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The Four Dimensions of Participation: A Kenyan Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes as its point of departure Wale Wale Kenya - an NGO located in Kibera, Nairobi that has been created by a group of youths from the Kibera slums. It is unusual in being founded, run and controlled by a group who are beneficiaries of many projects, but seldom owns the NGOs that initiate those projects.

Using a case study approach this research investigates the youth's own perception of their participation. The data is structured by a theoretical framework developed for this study. The framework conceptualises participation as collective power and divides it into four dimensions to be studied: degree, scope, inclusiveness and effectiveness. This theoretical tool can be used to analyse any instance of participation since these four aspects are the central dimensions of the concept and, in addition, tend to differ a lot.

After Wale Wale Kenya has been described according to the youth's perceptions the focus is moved to the theoretical framework itself and the connections between its dimensions as highlighted by the case study. It is concluded that it is impossible to reach the maximum level of all of them at the same time. Therefore, those who wish to use participatory methods should start from their primary goal and choose strategy based on the balance between the dimensions that suits their priorities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In their book *Participation: The New Tyranny* Cooke and Kothari call for an honest debate on whether participation is worth being improved or if it should simply be abolished (2001b: 15). Several authors express doubts about participation in its current form (see for example the contributions in Hickey & Mohan 2004a and Cooke & Kothari 2001a). At the same time there are those who argue that it is still a very useful idea. Cornwall and Brock (2005: 18), while criticising the discourses surrounding it, state that

Giving up on participation and empowerment as irrevocably contaminated by their mainstreaming would be to lose concepts that have been critical, for decades, in animating struggles for equality, rights and social justice

Mikkelsen also argues that despite being blurred participation is one of the most important concepts in the field of development cooperation (2005: 35).

The demand voiced by Cooke and Kothari, that a strategy that does not work ought to be abandoned, is reasonable. However, it is questionable whether the existing knowledge and understanding are sufficient to make such a judgement. Participation is not a new method and still Cleave (2001: 53-55) writes that the effects of participation are unknown and needs further investigation. Hassenforder et al (2015: 85) add that both systematic comparison and in depth case studies are needed to understand how efficient participation is. This study aims to contribute to a greater understanding of participation as a phenomenon and as a development strategy.

The research presented here is a case study of a very unusual case of participation, namely a development NGO that was created by its target group and that is, in itself, a participatory organisation. The aim of the study is to use this unique case to improve the understanding of participation. As a unique case it is interesting in its own right, but it can also contribute to theory development. A framework that describes the central aspects of participation, which also happen to be the ones

that tend to vary between different participatory processes, has been developed from the existing literature. The four dimensions included in the framework are: the degree of power the participatory process has, the scope of its power, the inclusiveness and equality of the process and, finally, the effectiveness of the collective decision-making. The framework will be the guiding structure in presenting and analysing the case study results and the data from the case study will contribute to further development of the framework by investigating the connections between its different parts.

The research questions guiding the study are *How do the youths of Wale Wale Kenya perceive their own participation?* and *Based on this case study, what are the connections between the dimensions identified in the theoretical framework?*

The first question is more descriptive and relates to the case itself. It is quite broad, but the framework specifies which aspects of participation that are important to emphasise. The second question is more analytical and links the case study data more strongly to theories of participation and uses it to contribute to theory development.

The structure of the thesis will be as follows. After this introduction a background chapter will provide the necessary background information concerning Wale Wale Kenya. Then a literature review will summarise the existing debates and theories about participation. Building on this the theoretical framework used in this research will be presented. After this a methodology section will explain and motivate the choice of research design and methods and also discuss the ethical considerations. The sixth chapter contains the presentation and discussion of the data collected and will culminate in a discussion about the framework used. Finally, the concluding remarks will summarise the findings.

2 BACKGROUND

In this section the organisation chosen for the case study, Wale Wale Kenya, will be described. The description is based on the different subpages on the webpage

of the organisation (Wale Wale Kenya n.d.) and the researcher's knowledge of the organisation, gained through a semester of internship there. In this study the organisation will be referred to as Wale Wale Kenya or Wale Wale.

Wale Wale Kenya is a small NGO located in Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. It was started in February 2015 when a group of youths and two 'adults'¹ decided to leave the organisation where they had previously been running a youth centre. The board of the existing organisation was unwilling to grant the youths full membership and voting rights and therefore they decided to start a new organisation based on a democratic model. The board of Wale Wale Kenya was elected by the youths themselves at the constituting meeting of the new organisation and out of the seven board members six are youths from Kibera. The seventh board member, who serves as secretary and executive director, is one of the adults who assisted in setting up the new organisation. Her name is Monica Adhiambo and she is a Kenyan woman in her early thirties. The other adult is her husband, Petter Eriksson, a Swede who has lived in Kenya on-and-off for almost ten years. They run the organisation together with the youth. The five youths on the board who have finished school and Monica Adhiambo are employed by the organisation and get a small salary every month (5000 khs) to run the organisation, take care of administrative work and lead the different projects. Petter Eriksson takes part in this work despite not being employed or paid for it. Often the organisation has volunteers or interns (primarily from Sweden) who help out with the office work.

Wale Wale's goal is to give youths from Kibera the tools with which they can build the life they desire. The organisation works with education both through homework assistance and through fundraising to pay the school fees for the members who are in high school. In addition, many creative activities are offered in order for the youth to both develop their talents and interests and to get

¹ Although some of the youths are old enough to be classified as adults, the word adult is in this paper reserved for Monica Adhiambo and Petter Eriksson. It is not meant to imply that the youths are not grown-up or capable; it is used in this way due to the lack of a better term to use for Adhiambo and Eriksson together.

something to do so they stay away from crime and drugs. The organisation runs a youth centre that opens in the late afternoon Monday-Friday. There is an hour of homework assistance and school work for the younger ones before the older youth arrive and they start dancing, acting or playing games. There is a studio at the centre where the youths can record music and there is a film project where different short films and documentaries have been produced. On Saturdays the centre is open the whole day and art classes are offered in addition to lunch, dance practice and educative games. Three days a week there are practice sessions with the football team Wale Wale FC.

The day-to-day work in the organisation and smaller decisions are handled by the admin-group consisting of the chairman, the secretary and the treasurer. They have a meeting in the beginning of every week and can also meet more often if this is needed. The board meets once every second month and the months when there is no board meeting general meetings are held. The general meetings are open to everyone in the organisation, including those who have not yet become members, and here different issues concerning the organisation are discussed. How the organisation and its decision-making process works will be discussed more in the chapter that focuses on the empirical material.

Seen in relation to most literature on NGOs and participation it becomes clear that the case study is different from most development NGOs. Wale Wale Kenya does not work with short-term projects, but has a long-term focus. It is also unusual in being a members-based organisation where the intended beneficiaries are the ones who elect and can be elected to sit on the board. Mansuri and Rao point out that historically participation has mainly existed within locally founded social movements that were challenging political authority. Nowadays it is more often initiated from outside and states as well as NGOs are supposed to transfer some of their power to local communities (2013: 285-287). However, NGOs are often seen as external to the target group or community they work with, even if they have a long-term commitment in the area. They can be intermediaries (Rees Catalán 2014: 90, 94; Bates 1991: 70), organisers of participatory activities (Yap 1990:

56), change agents (Schulenkorf 2010), representatives (Mosley & Grogan 2012) or facilitators that help communities to participate in participatory initiatives by someone else (Ui et al 2010). Often they are seen as very important for participatory development (see the studies quoted above), but they are a partner rather than a part of the community. In terms of how Wale Wale Kenya is run and was started it might come closer to the social movements mentioned, but since these can be described as a form of resistance to exploitation and exclusion (Hickey & Mohan 2005:248; Mansuri & Rao 2013: 285-286) and Wale Wale is not a political organisation this does not fit either. How and why this odd case can help increase the existing knowledge about participation overall was touched upon in the introduction and will be further discussed in the methodology chapter.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review the aim is to summarise the existing literature on participation. Firstly, this chapter will discuss different classifications and conceptualisations of participation. The second part of this chapter will move on to look at the proposed benefits of participation and the third will, in turn, review the different types of criticism that have been levelled at this type of development. After this there will be a section summarising the conclusions drawn about participation overall.

3.1 THE MULTIPLE MEANINGS AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Most authors who engage with the concept of participation agree that it can mean a wide variety of things, depending on who is discussing it (Cullen et al 2011: 356; Cullen & Coryn 2011; Mahoney et al 2007: 235; Draper et al 2010: 1103; Mikkelsen 2005: 53). That it is hailed as an ideal by both the World Bank and by radical civil society clearly demonstrates that this buzzword can take on very different meanings (Cornwall 2008: 269). The conceptual blurring of ‘participation’, ‘participatory’ and ‘participant’ makes it possible to apply those terms in many different situations (Cornwall & Jewkes 1995: 1668). According to

Arnstein the vagueness of participation as a term is grounded in the fact that it is a politically loaded issue (1969: 216).

However, maybe the vagueness is not only due to the fact that it is a buzzword or politically sensitive. Several researchers conclude that participation cannot and should not be the same everywhere. It is a context-specific process whose characteristics ought to be dependent on the setting (Mansuri & Rao 2013: 295, 300; Parkinson 2009; Hewitt et al 2013; Hayward et al 2004; Mahoney et al 2009 Cornwall 2008; Gow & Vansant 1983). Draper et al (2010: 1104) write that:

community participation is best understood as a complex and variable social process and one that is situation specific. Hence the search for a 'gold standard' for replication or evaluation is neither realistic nor appropriate.

Thus it is understandable why it is difficult to define the concept. How participation is conceptualised in this study will be discussed in the chapter *Theoretical Framework*. Since participation as a term is so broad many authors try to divide it into different categories. This can be done through ladders or rankings, through focusing in which sector it takes part or by looking at the justifications behind it.

Examples of ladders and hierarchical definitions can be found, for example, in the articles by Arnstein (1969) and Pretty (1995). Arnstein presents a ladder with eight rungs where the inclusion of the marginalised is ranked from 'manipulation to 'citizen power'. Pretty's model is slightly different and consists of nine types of participation ranked according to how participatory they are deemed to be. A related type of classification is presented by those who locate participatory processes along two (Cornwall & Jewkes 1995; Farrington & Bebbington 1993, Cornwall 2008), three (Cousins et al 1996) or even five (Weaver & Cousins 2004) continuums. Where multiple continuums are used more than one aspect of participation are deemed to be important enough to be measured.

Another way to classify is by sector. According to Mansuri and Rao there are two types of participation: decentralisation where official, local governments are

created or given more power and community development where informal attempts are made to engage the beneficiaries (2013: 286-287). Hickey and Mohan state that decentralisation of political power, participatory development organised by NGOs and social movements are the most common versions of participation (2005: 242).

The third option for classification is to look at the justifications, or reasons, for using participation. Weaver and Cousins (2004: 20-22), who look at participatory research, present three: one pragmatic, one political and one epistemological. This framework is also referred to by Cullen and Coryn (2011: 35) and Cullen et al (2011: 347-348). Jones et al decide on a similar framework where the three reasons to use participation are the normative function, the substantive function and the instrumental function (2009: 1181). Oakely also looks at the reasons behind participation, namely if participation is seen as a means or as an end. If participation is a means it is a tool to use the resources of rural communities to reach a set objective. Participation as an end is a longer-term process, sometimes even without predetermined goals, to develop rural capabilities and enable people to play a more active role in development (Oakley 1991: 7-8). The means/end distinction is probably the one most commonly used in development literature (see, for example, Carrick 2015 and Hayward et al 2004). Classifications based on the motives of participation are closely related to the benefits of participation.

3.2 THE EXPECTED BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Cousins and Weaver's justifications (2004) as well as Jones et al's functions (2009) can be translated into benefits of participation. Then these would be better problem solving, a fairer and more legitimate process, increased efficiency due to commitment and improved relations and, in the case of research, increased validity. Participation is also suggested to have positive effects such as more efficient poverty alleviation, better public service delivery, improved infrastructure maintenance, social cohesion, greater voice and more accountable governments (Mansuri & Rao 2013: 285). Other possible positive effects are that

it enables a combination of local contextual knowledge and scientific knowledge from outside and makes it more likely that the results of the process will be useful and used locally (Hassenforder et al 2015: 83-85). Use of local labour and knowledge increases the output relatively to the cost and ensures appropriateness. Beneficiaries will feel responsibility and ownership, which can spur more local efforts, and the participatory process is expected to create awareness, capacity and competence among those participating (Finsterbusch & Van Wicklin III 1987: 4). A real participatory process should include an increase in local capacities as well as a redistribution of power (Gow & Vansant 1983: 444). According to the evaluators interviewed by Cullen et al (2011: 353-354) participation leads to empowerment, increased usefulness of findings, fairness and validity. In a study of village-based planning and development in Vietnam the following benefits were listed by the participants: more power on local level, promoted democratic elections, financial transparency and accountability thanks to capacity building, more equitable resource distribution and a better understanding of these decisions, which also led to greater trust between groups, greater ability for transformation due to long-term engagement, ability to address all needs and multidimensional problems and economic and social results (Catford 2007: 167-176)

Based on these listed benefits it is not surprising that participation is sometimes seen as the solution to all the problems plaguing development work. The connection between power over decision-making and other forms of development is described at length by Sen in his book *Development as Freedom* (1999). There the argument is that political freedom will enable people to choose the other freedoms that they desire, such as economic facilities and social opportunities.

3.3 PARTICIPATION CRITICISED

Despite all these positive effects that have been ascribed to participation it has also been severely criticised. Much of the critique is about how participation fails to achieve all the benefits mentioned in the previous section. One should be realistic about what participation and specific participatory projects can and

cannot achieve (Hickey & Mohan 2004b: 13-15; Hickey & Mohan 2005: 252; Kelly 2004: 214; Sanderson & Kindon 2004: 115-117, 119). This section will provide an overview over the main criticisms against participatory approaches.

Participation can, firstly, be criticised for not being participatory. Kelly points out that participation is used to legitimise plans conceived by development agencies instead of actually letting the locals decide (2004: 220-221), which is for example demonstrated by Makuwira (2002: 117-122). It is normally the facilitator that decides what should be discussed (Henkel & Stirrat 2001: 182) and what is picked up as local knowledge in participatory processes is in fact dependent on the process (Mosse 2001). Arnstein mentions engineering support for a proposal as one version of manipulative participation (1969: 218). Beneficiary influence is limited by the current system where NGOs dependent on donor money gear their priorities and accountability toward the donors rather than towards the target group (Holmén 2010: 215-217; Hendersson 2002). The very unequal relationships in development work also make it difficult for the intended participants to express what they actually think about the projects they depend on even when they are invited to do so (Mosse 2001: 20-21; Hewitt et al 2013: 11-12, 15-17; Parkinson 2009: 234-236). In summary, the current international structures work against participation and some see the method as a new name for same old practice.

There are also those critics who claim that participation might not be a good idea at all. Cooke claims that findings from social psychology demonstrate that collective decision-making leads to increased risk taking, suppresses dissent and can result in decisions no one is satisfied with. Some participatory processes even resemble brain-washing in their attempts to make the participants see things differently (Cooke 2001). Henkel and Stirrat agree that empowerment might just be a term for making people see things differently (2001: 182). Due to how groups work and due to the influence of the facilitators participation might not be a good way of making decisions based on consensus and local views.

The next type of criticism relates to how group structures can prevent participation from benefitting the marginalised. On the local level there are power

structures that can prevent certain groups from accessing the participatory arenas. Chhotray's (2004) case study of two villages in Andhra Pradesh in India illustrates this. The project ended up increasing inequality since those who had political power were controlling the projects too. Those with insufficient status to speak at public meetings were not given any voice and possible disagreement was side-lined in favour of showing consensus. Goebel (1998) confirms that participatory exercises risk obscuring marginal or unpopular viewpoints and creating a false sense of homogeneity. Other have also pointed out that local power structures can suppress certain view-points and that participatory processes can lead to greater inequality (Cullen et al 2011: 355-356; Hayward et al 2004: 104; Chambers 2008: 141-142).

A related issue is that of representation. In many cases the group of beneficiaries might be too large for everyone to be invited and then representatives are used instead (Cornwall 2008: 276; Catford 2007: 125). Many participatory projects are in fact based on representation. It takes time and skills (such as computer skills and knowing how to lead and take part in meetings) to participate on higher levels and to have high positions (Hickey & Mohan 2004b: 19; Carrick 2015: 936, 942-943, 948). Whereas Hickey and Mohan are positive to representation, Carrick argues that it is problematic since only the representatives are empowered. He thinks participation ought to include as many people as possible since it is valuable due to its empowering and confidence-building effects (2015: 936-367, 942-943). In addition, the representatives are seldom representative but tend to be wealthier, more educated, whiter and consist to a larger extent of men than the population they are to represent (Mansuri & Rao 2013: 288-290; Coelho & Favareto 2007). This can lead to distrust from those who cannot speak for themselves (Parkinson 2009: 234) and to a resource allocation that favours the better-off. The poor often face higher opportunity costs when it comes to participation (Mansuri & Rao 2013: 288) and this means that self-exclusion can be one factor leading to uneven representation. Parkinson writes that "the rural poor consider programme participation as a cost, and weigh it against potential benefits, rather than viewing it as inherently valuable" (2009: 237). Non-

participation can be a valid choice; the choice of an empowered individual deciding not to spend time and effort on something temporary. The right to participate ought to include the right not to participate (Hayward 2004; Hewitt et al 2013: 2, 14,18; Yap 1990: 64)

In summary, participation is not as easy or as uncomplicated as it may seem and as Cullen et al 2011: 349 point out it demands much time and resources.

Finsterbusch and Van Wicklin III (1987: 4) write that some people think that since so much time and energy is needed for participation and the slow process might lead to frustration, it would be better to simply give the assistance needed. In the next section follows a review of what overall conclusions people have drawn concerning participation.

3.4 THE CONCLUSIONS DRAWN

As has been demonstrated above, participation has both its proponents and detractors. As it is such a vague concept it is difficult to draw any solid conclusions about it, especially since, as Hassenford et al point out, participatory practices are both complex and unique (2016: 80). However, some authors do try to do this and their findings will be summarised in this final section of the *Literature Review*.

Mansuri and Rao (2013: 291-303) have collected studies on participation to be able to map what is known. In the article where they summarise their findings they state that many projects attempting to use participation as a tool to reach other goals fail since their goals are unrealistic. Donors should use long-term engagement instead of trying to create participation out of thin air for short-term projects. The three general conclusions drawn support this statement. They are: the method must be adapted to the context, capacity building is necessary since not all communities have the social capital needed for participation and participation works best when supported on many levels. In addition, the participatory body must have real power and financial support.

Finsterebusch and Van Wicklin III (1987: 14-21) measure the level of participation and effectiveness in large-scale construction projects and look for correlations. There is no overall correlation between the two variables, so the results indicate that participation is not necessary for effectiveness. Nevertheless, participatory projects might be more effective and there is a stronger correlation between participation and effectiveness in relatively better-off countries.

Cooke and Kothari collect a broad range of criticism against participation as a project in their well-referenced book *Participation: The new Tyranny* (2001a). In the introduction they write that the problems are that facilitators can override local legitimate decision-making processes and that collective decision-making serves the interests of the elites. Despite this they do not claim that participation should be abandoned, but call for an open debate about participation where this possibility is recognised as an option (Cooke & Kothari 2001b: 13-15). It seems as if even the harshest critics of participation are reluctant to call for its abolishment.

Hickey and Mohan write that participation has been criticised for failing to achieve social change, but participatory initiatives can be transformative, if they do not make the mistake of ignoring power and politics. They can make a real difference if they are part of a wider radical political programme, if they focus on citizenship rights for the marginalised and if they see development as an immanent process of social change instead of a technocratic intervention (2005: 237-238, 250, 252). Other authors, mainly those who are critical of current participatory strategies, agree that if participation becomes more political, rights-based and empowering it has real potential (Williams 2004; Cleaver 2001: 53-55). If participation is to be emancipatory it must not avoid conflicts by seeking consensus, but engage with them (Kelly 2004: 213-214, 216).

One factor there is relatively broad agreement on is that participation takes time. This is to a large extent due to the difficulties of laying the foundations for successful participation. Skills and capacities as well as social capital must often be developed among the intended participants and this is a slow process (Laverack

& Wallerstein 2001: 3-4; Ui et al 2012: 110-112; Mansuri & Rao 2013: 295, 297-300). The types of capacity needed are how to organise meetings, reach consensus, choose good leaders, handle funds and keep records in a transparent way (Korten 1983: 191, Catford 2007: 170-171). These skills need to be widely shared if all members are to be actively involved in decision-making. Korten (1983: 191-192) confirms that if broad participation and a broad leadership base are the ideals training must be widely available. Johansson et al (2013: 478-480) add that a lack of capacity can make it very difficult to adhere to ideals of rotating leadership and shared responsibility. That capacity-building is important for participation is mentioned in much development literature (Gow & Vansant 1983: 436-437, 444; Mansuri & Rao 2013: 295; Carrick 2015; Ui et al 2010: 110-111; Bates 1991: 62). Social capital, another building block of participation, consists of the trust, norms and networks that make collective action possible. Cooperation and sharing often lead to better outcomes for everyone, but if people do not trust each other to reciprocate and fulfil their part of the bargain it is impossible to achieve these benefits (Putnam 1994: 164-167). Trust building is very important when using participatory methods (Rees Catalán 2014: 97-100; Hassenforder et al 2015: 86; Maheshwari et al 2015: 3405) since distrust can limit participation and even create lose-lose situations (Parkinson 2009: 235). However, as mentioned, it takes time to build the trust and democratic relationships needed for successful participation (Thornberg & Elvstrand 2012: 47; The Virginia Education Association et al 1988). In addition, people must be convinced of the value of participation and this can also take time (Mansuri & Rao 2013: 299). The type of participation that claims to remodel society takes even more time since large scale societal transformations cannot be rushed (Catford 172-173, 196; Kelly 2004: 214).

Many authors finish their articles by drawing conclusions about when participation works and how. Therefore, there are more than enough recommendations about what to do and what not to do. However, since some of these contradict each other and this is not a major focus in this study they will not

be listed here. Many of the recommendations actually state that there are no blueprints, that the methods chosen must be suited to the community, that it is good if the structures can be based on what already exists and that flexibility and creativity are important (Gow & Vansant 1883: 432-433; Mansuri & Rao 2013: 294, 303; Bates 1991: 69-70).

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to discuss participation one must define what participation means. For this study a framework has been developed that describes the most significant aspects of participation, which are also the aspects that tend to vary between different cases of participation. It sees participation as collective power and the central dimensions are the degree, the scope, the inclusiveness and the effectiveness of this collective power. The framework is based on existing literature and it will be used to structure the analysis of the data to ensure that the answer to the first research question focuses on the central dimensions of participation. The framework itself and the connections between its dimensions are then the subject matter for the second research question. This chapter will define all the aspects of the framework. Then it will conclude by explaining why these dimensions should be seen as continuums and by looking at the concept of empowerment.

4.1 PARTICIPATION AS POWER

Participation can be described and defined in many different ways, as demonstrated in the *Literature Review*. However, the one concept that best summarises what participation is about is power. Arnstein (1969: 216) puts it like this:

My answer to the critical what question is simply that citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently

excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future

This is the reason why participation has connotations to empowerment, democracy and development from below: it is about the powerless gaining power. Mahoney et al (2007) as well as Cornwall and Jewkes (1995: 1668) state that power and control are central terms of participation and several authors see genuine redistribution of power as necessary for effective participation (Gow & Vansant 1983: 444, Mansuri & Rao 2013: 303, The Virginia Education Association et al 1988: 15). The two aspects of power that will be emphasised in this study are degree and scope.

4.1.1 The Degree of Collective Power

This dimension refers to the degree of power that the participatory process has over the matters that are discussed. This can differ to a great extent, something which has been illustrated in many ladders of participation and other types of continuums. Arnstein's ladder of participation measures the inclusion of the marginalised from 'manipulation' to 'citizen power' (Arnstein 1969). There are others who have made hierarchical definitions of different types of participation according to how much power the participants have (see, for example, Pretty 1995). Authors that describe participation as moving along more than one continuum tend to include the degree of power. Cornwall and Jewkes (1995:1669) as well as Cousins et al (1996: 209-211) have continuums measuring who controls the decision-making, something that is retained in the development of the model by Weaver and Cousins (2004: 20-24). Farrington and Bebbington also emphasise this aspect in their model of participation (1993: 103-105). It becomes clear from these models that the participatory process is often not the only authority involved in the decision-making; there is also some other actor that could share the control to different degrees. This other actor is commonly some level of government or an NGO. Mansuri and Rao write that in the past increased citizen control has often been the result of movements that have challenged the state. Today governments and organisations are supposed to initiate this sort of power sharing (2013: 285-

287). No matter how it is brought about, the degree of power is about to what extent the participatory process has power over the decisions it is involved in. Following Arnstein (1969) the participants as a collective could, for example, be manipulated, informed, consulted, regarded as partners, have veto right or be in total control.

4.1.2 The Scope of Collective Power

The next aspect of power is the other dimension from Farrington and Bebbington's (1993: 103-104) framework, namely the scope of the power, or power over what. They describe this as relating to what the power can be used for or what the participants are able to decide. This aspect is also present in many continuums. In the model by Cousins et al (1996: 209-211) and its development by Weaver and Cousins (2004: 22-24) this is integrated through their attention to in which stages of the process the participants are included. Cornwall also describes a model where one of the axes is what parts of the process the participants take part in (2008: 276).² In the context of a development project they could participate in deciding what the problem is, coming up with a solution to an already established problem or be invited to decide the details of the solution the external partner has come up with, such as the location of the well, school or road that is to be built. The scope is about what decisions they are involved in, what they participate in, and for the participants this is bound to be a central consideration in deciding whether it is worth it or not. As Parkinson says, for the poor participation constitutes a cost and the potential results are a main consideration in if they think the benefits outweigh the costs (2009: 237)

² Cornwall (2008) refers the model where depth of participation indicates phases of inclusion and breadth points to how many people that are included to Farrington and Bebbington (1993). Cornwall and Jewkes also indicate that the idea of breadth referring to the number of participants comes from that source. However, the reading of Farrington and Bebbington used in this paper interprets their model so depth refers to the degree of power/participation (since it refers to who controls the process, the participants or the initiators) and what the authors call "subject matter scope" refers to the scope of the participation.

4.2 PARTICIPATION AS COOPERATION

Participation is about power. However, it is a specific sort of power, one that a group of people is supposed to wield together. Therefore, the cooperative aspects are very important. The dimensions presented below focus on the individuals rather than the collective and highlight how their relationships and interactions shape the participatory process and its outcomes. As Thornberg and Elvstrand (2012: 47) state, participation is about relations, interaction and trust. The two aspects of cooperation that will be discussed here are firstly, the power structures in this group of participants and, secondly how conducive the intragroup relationships are for effective management.

4.2.1 The Inclusiveness of Collective Power

This aspect of cooperation illuminates inclusion and dominance in the participatory process and thus forms an analysis of the power relations in the context. It is about who among the participants that are given a say in how the collective power is used. Communities are not homogenous, so whose voices that are heard matters. This relates to the issues of elite capture, representation and self-exclusion that were discussed in the *Literature Review*. These problematic factors demonstrate why this dimension of participation is important. Cousins et al (1996: 209-211) as well as Cornwall and Jewkes (1995: 1669) have continuums aiming to describe the stakeholder selection. In the modified model by Weaver and Cousins (2004) both the diversity and the power relations among the stakeholders are taken into account. Sanderson and Kindon point out that it is not enough to bring everyone together in a participatory process if one viewpoint still dominates (2004: 118). Therefore, although this dimension is named inclusiveness, structures of dominance and the degree of equality among the participants are as important and ought to be analysed as part of this aspect.

4.2.2 The Effectiveness of Collective Power

This part of the model focuses on the ability of the cooperative structures to make and carry out decisions. It is trying to capture how conducive the social structures and the routines for cooperation are for an effective collective decision-making

process. This aspect might be slightly less straight forward than the others, but there are many indications in the literature that this is important. In the previous chapter the concepts social capital and capacity were discussed in relation to why participation takes time. These two concepts are central for the effectiveness of the collective power. Social capital enables collective action and makes it possible to cooperate despite the dilemma of collective action. Capacity (in this context) relates to people's ability to cooperate in the organised way required in projects and organisations. Weaver and Cousins (2004: 23-26) include the manageability of participation in their model to analyse whether the process is feasible, if it is unwieldy and how it is affected by time, resource and logistical constraints.

This dimension of participation actually relates both to effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness is about achieving the intended outcomes, in this case using the participatory process to make decisions and ensure they are carried through. Efficiency is about working in a way that minimises waste of time and resources. Social capital and capacity are mainly about effectivity, whereas manageability has strong connections to both. The central concern here is that the participatory process reaches its goal. Therefore, effectiveness is the central concept here, although efficiency will also be discussed as part of this dimension.

4.3 THE FOUR ASPECTS AS CONTINUUMS

The four dimensions of participation discussed above ought to be seen as continuums. They are not things that projects either have or have not, but rather something that can be had to different extents. It is a well-established idea to see participation as a continuum. The hierarchical rankings of participation, such as ladders, typologies or continuums, mentioned in the *Literature Review* are examples of this. Typologies assist in differentiating different types and degrees of participation (Cornwall 2008: 270) and this is also the main benefit of continuums: that one can avoid the choice between a broad and a narrow definition of participation. Broad, all-encompassing definitions that allow almost everything to be considered as participation are common. This type of definition

makes it very hard to analyse participation, or to say anything about it, since it equates, for example, full control with mere consultations. The opposite model, using a very narrow model, nevertheless also poses problems. Firstly, as seen in the *Literature Review*, participation is context specific. Secondly, Rowe and Frewer (2004: 515) argue that it is more practical to have a definition with low requirements since this makes it easier to identify cases of participation before a study starts. The standpoint taken in this study is that the definition should have a low threshold, but differentiate between various degrees and therefore continuums are a useful tool.

4.4 EMPOWERMENT – THE GOAL?

Empowerment is commonly mentioned in participation literature, often as a possible, and desirable, result of participation. The discussion tends to circle around whether and how participation can result in empowerment (see, for example Wald 2014; Hickey & Mohan 2005; Iwasaki et al 2015; Hewitt et al 2013; Cullen et al 2011; Carrick 2015). Just as participation empowerment is cited as an important goal (Mosedale 2005: 244) and it can be both an end and a means (Drydyk 2008: 231). It has also become quite vague with its adoption into the mainstream debate (Drydyk 2008: 231-232; Mosedale 2005: 243) and thus there is a considerable debate about how it should be defined. Due to a lack of space it will have to suffice to say that this thesis will use the definition presented by Drydyk (2008: 231):

What I find is that people are empowered to the extent that: (a) they exercise enhanced decision-making and influence over strategic life-choices and barriers to agency and wellbeing freedom; (b) their capacity for such decision-making and influence has also been enhanced; and (c) they are capable of making these gains prevail, given (i) the capabilities they have and assets they control, individually or collectively, and (ii) the opportunity structure in which they act.

This definition highlights the connections to participation. Increased influence relates to either the degree of power or the inclusion in decision-making, depending on if empowerment is seen as an individual or a collective process. The ability to influence strategic life choices has to do with the scope of power and the capacity to make good decisions and use the influence seems connected to the effectiveness of the cooperation. Thus, empowerment is a reasonable goal for participatory processes, but participation can come in many shapes and not all of them will lead to empowerment.

5 METHODOLOGY

In this section the methods used in this piece of research will be detailed. The decisions regarding different aspects will be motivated and the chapter will be concluded with a section on the ethical considerations involved in the study.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research this thesis is based on is a case study of a participatory organisation or, to put it more broadly, a case study of participation. The choice to focus on one case was directed by the fact that participation in this context, the context of a small organisation with a long-term focus, started and owned by the participants themselves, has not been studied to any great extent. In such contexts case studies enable in-depth, all-round examination, as Punch (2005: 144) points out.

Hassenforder et al mention the risk that in quantitative or comparative studies potentially important factors and characteristics can disappear (2015: 89). In addition, since the research aims to be qualitative, a case study design has the benefit of allowing the researcher to spend a longer time at the site and get acquainted with the context while also building rapport with the interviewees. Many articles about participation draw on case studies looking at the participatory process in detail (see, for example Thornberg & Elvstrand 2012; Chhotray 2004; Hewitt et al 2012; Carrick 2015; Coelho & Favareto 2007). Often these case studies are used as a basis for theoretical discussions and conclusions.

Hassenforder et al point out that both comparative studies involving many cases and in-depth analyses of individual cases are needed to further our understanding of participation (2015: 85).

Case studies can be criticised for their limited generalizability and thus, according to some, their limited relevance. It is true that one cannot generalise to a broader population from a case study. However, as the proponents of case studies suggest, one can use it as a basis for theoretical or analytical generalisation. It can generate theoretical analysis, often by working inductively and generating new theories (Bryman 2012: 71, Punch 2005: 146). Concepts are a form of generalisation that must be “tested and refined on the basis of empirical research results”. This means that every unique case can contribute to theory by adding new dimensions to concepts (Becker 1998: 176). The purpose of this study is twofold; in the language of Punch (2005: 144) the case study is both intrinsic and instrumental. Since Wale Wale Kenya is a very unusual case it is interesting to describe in its own right. However, it can also contribute to theory formation through further development of the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter. The study is neither inductive nor deductive since the existing theories are both the starting point and what the data is supposed to feed something new back into.

5.1.1 Wale Wale Kenya as a Case

The case chosen has been described above, in the background section, and there are several reasons why it is a good choice for this study. At the outset the aim was to investigate Wale Wale Kenya as an exemplifying case that could be an example of a small NGO working in a participatory way. However, along the way it has become clear that development NGOs that are in themselves participatory are very unusual and therefore it is rather what Bryman would call a unique case (Bryman 2012: 70). This means that it might not be similar to as many cases, but following Becker’s statement above it might be very useful for illuminating new aspects of participation.

Wale Wale Kenya is a good example of participation for several reasons. It is stated in the constitution (Wale Wale Kenya 2015) that Wale Wale should

promote participation and democracy. The organisation is member-based, which means that the target group, as members, are the ones that elect the board. At the time of the research six out of seven board members were youths from Kibera. Every second month there is a general meeting where all members meet and discuss what is happening at the organisation.

There were naturally practical considerations involved in the choice of organisation as well. One was that the researcher and the interviewees could communicate directly and had English as a common language. A second reason behind the choice of the organisation and the reason the researcher knew about the organisation was that she had spent time there as an intern. This made it easier for her to gain access to the organisation and to the interviewees. Finally, the management of the organisation supported the research and granted permission to use the name of the organisation in the paper. Hence, both theoretical and practical considerations made Wale Wale Kenya a good choice as a case.

5.2 RESEARCH METHODS

The main method used in this research project is individual semi-structured interviews with youths from organisation and the two 30-year-olds who support the youth in leading the organisation. Interviews were chosen since a main point of interest is how youths perceive their own participation. This is at least as important as the formal structures since informal practices and the youths' own perceptions are crucial for if and how they will use any power they are formally granted. Having formal influence and feeling able to use it is not necessarily the same thing, as described in empowerment literature (Mosedale 2005: 248, 250, 253; Drydyk 2008: 234, 239). According to Punch (2005: 168) interviews are a good way to access people's perceptions and understandings. In addition, since power structures can be difficult to observe and interpret it is a reasonable approach to ask insiders about them.

The choice of semi-structured interviews was grounded in the wish to allow participants to express their version of reality, while at the same time inquiring

about specific things and having set questions. The flexibility enables the researcher to ask a question in another way if it becomes clear that the respondent misunderstood the question or does not know what to say. It also makes it possible to add questions, move questions around and skip questions if they have already been answered as well as to adjust the guide between the interviews. Individual interviews were chosen since group discussions, as Goebel argues, can result in a false sense of homogeneity and hide power relations (1998: 300).

The interview guides (included as appendices) were developed in accordance with the research questions and the existing literature on the subject. One pilot interview was carried out to test the interview guide that was to be used for the interviews with the youth. This session also checked if the recording software worked and whether the sound quality from recordings in the room where the interviews were to be carried out was acceptable. Since the pilot interview turned out to be very short more questions were added, resulting in a doubling of the length of the guide. It was also concluded that prompting and probing were important to get more detailed answers. After the additions were made one independent reviewer gave feedback on the guide and further adjustments were made. Some small changes were also made during the course of the research. The version included as an appendix is the final version. For the interviews with Eriksson and Adhiambo another interview guide was used. This was developed after the interviews with the youths and focused on the areas where further information or another viewpoint was desired.

The interviews varied in length and those carried out with the youth form two clusters, one of longer and one of shorter interviews. Five of the interviews were between 47 and 55 minutes long, four were between 20 and 26 minutes and the odd one was 32 minutes long. The variation is partly due to the fact that board members and non-board members in one part of the interview were being asked different sets of questions, but more due to the fact that some interviewees were more eager to talk and elaborate than others. The interviews with Eriksson and Adhiambo were 56 and 74 minutes, respectively. The interviews with the youth

took place at the centre whereas the one with Eriksson was done in the researcher's apartment and the one with Adhiambo in her house. The youth are familiar with that centre and feel at home there. However, the rooms are not completely sound proof even with the doors closed and there are non-closable windows in all rooms. Even though an effort was made to schedule the interviews during the quiet hours of the day, the location was not perfect in terms of privacy. Sometimes this can be an issue: Hewitt et al (2012: 9) describes a context where group interviews did not work since the participants were afraid they would be overheard and therefore chose to remain quiet. Fortunately, in this case the participants did not seem to worry about being overheard. They were willing to speak and in some cases even express critical views concerning the organisation.

The interviews were complemented by other sources. Organisation documents and the website were useful in creating a background picture and in identifying this as a good case. These were, in addition, used as sources concerning the scope of the organisation activities. A two-hour participant observation covering a general meeting of the organisation was also carried out. It was participant observation since the researcher was seen and felt as a regular at the centre and a natural participant in activities there. At the end of the meeting she also became directly involved when thanked for the job done as an intern. The observation was carried out before the interviews and its main contribution to the research was that it assisted the construction of the interview guides. Only a few observations from the meeting are presented as results. The reason is that most factors this research focuses on are not easily observed, especially not from a single meeting. The observation provides evidence concerning who speaks at meetings and who dominates discussions, but since only one observation was carried out the conclusions need to be verified with interview data concerning how it usually is. In addition, the research question focuses on the perceptions of the youth and these are difficult to observe. The observation was partly overt and partly covert, a choice which will be discussed in the section on ethical considerations below.

5.2.1 Sampling

The study focuses on the older youths at the centre. They might be on or be considered for the board and thus be more interested in power structures and decision-making. Their higher level of English made it possible to do the interviews without an interpreter, which created a more conversational and natural atmosphere, enabled better rapport, improved confidentiality and decreased the costs. For these reasons the sampling focused on those aged 15 or above who could be considered to be active in the organisation. In total the organisation had 20 members over the age of 15, excluding Adhiambo and Eriksson. Of these 13 were deemed to be active at the time of research. In total ten youth aged between 15 and 25 were interviewed. The aim was to include a large part of the population and both the regular members and the employed board members were interviewed to increase the diversity of viewpoints. The three active members who were not interviewed were excluded for specific reasons such as being too new as a member, neither being an employed board member nor a regular member³ and the difficulty of finding a suitable time for the interview. Even if the number of interviews is limited they cover the largest part of the population. In the age group in question there is a gender imbalance that is also reflected in the sample: three interviewees were girls and seven were boys. Four of the interviewees were employed board members and six were regular members.

The informants were approached in person at the youth centre. The researcher told them that she was writing a thesis and wanted to interview them about the organisation and that what they said would be treated with confidentiality. If they agreed, which everyone did, a date was either set straight away or decided later on.

³ At the time of the sampling one aim of the research was to investigate the differences in viewpoints between the employed board members and the regular members and therefore the person who did not belong fully to either group was excluded.

5.2.2 Recording and Transcription

The interviews were recorded using a smartphone. Recording was deemed to be better than note-taking since it decreases the risk of missing important information. It is also easier for the researcher to keep a relaxed conversation going if there is no need to take notes. Punch (2005: 175) summarises that though there is no finite agreement, tape-recording has many important advantages compared to taking notes⁴. All interviewees agreed to having the interview recorded. The choice of recording device was based on practical considerations such as cost and familiarity with the equipment.

All the interviews were transcribed in verbatim. In the quotes included in the thesis pauses are indicated by three dots. This is sometimes used to indicate that a section of the quote has been removed, but here this will instead be shown by dots in square brackets. Using dots to indicate a pause or hesitation in written speech is common and this is the method chosen for this paper. Grammatical errors have not been corrected since too much editing would make the text the product of the researcher instead of an account given by the respondents.

5.2.3 Analysis

The analysis of qualitative research can be very diverse (Punch 2005: 193) and in this research it was in fact relatively straightforward. The first research question is primarily descriptive and the theoretical framework indicates which aspects to focus on, so the data was sorted into the right categories and summarised. This results in a description of the unique case studied and also serves as a gateway into the more theoretical second research question about what connections that can be detected between the four aspects in the framework. The second part is similar to what Punch describes as axial coding. He writes that after having produced first-order concepts from the raw data the next step is to investigate how these are connected to each other. The final step would be to raise the level of abstraction again by coming up with a core category showing what the central theme is (Punch 2005: 205-212). In this case, the method used is not purely

⁴ It has to be assumed that more modern recording devices share these benefits.

inductive and based on grounded theory, so the concepts used were developed from the literature rather than from the body of data. It is also clear from the outset that participation is the core theme. However, the connections in the framework of participation were not established. Some of them were indicated in the literature, but an in-depth case study was judged to give better input concerning these connections. Focusing on those brought the discussion to a higher level of abstraction, which means that the case study can contribute to the more general theoretical knowledge surrounding the idea of participation.

5.3 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER AND ACCESS

At the commencement of the study, the researcher had already spent one semester interning for the organisation and had developed relationships with both the members and the management. This greatly facilitated access. The research was discussed with a representative of the organisation, who was very positive to the research project. The management encouraged members to accept if they were asked for interviews. Everyone who was asked agree to be interviewed. The youth seemed quite comfortable talking to the researcher, so the existing rapport was an important asset. Bryman writes that gaining access is a political process and that gatekeepers concerned with the effects on an organisation in terms of its image, disruption of routines and staff time might try to influence the research. Such influence could be in areas such as who will be interviewed, what questions will be asked and how things are to be interpreted (Bryman 2012: 151). This can raise questions concerning the independence of the research. However, in this case the organisation was positive to the research and expressed an interest in the results, but did not try to influence it.

The position of the researcher was ambiguous due to her long stay with the organisation. In one way the researcher remained an outsider from a world very different from the Nairobi slums. Still, she became an insider of the organisation as a person who was present and took part in different daily activities. The prolonged stay also allowed a degree of immersion in the social reality of the

context and thus helped the researcher to know what to ask. This insider position also brought benefits in terms of access, as mentioned, and rapport building. One difficulty with the insider position can be the issue of shared loyalties whereby it might be difficult to reconcile loyalty to the organisation and the need to be analytically objective. Since the organisation approves of the research and seems willing to use the results to develop the organisation further this was not a major problem in this study. The insider status also influenced the interviews in the way that the interviewees sometimes gave short-hand explanations, taking for granted that the researcher is aware of the background. This might result in the interviews being vague on certain points and therefore less useful as data. However, the answers might not have been clearer if given to an outsider and it is positive that the researcher has the background knowledge needed. The researcher tried to remember to ask the “stupid questions” to clarify things.

5.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In all research projects it is important to consider the ethical dimensions. According to Bryman (2012: 135, adapted from Diener & Crandall 1978) the four main ethical transgressions in research are: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. In this section harm to participants, the related issue of confidentiality and informed consent will be discussed in relation to the interviews and deception in relation to the observations. Invasion of privacy is less of a concern in this project since it is not based on any sensitive data and informed consent was given to the interviews. This section will also discuss the justifications for taking up participants’ time.

5.4.1 Possible Harm to Participants

There are no reasons to believe that this research project can harm the participants. The topic is not sensitive and it is highly unlikely that the youths would get into trouble with the authorities, school, their parents or in the community because they have been speaking to a researcher about an organisation where they spend some of their time. There is a slight possibility that someone in

the organisation could react negatively to a comment made or a viewpoint expressed. Therefore, it will be ensured that the youths are not recognisable in the final products of the research and the transcripts will not be made available to anyone except the researcher unless they have been carefully edited. How confidentiality is upheld is discussed further in the next section. As for Eriksson and Adhiambo, who are interviewed under their real names, the considerations were slightly different. Granting them anonymity would mean that it would be impossible to contextualise the material from the interviews with them since their role in the organisation is so special. The risk of them being harmed by being quoted in an academic paper as members of a small NGO is also very small. Since they are older and know more about the NGO and development sector than the youths they are also better at judging any potential risks and could therefore give informed consent to being interviewed without the protection of anonymity.

5.4.2 Confidentiality

As mentioned above, it was important to protect the anonymity of participants to prevent even the possibility of frictions due to things said in the interviews, and to make the interviewees more comfortable with speaking their minds. Individual confidentiality was central since the name of the organisation is included in the study. Permission to include it was granted from both the executive director and the chairperson. Even if the organisation was not named in the paper it would be possible to find out the name based on the researcher's internship with the organisation. Therefore, individual anonymity was important either way and it was concluded that it is easier to describe a case if one can be transparent about details and refer to the organisation documents and website.

The biggest threat to confidentiality was that it was not possible to guarantee that no one could overhear the interviews. The rooms at the centre are, as mentioned when the setting was described, not soundproof. Nevertheless, as the interviews were carried out in normal conversational tones behind a closed door when as few people as possible were at the centre the risk of anyone accidentally overhearing the conversation is small. The participants were as aware as the researcher of who

was in the building and their willingness to be interviewed anyway indicates consent to the small risks. When confidentiality has been promised it is also important to store the data in an appropriate way. The interviews, the transcripts and lists of participants were stored in a laptop with a password and a google drive likewise protected. All material was deleted from the mobile phone within a few hours of each interview. These precautions are no guarantee since computers can be stolen and hacked and so can e-mail accounts. Nevertheless, one must keep the records in a way that makes it possible to work with them and the identities of the participants in this study are not interesting enough to motivate extreme acts.

5.4.3 Informed Consent

According to Bryman (2012: 138) the essence of the principle of informed consent is that “prospective research participants should be given as much information as might be needed to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study”. Lund University refers to the guidelines from the Ethical Review Board, who lists things research participants should be informed about, but at the same time recommends that the information should not be too long and it should be written in a way that makes sense to the group whose consent is sought (Ethical Review Board n.d.). As there is a trade-off between including all information and keeping it short and understandable it has to be decided for each study what the interviewees need to know to make an informed decision about participation. In this case it was explained to the participants, both in a conversation in the beginning of the interview and in a letter of consent they were asked to read and sign before the interview, what the study is about and that their answers will be treated confidentially. The letter also pointed out that their participation is voluntary, specified what it would entail and pointed out that no compensation could be offered. How they can contact the researcher was not spelled out, but many of the participants have contact with the researcher on Facebook and those who do not can easily get in touch through others in the organisation. Despite the fact that some interviewees were under 18 no consent was obtained from the parents. This was partly for reasons of convenience, but as

all participants were 15 or older, they were deemed to be old enough to decide on their own whether they want to participate or not. Since the research was not in any way sensitive it seemed right to allow the youths themselves, rather than their parents or guardians, to decide if they wanted to be interviewed.

5.4.4 Deception

The only issue regarding deception in this research was the participant observation at a meeting. This was, to a large extent, a covert observation. The executive director of the organisation was asked for permission to attend as an observer. The international coordinator was also aware of the observing role. However, on their advice, this was not specified to the other participants. In the context of a meeting, a formal and slightly unnatural context as it is, telling people that their behaviour and how active they were was being observed would create a situation unlikely to generate any useful data. The slight deception connected to the observation was deemed to be acceptable since the meeting was a public setting, open to everyone interested in the organisation. Those speaking should be aware that this might be reflected in the public minutes of the meetings and therefore it was relatively unproblematic to record what happened for the sake of research. The reason that the minutes were not used instead of an observation is that they are not as detailed. In general, honesty is preferred, but this observation could not have been carried out while being open about the motives and it was not a serious infringement of privacy to take notes of what happens at an open meeting.

5.4.5 Taking up People's Time

Taking up the youth's time for the sake of a research project that might benefit the researcher but not the interviewees is also ethically problematic. Especially the youths who are still in school do not have much free time due to their long school days and this time must be considered as valuable. This research justifies taking up their time by arguing that, since the organisation has expressed interest in the results of the research, the study might, in the end, benefit the youths by leading to improvements in the organisation. The interviewees were very generous with their

time and said yes to the interview without this even being mentioned, but that does not mean this consideration is unimportant. Efforts were made to thank the youths properly and tell them that they are very important to the study. They might also have appreciated having someone listening to them and expressing an interest in their views. If feedback that could be valuable to the organisation is not be addressed in the research, this could be presented to the organisation separately as a way of giving back to those who gave their time to participate in the research.

6 DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL MATERIAL

In this chapter the results of the research will be presented and discussed. The first research question is, as has been stated earlier, *How do the youths of Wale Wale Kenya perceive their own participation?* In light of what was concluded about the nature of participation in the theoretical framework this question can be fleshed out into: *How do the youths of Wale Wale Kenya perceive their own cooperative power, that is, the degree and scope of their collective power, the power structures in the organisation and their capacity to use their power in an effective way?* The four aspects of participation included in the theoretical framework will be used here to ensure that the focus is on the central aspects of the phenomenon studied. Thus the first four sections of this chapter are: *The Degree of Collective Power, The Scope of Collective Power, The Inclusiveness of Collective Power* and *The Effectiveness of Collective Power*. For each of them relevant results from the study will be presented and discussed in relation to existing literature. The second research question is *Based on this case study, what are the connections between the dimensions identified in the theoretical framework?* This will be discussed towards the end of the chapter based on the data from the case and the indications found in the literature.

6.1 THE DEGREE OF COLLECTIVE POWER: HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DOES THE PARTICIPATORY BODY HAVE?

This section focuses on the degree of power of the participatory decision-making structure. Such participatory bodies can have different stakeholder make-ups. Some might consist of the intended beneficiaries only, others can include representatives from the state and civil society and yet others will focus on elected representatives from villages in a certain area. Who is included is studied later on, here the focus is on the power they have as a collective. This section will firstly demonstrate that participatory processes are unopposed decision-makers in Wale Wale Kenya and secondly discuss the organisation as a claimed or created space as opposed to an invited space.

One of the main themes in the interviews with the members of Wale Wale was how decisions are made in the organisation. All the interviewees point out that decisions are made collectively and that everyone's opinion counts. There was some confusion about the exact procedures, such as what happens if there is disagreement, but everyone agrees that the members make the decisions. For example, one of the board members says that:

we come up with meetings, maybe general meetings, through those meetings we make decisions and they are passed by all the members... After being passed... everybody follows the decision.

One of the younger members states, “we are asked if we want a particular thing or if we encourage a particular thing and we are the one who give the answers and that's how they take it”.

The importance of this is something the youths have strong feelings about. They are all in favour of this way of making decisions. When asked about how it would be if someone else were to make the decisions one girl replies that it would be as if those in charge were “seeing us like nobodies”. Another interviewee clearly states that: “Because you can't just be sitting here, then you find two or three people making a decision, that's not good, we need everyone to come”. The ideal

of youth influence becomes clear when Petter Eriksson describes the process of leaving the old organisation and starting up a new one:

during this process we had many meetings with them, con-, consult-, consulted them in anything, like in everything. Not only because we wanted to consult them, was also because we ourselves didn't know really what to do, so it had to be kind of them to say what they wanted and how they felt, 'cause even me and Monica we were, we were ready to keep working under the old organisation if that was what the youth wanted, but they didn't want it, so. So I'd say the, the decision was theirs mainly

The degree of influence the youths think they have can also be gleaned by asking them if they take part in making decisions and if they speak at the meetings. All of the members who were interviewed feel they are involved in decision-making to some extent. For some it is an obvious choice, as reflected in the comments “Yeah, I’m a member, I have to” and “Yeah, I have the right”. Others are more careful concerning their own involvement and say that they are involved “[s]ometimes. Sometimes I am just there”. Also regarding whether they speak at meetings there are both those who are very confident and always speak and those who are shy and find it more difficult and as a result do not speak so often. All the youths interviewed except one believe that there are people in the organisation that are too shy to speak at meetings. Those who are shy can find it difficult to know what to say and be afraid to be teased. However, they seem to know that their views are valued, for one of them says “they also need my opinion” to motivate why she does speak from time to time. It is also described that sometimes Adhiambo will point to someone who is very quiet and ask them what they think.

From this data one can conclude that decisions in the organisation are made through a participatory process. The crux of the matter, and the reason the dimension of degree is important, is that in many cases of participation the decision made by the participatory process is not the final word. If participation was initiated from outside the external actor might have retained a certain amount

of influence. The degree of power is the extent to which the participatory process actually has power over the things it decides about. In the case of Wale Wale Kenya the decisions made through the participatory process will be carried out. As this process does not share the power with anyone it can be argued to have full control and the highest degree of power possible.

One reason behind Wale Wale Kenya's unusually high degree of power is that the participatory process was not started when some external agent invited the members to take part in decision-making and get some influence over a project. Instead of sharing someone else's power the members created a space for themselves, an organisation where they have full decision-making power. This distinction between invited and claimed spaces is mentioned by Cornwall, who writes that participatory spaces constructed by outsiders can play an important role, but it can be difficult to transfer ownership of such spaces since people might see them mainly as a way to access benefits (Cornwall 2008: 275). Just as people cannot be empowered by someone else (Kelly 2004: 221; Mosedale 2005: 244) they cannot be made to participate in a certain way. This became clear in the *Literature Review* where self-exclusion and non-participation were mentioned. As empowerment, participation demands agency and agency cannot be initiated from outside. In a claimed space this agency exists. In an invited space it might develop, but since participation is a complex social process it cannot be predicted if and how this will happen.

Control of a process, in those cases where decision-making is shared, is dependent on both how much power the partners wish to give to the participatory body and what degree of power the participants want. If there is disagreement between the two parties this can lead to frictions. Arnstein (1969: 222) claims that struggles are often needed to make shared power reality. For the group that was later to become Wale Wale this was the case. They were not satisfied with the non-existent power they had in the organisation they used to belong to. Since they could not persuade the board to share the power and they had no means through

which to force a change they left the organisation to create a new one. It was a way for them to reclaim power over the place where they spend their spare time.

6.2 THE SCOPE OF COLLECTIVE POWER: WHAT CAN THE PARTICIPATORY BODY DO?

As was clarified in the *Theoretical Framework* this aspect is about the scope of the power that the participatory organ (a process, an organisation or a forum) has. It is about what it can do; what it can make and carry out decisions about. As discussed above *Wale Wale* is a space created by its members. What the organisation can do is based on the influence it has created for itself. This section will first look at the research results concerning what *Wale Wale Kenya* has done so far and then discuss what the organisation can do and introduce the idea of created power.

When asked about the purpose of the organisation most of the informants claim that it is to change and improve the lives of young people or that it helps youth to develop their talents. They argue that all members benefit from it. The descriptions of various activities on *Wale Wale Kenya's* webpage (*Wale Wale Kenya n.d.*) and in the organisation plan for 2015 (Eriksson 2015) serve as good overviews of what the organisation is able to do. The centre offers, for example, access to different leisure activities. It gives youth the opportunity to play football in a real team, to record music, to make their own films and to perform with dance and drama shows. Most youths really enjoy these activities. A few of the girls mention that the dancing makes them feel free and forget all stress and one of the boys claims that "I like football more than anything". In many of the interviews it also came up that one thing they really like about coming to the organisation is meeting people on an equal basis and sharing ideas.

Apart from giving the youths a place to meet others and to do fun activities the organisation focuses on educational support. As mentioned in interviews and as seen on the organisation webpage the organisation organises homework assistance sessions and also raises money to pay school fees for those members who attend high school. This can make a big difference for the youths: one interviewee

explains that “it's hard for the guardian who I'm living with to raise that kind of school fees”. As will be discussed more in the section about effectiveness the youths also learn leadership skills and how to run an organisation.

In addition, the organisation influences the youth's opportunities to earn money. Five of the older youths have been employed and receive a monthly wage from the organisation. Two interviewees mention that they earn money from some of the dance shows and they get access to a market for their works of art, which also helps them to earn some money.

One factor that indicates how important the organisation is to the youth is their willingness to improve it and to correct the things they perceive to be wrong. One young girl says that she would want more influence in the organisation so that she could act when she sees that something is wrong since “whenever I see something is not correct we need to correct it”. Such comments demonstrate a commitment to the organisation and its development. Those who are leaders take their roles seriously. They know that they are responsible for what happens in and to the organisation and seem to feel a certain pressure to live up to the expectations. One board member explains:

Yeah, 'cause if I'm the leader and I'm leading them to that, those wrong things, how am I leading them? So they've put me in a position whereby I feel like I'm responsible to these guys.

Another member of the board talks about how it is very important to know the whole context and to consider how it will affect people before making a decision. The same person also pointed out that there would be no point in sitting on the board if he could not have a positive influence on the organisation and stop things from going wrong. The importance allocated to keeping the organisation on the right path indicates that it is an important part in the lives of the youth.

Its importance is not surprising considering the results above. Based on the definition of empowerment used in this study one could say that Wale Wale creates conditions for empowerment. To be empowered people are supposed to

have increased their influence over strategic life choices and the barriers to their agency and well-being in a sustainable way and they should have become more capable of making such decisions. The members of Wale Wale have more options concerning what to do in their lives due to the increased access to education, leadership training and incomes. They can increase their own well-being through physical activities and the money they earn. They can use the organisation to remove barriers that prevent them from doing certain things, for example go to high school or speaking in front of an audience. In learning how to run an organisation their capacity for exercising their influence has indeed increased.

An interesting question is where this power comes from. The scope of power of Wale Wale covers the spare time, capacity, school fees, and to some extent incomes, of around 30 young people in Kibera. Just as the degree of power the scope of power for many participatory processes is dependent on the power that has been transferred to them. However, no power has been transferred to Wale Wale. The organisation has a Swedish sister organisation that assists in fundraising, but the Swedes have never had any power over and did not create the Kenyan organisation. Neither has Wale Wale had to fight someone to conquer this power. Just as Wale Wale is a created space, created by and for the youth, the power it wields has also been created. It corresponds to the idea of *power to* and *power with* as described by Mosedale (2005: 249-250), namely that one can achieve something without limiting the power of anyone else and that one can achieve more power through collective action. That power can be created is one of the conclusions Catford (2007: 197) draws from his study of village-based planning and development in Vietnam. He concludes that this makes it possible to avoid the potentially sensitive subject of power loss in connection to participation. This calls into questions Arnstein's (1969: 216) statement that participation is about "redistribution of power", since it demonstrates that transfer of power is not the only way for an organisation to gain influence. As long as they do not want power over something that is under someone else's jurisdiction they can create their own. The power of Wale Wale is based on the willingness of the youth to

make an effort for the sake of the organisation, their enthusiasm in taking part in the different activities, their creative talents and the ability of the organisation to raise funds for its work. Here the actions of individuals are very important. The individuals within the organisation and their interaction will be in focus in the next two sections.

6.3 THE INCLUSIVENESS OF COLLECTIVE POWER: WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?

In the first section about the cooperative aspects of participation the focus is on the power relations and structures of inclusion/exclusion and dominance within the organisation. There seem to be two main types of power asymmetries: one between the youths and Adhiambo and Eriksson and one between the board and the rest of the members. These will be described and who has what influence will be discussed.

In the interviews it became clear that Moncia Adhiambo and Petter Eriksson have a very special role in the organisation. Everyone concedes that one or both of them are either “leaders”, “the boss” or “the most important people”. It is mainly the younger ones who see those they regard as adults, primarily Monica Adhiambo, as the leaders of the organisation. One interviewee states “I think Monica is in charge of everything at the organisation”. However, the board members also emphasise the role of ‘the secretary’ or ‘the executive director’, which is a combined position that Monica Adhiambo has and one of them calls Eriksson “organisation manager”. One board member who states that everyone leads the organisation still reflects that “in terms of ranking, maybe the secretary is head of the organisation”. At the meeting the researcher attended Adhiambo and Eriksson were the ones who spoke the most and who frequently brought up or concluded discussions. The interviews and the observation both indicate that Adhiambo and Eriksson have more influence over what happens at the centre than the other members and tend to take on leadership roles. However, only one of the interviewees thinks that they take too much of a leadership role and that people do not dare to oppose them.

The members see Adhiambo as important since she takes care of the members, takes those who are sick to the hospital, makes sure everyone goes to school and is involved in conflict resolution. In addition, she ensures the records are kept, contributes with new ideas and arranges shows for the dance group. According to the members Eriksson is taking care of the funding for the organisation and making sure things are happening. When the youth were asked what would happen without these two most answers pointed to the difficulties they would face. Eriksson and Adhiambo indicate that there are things that the youth cannot do on their own. They lack administrative capacity and cannot write formal reports. Adhiambo is still in the process of teaching them to be responsible, keep time, keep records and do things in the right way. In addition, the youth are not confident enough to make decisions without asking her opinion. However, they are learning and in the future they might be able to run the organisation on their own. Adhiambo says that:

For me I'll be very happy in five years to see that this thing is like, for them they feel the same, they feel that confident enough that I don't need to tell Monica or I don't need to, Monica don't need to say this or for this to happen, but I can also, to believe in themselves that they can do it, so that's my dream actually

Hence, Adhiambo and Eriksson play important roles, roles that the youth may not be able to fill quite yet. Before the youths know how to carry out all the administrative tasks, write reports and are confident enough to make decisions without asking for advice it is not feasible for them to run the organisation themselves.

This situation has clear parallels to two cases described by Wald where middle-class experts became members of peasant-based grassroots movements instead of acting as consultants. Since everyone belonged to the same organisation the inequality between them was decreased and “[h]aving experts within the organization also acts to increase autonomy and allow for more resources to be allocated to projects, rather than to administration or as income for the external development experts”. It is impossible to avoid all power inequalities, since

people have different skills, but if leaders are seen as organisers and facilitators instead of decision-makers unequal relations can be avoided to a great extent (Wald 2014: 623-636, quote found on p635). Having its own experts reduces the need for Wale Wale to engage in more unequal (and expensive) relations with external experts. It can be argued that the presence of the experts was what enabled the group to set up a more equal, democratic organisation instead of the one they used to belong to. Experts that are part of the group can decrease the dependent position of the group as a whole and enable them to access a higher degree and a larger scope of collective power. Having expert members might come at the cost of slightly larger inequalities within the organisation, but Adhiambo and Eriksson act as the facilitators and organisers Wald mention rather than as decision-makers. They might have more influence over the decisions than others, but, as mentioned previously, all the members are still involved in decision-making.

Apart from the role of Adhiambo and Eriksson there is one more power asymmetry in the organisation and that is the one between the board and the rest of the members. According to the informants matters are first discussed by the board and then, after that, taken up at the general meeting. One of the board members explains that:

The task of the board is to identify any different things that should be changed in the organisation. Any new ideas. Any... negativities in the organisation. Any advantages. When they come up with that they discuss [...] When this is discussed it is taken to the general meeting. So... they told what the board discussed and they are told to say something about it. If anyone feels anything is not okay he's allowed to say it.

So the board discusses different issues, brainstorms and comes up with a solution. They decide what should be done. Then at the next general meeting they present the decision to the members and ask them what they think about it and whether they approve or not. If the members disagree with the decision made by the board the decision has to be changed. One younger member states that “they take what

we have said in the general meeting”. The board members make it completely clear that they cannot go against the wishes of the members:

The members have to agree with us too. If a couple, like ninety-nine percent don't agree with the board members and admin then nothing is to be done, they have the rights to say so, they have the rights to say that nothing is supposed to be done, this thing is not supposed to be done, this, yeah. So the point is abandoned.

There are only two interviewees who state that the board overrules the general meeting. One of them specifies that it should be the way the others claim it to be, that the board explains their decisions and asks for approval. However, this interviewee also says that the members are not involved in electing the board members, so there is a possibility that this person does not know how the decision-making process works either.

Even though the general meeting can overrule the board's decisions, there is a power asymmetry between the regular members and the board members. Firstly, the board members have more influence since one can affect a decision more in an idea generating phase than when a ready suggestion is being presented. It is easier to put ideas forward in an open discussion in a smaller group than to do it in front of a bigger audience and as a counter-suggestion to that which has been presented by the leaders of the organisation. Secondly, the observation carried out confirmed that those who are on the board talk the most at the general meetings too, as indicated in some of the interviews. This means that they dominate both stages in the decision-making process. The other members are invited to talk, but their responses are very limited. A further indication of the board's power position is that, according to Petter Eriksson, the general meeting has never disagreed with a decision by the board. Maybe this is what made one interviewee claim that once the board has made a decision the members cannot change it.

Nevertheless, all the interviewees have some sort of idea of what they should do if they had a suggestion to present to the organisation. Half of the interviewees claim that they have put forward ideas of their own and that these ideas were

approved. Interestingly, three out of the five suggestion-makers are not board-members. It does seem as if the non-board members, even if the board members dominate, are able to present and get support for their ideas. Even if they are not present at the board meetings when many problems are discussed, they can still influence the agenda.

This power asymmetry can be discussed in relation to literature on elite dominance, or elite capture. In the case study by Chhotray there were people with insufficient status to speak at meetings and they were not given any chance to voice their opinions (2004: 344-348). In Wale Wale at least the members who are 15 or older know that their views are valued and that they are supposed to express them. They all say that they have been speaking at meetings, which means that they do not feel that it is impossible, even if the extent of their participation is limited by shyness. The younger children are very quiet at these meetings, but efforts are made to include them. Eriksson mentions that they sometimes they have special meetings for the younger members only:

every now and then we try to have a meeting with them were they, they just get to share their ideas about certain stuff. Eh, partly because it's valuable for us, but, to get their views, but also for them to feel that they are also allowed to share their views and it's, to me it's a little bit of an edu-, training process to learn to be at these meetings and listen to what other people say and think for yourself what you think and make up your mind and share it with others

Several members also mention that those who are too shy to speak can tell someone else what they want to say before the meeting and then that person can say it. In the case studied everyone is welcome to express their views and routines are set up to ensure that even those who do not speak at meetings have a forum to voice their opinions. No one is excluded from decision-making unless they exclude themselves and choose not to speak or not to participate, a decision which has to be respected, but there are structures of dominance in the decision-making, which result in the board members having more influence than the other members.

Why decision-making is structured in this way will be touched upon in the next section and then discussed more in the final part of this chapter.

6.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLECTIVE POWER: WHAT IS THE CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATION?

The *Theoretical Framework* explained that this aspect of participation is about how well people cooperate and how manageable the social relations render the process. It goes beyond the study of power relations in the previous section and looks at the relations in a wider sense and how they influence people's ability to work together. The literature indicates that it is important to pay attention to social capital, capacity to work together in a formalised way and the manageability of the process.

The relationships in Wale Wale are characterised by friendship. Most new members find the organisation through friends or relatives and thus the other members are their friends' friends. Possibly for this reason there are very tight relationships within the organisation, despite the large age range. Several members describe it as being like siblings or a family. One of them says that: "when you come here you don't know each other, but you speak to each other like you are siblings and you, you relate to each other like you known each other from many years ago". Some of the informants argue that the fact that they know each other makes it easier for them to speak up during meetings. One person who admits to being shy at times claims that it is much easier to speak during meetings when one knows the others. "Cause I'm used to them I can't be that shy" is how it is phrased in the interview. Another interviewee explains that: "Cause we always believe that all of us are the same and, like, one family and whichever and you are always right to speak what you feel".

Despite the close relations between the members the level of trust is low, at least in certain respects. Half of the interviewees are unwilling to trust the other members with safe-keeping of their things since there have been cases of theft in the organisation. One member bluntly states that: "The one who you will be

trusting the most is the one who is now causing the most pain to you, you can't trust anyone". A person who has had things stolen from him says that:

That goes because, ah, that was like, eh, the reason why I don't trust anyone is because of... some of the properties that have lost in the organisation. Yeah. And some of the rumours that I've, I've heard about the other people in the organisation. Yeah. So, that means that there are some people that I trust, but there are some that I don't trust.

One interviewee talks about trusting people in matters concerning the organisation, but not when it comes to private property. Of course, not everyone is as distrustful. There are those who claim that they trust most people or those they have known for a long time. One of the board members, who would not entrust the other members the care of his things, still reflects on the importance of trust in the organisation like this:

you have first to trust them and them also to trust you, like, like if, if someone doesn't trust you there's a feeling that comes, eh, like, why am I here, I'm not trusted. So, the feeling that tells you that maybe you should, you're not supposed to be here, go somewhere where you can be trusted

Having close and quite equal relationships ought to make participation easier in the sense of bringing people together. Cullen et al point out that evaluators thought it was important that the stakeholders were at speaking terms for participation to work (2011: 352). In the case of Wale Wale we have seen that the relationships seem to facilitate honest discussions. Putnam and many other authors point to the importance of mutual trust for cooperation and effectiveness, as we have seen in the *Literature Review*. However, contrary to what the theories would indicate, in some respects the trust between the youths is very low and despite this they seem to be able to work well together. The fact that they know each other has not led to increased trust since they do know that someone in the organisation steals things. However, in the context of running the organisation together that does not seem to matter. People seem willing to make efforts to improve the organisation instead of free riding. There seem to be two sorts of trust

here. One is a general sort of trust that relates to working together and the other is about trusting people with your things. In this context it seems as if the two are not necessarily related and maybe only one of the two is needed in this case.

When it comes to the capacity of the youth to manage the organisation this was mainly discussed in the interviews with the board members as well as with Eriksson and Adhiambo Eriksson summarised the development during the first year:

the elder youths, like the project leaders who are also the bo-, many of the board members they also, they are also developing in their, in their capabilities of doing stuff on their own and, eh, learning how to plan projects, how to come up with their own ideas and feel that, eh, this is actually their thing

The youth would in all likelihood agree with this description since they talk about learning how to handle the tasks connected to their position on the board and improving their leadership skills. However, as indicated in the section where the role of Adhimabo and Eriksson is discussed, there are still things the youth cannot do. Adhiambo describes that

at the moment, even now sometimes, some issues they can't even handle, they have to come to me 'Monica, can you talk to so-and-so, I can't talk to that person because of this and that' [...] maybe there is a little bit disrespect to each other and then they kind of don't know how to approach it [...] so they come to me instead

This indicates that even if capacity-building has taken place this process is not finished. Adhiambo describes different situations where she has had to solve arguments sprung from instances of real, or perceived, disrespect and says that the youths must learn how to use power in a good way without dominating the others. Seemingly, the day-to-day cooperation is not always a smooth process. However, an example of a context where the cooperation has improved to a great extent is the meetings. In the beginning these were an arena for fighting and the focus was on complaining about what others did or did not do. As the sessions were very long and not as organised, they kept forwarding decisions. Nowadays the

meetings are much better since they are more to the point and more efficient. There are less of what the members call 'blame games'. The following excerpt is how one of the board members describes the development:

I remember the first meeting that we held... It was, there, it was too much of argument. And we kept, we kept on forwarding suggestions to the next meeting, next meetings, but it came up when Monica decided to, let's change this to be this, instead of keep on, keeping on pointing at who is doing this, who is not doing this, let's come up with ideas, discuss them and see what we do about them.

The board members also describe that now they know how to handle meetings, be on time and how and where to discuss different matters. Monica Adhiambo agrees that these things have changed a lot and attribute it to a learning process for the youth.

In the *Theoretical Framework* the areas where capacity-building are important are listed, namely holding meetings, making decisions, handling money in a good and transparent way and choosing good leaders (Korten 1983: 191; Catford 2007: 170-171). Regarding the first two the capacity seems to have reached quite high levels. From Monica Adhiambo's description it becomes clear that the routines for handling the financial side are not really established in everyone's consciousness yet. When it comes to electing good leaders this paper is not to evaluate the work done by the board, but the leaders seem to be developing and they are committed to doing well. Nevertheless, Wale Wale is still a young organisation and so far the youths are not working together well enough to manage without someone who can mediate in conflicts and remind them of how to do certain things.

The division of labour between the board and the general meeting, described in the previous section, is related to what Weaver and Cousins write about manageability. A diverse selection of stakeholders makes a process more difficult to manage unless the participation is very superficial and has one firm leader directing the process (Weaver & Cousins 2004: 25-26). From the beginning the idea was that all members of Wale Wale should be included at all meetings. Since

those meetings ended up being very long and inefficient they started to have separate board meetings. One of the board members explains that it is better to do it this way since “it avoids many things, conflicts, arguments in the general meetings” and then clarifies that at those meetings there are many who do not participate in the discussion in any meaningful way. From a practical point of view, it is easier to have one smaller group discussing problems and solutions and presenting a suggestion to the general meeting. The board has, after all, been elected as representatives of the members. The practicality but potential inequality of having a small group making decisions on behalf of a bigger one is what the debate about representation is about.

As mentioned in the *Literature Review*, Hickey and Mohan (2004b: 15-19) see representation as a natural part of participation as only those with sufficient education and time can participate on high levels. Carrick (2015), on the other hand, clearly states that if participation is to be empowering, give the poor a voice and build their confidence it needs to include people in a more active way than as voters in elections to representative bodies. Seemingly, both representation and non-representation has its benefits. It is worth noting that those who argue for representation are pointing at practicality and scaling up participation to achieve societal transformation whereas those who are against it instead focus on the benefits of strengthening the skills, the confidence and the voice among the poorest. If representation is appropriate might depend on one’s goals.

6.5 PARTICIPATION AS COLLECTIVE POWER

In this section the aim is to take one step back from the current case study and discuss the framework and the connections within it that have been made clear by the case. That the framework has been a good tool for illuminating both aspects where Wale Wale is unique and those where it faces the same dilemma as many other organisations highlights its value and applicability. It has allowed a detailed presentation of a case and drawn attention to both where it confirms the existing

literature and where it seems to contradict it. Now the time has come to address the second research question and move to a higher level of abstraction.

In the data the most obvious connection between the different dimensions is the trade-off between equality and effectiveness, as was touched upon in the final part of the previous section. It was concluded that having a board that prepares suggestions for the general meeting results in increased effectiveness and efficiency since this is a more practical way of working. However, this also gives some larger influence over decision-making than others which can be problematic if one prioritises inclusiveness and equality. Here there is an obvious trade-off between giving as many people as possible a strong voice in decision-making and being able to agree on proposed solutions quickly and with minimal complications. Weaver and Cousin (2004: 25-26) indicate this trade-off when they write that a diverse selection of stakeholders could lead to logistical challenges and decreased manageability. In another study it was mentioned that one reason behind elite capture was that those organising the projects wanted it to be efficient and therefore saw it as important to keep the powerful people happy (Chhotray 2004: 345). Thus the trade-off visible in the case study data is supported by existing literature. This dilemma is what the debate about representation, which was described briefly in the *Literature Review* and revisited toward the end of the section about effectiveness, is about. It was concluded that the desirability of representation depends on whether participation is seen as a means or as an end.

This trade-off can also be applied to the role of experts. Adhiambo and Eriksson have positions of power in Wale Wale, which decreases the equality in the organisation. However, as has been seen, they play an important role in teaching the youth how to run an organisation. Korten writes that if skill-building is done in the community when tasks need to be carried out this keeps the training practical and it also makes it possible to develop the capacity both of the leaders and the regular members (Korten 1983: 191-193). Including experts in the organisation facilitates capacity-building since those who have the abilities needed are part of

the organisation and can continuously pass on the knowledge. Again, effectiveness is difficult to reconcile with equal influence for all members.

The trade-off above is not the only one. There might also be a trade-off between the scope and the degree of power. The more one wants power over, the lower the degree of power over that is likely to be. In *Wale Wale*'s case there is a very high degree of power whereas the scope is limited. The organisation can do little to influence society as a whole and change the situations youths face in school, at home and in the community. A relatively small scope is easier for an organisation to have full control over. It cannot dictate things concerning the rest of society.

A third trade-off can also be found in the case study data, namely between inclusiveness and scope or degree. Having experts in the organisation can reduce the inclusiveness and increase domination since the great majority of the members lose influence relatively to the experts and might be included in fewer decisions. However, this can increase both the scope and the degree of collective power since these experts can help the group to do more without having to share power with external experts. This can be seen clearly in the case of *Wale Wale*: Eriksson and Adhiambo, with their experience of development work, act as the organisation's experts. They have more influence than other members, but they have enabled the group to start a new organisation where they have full control instead of remaining in an organisation where their degree of power was very limited. Considering the important roles Adhiambo and Eriksson played when the organisation was started it is unlikely the organisation could have started without them. Also, without Eriksson's fund-raising skills *Wale Wale* could not have done as much as they do today – the scope of their power would be much smaller and probably not cover school fees and other large expenses.

The study by Wald mentioned above confirms that including experts can increase the scope of an organisation and decrease its dependence on others. Whether this led to an increase in intragroup inequality is not totally clear. Wald writes that the relations were equal, but elsewhere he states that since people have different skills it is impossible to avoid all inequalities in power (Wald 2014: 633-635). Holmén

states that 'elite dominance' in projects and organisations is unavoidable since few people have the skills needed to write formal reports and negotiate with donors (2010: 212-213). Having its own experts or elite members with a higher level of education increases the depth and the scope of the organisation's power. However, since differing skills tend to create unavoidable inequalities it increases the inequality within the organisation.

The trade-offs described above are discernible in the case study data and some of them can also be confirmed by existing literature. When ways to escape these trade-offs were considered an article by Weaver and Cousins was an important inspiration. In it one participatory process manages to combine inclusiveness and effectivity through limiting the degree of power and giving the participatory process a consultative role. The facilitator remained firmly in control and thus it was possible to consult many people without it becoming inefficient (2004: 25-26). This way of thinking was applied to the other trade-offs. Indeed, if one wants to retain a high degree of power and widen the scope one could include more people into the participatory process. However, depending on how it is organised this would either make the process less manageable or, if a representative system is used, less inclusive. The trade-off between inclusion and degree or scope can be side-stepped if one takes pains to avoid that the experts, due to their knowledge are given more influence. All their ideas could be discussed at meetings, or by some committee, and they would not be allowed to make independent decisions. However, this would be impractical and decrease effectiveness.

As the discussion above highlights, it seems impossible to perform perfectly concerning all four aspects of participation: degree, scope, inclusion and effectiveness. One can seemingly reach high ratings on maximum three out of the four dimensions of collective power. A process with a high degree of collective power and a high degree of inclusiveness is likely to be inefficient, especially if the scope is large. To reach maximum scope and degree in an effective manner the inclusiveness must be limited since the decision-making process is easier if few people are included and if some of them has the status of experts. To include

a large amount of people in an efficient way one needs to limit their degree of power. If one minimises the scope it might be possible to allow a whole group the full control over decisions and still have a relatively efficient process. One example of the latter could be how Wales might make petty decisions such as when to clean the youth centre together at the general meetings. However, in such a process the scope must be small both in the case of being an uncomplicated matter and in the sense of not including too many people.

If no participatory process can reach the highest level on all dimensions this also indicates that one instance of participation cannot lead to all the benefits participation is expected to result in. Examples of these were listed in the *Literature Review*. There are benefits relating to the degree (greater voice, power on local level), the scope (an ambitious one covering poverty alleviation, service delivery and wise resource use), the inclusiveness (a fair process resulting in equal distribution) and the effectivity (increased efficiency, local capacity-building and better resource use). It is unlikely that a single project can do all this and therefore participation can easily be criticised for not living up to its promises.

The debate about participation would be more fruitful if it focused more on how the four dimensions identified relate to each other and how the goals of a participatory project determines what values it prioritises and what methods it uses. One must determine if the most important thing is to empower the maximum amount of people, to give local decision-making bodies full control over local issues, to broaden the scope of topics discussed in a participatory forum or to be able to make decisions quickly in response to new developments. This lends emphasis to the point that participation is many different things and therefore must be studied on a case-by-case basis. Instead of trying to draw sweeping conclusions about all types of participation the literature ought to give more attention to which methods that are best suited for different goals, how one finds the right balance between competing values and how one should make decisions concerning the priorities. This would be more useful from a practical perspective and also make the nuances of participation and its dimensions clearer. Cornwall

writes that one should aim for “optimum participation”, a term indicating the right balance between different values (2008: 276).

In Wale Wale Kenya there are both meetings for all members and a degree of leadership from the board. Experts are important for the organisations scope of power and its effectiveness and even though their skills result in unequal power relations their leadership is more about facilitating and organising than making decisions. Wanting to keep its degree of power, but at the same time increasing the scope, the organisation aims to expand and welcome more and more members. That is the balance between the dimensions in the case study in this research project.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has investigated a case of participation that turned out to be quite unique. Wale Wale Kenya is a small participatory NGO that was founded and is run by its target group. They created an organisation for themselves and others like them. This is very different from most development NGOs since these work as partners of the target groups and only invite participants to certain aspects of their work. This study has demonstrated that organisations that are locally founded can help a group to create collective power. They can create a space over which they have full control and then fill it with power to do certain things. This is a good example of when participation can lead to empowerment.

However, it has to be emphasised that this potential does not mean that this type of participation should be the universal ideal. Firstly, there is a limit to the scope of power that can be created through such organisations. To influence things that someone already has power over or to influence political issues a type of participation that includes political decentralisation and formal power transfer is needed. Secondly, as described in the *Literature Review*, not all areas are ripe for participation and not all groups and communities are capable of organising themselves. To be able to create a participatory space a certain capacity is needed.

Even more is needed to create power one can do something useful with. Having some sort of experts as members can solve this problem, but that can result in those experts dominating the decision-making and other members having less influence. This draws the attention to the trade-offs between the different dimensions.

The framework developed for this study has been demonstrated to be a good way of describing a participatory process. The core of participation is collective power and its central dimensions are the degree of power, the scope of its power, its structures of inclusion and dominance and the effectiveness of the process. These vary from process to process. By demonstrating the many possible combinations leading to different types of participation, this framework emphasises the variety of processes included under the umbrella of this concept. It was discovered through this case study that it is impossible to reach the highest levels on all four continuums at the same time. This lends support to those who claim that full participation is an impossible ideal and that the suitable degree depends on the context. This thesis claims that since a participatory project cannot fulfil all ideals it is important that those who want to use participation consider what their main goal is. Based on what they want to achieve it becomes clear what dimensions to emphasise and how to balance different values. It is argued that a four-dimensional conceptualisation of participation facilitates conceptual clarity and makes it easier to describe, differentiate between and discuss different modes of participation. A productive debate about participation ought to focus on the central aspects of the concept, the possible combinations of these and the desirability of different goals rather than on whether participation as a whole is good or bad.

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APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE YOUTH

Introduction

Name:

Age:

Position in organisation:

I need to give you a fake name for the thesis, since you are to be anonymous, do you have any preferences for what I should call you?

Relation to Wale Wale

How long have you been with Wale Wale?

How come you started to come to this organisation?

Have you brought any of your friends or siblings along?

What is your favourite activity at the centre?

Why?

What is the purpose of Wale Wale?

Why do you, personally, like coming here?

Who benefits from Wale Wale?

In the constitution it says that Wale Wale should “promote participation, democracy and transparency” -what does that mean to you?

Decision-making

How are decisions made in Wale Wale?

Do you think this is a good way of making decisions?

Do you take part in making decisions?

Do you think you have influence over what happens in the organisation?

Would you want more influence?

What could give you that influence?

What would you do if you had an idea about something you wanted the organisation to do?

Have you been in this situation? What did you do?

If the board makes a decision you do not agree with, what do you do?

Do you usually agree with the decisions made in the organisation?

Structures of influence

Who leads the organisation?

Who is the most important person in the organisation?

Who is the boss in the organisation?

How would the organisation work without them?

Who comes up with the ideas for different projects?

- school fee campaign

- making studio

- Indian dance show at Uumuntu

Who decides if the organisation should go ahead with them?

How are the different projects planned?

By whom?

Are projects evaluated?

How and by whom?

Who decided on the rules and regulations?

General meetings

What happens at the general meetings?

Do you normally speak at meetings?

(About what? / Why not?)

Who speaks the most?

How many people are usually involved in the discussions?

Do you think there are people who want to speak but don't dare to?

What could help them speak their minds?

Are you confident about speaking in front of others?

Is it difficult to protest when those who are older than you say something?

What is decided at general meetings and what is decided at board meetings?

Do most people come to the general meetings?

How are the general meetings seen among members?

What do you think about the general meetings?

How important do you think they are?

Have the general meetings changed in structure since the organisation started?

How are situations when people have different opinions handled?

Have you seen any conflicts in the organisation?

Are there many conflicts?

Do you trust the other members?

Questions to Board members:

How were people elected to the board?

You have been on the board this year, haven't you?

What has it been like?

Can you describe how a meeting with the board works?

Who is talking the most?

What have you thought about being on the board?

Have you liked it?

Why/Why not?

Do you want to stay on the board next year?

What have you learnt from this experience?

Do you feel differently about your role now compared to when you started?

Are the meetings different now compared to how it was in the beginning of last year?

You have put much work into the organisation. What motivates you?

What if Wale Wale was to close this summer? Would this make you feel/act differently?

To non-board members:

How were people elected to the board?

What does the board of the organisation do?

Would you be interested in sitting on the board, you think?

Why/Why not?

What are the benefits?

What are the drawbacks?

Others

Do boys and girls have the same roles in the organisation?

Do girls speak as much as boys?

Why are there more guys than girls on the board?

Would you want more girls on the board?

How long do you think Wale Wale will be around?

What do you think the organisation will be like in five years?

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH ERIKSSON AND ADHIAMBO

Basic information

Name:

Age:

Position in organisation:

About Wale Wale

Could you please describe Wale Wale as an organisation?

How and why did the organisation start?

What was the starting-up process like?

What was your role in this process?

In the constitution it says that Wale Wale should “promote participation, democracy and transparency” – what does that mean to you?

Decision-making

Can you describe the decision-making structures in the organisation?

Where do most of the ideas and initiatives come from?

-School Fee Campaign

-Creating the Studio

-Sports Project

How are projects planned?

Do you carry out any types of evaluations of projects?

General Meetings

How often do you have general meetings?

Who leads the general meeting?

How many of the members usually attend?

Do you think the members see the meetings as important?

How many of the members speak at general meetings?

Have you noticed any difference in this since the start of the organisation?

Are there people who would want to say something, but don't dare?

How can more people be encouraged to speak up?

How did you decide on the time for the general meeting? (I've heard that some might be in school.)

What is the division of responsibility between the board meeting and the general meeting?

The Board

How does it work to have a board that consists almost exclusively of youths?
(difficulties/benefits)

How were people elected to the board? Nominated?

Why must most board members be over 18?

Could you describe what happens at a board meeting?

What is discussed?

Who leads the meetings?

How many of the board members are active and speak?

Have the board meetings changed in any way since you started the organisation?

Are members informed about what happens at board meetings?

Development of the organisation

In what ways has the organisation changed, or developed, since it was started? (in terms of how meeting works, whether people speak up etc)

Have the youths developed in any way when given more responsibility? How?

How do you try to make the youths active participants?

How do you work with empowerment of the youths?

What is the vision for the future, in terms of decision-making: how would you ideally want it to work?

Your position

Can you describe your role in the organisation now?

Which role do you aim to have in five years?

How do you regard your own position in relation to that of the youth?

How do you think they regard you?

Do you think the youths find it difficult to disagree with you?

What would happen to the organisation without your adult support and experience?

Do you think that the organisation can be run by the youths on their own in the future?

What level of participation is realistic?