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Children and Democracy

A Minor Field Study of Child-led Organisations
in Urban Tanzania

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Abstract

Children are traditionally excluded from political processes in Tanzania and marginalising attitudes have made it difficult for children to actively take part in decisions that concern both themselves as individuals and as groups. However, child-led movements with the aim to challenge these kinds of norms and reposition the child as an active and important social agent have emerged. The author conducted a field-study in urban Tanzania to learn more about these organisations and their relation to democratic consolidation. To allow such a study, the thesis analyses five child-led organisations' participation in political processes through highlighting their pluralist function on democratic developments. In line with the theoretical framework, it is anticipated that civil society organisations inhabit a potential for democratic promotion through representing, monitoring and struggling for their members. To elucidate this, the thesis operationalises the organisations' participation in political processes through looking at three indicators: access-channels, rate of participation and interests. The findings from the study show that the organisations have marginal effects on democratic consolidation, viewed from the pluralist perspective, since their participation in political processes is limited.

Keywords: Tanzania, child-led organisations, pluralist function, participation, democratic consolidation

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Table of Contents

- 1. INTRODUCTION 5**
 - 1.1 Aim and key-questions 5
 - 1.2 Theories 6
 - 1.3 Methodology and Material 6
 - 1.3.1 Selection Process 8
 - 1.4 Criticism of Sources 9
 - 1.5 Disposition..... 9
 - 1.6 Limitations..... 10
- 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... 11**
 - 2.1 Theoretical Justifications 11
 - 2.1.1 Democratic Consolidation 11
 - 2.1.2 Civil Society– A Definition 12
 - 2.1.3 The State– A Definition..... 13
 - 2.1.4 Civil Society and Its Role for Democratisation..... 13
 - 2.1.5 The State and Civil Society; Their Relation to Each Other..... 14
 - 2.1.6 Child-led Movements 14
 - 2.2 A Model for Participation..... 16
 - 2.2.1 Access-channels..... 17
 - 2.2.2 Rate of Participation 18
 - 2.2.3 Interests..... 18
 - 2.2.4 The Model’s Limitations and Their Justifications..... 19
- 3. EMPIRICAL AND ANALYTICAL PART 21**
 - 3.1 Access-channels..... 21
 - 3.2 Rate of Participation 24
 - 3.3 Interests..... 26
- 4. CONCLUSIONS 28**
 - 4.1 Suggested Studies 30
- 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY 31**
 - 5.1 Books and Publications 31
 - 5.2 Internet Sources 33
- APPENDIX I THE ORGANISATIONS IN THE STUDY 34**
- APPENDIX II LIST OF INFORMANTS AND RESPONDENTS 35**
- APPENDIX III QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE INTERVIEWS (ORGANISATIONS) 37**

APPENDIX IV QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE INTERVIEWS (THE STATE)..... 38
APPENDIX V QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE INTERVIEWS (INFORMANTS)..... 39

1 Introduction

This thesis is about young people and participation. It highlights so-called child-led organisations and their potential for consolidating democracy in Tanzania, a country with depressive records on child rights' violation (UNICEF et al 2001). Children are traditionally excluded and passivated in Tanzania, which makes this phenomenon relatively new and unexplored (Mascarenhas 2004). When I enhanced information about the country, a contradiction became apparent to me: Tanzania is a modern African state, a member of United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and has expressed its commitment to the standards of the child and its rights to participation in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and regional treaties¹. Yet, children's right to participation and to be heard seems to have been poorly realised (cf. Rwezaura 1998:57 ff.). But movements led by young people are trying to challenge this and reposition the status of the child within the politics as an active and important player with crucial insights and knowledge about children's lives and demands. However, does it work? Do these movements manage to represent their members' interests and rights?

These were reasons departing from my decision to conduct a Minor Field Study in urban Tanzania to meet with representatives from these organisations, and state officials, to learn more about their work and how they matter for democratic developments in the country.

1.1 Aim and key-questions

I have chosen to investigate whether child-led organisations have a possibility to contribute to democratic consolidation in Tanzania. This is an area of empirical art rather than normative or constructive (cf. Lundquist 1993:60). It is my ambition to explain the above-mentioned through conducting a field study in urban Tanzania. However, democratic consolidation could be an immense area and to facilitate a study of it, I chose to focus on a certain aspect of civil society and democratic consolidation: the organisations' participation in political processes². The aim could best be summarised into the following two questions:

- 1. Do child-led organisations participate in political processes in Tanzania?*
- 2. If affirmative, how and to what extent?*

¹ Tanzania ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991 wherein article nr. 12 sanctions the right of the child to have its view given weight (although not binding). See for ex. B. Rwezaura 1998.

² In this thesis, political processes represent those formal decision-making processes that are *public* (i.e. not behind closed doors) and involve representatives from the state (cf. Uhrwing 2001:13).

By concentrating on this aspect I will, on basis of my findings, be able to draw *some* conclusions on child-led organisations and their relation to democratic developments in Tanzania. It is not my ambition to generalise the findings to a larger context more than that it could be argued that similar cases could occur in comparable environments. Although these results originate from a specific study, it is not unrealistic to assume that resembling phenomena occur in similar contexts (cf. Lundquist 1993:64). However, the primary aim is to sketch a relation between democracy and child-led organisations, through the specific key-questions, valid for Tanzania.

Lastly, none of the above is suggested as a panacea for how child-led organisations contribute to democratic consolidation. Rather, the thesis highlights *one* aspect (participation in political processes) of civil society and its relation to democratic consolidation.

1.2 Theories

Since this study has an explanatory ambition, theories have been deployed in order to create an understanding of concepts such as democratic consolidation, civil society and child-led movements. Moreover, since the thesis analyses how a group of organisations within the civil society sector participates in political processes, it utilises theorists such as Axel Hadenius and Fredrik Ugglå (1998), who emphasise civil society's participation and interaction with the state.

But, since my aim revolves around participation I saw it as mandatory to take the study one step further and close a ring around participation as such. Here I found a Swedish dissertation written by Marie Uhrwing (2001) very useful as she investigates interest organisations and their access to political decision-making processes. Although she operates within a Swedish context, I believe her writings are negotiable elsewhere since it, in its endeavours to achieve the aim, treats civil society and participation *as such*.

On basis of her writings together with the other theorists, I identified three aspects, or indicators, of participation in political processes that would assist me in developing adequate interview questions to the organisations and the state representatives. These should not be interpreted as divinely given answers for what participation is; rather they are my operationalisation of participation, which enabled me to collect relevant information for my aim as well as analysing it.

1.3 Methodology and Material

In order to render an investigation of child-led movements in Tanzania realistic, I chose to conduct a case study of five child-led non-governmental organisations' experiences of working with the state³. The primary material is therefore first-hand information from interviews with representatives from child-led organisations but also with state officials to obtain their views. To double-check if

³ See appendix I for organisational information.

the information given was correct, and to increase my overall understanding of the situation, I also conducted interviews with key-persons, who had a potential insight in the subject due to their work⁴.

Working with case studies as a method can be complicated and due to the reality's complexity, several disparate opinions regarding its design have originated. Some scholars such as Robert Yin (1989) insist on a persistent link between initial questions and findings in order to attain a stringency in the study, while others, like Lars-Göran Stenelo (1984:24-25), stresses the flexibility attached to the case study as a method. My understanding of case study as a method lies closer to the later than the former. While I recognise that key-questions and aim(s) should stay firm throughout the study, I find Stenelo's reasoning useful. Openness and flexibility towards new impressions and findings enables the researcher to utilise new perspectives, rising from the field findings, which he or she did not have knowledge about before starting the investigation.

To allow such a case study I have enhanced different types of literature to achieve a greater understanding of the case and Tanzania. Historical books on pre-colonial Tanzania and the African conceptualisation of childhood have been of great value. However, reality is far more complex than literature tends to capture and since the phenomenon of child-led organisations in Tanzania seems to be poorly documented, I saw it as necessarily to conduct a field research in Tanzania to see if first-hand information could provide me with more facts. It is, as Stenelo points out, an advantage to come close to the people and situations studied to entirely understand the phenomenon one intends to explore (Stenelo 1984:29). Furthermore, an advantage with interviews as a method is that they can verify facts from other sources when presented to the respondents or informants (Stenelo 1984:30). Moreover, by being in Tanzania I would gain access to earlier researches, rapid assessments and other local surveys, valuable for my study. Tanzania has a well-recorded history of civil society organisations. During the economic crisis in the 1980s people were forced to withdraw their reliance on the state for obtaining resources and support, because of its inability to meet the citizens' needs. Instead people had to depend on their own efforts in order to survive and from this a diversity of organisations ensued (Kiondo et al 2000; Tripp 1992:221). I therefore assumed that other studies, although not about child-led organisations, had been conducted locally, which would be vital for my overall understanding of the child's situation respectively civic life in Tanzania.

During my field-work (the end of November 2004 to early February 2005) I conducted 17 interviews. The time for each interview was approximately one hour, but the time varied due to the interest and time available (this holds especially true for the state representatives and informants, who in some cases had very limited time). The interviews had the form of so-called semi-structured interviews (Berg 1989:17; Bryman 301:2002; Stenelo 1984:30). At first I formulated common central questions, which embraced the overall subject of child-led organisations and participation in Tanzania. But the interview situation

⁴ These persons are called "key-persons" due to their experiences from working with established organisations that in one way or another are connected to child-rights. See appendix II for interview list.

itself was always characterised by an openness and frankness, which allowed for impulses and suggestions from the respondents or informants. Nor did I strictly follow the order and structure of the beforehand-formulated questionnaire. On the contrary I let the respondent/informant speak freely within the frames of my interest in order to create a comfortable situation as possible. The fact that young people were interviewed is not neglected. Nor is the fact that I, as a foreigner could have had influenced the answers. But with carefulness and “cross-checking” with key-persons, informants, with insights in the organisations, I believe that errors and misunderstandings can be avoided, or at least marginalised.

At first I had planned to use tape-recorded interviews, in order to safeguard my interpretation of the content. But as time went I realised that my respondents preferred to speak without a tape-recorder and as a result I performed seven interviews without it. The lion’s share of my interviews was conducted in English, but when Kiswahili⁵ was spoken I took use of a translator⁶.

1.3.1 Selection Process

Since Tanzania has a vast amount of child-led organisations with a variety of missions and visions, it became important to select relevant organisations. To avoid a scope which would include organisations outside the aim, I lend support from Caroline Boussard’s writings (1998). In compliance with her reasoning I decided to restrict my inclusion of organisations to those that would have a broader civic engagement and not to those, which merely would be involved in recreational activities⁷. Boussard argues that one should make an analytical differentiation between organisations that are related to public concerns and matters from the rest, although they are all part of the civil society (Boussard 1998:156). Since my aim concerns civil society’s participation in political processes, I decided to focus on organisations that exclusively and explicitly work with political and societal issues.

Equipped with this distinction I decided to briefly map out the most prevalent child-led movements in Dar es Salaam (since it was the place of my investigation) in terms of their public appearance, mandates and agendas⁸. Due to the scope, time and resources, five organisations, with their basis located in Dar es Salaam, were selected to be included in the thesis⁹.

⁵ Kiswahili, or Swahili, is Tanzania’s national language.

⁶ Patric Mbonga had the role of my translator. Mr. Mbonga is a third-year law student at the University of Dar es Salaam, where English is the teaching language.

⁷ This is not to compromise on their potential in building social capital, see R. Putnam (1992) for a more inclusive reading.

⁸ This was done with the assistance of a UNICEF officer, in charge for child- and youth organisations in Tanzania and the co-ordinator of the Tanzania Movement for and with Children (see interviews 7 and 15 for further details). The two assisted me with information and contact-details to the organisations, and functioned as references in my initiating contact letters.

⁹ See appendix I for organisational information.

1.4 Criticism of Sources

This thesis highlights the relation between democratic civil society organisations and democratic development. It anticipates, along the lines with the theoretical section, that democratic civil society organisations promote democracy. It could thus be argued that the thesis disregards the problematic aspects that are associated with uncivil and undemocratic organisations. This is indeed recognised: undemocratic movements' participation in the political system does not yield democratic consolidation. But, as the focus has been laid on organisations that struggle for children's rights, this was not seen as a primary concern to embrace. As a result, critical theories about undemocratic civil society organisations and democratisation lack in their absence.

But what about the extensive "Africanist" scholarly on democratisation and civil society, may some readers argue, why is this not utilised to a larger extent? I am fully aware of the immense writings and many theorists on the area. However, this is not a single school with one single thought about the topics I am treating here. This school is as divergent as any (if there is such thing as a school?) and I therefore selected scholars on basis of their relevance for this thesis's aim– not on their backgrounds. Still I am mentioning it here, because it can be problemized depending on one's ideological and/or scientific affiliation.

Lastly, the focus has to its greatest extent been laid on the organisations' experiences– not the state's (although this has been included but to a limited extent). It could, and probably should, be problemized since the thesis also discusses the state and its relation to the organisations. To my defence it should be said that I before arrival in Tanzania expected it to be easier to include state officials' views than it actually turned out to be. Once in Tanzania I discovered the problems attached to setting up appointments with state representatives (at all levels). Either they were busy and never reverted, or they regretfully declined my proposals for an interview. After some time I succeeded to set up some interviews but not to the degree that I initially had expected. But in conjunction to this, I also wish to emphasise that, as the aim lies out, it is the *organisations* and their experiences from the system that are in focus whereby these naturally are the interesting part.

1.5 Disposition

After this introducing part, a theoretical one will follow where key-concepts and their relations to each other are defined. It is also here, where the model, which is employed to capture the investigated organisations' participation in political processes, is presented. Equipped with this knowledge the reader will continue to the empirical part where the findings are presented and analysed in accordance with the presented model. In the last section the aim is answered and some

conclusions drawn whether the child-led organisations contribute to democratic consolidation in Tanzania.

1.6 Limitations

Before proceeding, it is important to locate this thesis within the extremely wide debate, and diverse interpretations, of civil society organisations. In this context, this study only highlights five organisations' participation in political processes. As a result, not much attention has been allocated to the organisations' structures and histories such as internal power structures, differences between sexes, economical resources and members' backgrounds. Furthermore, factors concerning how the state selects its collaborators or what would happen with an organisation that becomes "uncomfortable" for the state have not been included in the investigation. In the best of all worlds, all these factors would be embraced and highlighted to galvanise the findings. But this was simply not possible due to time, resources, scope and skills. It could indeed be material for a master thesis.

2 Theoretical Framework

The objective in laying out this theoretical foundation is *not* to recapitulate the very immense democracy- and civil society debate. Nor is it to preface a revolutionary concept. Others, more qualified, have already done this. My goal is, rather, with the help of selected theorists, to demonstrate the meanings of the most central concepts used in this thesis and how they interrelate to each other, in order to provide the reader with a theoretical understanding before embarking on the empirical part. In the end of this section, a model, based on the theoretical exposition, for how to collect the empiric will be outlined.

2.1 Theoretical Justifications

Below the concepts of democratic consolidation, civil society and its roles, the state respectively child-led organisations will be clarified in order to show how civil society participation relates to democratic consolidation.

2.1.1 Democratic Consolidation

Democratisation is an extremely nuanced concept with probably as many meanings as there are advocates/critics (Diamond 1999:7; Hydén 1998:7; Liebenberg 2000:65 ff.). Depending on how one views it, different factors have been subscribed various degrees of importance (cf. Rindeljäll 1998: chapter 2). For the purpose here, democratisation, or democratic consolidation, is viewed as a developmental process, which always is capable of becoming more inclusive and responsive towards its citizens' interests, demands and preferences (Diamond 1999:16 based on R. Sklar 1987 and 1996 in T. Falola 2002). Larry Diamond sees democratisation as a *constant* process of change in the character, degree and depth of democratic institutions (Diamond 1999:289). These institutions can, to put it different, always become more accountable and responsible to the people. Following this reasoning, the electoral, or smaller, democracy definition's focus on election processes and the elites seems inappropriate since it does not allocate much space for the masses and their potential for consolidating democracy¹⁰ (Grugel 2002:18, Held 1993:165 ff.). This is not to undermine the prominence of the elites such as governments' responses to people's insurrections, their management of the economy or their relation with the military (Zuern 2000:114). But if we see democracy as something more than just a system for competitive struggles between elites it means that we define democracy as a political system

¹⁰ The reader should observe that this thesis highlights *consolidation* of democracy, not *transition* towards democracy (cf. Rindeljäll 1998:33).

where governments can be held accountable to the citizens and where mechanisms that force the state to be responsive to the people's interests and demands are installed (Diamond 1999:219). Employing this developmental and continuous concept of democracy implies that we must occupy a definition of democratisation, which embraces and acknowledges the potential of other factors' impact on democratisation than just the elites'.

Take for example the rights of marginalised groups, as the scope of this thesis is related to. If these groups shall be able to retain to their rights, or reinforce them, other factors than just the elites' actions will influence the outcome. Organisations that struggle for these groups' rights will most likely try to influence the state on this area. If we define democratisation, or democratic consolidation, as continuous, it means that *democratic developments will occur as long as these rights are improved*. With this approach to democratisation it is practically impossible to exclude factors such as the mentioned groups' struggles from the democratisation process since they are such a crucial part of it. It is with this definition of democratic consolidation time to proceed to *one* of the factors that matter for it: civil society.

2.1.2 Civil Society- A Definition

Before embarking on theories that demonstrate how civil society matters for democratic consolidation, a definition of civil society ought to be presented. In this thesis I propose the following definition of civil society as “an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities– economic and cultural production, voluntary associations, and household life– and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressure or controls upon state institutions” (Makumbe 1998:305 based on Sachikonye 1995). To follow John Makumbe's writings, it means, in the context of Africa: trade unions; professional associations; church organisations; resident, student, business and other special interest associations; the media, and various types of non-governmental organisations (Makumbe 1995:305). Furthermore, I wish to add an extra feature saying that organisations within the civil society sector recognise the principles of state authority and the rule of law, if the state itself is democratically elected (Diamond 1999:221).

It is not the objective to submerge into the enormous discussion regarding what civil society is and not. For the purpose here it suffices to point out that I have tried to contextualise the definition by lending interpretation from Africanist scholars¹¹.

¹¹ See M. Karlström, among others, for a critical exposition of civil society definitions and the African environment (Karlström 1999:104 ff; also Gyimah-Boadi 1996; N. Kasfir 1995).

2.1.3 The State- A Definition

The complex and nuanced concept of the state will here be appropriated as Marie Uhrwing defines it in *Tillträde till maktens rum* (2001:54-55). Uhrwing identifies the state as the officials and politicians who work in the name of the state and the rules and guidelines that regulate their activities. The state may hence be treated as a single entity but is nevertheless composed by a variety of representatives, institutions and regulations.

2.1.4 Civil Society and Its Role for Democratisation

In this thesis, civil society's role in democratisation is conceptualised along the lines of Axel Hadenius and Fredrik Ugglå (1995). The authors discuss how and in what ways civil society promotes democratic developments. They locate two functions, or two tasks, that the civil society sector inhabits for democratic consolidation: pluralist respectively educational. In my opinion this reasoning is useful for the thesis's purpose since it provides the scientist with clear and explicit dimensions on what to study when approaching the civil society sector empirically.

The pluralist function is connected to the distribution of power in society and in political life (Hadenius et al 1995:2). Its relation to democratic consolidation concerns its protection of the individual citizen *vis-à-vis* the state. By creating or joining groups, citizens obtain power resources, which they otherwise would not have. The explanation is double. First, the members obtain power resources in terms of benefiting from the large membership and skills among the members/leaders etc. Such factors facilitate contacts and interaction with those in power, and may thus increase the individual citizen's possibilities to influence the outcome of decisions (either due to the group's pressure and/or due to members' performances such as lobbyism and other activism) in line with his/her preferences. I.e. multiple channels to affect political decisions, beyond formal political parties, are furnished (cf. Diamond 1999:239 ff.). Secondly, seen from the pluralist perspective, membership in organisation(s) equips the individual with power resources because these groups limit the state's power (Hadenius et al 1995:3). By monitoring and evaluating the state's actions and performances the organisations take on the role of a "watchdog", which obstructs violation and marginalisation of the organisations' interests and goals. For the pluralist function to work properly, the organisations must be open for everyone (i.e. constitute a popular base), autonomous from the state and represent a wide array of interests, to avoid domination of certain interests (Ibid.).

The second function, the educational task, is connected to the "internal life of the organisations" (Ibid.). The prospects of democracy do not only depend on the relationship between organisations and the state apparatus. Democratic evolvments do also rely on how the people themselves perceive and acknowledges democratic ideas and ideals. By participating in democratic organisations, citizens learn to be democratic. How can this be? Very simplistic

this socialising is twofold. First and foremost the citizens learn to accept divergent views by being confronted with these views when they work with other people. A tolerance is created. Secondly, by participating and engaging with other people, citizens may reach a greater understanding of the other's views and through this appreciate the similarities in their reasoning as in contrast to just the disparities. A growing mutual concern and public spirit is thereby created (Hadenius et al 1995: 4).

For the sake of it, it should be mentioned that these two functions *may* stand in contrast to each other since the pluralist function emphasises efficiency, which might require a top-down organisational hierarchy, whereas the whole idea with the educational function concerns the organisations' internal democratic structure (Hadenius et al 1995:6, 9). This is a dilemma that has characterised bilateral, multilateral and other supporters' aid for an efficient but also democratic civil society.

2.1.5 The State and Civil Society; Their Relation to Each Other

Even though we earlier have skimmed the relation between civil society and the state, it may still suffice to allot some further space to it in order to clarify their relationship, which the thesis's aim rests upon.

As written above, the elites, or those who constitute the state, play a pre-eminent role in consolidating democracy since they form the system, in which people live (i.e. the types of institutions and rules that govern the system, see Diamond 1999:219). But for this system to remain democratic and become responsive, other groups, such as (democratic) civil society organisations, need to relate to it and be able to affect it as outlined in the earlier sections. Thus, civil society organisations do relate to the state not only because they restrict its power, but also because they legitimate the state when they interact with it (Diamond 1999:22). But a predicament for this is that the state *must relate to these groups as well*. There cannot only be a one-sided way of approaching: the other end (the state) must also react and be responsible. This means that the state must not only allow independent organisations, it must also provide room for them where they can meet with the state and have access to influential channels (Hadenius et al 1995:18 ff.). By taking the organisations into consideration when making policies etc. the state both recognises and legitimises the organisations' work, which establishes a reciprocal link between civil society organisations and the state (Ibid.). We can hence establish that a two-way (or multi-way) situation of reaction and responsiveness must be in place in a democratic system.

2.1.6 Child-led Movements

Since this thesis concerns child-led movements' possibilities to participation in political decision-making processes it becomes vital to define what we mean with a child-led movement and to identify specific attributes and characteristics,

incongruent from the larger civil society before we embark on their participation in political processes.

Any organisation with members below eighteen years is a so-called child-led organisation. This is derived from how the term child is used in this thesis. The words *child*, *youth* respectively *young people* are interchangeably used for any person up to eighteen years. This is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which has extended the meaning of “child” to all human beings below the age of eighteen years (Internet 1).

Children have traditionally been excluded from decision-making processes around the world (O’ Kane 2003:1). Tanzania is no exception. There is a proverb in Kiswahili saying that “children are a future generation”, which in reality means that young people should listen when adults plan for them rather than actively participate (Omari 1997:51). However, a paradigm shift is occurring around the world, Tanzania included, about the place and status of children’s voices in society (Boylan 2005:2; O’ Kane 2003:2). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been signed by a majority of states¹² since its initiation 1989, recognises children as important social actors with important contributions (knowledge, insights, feelings, ideas, opinions etc.) in decisions that affect them due to their status as children (King et al 1998:100; Hart 1995; O’ Kane 2003).

So how do these movements contribute to democratic consolidation as outlined earlier? Previous research, in other environments than Africa, has shown that these organisations gather children to collectively identify and articulate problems that they meet in their everyday life. The organisations can be described as arenas for sharing views and experiences (O’ Kane 2003:1-10). But it has also been found that the organisations yield possibilities for the children to learn about their rights and how to realise them (Poudyal 2003:5-9; Rajani 2000:14). With this knowledge, and together as a collective, they might be able to challenge commonplace norms and practises that discriminate them as children.

Although I regard child-led movements as a part of the larger civil society sector in general there are some specific aspects that arise as a result of the constituents’ age. Children are below eighteen years and thereby in the custody of others such as the family or other guardians. The consequence is that children do not have the total autonomy that adults have (at least should have). Consequences for the organisations may be that the members lack possibilities to devote time and engagement into the organisation’s work (Hart 1995). This is a general problem that several organisations struggle against. But what is distinctive in the case of child-led organisations is that the members themselves are obliged to obey external factors (family, custodians) to an extent that adults do not have to (Ibid.). It is realistic to assume that this might affect the work and prospects of an organisation.

In the context of East Africa and Tanzania, it is necessarily to locate the status of the child within the traditional perceptions against child participation. As described above, children are to be seen rather than heard, which prevents them from taking active part in different processes (Mascarenhas 2004:2). These deeply

¹² With Somalia and the United States as exceptions (Internet 2).

embedded cultural norms affect the way children participate and visualise themselves as active members of the society, and may also influence the prospects for any organisation in terms of internal behaviour (members might be passive or afraid of provoking the environment) as well as external reception of the children's endeavours (the organisation is not taken seriously etc.).

2.2 A Model for Participation

What we have discovered earlier, is that civil society participation is a key-word for democratic consolidation. In line with the earlier theories, civil society has a pluralist respectively educational function where the latter concerns the organisations external relations with the state and the later the internal relations within the organisations. This thesis will focus on the child-led movements external relations with the state. One way to settle this is to study the organisations' participation in political processes since these involve the state. This is not to argue that the internal function is unimportant. On the contrary this function contributes to crucial democratic fundamentals and presuppositions for democracy to function properly. The reasons why the concentration revolves around participation in political processes may best be encapsulated in the following points:

1. The educational function is relatively well documented by child psychologists, who emphasise the importance of participation as a learning element for becoming responsible citizens (see King 1998 and Boylan 2005 for example). This posits the pluralist function in a relatively new and unexplored study-area;
2. In order to achieve their objectives (being a political or societal organisation) the organisations need to relate to the state in some way (Hadenius et al 1998:18). To influence state policy, with other words, requires interaction with the state. Thus, it is of interest to study how civil society organisations participate in the political processes, since it gives information on their external relations with the state.
3. If we view democracy as a continuous and open-ended process, the inherent possibilities of civil society to affect decisions and policies are essential since they may lead to democratic consolidation (Diamond 1999:239-250). Consequently, there is a relation between participation in political processes and democratic consolidation since the work of the organisation aims to improve the situation of its members (with the presupposition that it is *democratic* civil society organisations we are aiming at).

With these justifications in mind, it is time to shed light on how the external and mutual relations can be analysed. It is, with other words, the child-led

organisations' participation in political processes, which requires operationalisation.

I hence probed the theoretical terrain for analytical tools that would concretise participation and render a study of it possible. Here I found Marie Uhrwing (whose definition of the state was employed in section 2.1.3) useful as she analyses Swedish interest organisations' access to political decision-making processes (Uhrwing 2000). In doing so, she highlights some specific aspects of the relationship between the state and the interest organisations. Although Uhrwing is not employing any model as such (i.e. for participation), I found her writings and reasoning advantageous and useful and I therefore lend inspiration from her procedures and methodology when I developed my own operationalisation of participation in political processes. In conjunction I also found a master thesis, written by Anna Edgren (2001), of value since it, in the context of investigating civil society and democracy promotion in Cambodia, departs from a similar aim than that of mine and the methodology used, functioned as a good source of inspiration for this thesis.

The operationalisation of participation in political processes takes its manifestation in three indicators (access-channels, rate of participation and interests), which have composed a foundation for the interview questions. The expectation is that they together will complement each other and form a comprehensive picture on the participation-patterns among child-led movements in Tanzania.

2.2.1 Access-channels

Since political processes, as we defined them in section 1.1, tend to be a very wide concept it requires concretisation to render a study of it possible. One way to study participation in political processes is to study the access that the organisations have to them. To be able to participate in political processes, organisations need access into the political system (Uhrwing 2000:55-56). In this thesis this access is denoted as access-channels and constitutes the following channels¹³: participation in meetings open for the public, public fora, co-operation to educate the people, functioning as reference group, and other co-operation. By participating in one or several of these access-channels, organisations are equipped with possibilities to take part in the political process. It should be noted that these channels only equip the organisations with possibilities to participate in political processes, and not actual influence *per se* (cf. Uhrwing 2000:10-11). The

¹³ Based on the fact that it is children that we are studying, some of the ordinary access-channels such as petition rights might be inappropriate to highlight. Hence, I chose to create broad and inclusive categories in order to prevent exclusion of any kind of participation activity. This can of course be questioned but focus has been put on channels such as meetings with local political leaders or district campaigns rather than on channels such as formal circulation of suggestions or political hearings, although this is included to a limited extent. If only those channels, and similar ones, were to be included, a too small scope would have been used, which would bear the risk of failing to capture the kind of participation in political processes that do occur among child-led organisations. I therefore chose to broaden the categories and embrace all sorts of formal participation channels that connect civil society with the State.

collected information for this indicator will furnish answers mainly for the first part of the aim: if the child-led organisations participate in political processes? But also for the question regarding *how* they participate in these.

2.2.2 Rate of Participation

To settle how and to what extent the child-led organisations participate in political processes, as the second part of the aim lies out, it becomes important to look beyond the access-channels mentioned earlier. Uhrwing writes about meaningful access to political decision-making processes and underlines that actual chances to reach influence over the politics are imperative if the organisations shall be able to carry out their missions (Uhrwing 2000:14). *One* way to settle this would be to study how often the organisations take part in the access-channels that were defined. To be able to press for demands and monitor interests, organisations need to participate in processes that furnish interaction between them and the state (Hadenius et al 1995:22). We see that their pluralist function not only is dependent on the actual channels of participation, it also depends on the rate to that they can participate in these. Even if there are many channels, these fall short if the organisations seldom, or very rarely, take part in them. I therefore saw it as crucial to adopt an indicator that would assess the frequency of how often the organisations participate in the earlier stated access-channels.

The intervals to measure the occurrences of participation, or the organisations' external relations with the state, are: *considerable participation*; if the organisation participates in the access-channels more than once a month, *partly considerable participation*; if the organisation participates every second month up to quarterly (i.e. at least one meeting/activity every third month) and *inconsiderable participation*, which refers to less than quarterly.

These were set quite arbitrary, due to my own logistical reasoning what considerable participation etc. is, and should be seen as indicators and expressions of the organisations' external relations with the state apparatus, rather than divinely given gauges.

2.2.3 Interests

Since the state most likely plays a major role in stipulating or establishing the organisations' possibilities for accessing political processes (notwithstanding the fact that they are not the only one), their role as such becomes interesting (cf. Uhrwing 2000:15). Although laws and stipulations regulate certain aspects of civil society organisations' access to state spheres there is, in my opinion, another aspect that affects the organisations' possibilities to participate: the state's interest and attitudes towards including the organisations' in the political processes. If civil society organisations continuously shall be able to perform their pluralist tasks there need to be a mutual interest for the existence and work of the organisations (cf. Hadenius et al 1995:3, 18). Furthermore, in view of the

traditional perceptions against children and participation (see section 2.1.6) it becomes even more interesting to elucidate whether state authorities have an interest to embrace child-led organisations in political processes. Thus, an indicator, which would capture the state's interests towards including child-led organisations in political processes would complement the rate of participation indicator in that it would establish any relations between attitudes and access. To encircle this, I applied an indicator that analyses attitudes and positions towards the child-led organisations and their work: interests.

These questions were directed towards the state representatives as well as the organisations themselves to avoid “good” answers from the state's side. Above all, I saw the initiator of the contacts as a token of reciprocity. If it always is the same part that contacts/asks the other for collaboration/information/opinion the interest has to be seen as *one-sided*, whereas if both parts contact each other I could classify the interest of involving child-led organisations as *reciprocal*. *Partly considerable* refers to when it is mixed, more or less 50 percent. But I also embraced questions that would capture how the parts contact each other (through telephone, e-mail or in person) and if they receive answers, since this gives information about the nature of the contacts as well as that it says something about interests, attitudes and the access into the system for the organisations. As outlined above, the state must react to, respond to and consider civil society organisations in order to legitimise them as social and political actors (see section 2.1.5).

These indicators do not make any worldwide claims, but will help me to elucidate my aim since they, in my opinion, highlights essential parts of participation in political processes.

2.2.4 The Model's Limitations and Their Justifications

Since this thesis only analyses participation in processes as such (access to them, how they are constituted etc.), the reader may argue that the study only lays proof for symbolic developments when it does not assert if real or actual developments have occurred in the children's lives.

I would answer such critic with both yes and no. Yes there is definitely a certain problematic associated with my line of procedure. By studying participation I am focusing on *possibilities* to influence democratic developments. A rising matter is as a consequence the problem of symbolic participation/representation. Symbolic participation/representation concerns those cases where an organisation is allowed to participate (in whatever form) but without *real* chances to influence the contents of the politics (Uhrwing 2001:15). Yet, studying actual developments in people's lives calls for methods that enable the researcher to look into and compare the changes in the target groups' lives. S/he needs to be able to distinguish and trace the origin of a change in a group's situation to determine if, and to what extent, the change came into being as a result of the organisation's work. I believe these methods require insights in the specific

children's lives as well as knowledge about the general situation of child-development, which I do not have. This is not equivalent with claiming that the findings in this thesis only are symbolic. In order to avoid symbolic participation I incorporated some indicators in my model such as rate of participation and interests to involve the organisations in political processes to better include meaningful participation. Rather it is a word of caution and explains my focus on possibilities to participation. Moreover, possibilities to influence, through participation, become interesting if one regards them as predicament for interaction: To affect the state, possibilities to participate and interact with it must exist for the organisation.

A final justification may merit emphasising before proceeding with the empirical findings. By stressing the possibilities for *direct* participation one may suffer rebuke from, however subtly, devaluating the possibilities associated with indirect participation. It should be underlined that there are various possibilities for indirect participation in political processes (mass demonstrations, usage of media, advocacy and opinion-creation to mention a few, see Uhrwing 2001:11 for discussion) but to include these would impose a scope, which would bear the risk of endangering the whole stringency of the thesis. It is, after all, the organisations' external relations with the state which are under the loop.

3 Empirical and Analytical Part

In this chapter, the collected material will be outlined and analysed in accordance with the earlier presented model of participation. The interviews and sources will be explained in so much as it is possible. To facilitate the reading I gave each organisation a number, which would function as a reference. They are as follow: Tanzania Youth Coalition (nr. 1), Tanzania Girls Education Movement (nr. 2), Junior Council of Tanzania (nr. 3), Youth Action! (nr. 4) and Young Writers Association (nr. 5). Some of the respondents wished to be anonymous when it came to specific aspects of their relationship with the state and vice versa. As a consequence I labelled those with letters ranging from A to C. Furthermore, since the organisations were created within a time-span of one year (between 2000-2001, see appendix I), any potential advantage such as that someone has had more time to establish and breed than others, has not been problemized. On the contrary, the collected material refers to the organisations' overall experiences if no specific year is written.

3.1 Access-channels

As earlier assessed, civil society organisations need multiple access-channels into the political system to carry out the pluralist function on democracy. The interviews disclosed that access does exist in forms of public meetings, public fora, education and functioning as reference group (no "other co-operation" was found).

Four of the interviewed organisations (with Young Writers Association, nr. 5, as an exception), although to various degrees, had participated in public meetings where the state, for example, presented policies/reforms, invited the public to discussions about suggestions or public mass meetings at local level.

On the issue of public fora, all five organisations had been invited to participate in child- or youth activities that the state was planning to conduct in connection to celebrations such as the Day of the African Child, the International Children's Day and the World AIDS day etc. They could for example be asked to arrange or participate in a debate, a performance or an exhibition in accordance to the organisation's mission:

For the last two years we have participated in the Youth Forum, which happens every year [on the International Children's Day, author's remark]. It brings some other organisations together and a lot of youths to discuss issues. Last year we talked about child-abuse, and people could have their say. (Interview 4 with Tanzania Youth Coalition).

Regarding reference group as access-channel, all three within this category (nr. 1, 3 and 4) referred to different kinds of collaborations with a lower state authority, mostly at Warden's level¹⁴. They could be given the task of bringing their members and other children and adolescents together for the purpose of a survey, meeting or conference when the state authority wished to avail themselves young people's views. Youth Action! (nr. 4) constitutes an expressive example of these kinds of access-channels. Last year the organisation was asked to prepare a paper of their members and other children's opinions of HIV/AIDS to a Warden's area meeting in Dar es Salaam.

Since we participated in a forum last year, talking about how we [the members, author's remark] inform our neighbourhood and other areas on HIV/AIDS, the Warden's office asked us to write something on how young people think about the disease. They wanted to start a project for adolescents' to go more to testing centres for HIV/AIDS and wanted some youth organisations' opinions on that. (Interview 5).

Commonly, the organisations functioned as reference groups for how children and adolescents think or act in a specific question. An example is when Tanzania Youth Coalition (nr. 1) and Youth Action! (nr. 4) were asked to include children's views and needs on poverty, based on the opinions of their members and voluntary work.

Only one organisation had participated in courses to educate people in collaboration with the state. Due to their mandate, Junior Council (nr. 3) was invited to hold speeches at a meeting for parliamentarians on young people's participation in politics, with the aim to increase the parliamentarians understanding of the importance of children's participation in decision-making processes.

Taking the above into account gives that these channels do equip the organisations with possibilities to receive information from the state as well as with possibilities to forward demands and interests. It was also revealed, in conjunction to this, that these channels provide the organisations with possibilities to approach the state with other issues than the original one. As the representative from Tanzania Youth Coalition (nr. 1) puts it:

Many of these meetings are good because we can say what is wrong or what is good for us. But, I mean, even if the meetings is about children and schooling for example, we sometimes can talk to the education department [representatives for the Ministry of Education, author's remark] about problems we meet, not only what we are supposed to tell on the meeting. (Interview 4).

It is tempting to assert that not only the access-channels themselves offer ways of participation but also the *informal talks* surrounding these interactions. Moreover, several of the organisations (nr. 1, 3 and 4) declared that when they are invited to participate in, let say a public celebration or discussion, they are also asked to

¹⁴ Warden's office is the lowest level of governmental representation, located in the different districts that Dar es Salaam is divided into. They are the government's lowest instance and implement decisions from the district level, which they also report to. It is to the Warden's office a citizen should seek advice before approaching the district office (Interviews 6 and 10).

participate in the preparatory meetings, preceding the event. Since the pluralist function requires several channels into the political sphere, where the organisations may convey pressure on the state, these preparatory meetings may be interpreted as occasions for this– and not only the event itself.

When we are invited they [the Ministry of Education, author's remark] ask us about what we think would be important to contribute with. If we have any suggestions and so. (Interview 5, Youth Action!).

However, some of the interviews revealed that the organisations often got to know, or were informed, about the activities with short notice, which resulted in lack of time for preparation and failure of notifying members in the organisation.

They [the Warden's office in one district, author's remark] often tell us four-five days before the meeting. They don't care if we can't find our members or any others to come. They will have the meeting anyway. I believe they just tell us because they have to. It's very hard for us to notify all members since we don't have telephones. Some people we don't even know where they stay. And they [the warden's office, author's remark] know this 'cause we have told them. (Interview 12, Junior Council).

The frustration among the child-led organisations over this fact was apparent in many of the interviews (nr. 1, 2, 3 and 5). They exposed that this failure in information-delivery characterised the joint activities and severely damaged the quality of the output. When confronting the state officials about this, I was told that it often is a result from shortages of the officers' available time but also from misunderstandings between the organisations and the responsible authority.

We have a policy, which we strictly adhere to at the office, which states that all competent and relevant organisations are invited, if there is need for it. We use the ordinary channels of information such as announcing in newspapers and other media [...] but yes, it does happen that we contact them [the organisations, author's remark] personally if we find this procedure more appropriate. (Interview 10).

We see that there are different understandings and experiences of the situation and to consolidate my findings I continued probing the terrain by asking the organisations about the other access-channels, apart from the ones discussed. The answers varied. Organisation nr. 3 (Junior Council) said that they were asked months in advance before conducting the lecture with the parliamentarians whereas some organisations like nr. 1 and 2 said their experiences from participating in meetings about policy suggestions etc. were mixed. Sometimes they are invited weeks in advance and in some instances informed just days before the event. This information shows that in several cases the state offices simply fail to deliver the information in time, which *may* be a sign of reluctance or ignorance. On the other hand, it may also be symptomatic for *all* participating organisations, not only child-led ones, and is hence a too vague evidence for supporting any obstructing attitudes within the state. No matter what, this failure

of delivering information about access-channels, constitute a hindrance for the child-led organisations to effectively and forcefully participate in them¹⁵.

What we see is that there is room for the organisations, where they can participate and press forward demands etc. In my opinion, however, these opportunities fall relatively short since the findings from the interviews yield a lack of commitment from the state's side to create and facilitate these opportunities. If child-led organisations are going to be active and influential agents, they need real ownership of the access-channels. Factors such as shortage of time for preparation reduce the organisations' chances to participate on equal terms, which undermine their efficiency.

Lastly a summary may be in place: all five organisations had been involved in fora or discussions, four in public meetings, three as reference groups and one in education.

3.2 Rate of Participation

The time available for the organisations to interact with the state apparatus is an essential requirement for meaningful participation. At first I had the intention to only concentrate on how often the organisations are allowed, or have the possibility, to participate in the access-channels. But as I was interviewing the organisations I discovered that there seemed to be a strong correlation between those organisations that participated more than the others in the access-channels (nr. 1 and 4) and those which frequently could approach state institutions *in between* these access-channels (nr. 1 and 4). As a result, I decided to embrace both aspects of frequency in the indicator.

Three of the five organisations (nr. 2, 3 and 5) said that they participated in different access-channels less than quarterly, which means *inconsiderable participation*. Tanzania Girls Education Movement (nr. 2) claimed that they participated in the aforementioned access-channels (in a meeting and in a fora) two times last year (2004) and Young Writers Association (nr. 5) none. The same organisations did also disclose that they felt they had insufficient time with state institutions in between the access-channels. The organisations had in several instances tried to address different state authorities with questions and suggestions but found it difficult to reach all the way through. Many of the representatives referred to obstacles such as bureaucratic mechanisms and marginalising attitudes as hindrances for their engagements with the state apparatus. These problems might best be summarised into the words of one of the respondents called A:

We really try to meet with the officers but either they [the state institution- author's remark] say that "No, this is not the right place, you have to go there or there" even though another place [i.e. state institution- author's remark] has told us to come to

¹⁵ It is important to remember that not all activities, or segments in them, are open for the public. Nor is it realistic to expect that every organisation that work with a certain issue will be invited to voice their opinion etc. But the activities, or access-channels, in this indicator were specifically referring to public activities with certain relevance for the concerned organisations mandated areas.

that place. Then we have to do all the things again. Write a new letter, 'cause they always want us to write our mission down and find time to go to the new place. Or, if we come there they just say, "No, this is not the way you are supposed to do it." But they don't even show us how they want us to do it!

The two other organisations, Tanzania Youth Coalition and Youth Action! (nr. 1 and 4), did not participate in the access-channels on a monthly basis, but were represented in the different channels to a higher degree than the other three. Last year, they both participated four times in the access-channels (public meetings, fora and as reference groups). Furthermore, they also claimed that they interacted, in between these channels, with different state authorities as much as every second month. This interaction was often in the form of questions or errands from the organisations' side (about the state's opinion in a question, policy documents, feedback on a joint activity– to mention a few), but in some instances they received information about future events and meetings.

Two observations can be made from the findings in conjunction to this indicator. The first is that a majority of the organisations comprehend their participation in access-channels as inconsiderable. The lack of continuous and frequent external relations between the state and the child-led organisations may compose a problem for the organisations' work and tasks. To be able to press for demands, monitor interests and receive relevant information, civil society organisations need frequent and continuous interactions with the state (especially if one defines democracy as developmental). The three organisations (nr. 2, 3 and 5) meant that they try to take part of the activities that occur such as meetings and events but fail due to lack of knowledge about the activities and what they can do in them. This relates to the second observation: the correlation between frequent interaction in between the access-channels and the considerable participation in the channels themselves. The two organisations (nr. 1 and 4) that participated in access-channels to a greater extent than the others have frequent contacts with state institutions. This frequent contact may have generated knowledge about procedures as well as personal contacts, which can be employed to increase the chances for prevalence in the access-channels. An interesting comment from one of the informants merit emphasising here since it sheds some light on these observations. The informant described the Tanzanian political system as "thick-skinned" in the sense that people who wish to contact the state apparatus need to be "naggy and persistent" to get appointments or responses (Interview 11). It is not the intention to dwell on the subject of the Tanzanian political structure, but if this holds true, frequent interaction may furnish confidence, self-esteem and personal contacts among the organisations, which is necessarily, or at least advantageous, if they want to approach the state representatives.

As above a summary may be in place. Two of the five organisations could be said to take part in the access-channels to a *partly considerable rate*, whereas the rest participated to an *inconsiderable rate*.

3.3 Interests

The results from this indicator corresponded with the one measuring the rate of participation. The theoretical section exposed the need of organisations to relate to the state in some way(s) to be able to carry out their work. We therefore asserted the rate, or the degree, to that the organisations participated in the access-channels. This revealed some sufficient gaps among three of the five organisations. But to assess whether these gaps originate from lack of mutual interest within the state to involve the organisations to a larger extent, or if the gaps are results from other factors, I sought information about the nature of the findings from the former indicator through capturing whether the state shows an interest in involving the organisations in the access-channels.

Here I mainly focused on the initiator and maintainer of the relations, as these can be used as indicators. However, there might be other ways to establish it and they should therefore not be regarded as universal.

All organisations met with argued that they were the main-initiators of the contacts with the state at any level. The information disclosed that it is the organisations that almost always are the ones that approach the state to receive information about planned meetings or activities. The organisations found the state a bit reluctant to regularly and systematically invite them to meetings etc. or share information with them. Furthermore, they also saw it as necessarily to do it in person as there was a tendency of not reverting if they sent letters or made telephone calls.

There is no use in calling or writing a letter. We have tried but there is never a response. I believe they don't even read it. (Interview B).

But two of the organisations (nr. 1 and 4) argued that they could call or send a letter with a request for a meeting and then expect an answer.

It depends. If we know the Ministry or District we are going to talk to, let say for example the Vice-President's Youth Unit. There we are familiar faces and I can easily approach the secretaries there and ask them to deliver a letter to the desk officer. But if we want to talk with someone else, for example a Warden's Office or so, it is useless to send a letter. They just won't reply. (Interview 5).

There is an interesting aspect in this quotation, which concerns the organisation's personal contacts as a facility for interaction. We will revert to this in the concluding part, but it is worth noticing that these are mentioned as predicaments for preservation of contacts.

The exception was public fora, where the organisations participated as children with insights on basis of their organisations' work. All organisations had been contacted and invited to participate through individual visits or formal written invitations. The two organisations (nr. 1 and 4) that repeatedly had participated in these fora claimed that they sought information about these fora themselves but that they also had been invited by state offices several times. This is indeed recognition from the state's side: the organisation in question has knowledge

about an issue within its mandated area, which it is supposed to share with others on these fora. On the other hand, if no, or little, efforts are made from the state's side to include child-led organisations in other activities, one could argue that, due to the foras' character, children are required to participate and the state does hence lack choice to do otherwise. *The children are there because they are supposed to.* An interview with one official at a public institution revealed the following:

Personally I think these organisations [child-led ones; author's remark] are good. They are very eager to show that they are important and that they know things. But some other people here, at the Department, wonder why these events [public fora where children are invited for debate or speeches; author's remark] really are for? (Interview C).

There is, as we see, evidence to support the organisations' claim that reluctance remains against their existence and work. The findings from the indicator in the former section (3.2) that presented a low rate of participation in the access-channels may hence be interpreted as that this might be a result from low interests within the state itself to involve the organisations to a higher degree. Traditional values *may* still play a major role in determining children's participation-pattern in the political processes and constitute a deterrent barrier through making it hard and difficult to reach through the "bureaucratic jungle".

This view was also confirmed by the UNICEF officer who meant that the main problem for child-led organisations is "to get the foot in the door". People, the state included, does not expect young people to speak and tend to take decisions over their heads (Interview 15). This may explain the low frequency within the state to contact the child-led organisations on their own initiative. Furthermore, even if they have started to do something together, for example a campaign, it is common that the state simply continues the "collaboration" on their own, without ensuring the involved children's and organisations' views.

The interview with the representative for the Tanzania Movement For and With Children, an organisation that struggles to reposition the status of the child in the Tanzanian society, touched upon the problems that these attitudes and non-reciprocal interests generate for child-led organisations in general. The representative was of the opinion that child-led organisations require sufficient and strong support from the authorities if they want them to act as influential sources and actors. Perhaps even more than other organisations due to their age and other factors (lack of resources etc.) that may obstruct their abilities to perform their organisational tasks (Interview 7).

Putting the above together, there is evidence to suggest that there is *one-sided* interest, where the organisations often are the ones that contact the state. However, in some isolated cases, the organisations were approached by the state in order to deliver an opinion or participate in a forum. In the other cases it is up to the organisation to contact the state if it wishes to do something (participate in an activity, discussion etc.) or communicate with it.

4 Conclusions

This thesis analyses whether child-led organisations have the possibility to contribute to democratic consolidation in Tanzania through studying five selected child-led organisations' participation in political processes. The specific aim, which would elucidate this, was formulated into two questions: *Do child-led organisations participate in political processes in Tanzania?* respectively *If affirmative, how and to what extent?* As a result of this, it was the organisations' external relations with the state, which were in focus since they concern how the organisations manage to press for their demands, monitor interests and articulate goals etc. in the public sphere. In line with the theories we defined this as a pluralist function for democratic consolidation. If the organisations carry out this pluralist function by participating in political processes it could be interpreted as that they contribute to democratic consolidation since we defined democratisation as an ever-ending process, always capable of becoming more inclusive and responsive. With other words: if the organisations (in this study) manage to participate in political processes and represent their members' interests and rights, they inhabit *a possibility* to influence the processes and hence contribute to democratic consolidation (this anticipates that the five organisations are democratic and pursue democratic goals, see section 1.4).

There is evidence from this study to suggest that child-led organisations have a *marginal* effect on democratic consolidation viewed from the pluralist function. The findings revealed that the organisations' relations with the state are constrained and characterised by difficulties. Yet, it was disclosed that they do participate in political processes in channels such as public meetings, fora and as reference groups, which furnish possibilities to participate in the political process. It was also revealed that the meetings in conjunction to the access-channels such as preparatory meetings furnished possibilities to participate. However, findings also showed that the extent, to that they participate in these channels, is limited. Three of the five organisations participated to an inconsiderable rate and experienced one-sided interests from the state to include them in access-channels, which would provide them with possibilities to take part in the political process. Developmental democracy means that the system must be held accountable by the people— otherwise it will not develop towards more responsiveness and inclusiveness. As we have seen, people can do this by engaging in organisations that participate in the political system with the aim to make it responsible to their (the organisations) preferences, passions and interests. But the state must also react, respond and consider the civil society organisations' work to create mutual and responsive relations between the two. By doing this, the state legitimates the organisations, which establishes the link between civil society organisations and the state. However, findings from this study suggest that this is not the case in the context of child-led movements in Tanzania. Unsystematic and irregular

participation in the access-channels, emanating from lack of information and difficulties to approach state institutions, together with reluctant attitudes within the state towards including organisations in access-channels, are proofs of this, since they show upon a tendency within the state to not legitimate the organisations.

Nevertheless, there are two organisations that did take part in more access-channels to a greater extent than the other three. But, as the findings showed, these two organisations referred to their personal contacts as the main reason for this. This does not converge with the pluralist function since it requires open access as well as autonomy from the state. Personal contacts as a means of facilitation, or requirement for participation, may obstruct the necessarily independency among the organisations that they need in order to represent and convey their pluralist function. This is mainly because if personal contacts are a predicament for participation in political processes, organisations may be forced to rely on the state to an extent that they otherwise would not have had to. If the organisations are to take on a “watchdog function” and seek to influence state policy etc. they need to be able to access public arenas (i.e. access-channels) independently and without any presuppositions in terms of personal contacts or suspicious attitudes that render their participation difficult. If we define democratic consolidation as a continuous process, which takes place as long as rights of marginalised groups (and others) are improved, all kinds of organisations with a democratic agenda must be able to at least have the possibility to work for their mandates in the public sphere. If they need to use their established personal relations with state institutions to participate in political processes it means that organisations without these relations are in a difficult situation, which in my opinion undermines equal and independent access to participation. Of course does the civil society need to relate to the state to exert their pluralist function, but if personal relations are a sort of “fast-lane” to participation it can both be interpreted as that the state has a possibility to select its critics and collaborators, which threatens the autonomy of the civil society, but may also generate inequalities that privilege those in a position that have the relations on behalf of those, which lack them. This does in my view contradict the way that the pluralist function shall promote democracy. In line with the findings there is evidence to suggest that these two organisations’ indeed perform some of the tasks within the pluralist function but that the personal relations they referred to compose a constrain to the extent to that they contribute to democratic consolidation. However, since my study only included five organisations it should be stated that this only is a conclusion rather than a claim.

These findings do only lend support from the experiences of five organisations, and it should be acknowledged that the results could have been different if other child-led organisations in other contexts (such as rural areas for example) were involved. It is therefore difficult to draw any wider generalisations from this study more than that the theories used suggest that similar contexts are prevalent throughout East Africa, which could be employed to make the findings a bit more general– at least in the environments of East Africa.

To answer the aim: child-led organisations participate in political processes through a variety of channels such as political meetings, public fora, education and meetings (which also answers how they participate). However, evidence supports that they do this to a limited extent. It could therefore be suggested that their contribution to democratic consolidation from the pluralist view is marginal. There is, nevertheless, an aspect which may support the organisations' pluralistic role in the democratic process in Tanzania. It was earlier argued that the reasons behind the larger extent of participating child-led organisations in public fora, comparing to the other access-channels, could have its origin in the fact that the organisations are expected and required to participate in these fora. The state does hence have an interest of involving these kinds of organisations. This might be the case, but there is also one major democratic function in these: by participating the organisations make child-led organisations and child issues visible, which may generate developments in that area.

4.1 Suggested Studies

An interesting area to continue with is to analyse why some of the investigated organisations were more influential than others? How come, for example, that Tanzania Youth Coalition got to participate in many meetings and conferences and not, let say, the Young Writers' Association. There are several influential movements against illiteracy in Tanzania, which makes one wonder why this association did not managed to merge, or collaborate with these, in order to more progressively promote their agenda? Why did the state choose to ask Youth Action! to popularise HIV policies among children and not the Junior Council, which works under similar mandate? Do the latter organisation posses any certain qualifications that the later lacks? What prerequisites among the child-led organisations are desirable, or even required, in order to access participation channels? How does influence correlate with organisational qualifications and characteristics? Here I believe that by merging the educational function with the pluralist one, answers might be found.

Another aspect that deserves attention, in the context of donors and recipients, is how much pressure external donors may convey on the state. In Tanzania, UNICEF for example, plays a major role for child developments and it would be interesting to locate their role in positioning child-led organisations in the domestic politics.

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Appendix I

The Organisations in the Study

The information about the five organisations in this field study is summarised in the following matrix:

Name of org.	Mission	Activities	Membershi p nr.	Year of Start
1. Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC)	Inclusion of children's views in policies	Meetings, seminars and courses for members, awareness raising in communities about their issues	Around 89 in DSM and 150 in whole TZ	2001
2. Tanzania Girls Education Movement	Girls' access to education	Meetings, seminars, support group for members	60, only in DSM	2000
3. Junior Council of Tanzania (JC)	Children's and youths' participation	Conduct "parliament sessions" and other decision-making situations for practising and enhancing	40 in DSM, 120 in whole TZ	2001
4. Youth Action!	Children's and youths' participation	Awareness raising campaigns, sensitisation on children's status	60 in DSM and 270 in whole TZ	2001
5. Young Writers Association	HIV/AIDS and young people's participation, illiteracy	Write and disseminate material on the connection between empowerment and HIV/AIDS	40, only in DSM	2001

DSM – Dar es Salaam
TZ - Tanzania

Appendix II

List of informants and respondents

Name and Title	Date of Interview
1. George, Douglas Secretary, Warden's Office Temeke	23-Nov-2005
2. Idd, George Secretary, Tanzania Girls Education Movement	29-Jan-2005
3. Kiria, James Officer, Vice-President's Office Youth Section	03-Feb-2005
4. Lenin, Christopher Director, Tanzania Youth Coalition	29-Dec-2004
5. Lumbebe, Daniel Director, Youth Action!	12-Jan-2005
6. Masika, Peter Director, Tanzania Youth Aware Trust Fund	10-Dec-2004
7. Massesa, Joram Director, Tanzania Movement for and With Children	13-Dec-2004
8. Matafunda, Ana Vice-director Tanzania Youth Coalition	29-Dec-2004
9. Mayodi, Dotto Director, Tanzania Girls Education Movement	27-Nov-2004 29-Dec-2004
10. Mbuya, Mary Senior Officer, Warden's Office Kinondoni	28-Jan-2005

11. Milanzi, Geoffrey Field Officer, Watoto Salaama Trust Fund	30-Nov-2004
12. Mklama, Kelvin Chairperson, Tanzania Junior Council	07-Dec-2004 14-Jan-2005
13. Mwambanga, Stella Field Officer, KIWOHEDE (KIOTA Women Health and Development Organisation)	02-Dec-2004
14. Noel, Samuel President, Young Writers Association	11-Dec-2004
15. Obdam, Esther Field Officer, UNICEF	24-Nov-2004
16. Tembu, Rose Member, Youth Action!	10-Jan-2005
17. Temu, Robert Desk-Officer, Ministry of Sports, Labour and Youths: Youth Unit	01-Feb-2005

Appendix III

Questionnaire used for the interviews

To the organisation

- 1) Has your organisation any contacts with the State?
- 2) At which level is this State authority/authorities operating (local, district or national)?
- 3) How did you find out that you should work with that/ particular authority/authorities?
- 4) What kind of activity/activities did you/do you partake in?
- 5) Is your organisation involved in the planning process, implementing process, monitoring process and evaluation process? If no, which and why?
- 6) How often do you meet the State authority you work with?
- 7) Do you meet the State authority otherwise for other purposes?
- 8) Are these meeting personal, by telephone or e-mail?
- 9) Can you account for your procedures and the proceeding process?
- 10) Who takes the majority of the initiatives to meet or do something jointly?
- 11) Why do you think this is the case?
- 12) Are your organisation invited to all meetings that concern the common activity?
- 13) If not, how have you found out about that activity? (I.e. did others tell you, did you read about it?)
- 14) Additional comments?

Appendix IV

Questionnaire used for the interviews

For State Authorities

- 1) Have you worked/ do you work with child-led organisations¹⁶?
- 2) If yes, which organisations and what have you done together?
- 3) If not, why?
- 4) What is your experience from this? (For those who answered yes on question 2)
- 5) Does your department have any other interaction with these organisations apart from the afore-mentioned?
- 6) Have you identified any particular constraints and/or advantages of working with these organisations?
- 7) If yes, how have you tried to overcome them?
- 8) Additional comments?

¹⁶ An organisation with members below 18 years.

Appendix V

Questionnaire used for the interviews

For Informants

- 1) What is your understanding of children's general situation in Tanzania due to your professional experiences? Are there specific challenges that children encounter or will encounter?
- 2) What is your experience from child-led organisations? How are you as a professional related to them?
- 3) Why are, in your opinion, child-led movements important in Tanzania?
- 4) Do you see specificities with these organisations in comparison with other organisations?
- 5) What are the biggest threats, or obstacles, against these organisations' work?
- 6) What would be the best way for the State to support these movements' work in your opinion?
- 7) Additional comments?