANGO's mission is "to facilitate qualitative and quantitative growth of the NGO sector through capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, partnership building and lobbying and advocating with and for member organizations". Both aim to improve the quality of the NGO sector through capacity building/trainings, information sharing and networking/partnership building, and lobbying and advocating, and they both envision a strong and capable civil society promoting social justice and people-centred development. Mission statements between these two umbrella bodies are very similar.

The Foundation for Civil Society's mission is little bit shorter and different compared to the other umbrella NGOs. It wants "to empower citizens through the provision of grants, facilitating linkages and enabling a culture of ongoing learning to civil society" (FCS 2011) but when looking at its main activities it also provides capacity building, shares information, promotes public policy dialogues/advocacy. It differentiates from the other two by providing grants and doing monitoring and evaluation of those organizations to which the grants have been provided. NAGONCO's mission, on the other hand, is "to facilitate NGOs in Tanzania in order to positively contribute to the national development. NACONGO's facilitation is through information sharing, networking and self-regulation of the NGO" (NACONGO 2008). NACONGO has a self-regulating emphasis and according to its agenda it should provide general information about NGOs in Tanzania to those who want or need it. Yet – and most importantly – it also builds capacities, advocates and lobbies, and shares information just like the all the other organizations.

TACOSODE

- Vision: "Capable CSOs working for social justice"
- Mission: "TACOSODE is an umbrella NGO aiming at improving the capacities of NGOs and CBOs to deliver quality services through training, networking, policy analysis, lobbying and advocacy."
- Main activities: Capacity building, networking and information sharing, advocacy and awareness creation, liaising between the government officials and donors and NGOs, and voluntary coordinating of NGOs (TACOSODE 2009, 2011)

TANGO

- Vision: "A strong and vibrant society in Tanzania where NGOs are taking an active and effective role in promoting people-centered development based on the aspects of justice, peace, gender equality and quity, good governance and human rights."
- Mission: "To facilitate qualitative and quantitative growth of the NGO sector through capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, partnership building and lobbying and advocating with and for member organizations"
- Main activities: Capacity building, lobbying and advocacy, knowledge and experince sharing, networking and acting as a unifying organ (TANGO 2008; 2012)

FCS

- Vision: "Tanzania where citizens are empowered to realise their rights and engage in change processes that enhance their quality of life."
- Mission: "To empower citizens through the provision of grants, facilitating linkages and enabling a culture of ongoing learning in civil society."
- Main activities: Capacity building, enhancing networking and public policy dialogues, grant giving services, monitoring and evaluation (FCS 2009; 2011)

NACONGO

- Vision: "A poverty free Tanzania where NGOs play an active role in the social-economic and political affairs of the country."
- Mission: "To facilitate NGOs in Tanzania, in order to postively contribute to the national development. NAGONCO's facilitation is through information sharing, networking and self-regulation of the NGOs."
- Main activities: To lobby and advocate on behalf of NGOs in Tanzania, provide information about NGO community in Tanzania to those who need it, inform NGOs about policy and other issues that affect NGOs positively or negatively, and build NGOs capacity of NGOs. (NACONGO 2008)

Figure 5.3: Visions, missions and main activities of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs

DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 149) argue that any unit will resemble other units when they face the same set of environmental conditions. The umbrella NGOs in Tanzania share the same urban working environment, legal and political context, a somewhat similar cultural and historical background, nation-wide membership, and donor dependency although relationships between different stakeholders might differ at times. Organizations in the same set of environmental conditions do not only compete for resources and members but for political power and institutional legitimation (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 150). This will be explained more thoroughly in the next paragraphs.

5.3.1 Coercive isomorphism

Firstly, institutional isomorphism derives from coercive authorities: donors and government put pressure and have political influence on organizations that are depending on themselves. Since the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are highly depending on donor money for their organizational survival, it can be interpreted that donors are putting more pressure on these NGOs than the government. Donors not only have an impact on the allocation and the use of funding, as discussed in the resource dependence chapter, but they also affect umbrella organizations' reporting and accounting practices, strategies and budgetary plans, although the organizations themselves have also room for manoeuvre. Olivier de Sardan (2005, 72) reminds that development projects and donors do not only aim to transfer technologies and know-how but that these are combined with attempts to transfer and to create structures and modes of organization based on some ideal. The examples below illustrate how the umbrella NGOs are setting or are trying to set their organizational practices to a similar level of bureaucracy to satisfy the donor's demands on accountability and regularity. The level of organizational practices is highly interconnected with the funding from donors as elaborated in the second excerpt:

> *Yes, this [quarterly report] is a donor requirement. Formerly, we used to report monthly but due to the time constraints sometimes you fail to get things set on time - - So later they [donors] decided it's better to report quarterly so in all the projects we report quarterly. Although for narrative report, you can send narrative report monthly, depending on donors but for the finance part, we always report quarterly.* (Idrisa July 2010)

> *Challenges first, it took us some time to get into the system [of donors]. It's like partners were not really prepared, you know, they have their criteria and we were not set according*

to their criteria so that time that we lost setting ourselves into the system that is one, which in line posed delay of disbursement of funds and the delay of disbursement of funds was because of delay in reporting. If you are not doing the activities in time, you delay in reporting and it's performance based. You implement, give us report and then we release the funds. So there was a challenge of first late reporting but also delay of disbursements. (Amina July 2010)

Another example comes from the budget negotiations of one project between the workers of an umbrella organization and a donor. There was a discussion about allowances of the seminar attendees since there has been a habit of giving a small reimbursement for all the attendees for the travels, accommodation etc. The discussion was about the appropriate amount and the donor first asked what the workers from an umbrella body thought would be adequate. This immediately led to a counterquestion "what is possible?" In the end, even though the donor's suggestion on allowance (25 000 TZS = about 15€) was thought not to be realistic and too little according to the workers from the umbrella body, the discussion ended when the donor set the price to 27 000 TZS (about 16€) for accommodation.

Later on, I remembered that the donor had talked about a renewal of the allowance system at the umbrella organization to be more in line with that at other organizations. Furthermore, according to the donor, a shared view has grown among some donors that the whole system of allowances should be wound down within Tanzanian civil society. Presumptions of NGOs being based on purely voluntariness coincide with the actions of paid-voluntary which is not seen as 'ideal' for the NGO sector. Yet, the allowance issue can be seen many ways: for some attendants it is purely a compensation for a bus ticket and a hotel night if they are coming somewhere far away from the seminar place, for others it might be a source of livelihood or an extra salary. For umbrella NGOs it also seems to be a measurement of reputation: better off umbrella bodies can provide better compensations which is a sign of a capable organization. For donors, on the other hand, allowance is something that is away from the real project funding – sort of an administrative cost that is seen as a 'necessary evil' in project funding. Also, it can be seen as feeding the informal economy in the country since taxes are not paid from the allowances. Kontinen (2007, 114) has wrote that the issue of allowance exemplifies a tension between the kind of short-term financial benefit and skills improvement as objects of cooperation between the NGOs and their donors. In any case, pressure has been put on the umbrella NGOs to change their systems and ideally the systems would be the same for all NGOs. This is a clear empirical example of donors' coercive institutional pressure which causes isomorphism.

The whole issue of isomorphism and the effect of the environment were concluded very well when one of the interviewees stated that "instead of establishing organizations which are for the need of the people, we establish organizations which are for the needs of funds – donor-driven." (Benjamin May 2010). For some reason the donors seem to apply only one or two agenda at a time. These agendas or fashions change every now and then. Now it is trendy to do 'capacity building' which is also the main agenda of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs in Tanzania. Capacity building is seen by donors as a solution to every problem in the NGO sector (Kelsall 2001). The 'wrong' kinds of NGOs are now educated, strengthened and capacitated to do better and to become the 'right' kind of organizations according to donor views (see Kontinen 2011). Then NGOs can better do the work they are meant to do (e.g. advocating democratization, increasing social development) as seen by the donors and as the umbrella bodies try to implement.

The Tanzanian government is also having an influence on NGOs by setting the legal framework for the NGOs and the way NGOs can work. The Tanzanian NGO Act and Policy define what is an NGO and its structure and features. The NGO Registrar, can register and also de-register NGOs without any clear procedures for appealing against a resolution and the NGO Board has a mandate to coordinate the NGO activities. Moreover, the whole processes of first forming the NGO Policy which included the umbrella NGOs' and other NGOs' views and then enacting the NGO law that ignored the contribution of the NGO sector can be read as a statement from the government which lets the NGOs know their place. Also, establishing a new organ, NACONGO, in addition to these other bodies to coordinate the NGOs can be seen as a way to control the NGO sector, even though NACONGO's current activities are somewhat side-tracked from the originals as will be elaborated in the next chapter. However, as said, the dependence of umbrella NGOs on government is not so high and relevant as is their dependency on donors.

5.3.2 Mimetic processes

Secondly, institutional isomorphism can result from mimetic processes of imitation which originate from ambiguous goals, uncertainty of the environment or bounded understanding of organizational concepts (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 151). Also, "much of the homogeneity in organizational structures stems from the fact that despite considerable search for diversity there is relatively little variation to be selected from" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, 151–152). An example of a mimetic process could be the National Council of NGOs, NACONGO. In the NGO Act its role was defined to be an NGO coordinator and an actor which enhances the self-regulation of the NGOs by developing a Code of Conduct among other things.

However, NACONGO now seems to have widened its goals and activities also to lobbying, advocating, sharing information about its members and capacity building. It seems to be planning to do a little bit of everything and having very similar activities to the umbrella bodies. Its existence is ensured by the law (the NGO Act) but it is not funded by the government and its duties are not described very clearly which leaves the role of the Council ambiguous and allows it to take steps of its own. Lack of funding means that it has to attract funding in different ways and it is better to try to capture the interest of various funders by including all kinds of activities in its mission. It is a way to response to the uncertainty that the environment has created. This is what other umbrella NGOs and other networks of NGOs are doing as well and it causes mimetic isomorphism. In NACONGO they are also very aware of the different working methods of umbrella NGOs, since it has had meetings with the umbrella organizations as representatives from the NGO field, among other representatives, in order to gather information about the umbrella NGOs' work and the NGO field in Tanzania for NACONGO's use: "TACOSODE and TANGO, they are long time umbrella organizations, have immense experience in coordination and self-regulation through their own members, so we decided to fetch their knowledge and put it together into one, plus others." (Juma June 2010)

Besides knowing, although maybe only on the surface, what the other organizations are doing, NACONGO is planning in the future to concentrate more on activities which are similar to what the umbrella NGOs are already doing. This especially means capacity building but other things as well. NACONGO has also already been involved in organizing an HIV/Aids workshop for NGOs together with TACAids, a government department which works for the reduction of HIV/Aids infection and supports those who already are infected or affected by it (TACAids 2011):

> *We have done little bit of capacity needs assessment to some of the members of NGOs, but in the long run, we are thinking of doing lot of capacity building programs. - - Now we have a joint program with a TACAids, at the UN agencies - - Also thinking of how NACONGO could build the capacity of regional and district NGO networks.* (Juma June 2010)

HIV/Aids workshops and capacity building on health issues are clearly out of NACONGO's original focus and objectives. All in all, needs assessments, capacity building, implementing donor programmes and building regional and district networks are also exactly the activities that the umbrella NGOs are already doing.

5.3.3 Normative pressures

Lastly, normative isomorphism reflects professional and societal conceptions of what is natural and appropriate. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983, 152–154) normative isomorphism is primarily a result from professionalization by which they mean "collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control 'the production of producers', and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy". They also see that formal education and academics produce legitimation, on one hand, and professional networks where new ideas spread rapidly, on the other hand, and both of these are important sources of isomorphism (ibid.).

I argue that the normative pressures and what is seen as 'professional' in the NGO field do not necessarily emanate from professional networks or associations as defined by DiMaggio and Powell but from particular events where NGO workers meet. These are the seminars and trainings that the NGOs or other parties are organizing for NGOs and are attended by NGOs, donors, governmental representatives, and academics. These are the forums for forming and renewing organizational and professional behavior in the NGO sector. The people working for the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are highly professional within the NGO and development field. They know the 'development language' used by donors, and they know how to act according to what is expected from them as NGOs. In a sense, then, trainings and conferences organized for example around capacity building are a way to disperse a similar kind of normative thinking among the members, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

5.4 Working for the same goals but competing with each other

Koch (2008) has researched competition and cooperation between the NGOs in Tanzania and found that "the willingness to cooperate among the NGOs decreases when more of them work in the same area". By cooperation he means NGOs sharing activities and extending the impact of their projects, organizations and the sector as a whole (ibid.). Guo & Acar (2005, 342–343), in their article researching collaboration among nonprofit organizations, have defined nonprofit collaboration as "what occurs when different nonprofit organizations work together to address problems through joint effort, resources, and decision making and share ownership of the final products or service". Umbrella NGOs need to gain legitimation for their organizational survival as has been already mentioned. In order to gain legitimation organizations are competing for members, influence and donor funding which inevitably raises problems in terms of information sharing and working together. NGOs working especially in the same sector might not be tempted to share a new idea or ways of working if the organization wants to improve its own image in the eyes of donors or its members. On the other hand, some room has to be left for other reasons why there is not much cooperation: for example ideological differences or bad relations in the past can affect. The two national umbrella NGOs have had disagreements in the past.

To elaborate this further I will address the idea of forming networks among the members of umbrella NGOs. One worker from an umbrella NGO explains that the umbrella organization has changed focus and has started to work more with regional and district networks because it has not been easy to reach every member all over Tanzania. They hope to cooperate with the NGO networks more in the future. However, some of the networks are more active than others but in the umbrella organization there is a view of the trickle-down effect: if the networks are strong, the individual organizations of those networks will become strong too. Members have had different attitudes and reservations towards forming networks and organizing themselves in networks and some of the member NGOs think that it makes them weaker and not stronger. It is also an issue of transparency according to the umbrella NGOs:

The problem is within the NGOs there, people they don't have money or they have never received funds, you find that, let's say, we have three or four NGOs around and only two or three or one is getting funds, the others don't get funds, so they feel kind of jealous of that one NGO that is always getting funds. They don't want to disclose how they get funds to the other three that's why they say there's no transparency between them. - - Yes, there is competition so they [NGOs, members] try to hide information. But for us, once we teach them, we unhide that information. You know, if you want to get donors, there are plenty. (Idrisa July 2010)

Yet, the same 'fear' rises to the national level and can be discovered among the umbrella NGOs as well. There is little cooperation among the umbrella organizations: they do not share information on funding opportunities or activities they implement in detail. They are teaching their members to be transparent but seem to lack the transparency between umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs:

Even ourselves, at the national level, the umbrella organizations we fear being together, we are suppose to maybe have one organization which can coordinate all our works. We got TANGO, TACOSODE, TGNP [Tanzania Gender Networking Programme], we so many, Tanzania Youth Coalition very many national networks or umbrella organizations but we don't have a one single organization that coordinates, so sometimes - - you may see some duplication of work. If coordination would be there, each one would know that TANGO will do this and this, so there is no need for TACOSODE to do the same or TACOSODE is doing, so there is no need for TANGO to do the same. - - If we can know the 'hows', it means that TANGO will know how TACOSODE does it, to reduce poverty, so we are doing this way, so there is no need for going there. Sometimes we go to the same districts with the same ideas because we only know what we are doing and they [the other umbrella body] know what they are doing. (Benjamin May 2010)

Let me give you a good example: TACOSODE, if it knows that somebody has money, it cannot tell TANGO or other NGOs. They won't do that. Because of what? Competition. Somebody ought to be transparent, because if they went for their own, transparent gesture. Ok, there's money there, do this and this and get the money from there. But no, they won't tell anybody. They do everything in secret. (Emmanuel June 2010)

The national umbrella NGOs can go to the same districts with the same ideas because they only know about the work which they do themselves. The local people do not necessary complain or say anything because they welcome every seminar, workshop etc. that would benefit them one way or another. It does not matter who offers it: "because of poverty it might not be easy for those people, those who are beneficiaries to say that we already got this from TACOSODE or TANGO. They keep quiet and there is a double work so the funds are being doubled to tackle the same problem", as Benjamin (May 2010) from an umbrella NGO elaborates the issue. On the other hand, plurality of these umbrella NGOs and thematic networks enhances variety in the sector even though some overlaps of activities are manifested.

Yet, there is not only competition among local and national organizations but also among local and international NGOs (INGOs) which takes the competition to a different level in the sense that donors prefer funding and supporting their 'own' organizations or establishing local branches instead of supporting the local NGOs. This is because INGOs are usually quite visible in the national NGO sector and have good office equipment, cars and other resources such as professional staff (Maral-Hanak 2009, 47). They also comply very well with the organizational practices of donors. The same things also help them to keep the 'better' positions in the field compared to local NGOs:

> *Here are plenty of NGOs and the donors are the same. They haven't increased but as it wasn't enough, you have international NGOs also fighting for the same funds from the same donors. They call themselves international NGOs but sometimes I ask, are they really NGOs or donors, because you find organizations like Family Health International. I don't know but they have received lot of funds from USAid. So if, say local NGO and international NGO, which is an American, go to the same donor, I think the chances are that the American NGO will get [the money]. Although it's local here but they will get it, because they got more experience, they know the rules and regulations of how to account for the American money etc. so they will be in the better position. Besides, they speak the language.* (Gideon June 2010)

Gideon mentions Family Health International (FHI) which is a U.S. based development organization focusing on health, nutrition, education and research, among other things (FHI 2011). The organization has worked in 125 countries, having 4,400 workers and has many funders and partners like USAid, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Health Organization (FHI 2010; 2011). FHI had a budget of $350 million (about € 267 million) in 2010 (FHI 2010) so it is understandable that these kinds of international organizations might have better positions in bargaining for funds from the donors in relation to local NGOs.

The difficulties that hinder cooperation and collaboration between different NGOs seem not to be umbrella NGOs' fault, at least not entirely, since they themselves see that it might be a good idea to try to coordinate between different organizations in order to avoid duplication of work. The NGO coordination is supposed to be NACONGO's work but currently there is a perception that no one coordinates the work of national networks, the umbrella NGOs or quasi-umbrella NGOs. These organizations themselves have not agreed on who should do what and in which areas. It is evident that NACONGO has not taken the role allocated to it. Also, as David brings out below, the coordination of these organizations should be planned together if it is planned at all and NACONGO might play a role here if it would be "well functional":

> *We don't have one single organization that coordinates so sometimes* - - *you may see some duplication of work. So if coordination would be there, each one would know that TANGO will do this and this, so there is no need for TACOSODE to do the same or TACOSODE is doing this so there is no need for TANGO to do the same.* (Benjamin May 2010)
>
> *I think who ever might start doing that coordination, you cannot coordinate people without sitting with them together and agreeing on those roles.* - - *So I think we should divide responsibilities.* - - *O maybe alternatively, if there is this Council of NGOs* - - *I think that maybe can be another option that we could use if it was well functional. I think it could help in that role because it's on top of everything, including on top of these umbrella networks. I think that would be the best situation to maybe to help and coordinate, establish that coordination among the umbrella organizations.* (David June 2010)

In addition to the duplication of work, competition between the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs causes other difficulties as well. Not having a single voice among the civil society organizations undermines the credibility of umbrella NGOs as representatives of NGOs, which is one of their main purposes. Diversity within civil society is seen as a good thing but some kind agreement on different issues should be in place in order to increase the impact of the organizations:

> *Having one common platform is something that we need. It is something that we maybe need to look into because we run at a risk of the government not taking us seriously because today TACOSODE is saying this, tomorrow TANGO is saying that. It's better be the same thing but if it's different, then you are sending wrong signals to the government: these people don't know what they are doing because this one is saying this and this one is saying that. I think there is a need to have a meeting place.* - - *But coming back to the diversity of opinions, it could also be a good thing. Only we shouldn't be conflicting with each other.* - - *The others should be saying the same thing, not necessarily in the same words, but taking*

> *the same direction. Then the diversity has lot to offer, because what I say, someone else will add more to what I have said.* (Selemani June 2010)

Selemani and some government officials agree on the view that umbrella NGOs are perhaps not taken seriously by the government. It is apparent that a statement coming from one umbrella NGO is not going to have any impact on the government “because there is no mandate” in words of one of the officials. Obviously, for the government, NACONGO is provided as an answer, since according to the ideal their statements would represent all the NGOs in Tanzania, as all the NGOs become members of NACONGO when registered. But clearly membership in NACONGO does not mean that all these organizations would be represented in the Council or that they would have access to it.

Moreover, lack of coordination and communication between umbrella NGOs and the government sometimes also causes duplication of activities, but is that because of competition among these two sectors, the government and the NGOs? Could it be that the roles of these sectors cannot always be separated from each other? A worker from an umbrella body elaborates the duplication of work by saying that “the government might have been there and did the same thing and you are looking for resources somewhere else and you are going to do the same thing” (Amina July 2010). One government official explains that in the rural areas local NGOs are not always transparent with their activities and like to work in urban areas instead of rural ones, and for these reasons they are not keen on working together with local government officials. This is why projects are not implemented together. Also, the distribution of work between different ministries, municipal and district officials and other government representatives is sometimes not recognized by the (umbrella and quasi-umbrella) NGOs and some issues belonging to one officer might be taken to another for one reason or another. However, these same reasons could be used to criticize the local government officials. Competition or not, mutual trust is missing sometimes, expectations towards each other do not come across and functioning systems of communication have not been established between the sectors. These are challenges for cooperation between umbrella NGOs, their members and the government. Yet, this does not mean that there is no cooperation at all between the government officials and the umbrella bodies but to express some of the challenges.

Nevertheless, the co-existence of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs has not gone off totally in separation. The organizations have been working together or at least working for the same goals in national issues such as drafting the NGO Policy and trying to influence the NGO Act. Both of the umbrella NGOs are also members of the Policy Forum and NACONGO and have been taking part in their meetings. David (June 2010) from an umbrella body told me about collaboration: “we all work with [other umbrella NGOs and networks] for most cases, so at least there is collaboration at that level but not at the next level of sharing what you actually should be doing, and dividing, but at least we are sharing”.

There have been some suggestions that MKUKUTA reviews and monitoring, as well as public expenditure reviews (PERs), could be issues that promote wider and deeper collaboration among the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs, since responsibilities might be divided easily among different organizations (Joyce July 2010; Selemani June 2010). Working with thematic networks also seems to be easier for umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs than working together, since thematic networks do not necessarily compete for the same resources, members and political power. There is no competitive arrangement when organizations are working in different sectors or areas. Umbrella NGOs have already worked with thematic NGOs. A project worker from an umbrella organization explains about a programme where they collaborated with a thematic network to identify the beneficiaries of the project: “So they are self-initiated groups and [we] did not create them but we identified the existing groups and we were doing that in collaboration with national umbrella NGO, it's called TANOFA. It's Tanzania Network of Organizations of People Living with HIV so we worked with TANOFA” (Amina July 2010). Another thematic network’s help was used for organizing a seminar and identifying relevant NGOs to be invited.

6 Different roles and faces of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs and ways of legitimizing their roles – the ways of 'NGOing'

This chapter discusses the ways NGOs legitimize their organizational roles and it builds pictures of 'real' umbrella NGOs. The previous part of the thesis addressed the issue of adapting to the environment and the institutional context where the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs operate. This part of the study, on the other hand, introduces the reactions of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs to the environmental constraints and the ways to shape the constructed context according to their preferences. Besides constraints and limitations created by the environment and the international community, at the same time opportunities can arise from the same contexts. Local actors can interpret, bend and negotiate development (Hilhorst 2003) and take an active role in shaping contexts.

6.1 'Doing good for others': ideological concepts and different realities

6.1.1 The fine art of speaking 'development': the power of discourses

For an organization to claim 'genuineness' and to prove to others that it is a 'real' NGO, it needs to show that it is doing good for others who need it, has no self-interest and is capable and trustworthy (see Hilhorst 2003). Also, it is important to bring results and convince others of the effectiveness of its projects and programmes and emphasize something that the others cannot do. These could be thought of as the 'institutionalized rules' of NGOs – the formal structure of the organization that is a myth and a ceremony according to Meyer and Rowan (1977).

All the above elements came out very clearly in the interviews which I conducted with the staff of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. Below, the excerpts from the interviews reflect a 'development language', international aid discourses, favored by donors. It is part of the externally defined ideal picture of an umbrella NGO. Since organizational legitimation is a matter of survival for the organization, then the way to speak, the development discourse, could be defined as an institutionalized rule – a myth – that is binding the organization and is legitimized through the international development community and enforced by a public opinion. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) development language, or as they say ‘vocabularies of structure’, which are isomorphic with institutional rules, provide rational and legitimate accounts.

Firstly, the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs need to prove that there is a need or a problem that must be satisfied or solved and that they are part of the solution:

> *In most cases, most of the people don't have any background in management of institutions or processes, organizational structures, leadership or everything. They are driven just by the need to organize so they form the organizations but* ***they lack that minimum understanding what an institution should look like, even how the structure of an organization should look like, how to manage the sources in the organization****.* (David June 2010; bolding mine)

It fits to the picture that problems are related to the institutional structures of the NGOs and other organizations in the technical sense and not to poverty or lack of food etc., which usually are expressed as the principal problems in poor communities, but this is not even the purpose of umbrella and quasi-umbrella. A worker from one of the intermediary NGOs explained to me that they capacitate NGOs who are involved in service provision so when these NGOs are capacitated to realize “what they are suppose to do, it is automatically contributing to the social or economic development of the country” (Juma June 2010).

Secondly, the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs (all being urban-based and located in Dar es Salaam) still need to show how close they are to the grass-root level and the problems there. These organizations have to prove that they know the realities of the poor people, they focus on the real issues and bring results in a way that other organizations cannot do. It is also good to highlight that the money is spent wisely since it is western governments’ tax money.

> *We take the perspective of civil society because our main aim is to actually* ***speak for the people, for the majority of people who are poor****.* (Selemani June 2010)

> ***There is a recognition in the whole community****, private sector, the FBOs, the NGO sector, the government because in all those areas we have been invited,* ***we are doing things to them****, doing some partnership with the government, with the FBOs. We have been recognized that is really an achievement for us. Another achievement, maybe that one of* ***advocating for things which are international and others cannot take****. In this umbrella organization we got coalitions, loose networks where we do things together,* ***when we finish the mission, there is a result****.* (Benjamin May 2010)

What enhances my work, first, the fact that ***we usually like to focus on real issues, like I was saying, which means that it can be easy to approach donors and other stakeholders*** *and tell them this is what we want to work on or this what we are working on so please support us.* - - *To raise as much relevant issues to the current situation so that kind of flexibility in our plans, in our strategic planning, annual planning so trying as much as we can to stick on the real issues and presenting them to stakeholders* - - *that has helped to get support from the members and donors, the government from the other side.* - - ***We are real, not just theoretical****.* (David June 2010)

But also to make sure that ***we have value for money whichever we do****, it really has to reflect the way 'money worth spent' because* ***we know this is the tax payers' money****.* (Ethel June 2010) {All boldings mine}

Hilhorst (2003, 81) sees that even though (dominant) discourses influence actors, at the same time the actors can "reshuffle, circumvent and accommodate these". NGOs have an opportunity to actively build positive pictures of their organizations and actions in the way they want. Yet, building a picture of an efficient and result-oriented organization does not necessary mean that the organization is actually effective and delivering results (although that does not mean that it is not). Also, different discourses can become dominant in a variety of situations and dominant discourses can change. Talented actors know how to use the dominant language for their own purposes, for example to seek attention from donors and increase their prospects for funding. In other words, the umbrella NGOs cleverly use the ideal picture for their own good. Adopting this kind of development-language needs, then, to be understood in strategic terms. It is one way to take care of an organization's reputation and a way to prove the "authenticity" and "realness" of these organizations for the donors, development community and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, this does not exclude good intentions and willingness and competency of staff members to try to change things 'for the better' and to do 'good'. The next paragraph will explore some practices of 'doing good' and includes some shortcomings as well.

6.1.2 The actual work: examples from capacity building trainings

So that's capacity building: economic capacity, social capacity, political capacity, whatever. These types of capacities. (Fredy June 2010)

The umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs build capacities of their members and civil society organizations. The most popular way is to organize trainings that last from a few days to a few weeks and to invite NGOs and CBOs to attend. The usual answer to the question 'What does capacity building mean and how do the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs do it?' is: organizational training. In other words, training in how to write project proposals, fundraise, plan a project and manage the finances but also how to do advocacy work, to form networks or for example cooperate with the local government in rural areas as explained by the workers from both umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs:

> *It [capacity building] usually comes in forms of training on different areas, particularly to do with the NGO work, from management of the organizations, developing the institutions to work on the field. Capacity building has usually been focused on the areas where the members want the capacity building programs for them, like capacity building initiatives do with the organizational development, management, financial management for the institutions, fundraising, resource mobilization, capacity building in areas of advocacy, lobbying. Initiatives to do with networking and collaborating with different partners, so those are the areas mainly, when we say capacity building.* (David June 2010)

> *I mean these trainings focus on like ensuring that CSOs are able to deliver or to implement or to operationalize their activities. And the trainings are also here to ensure that CSOs are accountable that they have good operation systems so trainings like financial management training, project design and organizational development. Sometimes there are trainings focusing on social accountability, monitoring, and public expenditure tracking so that they are able to do their activities.* (Godfrey May 2010)

According to the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs the idea for the training usually comes from the needs assessment of the members and CSOs. Either the members suggest training in a specific area or the umbrella or quasi-umbrella NGO identifies from the feedback collected from the members what would be the subject of the training. Trainings are also organized all over Tanzania depending on the issue but most of the time they are short:

> *They [trainings] are usually short* - - *Usually short, two days, depending on the issues to be covered in that particular training. They are usually in very different places in the country, sometimes near Dar es Salaam, sometimes in Morogoro or Iringa. It depends if they are national ones, they are usually maybe done in Dar es Salaam or Morogoro, where it is easy for lot of them [participants] to come there. When they are done in the zonal level, regional*

> *level, they should be in that particular zone. - - And in most cases it is the members themselves who indentify the needs.* (David June 2010)

> *First of all, we do the needs assessment to our members, they tell us what capacity gaps they have and then we try to find a way for filling the gaps.* (Selemani June 2010)

Capacity building is also described as something wider than just trainings. It can include ‘every day help’ like providing an office space for a while, borrowing a mail box or mediating disputes and conflicts:

> *Capacity building is wider than just trainings. Training is the one that is used to displaying that now I'm capacitating this one but there are lots of capacity building activities that people don't see. First of all, as a Council one of our main functions, when I was employed, at least when smaller NGOs were established, we used to provide the secretarial services to them. They don't have an office, they come sit here, develop their proposal, they don't have a P.O. Box number - - so they used our P.O. Box. They want technical assistance on how to manage, we do that. They are fighting the leadership; for example the secretary doesn't talk with the chair. We intervene and call a meeting so we set the environment for them to collaborate. We resolve issues. That's capacity building as well.* (Rose June 2010)

The ideal that comes through from these interview excerpts is that civil society organizations should be more able in institutional terms. Now they are lacking the capacity – somehow – and they need to be educated. Paradoxically, umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs build capacities of other NGOs, for example in fundraising and income generating activities, even though the organizations themselves are lacking enough funding all the time, are dependent on donors, and see dependency on donor money as very problematic (see 5.2): “we have the expertise of fundraising because we teach other NGOs on fundraising. - - We always tell people to fundraise or to have income generating activities from their areas” (Idrisa July 2010). However, one of the worker I interviewed reminded me that, for example, learning how to write a project proposal (albeit for donors’ purposes) also means that things like what an NGO wants to achieve, how they are doing things, who is doing what etc. are also covered in the proposal (Joyce July 2010). The NGO then does not exist only because of the title but has some content.

In reality, capacity building trainings have many challenges: starting from the ‘needs’ of capacity building. Olivier de Sardan (2005, 85) asks what a need is, who is defining it and expressing the needs of whom. For him (ibid.) the idea of objective needs which are common to an entire population is a misguided conception and merely an example of the ‘supply’ producing the ‘demand’. Also, when the members or other organizations are served and the needs are assessed before offering trainings as suggested by the umbrellas, Hilhorst (2003, 108) reminds that the memory people have from the previous interventions and development projects shapes the present images. Hilhorst (ibid.) explains how communities’ requests for assistance from an NGO are not necessarily based on real needs but reflections on the kind of assistance the NGO could provide. This issue came out during the field trip to the Mbeya region with one of the umbrella NGOs but also elsewhere. Mostly the NGOs we met in the region were expecting visits, trainings and funding from the umbrella NGO. This is also what is mainly provided to NGOs from the umbrella NGOs, excluding funding. The umbrella NGOs are currently not providing funding for its members but in the past they have done that, as well.

In practice, the participants of the trainings can be various and sometimes very random. In one of the umbrella NGO’s trainings concerning issues around agriculture, some of the participants were government retirees who had been working as experts in the sector and knew already everything and some other participants were from an urban children welfare NGO with very little interest in agriculture (Joyce July 2010). Workshop participants can also be picked up randomly from the street as a member of one of the NGOs explains below. Also, a person from an NGO who would not gain the most from a training or a workshop, but happens to have time when the workshop is organized and needs the little allowance given for the attendants, can be sent to the training as well (Joyce July 2010):

> *The public dialogue which we had - - about the contribution of MKUKUTA or something like that, so you'll find, because we indicated that each district has to come with five representatives from CSOs, we realized that only two leaders were from the CSOs but the others were just individuals who were picked somewhere on the road, that you know, “we have to go there”.* (Kabile May 2010)

> *Because first of all, we wanted to know the educational background when we found out that the title, the project design and the materials were in English, but most of the people who came there, you know, they said their educational background was a bit low compared to the title itself. Sometimes I think those people who select these people to the workshop, they just pick someone, “you just go”, without knowing that the one whom you are picking might*

benefit the organization or not. You just pick someone, let's say like a chairman or like someone from the village and just say go there without knowing [anything]. He is going back, he produces nothing. (Idrisa July 2010)

These various occasions can result in low expectations for the trainings and the feedback also can be that "the training was nice" as found in one of the umbrella NGO's workshops concerning agriculture (Joyce July 2010).

Sometimes it is also burdensome to get people to be present. One of the members explains how it is difficult sometimes to organize an event or a meeting without the provision of a small reimbursement from the meeting. Allowance then is not just a small administrative cost (see 5.3.1) but becomes a condition for organizing an event at all. The member sees that ex-government workers now engaged to NGO work are especially part of this phenomenon:

> *You find some of these staff who are members of these individual organizations, they have the background from the government so they come with the inheritance of the government issues because they are government retirees. - - People are referring as if they are still working for the government so when you are talking about volunteering, they are saying: "No, no, no, we cannot volunteer". When you are talking about, let us have a meeting, they are saying: "No, who is going to pay us if we will meet?", but we are talking issues for our own benefit. - - Some of the challenge when you are organizing a meeting, they say: Is there any portion there?" If there is no portion, there is no allowance. It means that attendance could be poor.* (Kabile May 2010)

As Kontinen (2011) writes, western theories of civil society and NGOs usually presume that the NGO sector is based on individuals who can freely choose how to organize and are free from the local context where they operate. It is assumed that NGOs are organized around a certain goal or a vision and work for free on a voluntary basis (ibid.).

Besides the difficulty of getting the right kind of people present at the trainings, the results of the capacity building workshops cannot necessarily be easily measured, as one of the interviewees suggest: "Capacity building they are doing, it cannot be maintained. Once, they give the information and then they go back. How do they make sure that the information they have given them is going to be used?" (Emmanuel June 2010)

Besides asking if the information is used, it could also be asked *how* the information is used. Some of the members expressed that the trainings are too short in order to learn anything very well (Judith July 2010). The information shared at the trainings can be very shallow due to time constraints (usually decided by the donors) but also because of the ‘randomness’ of participants. Sometimes the result from the training is just a report that the umbrella NGO needs to write for a funder or a plan for the future that cannot even materialize due to lack of funding. Without a follow-up it is difficult to know what has come out of the seminar or training after it has been done. Sometimes follow-ups are organized and sometimes not:

> ME: *Ok, what happens after trainings?*
>
> IDRISA: *After training, we produce a report and we give it to the one who gave us the task of doing that, we give the report. We also like to monitor them but on the monitoring side, it depends on donors, it depends on the one who gave us, otherwise we also like to follow-up those people, how far they have gone after training. But we don't have that chance because we are just contracted to teach these and then the end, no follow-up.*
>
> ME: *Why do you think there is no follow-up usually?*
>
> IDRISA: *I don't know. It depends on the organization but always we recommend that these people, they need close follow-up so that we know that they have benefitted from what they have been getting from the workshop. Otherwise people, once they come from the workshop, they might go to the office and leave everything there without going back to read what they have been undertaking.*

Even if the follow-up will be organized it might be difficult to say what difference it makes. In the agricultural training mentioned earlier the participants made an advocacy plan for the agricultural sector but the training did not include funding for implementing the plan, only money for the follow-up visit by the umbrella NGO later on (Joyce July 2010). Also, if the NGO or the organization does not need the particular training or the information provided in the trainings at that moment it might go in vain (ibid.). Rarely does the training information become useful after a year or more, since it is by then already forgotten. Most importantly the participating organizations need to have a will to change and do things differently. If the staff and the management do not want to change, an outsider cannot do anything. (Joyce July 2010)

Eade (2007) argues that different kinds of trainings may be successful in their own terms but rarely contribute to enabling participants to change their realities. Capacity building in fact ignores the very reason that the lack of capacity in communities is not the primary cause for difficulties in ‘development’ but “the structural, political and resource impediments in their way” (Kenny & Clarke 2010, 8). So far capacity building has not been able to change unequal power relations or accountability mechanisms. The most important thing is that capacity building trainings, or ‘talking’ as Watkins et al. (2012) see this form of development, have value for both donors and the NGOs organizing it. For each, the participants in the workshops and trainings can be counted, providing indicators of success that can be put into a quarterly report (ibid.).

6.2 Managing reputation and room for manoeuvre

> *I act like a chameleon. I can change to adapt a situation.* (Rose June 2010)

As already showed the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are building certain kinds of pictures of their organizations and are actively constructing their own realities. This is one way to manage reputation and room for manoeuvre. Room for manoeuvre means a social space where actors have or lack the ability to enable their ideas and activities (Hilhorst 2003, 106–107). The room for manoeuvre is restricted by circumstantial, material and institutional limitations but how these circumscribe actors depends partly on how limitations are perceived and acted upon (ibid.). Actors “socially construct their room for manoeuvre through their responses to constraints” but it does not mean that actors always stretch their room for manoeuvre to the widest limits. Actors expand their room for manoeuvre by using their abilities and effectiveness to draw people to think in a similar way or enrolling others in their projects (ibid.). Yet, tactics and strategies used in one setting may not be conceivable in another (Scott 2008, 169). It is also important to note that NGOs’ stakeholders usually know each other through the NGO which complicates the legitimation and reputation building process but also makes it easier since the stakeholders have to rely on the NGOs’ representations of what happens in other sectors (Hilhorst 2007). It becomes relevant to know what information is shared by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs and what is left untold.

Organizational resistance or strategic responses to an organizational environment can vary from passive conformity to proactive manipulation (Oliver 1991). Conformity can be shown in many ways. One of the umbrella NGOs’ workers illustrated this by saying “that’s what we are trained for” when I asked how to deal with donors and with their sometimes strange requests. Conformity is part of the NGO professionalism and the example shows how deliberate attitudes the workers might have. Also a confronting situation between a donor and the workers of the umbrella body revealed similar kind of active strategies. The NGO worker explained to me that there are two ways to react to donors' 'crazy whims': "either to laugh or cry and it's better to laugh" (Ethel June 2010).

Besides conformity there are more active strategies. Adopting external criteria of worth for gaining legitimacy can be seen as a buffering strategy for an organization (Ebrahim 2002, 102–107; Scott 2008, 171). If a strategy or a programme is unintegrated from the overall planning and actual implementation of activities, it allows some operational space independent from outside pressures (Ebrahim 2002, 104). Some activities and decision processes can protected from the external influence (ibid.). In other words, sometimes things are said without meaning – or having only a symbolic meaning – and programs exist more on paper than in practice. This is highlighted in the next excerpt from an interview with one umbrella NGO's workers:

> ROSE: *The director also said they are doing capacity building?*
> ME: *No, I read from the leaflet, this leaflet of [the organization that they are doing it].*
> ROSE: *Yeah, but when people write things, I think they end up writing things that they don't do.*

Another example related to this issue came up when I was talking about one umbrella NGO's strategic plan and how it is formulated. The objectives in the strategic plan are developed by producing a stakeholders' analysis which is done by the umbrella NGO. A staff member from the umbrella NGO highlighted how they organize a three-day workshop for members and a few others to share the views and to plan the strategy for the umbrella NGO (Amina July 2010). This is an example of how the organizational legitimacy is enhanced ("we can prove that the strategy is based on the views of stakeholders and their needs") and at the same it is an opportunity to minimize the funders' influence on activities ("who could disagree with the strategy that is created on the basis of a needs assessment of the stakeholders?").

Yet, I wanted to know how much the implementation of the strategic plan depends on whether or not the umbrella NGO gets funding for the activities to meet the objectives:

> *The external analysis will tell us: this is now the trend, that this is now. So at least at times you really get to know, you really get to anticipate what you need to include into your strategic plan but at times it is not easy and if it comes up, it means that you'll have to revise the strategic plan.* (Amina July 2010)

The existing plans get revised by the organizations if they do not get funding for all the purposes that they have planned and this strengthens the view above that some objectives and strategies might only be expressed on paper, not in reality. This is not to say that strategic plans should be or always are realized as planned, or that it does not have other purposes, but to argue that it is one tool with which the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs can build a positive and capable picture of their organizations and seek positive attention from their stakeholders. Even the language of the strategic plan, English, to some extent indicates that it is for foreign stakeholders – for donors. Umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs' production of reports and strategies, if created for the attraction of donors' funding and increasing stakeholder legitimacy, and being unintegrated from actual implementation of activities, can be seen as a tactic or a response towards the environment.

Certain terms also give quite a lot of room for manoeuvre for umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs to accommodate these for their own purposes. In terms of capacity building and advocacy, which are the main activities for each umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGO, it was said that the challenge but also the easiness of doing these comes from the vagueness of the term and the fact that you can always claim some results even if it is unsure who deserves the merit or credit. In other words, when one needs to prove results or show that it is an active NGO, it is very easy. This is not only good for the NGO but also for its donor and other stakeholders since it is in all interests to show success. The following two fragments are from two different persons working for the same organization: the first one is explaining how their umbrella NGO has affected Tanzanian civil society in many ways and different happenings are a tribute to their actions, while the other is stating that it is almost impossible sometimes to say who did what and who could take the credit for the changes:

> *First, the mobilization of NGOs, everywhere you go, you get that sense of coordination and understanding among almost all NGOs from the north to the south, shared understanding of issues and shared focus.* - - *There are those common things you can find in the NGOs thanks to our umbrella NGO's work through the networks and members has helped to impart this kind of understanding and spirit in the NGOs in the country* - - *The regional networks were started by us [the umbrella NGO]. It was our initiative to try to organize these NGOs from the lowest levels, they should be organized. Now, most the regions have regional networks and most of the districts have strong NGOs.* - - *That's an achievement for us [the umbrella NGO].* - - *Everywhere you go, you find active engagement of CSOs with local government*

authorities so at least that's an achievement for me that I have witnessed at the local levels. - - And maybe another thing that the umbrella NGO has helped a lot: to winning the confidence of the government to the NGOs – a lot. (David June 2010)

When we implement our activities, we have problems because the partners, maybe they don't know or they are not interested in those areas which we are working in because many of them are for capacity building, advocacy so it might be that they are not interested in. But those who are doing service delivery, they are more preferred because even the impact is seen in shorter time than the impact of advocacy. Sometimes you might not even know that we were the one who did this even if we see the result after five years, you maybe don't know who did it what. (Benjamin May 2010)

When the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs talk about achievements and results, self-criticism is rarely present. There is a tendency to emphasize success while downplaying negative events (see also Ebrahim 2002). This does not mean that self-criticism does not exist. On the contrary, shortcomings are also noticed but not necessarily actively advertised by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs, as one of the umbrella bodies' workers explains: “I will not feel proud when I go to [a district] to do an activity with an NGO, and after I leave, then this thing collapses, I don't like that one” (Rose June 2010). The NGO workers are highly critical but are reluctant to share their critiques with the outside world. Ebrahim (ibid., 104) found that the “donors harp on one bad thing of 99 good” which makes organizations cautious in providing information to donors in order to avoid misunderstandings. Selectivity of information then becomes another active strategy carried out by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. The Annual Reports of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs also highlight a similar kind of selectivity of information. Most of the time they demonstrate success without revealing the details of processes through which those successes are achieved, or they do not reveal the potentially ambiguous nature of that success (Ebrahim 2002). If challenges are mentioned they are mostly related to the difficult working environment and factors external to the umbrella bodies (ibid.).

Also, spreading activities to different sectors (education, health etc) and working at different levels (local, national, and international) can be seen as tactics to ease the external pressure. Umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs' stakeholders hold different goals when working with the organizations and providing support to them. This means that doing a little bit of everything and getting involved in many issues and activities provides something for each stakeholder. Again, capacity building becomes handy as well: organizational development applies to every NGO and organization regardless of the sector or the level. An umbrella NGO's worker also illustrates this by explaining why the NGOs' constitutions are 'wide' in terms of contents:

> *So they [donors] say this we are not funding but we are funding this and this so we go to that. So you can find that even the constitutions [of the NGOs], so many constitutions are very wide that is for: if you are not getting from this, you may get it from this but which is just maybe because the capacity of the organization. That's why we are putting very wide things instead of narrowing down and saying that we focus on that.* (Benjamin May 2010).

Yet, when umbrella or quasi-umbrella NGOs are organizing events or trainings on specific issues, then an outside expert facilitator is hired. The organizations seem to have good relationships with academics and using experts is one way to gain legitimation among the stakeholders.

Also, it needs to be noticed that donors are not always on the spot and even if they are, they are not controlling everything, as I found out during the trip to Mbeya region with the umbrella NGO and its donor. The NGO members we met during the trip were decided by the umbrella body. Most of meetings were held in Swahili which gave the umbrella workers power to lead the discussion since neither I nor the donor knew much Swahili. The same applied to the one-day seminar organized by the umbrella NGO: the participants, the content and the discussion were actively produced by the umbrella NGO and other NGO participants even though donors and government representatives were present. Donors and other stakeholders are not involved and not so much present in the every-day implementation which is left to the organizations themselves to decide and plan. Even though for example capacity building can be seen as a donor-induced agenda, the umbrella organizations reshape concepts of capacity building to adapt local conditions.

Reputation is important also 'downwards', since the members constitute the base for the umbrella NGOs and wide membership bases look good in the eyes of other stakeholders. The umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are trying to convince their members that they are giving the best that is available: the same examples and quotes used to impress the donors could be used to impress the members. I will now turn attention to various issues and aspects surrounding the members and beneficiaries.

6.3 Beneficiaries and member NGOs

The umbrella NGOs have members and quasi-umbrella NGOs are supporting NGOs but do not have the membership-base. Beneficiaries and members are spread all over Tanzania and in different sectors. Members are a lifeline to umbrella NGOs since without them there is no umbrella body. It is important to keep them satisfied. Yet, they seem to have as many pictures of umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies as they are in number and I start with a positive view which is not exceptional but seems to be shared among active members. Below is one umbrella NGO's member's answer to a question of how her NGO has benefited from being a member of an umbrella body:

> *We benefit a lot. These are providing much training. They do build capacity on us in many areas: in financial management, in policy and advocacy, and in fundraising activities.* - - *Other things, once there is a meeting, once they do training, we mix with different people, we meet and there is an opportunity to meet donors as well. The good thing about these umbrella networks is that, because many of them got an access of worldwide donors, donors' contacts, so they do provide us donor contacts.* - - *This is another thing, the benefit of joining these umbrellas. And of course, we [members] happen to know each other.* - - *I know them and they know us because of networking and working with umbrella NGOs so we keep helping each other. Let say, I'm having problem with a proposal, I can ask a member of another organization* - - *I can also ask [the umbrella body] themselves. They do that. That's a good thing of joining umbrellas and networks.* (Judith July 2010)

Clearly, many members and beneficiaries are benefiting from different services of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. The role of the umbrella or quasi-umbrella body is balancing between providing services to members and beneficiaries and getting information/reputation.

Yet, it needs to be mentioned that these memberships or beneficiaries are not divided between the umbrella NGOs and quasi-umbrella NGOs but they are overlapping. The NGOs, the members, do not necessarily remain faithful to one organization but they use all the services and support that they can get. This means that the NGOs can be members of more than one umbrella NGO and on top of that receive support from a quasi-umbrella NGO. The local NGOs can also be members of district networks, regional networks and then national umbrella NGOs, at all of these levels or only at one of these levels, which causes confusion about who represents who and who should be a member of which organization at what level (Joyce July 2010). Some of the members of the umbrella organizations have suggested that only regional networks should be members of the national umbrella NGOs and NGOs should be reached through these regional networks (ibid.). Also as explained before, similar trainings are offered to the same NGOs by different umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies in the same areas and no one is complaining about getting free training and allowance twice from the same training (see 5.4).

Who are the members of umbrella NGOs? The whole concept of being a member is somewhat flexible. Only one quite strict rule exists: accepted members have to be registered local NGOs or local NGO networks. For example churches, political parties or international NGOs are not accepted as members. Membership lasts if you pay annual membership fees and do not violate the law in any way. However, an expulsion from the umbrella NGO might not happen if you have forgotten to pay the membership fee for 'a few' times. It is in the interests of both, the umbrella NGO and the member organization, to keep the membership even though the fees are not paid. Many smaller member NGOs are mostly running on a voluntary or allowance basis and on money raised from communities, so the small annual fees (about 8–15 €) might feel rather large to them, but reasons for not paying can be various. There are no sanctions for not paying, except the expulsion, but no common practice when the expulsion can happen or as to when it is justified:

> *You just joined to become a member and you haven't paid your membership fees, so this is the fifth year, you are still due, so can you please pay the dues. So if they are able, they can pay the whole of it, if they are not, then pay half. - - But currently it's very challenging that these members are due to pay. It [the constitution] doesn't say if a member fails to do that what will happen.* (Selemani June 2010)

> *That is a challenge [that members do not pay]. We don't know what to do. What to follow, so you do what your heart tells you mostly and what you are pleased to do. Because when you say we are going to withdraw a membership, because it didn't pay the fee, it looks that the primary objective for your existence is to collect the fees and it is not.* (Rose June 2010)

It is obvious that if members contribute less than 15 % to the total budget of the organization, accountability in financial terms towards the members becomes quite weak. The services of the umbrella NGOs are also offered and given to other organizations and NGOs besides the members as explained by the staff from umbrella bodies. Membership then does not determine to whom services are given:

> *Because in many cases, even in projects which we do, sometimes it doesn't just focus to our members because if we say our role is to promote the sectors so we will not do right if we just focus on our members. Some of our members are better than others who are not members of any umbrella or any so we target based on the relevance. If it is HIV/Aids related sort of training, we look for who is doing it.* (Rose June 2010)

> *For these trainings, it depends, I mean for instance, some of them are our members, but others are not necessarily members.* (Gideon June 2010)

> *But also we invite non-members as well. Those who, people like TCCIA (Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture), faith-based organizations, that can speak for civil society. Because our aim is actually to make sure that our umbrella body is used as a platform to ensure that civil society advocate for people-friendly policies, pro-poor growth.* (Selemani June 2010)

If members are invited, there might be a need for certain kind of members to be present for example when calling a meeting with the government representatives. The umbrella bodies are inviting only capable, educated and elite members to speak when the government and policy issues are covered, especially at the national level:

> *We invite our members but we make sure that we invite those members who are able, have been empowered already that they can speak with authority, they have the confidence. They have the skills to negotiate with the government because nowadays if you speak to the government, if you don't have the evidence, if you don't speak 'the authority', if you don't know what is behind the subject, it is very easy to be challenged by the people from the government.* (Selemani June 2010)

On the other hand, the same worker from the umbrella body highlighted how in public-policy dialogues at the local levels, the members are always the main speakers of the meetings. The umbrella NGO's role then is only to make sure that the focus is not missed. However, if there is differentiation between members in diverse meetings, it might increase inequality within the sector when only the capable are given the voice at the national or high-impact level meetings. Then the variety in the sector is not supported.

When the members are invited to events, the rural-urban aspect also plays a role. As said, all the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are located in Dar es Salaam. Even though seminars and trainings are organized in the various areas in the country and members in different districts are visited about two-four times a year, although depending on the year as well, distance still becomes an evident problem. All the NGOs cannot be covered, as Fredy, an NGO veteran, explains:

> *The majority of people are in the rural areas. And normally when such a seminar comes, only people in the urban areas are invited. So, you can see the gap. - - So the problem here is for the NGOs to ensure that they cover providing their services to their members even in the rural areas.* (Fredy June 2010)

I also discovered at least in terms of one umbrella NGO, that in some areas the same NGOs are involved in trainings and seminars year after year. It shows continuity of the work and also continuity in the relationships but how useful the trainings and seminars then are, if the same NGOs are capacitated many times by the same umbrella NGO and maybe even some other umbrellas.

The umbrella NGOs seem to be aware of the difficult situation of serving all the members. Not all are satisfied, as Nelson from a member NGO and a worker from an umbrella NGO explain this:

> *Members are like babies and the umbrella NGO is a father so think about a father with for example 200 children. He cannot take care all of them.* (Nelson July 2010)

> *But now, the other challenge is how to meet the expectations of the members. For the last three weeks I think I have been receiving calls from our members: since we joined TACOSODE we have not been called to any seminar, we are even paying the fees. - - People expect you to service them and we cannot meet them, there are [so many].* (Rose June 2010)

Sometimes members' issues cannot be advocated or even overseen by the umbrella NGOs, but only by other organizations. This happens when the issue is thematic or sectoral even though umbrella NGOs have members from different sectors such as education, gender, faith-based, environment etc. One umbrella NGO's worker gives an example of a farmers association that usually engages directly with the parliament in agricultural issues and do not pass the issue through the umbrella body since it has better chances to influence on its own (David June 2010). The umbrella body helps only if the issue is cross-cutting (ibid.).

6.3.1 Real information sharing between the umbrella bodies and their members

Besides trainings, information sharing is an important task of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. The umbrella bodies share information with members and beneficiaries but also expect the members to share some information with them. As mentioned earlier (see 5.2) the survival of the organization depends on how it plays the intermediary role and converts money to information/reputation coming from the members or other beneficiaries. Ideally and many times information is shared among the actors but there are many challenges as well which will be elaborated in this section. The kind of information the umbrella bodies share or want to share with members and beneficiaries varies from national policy issues to international processes as well as information on donors providing funding:

> *It's information about different things that is related to what we are doing. - - so usually information about the policy issues, maybe if we have been engaged in lobbying and advocacy about certain policies, changing policy directions, policy priorities or something like that. It's information about policy processes in general. Information about what other member organization are doing, sharing it to the wider civil society sector in Tanzania. So information is two-way: information goes to civil society and out of the civil society sectors. - - Kind of information we channel to our members: this is what happened at the international level. And when it comes to the national level there are these policy processes, budget processes that we share. Then there is that information that comes from the NGOs themselves, what they are doing and their success stories, their ongoing projects and activities that they have on the ground. They bring that and we use channels to share that information with other member organizations and other actors, like the government, donor community and politicians.* (David June 2010)

> *We have the website where the donors are so we always want to send, we always disperse it to all members.* (Idrisa July 2010)

Yet, different members have different access to the information provided by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs. During the field trip to Tanzania I met quite many members of the umbrella NGOs and they rarely had computers in their offices or access to internet from the office. Some could use internet cafes – when the connection works –but for others, especially in rural village areas, it might have been almost impossible. Yet, members in Dar es Salaam were explaining how internet and mailing lists are important channels to share information and especially the FCS' large civil society mailing list was mentioned for getting a variety of information (Dennis July 2010; Judith July 2010). The rural-urban aspect becomes relevant again in terms of sharing information between stakeholders. Sometimes in order to give and get information from members, workers of the umbrella body need to travel to the member. One umbrella NGO's worker is elaborating this issue:

> *Another challenge is that Tanzania is very big, getting all the NGOs here is challenging, so you usually opt to travel where the NGOs are, it is somehow challenging to coordinate NGOs in a big country like Tanzania. It takes a lot of resources to get the information out there for everyone and get the feedback when you need it.* (David June 2010)

The location of the member's office becomes crucial because members located in Dar es Salaam have better access to information and other services. It can also be asked how many member NGOs are attending the umbrella NGOs' Annual General Meetings, the most important meeting once in a year to get feedback and give feedback and to hold the body accountable, except those ones situated in Dar es Salaam and the ones having well established funding (from the donors). Many members highlighted the cost of travelling from the rural areas to Dar es Salaam as being too much. The Annual General Meetings are also important events to share information and network among the members and other stakeholders. One of the member NGOs is explaining why they have two offices, one in the country side and the other one in Dar es Salaam, even though they do not implement any projects in Dar es Salaam:

> *We have two offices, one in [rural area] and this [in Dar es Salaam]. You know it's good for information, dissemination and gathering of information because if you are there you are out of information. That's what we do. We are benefiting a lot having office here in Dar es Salaam.* (Judith July 2010)

Sometimes it is not enough to have an office in Dar es Salaam if the systems of sharing information are not in place and actively used in the umbrella NGOs. One staff member from the umbrella criticizes especially the lack of continuity in information sharing, whereby sometimes information is shared more actively and sometimes there are gaps:

> *Of course we have the public relations officer who is supposed to work on this. We had agreed, we should develop a list of different stakeholders including our members so that once we have any information, we forward it to all but also we need to create a way of getting feedback that is where we have not done anything.* - - *Of course, I know, as they [staff members working for one project] visit the organizations, it's also a means of getting feedback, but it should be constant. It's not a onetime thing. That means we need to create a system for flood of information. We provide information but also to get feedback for what is that and what is this.* (Amina July 2010)

Also, members do not so actively share their information on activities etc. This gives the impression that the member organizations do not see the relevance in sending information to umbrella bodies, while umbrella NGOs have not been too active in explaining the relevance and asking for the information to be sent:

> *We find that members are doing lot of work but we are not informed but a few of them also sent information to us. But this is an area that is a grey area that it's not something that really happens regularly. It doesn't happen that we get copies of information.* (Selemani June 2010)

> ME: *I have understood that the members should send you the annual reports?*
> AMINA: *They should but not many of them are, very few. I would even count them. I don't think they go beyond ten. I know some organizations that constantly bring their annual reports but not all of them do that. And at times, it is also, of course, like we are not very strong in following up.*

Moreover, members who are active change. New NGOs are born and ‘old’ ones die. The NGO sector is changing all the time, even though some stability can be found among the stronger and/or donor-favored member NGOs. This affects also the information sharing between the members and umbrella NGOs, since it might be difficult to keep track of which members are active. This also explains why there is sometimes no total increase in memberships, even though the number of new members in the umbrella NGOs increases all the time.

6.3.2 Forming networks, increasing intermediaries

Since there have been problems of getting hold of the members and serving the NGOs country-wide, the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs have started to focus on forming and supporting networks. This seems to be a clever solution to the challenges that the umbrella NGOs have in reaching members and other NGOs which is also noticed by donors. This also means that the number of intermediaries increases and processes and linkages become even more multi-layered. Yet, it is still supported by donors:

> *We are just supporting the existing ones [networks of NGOs] but we formed them before, so after others [NGOs] saw that the networks worked well, it meant that they started alone, when they felt the need of networking. They started the networks. In those days when we had very few networks, [a donor] was supporting us and [another donor] were the ones who were supporting the initiative of networks.* (Benjamin May 2010)

The networks of NGOs are ways to attract donors' and the government's attention and increase reputation in the sense that umbrella bodies can claim they have established networks of local organizations through which they have contacts and an access to knowledge and realities of communities all over the country and at the grass root level. Regional and district NGOs' networks can play an intermediary role between umbrella bodies and the community at the grass root level. The umbrella bodies also can work through these networks and mandate networks to work for their purposes as one umbrella worker elaborates here:

> *We just give mandate to the networks, the regional and the districts, like this one [training] we have given mandate to one who wrote the invitation letters - - so we just sent one letter to each region so then they invite the district networks. That is how we are working right now.* (Benjamin May 2010)

All in all, the purpose of the networks seems to be quite similar to the aims of umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs: empowerment and capacity building. One of the representatives from a member NGO is explaining about NGO networks and its purposes:

> *Empowerment, we mean that sometimes individual NGOs have a good idea to implement something, some project or so forth, but they don't have the capacity to do that so we as a network we can organize maybe some trainings, some workshop, so that to build the capacity, to empower them on how to work on that.* (Judith July 2010)

Because of the similar purposes, the some of the challenges of these networks seem to be quite similar as well. Some networks are functioning better than others, but many times there is this 'fear' that keeps them from coming and being together (see 5.3.3). I argue this is to some extent for competitive reasons. One member NGOs explains about the problems the regional networks have with the individual NGOs:

> *We organized the meeting with some of the few organizations based in [the area] and then we explained clearly that up to this very moment, it is you who have not even paid the registration fee so you are not legally a member of the network. You have not paid the annual subscription fee but if you compare to other districts that are paying this subscription fee, these cannot be compared even economically with you, you are far better. So I think the problem with [this particular district] is a problem of leadership. They are not proactive to make sure that they organize those members to commit because when you went there, they said we don't know if we even have leaders at the district level.* (Kabile May 2010)

7 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explained how, on the one hand, the context and different stakeholders, especially donors, the state and members/beneficiaries, influence umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs in Tanzania, and how, on the other hand, these intermediary organizations affect and work with these stakeholders. The dependences among these different actors are relational and these umbrella bodies are balancing especially between the funders and beneficiaries but also the state, other intermediary NGOs and stakeholders.

This study has showed some isomorphic forms among the umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies, although points of divergence should not be ignored. All the organizations are working for the same goals (poverty reduction and social development) and doing some similar activities (capacity building and advocacy) but do not actively work together because competition over resources, members, political power and organizational legitimacy does not enhance cooperation among the organizations. Even though the environment poses these kinds of constraints, there exist many opportunities and the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are taking advantage of these. Staff members speak the ‘development language’ and know which strings to pull to enhance their positions and to gain legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders.

Something has to be said about the role of the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs as intermediaries. It seems to be true that these organizations are filling some kind of structural gap between local NGOs and global funding agencies and are located between different micro and macro levels (see Sanyal 2006). These organizations have emerged, born or later on changed its focus, to assist the sector which faces challenges posed by the national and global contexts and the nature of the sectors itself (Brown & Kaleongar 2002). To put it simply: the government is trying to control the roles of civil society, donors impose their own conditions for NGOs and need local success stories as an exchange, and an increasing number of the ‘wrong’ kind of NGOs have emerged in Tanzania. All these suggest that there is a ‘need’ for the support functions (capacity building and advocacy) provided by the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs.

Also, the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs can be seen as located between different local, national, and international actors. These organizations have worked and have contacts with many multilateral organizations and donors. They have attended international seminars abroad. The staff members know people from academia, government and media and invite them actively, for example, to their events. Civil society organizations are their clients, their members with whom they have immense contacts and established relationships. Umbrella NGOs also have a special obligation to serve their members since they are membership-based.

These organizations also work to bridge ties between different sectors. Government officials, donors, members, academia, media and others are invited to these NGOs' events and meetings etc., and these organizations are actively renewing old relations and building new ones. Yet, there exist fewer ties among the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs themselves and these bridging ties can be overlapping. As said, each organization works mostly independently when it comes to implementing projects and this causes duplication of activities. Further, these organizations are not the only intermediaries within Tanzanian civil society field, for there exist other NGOs such as thematic networks that can bypass these national umbrella bodies (in sectoral issues, for example) and have their own activities, albeit more or less similar with those of the umbrella organizations. Also, rural-urban factor and personal relationships have an effect on 'bridging ties'. Urban NGOs have better access to umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs' services, and some members and CSOs as well as donors and the government representatives have established better relationships with the umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies than the others.

Further, it needs to be remembered that it is peculiar to the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs that the services provided are mostly short-term programmes or projects funded by donors. Long-term self-financed programmes do not exist, which means that the beneficiaries (members or non-members or both), the goals, and the services which are provided, all vary according to, and are dependent on, each specific project. These might not be congruent with the umbrella and quasi-umbrella bodies' own visions and values nor its members or other stakeholders. The quality of these 'support services' provided to civil society is also difficult to measure and capacity building trainings have many challenges. The ideal does not necessary correspond with the practice. This means that even though the umbrella organizations work mostly country-wide, support CSOs and highlight their ‘umbrellaness’, sometimes their work cannot be separated from other well-established and donor-funded Tanzanian NGOs. Does this mean that the umbrella NGOs are sometimes implementing projects that ideally should be implemented by their members, and that they are not serving the ones they are supposed to? The answer is yes and no. Yes, because these ‘support organizations’ also need support themselves – funds and capacity building – as their donors have expressed, and are driven by the need to get funding almost at any expense. Also, when thinking the role of umbrella bodies in the light of interests and that these organizations do capacity building activities, the whole idea of seems to be exhausting their own role: doing capacity building among members and NGOs means there will be more NGOs that want to take a piece of the funding pie. The umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs are increasing competition and at the same weakening their own positions.

This means that sooner or later these organizations need to find new roles in the aid system. However, this should not be too complicated since these organizations are constantly adapting but also forming the environment around them, as has been seen in the past. The two national umbrella NGOs did not initially start as capacity building organizations but have slowly grown into their current positions as the environment, as well as the staff members and their views have changed. Yet, even though the two umbrella NGOs are long-standing organizations, the role and services of these bodies were not acknowledged by all the stakeholders working in the Tanzanian civil society field at the beginning of 2000. New organizations have also been born: some of the donors saw the need to establish the Foundation for Civil Society to deal with local funding scarcities. However, the FCS has come closer to the umbrella bodies in terms of providing similar activities (the idea must have been that effective use of sources needs capacity building of the beneficiaries), and even though the role of the FCS as an implementor has been criticized, the umbrella bodies have benefited from the Foundation in the form of funds. Now, the government has also responded to the changes in the sector and established NACONGO to regulate the wrong kind of NGOs and to support CSOs becoming better harbingers of the government. Yet, this one also seems to want to take similar kind of roles that the others have already taken. In this sense these organizations seem to have certain kind of function and nature that can be explained by using organizational theories within the aid system context.

However, coming back to the question of serving members; it is important for these four organizations to claim the status of an umbrella or quasi-umbrella body and play the 'dual conversion role' successfully, and legitimize these roles in different sectors. This is crucial if these organizations want to survive. This also means that they have to serve their members, other NGOs and other sectors as well. In other words, even though the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs purpose is to support and serve members and civil society (which they are also doing), the intermediary role that they are playing suggests that sometimes these organizations serve donor agendas, their own interest as an organization or other stakeholders' interests depending on the situation. The most important thing is to maintain a balance between these actions, and it is the easier the further away these sectors are from each other i.e. when the other sectors are only in contact with each other through the intermediary.

More research is needed to understand the different realities of these umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs more comprehensively and in greater detail. For instance, heterogeneity inside the umbrella and quasi-umbrella NGOs has not been researched in this study due to my broad scope and covering of more than one organization in a study the size of a Master's thesis. The role of leaders in these organizations and deeper look at the relationships between different sectors would also provide more insights to the roles and realities of these organizations.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Key informant interviews

Amina. Personal interview with the author. July 8, 2010.

Benjamin. Personal interview with the author. May 25, 2010.

David. Personal interview with the author. June 7, 2010.

Dennis. Personal interview with the author. July 6. 2010.

Emmanuel. Personal interview with the author. June 10, 2010.

Ethel. Personal interview with the author. June 29, 2010.

Francis. Personal interview with the author. July 5, 2010.

Fredy. Personal interview with the author. June 11, 2010.

Gideon. Personal interview with the author. June 28, 2010.

Godfrey. Personal interview with the author. May 21, 2010.

Ibrahim. Personal interview with the author. June 1, 2010.

Idrisa. Personal interview with the author. July 1, 2010.

James. Group interview with the author, an umbrella NGO and a donor. May 4, 2010.

Joseph. Personal interview with the author. June 9, 2010.

Joyce. Personal interview with the author. July 2, 2010.

Judith. Personal interview with the author. July 5, 2010.

Juma. Personal interview with the author. June 15, 2010.

Kabile. Group interview with the author, an umbrella NGO and a donor. May 12, 2010.

Mary. Personal interview with the author. July 8, 2010.

Nelson. Personal interview with the author. July 6, 2010.

Rose. Personal interview with the author. June 18, 2010; July 2, 2010.

Salma. Personal interview with the author. June 8, 2010.

Selemani. Personal interview with the author. June 14, 2010.

Appendix 2: Questions for the interviews

QUESTIONS FOR UMBRELLA AND QUASI-UMBRELLA NGOs

”Tell me about yourself”

How long have you been part of the NGO work?
How long have you been working in this particular NGO?
Is this your main job/part-time job?
How did you become engaged with this NGO?
What is your role in the NGO? What do you do?
Tell me about your “normal” day at work.

“Tell me about your organization”

What is the history of your organization? Why it was established?

How big or small is your organization? How many people are running the activities?

What are the main objects of your organization? Main activities? Could you give some examples, please.
Why these are important?
Have they always been the same or have you had different objects and activities? Why these have changed?
Who decides what are the goals and main activities?

What kind of services do you offer to your members?

What do you mean by capacity building?
How would you define “capacity building”?
Whose capacity you seek to build? Why?
What is the aim of capacity building?
How did you end up doing capacity building? Where did the idea come from?
What happens after the capacity building? Is it as an end itself or a way to something else?
Could you give an example of an organization that has a built/full/good capacity.

What about empowerment? How do you understand the word empowerment?
How would you define it?

What about networking?

Advocacy? Lobbying? What do you mean by these words?
What kind of cooperation do you have with officials, e.g. government officials?
Other stakeholders?

Do you differ from other organizations/NGOs? How do you differ? How about other umbrella organizations?

What do you think is the role of your organization in the Tanzanian NGO field?
Why there are umbrella organizations in Tanzania?
Do you see your role as “supervisor” of the members?

What are the major challenges? And why? What or who hinders your work?
What about the major achievements?

How do you see the future of the organization?

“Tell me about your members”

What kind of organizations do you have as members? Regional/local? Geographical coverage?
How many members do you have?
Is the number of members increasing/decreasing?
How this affects the work you do?

Who can become a member? And who can’t? And why?
Does the membership last forever once approved as member or do the members need to renew it every once in awhile?
Annual fee?

What is the difference between NGO and CBO? How about CSO?
Could you give an example?
So, how would you define NGO?

What kinds of services do your offer to your members? Why these services?
Do you give funding to the members? What kind of funding? Why?

How often are you in contact with the members?
Are there some members that you see more often than others? Why?

Do you collect information about your members?
What kind of information and for what do you use it?
How do you collect the information?

Do you offer information back to the members?
What kind of information?
How do you get the information?
Why do you give that kind of information to the members?

What kind of effect your organization has on your members?

Do you know how the members perceive your organization?

“Tell me about the NGO work in general”

Are you familiar with the NGO Act made by the government and the law enacted in 2002?
Are you familiar with the definition of NGO in that?
What do you think about the government definition?

What do you think is the purpose of NGOs/civil society? Why their work is important/unimportant?

Whom these organizations represent?

There are also other umbrella organizations in Tanzania. Do you know any? How do you differ from them or do you differ? Do you have any joint projects? Why and why not?

What do you think the Foundation for Civil Society? NACONGO? TANGO? TACOSODE? Policy Forum?

"Tell me about donors"

How do you get funding? What is the ratio between the donor fund and the annual fees from members?
Who are your donors?
How often the donors change? What kind of effects this has on your work from your point of view?

How would you define the relationship between your organization and donors?
How much the donors affect the work of the organization, goals and activities?

What do you think about aid dependency? Sustainability of your organization?

QUESTIONS FOR MEMBER NGOs

"Tell me about yourself" (see above)

"Tell me about your organization" (see above)

"Tell me about the umbrella organization"

How did you get to know about umbrella/middle range organizations? How did you find out about this particular one?

When did you become a member? Why?
How was the process of becoming a member?

Why did become a member of this particular umbrella organization, since there also other umbrella organizations? Are you also a member of them?
Can you become a member of more than a one organization?

What kind of services do the umbrella organizations offer to you? How do you find these services? What do you think about these services? Could you give some examples, please.

What kind of information do you share with the umbrella organization?

Do you get funding from the umbrella organizations? What kind of funding?

How often are you in contact with the umbrella organization? Why that often or seldom?

What kind of effect the umbrella organization has on your organization? Why?
What are your expectations towards umbrella organizations?

What kind of challenges you see in the work of umbrella/middle range organizations?

What is the role of umbrella organization(s) in general?

Appendix 3: List of codes from the ATLAS.ti

Codes	Number of codes
Accountability	11
Achievements	10
Achievement; doing something others cannot	5
Achievement; recognition	9
Advocacy/lobbying	36
An example of a project	6
Bad NGO	6
Becoming an NGO	5
Board members	1
Capacity building and trainings	65
CBO	11
Challenges	36
CISUNET project	11
Civil society	17
Civil society language	3
Competition	17
Coordination	15
CSO	9
Dependency	32
Development language	4
Donor-NGO cooperation	14
Donors	54
Executive committee	4
FCS	36
Forming networks	8
Future	1
Government	10
History	12
Ideal organization	7
Income generating	14
Information sharing	14
Institutional capacity	9
Intermediary role	2
Kepa	3
Legitimizing own roles/doing good	18
Main activities	28
Managing expectations	3
Media relationships	2
Members	71
NACONGO	44
Networks	16
Traditional vs modern NGOs	3

Personal stuff	14
Policy Forum	8
Private sector	1
Real/good NGO	32
Relationship with the government	72
Reputation	4
Results	8
Role of NGOs	2
Service delivery	8
Strategic plan	8
Sustainability	6
TACOSODE	60
TANGO	23
The role of a researcher	1
Umbrella/quasi-umbrella NGOs	44
Using power	4