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Creating a Safe Haven

Understanding experiences of youth's participation in Kibera –Kenya.

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Abstract

This study explores the experiences of youth's *participation* in a youth-led organisation in Kibera, Kenya. The aim of the study is to interpret and understand the meaning youth attribute to their participation in such an organisation. The study is based on an inductive approach, where data is categorized in themes and explored through concepts like *identity*, and *citizenship*. The data was collected through participatory observations as well as semi-structured interviews. The analysis shows how, in practice, multiple and sometimes unexpected factors can influence the youth's participation in the organisation. It confirms several of the benefits of participation discussed by previous research in the field but also demonstrates how the organisation provides a safe haven and a sense of belonging for the participating youths. However, the need of a safe place for youth, protected from the insecurities of the surrounding society appears to be contradictory to the underlying idea of participation in society that drives youth-led organisations.

Keywords: Youth, Kibera, participation, citizenship, and identity formation.

A big thanks to Wale Wale Kenya, for welcoming me into the organisation as well as in your lives, giving me an experiences of a lifetime. Without all of you, this study would have not been possible.

I am also very grateful of my family and friends. Which have shared this, at times horrific – at times enlightening, process of thesis-writing with all its ups and downs.

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1. Introduction

Exclusion of people in poverty from participating and influencing decisions that affect them and their lives, increase their vulnerability and powerlessness. (Howard & Wheeler, 2015: 565).

The international community has started recognising the potential and power of youth, seeing young people as agents of change and development. A new wave of participatory approaches has emerged, contending old ideas of top-down approaches (Child Fund. 2012). However, the world still has problems ensuring this group an active role in society. When only offering them superficial and limiting participatory opportunities, it results in a lack of opportunity to make any kind of change to core structural questions. One of the greater issues consists of creating platforms where youths are enabled to participate based on democratic principles (UNDESA, 2007).

UNDESA report (2007) states that youths (ages 15-24) constitute 1.2 billion people. Just under 90 percent of them live in developing countries and account for almost 30 percent of the populations with an even higher share in the poorest countries (UNFPA, 2010). This is often referred to as the “youth bulge”.

Children and young people are shaped by the local environment; the social, political economic and cultural structures around them, as well as global issues like migration, climate change, and access to resources (Rock 2012: 343-344). The period of being a youth is marked by the transition into adulthood. It is a time for exploration, and contemplation about the future, which is significantly influenced by available opportunities. For example, the exposure to crime or violence, that can be found in resource-poor urban contexts (slums) can have negative impacts on youth development, like poor academic performances and delinquent behaviour (Kabiru et al, 2013). Which in turn affects their identity formation – shaping who they are now, and will become in the future (Jones, 2009: 18).

1.1 Kenya

Kenya is a country situated on the east coast of Africa. It has a population of about 45 million and is seen to be east Africa's largest economy and a centre for finance and IT. However, the growth is repressed because of the extent of corruption (Landsguiden, 2016).

The youth population (ages 15-30) in Kenya is estimated at 75% of the entire population and the country is considered to have a "youth bulge" (Youth Policy, 2016). With the social changes in Kenya, due to rapid urbanization slums have become the residential reality for many youths. Slums are often disregarded by the local and national government and therefore characterized by high levels of unemployment, inadequate social services, extreme poverty, insecurity, crime, and exclusion (Ndugwa, et al, 2010). About 32% of the youth population live in urban areas. The majority of youth in this group live in slum-communities e.g. Kibera (Kabiru, et al, 2013).

Kibera, an area in the Nairobi, is often described as the biggest slum in Africa. With a population count ranging from 250 000 to 1 million. According to Onyango & Tostensen (2015: 2) about 90 % of the land is owned by the government, which means that 90 % of the tenants in Kibera are without land rights. The area consists of small shacks, is prone to unemployment, poor environmental conditions, limited water supply, poor sanitation, inadequate electricity supply, and access to health facilities. Crime and domestic violence are some of the social issues effecting the large population, as well as alcoholism, unwanted pregnancies, and school drop-outs. However, efforts are being made to improve the situation. (Kibera, 2016; Onyango & Tostensen, 2015: 1-2)

There are changes taking place in Kibera which are based on programmes by NGOs, faith based organizations, UN agencies, and CBOs in the area. These stakeholders recognize the need for education and skills development for youths. Their driving

principle is the need to involve youth in addressing the issues affecting them. Thus, youth is being targeted by interventions with the understanding that youth are often not adequately engaged in society (DFID-CSO, 2010). The NGO Wale Wale Kenya works in Kibera. The organisation bases itself on ideas about participation and ownership by youth's and for youths (Wale Wale Kenya, 2016).

1.2 Background about the case

Wale Wale Kenya is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) located in the area Kibera in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Wale Wale Kenya was established as an organisation in January 2015, however started as a project in 2012 in an NGO called Wayo Wayo Africa (Wale Wale Kenya, 2016).

As described in the constitution, the main objective of the organisation is to eradicate poverty, and improve living standards of persons living in the slums. It is done by identifying and nurturing youth's talents through creative activities, educational support, and economic empowerment. Besides the main objective, the organisation has specific objectives targeting capacity building, informing communities about human and children's rights, promoting participation, democracy, and transparency within the organisation (Constitution, 2016).

By using participation and ownership as fundamental components the organisation is shaped by the involvement of youths. They play important roles both in managing the organisation. By giving youth's access to a meaningful spare time, a chance to explore and develop interests as well as talents, they avert from destructive behaviour. The long term goal of the organisation is to equip youths with the tools they need to build the life they desire (Organisation plan, 2015).

Be the change you want to see in this world (The motto of the organisation, Wale Wale Kenya, 2016)

1.3 Statement of purpose and objective

According to Hart (2007:1) interventions like youth-led organisations where young people participate and contribute, has become a fashionable concept in the world of development. The number of organisations and projects focusing on participation are growing as well as donors and with that, aid. In light of the emerging participatory projects taking place in Kibera, a need of understanding youths own perception about the phenomena is needed. Limited amount of studies has approached the phenomena of youth-led organisations, even though the field of participation long have been studied. Mostly due to the fact that participation studies have focused on understanding the benefits of participation, instead of looking at the structure of the participation projects as well as individual outcomes. Therefore, it is important to understand youth-led organisation contributing influence toward things like the socialisation processes for young people has been absent in today's research.

The study is based on interpreting, and conceptualising the youth's realities by giving them space to express their experiences. The aim of the study is therefore to interpret and understand the meaning youth attribute to their *participation* in such an organisation. Since most of previous research (Schelbe et al, 2015; Ozer, et al, 2013; Ozer & Douglas, 2015; Macdonald et al, 2011) about youth and participation fall under the category of youth-led participatory action research (YPAR), in which young people conduct research aimed at understanding issues concerning youths, by using youths as consultants (Ozer & Douglas, 2015; DFID-CSO, 2012). Limited amount of studies has therefore examined the outcomes of participation in youth-led organisations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to that research field.

1.3.1 Objective

The main objective of the study was to observe and interview youths about their own experiences of being participants in youth-led organisations. Their experiences were analysed and interpreted through the concept of *participation*, in order to

understand how it influences them. By categorizing the data, the objective also became to understand what inter linkage the concepts *identity* and *citizenship* had to participation.

1.3.2 Research question

Since the focus of the study is to understand the youth's experiences of participation in youth-led organisations. The main objectives and aim has been concluded in the main research question;

- **How does youth in a youth-led organisation in Kibera experience participation?**
- How do they perceive their own participation in youth-led organisations?
- In what way does it influence them?
- How do the youths use their opportunity of participation to influence others?

1.4 Disposition of the study

In order to make the study consistent and coherent, it has been outlined as follows. Chapter one aims to give background information about the area of interest as well as a cohesive picture of the aim, and objective of the study. Chapter two reviews previous research done on the two main terms used in the study, namely *youth* and *slums*. The theoretical framework in chapter three contains theorizing on the concepts *identity*, *citizenship*, and *participation* which later are connected to the collected material creating a framework for the analysis. The fourth chapter consists of information about the methodology used in the study. Discussing matters like research design, sampling, ethical considerations and analysis method.

The fifth chapter presents the data collected from the field in connection with the concepts used in the theoretical framework. The data is analysed in order to connect to the aim and objective of the study with the purpose of answering the research questions. The last chapter summarizes the findings of the study, discusses the implications of the results, and concludes the thesis.

2. Previous research

The literature review consists of explaining, and defining the main terms used in the study, *youth*, and *slums* through previous research. The chapter ends with a discussion on the overall limitations of the literature review.

2.1 Material and search

This literature review mainly consists of peer-reviewed articles searched through LUBsearch, a database used by students at Lund University, Sweden. But also reports written by bigger organisations dealing with human development e.g. UN agencies and Child Fund. The reports were found through LOVISA, another database provided by Lund University, Sweden. The main search-words used in different intervals for both the literature review, and the upcoming theoretical framework were; youth, participation, youth-led development, Kenya, Kibera, youth's situation, slums, informal settlements, identity, and citizenship. However, the concepts presented in "Theoretical framework" (3.) are also based on books which are theorising more around them (Jones, 2009; Furlong 2009; Wellros, 1998; Marshall, 1950; Cotterell, 2007).

Chosen articles, and books highlight the research area focusing on the terms *youth* and *slums* as well as the concepts *participation*, *identity*, and *citizenship*, which are most important to understand the purpose of the study. The material is meant to create a framework and base for the analysis and through that answering the main research question: *How does youth in a youth-led organisation in Kibera experience their participation?*

Most of the previous research found is based on literature reviews, especially about the concept of participation (Schelbe et al, 2015; Child Fund, 2012; Checkoway, 2001; Head, 2011). There are only a few (Kabiru, et al, 2013; Ndugwa et al, 2010; Onyango & Tostensen, 2015) that are based on research done in the field. These studies however, are mostly connected to researching the experiences of living in slums.

2.2 Youth

Since researcher has taken a larger interest in the area of children and youth, the awareness of youth being a marginalised, and subordinate group in the adult society has been exposed (Matthews et al, 1999: 135). The issues of today's globalised world are affecting the circumstances of growing up significantly differently from previous generations. The encounter with issues like AIDS, creasing urbanisation, electronic communication, migration, economic challenges has become even more prevalent and influential in young people's lives. In the extension, it adds pressure to a very sensitive time in a person's life moving from childhood to adulthood (Fatusi & Hindin, 2010: 499).

2.2.1 Definition of youth

According to Jones (2009: 1) the notion of *youth* is a social construction, which builds on values, and thoughts based on the current moral, social, and political outlook in society. It is a term that has been evolving over time (Ibid: 2009:1). Therefore, in order to understand the notion of youth, an explicatory definition is provided. It is necessary since it is a more complex issue than the universal definition of youth set by the United Nations. The UN defines youths as people between the ages of 15-24 (Williams, 2012: 266). This definition, however, does not capture the difficulties of regarding all the different psychological, physiological, social and cultural factors when defining who should be considered to be a youth (Rock, 2012: 344).

Research done in West and theories emerged from that context have had the advantage determining what, and who is defined by childhood, and youth. Which in turn influences perception on when youth are made responsible towards society. These perceptions disregard local and cultural perceptions on age and its effect on ability/appropriateness to work, childhood, marriage, age of criminal responsibility etc. (Rock, 2012: 344). Since most of the theories, perceptions about child development, and different psycho-social research is based in Western perspectives, majority of interventions and methods used for children and young are also based

on them (Rock, 2012: 344). The narrow definition does not only fail taking into account different local influences but also the impacts of race, gender, class or cultural context. It discounts the fact that there are no clear marks or shifts between childhood, youth, and adulthood (Williams, 2012: 266).

2.2.2 Perception on youth

For decades there has been a dualistic view on youth, where academia has valued different discourses depending on the time and age (Jones, 2009: 4). Jones (2009) describes seven of these dualistic viewpoints in his book “Youth”. The author describes these dualistic views by discussing science versus nature, biology versus culture, age generation or social class, conflict versus consensus, structure versus agency, structure versus process and contributors versus dependants. Since the last discussion is most relevant for this study, it will be discussed more in detail.

However, Cohen (1997) describes the deficit model in his book “Rethinking the youth question”. A model where young people are neither perceived as children nor adults. By perceiving youth as children, they would be considered as a group in need of compassion and nurture, however if perceived as adults they would be worthy of respect based on their ability to be responsible citizens of society. Researchers like Farrell, 2005; Fisher et al., 2013; Laenen, 2009; Mishna et al., 2004 state that youths instead are viewed as unskilled, immature, incapable and unreliable, stuck in a category in-between children and adults and being perceived as *deficits*.

However, there has been a shift in contemporary research about youths, emphasising their individual agency instead of simply explaining their realities through structural perspectives. Which in return has influenced youth's lives by perceiving them as individuals, giving them individual opportunities instead of only identifying them as a group (Furlong, 2009: 1). Something that Schelbe et al (2015: 506) also points out by stating that researchers have started to value children's perspectives differently, viewing them as able to convey their own realities and

situations. Schelbe et al (2015: 505) believes this is done through youth, and child participation, since it helps to understand their lived experiences and perceptions.

Checkoway (2001: 342) states in his article “What is youth participation?”, that it is not surprising that adults questions the views of youths being seen as resources, since it challenges their own understanding of “youth pathology”. Which in return suppress the opportunity for youths to see themselves as anything but deficits, instead of portraying them as a group that can create change (Ibid). Something that Checkoway (2001) concludes by stating; “However, young people are experts on being young people, regardless of what others think”.

2.3 Resource challenged areas/slums

In order to give a better understanding of the term *slums*, a definition is provided, before going into more specific aspects of youth’s situation in slums.

According to UN-HABITAT (2015) resources challenged areas, marginalised areas, informal settlements, slums are often the description of urban areas which are lacking public and personal resources. They offer scarce housing opportunity, poverty, infectious diseases, lack of sanitation- and draining systems, high unemployment rates, crime etc. Even though they are mostly associated with urban areas in the global south, substandard living conditions can also be found in similar areas in the global north.

The paper from UN-HABITAT (2015) state that informal settlements and slums are caused by a range of interrelated factors, “...including population growth and rural-urban migration, lack of affordable housing for the urban poor, weak governance (particularly in the areas of policy, planning, land and urban management resulting in land speculation and grabbing), economic vulnerability and underpaid work, discrimination and marginalization, and displacement caused by conflict, natural disasters and climate change” (UN-HABITAT, 2015: 2). People in these areas often suffer from harder social and economic exclusion than others living in urban areas.

They encounter difficulties regarding marginalisation based on geographical location, insufficient social services, security issues, poor health due to lack of sanitation and water facilities, limited access to land and property (UN-HABITAT, 2015: 2; APHRC, 2002; APHCR, 2008)

However, some specific groups are more affected by the disadvantages of slum areas. The groups mentioned in the report are women, children, disabled, migrants, and youths (UN-HABITAT, 2015). According to the report (Ibid, 2015) youth are heavily affected by the realities of the slums. Slum classifications as informal has according to Ndugwa et al (2010: 299) given government and local authorities justified reasons to neglect the development of these areas as well as overlook the necessity to provide them with adequate resources.

2.3.1 Youth in slums

The lack of resources provided by the government and support for livelihood in slums as well as lack of opportunities to participate in mainstream society, affects long-term inequality for youth (UN-HABITAT, 2015: 6). The situation for youth and children in slums is connected to even harder realities than in other areas, consisting of *lack of resources* like education and employment opportunities, providing shelter etc. (Kabiru, et al, 2013: 1; Ndugwa et al, 2010: 298). Ndugwa et al (2010: 299) study provides an example from the field of education. An immense difference can be seen in educational attainment or access to educational resources, quality of schools, teacher absence and quantity of schools in slums area compared to non-slum areas. Which is portrayed by the statistics, where only 40 % of children living in slum areas transition from primary to secondary school, whereas in low income areas that number is 90% (Ndugwa et al, 2010: 300). Issues prevalent in the slums like poverty along with lack of educational and employment opportunities has been shown to increase risk of destructive behaviours like drug abuse, crime, risky sexual behaviour dropping out of school etc. (Ibid, 2010:300).

In Onyango and Tostensen's report (2015: 11) "The Situation of Youth and Children in Kibera" they describe the five most dominant issues that youths are facing in Kibera, determined through a survey done in the field; unemployment, drug abuse, lack of education, crime, and insecurity and parental guidance. However, Kabiru et al (2010: 91) also critic this discourse by highlighting the fact that most of the literature about youth in sub-Saharan Africa often focuses on youth being a group at risk. On the other hand, Onyango and Tostensen (2015:11) highlight that over 50 % of the youths declared being involved in positive activities in their communities, like community service, youth campaigns, sport activities, and religious activities. 53 % of the positive activities occurring were undertaken by civil- and international agencies, the government stood for 12 % (Onyango & Tostensen, 2015: 12). According to Kabiru et al (2010: 91) new studies should therefore focus on young people's aspirations and challenges which are crucial parts of creating methods for development

2.4 Limitations of the theoretical background

Some limitations that were encountered when doing the literature review was the fact that most studies published on youth and youth work, were done in a western context. Therefore, it is not without hesitation some of the literature is used in this study, since material is not entirely applicable for the context of this study. Which can correlate to the aspect highlighted in the section "Definition of youth" (2.2.1) which describes youth's circumstances, opportunities, and development as different depending on context.

The concept of youth can be seen as a multidimensional concept, layered with a variety of different aspects, perspectives and discourses. Which need to be kept in mind when using it. Since it can be portrayed as excluding part of the concepts, making it less credible by not presenting all the viewpoints. However, in order to make the concept comprehensible for this study a revised version of the concept is provided.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework highlights the three main concepts used in this study, namely *citizenship*, *identity*, and *participation*. They will be described and discussed from different point of views, lifting the focal points of the concepts used in the analysis of the study.

3.1 Operationalising the theoretical framework

The study deploys an inductive, research approach, meaning that that data is categorized in broader themes and then explored through the theoretical framework. It is a “bottom-up” approach, proceeding from the material that is collected instead of theories (Bryman, 2012: 48). Therefore, the study began by collecting material from the field in order to find patterns and themes that could be interlinked to theories and concepts. Since the study mainly focused on the experiences of the youth, the point of departure for the analysis was their understandings of their participation in youth-led organisations. This was done in order to capture the essence of how, why and if participating in such an organisation can impact youth’s lives. Through this process concepts of citizenship, identity, and participation became evident for the study. However, the theoretical framework is curtailed in order to explain the main ideas of the relevant concepts in a concentrated way. This is purposefully done in order to keep focus on the participant’s experiences. However, it can be understood as a limitation, not exploring different perspectives on the concepts, which are significant for the understanding of the concepts. This is done in order to make the concepts comprehensible for this study and therefore revised versions of the concepts are provided.

3.2 Analytical strategy

The analytic strategy is to use the concept of *participation* as an umbrella concept, in connection with the two main concepts; *identity*, and *citizenship*. They will be analysed by using key themes, like “us- and them” perception, and a “means and an end”. This will forge a relevant basis when discussing the youth’s experiences of participation in youth-led organisations. The concept of participation is crucial

to understand why and how living in slums influences youths need, want and ability to be a part of youth-led organisations. Therefore, five main themes have been brought out from the material, identity formation, living in slums, perception, social citizenship and participation as a means and end. This is done to in order to understand how the concepts correspond to each other and subsequently influence the experiences of the youth's participation.

3.3 Social citizenship

Social citizenship enhances opportunities for inclusion in society since it enables individuals to be a part of decision-making processes (Seebach, 2008: 37; Head, 2011: 544). The concept of social citizenship developed in the twentieth century. It carries the notion that citizens of a nation have the rights to basic welfare provided by the government, which in turn enhances opportunities to exercise their civil and political citizenships. It is therefore dependent on the relationship between the individual and society, through its ability to ensure its citizens *full membership* of the society. By full membership in the society the individual can enjoy universal social rights as well as responsibility, which includes the right to education, a job or other income, housing, as well as social participation and equal terms in society (Marshall. 1950:).

3.3.1 Institutions affecting citizenship

Scholars like Cotterell (2007: 236) have claimed that there are two alternative systems that can promote participation in society and give emphasis on citizenship. *Educational institutions* and *family* have a strong bearing on young people's lives. In the educational system e.g. schools, youth get a sense of belonging to society. By participating in the educational system youth learn how the system works, how to contribute, and be a part of society as well as act out their role as citizens (Head, 2011: 542). Checkoway (2001: 342) explains that young people especially care about schools and education since it is the place where they spend most of their time. Youths are concerned about both questions regarding individual issues as well as structural problems within schools like academic and curricular issues, school facilities, unjust attendance policies or diversity (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster,

2006: 23) According to Head (2011:542) the support of the family is what encompasses a connection to society and by that a meaningful opportunity to participation in decision-making processes. The support of the family is however dependent on their views on social citizenship, and values as well as norms promoted to the children and youths.

3.4 Identity

Identity formation is seen as a process where young people's identities are socially developed by separation from family in order to develop a sense of self (Jones, 2009: 58). It is a partly self-achieved and partly ascribed by social background. It is done by a *socialisation process* where the person inherits norms, values, and customs in order to participate in society. For example, peer-groups can have strong impact on socialisation as well as identity formation since it creates a separation from social background which helps a person explore identity through a new collective identity (Ibid: 61).

In this study identity is understood through sociological interpretations, meaning that the socialisation process as well as social structures are seen as a part of the identity formation, whereas psychological approaches more tend to discuss the individualisation of the identity process (Furlong, 2009: 392).

3.4.1 Identity formation in late modernity

Within youth studies construction and transformation of identity is a relatively new concept, since it has more been focus on the psychological aspects like cognitive skills and adaptation to static social order. The sociological aspect of identity, meaning the linkage to social change has been growing in late modernity. Before, identity formation was seen as a linear process, shaped by gender and social class. By those means identity was shaped by expectations from the people around the individuals well as the context and surroundings. However, because of the social changes in society, people have to take into consideration the uncertainty of the transition-period. More expectations as well as ranging variety of outcomes are influencing people's identity formation. The process has therefore evolved from

being ascribed an identity to a process, and project that needs to be managed (Furlong, 2009: 373).

According to Williams (2011: 269) the time-period of being a youth is considered to be the period a person suffers the most with the anxiety of forming and establishing an individual identity. It is a period when a person seeks social and economic independence. Furlong and Cartmel (2007: 8) state that youths have had opportunities to construct identities based on experiences of significant others, like family and peers. However, in late modernity the process of social change has become an intensified and now based on fragmented experiences. It disables youths to start creating a roadmap which is built in order to make a plan for the future, to be able to manage life. “No one can predict which skills are needed in the future” (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007: 9).

Identity formation comes from socialisation in different groups. The family is the first group of socialisation, this is where individuals learn the norms, values, and behaviours that shapes identity. The next phase of identity formation and socialisation process is most commonly taken by the school and educational institutions (Cotterell, 2007: 226). According to Jones (2009: 85) the responsibility for identity building and socialisation has become bigger on the family, since the transition process into adulthood has prolonged, due to globalisation, lack of employment opportunities etc.

Based on the earlier described factors, Van de Walle et al (2011: 222) claims that socialisation and identity formation has fallen onto a *third institution* since family and schools cannot handle the whole socialisation process on their own. Cotterell (2007: 223) states that community and youth organisations create an opportunity for youths to build a wider network by creating relationships with adults outside the family and other youths. Furlong and Cartmel (2007: 11) however asserts that even though other institutions are making way for a socialisation alternative, some

youths lack resources to be able to participate in activities or to socialise with people from other social positions.

This can correlate to the conception of social identity. Social identities are the way individuals identify or define themselves, and others based on general categorisations like sex, age, ethnicity etc. Since the social identity is formed through interactions with groups, it is socially constructed. The social identity has a subjective and an objective part, where the subjective expresses the attributes you give your identity, and objective what other people connect to your social identity. This creates inside and outside-groups, like “*us and them*”. In order to gain a membership in an inside group, subjective and objective views need to correlate. The borders between different groups are drawn stricter that are similar to each other in values and interest (Wellros, 1998: 115-120).

3.5 Social participation

In order to understand the concept of *participation* it needs to be explored within the agenda of development. Holland et al (2015: 77) states that methods of participation within development has long been perceived as a way to increase effectiveness in certain development interventions, but also to promote wider social change. Parfitt (2004: 537) mentions that it has become conventional in articles on participatory development to promote the huge benefits of this approach. It has become one of most influential approaches in mainstream development schemes.

Modern-day participatory methods are development methods that are based on local knowledge about local conditions, which includes the “poor” emancipation to lead their own development opportunities (Wenar, 2006: 16). According to (Bryant, 2015: 30) there must be a space that enables participation and where production of knowledge can be nourished through *meaningful involvement* of the targeted people (Bryant, 2015: 30).

However, Holland et al (2015: 77) portray that the outlook on participation has changed over time, where participatory methods were perceived as a normative practice based on a hierarchical framework. Even though participation, in the 1980s, was a reaction against top-down investments, it was still built on a neo-liberal focus where the main aim was to improve and sustain development outcomes. In the 1990s the development agencies worked for connecting the approach to promotion of social justice, by shift focus to governance, accountability and empowerment (Ibid: 78).

Leavy & Howard (2013: 6) have done 84 studies on participation from 107 countries and derived to the conclusion that the provision of information and resources are of the utmost importance in order to prohibit different forms of exclusion within the participatory approaches in development. Especially for marginalised and excluded groups in society. According to Bryant (20015: 28) the methods also need to reflect the needs of the beneficiary groups, not delivering standardised development schemes without reflection and input from the local community. Especially since the benefits does not reach the most vulnerable groups in society due to a lack of information and knowledge, lack of transportation, hidden costs, short-term coping strategies which sacrifice long-term needs. Beneficiaries are often the most literate, least geographically isolated, and most politically well-connected in society (Mansuri & Rao, 2012; Leavy & Howard, 2013). However, Parfitt (2004: 538) emphasise that participation needs to be portrayed as both *means and an end* itself. When it is understood like an end in itself it becomes an emancipatory practice.

3.5.1 Youth participation

Youth participation which is based on the principles of social participation target youth as the main focus (Checkoway, 2011: 341). The concept of youth participation is considered incoherent and difficult to define since it has roots and theoretical basis in different disciplines like sociology, psychology etc. (Seebach, 2008: 37). In Checkoways article (2001: 341) “What is youth participation?” the

author also describes the multiple objectives, outcomes and assessment criteria's that are put on the concepts youth participation. Farthing (2012: 73) goes even further and states that youth participation should be defined as "a process where young people, as active citizens, take part in, express views on, and have decision-making power about issues that affect them". Based on a sum up of fourteen different definitions of youth participation. However, he also concludes that this is part of normative thinking about the concept.

According to several researchers (Checkoway, 2011: 341; Merkle, 2003; Head, 2011) youth participation is seen as an important method and concept to use since it helps youths to understand, value and use their rights as citizens as well as helping them with personal development and acquiring both knowledge and practical skills in order to contribute to a more democratic society. Farthing (2012: 74) formulates the justifications for youth participation as; fulfilment of young people's rights; empowering youth; making policies and services efficient; and helping develop young people.

Matthews et al (1999:135-136) discusses that unlike other marginalised group children and youth do not have the opportunity to discuss their needs and aspirations since they are in an uneven power position in regards to adults and therefore hold a special position of exclusion. Checkoway (2001: 342) portrays that the view power imbalance is due to the view on youth as victims or problems of society. Professionals therefore mostly allocate resources or create policies with focus on youth's deficit instead of focusing on youth's assets, and strengthening their role in society. Matthews et al (1999: 135) uphold the central idea of creating opportunities for this group to be involved in decision-making concerning their own lives, as well as issues in society.

3.5.2 Youth-led interventions

Youth participation can take multiple forms, for example through youth-led research, community organising, youth organisations, and policy development

(Suleiman et al, 2006: 126). This study focuses on youth-organisations and in particular youth-led organisations.

Zimmerman's study (2007: 299) about *youth-led organisation* in the US described that it is the youth organisations that are dealing with the most pressing social issues concerning youth. The organisations are putting youth in the centre by giving them leadership and decision-making opportunities which in turn is in creating space for young people to develop artistic, personal and practical skills. According to Zimmerman (2007:300) by challenging youth to lead and govern, young people have taken positions and roles that normally are held by adults in community organisations. Youth-led organisations help develop democratic structures, redefine intergenerational relationships and become an environment for personal and social development.

The internet is nowadays perceived as a way of increasing opportunities for participation in democratic processes. Young people are the most advantaged group of this new phenomena (Vromen, 2008: 79). Three areas of usage can be understood when using internet as a participatory space. As an information, giving information about social, and political issues, as a communication arena building on communication like email, blogs, and a virtual public sphere, where opinion formation by providing a platform is created (Vromen, 2008: 81). The study concludes that the internet creates an access for young people to express their views and opinions since other arenas are still exclusionary. Internet therefore becomes a space of sharing, discussing and building on information (Vromen, 2008: 94-95).

3.5.3 Critique to participation

One of the main critiques about participatory approaches and methods voiced by authors like Cooke & Kothari (2001: 3) arguing that "rather than empowering those at the grass roots, it simply provides alternative methods for incorporating the poor into the projects of large agencies which remain essentially unaccountable to those they are supposed to serve." Farthing (2012: 91-92) looks upon three critiques

towards youth participation namely radical, conservative and secular. Radical critique portrays participation as a form of social control, where it can be understood that including young people in decision-making processes can exercise power over them since they are not able to partake in the negotiations of terms for participation. The conservative critique instead raises the issue of considering young people's participation in decision-making naïve. With this critique young people are seen as limited in what they know and understand because of their cognitive development and therefore not suitable to over-take the roles of experts and expert knowledge. The third critique, secular critique, evokes the view that participation has missionary tendencies. All the different angles of critique however basis itself on the imbalance of power and the fact that the limitations of participation can be based on principles reinforcing existing inequalities (Cooke & Kothari, 2001: 5).

3.6 Limitations to the theoretical framework

The main limitation is the difficulties finding critical material on participation as well as research that does not have a normative stance. Most of the literature focuses on participation as means for development and without really discussing the foundation of the concept, where it originated from and how it is working now. Since the concept is built on so many different disciplines and basis, it is hard to use it as a unified concept.

4. Method

In this chapter I will in detail describe the overall research strategy and design of the study in order to make my choices and research process as transparent as possible. It will also connect to ethical considerations done in the study considering research method and sampling. Lastly, this chapter connects the data derived from the field with the method of analysis as well as discussing the limitations of the study.

4.1 Research strategy

In research the concepts of coherence and consistency are expanded as quality criteria's for all different research strategies and designs. Coherence stresses how the individual parts of the study cohere with each other, while consistency regards the consistency of usage of theory, concepts and methods throughout the study (Justesen & Mik-Meyer, 2010). In order to understand the consistency, the overarching theoretical underpinnings of the study will be briefly discussed.

The ontological positioning of this thesis is based on constructivism. Constructivism emphasise that social phenomena are created through social interaction and that knowledge is ever-changing (Bryman, 2012: 33). This study is based on the youth social interaction in a certain place and time, which forms their experiences of participation in youth-led organisations. Since the emphasis also is to understand how participation influences other areas of youths lives, like identity formation, the social context of the youths becomes of the utmost importance.

The overall aim of the study to interpret and understand the meaning youth give to their opportunity to participate in youth-led organisations. Therefore, the epistemological positioning of this study is based on hermeneutics, in order to create an understanding on how representation of issues are constructed in the social world (Bryman, 2012: 618). Since this study puts emphasis on the interpretations made about the youth's own experiences, which is shaped by the interaction with

their surroundings, hermeneutics is most suitable to understand how knowledge is created.

The ontological and epistemological approaches shaped the theoretical framework used to interpret the data produced within the study. Since young people in today's society are considered to be a target-group for multiple interventions, there is a need to make their voices heard about matters concerning and affecting them, something that is lacking in the research community today. Scholars like Schelbe et al (2015: 505) states that "recently researchers value children's perspectives, seeing children as active agents in constructing and communicating their own realities".

4.2 Research design

Considering the study's focus on the case of one youth-led organisation, it is marked by being a case-study. However, the focus is on the youth's participation, and the ability to apply their views on youth-led organisations on more general terms. Therefore, the research design shows elements of being both a case-study as well as a cross-sectional study. Case studies often require intense analysis of a case, often based in specific setting's like an organisation or a community, while cross-sectional studies focus on generating statements that apply regardless of time and place (Bryman, 2012: 66, 69).

4.2.1 Research reflexivity

In order for the reader to understand the choices made in this study, I will try to reflect around them and their implications. As a social worker I have had previous experience of working with youths. The strength of the group, as well as the outlook on this group is what made me want to study it further, but in a development context. During my master studies in the field of development, most of the research is focused on western-led development, development aid or development done by experts. However, during a course called "Participatory development" at Lund University in the spring of 2015, I developed the idea of studying youths through the concept of participation. The initial focus was to give them an opportunity to

make their voices heard about youth-led organisations. However, during the fieldwork the focus changed into aiming more towards understanding the attribute they put on their participation. The whole research idea can however seem contradictory since I created an opportunity for them to participate based on my premises, instead of creating it with them. Which is the basis for true participation.

This case and particular organisation, Wale Wale Kenya, was chosen because of its unique internal structure and base on democratic principles. By intensively searching the Internet, a handful organisation focused on youth-led organisations were found, however after reaching out to eight different organisations, the response was low. Wale Wale Kenya was then found through contacts at Lund university and entry to the field was given through a gatekeeper, one of the founders of the organisation.

When entering the field, I had little prior knowledge about the organisation, Wale Wale Kenya and its structure. The information I had was given by a former intern as well as some information which was found on their website. However, the main thing that drew me to this particular organisation was the set-up of youths being both board members, project leaders, and voting members in the organisation. The fact that participation was not only a word that was used, but also implemented in the structure of the organisation, is what made me want to understand the youth's experiences in this particular organisation.

In order to reflect on impacts made on the study, the term of trustworthiness is discussed. According to Bryman (2001) some qualitative researchers state that by using the concepts of validity and reliability you can actually capture the social reality. However qualitative researchers Lincoln and Guba (1985) discard these concepts saying that the theories and concepts created by researchers only constitutes representations of the social reality. They instead focus on trustworthiness (Bryman, 2001). Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasises the importance of the concept of trustworthiness for the study in order to evaluate its

worth. Trustworthiness is a mostly used by researchers with a constructivist outlook and is a mechanism to ensure the requirement of probing the validity of data that is collected (Mathison, 2005: 425).

Credibility is a concept that refers to the data's truthfulness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Since the study focused on understanding and bringing forward the youth's own truths as well as perceptions on the subject at hand, the data became more reliant. However, there were numerous aspects that needed to be taken into consideration which could affect or hamper the truthfulness of the results. Most aspects involved me as a researcher and my position in connection to the participants.

The main aspects were concerning power structures, e.g. me being an adult versus them being youths, as well as me coming from a Western country. By being an outsider I could have made them reluctant to answer truthfully and instead answer the way they thought I would want. Or they could have felt intimidated to say no to participating in the study. However, by spending time with them and being at Wale Wale Kenya's centre for almost 1 month before conducting the interviews, it most likely had a reassuring effect. They started seeing me as a person wanting to learn, and know more, instead of just being an outsider. However, in order to get the truth, they needed to have a connection to me, feel that I was equal to them and by that minimising the effects of the power structures. Therefore, I engaged in different activities with them, in order to make them feel that I was on the same level. Through these measures they became indifferent to the other dynamics which I think made them be more truthful towards me. However, the study was done with a limited amount of time, which of course affected the outcomes, and the ability to show the truth through deeper discussions, interviews or observations.

Another parameter that needs to be discussed is the ability to transfer the study's findings to other contexts and settings, in order to make more generalised conclusions (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Guba and Lincoln (1985) argue that this

parameter can be eased through thick descriptions. That is why I deployed such a rigorous method chapter, so the research process can be followed in detail. However, since this study was done in a specific context and organisation, the transferability to other contexts could be difficult. Concerning the target-group, the biological stages of adolescences are somewhat equivalent all over the world, no matter of the context, e.g. biological changes, growing of reasoning etc. However, the contextual differences of societal structures play a significant part in this study, which makes this study low in transferability. Nevertheless, it is not a major concern for this study, since the focus was to bring contextual factors for the interviewed youths forward. Factors like living in slums, and to show how the ability to participate shaped their interaction with their surroundings as well as impacted their identity formation.

The parameter of dependability explores the consistency of the findings and probability of repeating the study. Therefore, the study's limitations are explored throughout the study, to ensure that dependability is possible and promoted. By using multiple methods, such as participatory observations, semi-structured interviews as well as documents to gather data, it was possible to give fuller descriptions in the study. That is why discussing every step in this study was necessary, in order to understand the approach that was taken and why.

The assurance of conformability of the study is mostly promoted through the interaction with the research area and participants. Undoubtedly, the pre-knowledge about the world, the area, former experiences affects the neutrality of me as a researcher, as well as the ability to interpret the data according to those influences. In this study my previous work experience with young people and my social position with a background as a social worker played a role when entering the field. Probably I was prone to participate more than another researcher would do, engaging informally with the youths in the organisation. Even though prior knowledge could have influenced me as a researcher, the inductive approach of the study ensured that the study was built on empirical material gathered through

observations, and interactions with participants. After several sessions of interpretation, it was connected to theoretical knowledge situated within the research area. The theoretical conclusions were therefore based on the participant's words which were coded, divided into themes, and analysed through thematic analysis.

Another aspect that gave influences on the material and created some hindrance was the language. Even though all participants spoke fluent English, there were differences in how they expressed themselves, which words were used etc. The language differences became prominent when using the word "affect" during the interviews. Since several of the questions in the interview-guide were framed with the word affect, the answers given were prone to negative attributes by the youths. Which was taken in consideration during the last interviews, choosing words like influence instead. The data also showed a variance in the fluency in English between younger and older youths, where the younger youths had a harder time understanding some questions and formulations which needed repetition and reformulations. Something that could affect the study's credibility by giving room for misinterpretations.

4.3 Research methods

Within the research multiple methods were used for data collection, since the environment and type of study best allowed it.

4.3.1 Primary sources

4.3.1.1 Initial observations

Since the research area was so specific, based in a certain environment where the youths were already spending their time the first attempts of data collection were through participatory observations. They were done for a period of two weeks in February 2016. I was granted access to the field by the founders of the organisation, being introduced as a student from Sweden, wanting to do research about the organisation. In order to capture the nature, and feeling of the environment and

people within the organisation I observed as well as participated in dance classes, staff meetings, Saturday-lunches for all the members, football practices, and so on. Through the observations I required field notes which were written for the first 4 days and then on a needs-basis, following a specific event or conversation. By this process the study became iterative, since the research question was shaped through collecting, and analysing the data from the initial observations, shaping the question; How do youth in a youth-led organisation experience participation? (Bryman, 2012: 387).

4.3.1.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to build a deeper understanding of the youth's experiences semi-structured interviews were conducted with the youths, building on the initial data from the observations. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to seek clarification and elaboration on the answers given as well as enabling him/her to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Since the initial observations, and informal interviews had given an indication of how youth were participating in the organisation, I found it more relevant to understand how they actually experiences their participation. Semi-structured interviews were used since they allow the researcher more exploratory freedom than the standardised interview approach, while still providing a structure for comparability compared to the focused interview technique (May, 2001). Within these interviews the open-ended questions were focused on eight overall topics:

1. Youths situation in Kenya,
2. Living in a marginalised area,
3. Youths situation in Kibera,
4. Youth-led development and the organisation,
5. Youth-led organisations,
6. The organisations effect on society,
7. Personal engagement with the organisation

8. The organisations personal affect

These eight topics related back to the general research question and a number of sub questions touching upon personal feelings, attitudes and thoughts about the leadership of the organisation, as well as how it affected individual youths, connected with the fact that they lived in slums.

The interviews were conducted at a location of the informant's choice, all however felt more comfortable having the interviews at the youth centre, since most of them live overcrowded and there are not many alternative places in the area. They were conducted over a period of 3 weeks in February and March 2016. Several of the informants were still in school during the days and therefore could only be interviewed in the evenings. Which could cause some problems since they also had homework and other obligations to attend to. That is why an interview-guide was made and tested (Appendix 2), to ensure that the interviews did not take longer than 50 minutes. After a couple of interviews were managed, preliminary analysis was conducted in order to start the process of generating theoretical patterns and themes. When all the interviews were finished the material from the interviews was transcribed in order to create transparency about the material, and to facilitate the coding process, using thematic analysis.

4.3.1.3 Final observations

When doing the preliminary coding of the interview data, new questions arose and needed to be looked at. As a way new participatory observations were done sporadically during the month of March. In order to understand how the intervention, youth-led organisations affect the youth's opportunity and ability to participate in society. The observations contained of informal interviews with the youths that are members of the organisation as well as participation in different activities like annual meeting, planning of a future dance-project and everyday activities like dance, blogging, acting were the youths tried to extend different subjects out in the society.

4.3.2 Secondary sources

To give the study some anchoring in the actual case and more practical knowledge to the reader, I decided to include the organisations website as well as their constitution and organisation plan for 2015 as a source of data for the analysis. As well as one of the youth's blog, which was used after oral consent from the author. They were used in conjunction with the primary data in order to give more substance to the interpretations made in the analysis.

4.3.3 Ethical considerations for research methods

Ethical considerations usually deal with issues like voluntarism, integrity, confidentiality and anonymity. According to the Swedish research council there are four principals that need to be consulted during a research project: the principal of information, of consent, of confidentiality and of usage (Vetenskapsrådet, 2016). By starting the interviews by informing the participants about the study, the purpose, confidentiality and usage of the study insurance of ethical research conduct was obtained (Appendix 1). All the participants also were informed that the study was voluntary and that it could be discontinued at any point in time. The informants had to be above 15 years of age in order to participate in the study, a requirement based on the importance to understand the consequences of the study and to on its own derive to a decision to participate or not. Also since the Swedish law of ethical consideration implies that children/youth above the age of 15, can make an informed decision about participating (Codex,2016). The participants were informed of the fact the study was conducted in only one setting, consisting of only one case, which could affect the possibility of recognition. The organisations real name was used in the study after consent provided from the board, and one of the founders of the organisation. The purpose was to provide transparency to the study. I decided to include the name since the material did not touch on sensitive subjects that could in any way harm the participants or be used against them along with the fact that the study was based on anonymity.

4.3.4 Sampling

The sampling for the study consisted of youths participating in the programs of the particular organisation (Wale Wale Kenya) in focus. Since the study was done within the organisation, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling entails initial material collection from a group of people relevant to the research topic which further leads to contacts with other informants (Bryman 2012: 202). The first group of youths were chosen due to their availability to participate in the study and further on other youths were chosen. The participants of the study were however chosen in regards to three main criteria's, where age was most prioritised. Which was done in respect to the Swedish law of ethical consideration, presented before (3.3.3 Ethical considerations for research methods). The other criteria's were membership in the organisation of study and if they were residents of Kibera.

For other factors influencing the sampling for the study, consideration about mix of gender, positions in the organisation, tribal and educational background were made, in order to get a wide perspective on the phenomena participation in youth-led organisations. The youths interviewed ranged from the ages of 16 to 22 and were a mix of 3 girls and 6 boys, some were still in high school, some were pursuing higher education in form of college and some that had own businesses on the side. All youths had been members of the organisation, however, the membership ranged for different time-periods from nine years to one month, in order to get a variety of perspectives from new to old members. There was also a mix of employed youths, project leaders, and youths that only came to participate in the programs and activities of the organisation. In order to understand if the experience of the organisation being youth-led was different between the ones who actually benefited financially from the organisation and had more knowledge about the overall structure of the organisation in contrast to those who came to participate and had a bit of an "outside" perspective.

4.4 Limitations

Throughout the completion of this study some limitations were experienced due to different factors encountered by the researcher, affecting the coherence of the study. Since the study was done within a limited time-frame factors like number of informants, depth of study and range in research area was compromised. Even though the study has influences of ethnographic¹ field work, the limited time-frame made it impossible to go into depth in the field through longer observations over a longer period of time. The observations done in the study, therefore only shows a glimpse of what the reality is for the participating youths and cannot show the impacts from a longitudinal perspective. That is also why semi-structured interviews were chosen as a data collection method, in order to get material from the field from the limited amount of time.

However, the sampling size was also relatively small since the organisation was limited in participants and there were limitations on when the interviews could be done and how much material could be handled in a thesis of this size. Therefore, the study does not represent the whole organisation or youth-led organisations overall, it instead gives an indication on aspects that can be understood from young people's involvement in these types of organisations and give youths a platform to make their voice heard about their experiences.

Had there been an opportunity to do a deeper study, a larger sample size as well as large a selection of more youth-led organisations would have been recommended to give more information to the study. In order to give a wider range of credibility to the research. However, the organisations would have been needed to be situated within Kibera since the scope of the study was not to interview people outside of Kibera. As the study focused on youths living in slums, and conditions that were interlinked to that aspect.

¹ Ethnography; Methodological tool to use when gathering, and analysing data. Often used in anthropology.

By using multiple methods, the study was however given a depth. By using both participatory observations, informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews I was able to emerge even deeper in the field to understand the reason for the youth's experiences.

4.5 Analysis Method

Thematic analysis was used to code and analyse qualitative data. It allows for the opportunity to gain insightful interpretations that are contextually grounded, and identify larger patterns and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 6). Which falls in line with the interpretivist theoretical basis of the study. The material was firstly coded through a coding guide, putting emphasis on perspectives, and factors that were shown frequently in the data. For example, the use of the description of the organisations as being a "home". The codes were then set into different themes which consisted of different perspectives of the same occurrences. The themes identity formation, living in slums, perceptions, social citizenship, and participation as a means and end, are presented in the analysis chapter and connected to the concepts of *citizenship*, *participation* and *identity*. According to Braun & Clarke (2006: 16) thematic analysis should not be a linear process, it should go back and forth, in order to develop the content of the study over time. As can be seen in this study where the initial approach was focused on the fact that the organisation was youth-led, but changed directions after the coding to instead have the main focus on participation. Therefore, when the analysis took shape, the themes were in different ways connecting to participation and understanding other concepts influence on participation and vice versa.

5. Analysis

The analysis is based on the interviews and observations that were done in the field, with connection to secondary sources like organisational plan and the organisations constitution. They are interpreted through the theoretical framework in order to understand the experiences of the youths, giving an opportunity to draw conclusions based on the interpretations. The objective is to see deeper in the material than the face-value. That is why the five themes; identity formation, living in slums, perceptions, social citizenship, and participation as a means and end, are twisted and turned. In order to understand and interpret the data in a multifaceted way *participation* is used as umbrella concept for the analysis in connection with the concepts *identity*, and *citizenship*. The analysis helps in answering the main research question; *how youth in a youth-led organisation experience participation?*-from multiple angles, by exploring the influence of the area, the organisation, and other factors.

The analysis chapter begins with an introduction which is based on the initial observations that were done in the field. The environmental depiction, is a way of getting a feel of my experience in the field and place of study. It is important to set the tone of the study for the reader to understand the surrounding and actual context, in order to understand the interpretations made in the analysis.

5.1 Introduction

"It is my first day at the centre. Since it is afternoon a lot of younger children as well as youths are here. I am struck by all the colours. The house where the centre is, is painted in a bright yellow and red, and the door is sky-blue. I am sitting outside on the patio (which is a dirt floor) just outside of the centre. I have been shown around by one of the youths, explaining how the centre works, showing me the different rooms, and telling me all the children's name as they pass by. Most of the rooms were small, at least for the amount of people that were visiting the centre and participating in the activities. Right now dance-class is in session, where there are about 20 people dancing in a small room, which is about 3*5 m. Everyone looks

happy though, smiling together, laughing, children together with older youths. I am amazed by the liveliness of the people and the place" (Observation note 2).

5.2 Identity formation

As described in the theoretical framework (3.3 Identity) the concept of identity is understood as a social construction formed through social interaction and social relationships, where social structures and social change affect that formation. Identity formation therefore becomes a part of the socialisation process.

Since more emphasis is put on a third institution to help provide tools for socialisation and guidance in identity formation, the youths participation in the organisation is highly affecting these processes. Therefore, their experience of participation is discussed through the lights of these two sub-themes, unity and “us-and them”.

5.2.1 Unity

In Kabiru et al (2013: 82) as well as Yndigeg (2003: 248) studies it can have been seen that young people living in marginalised areas maintain high ambitions and express strong desire to move out of the slums. They perceive slums as areas that limit their chances for success. Their want and need of residential mobility is seen as one of the tactics young people use to find better opportunities to achieve their life goals, which can be interpreted in this study’s material as well. Even though the youths praise the unity, sense of family, the closeness, and the feeling of help when you need it,-the want for something more, something better becomes even more prioritised.

When working through the data the word unity becomes prevalent. In order to understand the interviewed youth’s experiences, their surroundings, how they value their area, the organisation, and their future, the concept of unity will be analysed. It will both be discussed through its connection to identity formation as well as an end product of participation.

Several of the youths talk about the need of unity, the strength of being a family, and being together. They talk about these factors as something that is of the utmost importance, both as a cornerstone of the organisation as well as the main strength and highlight of living in Kibera. It is the sense of unity, community and feeling a part of something that seems to be meaningful for the youths.

But in Kibera people are living as a family, as one community. So that's what I love about it. People share your problems, they share your happiness, they share everything they have with you. Like just a family.

This quote brings forward the importance of being a family, sharing your life with people that are equal to you, with similar circumstances. In all interviews this sense of community and family is described, when describing Kibera. Something that can connect to Yndigeg's (2003) study about periphery areas in Denmark, where it could be seen that marginalised areas often had a hold of it residents since the residents created an identity around it. The youths in Kibera feel that they can relate to each other and how it is to grow up, and be a young in areas like Kibera. They can relate to the struggles that are prevalent there, like poverty, educational and employment issues. Which they believe others, like government or other institutions do not understand or even want to know about.

Also when discussing about the strength of the organisation and the main reasons for spending time there, *the sense of belonging*, and unity can be distinguished as the common incentive. In this quote, one of the youths addresses the reason for coming to Wale Wale, every day for several years.

The unity. How people relate in Wale Wale, we are like family. And if you go one day without coming to Wale Wale it feels like: There is something I haven't done today. So I must go to Wale Wale. That's how people relate. We are like family. We forget about our differences, when we come here we are just equal. We forget where we come from, everything about Kibera,

where we come from. When we come to Wale Wale we are just one and that makes me so happy.

The unity that the youths are talking about is an intricate part in the concept of participation, since it helps build relationships and ties between participants, like described in the theoretical framework (3.3.1 Identity formation in late modernity). By participating in social activities, like the organisation the youths are gaining a sense of belonging both in the neighbourhood and in the organisation, as depicted in the quote.

The youth's experiences are interpreted as creating an interlinkage between the concepts of identity and participation, in this study. Participation becomes a crucial component of identity formation, and socialisation for these youths since it impacts their view points, values, and norms. The sense of belonging helps them connect, in this case to Wale Wale Kenya, which aims to provide healthy and positive values. The values are internalised by the youths thorough the interaction they have with other participants, which further helps them counteract social isolation and exclusion. *Unity* therefore becomes an end product of participation since it helps the youths to involve themselves in something that provides them with positive elements like a space to interact with equals. However, when the identity formation process has started, and the youths have had the opportunity to form relationships and ties, the sense of belonging becomes equally important for participation. Since it makes the youths come back to the organisation and continue participating in the activities.

It is also portrayed in the next quote where one of the youths is talking about what is lacking and needed in Kenyan society in order for youths to be more active in change and development of the country. It connects to the concept of ties and relationship, which relates to the other statements about what is the focal point of unity in Kibera and the organisation.

And the Kenyans should love one another. It doesn't matter where you come from, it doesn't matter if you are blue, yellow, brown, pink, it doesn't matter. Because we are all one and we are all united. So I think that is something every Kenyan should have in their mind. Then if everyone has that in their mind, they I am sure it would really make a change.

Therefore, it is crucial for youth organisation, as well as other institutions working with youths, to know what implications they have on identity formation. As well as understanding what responsibility to provide participatory projects that are built on democratic values and equality. By embracing the fact that they become the third institution, described in "3.3.1 Identity formation in late modernity", that impact young people's identity formation.

However, there is a dichotomy in statements about unity being the most important thing for the youths. By interpreting other statements made by the youths a clear urge to change locations, move out from the slums, and in one way break the bond of unity becomes prevalent. Several of the youths describe that in other areas in Nairobi (Estates) unity is not seen as an important feature in society. When discussing about the future, majority of the interviewed youth's express desires of moving away from Kibera. They perceive things like security as well as other opportunities regarding employment and education as higher *priorities* than the sense of belonging and unity. Even though the sense of belonging and unity is one of the most valuable things for them right now they, without consideration can revert from it.

For now, I have no choice. I really don't have much choice now, but maybe when I finish all my... my career takes me somewhere, then I can someday live in another place. But for now, I was born... I was raised here in Kibera, so... I think you don't have a real choice. ...But I want to like upgrade and live somewhere else, somewhere much better... I don't want to spend the rest of my life here. You know some people got stuck in Kibera. They get...

they are born here, they want to stay here, they get married here and they die here. I don't want that. I want more...

Maybe we need to understand why it is more important with unity in slum areas, than in other areas, which are more affluent. What mechanisms are causing this clash of priorities? From the statements made by the youths it can be understood that the youths in their current situation, need and value the things that they have around them. Since there is a lack of material things, security, housing facilities, they instead install value in the relationships they have around them. It can be interpreted that the sense of community is an answer, and an alternative to the lack of societal structures in the slums. When the government cannot provide the help that people need, people come together and help each other (Cotterell, 2007, Jones, 2009). As discussed earlier in the section, it can also be understood from the quotes about the organisation that it provides an opportunity for the youths to feel unity. It is a place where they can come together and feel free because of the promotion of equality. Some of the younger youths describe congested home-environments, where people live on top of each other. They express an inability to be themselves, and be understood for who they are, and their interests in creative forms of expressions. Therefore, the organisation offers an *alternative space* to spend their time, together with other like-minded people.

However, the organisation can be interpreted as having a contradictory effect on the youths. By giving them opportunities to participate in the organisation the youths are experiencing a sense of belonging to something that brings them together, and that makes them part of a bigger group, and wider community. Which in a way hinders some of the youths from taking steps to move out from the slums, by fearing to lose that connection. "I would like to move, but I also like staying in Kibera, coming to Wale and being with everyone here". At the same time, it helps the youths to internalise values on wanting to live a better or different kind of life, something that the youths interpret as, better than living in slums. Which in a way alters their values as well as priorities, makes them wanting to move away and live

without the same sense of community that they cherish today, in their everyday life. This will be discussed further, introducing another angle on this contradictory effect in the next section, 5.3.1 “Creating inclusion?”.

5.2.2 Us and them

The opportunity of participating not only gives the youths a sense of belonging, it also gives them *something to do*, after school, after work, or even as an employment opportunity. However, participation can also have less desirable effects, like creating *differentiation*.

The notion of “sitting idle” was consistently seen in the data, where two youths mentioned; “sitting idle, that’s the devils workshop”, and “idle-minds, devils workshop”. The meaning of these statements is that by doing nothing and having nothing to do, youth turn to alternative ways of passing time. It can be through destructive things like crime, drugs etc. It can be connected with the living area and factor that were raised in Onyango & Tostensen (2012) study about how people in slums do not have productive means to activate themselves. Which in return shape others views on them as youths from Kibera, which will be discussed further in 5.4 “Perception”. Wamucii (2011:195) describes in the study that the youth from a slum area were seen as different to the “good people” in society (own emphasis).

The data distinctively portrayed participation as a means to counteract the idleness². However, in order for participation to take place the location and space available for young people is of importance. The spaces that influence individuals are the spaces where they interact with others as a part of their socialisation process.

Living in Kenya, somehow for me is easy and sometime also hard. Because for the young youths, especially in Kibera it is kind of risky. Because there a lot of bad things happening, mostly in the inner places of Kibera. Because you find that a lot of youths have nothing to do thereby they end up forming

² Idleness; An adjective for not working or being active – doing nothing.

gangs and thereby the steal, they do drugs, they rape people... things like that.

The perception on young people being idle, engaging in destructive things forms the public space that is made available for them in society. Instead of creating spaces where youths can be free, and get social stimulation away from parental pressure, it creates controlled and regulated public spaces, if it creates anything at all (Cotterell, 2007: 295).

From the material it can be understood that many of the young people participate in the organisation and its activities since it is regarded as an arena which creates a space to be *free* as well as a space that is perceived as a home. The youth talk about it as a place where you can be yourself, do what you want, live out your creativity, and an arena where you can take space that you need and want. This is also portrayed and described in the constitution as one of the aims for the organisations, where the focus lies on participation and creating a place where the youths can come together. Therefore, by not creating chances for young people to engage in positive things on their leisure time, the youth understand it as a way of hindering their opportunity to get involved in society, in a positive way.

However, even though the space made available by the organisation generates positive outcomes for the youth participating in the organisation. It also gives them an opportunity to *separate* themselves from other youth groups. As explained in “Identity formation in late modernity” (3.3.1) identity formation is done by separating one group from another. As can be understood from the data, the youths are creating an “us- and them” – mentality, enforcing the notions of power and hierarchy even between youth groups in Kibera. This separation can be portrayed in the next quote where a youth differentiates themselves from other youth groups in Kibera, who are living destructive lifestyles.

Wale Wale has helped me a lot, like I can say youths from Wale Wale they are not the same as youths out there. Even though we come from slums our lives are more better than people outside there.

Because I know Wale Wale is helping me so that I may not engage in those other bad groups.

What would you do if you did not come here? (Interviewer).

Maybe I would have been a very bad guy. I will not even be hearing my parents because I used to hang around with friends.

The “us-and them”-perspective is probably something that helps these youths to separate themselves and their social identity compared to the youth groups doing more destructive things. Youths from slums already have struggles of burden of negative identities put on them by others (Wamucii, 2011: 195). Their participation in the organisation provides them with an opportunity to separate themselves from other, less desirable social identities.

Therefore, it is important to keep in mind what impacts participation can have on identity formation of participating youths, both in terms of impacts towards other youth groups. Even though these impacts are not predicted effects of participation in Wale Wale Kenya, the youths indirectly are internalising values of differentiation. Which goes against both the organisations values as well as the values expressed by the youths. Which in turn builds *hierarchal* power structures based on differentiation, something that the participating youths are working against. As well as sustains the image of youths being incapable and not trustworthy, as described in 2.2.2 “Perception on youth”.

5.3 Living in slums

The fact that the youths are living in Kibera, also provides a vast impact on their daily life, both in terms of available resources, how they are perceived, and opportunities to engage in mainstream society. Being born and raised in these spaces affect the youth’s identity formation in terms of creating social identities

based on negative societal stereotypes (Wamucii, 2011: 196). Which in turn affect the norms and values they are socialised into.

The first quote displays the internal views on norms and values that are shaped by an opportunity to participate in the organisation. The second quote focuses more on another aspect that the youths discussed in majority of the interviews. Which was people's perception on being a youth from Kibera, giving them external values and norms put on them, just by the fact that they live in there.

Because Kibera has been known to be a bad place where... like they think we are thieves, we do all sort of bad things. Kibera is not viewed good. Like when you talk to a girl and she knows you're from Kibera, she's never talking to you again.

The statement frames the perception on people living in slums in by people that are outsiders. By internalising the norms and values of the organisation, they feel unfairly perceived since they do not hold the values that Kibera is associated with. Since all the youths in the study declare that they met these types of prejudices it seems even more important for them to distinguish themselves as something else, at least as different from the other people in the slums.

How we behave, how we carry ourselves in the community. People might think that we are rich, but we are not rich. It is because of Wale Wale. You are taught how to live your life good and manage your life when you are still young so when you grow up, it doesn't have to be tricky.

Since living in the slums produces stereotypes of people living there, it affects the different part of youth's life's, like opportunities to enter educational systems and employment possibilities. However, since the institutions like discussed in Cotterell, 2007: 237) identity formation can be done by engaging in social activities outside of the home. The youths describe the organisation as a welcoming place where they have had an opportunity to build on their values and norms.

... Because someone comes in here and find that a couple of these people really live a different life than mine or maybe we are in the same place, similar life situation or maybe someone just motivates you; you can do this. So, you feel like you are in the same place. Maybe you are from a rich family but when you come here you feel different, you feel like; Oh, I should try and be the same way that these people are. So you inherit the culture here.

By participating in the organisations daily activities, the youths create *internal values and norms* that regard all members and are maintained through internal control. The only way to belong is to conform to the ideas and values that are prevalent in that particular group. This internalisation of norms and values in return help to shape youth's identities (Cottrell, 2007: 237). However, when no one challenges these ideas of how to be and what to think, a probability of creating a separation from other groups in society can be possible. This was previously discussed in "Us and them" (5.2.2) and will be further discussed in 5.3.1 "Creating exclusion?".

5.3.1 Creating exclusion?

The separation therefore creates the question if the participation in the organisation also creates a form of exclusion for the youths. By creating a space that shelters the youth from the rest of society, it gives the youths a chance to seek refuge from the daily struggles in Kibera. But can it also create a separation and in the end a form of *exclusion*.

As discussed before, lack of a sense of security is an aspect about living in Kibera that is discussed in all the interviews, something that Onyango & Tostensen (2015: 11) mentions in their report, as one of the five major issues affecting youths in Kibera. By creating an organisation like Wale Wale Kenya, the youths perceive that they get an opportunity to escape the realities of everyday life. One youth speaks

about the organisations as something that “protects you from all the other bad things outside”.

Since the organisation is promoting participation, ownership and democracy, they are creating a space where youths can develop productively. They have taken on matters that should be handled and services that should be provided by societal structures in society. By giving the youths an opportunity to participation and prospect of engaging with others with the same mind-set, they are helping the youths to make active choices of not joining groups involved with destructive behaviours. The organisation helps them cope with different things in life by giving them support, giving them opportunities to do things that they like and nurture their talents. So participation becomes a key to a different lifestyle and a way out of destructiveness.

Positively it affects society in the way that youths have something to do, so they don't have time to think of evil things. I am working, I get something in the end of the day. Why should I go and do something bad? It helps the society in the way that those who come to Wale Wale, they have something to do, they are mentored towards being important people in the society. So they don't really have the time of being lazy and thinking about going to do evil things out there.

However, it can also be interpreted in an opposing way; creating a place to hide, a space to escape the realities of everyday life, can be a way of creating a space that separates youths from the rest of society. A separation that can act excluding instead of the organisational aim of inclusion. Even if the organisation has good intentions, trying to give the youths an opportunity to integrate in society, by giving them a platform for change and place of security, the question of conflicting effects need to be taken into account. Where can the line be drawn of protection and seclusion? This can be interpreted as; by creating this safe space, the organisation is creating a bubble, where the realities of the outside world are not dealt with. Also giving the youths an opportunity to separate themselves from people that they perceive as “less

valuable” to society (own emphasis). *Reinforcing* the negative perceptions that people already have on youths.

On the other hand, it also can be understood as a failure from both the society and also the guardians of the youth, by not being able to provide the sense of security that the youths in Kibera need.

Because you don't have anywhere to show your talent so you end up playing out there, then you have nothing to do, by the end of the day you have no food, you take a gun... you are astray. You make it impossible with your life. That's what I can say this place is at least a place where we can hide in. And have that comfortability, you feel comfortable.

5.4 Perception

Through questions like; why youths need to be involved in society, youth's role and why they need to be in leading positions for these type of organisations -the youths explored on the idea about perception. The data shows that the youths experiences dualistic perceptions both in terms of perceptions about youth in general, and youth in leading positions. Outside perception explores the experience youth have of being viewed as youth by adults in society and how that in turn affects their ability to be a part of society. The inside perceptions are the perceptions held by the youth, inside the youth group. Both in terms of youths in general and what role they should have in society. The data shows a way of changing perception through participation in an organisation like Wale Wale Kenya, which is further discussed.

5.4.1 Outside perception

The youths understand that they are facing an onerous battle against society in order to change adults' perception on them as youths. As described in previous research (2.2.2 Perception on youth) the academic field has started to portray youths as contributors to society, by acknowledging that they can convey the realities of their own situations and lives. Something that has made many grass-root organisations, like Wale Wale Kenya to follow suit. Even though the academic and development

field are taking steps forward to change the ways youths are viewed, the interviewed youths lived experiences demonstrates something else.

Maybe they are... people do not... how do I say it. They do not believe in the youths, they think that if we are given a chance we don't do the things like the adults can do it.

The process of identity formation has gone from simply shaping the identity through outside expectations, to becoming a complex endeavour (3.3.1 Identity formation in late modernity). Where the negative outside perceptions influence the youth's identity processes in a significant way. It affects their confidence and personal development increasing doubtfulness on their capabilities, by portraying the common notion of youths as deficits. Which in turn *affects youth's own perception* about themselves. The outside perception can be a reason for the inability of young people in Kibera to shape their transition period, from childhood to adulthood, in an adequate way. Since their opportunity to get independence is dependent on resources available to them. Something that, according to the youths, the societal structures are not ready to provide.

However, even within the interviewed youth's group, a sceptic opinion could be found about youths. Consequently, some of the youths raised hesitations to having youths in leading positions, expressing things like; "properties will be mishandled", "looking for the easy way out", "maybe they'll use the money for their things", "some people they have much ego". Meaning that their own perception has been heavily influenced by experiences of perceptions on them and other youths, by their surroundings.

Even though the youths have started to internalise a positive rhetoric about youth, which is discussed more in detail in "Inside Perception" (5.3.2), youths have a hard time discarding the notions and perceptions that they have been internalising and socialised into since birth. The perceptions that young people are incapable or not

trustworthy. This can in a way correlate to the youth's perception towards other youth groups. By participating in the organisation they are changing the perception on young people that are like them, engaging in similar things. However, they are using the old rhetoric towards other youth group, by creating an "us and them"-mentality (5.2.2 Us and them). This can in turn exemplify how easy it is for one group to distance itself from another, building hierarchal power structures based on differentiation.

In the case of youth groups versus adults, adults hold a clear *power advantage* in society. With an already uneven power balance, viewing young people as immature, incapable and unreliable (2.2.2 Perception on youth) creates even bigger obstacles for young people. Both in terms of getting recognised as a capable group, that can contribute to society in different ways. But also concerning opportunities to take on leading positions in different institutions, in order to lead processes of change. Since no one wants to invest time or money on a group that is portrayed, and seen as deficits.

5.4.2 Inside perception

The organisation itself perceives the youths as capable members of society. They proclaim that the youths need to obtain an active role, both in the organisation as well as in the society, in order to contribute to development. In the organisation the youths are members with voting rights, projects leaders as well as board members. Therefore, the organisations main principles are based on participation, ownership and democracy.

Build the work of the organisation upon the involvement of the youths and enable them to play important roles both in the everyday work as well as in managing the organisation (Constitution of the organisation).

The organisation is thereby stepping away from society's traditional viewpoints on youths. By recognising young people's potential, they are empowering youths to

take a step forward in the development agenda towards becoming active members of society, which mentioned as one of the desirable outcomes of participation (3.4.1 Youth participation). However, the interviewed youths recognize a battle between the organisations perception, their own perception and society's perception on them as youth. With that said, they are clear on their viewpoints about what positive contributions youth can make and what capabilities they have. Which can be interpreted as a sign of internalising the rhetoric of the organisation, discussing things like youths being "role-models" and "the backbone of a country".

I think by that, it will help more youths to get into organisations since they can see they will relate to others and also they'll see like; if I go to that organisation I may also be like her, she's doing finance. If I go there maybe I'll learn that too. I'll also be a leader in that organisation so they'll be more interested to get into organisation like these ones.

By this quote, it can be understood what the organisation actually achieves by being youth-led, and promoting youth's rights. Since the youth's identity formation is impacted by participating in the organisations activities, they are being socialised in to having values about youths that emphasises youth's agency and competence. These might be values that conflict with earlier socialisation patterns, seeing them as deficits. Which is an outlook that the interviewed youths describe, in many ways reflect the views adults have on young people in Kenya and especially Kibera.

However, by internalising the positive rhetoric and changing these views about young people, they are also challenging the views that have been put on youths for a long time. By participating in an organisation that has credibility for being an organisation that works with ambitious, capable, and creative youths, they create a collective social identity shaped by positive attributes. In that way they can combat the image that is put on them by others, helping them to reconstruct their pre-determined identity, being from Kibera, into a formation of identity that is more progressive and positive. It might be their way of changing the perception on them

as incapable and unable outsiders of the public sphere to capable contributors to society. That is also why it is important for them to separate themselves from the other groups in Kibera, especially other youth groups. In this way, they are challenging the local community view on them. They are now seen as productive individuals that have potential to provide for themselves and become independent by gaining both educational skill as well as employment opportunities, instead of just hanging around, and doing nothing. “So people are like: Okay, she goes to Wale Wale and she’s like this. So parents are like: why don’t just be like her...”. By challenging these views, it increases the opportunity to create spaces for youths to become a bigger part of society and increases their opportunity to take on leading positions.

... Maybe if I talk about the other organisations you might... when you go out there I can say as youth we have different positions, the chairman is a youth, the treasurer is a youth, the secretary is a youth. Then we go out there to meet some of the bigger organisations where you find that the chairman is such a big person, the treasurer is a respected person, but here he meets the youth, he or she meets up with the youth. And I think it creates that feeling that; This is a youth, what am I doing with the youth. Yet the youth might have more ideas than you. So I think it’s a challenge, like it’s a challenge to many other organisations. And it also encourages other people, outside there that they can make it. Like many other youths. If that’s a youth, in that position; then who am I. I can do it too. So I can say that it is a very big challenge to other people out there and other organisations.

So by creating opportunities for participation the gap of inside and outside perceptions can be bridged. By giving youths opportunities to participate in the organisations or activities that promote youth’s right for space in society and the right to voice their opinions about matters concerning them, they have an opportunity to showcase their abilities and ideas to the larger crowd, which in turn can impact the views people have of them being from Kibera. Since the organisation is led by youth, the youth themselves see it as a possibility to; get an experience of

being leaders, having positions that can constitute power, understand how it is to make decisions and build confidence. Checkoway (2001: 342) states that by participation the perception on youth might be changed by understanding that young people are competent citizens, rather than passive recipients of services. Thus the organisation can operate as a mechanism for change on perception, by creating opportunities for youth to be perceived and understood as something else then deficits, which in turn can create a shift in the power structures in the relationship between young people and adults.

5.5 Social citizenship

In order to enhance inclusion in society, social citizenship needs to be promoted. Citizenship is about believing in the welfare system and societal structures and their benefits for mainstream society and exercising your right as a member of that society (3.2 Social citizenship) Many times the outlook society has about a specific group, correlates to their ability and opportunity to participate. Hence, when the interviewed youth show a *distrust* for the societal structures in Kenya, it is because issues concerning corruption, a feeling of deceit, with the fact that no change can be seen. Youths describe it as nepotism³, and the misuse of resources, with a lack of focus or allocation of resources for issues that mostly affect youths, like unemployment, drugs, and crime.

Kenya is a third world country so there are not enough resources supports youths. And the population, we are too many. So that's why, if the support comes it doesn't reach everyone, only a few people.

Which few does it reach? (Interviewer)

To this I can say, by knowing someone or by corruption. If you work in the government and you know someone that can get you support, so you bribe them to give them to offer the support. Yeah, so just knowing each other and corruption.

³Nepotism; patronage bestowed or favouritism shown on the basis of family relationship, as in business and politics.

By having a perception, like the one described, on the democratic process it affects the youth's perspectives on democracy, rights and government. By not creating, and giving young people opportunity to participate they are reduced to being *partial members of society*. This distrust spills over to other aspects of the youth's lives and their ability to wanting to be a part of that system. In the long run making them reluctant to engage in their responsibilities as social citizens which in turn hampers their ability and want to participate as active civic and political citizens. By having this type of distrust they are moving further away from the mainstream ways of being full member citizens of a nation. They, as partial citizens, cannot enjoy the universal social rights of the welfare system, like right to education, employment, income, housing etc., which in turn leads many young people to live destructive lifestyles. The perceptions on youths being immature, and not capable of making wise decisions (2.2.2 Perception on youth) therefore overshadows the real factors of young people's exclusion in society, which are created as a consequence of an uneven structure of participation and citizenship.

5.5.1 Other institutions

The primary socialisation in society is through parents (Jones, 2009: 168). Even though this entity is separate from the government, it is very much impacted by its policies, regulations, encouragements etc. (Ibid: 169). Checkoway (2011: 243) points out that most of the issues that are conveyed by youths are actually persuaded by adults in their surroundings, like parents and teachers. However, when young people identify their own issues, it can awaken their spirit and move them into action" (Checkoway, 2011: 342). But, since the transition period for youths have gotten prolonged, the families influence and control has increased (Jones, 2009: 169). It can be seen in the data where one of the youths discusses about families with values conflicting with mainstream society.

Okay, it's like. When you are 14-16 some parents think that you've grown up. You are supposed to do some stuff. Some are told to leave school, some are like too... after school you have to do work, which makes it difficult for

them to study. Some are told to leave school because they are higher age, age of 15, because they think it's a age of starting working. So it's like; Should I work, should I study. It's like complicated, they are in the middle. Choosing to do the right and the bad... follow the parents or follow the what she or he thinks is right. So it's a bit difficult for them to understand how to live and do the right things.

As seen in the quote, the parents or guardians are put in a contradicting position by the society. By not creating an opportunity for them to be participating citizens and undermining their prospect to develop by, in this case forcing them in to things like child-labour. Young people therefore in many respects lack opportunity to become full members of society, since there is an absence of societal structures in areas like Kibera.

I think 2, public schools, the ones government build. And the government schools are the ones that are free. And in Kibera there are so many people, so many people. You can't expect 2 schools to serve all of Kibera. There are so many people.. and when you can't take your child to a public school there are private school that not many people can afford to pay for. So I think that's why they drop out. And that is when you start getting ideas, bad ideas and negative influences, then you end up on the wrong path.

It also affects youth's identity formation since the family, and the educational institutions are the primary, and secondary socialisation. Which sets the values, norms, and customs that young people internalise, and then have a hard time changing or escaping.

But by participating in the organisation the youths are using the organisation as a third institution of socialisation, which is helping them to form parts of their identity, as well as their values and norms on how to be. Which they in turn are passing on to other participants and youths. By being involved in this type of organisation the youths have shown that they are internalising the rhetoric on how

to become prosperous in society. NGOs and other organisations are taking these roles in Kenya, especially in Kibera since it bridges the gap towards being full members of society. Something that governmental structures cannot provide today, according to the interviewed youths. Through this socialisation process, the youths state that the feeling of being a participant of society, with its norms and values of how to be a good citizen are easier internalised. One youth describes that the youths from Wale Wale Kenya are different since “you are taught how to live your life good and manage your life...”.

Some of these values were shown in observations done during the last weeks of the fieldwork. One example can be seen through the observations done on the 29th of March where I joined three youth that were planning for a workshop for a new project in the organisation. The new project composed of youths in Wale Wale Kenya leading workshop where outside youths had an opportunity to come and learn about music production, song writing, singing, dancing, painting, blogging etc. The youths in charge of the workshop were supposed to create a schedule for what they were going to teach the new participants. “The youths are planning the different stages of the workshop. They have room to frame the workshop as they want, since they are leading it... After talking about different stages of the workshop they start talking about something that surprises me. They talk about “knowing your value”, which according to them entails knowing what you are worth, in combination with how you are presenting it. They discuss how they should frame it for the new participants. I ask them why they are including this part in the workshop, since the workshop is more about practical knowledge. They tell me that it is important to know your own worth, because that is what other people will judge you on later e.g. how you dress, how you present yourself etc. They themselves were taught about that at a workshop they attended through Wale, and say that really stuck with them” (parts of observation note 18).

5.5.2 Reaching others

All young people do not have the opportunity to engage in organisations like Wale Wale Kenya and through that increasing their opportunity for social citizenship. Therefore, the youths participating in the organisation have intentionally been taught, through workshops, alternative ways of reaching other youth groups both in Kibera, Kenya and around the world. They use multiple techniques to reach others both locally and globally like out-reach programs in Kibera and other areas in Nairobi as well as several social medias like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Sound Cloud and personal blogs. As described by Vromen, (2008) *Internet* is a way of increasing opportunities for participation in democratic processes. Therefore, Internet has become a new arena of participation for groups that otherwise have a hard time finding space in mainstream society, where youths are the most advantaged group. Since Internet has started to take such a substantial part of mainstream society, it interferes in the traditional socialisation process and thereby the identity formation of youths. It is taking over the role of family and school in creating a space where youths can find a sense of belonging, as well as build a social identity. In that way youths today have a bigger opportunity to collectively bring about change, by having an arena to come together.

The growing trend of participation through the Internet can therefore be understood as a means to help engage youths in issues concerning them, a method of spreading the realities of young people and a way of connecting young people in order to come together and claim their rights in society. In this way the youths in Wale Wale Kenya are learning how to utilise the platforms that are available to them since they have yet not reached the goal of having opportunity to participate in any official channels of development and change, e.g. political. The blogging for example brings up topics that raises political issues like poverty, insecurity, domestic violence, alcohol and drug-abuse (Blog, 2016), things affecting youth's everyday life. Also they easier connect to other youth groups fighting for the same rights and values.

5.6 Participation as a means and end

As described by Parfitt (2004) participation can be seen as a means and end. It is this dualistic view that pushes the concept of participation forward into becoming an emancipatory way of reaching change in society. But it raises the question of who should provide the space, along with opportunity for young people to participate.

5.6.1 Alternative ways

As discussed before (5.5 Social citizenship) the youths depict a picture of not trusting the current governmental structures in Kenya. Consequently, notions of finding alternative ways to drive development forward in Kenya has emerged, outside of the governmental structures. Hence areas like Kibera has had an up rise of NGOs, CBOs, and other development projects, like described in the introduction 1.1 “Kenya”. They have taken on responsibilities of the government in teaching children that they have voices that need to be heard, giving them opportunities to develop leadership skills as well as learn about democratic structures. For example, by having a democratic system within Wale Wale Kenya it installs trust in the youths as well as a belief that they can actually be a part of change. The youths experience that the organisation gives them a platform where their voices are valued and heard, as well as a belief and understanding of equality between genders and ages.

Even when empowering someone, if you are empowering the old, give the old a chance to lead themselves. If you are empowering women, give them a chance to lead themselves. Because you can't... in an army of lions, you out a sheep in front, that sheep won't lead those lions. It will simply be eaten or maybe it will simply be treated by these others lions. And these lions will run away. If you are leading the youths or you are empowering the youths, give them a youth to lead them. It will be easier for them to listen to that youth and even understand that I want to be there, like him. So everyone will be having that mind that: I want to be like him, But if you give an old person that has already made it in life, how will these guys learn

that I want to reach there. Help these ones to see the steps he has taken, where he is and to say: I want to be this way. I think that is why we are led by youth and we are a youth-led organisation.

However, as experienced by the interviewed youths, majority of the organisations in Kibera are not exploring true participatory values where structures are democratic formed, something that is also raised in (Onaynago & Tostensen, 2012). Which in turn correlates to the overall critique that the concept of participation is facing today, mainly connected to the radical critique (3.4.3 Critique to participation). Revealing that youth mostly have a superficial involvement, even though organisations claim that they are based on principals of participation. But by not giving youths the chance to partake in negotiating the terms of participation, it actually interferes with them having any real power at all.

What is prominent in this particular study is the sense of actual power that these youths hold. As a result, the participating youths are conveying a trust for the democratic system that is built within the organisation. Which can be interpreted as a distrust of the government structure and not for democracy in itself. Which confirms to the ideas formed by earlier research, that meaningful participation promotes democracy by benefitting democratic habits and trust (Seebach, 2008: 40). However, what does it actually mean for the youths to have this space to participate in and increase their sense of belonging to mainstream society. Some of the youths express a want to make a change for other people in society, especially in areas like Kibera. According to some of the interviewed youths, by being a part of the organisation, they are getting an opportunity to change the perception on youth, on functioning democratic systems and through that, be able to grow and take positions in the future where they actually can make structural changes. Yet, three interviewed youths, mainly the younger ones, are understanding the organisation more as a safe place. It can be interpreted as they are building a safe

haven⁴, a better world where the dangers and disadvantages of outside are insulated, like discussed in 5.3 “Creating exclusion?”.

Subsequently Wale Wale Kenya has become both a means and an end to participation. By being an entity in society that is helping *drive democratic values*, alongside development forward in Kenya. It has also become a space for young people to *be safe* and *built trust* as well as form social identities with other like-minded youths.

⁴ Safe haven; A place where you are protected from harm and danger.

6. Discussion/Conclusion

In this chapter the study is being discussed based on the findings and interpretations made in the analysis. As well as concluding the interrelation between the concepts of identity, citizenship, and participation. In order to answer the research question: *How does youth in a youth-led organisation in Kibera experience participation?*

When going out to the field my main focus was based on youth-led organisations and the youth's experiences of participating in that particular phenomena. However, when exploring deeper in the data a more nuanced picture was shown regarding the youth's experiences. The fact that the organisation is youth-led did not take priority in the discussion. Therefore, after interpreting the data, patterns around the concepts identity, citizenship, and participation became clear. Within those concepts, other factors like space for participation, and perceptions were explored further in connection to the data. Even though the leadership of the organisation impacted the youths will to participate in the organisation by being a prominent factor for the sense of belonging and changing outsider's perception on them. It did not take president over the other concepts that were affecting and influencing their experience of this participation.

The main experiences that were expressed by the interviewed youths were the fact that the organisation offers as an alternative space where they can be free, which brings like-minded youth together, a place which offers unity and a sense of belonging as well as an opportunity to learn new skills. It also provides an opportunity that can help change adult's perceptions on them as youth, especially being youths from Kibera as well as installing belief and reliability that democratic structures and processes can work. Therefore, the interpretations made in the analysis determine that the organisation provides the youths opportunities that they probably would not have attained otherwise.

The process of identity formation is hard in general for most youth, and becomes even more complicated for these youths that are affected by multiple factors

influencing their identity formation like poverty, lack of resources, and inability to be part of mainstream society. By being able to participate in the organisation, the youths are getting the ability to be a part of a system, belong somewhere, and be part of the social identity that is present there. Which in turn gives them satisfaction and relief about their own current situation as well as helps them look forward to their own, the community's, and the society's development.

The outside perception of them as young people, from Kibera might hinder them in perusing future goals since they have not obtained full membership as citizens. But that is one of the reasons for the youths to participate in activities, to change that perception. By engaging with social media, they are reaching to diverse group of people based on age, social class, gender, race with their messages about how society should be formed, and through that also participating in a global context. Something that they might not have had the opportunity, skills or knowledge about otherwise. Their opportunity to connect with people through social media has even given ripple effects and given employment opportunities which in the long run leads to even more opportunities for participation in society, which in turn leads to increasing their social citizenship.

Therefore, in this study participation can be seen both as a means and an end in itself. A means to create socialisation processes that compensate for other socialisation institutions lack of ability to manage the process in an adequate way. By participation in this particular organisation they youths obtain skills and competence in areas that they might not have been able to get otherwise. It also is a means to start building sentiments of inclusion for this group. By socialising them into certain values and norms, by giving educational and employment opportunities, by offering a way of decreasing their distrust in society –they can activate their social citizenship and rights. Participation in the organisation also provides an end in itself to the youth's personal development. By giving leadership skills, building their confidence and giving them a sense of belonging –they are attaining meaningful involvement and security from the surroundings, providing them with

a space where they can be free and safe. However, the question arises, if participation in the organisation providing a safe haven for these youths, only can be perceived as something explicitly positive. By separating the organisation from the rest of society they potentially create exclusionary process for the youths, by not giving them opportunity to face the realities around them. Also, without creating space in more public arenas, the participation in the organisation will not change or challenge anything in the overall structures of society, since it solely becomes an individual intervention. Which means that participation in Wale Wale Kenya might not give any possibilities to make any structural changes in Kenyan society, something that is a goal both for the organisation and participating youths.

In addition, the analysis identifies undesirable effects of participation. By participating and creating a social identity within the group of participants, it has construct a feeling of us- and them. Distancing the youths from the rest of society, partly by creating a separate space, partly by the rhetoric used by the youths. Participation can therefore also create a hierarchy among youth groups, separating them from each other instead of creating forces that should work together to change the rest of societies views. Which means that the youths have gained power in their local community by differentiating themselves from youth groups living destructive lifestyles, and restoring the negative views society has on this group. Which challenges the objective of equality within organisation as well as goes against the fundamental ideas of participation, promoting the most vulnerable groups rights to be empowered. Which in turn questions which group these type of interventions actually reaches. In this study it is prevalent that the organisation reaches youths that have a drive, and are capable of moving forward in this type of process. Once again, not reaching the most vulnerable youth groups that need more specific and intense guidance, and help to overcome destructive lifestyles. The separation from the insecurities in society and the differentiation to other youth groups might also create involuntary exclusion of new people wanting to participate in the organisation.

By discussing both the limitation, and positive impacts of participation, this study is mostly suited as a base on what to consider for projects, or organisations that want to use participatory methods as their main approach. Since it is based on youth's own experiences it gives a sense of understanding of how negative and positive aspects of participation can emerge. We also need to remember the critique deployed against participation as a development method, where organisation often use it as a cover up for conducting projects without giving real opportunities for participation. Which again puts a distrust on the system created by adults. Therefore, organisations and development projects need to understand the needs of their particular target-group. Which, according to this study, is done by involving the actual target-group in constructing and conducting the actual project. The fact that the organisation of study was youth-led, therefore played a major part in making the youths feel included in the organisation, believing in their ability, and making them change their own perception about themselves. These types of projects and organisations can have more bearing than we recognise, influencing the identity formation, taking the spaces of government, schools and family. Therefore, to make hollow, insufficient or disregarded attempts of creating space for participation can have adverse influences on youth's identity formation, sense of belonging, socialisation process, and opportunity to become full members of society as well as affect their personal development.

With the limitations of the study in mind like sample size, being a single case study, done in a limited space, and during a limited amount of time, it is hard to draw any overall or broad conclusions about the impact the study. This study reinforces the results of previous research about participation, concluding that it benefits personal development, and increases the sense of inclusion in society. However, the connection to sense of belonging has not been explored in earlier research in the way that it is brought forward in this study. Therefore, the critical parts of participation, creating excluding aspects based on identity formation, and separating mentality is less examined in earlier research. An aspect which is crucial to acknowledge when constructing organisation that are based on participation.

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Appendix 1

Information Letter

February and March 2016

This letter contains information to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Social Work/Development Studies at Lund University, Sweden. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

The purpose of this study is to understand how youth in informal settlements, like Kibera, experience youth-led organisations. There has been some research done on similar phenomena's before, but most of them do not take the voices of the youth into consideration. Which I think is of the utmost importance. Therefore, I would like to include you in this study, as one of several youths, to get your voices across.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 45 min in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising me, the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in the thesis or reported result from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please give your oral consent at the introduction of the interview. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Fatema Vanat

Department of Social Work/Development Studies, Lund University, Sweden

Appendix 2

Interview-guide

Information about the study:

- *Interview is done for my master thesis at Lund University – Development studies in combination with Social Work.*
- *It is a study about how youth experience youth-led organisations.*
- *Information letter*

• **Introduction questions:**

- **Tell me about who you are...**

- Name:
- Age:
- Position in the WaleWale:
- If you are employed – how long how you worked in the WaleWale?

• **Youths situation in Kenya**

1. As a young person living in Kenya, how would you describe the general situation of young people here?

- Possibilities/obstacles?
- Does it differ for boys and girls?

• **Living in a marginalised area**

2. Tell me about your living situation...

3. How long have you lived in Kibera?

4. How would you describe Kibera?

- How do you feel about living here?

5. Why do you live in Kibera?

6. What is the difference between living in Kibera and other areas in Nairobi?

7. Tell me about the youth's situation in Kibera...

- What is the general view/perception on youths in Kibera?
- How do you think others view your situation?

8. Do you encounter any struggles when living in Kibera?

- Which struggles would you consider most prominent?
- Why are these the struggles?
- Do you think a girl/boy would encounter the same issues as those you've described?

9. What would you change?

10. What is the best thing about living here?

• Youth-led development and the WaleWale

11. Tell me about the WaleWale Kenya...

12. How is WaleWale focusing on youth?

- Why do you think it is focusing on youth?

13. How do you experience the main values of WaleWale of democracy, participation and transparency are promoted?

14. Tell me what you think about WaleWale being led by/run by youths...

15. How do you think it affects the youths involved in WaleWale that it is led by other youths?

- How does it affect you that the WaleWale is led by youths?
- How and why is it valuable for young people in Kenya to have youth-led organisations?
- As an organisation that is explicitly led by/for youth, how is that visible when engaging in it?
- How is it different than if it weren't led by youths?
- Why do you think it is led by youths?

16. Who can become a leader?

- Do you think anyone should be able to become a leader?

17. Why do you think WaleWale exist?

- Who do you think benefits from the existence of WaleWale?
- In what way do they benefit?

18. What is the best thing about WaleWale?

19. What would you change about WaleWale?

20. Tell me about how you think WaleWale can affect society...

21. Why is there a need for this type of organisation? (On a structural level)

22. What type of effect can this type of organisation have? How and why? (On a structural level)

23. Is it different from other organisations?

- In what way?

24. What is the biggest obstacles with this type of organisation? (being youth led)

25. What are the biggest opportunities for this type of organisation? (being youth-led)

26. Do you think youth should be promoted in development?

- Why?
- Do you think youths have abilities/insights that would be beneficial to development, that adult do not have?

27. What do you think it would take for young Kenyans to be more active in change in society?

- What tools should be provided?
- What would it take for you to be more active in change in society?

• **Personal engagement**

28. Tell me about your engagement with WaleWale...

29. How did you come to know about WaleWale Kenya?

30. What do you do when you are here?

31. Why do you take your time and participate in WaleWale programs?

32. Tell me about how WaleWale has/is affecting you....

33. How does coming here affect you?

- Do you learn anything at WaleWale that you can use as a tool in your everyday life?
- How is it portrayed to others?

34. Have you participated in other type of programs at other organisations? If yes, was there any difference?

35. What would you do if you did not come here?

36. What are your peers, who do not spend time at WaleWale, doing?

37. What are your goals for the future?

- Have they been affected anything by coming to WaleWale?
- If yes, in what way?