

Civil society organisations' increased professionalisation and decreased member activism?

The case of Save the Children Sweden



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Abstract

Members have traditionally played a central role in civil society organisations (CSOs) since they typically are the ones who decide upon the course of the organisation and carry out organisational activities. However, with organisations becoming more professionalised, concerns have been raised about the future role of members. Previous research point to different consequences on membership due to professionalisation: some argue that the increase in employees will diminish members' role in civil society, whereas others suggest that employees can strengthen member influence and involvement. The literature furthermore points to differences between policy- and service-oriented organisations with regards to how members are affected by professionalisation. Yet less is known about the consequences on membership in hybrid organisations which combine features of both advocacy and service-delivery.

Through a qualitative case study of Save the Children Sweden, the thesis explores the consequences of an increased professionalisation on member influence and involvement in hybrid organisations. The analysis draws on nine interviews with members and employees of Save the Children Sweden. The findings show that professionalisation has created a distance between members and employees. However, the research also finds that employees who work specifically with the members can help strengthen their role in the organisation and support them in implementing activities. Ultimately, the thesis concludes that professionalisation does not necessarily mean that organisations will transform into being entirely run by employees. Rather, if organisations invest in their members and employees who can strengthen their engagement, there is potential for strengthened member activism.

Key words: civil society organisations, member activism, professionalisation, hybrid organisations, Save the Children Sweden

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Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Aim and research questions.....	4
1.2 Disposition of the thesis	5
2 Background	6
2.1 The history of Sweden’s civil society	6
2.2 Hybrid organisations	8
2.3 Organisational membership and civic engagement.....	11
3 Conceptual framework.....	14
3.1 Member activism.....	14
3.2 Professionalisation	18
3.3 Consequences of professionalisation on member activism.....	21
4 Methodology	23
4.1 Ontology and epistemology	23
4.2 Methods.....	25
4.2.1 Case study: Save the Children Sweden	25
4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	27
4.2.3 Data analysis	30
4.2.4 Limitations	31
5 Results.....	32
5.1 Influence.....	32
5.1.1 Avenues of influence.....	32
5.1.2 Interest in decision-making	36
5.2 Involvement.....	39
5.2.1 Member recruitment	39
5.2.2 Obstacles	42
5.2.3 Incentives	44
5.2.4 Collaboration.....	45
6 Discussion	48
7 Conclusion	54
7.1 Recommendations for future research.....	56
8 References.....	58

Appendix 1: Interview guides	64
Appendix 2: Codebook	68

1. Introduction

Civil society is often referred to as the ‘third sector’, distinct from the public and private sectors. It is commonly considered a key site for fostering civility and extending democracy as it encourages people to come together over mutual interests while also bridging the gap between citizens and political decision-makers (Kenny et al., 2015). It has further been defined as “a space of social experimentation for the development of new forms of life, new types of solidarity, and social relations of cooperation and work” (Cohen & Arato, 1992: 38). Civil society organisations (CSOs), which represent organised forms of civil society participation, are typically distinguished by their main organisational function and activities as either policy- or service-oriented organisations (Mota & Mourão, 2014; Kiviniemi, 2008). Policy-oriented organisations include organisations that work with advocacy towards decision-makers in pursuit of a collective interest through for example lobbyism, policy work and campaigning. Political parties and interest groups (e.g. business associations and environmental organisations) are examples of the type of organisations that belong to the policy-oriented sector (Fehsenfeld & Levinsen, 2019). Service-oriented organisations, on the other hand, provide services for a specific constituency. The types of services provided by these organisations vary greatly and include, for example, organisations that seek to fill the gaps of the welfare state (e.g., the City Mission, crisis hotlines), educational institutions (e.g., folk high schools), and cultural and recreational organisations (e.g. sports clubs) (Harding, 2012).

Even though civil society activism generally is local or regional in character, its indirect societal implications can be much larger (Kiviniemi, 2008). In Sweden, the societal importance of civil society is undeniable, with approximately 86 percent of all adults being involved in some sort of organisation (von Essen & Svedberg, 2019). While civil society in many countries (e.g., Germany, the US, and the UK) is dominated by organisations in the service field, Sweden’s civil society has traditionally been more policy-oriented, and CSOs are valued by the state as important sources of information and carriers of democratic

values (von Essen & Svedberg, 2019; Wijkström, 2011). The high number of people involved in CSOs as well as its important role in national policymaking make it a relevant context to explore. Similar to CSOs in other countries, many Swedish CSOs are, however, increasingly transcending the borders associated with their main organisational function, i.e., service provision or advocacy. In other words, some service-oriented organisations are working with advocacy as well, and policy-oriented organisations are also involved in delivering services. These types of organisations are referred to as multi-purpose hybrid organisations (hereafter hybrid organisations) (Evers, 2020; Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005; Harding, 2012). Yet, the literature regarding hybrid organisations is currently limited (e.g., Hyde, 1992; Hyde, 2000; Gates, 2014) and little is known about if and how hybrid organisations differ from traditional, single-function organisations.

A more frequently referred to global trend among CSOs, on the other hand, is the increasing professionalisation of civil society (Roth, 2019; Harding, 2012; Meeuwisse & Sunesson, 1998). The concept of professionalisation primarily refers to an increase in the number of people who work for CSOs. Some also suggest a broader interpretation that includes higher, more professional expectations on volunteers (Ivanovska Hadjievska & Stavenes, 2020). The emergence of this trend is typically considered a consequence of increased demands to access state funding and participate in political decision-making processes, combined with the assumption that member involvement means less flexibility and efficiency for the organisation (Heylen et al., 2020). The increased professionalisation of CSOs has, however, raised questions about whether CSOs will move towards becoming more like for-profit organisations, or if they will manage to balance the professionalisation with a strong and engaged member base (Saurugger & Eberwein, 2009; Heylen et al., 2020). This thesis focuses specifically on the role of members in hybrid organisations and how they are affected by organisational changes due to an increased professionalisation.

Members have always played a central role in CSOs as they traditionally are the ones tasked with carrying out the organisation's activities, deciding its policy direction, recruiting new members, and so on. Participation in associational life is often referred to as a form of active citizenship, meaning that people are active contributors to democracy and social change (Hoskins, 2014). In general,

members are considered to provide organisations with much-valued legitimacy. Being able to demonstrate that a large group of citizens is behind an idea naturally gives the organisation strength and mandate to influence the public debate and participate in political consultation processes (Wallman Lundåsen, 2019; Grömping & Halpin, 2019). Moreover, members' involvement in associational life has been argued to contribute to increased well-being and trust through social interactions (Putnam, 1995). In many cases, active members also connect organisations with their beneficiaries by being present 'in the field' (Kenny et al., 2015; James, 2016). Ultimately, members are in many ways relevant – or even essential – for most CSOs.

Yet, with the increasing professionalisation, it is unclear how the members' role might change in the future. Many organisations have already shifted their organisational structure to a foundation-type (e.g. Greenpeace, WWF) where supporters and volunteers are involved to carry out tasks ordered by professionals, but not democratically involved as members (Wijkström & Zimmer, 2013). As found by Mota and Mourão (2014), there are relevant differences regarding to what extent policy- and service-oriented organisations are becoming professionalised, which also has implications for how it affects the organisations' members. Service provision is generally labour-intensive since it requires more resources and is continuous in nature, hence these organisations rely more on paid staff, whereas advocacy typically is less costly and therefore relies more on volunteers (Ibid; Kriesi, 2007). How the increased professionalisation affects members of hybrid organisations involved in both service-delivery and advocacy is however unclear as there currently is no research that addresses the issue. In general, research focusing on members' own views regarding how organisations are becoming professionalised and the potential implications of this on member involvement and influence in the organisation is scarce. Rather, focus has been on the side of the organisation (e.g., Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Heylen et al., 2020). Thus, this thesis suggests that in order to fully understand the consequences of an increased professionalisation, one must both look at the side of the paid employees and the organisation's members.

Another factor worth taking into consideration when studying CSOs is the national context in which they operate. Even though CSOs often operate and collaborate across national borders and seek to address issues of an international

or global nature (Kaldor, 2003), it is generally agreed upon that CSOs are heavily affected by the social, political, and economic systems of the societies in which they are based. These are sometimes referred to as ‘civil society regimes’ (Evers & Laville 2004; Anheier & Salamon 2006). Arguably, this has consequences for in what way and to what extent they are becoming professionalised (Wijkström, 2011; Mota & Mourão, 2014). Examples of civil society regimes are social democratic regimes which are characterised by high welfare spending and an expressive civil society (e.g. Sweden and Italy), corporatist regimes, characterised by high public spending but where CSOs play a prominent role in delivering welfare services (e.g. Germany and France), and liberal regimes, characterised by low public spending and a service-oriented civil society sector that is highly dependent upon volunteers and philanthropy (e.g. the UK and Switzerland) (Mota & Mourão, 2014). Thus, considering that CSOs have different functions in different contexts, comparing the effects of an increased professionalisation across countries is not a simple task. It is therefore considered relevant to study the professionalisation of CSOs within specific civil society regimes. Building on this assumption, this thesis seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how the professionalisation of CSOs affects member-based organisations in the Swedish, social democratic context.

1.1 Aim and research questions

This study aims to contribute to the ongoing debate about the changing role of and relevance of members in CSOs (e.g., Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Heylen et al., 2020; Grömping & Halpin, 2019). While the professionalisation of CSOs has been widely researched in recent years, knowledge gaps remain in regard to its impact on membership. Moreover, as noted above, little attention has been paid to understanding members’ own experiences of the increasing professionalisation and how this has affected the relationship between members and employees. Hence, this thesis argues for the relevance of studying both side of the employees and the members to understand how the role of members is perceived.

This thesis contributes with empirical, case-based data to the discussion about the role of active members in hybrid organisations, an organisational

“sector” which thus far has received relatively little attention in research (Evers, 2020). More specifically, it takes a case study approach examining Save the Children Sweden and how the ongoing professionalisation of the organisation has affected two central forms of member activism: members’ *influence* and *involvement*. Save the Children Sweden represents a typical, member-based organisation that focuses on both advocacy and service-delivery; hence it makes an interesting case to study. The research is guided by the following questions:

- *What possibilities do members have to influence internal decision-making in hybrid organisations?*
- *How do hybrid organisations seek to generate and sustain member involvement over time?*

1.2 Disposition of the thesis

Having the above stated aim and research questions in mind, the thesis begins with a background chapter that first explains how Swedish civil society has developed, followed by a section about hybrid organisations, and lastly the role of members in CSOs. The thesis then moves on to the conceptual framework which brings together theories and conceptual understandings of member activism and professionalisation. After this, the methodology and methods upon which data was generated and analysed are presented. The empirical data is then presented in the following results chapter. The thesis then moves to a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature presented in the background chapter and conceptual framework. Lastly, the thesis is rounded off with some concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

2 Background

This chapter presents the context within which the thesis is based. It begins by providing a historical background of Sweden's civil society. As previously mentioned, Swedish CSOs have, with high numbers of participation among the population, traditionally held a strong position in society as agents of democracy and voice. However, civil society trends in recent decades have led to developments which arguably have changed their traditional role. One of these changes is the increasing hybridisation of CSOs, meaning that many organisations are transcending the traditional borders of their organisational function and are as such becoming involved in both advocacy and service-delivery. This phenomenon will be addressed before moving on to discuss another central aspect of CSOs, namely the role of members. While it is commonly recognised that the role played by members in organisational life has evolved over time, scholarly findings vary concerning the reasons for this and its potential consequences. The last section of this chapter will thus present some central discussions regarding organisational membership and civic engagement.

2.1 The history of Sweden's civil society

The Scandinavian voluntary sector stands out from the rest of the world in many ways. It is characterised by a large number of organisations, members and volunteers, an organisational structure with local, regional and national chapters, and close cooperation with the state (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018). The history of Swedish civil society dates back to the mid-19th century when social, economic and political structures changed which created a void in society (Wijkström, 2011). Consequently, people had to come together in new forms to lift political issues and provide social services. The associations that initially emerged covered

a broad spectrum of interests and included for example women's associations, temperance movements, religious groups and trade unions. However, with the growing role and power exerted by the Social Democratic Party in the 20th century, the traditional organisations were out conquered in favour of organisations focusing on solidarity and democratic structures. Thus, focus shifted from service-delivery to advocacy (Trägårdh, 2019; Wijkström, 2011).

The solidarity and group emphasis in civil society did, nevertheless, face obstacles in the 1960s and 70s, as new types of organisations emerged that could better facilitate young people's political concerns. Sweden had by then become a more prosperous country which brought with it more consumption and individualistic values that did not fit with the traditional types of associations. Focus thus began to shift towards freedom of choice, and for organisations, more focus on specific issues, such as minority rights and the environment (Trägårdh, 2019). This phase was followed by a growing concern for community building and increased solidarity. Unlike in the past, focus was no longer directed at convincing the government to increase its responsibilities, but rather it aimed at encouraging active participation among citizens in the governance of the nation (Micheletti, 1995). This volunteer- and non-profit focused era is still ongoing, as will be further discussed below.

Ultimately, the close bond between state and civil society has, unlike in many other countries, not developed because CSOs produce traditional welfare services, such as health care, education, and social services. Rather, CSOs in the Swedish context have focused on providing voice and advocating for specific groups, and organising cultural and sports activities, while leaving welfare services primarily to the public sector. The strong collaboration with the state has instead been based on the proximity between the social democratic welfare regime and the political values of the membership organisations that evolved in parallel (Wijkström, 2011). Nevertheless, Sweden's civil society is facing changes, with potentially significant consequences for the existence of member-based organisations as we know them, since more people are choosing to only volunteer without being members. Volunteers typically have no contractual obligation to the organisation and they also do not have any official voting rights. The increased interest in volunteering without being a formal member is arguably a consequence of a diminished interest among CSOs in ideology and an increased focus on

individuals and the activities they want to perform (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018; Harding, 2012). This indicates a lack of organisational loyalty which throughout the history of Swedish CSOs has been central (Harding, 2012). Furthermore, organisations today have fewer local chapters which means that they are run only at the national level. The local chapters that do exist are less connected to the national organisation. At the same time, the voluntary sector is becoming more valued by the state in the context of welfare provision, and it is becoming increasingly common for organisations to focus on service-delivery (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018). As such, there is an ongoing trend where organisations that in the past mainly were involved in advocacy are becoming more hybridised by expanding into the service field. The hybridisation of CSOs will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In summary, Swedish civil society has during the past century gone from primarily focusing on advocacy to an increased emphasis on service-delivery. As part of these developments, interest in membership has been replaced by volunteerism and short-term involvement in organisational activities.

2.2 Hybrid organisations

As previously discussed, civil society is often considered to consist in two dominating types of organisations: service- and policy-oriented. As the name suggests, service-oriented organisations provide services to their constituencies. This type of organisational form is often associated with, for example, charity organisations and provision of different kinds of welfare services. Policy-oriented organisations, on the other hand, focus on advocacy and pursuing specific political goals (Arvidson et al., 2018). This includes organisations such as political parties, labour unions, and interest groups.

However, as noted by some scholars (e.g. Harding, 2012; Evers, 2020; Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005), many organisations serve more than one purpose and may as such work both with providing services to their constituency and advocating for their cause to make a change in society. Thus, the term hybrid

organisation has slowly started to be used. Arguably, operating in both fields can strengthen the organisation's legitimacy (von Essen & Svedberg, 2019; Kiviniemi, 2008). For example, an organisation that seeks to improve the rights of homeless people through advocacy may appear more legitimate if they are simultaneously running a homeless shelter as this provides them with real life knowledge and experiences from the field. According to Hasenfeld and Gidron, hybrid organisations are characterised by the following features: “(a) they seek to bring about social change, though not necessarily through protest and other non-institutional means; (b) the services they provide, such as social and educational, are a strategy for social change; (c) their internal structure is a mix of collectivist and bureaucratic elements” (Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005: 98).

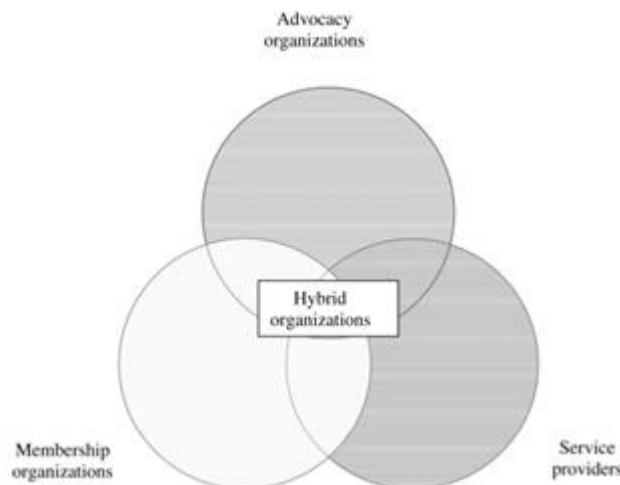


Figure 1: Hybrid organisations as a mix of service, advocacy, and membership organisations (Galaskiewicz, 2005: 114)

As mentioned above, the increasing hybridisation of CSOs can also be seen in the Swedish context where the most common change has been for traditional, policy-oriented organisations to expand their work into the service field (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018, Wijkström, 2011). “Multi-purpose” hybrid organisations, as referred to in this thesis, should however not be confused with “inter-sectoral” hybrid organisations which is a more commonly researched term that refers to organisations that combine features of, for example, businesses and commerciality with traditional non-profit activities (e.g. Wijkström, 2011; Evers, 2020). The

currently limited research on multi-purpose hybrid organisations has inter alia explored women's and racial-ethnic organisations (Minkoff, 2002), feminist social movement organisations (Hyde, 2000), and immigrant worker centers (Gates, 2014) as examples of this organisational form. In his research, Gates (2014) stresses the benefits of integrating services into organisations previously involved in advocacy work. By not only working towards long-term improvements in the lives of the organisation's constituency, but rather being present in the field and actively building relationships, contributes to an increased sense of trust among vulnerable populations. Providing services such as education and language training can also contribute to strengthening the voice of the constituency and as such enhance their role in society. Conversely, some organisations involved in service-delivery have expanded into the advocacy field to gain more legitimacy and increase their chances of contributing to long-term change (Minkoff, 2002). Arguably, hybrid organisations resemble each other in as much as they want to do as much as possible to achieve change for their constituency.

Yet, at the same time, pursuing multiple goals runs the risk of blurring the organisational focus and it can also be difficult to achieve legitimacy in different sectors (Gates, 2014). The potential problem of having to juggle different, and at times conflicting, roles and demands is also emphasised by both Hyde (2000) and Minkoff (2002). For example, funding agencies may be unwilling to support an organisation advocating for a political cause, even when this is combined with more traditional service-related activities (Minkoff, 2002). The conflict for hybrid organisations in balancing different roles can also be seen in the member context. While gaining legitimacy and as such access to public decision-making may benefit from an actively involved member base, delivering services may become more inefficient if members are to be involved. This creates a conflict within the organisation regarding to what extent members should be valued and included.

2.3 Organisational membership and civic engagement

Members have traditionally played a central role in CSOs; however, opinions vary among scholars regarding to what extent member engagement is something today's CSOs should premier. Moreover, why should members want to remain involved in associational life? A study by Knoke (1981) explored what makes members feel committed versus detached from the organisations in which they take part. According to Knoke, three factors affect membership support: influence, communication, and centralisation. Influence refers to members' possibilities to influence the organisation and the structures that facilitate interaction between members and leaders. Communication concerns how information is distributed in the organisation and who can access it. Lastly, centralisation refers to who is involved in shaping the organisation's policies. The lesser the extent to which members are involved, the more centralised the organisation is. Knoke's findings suggest that simultaneously high levels of communication and decision participation are the most important factors for members to feel committed. Feelings of organisational detachment do, however, appear to have developed in recent decades which can be seen in the increase in passive members. As argued by Putnam (1995) in his seminal work about the developments in American civil society, organisations want to be able to present a long list of members for political reasons, even though this does not contribute to the social connectedness that many people associate with associational life. Arguably, "[f]or the vast majority of their members, the only act of membership consists in writing a check for dues or perhaps occasionally reading a newsletter. Few ever attend any meetings of such organizations, and most are unlikely ever (knowingly) to encounter any other member" (Putnam, 1995: 70). In that sense, Putnam arguably considers civil society as a community-building force is somewhat outdated.

However, there is a strong link between participation in civil society through membership in a CSO, and democracy. It is often argued that membership fosters democratic principles and that it can be considered a democracy school in that sense (Wijkström, 2011; Putnam, 1995). Hence, members' influence in the

organisation's issues has traditionally been a central principle. Yet, with the increasing passivity and reliance on professionals in organisations, these assumptions are perhaps not as relevant today as in the past. As found by Binderkrantz (2009), there are noticeable differences between organisations regarding to what extent members influence the group's priorities and activities. Binderkrantz compared levels of member influence among Danish public interest groups (i.e. advocacy-oriented organisations focusing on broader societal issues), trade unions, patient associations, and professional groups. The findings of the research showed that trade unions were the most democratic followed by public interest groups, whereas the remaining two could be found at the bottom. These findings contradict the common assumption that public interest groups, that work with "external issues" and as such do not represent their members' own issues, would be less likely to engage their members in internal decision-making.

Yet, to what extent the organisations in fact value their members' participation in internal decision-making processes can be questioned. According to Maloney (2009), the democratic contribution of involving members is not as effective as could be assumed. Organisations can make decisions more effectively without involving political amateurs, i.e. members, which benefits the organisation's mission. As famously noted by Skocpol, "Even a group claiming to speak for large numbers of Americans does not absolutely need members. And if mass adherents are recruited through the mail, why hold meetings? From a managerial point of view, interactions with groups of members may be downright inefficient" (Skocpol, 1999: 494). Somewhat contradictory to Binderkrantz (2009) findings, as presented above, Maloney (2009) furthermore argues that the members themselves are more likely to want to join an organisation if there are fewer or no requirements of involvement in internal processes and activities. Thus, many organisations prefer passive members over active ones. Steffek et al.'s (2010) and Piewitt et al.'s (2010) research of transnational, policy oriented CSOs does, however, suggest that organisations value the contribution of their members in strategic decisions, whereas daily tactical decisions are preferred to be made in consultation with peers.

Nevertheless, members can serve other purposes for organisations, such as providing them with legitimacy. This is particularly the case for organisations in the field of advocacy that want to be able to demonstrate that they are

representative of a significant group of people. Grömping and Halpin (2019) studied to what extent member engagement was an important factor for Australian CSOs in gaining access to political decision-making processes. Their research showed that organisations that interacted more with their members had greater influence over policy outcomes. Ultimately, involving members makes organisations less effective, however it also contributes to more influence over policy outcomes. Thus, it is considered a “beneficial inefficiency” (Ibid). Yet, it can be questioned whether the same logic can be applied to service-oriented organisations. In other words, does a long list of members increase the legitimacy of service-oriented organisations or is it merely important to be able to provide certain services?

To summarise, to what extent members are valued by their organisations varies greatly. Whereas some scholars suggest that passive membership is preferred by organisations as well as their members, other studies show that members want to be involved and that the organisations benefit from it. A general issue within literature regarding CSOs is the multitude of definitions: non-profit, volunteer organisations, social movements are terms that often are not clearly defined. Thus, to make comparisons and draw conclusions based on different research contributions can be tricky as the characteristics of the organisations that have been included vary (Maier et al., 2016). Another point to be made is the emphasis on the organisational perspective in discussions regarding the role of members. Less attention appears to have been devoted to members’ own experiences in the development of civil society. It is commonly assumed that members simply do not want to engage in organisational activities (e.g. Maloney, 2009), yet it can be questioned whether this partly is a consequence of the increasingly dominating role of professionals which causes members to feel unimportant and peripheral in their respective organisations. More attention should be given to understanding the relationships between members and professionals, as argued in this thesis.

3 Conceptual framework

This chapter presents the conceptual framework upon which the analysis will be based. The central concepts to this thesis are member influence, member involvement, and professionalisation. As previously mentioned, member influence and involvement constitute two central types of member activism. Whereas influence is related to notions of self-governance and democratic representation, involvement is associated with social benefits such as increased well-being and enhanced human capital (Heylen et al., 2020). With the increasing professionalisation of CSOs, its impact on the role of members, in terms of organisational influence and involvement, has been debated. Nevertheless, findings vary regarding the correlations between the three concepts (e.g., Heylen et al., 2020; Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Maier et al., 2016; Grömping & Halpin, 2019). With this chapter, the purpose is to clarify the concepts and provide a theoretical discussion of how they relate to each other. The chapter begins with a conceptual discussion of member influence and involvement. Inspired by resource dependence theory and the logic of collective action, the section explores the ‘drivers’ and ‘costs’ of the two types of activism. This is followed by a discussion about professionalisation in the context of CSOs. Lastly, the different sections of this conceptual framework will be tied together in a brief discussion regarding their interrelatedness.

3.1 Member activism

Member influence and involvement are two central types of member activism that highlight the different roles members can play in CSOs. Influence, on the one hand, is defined as members’ participation in internal decision-making, whereas involvement, on the other hand, refers to members’ participation in the organisation’s activities, meetings, recruitment, fundraising, and so on. It is often

referred to in terms of volunteerism, yet member involvement is different in as much as it requires the volunteer to be a member of the organisation. As such, member influence can be associated with political benefits as it helps channel members' preferences in society, thus contributing to democratic representation (Hoskins, 2014; Wijkström, 2011). Conversely, member involvement is typically associated with social benefits such as enhanced well-being and increased human capital through interaction with others. It also contributes to the mobilisation of people to address unmet social needs (Hustinx et al., 2010; Putnam, 1995; Kenny et al., 2015).

Although the concepts are closely related, they are influenced by different factors. According to Albareda (2020), member influence in organisations builds on three elements. The first element is the existence of a forum where members and leaders meet. The second element concerns decision-making processes and members' ability to influence these. Participation in decision-making is expected to deepen members' commitment and involvement in the organisation (Ibid; Knoke, 1981). Third, local offices and regional branches are needed in order to maintain a close connection to the members. This strengthens the local embeddedness and facilitates communication with people in geographically dispersed places (Albareda, 2020).

Theories regarding the drivers behind member involvement, on the other hand, point in somewhat different directions. Whereas scholars of the Tocquevillian school, such as Putnam (1995), suggest that people come together as members of organisations to create positive change and thus contribute to increased trust and better values, Olson's (1965) seminal work on collective action suggests that there are other dynamics involved in determining to what extent people will become involved in an organisation. According to the logic of collective action, members of larger organisations will only become actively involved and work towards the organisation's goals if they have personal incitements, such as economic or social gains, for doing so. Ultimately, members' varying levels of involvement is determined by how much members value the "goods" that they are producing, i.e. what the organisation is achieving, the social ties that involvement in a group gives them, and how noticeable their contribution is to the organisation. Arguably, members of larger organisations, where the actions of a single individual may not generate much change, are as such likely to

experience their contributions as irrelevant and therefore may obtain from extending their involvement (Ibid; Oliver, 1984). According to Oliver (1984), other factors, such as higher education and income, access to free time, and being able to identify oneself with other members of the groups are also relevant for members to remain involved in an organisation (Ibid).

As furthermore noted by Bolleyer & Correa (2020), member influence and involvement enforce different “costs” on organisations. Member influence in internal decision-making processes curbs organisational leaders since it negatively impacts their ability to make their own decisions and limits their efficiency (Maloney, 2009; Evers, 2014) whereas member involvement can be steered by leaders. In other words, leaders have more control over members’ participation in organisational activities than the ways in which members seek to influence the policy direction of the organisation (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020). Hence, it can be assumed that, in many cases, organisations prefer member involvement over member influence.

Similarly, both member influence and involvement require specific resources. To keep members involved in organisational activities such as advocacy work, meetings, or fundraising requires financial resources, for example to pay for venues or training courses. As argued by some (e.g., Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Schmitter & Streeck, 1999), organisations’ willingness to make these investments is based on the availability of critical resources, such as state funding. Consequently, many scholars (e.g., Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004; Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; Heylen et al., 2020) have sought to explore the implications of professionalisation on member influence and involvement by using resource dependence theory. Resource dependence theory is an organisational theory that was developed in the late 1970s by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salanick (1978/2003). The theory seeks to explain organisational behaviour and structure by focusing on their resources. The fundamental assumption of resource dependence theory is that an organisation’s actions can be explained by the resources upon which it depends. What is considered a resource naturally differs between organisations and can therefore include anything from financial or material resources to symbolic resources such as knowledge or relationships (Neinhüser, 2008). Whoever controls the resources, in whatever shape they take, has the power over the actors who need the resources. Hence, in order to reduce

other actors' power, organisations strive to become less dependent upon them. This can be done either by reducing the needs for the resources that the other actor contributes with, or by finding alternative sources of resources (Ibid; Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978/2003). Ultimately, dependence creates uncertainties which makes the organisation vulnerable and therefore, managers within the organisation must establish what level of dependence that is reasonable (Malatesta & Smith, 2014; Neinhüser, 2008).

Applied to the context of member-based organisations, this means that when members primarily are the ones that contribute with resources to the organisation, they also hold a lot of power and thus have leverage to control the organisation. However, as the organisation evolves, management may want to diversify their resource dependencies and seek external resources (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978/2003). Moreover, unlike in for example business firms, members of an organisation are free to leave at any point. Hence, organisational leaders are unable to control their members behaviour. From a resource dependency perspective, this has serious implications for the relationship between organisational leaders and members and the uncertainties it brings about may cause management to seek other, more reliable resources (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020). For example, to reduce their dependence on membership fees and other financial contributions by members, they can seek funding from elsewhere, such as state funding. Consequently, the members are no longer the primary source of resources and therefore do not hold the same power as before. This means that they cannot influence the organisation's policy positioning to the same extent (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978/2003; Heylen et al., 2020).

Increased dependence on external resources can also be problematic with regards to members' involvement. Increased funding means that members' contributions are almost dispensable since the organisation has enough resources to replace them with paid staff who are hired based on their specific knowledge in the field (Saurugger, 2012). Furthermore, more resources also increase reporting requirements towards donors and other stakeholders. Such administrative tasks may be considered too complex or time-consuming to delegate to members hence, to reduce their dependence on members for carrying out these tasks, the organisation hires paid staff to do the job. Ultimately, members become less involved in the organisation (Ibid; Froelich, 2005). Alternatively, members are

expected to deal with the administrative tasks themselves which thus increases the organisation's demands on them in terms of time and knowledge. Moreover, this drives them further away from the issues that first made them join the organisation, causing them to feel detached from the organisation's original mission (Ganesh & McAllum, 2012; Alexander et al., 1999). Nevertheless, for organisations involved in advocacy work, an actively involved member base may provide the organisation with a critical resource in the shape of access to policy-making processes. CSOs are sometimes referred to as transmission belts between citizens and decision-makers. Thus, organisations that allow their members to actively participate in internal decision-making processes in a democratic fashion arguably appear more legitimate and will consequently have better chances of participating in such processes (Grömping & Halpin, 2019).

However, as pointed out in previous chapters, the organisation's functional orientation and the constituency it represents presumably has consequences for the role played by its members. Halpin (2006) suggests that the less representative an organisation is of its constituency, the lesser is the importance of granting the members influence. Instead, leaders will more likely extend their control in the organisation and its members will become peripheral in terms of decision-making. As such, it is assumed that members of, for example, a patient organisation will be more interested in allowing their members to play an active role in establishing the organisation's policy-orientation and activities, since its member base is likely to predominantly be made up of its constituency, i.e. patients, than an organisation working for refugees or children, since these are not likely to be members of the organisation. Similarly, the extent to which member involvement is valued and considered a critical resource to maintain the organisation's activities arguably depends on its organisational function (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978/2003).

3.2 Professionalisation

The concept of professionalisation has been widely discussed as an organisational phenomenon for more than a century within a range of disciplines, including sociology, educational studies, and political science (e.g., Saurugger, 2012; Evans,

2008). In civil society studies, the term has become increasingly referred to in recent decades. However, without one clear definition, literature on the topic is fragmented. While some simply consider it the presence of professionals in an organisation (e.g., Suarez, 2010; Webb & Kolodny, 2006), others suggest a broader approach (Ivanovska Hadjievsk & Stavenes, 2020). This thesis follows the conceptualisation proposed by Ivanovska Hadjievsk and Stavenes in which professionalisation is defined as “the recruitment of people with competencies necessary for organisational maintenance, which encompasses both paid and unpaid (voluntary) labour” (Ivanovska Hadjievsk & Stavenes, 2020: 99).

Michels’ (1915) theory of the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ is often referred to as a starting point to the systematic study of professionalisation (e.g., Saurugger, 2012; Heylen et al., 2020). The theory suggests that all organisations, including those based on democratic ideals, will inevitably transform into being run by a few. This is based on three primary factors. Firstly, the increasing amount and complexity of duties in the organisation means that they will be carried out by employees. Secondly, in a similar vein, the complexity of the issues that the organisation works with means that decision-making will be left to knowledgeable leaders instead of the members. Lastly, the large number of members makes it difficult to remain in close contact with them and decisions are thus instead made almost entirely by members of staff. Ultimately, Michaels suggests that by controlling who has access to information, the paid employees in an organisation can centralise their power and thus loosen their ties to the members. Since many members are uninvolved or passive supporters of the organisation, the members will not seek to hold the professionals accountable for their actions (Michels, 1915).

More recent research has also sought to explain the causes for professionalisation. Economic and political conditions are often pointed out as drivers of CSOs becoming more business-like with an increased focus on professional knowledge. New Public Management and neoliberal reforms have arguably had a significant impact on these developments (Kamat, 2004; Salgado, 2014). This is partly because it has contributed to an increased competition among CSOs for funding but also because of the roll-back of the state which has led to competition between CSOs and for-profit providers, particularly in the context of service-delivery (Maier et al., 2016; Wijkström, 2011). It has furthermore been

suggested that organisations become professionalised out of a desire to strengthen their legitimacy, as well as to meet policymakers demands for technical expertise (van Deth & Maloney, 2012). Professionalisation is often discussed in relation to the bureaucratisation and marketisation of CSOs (e.g., Eikenberry, 2009; Leroux & Goerdel, 2009). These concepts point to a growing trend in civil society which suggests that CSOs are becoming more business-like and market-oriented with regards to how they are organised, the language used and the activities they perform (Ibid). While these concepts are not synonymous, they relate to similar types of developments which have shifted focus away from the society and democracy enhancing notion of civil society that arguably has dominated until recent decades.

A central issue for organisations that are becoming increasingly professionalised is the so-called “professionalisation paradox” (Saruugger, 2012), meaning that the organisation’s quest to be efficient, deliver results and participate in decision-making processes risks increasing the distance between professionals and members. It is often the case in professionalised organisations that people are hired based on their expertise in a certain field, rather than an understanding of the specific needs of the members (Heylen et al., 2020; Bucher & Stelling, 1969). As noted by Heylen et al., “Specifically, professionals whose livelihoods are intertwined with organisational survival might be more predisposed to focus on issues of organisational maintenance than on informing or involving the membership; this scenario can potentially lead to ‘mission drift’ or ‘goal displacement’.” (Heylen et al., 2020: 1229). Hence, in the quest to produce results effectively, the organisation’s core values are often compromised. Consequently, members tend to be represented in two different ways, either as chequebook participants or through general assemblies. While general assemblies allow the members a voice in internal decision-making, it is however not the same as participation in the organisation’s day-to-day activities (Saurugger, 2012). Schmitter and Streeck (1999) similarly refer to this potential trade-off as an organisational conflict between the logic of membership, i.e. acting on behalf of the members, and the logic of influence, i.e. pursuing broader goals, such as shaping public policy through participation in political consultations.

3.3 Consequences of professionalisation on member activism

This chapter has thus far presented conceptual and theoretical discussions regarding member activism and the professionalisation of CSOs. With the increasing professionalisation of CSOs, its impact on member influence and involvement has become more frequently referred to. Nevertheless, findings vary regarding the correlations between the three concepts. Two opposite ‘strands’ of research findings have arguably developed: one suggesting a somewhat pessimistic outlook on the role of members as a consequence of an increased professionalisation (e.g., Ganesh & McAllum, 2012; Skocpol, 1999), with more organisations moving to a foundation-like organisational structure with less member interaction, and the other indicating a more optimistic future (e.g., Albareda & Braun, 2019; Grömping & Halpin, 2019), where the participation of members will continue to be central for CSOs as the presence of professionals can facilitate and strengthen member activism. Whereas the first group has dominated the scholarly debate on professionalisation effects, the second, more nuanced approach to members’ role in professionalising organisations has in recent years become increasingly common.

Two recent studies by Bolleyer and Correa (2020) and Heylen (2020), focusing on the consequences of professionalisation on member activism, can be considered representative of the second strand even though their findings point in somewhat different directions. Bolleyer and Correa’s (2020) study of voluntary organisations in four European countries found that the more staff-driven an organisation is, the less influence the members hold. However, member involvement was found to increase in organisations with more employees. Heylen et al. (2020) conducted a similar study of CSOs in five European countries. In contrast to Bolleyer and Correa’s (2020) findings, their research indicates that employing professionals in fact can be beneficial for membership influence. This is, however, contingent upon the members being actively involved in the organisation’s activities. As these two studies show, there is no consensus on the effects of an increased professionalisation and more research is as such needed to address this gap. By focusing on the two aspects of member activism, i.e.

influence in internal decision-making and involvement in organisational activities, through the lens of professionalisation, this thesis will allow for a holistic study that answers the previously stated research questions.

4 Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology and methods through which the research was carried out to answer the research questions regarding what possibilities members have to influence internal decision-making in hybrid organisations and how these seek to generate and sustain member involvement. The chapter begins with a discussion of the researcher's ontological and epistemological position. The chapter then moves on to present a detailed account of the case study, the data collecting process, the analysis process, and the limitations of the study.

4.1 Ontology and epistemology

This thesis is concerned with understanding the consequences of professionalisation in CSOs by focusing on how members and employees at Save the Children Sweden view the role of membership in the organisation. Central to the research are as such members and employees of Save the Children Sweden, and their interpretations of the ongoing professionalisation of the organisation. The belief that understanding individual experiences is of importance stems from an ontological worldview that assumes that reality is socially constructed. Ontology is a concept that refers to how one sees the nature and character of social things. The researcher's ontological perspective has implications for the research questions asked and how the researcher goes about answering these (Mason, 2018).

The ontological position is closely linked to the researcher's epistemological orientation, meaning what the researcher considers to be evidence or knowledge. According to the social constructivist perspective upon which this thesis is based, there are multiple interpretations of a single event and therefore one is not more real than the other. Knowledge can, in that sense, not be found. Rather, social constructivism suggests that the researcher creates knowledge by seeking and interpreting different understandings. The way in which participants describe their

experiences and interpretations of the issue being researched is as such what creates knowledge about social reality (Merriam, 2009; Mason, 2018; Bryman, 2012). This allows for a close relationship between the researcher and the participant as the researcher seeks to understand how people make sense of their world (Merriam, 2009). Knowledge is therefore, from a social constructivist perspective, assumed to be context-bound and subjective, and consequently, the way in which the researcher interprets data is shaped by his or her own biases. These biases cannot be eliminated, and the researcher must instead seek to be aware of them and reflect upon how one's own subjectivities affect the collection and interpretation of data (Ibid).

Being aware of one's own approach and biases when seeking to understand a certain phenomenon requires a reflexive approach. According to Corlett and Mavin (2018), reflexivity involves constant considerations of what knowledge is, one's relationship with the research context, and what is considered valuable and valid research. Ultimately, the researcher must seek to stay true to his or her epistemological perspective. A reflexive approach also involves taking into account one's own positionality, i.e. the researcher's position in relation to the research subject(s) and reflecting upon how this may impact the research findings. The researcher's positionality can be influenced by issues such as class, gender, and personal experiences (Ibid). It is commonly considered that the more one resembles the participants in the research, the more it is assumed that meanings are shared, and the validity of the findings can be assured (Merriam et al., 2001).

My own positionality in this research project was affected by the fact that I had previously conducted an internship at Save the Children Sweden which provided me with a semi-insider status in the organisation. My semi-insider status was arguably strengthened by the fact that I am a white female, born and raised in Sweden. These are characteristics of both the typical member and employee of Save the Children Sweden. The insider status can be considered advantageous since it gives the researcher easier access to the culture that is being studied, it allows the researcher to ask the respondents deeper questions as he or she already knows 'the basics', and the researcher may be considered more trustworthy, hence making the respondents more comfortable opening up. However, the insider status also has disadvantages. For example, the respondents may overestimate the researcher's knowledge and therefore do not explain things that are considered

obvious. Similarly, the researcher may not feel comfortable asking ‘dumb’ questions, which would have been natural for an outsider. Moreover, the respondents may not feel as comfortable sharing personal or sensitive information as they would to a complete stranger (Holmes, 2020). My personal characteristics and background in Save the Children Sweden arguably made it easier for me to access the organisation and find people interested in participating in interviews. It furthermore seemed to enable the respondents to speak freely, knowing that I would likely understand where their thoughts were coming from.

4.2 Methods

This part of the chapter presents the methods that have been applied to generate and analyse data in order to answer the research questions. It begins with laying out the rationale for using a case study approach, followed by a presentation of the case, Save the Children Sweden. After this, the semi-structured interview and the sampling method are discussed. The method of data analysis, a qualitative content analysis, is then presented before briefly addressing the limitations of the study.

4.2.1 Case study: Save the Children Sweden

This thesis takes a case study approach to explore the consequences of an increased professionalisation on member influence and involvement. As noted by Baxter and Jack (2008), this design is suitable when the goal is to take into account contextual conditions that are thought to be relevant for the issue being studied. Moreover, it allows the researcher to capture the complexity of the object that is being studied. As the case study is bound to the specific context that it is part of, its purpose is not to produce generalisable results (Hyett et al., 2014). However, certain aspects of the findings generated by a case study can be compared to other studies and as such contribute to a new or existing theory (Erickson, 1986).

Researchers suggest two different approaches to selecting a unit of analysis for a case study. Some (e.g., Starman, 2013) argue that extreme or exceptional

cases should be selected as this can reveal entirely new information, whereas others (e.g., Yin, 2009) recommend selecting a typical case as this might deepen the knowledge of a particular issue or generate a new hypothesis. Save the Children Sweden is considered a typical case in the context of Swedish CSOs and hybrid organisations. It is a democratic, member-based organisation that is actively involved in both advocacy and service-delivery. It has furthermore experienced an increase in paid staff in recent years which makes it a suitable case to explore with regards to professionalisation.

Although the organisation mainly is known for its international relief work, it also works actively with child protection at the national level. Through activism and participation in political decision-making processes, Save the Children Sweden has had an important influence on the country's child protection discourse (Lundström, 2001). The organisation, which was founded in 1919, currently has around 64 000 members that are tied to 171 local associations spread across the country (Rädda Barnen, 2020). All members pay a yearly membership fee of which 25 percent goes to the local association to which the member belongs. The local associations are responsible for, inter alia, organising activities, spreading information about children's rights, and advocacy in the local context. Each local association has their own board. The local associations are based on their geographical position grouped together into 25 district associations which also are run by member-based boards (Rädda Barnen, 2019). In addition to the members, Save the Children Sweden currently has approximately 400 employees. These are primarily based at the main office in Stockholm and at 11 regional offices around the country. The Stockholm office works with issues ranging from IT and marketing to international relief work and national member support. The regional offices, on the other hand, primarily support the local and district associations in different ways and provide services for children and young adults, e.g., psychological treatment and Swedish language training (Ibid).

4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Data was generated through nine semi-structured interviews with active members of Save the Children Sweden and employees that work towards the members. Following a social constructivist epistemological approach, the purpose of using interviews was to understand experiences and opinions that could not be accessed through texts or surveys. Moreover, a document analysis of, for example, official Save the Children reports would most likely only provide insight into the organisation's perspective. Since this thesis is concerned with understanding both the employees' and the members' points of view, interviews were considered the most appropriate method (Bryman, 2012). The interviews were semi-structured in order to enable the respondents to share their own thoughts and not become too steered by the questions asked. To allow the interviews to flow naturally while at the same time covering the topics of investigation, two sets of interview guides were used; one for the members and one for the employees (see Appendix 1). An interview guide lists questions and topics that should be covered in the interview, but its relatively loose format also allows the researcher to come up with new questions during the interview, depending on where the respondent's answers are leading the interview (Bryman, 2012). The two interview guides focused on the same issues but formulated somewhat differently to capture the different perspectives of the members and the employees.

As mentioned above, the respondents were active members and employees working with membership related issues. Active members are defined as members who in some way participate in, or contribute to, organisational activities. It contrasts with passive members whose only engagement with the organisation is through the payment of membership fees (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020). Active members were considered most relevant to include in this study as they, in comparison to passive members, have more insight into the ongoings of Save the Children Sweden and as such can provide valuable information about members' possibilities to exert influence and become involved in the organisation. Similarly, interviews were conducted with employees that work with member-related matters as they arguably have the most knowledge about the potentially changing role of the organisation's members. The purpose of including both members and

employees was to gain insight into the two roles and as such explore whether their experiences and perceptions of the member role in an increasingly professional organisation corresponded. Using multiple perspectives in a study enables rich understandings of different perspectives within the same group and can hence contribute to a fuller and more nuanced picture of the phenomena or occurrence that is being studied (Santoro, 2014; Vogl et al., 2019).

To access members and employees with valuable insights about the organisation, the research employed a purposeful sampling strategy. This allows the researcher to find information-rich cases with relevant knowledge of the topic of inquiry. More specifically, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods was employed (Merriam, 2009). Because of my previous role as an intern at Save the Children Sweden, I had some knowledge about relevant persons within the organisation to reach out to. This allowed me to purposively sample participants for the study. A recurring challenge in research on organisational dynamics that seeks to include an individual-level approach is the researcher's limited access to organisations' members (Bolloyer & Correa, 2020). However, because of my semi-insider role in the organisation, I could access members more easily and thus get insight into their experiences. To broaden the sample beyond respondents that I was already familiar with, snowball sampling was also used as a method for finding new participants. Snowball sampling means that the researcher asks research participants to suggest other people to be contacted (Bryman, 2012). In this research, the snowball method contributed to an extended geographical scope and an increased diversity of people among the respondents. The risk of both the purposive and snowball sampling strategy, however, is that it is unlikely that the findings will be representative of the wider population. This is nevertheless not a significant problem in qualitative research as it does not seek to generate statistical data (Ibid).

To make the respondents feel relaxed and free to answer the questions without hesitation, all respondents were guaranteed anonymity at the offset of the interviews. There is, however, always a risk when including qualitative interviews in research that the data cannot be fully anonymised. The rich and personal nature of qualitative interviews risks revealing information that makes the respondents recognisable (Mason, 2018). Although the respondents were not asked to reveal any particularly private information, the interviews focused on their experiences

of being involved in or working for Save the Children Sweden, and as such, not anonymising them might have risked them not wanting to share, for example, critical opinions about the organisation. To minimise the risk of revealing the identities of the participants, the thesis does not offer any information about which parts of the country the respondents are active in or what positions they hold.

The interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams, a videoconferencing tool that is used by staff as well as actively involved members of Save the Children Sweden. The strength of the online interview lies primarily in the convenience of it. Interviews can be conducted even if the researcher and respondent are not in the same place geographically and it is also easier to fit into busy schedules as it does not require any transportation or setting up (Mason, 2018). Interviews can also easily be recorded in many videoconferencing tools, including Microsoft Teams. Nevertheless, there are downsides to using online tools for interviewing. For example, not everyone is comfortable using online communication or has access to the relevant technology, which can prevent potential respondents from wanting to participate (Mason, 2018). An unstable internet connection is also an issue that can occur during online interviews. This can cause disturbances in the recordings as well as a distant feeling between the researcher and the respondent (Ibid). Nevertheless, the advantages of using a videoconferencing tool arguably outweigh the disadvantages and it was thus considered beneficial for this research.

Each interview lasted for approximately one hour. After the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed. Since all of the interviews were conducted in Swedish, the quotes that appear in the results chapter have been translated to English and are as such not direct quotations. As noted by Santos Jr et al., “Language constitutes a challenge even in qualitative research conducted in one language, because there is always a gap between a life-as-lived, a life-as-experienced, and a life-as-told” (Santos Jr et al., 2015: 135). Thus, there is always a challenge for the researcher in understanding and interpreting these lives. Cross-language qualitative studies add another dimension to this as the researcher then also must translate these interpretations of what is being said (Ibid). Ideally, the interviews would have been translated in their entirety by a professional translator. However, due to restrictions in terms of time and resources, only the parts that were found particularly relevant have been translated by the researcher.

4.2.3 Data analysis

The data generated through the interviews was analysed using a qualitative content analysis. This method of analysis is used to find underlying themes in the data. It relies on hermeneutical traditions which provide principles for how to interpret texts. A hermeneutical interpretation of a text suggests that previous knowledge of a topic is essential for understanding different levels of meaning. As such, the researcher must reflect on his or her own preconceptions about the research question and actively work through the text as a whole to bit by bit develop one's own understanding of what is being said. To do so, the researcher must also take into account the circumstances under which the text was produced. Building on this tradition, the qualitative content analysis emphasises the context of the issue that is being researched and thus constitutes an interpretative type of analysis (Kuckartz, 2014). Even though qualitative content analysis is among the most commonly used methods of document analysis, there are no explicitly stated steps that should be followed by the researcher (Bryman, 2012). However, the general procedure begins with a thorough reading of the data. Before beginning to analyse the data, it is essential that the researcher becomes immersed in the data by actively thinking about what is going on and why certain things are being said. Only by being completely familiar with the data can insights emerge (Dey, 1993). In this thesis, the texts that are subject to interpretation are the interview transcripts. Thus, before beginning to code the data, the transcripts were repeatedly read through and reflected upon.

The second step in the process is to organise the data by developing categories and specific codes that go under these (see Appendix 2) (Elo & Kyngäs, 2009). The codes used to categorise the data were developed inductively. At first, a broad set of codes were developed in order to capture the many different issues brought up by the respondents. These were then refined and reorganised to ensure a clear connection to two research questions. To ensure consistency in the coding, constant comparisons and revisions were made during the process of coding. Ideally, this would have been done in dialogue with other researchers to strengthen the validity further (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). The qualitative data analysis software NVivo was used to facilitate the analysis of data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

However, since the data included multiple perspectives, i.e. both the members' and the employees', the analysis phase differed somewhat from a traditional qualitative content analysis (Vogl et al., 2019). In multiple perspective interviews, the findings are triangulated which requires the researcher to move between interpreting singular accounts, analysing the dynamics within groups, and seeking to make sense of where the perspectives correspond and differ (Zartler, 2010). As such, the interview transcripts were at first coded and analysed separately within the two groups (members and employees) and then compared across the groups. The comparison of interview accounts can converge, i.e., when the same view is shared, complement each other, i.e., when two (or more) views create a fuller picture, or diverge, i.e., when views contradict each other (Vogl et al., 2019).

4.2.4 Limitations

The thesis focuses on member influence and involvement, based on the perspectives of active members and employees working with member-related issues. As previously discussed, these two groups were chosen because of their insight into the members' situation. The thesis is as such not representative of Save the Children Sweden's members and employees at large. Moreover, the scope of the research is limited due to the timeframe of one semester during which the thesis was written. More time would have allowed for more respondents and possibly comparisons with other cases as well. Nevertheless, the research questions could still be answered within the frames of this research.

5 Results

This chapter presents the data that has been generated through interviews with members and employees at Save the Children Sweden. The results are organised to answer the following research questions: *What possibilities do members have to influence internal decision-making in hybrid organisations?* and *How do hybrid organisations seek to generate and sustain member involvement over time?* The chapter presents issues brought up by both the employees and members and offers comparisons of their views to contribute to a better understanding of how their views converge, diverge, or complement each other.

5.1 Influence

This section focuses on results generated in relation to the first research question regarding members' possibilities to influence decision-making within Save the Children Sweden. It begins by presenting the respondents' reflections concerning the democratic aspects of being a member-based organisation and members' avenues of influence. As frequently stated by the respondents, there is however a limited interest among the members in influencing internal decision-making, which will be discussed in the following section.

5.1.1 Avenues of influence

Save the Children Sweden is officially referred to as a democratic, member-based organisation. The democratic aspect was mentioned by all of the interviewed employees. This was referred to as a strength that cannot be found in other types of organisations and thus must be valued.

Since we are a member-run organisation, it is really important that people become members. To be able to show, in dialogues with politicians or in advocacy work [...]. There is a huge difference between saying that “We are a member-based organisation of 10 000 people” or “We are a member-based organisation of 100 000 people”. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021).

We believe that if people participate and can channel their commitment in an organisation like ours, [we] will become stronger and more legitimate. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

As these quotes indicate, being a democratic organisation provides Save the Children Sweden with legitimacy and strengthens its voice in external contexts. However, the idea of Save the Children as being a democratic, member-based organisation has not been central in the entire organisation, as expressed by three of the employees. Supposedly, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding among many of the employees who work with non-member related issues regarding the role of the members and what it means to be a democratic organisation.

It is not really about money; it is about having people that are involved in the whole democratic process that does not just build an organisation but a society [...]. And that is what we want, but I think it has slipped into the background. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

The quote refers to the fact that Save the Children Sweden in recent years has prioritised generating money over matters related to members and the democratic ideals upon which the organisation is based. According to the employees, it is important to discuss these issues more often if the members' status in the organisation is to improve. While the majority of the members also stressed the importance of being a democratic organisation, this aspect was referred to a lesser extent than the employees.

In terms of members' actual possibilities to influence internal decision-making, all of the interviewed employees emphasised the fact that members have great opportunities to bring their thoughts to the table through different forums.

So there are many formal opportunities [...] where the national board and secretariat invite [the members] to discussion. But then there are also [...] several focus groups, informal conversations, but also that you can email us, you can contact us directly and express things and we will take that forward. (Employee 2, March 12, 2021)

[I]t is in particular every other year, prior to our General Assemblies, that you have the opportunity to send in motions. And you must not forget that our national board also are trustees [elected by] the members to represent the members. So they can also make suggestions and propositions. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

As these quotes show, there are many ways in which members can seek to influence the decisions made within the organisation. Particularly the bi-annual General Assembly was referred to as a forum for members to raise their voices. The General Assembly is Save the Children Sweden's primary decision-making forum where members meet to discuss the direction of the organisation and elect trustees to the national board. All members can send in motions and participate at the meeting, however not everyone has the right to vote. Each local and district association is entitled to a certain number of representatives, based on the number of members that belong to the association, who hold voting rights at the General Assembly. While employees from the organisation also participate at the General Assembly, they are strictly forbidden from voicing their own concerns or in any way influencing the outcomes. Rather, their role is to act as facilitators. Aside from the General Assembly, members are also invited to partake in conferences and working groups throughout the year.

The members also expressed a relatively positive attitude towards their possibilities to influence decision-making within the organisation. They primarily stressed their contact with the operational development planners, who work at the regional offices, as a way to express their thoughts and opinions. The operational

development planners' primary task is to support the local and district associations; hence they are the employees closest in contact with the members. However, a majority of the members also referred to a feeling of distance within the organisation, particularly towards the national board, which made them feel disconnected from some of the decisions made at the national level. As pointed out by two of the employees, the members cannot influence the organisation's day-to-day decisions, which also can contribute to the members' feeling of not being present in the decisions made by the organisation.

[T]he members cannot go in and decide exactly how a regional office should act in different issues and how we choose to organise ourselves, where we should have our offices and so on. That responsibility has been delegated to the general secretary. (Employee 4, April 6, 2021)

We at the secretariat have been assigned to sort of carry out what the members decide. [...] We are trying to listen more, I'd say, or we want to be able to listen to the members more and... But [...] the members are not involved in all the decisions that we make at the regional office. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021)

As such, the overarching decisions are made by the members whereas decisions regarding the running of the regional offices and secretariat are made by the employees. This is arguably a matter of working efficiently. Consulting decisions with members is a time-consuming process, as mentioned by the employees, hence, to include them in daily, operational decisions would slow processes down and likely also overwhelm the members. However, since the members are not active in the daily running of the organisation, their role in the organisation risks being forgotten or overlooked by those who do not work specifically with member-related issues.

Nevertheless, as furthermore stated by the employees, the members are increasingly becoming recognised as important actors in the organisation. At the previous General Assembly, which took place in September 2020, it was decided that the organisation would carry out an investigation that seeks to look over how

the organisation is structured and what changes can be done to bring the members closer to the rest of the organisation. A central part of the investigation is consultations with the members to actively include them in decisions about how the organisations should be structured. The organisational investigation was thus frequently referred to by both employees and members as a positive step that hopefully will strengthen the members' voices in internal decision-making.

In summary, the members' and employees' understandings of what possibilities members have to influence internal decision-making converged. The two parties agreed that members have good possibilities to influence the organisation. However, as pointed out by the employees, the members' role in decision-making processes is not common knowledge within the whole organisation. On a similar note, the members stated that they do feel somewhat distant from some of the decisions being made by the organisation, which can be linked to the fact that their influence is restricted to strategic long-term decision-making rather than day-to-day decisions. However, the organisational investigation was brought up by both members and employees as something that hopefully will strengthen member influence.

5.1.2 Interest in decision-making

While the members arguably have many forums in which to express their opinions, four of the respondents expressed a concern regarding members' interest in participating in these processes.

What we are witnessing is a diminishing number of members and that means that the people who are involved [in decision-making processes] usually are the same people who sort of do the same thing. [...] So it's probably that the involvement is very high within a smaller group of people. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021)

I feel like there is a core within Save the Children Sweden that often reoccurs in these, those who are the most involved, I mean. But I think that there is a larger group outside that surely could be, or would like to be, more active. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

The employees unanimously stated that even though they invite members to partake in different forums for dialogue or decision-making, it is often the same people that participate, as suggested in the quotes above. There was however no consensus regarding why the situation looks like this. As pointed out by a minority of the respondents, it is primarily the chairmen of the local and district associations' boards that participate in forums for decision-making and member consultation. According to one of the employees, this is because the chairmen often are very committed people who want to do as much as they possibly can. It was furthermore suggested that the personal relationships between members and employees are of value in terms of making members interested in influencing the organisation.

It is the chairmen [of the local and district organisations] that [we] have the most personal contact with. Had we mostly been in contact with the secretaries and encouraged them and known them on a personal level, then we would perhaps have seen a majority of secretaries in working groups or whatever it may be. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021)

Arguably, the better the employees know the organisation's members, the easier it will be for them to find people who might be interested in participating in specific working groups. However, due to a lack of resources in terms of time, this is not possible. One of the members also mentioned that invitations to member consultations usually go out to the local association's board members but these are usually not passed on to people outside of the boards. Moreover, Save the Children Sweden does not have email addresses to all of the members, which also was pointed out by two of the employees as a central concern that hinders member participation in decision-making. Another potential reason for members' limited participation was suggested out by one of the employees who referred to the operational development planners' increased workload and changed priorities as a contributing factor.

Before, we also worked with administrative support to the members. We don't really do that in the same way today since [we] have other assigned tasks that we perhaps did not have 15 years ago. (Employee 4, April 6, 2021)

The above quote refers to the fact that the number of motions written for the General Assembly has gone down in recent years. This was explained as a consequence of the fact that the organisation's employees, in particular the operational development planners, no longer provide the same hands-on support to the members as they did before. In the past, the operational development planners would organise sessions for the members where they would receive help with writing motions for the General Assembly. However, as mentioned above, they no longer have the possibility to provide this type of support, hence it is up to the members to do this themselves.

While the interviewed members had mixed experiences regarding the members' interest in taking part in internal decision-making processes, the majority of them agreed that there is generally not a strong interest in these issues.

[In the past,] all of us board members were really committed to going to different things and courses in a completely different way than I feel like people do today. It is very difficult getting people to go to anything today. (Member 5, April 21, 2021)

No, I haven't felt like [there is an interest in influencing the organisation]. And I think that is because we haven't been involved in it, we are working in the same way as we always have. (Member 4, April 14, 2021)

As the first quote suggests, there used to be a bigger interest among the members in taking part in conferences organised by the organisation which would often last whole weekends. Today, it is difficult to get people to take the time to attend such events. The second quote shows another perspective, where active members have no interest in participating in decision-making forums since they are content doing what they always have done in their own local association. Similar to the

employees, the members could not explain why there is a lack of interest to participate in internal decision-making processes, however some of them indicated that it could be related to it being quite time-consuming and a general feeling of not being able to make a difference anyway.

In summary, the majority of the members and employees shared a similar understanding of members' limited interest in participating in decision-making processes. There was, however, no unanimous understanding of why this is the case.

5.2 Involvement

This part of the chapter focuses on the second research question, i.e. how Save the Children Sweden seeks to sustain member involvement. It begins by presenting the respondents' thoughts regarding member recruitment, both at the national and local level. It then moves on to discuss reported obstacles for participation, followed by the respondents' thoughts regarding members' incentives for actively participating in the organisation. The final part of this section focuses on collaboration between members and employees as a method of reducing the distance between the two parties.

5.2.1 Member recruitment

In recent years, membership numbers have gone down in Save the Children Sweden. According to the interviewed employees, member recruitment has not been a prioritised issue.

[E]ven though it has always been said that “Yes, the members are important because they are [...] our owners [...]”, I have felt like I haven't been working with the most prioritised issue in the organisation. (Employee 3, personal interview, March 16, 2021)

Rather than focusing on member recruitment, focus has primarily been on increasing the number of monthly donors. Unlike members, who pay an annual fee to the organisation, monthly donors contribute with a specific amount of money each month. Thus, monthly donations generate more money than membership fees. Several of the employees pointed out that it is sometimes difficult to explain to people in the organisation who do not work with member related issues why finding new members should be a priority. As previously stated, the concern with being a democratic organisation was emphasised by all of the interviewed employees, however not everyone who works for Save the Children Sweden is as knowledgeable about the role members possess in the organisation. Moreover, the fact that the organisation offers different ways in which people can become involved can arguably be somewhat problematic.

You can be a Save the Children activist in so many different ways: you can be a monthly donor, you can be a volunteer, you can be a member, you can be an employee. There are so many different ways in which to be involved and I think that in itself is a challenge because we are competing over these people all the time. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021)

The internal competition for attention and resources to specific issues has meant that member recruitment has fallen on the list of priorities at the national level. Similarly, the majority of the members reported that they have not actively been working with finding new members to their local associations in recent years.

I said at our board meeting [last year] that we have to do something about membership [...], but I don't feel like we have started with it. (Member 4, April 14, 2021)

We haven't really focused on recruitment; however [...] I am an old teacher, so I have some students that are grown up now that have families that have joined our [local association]. (Member 5, April 21, 2021)

Similar to the last quote, many of the members reported that they usually recruit members among people they know and that they, themselves, were asked by friends to join the organisation.

Nevertheless, even though the number of members is decreasing, there are a lot of people who take part in organisational activities as volunteers, without formal membership. These can participate in activities organised by the associations; however they do not hold voting rights at meetings, nor are they obliged to provide any contact information which means that the organisation does not have a record of everyone who is involved. The members reported different experiences of working with volunteers; while some stated that everyone who was active in their association were also members, others reported that they had a lot of non-member volunteers. Overall, the members did not consider it negative to have people involved as volunteers rather than members. The employees, on the other hand, expressed mixed feelings toward the increased focus on volunteerism.

I think it's okay that we offer people to become volunteers in the organisation, but I think that after a while when [...] they have got to know us, then we must offer them membership. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

Moreover, the risk of the organisation moving away from its democratic principles and becoming too professionalised, with employees who hand out tasks to volunteers, similar to CSOs in e.g. the US and the UK, was also pointed out by two of the employees as a potential consequence of the increased volunteerism.

In summary, the members' and employees' views regarding member recruitment were complimentary. As pointed out by the employees, member recruitment has not been a priority at the national level as there are also other ways in which people can become involved in the organisation. The members, on the other hand, did not refer to member recruitment in terms of national initiatives but rather they stressed the lack of initiatives from their own part. In terms of increasing volunteerism, the members and employees did not share a mutual concern regarding the potential consequences it might have on the future of the organisation.

5.2.2 Obstacles

As discussed in the previous section, Save the Children Sweden, like many other CSOs, has struggled with recruiting new members in recent years. The respondents also reported other reasons that arguably prevent people from becoming involved in the organisation. The administrative burden was frequently referred to as a negative factor for member involvement.

For some, I think it's like a full-time job being involved in Save the Children. Or at least a part-time job. (Employee 1, March 4, 2021)

I can only say what I've heard, but [the members] are expressing that they feel like it's quite burdening and that administration takes a lot of time. (Employee 4, April 6, 2021)

However, it is not only administrative tasks that contribute to the increased workload. Both members and employees lifted the fact that Save the Children Sweden in recent years has expanded its focus into the service-delivery field which has increased the active members' workload. Earlier, the local and district associations primarily worked with fundraising and advocacy which are not particularly resource demanding activities. Being able to provide activities on a continual basis, on the other hand, expects more from the members in terms of time and commitment.

[There] is a difficulty in going from being a fundraising organisation to an advocacy organisation with direct activities. It requires some people that can participate in direct activities. (Member 2, March 31, 2021)

It requires a lot of resources and it's heavy work with a lot of people involved in it if it's going to be successful and last over time. (Employee 3, March 16, 2021)

As suggested by these two respondents, the change in organisational focus can also impact the organisation's expectations on the members. Moreover, three of the respondents expressed concerns about the fact that the organisation is providing services for children and youths which previously was considered a task for the state. This shift towards an increased focus on service-delivery was referred to by some of the respondents as a 'return to older days', when it was CSOs that provided services for other people, rather than the state.

Yet, at the same time, the majority of the members argued that the way forward for the local and district associations is to organise different kinds of activities for children and youths as this might encourage new people to join the organisation as members. The majority of Save the Children Sweden's active members are older people who have a background in working with issues related to children. According to both members and employees, the lack of diversity makes it difficult for new people to become active in the local and district associations and feel like they are welcome.

If you have been in your position for too long, you might be afraid to let it go. And that can make it difficult to come in as new and young if you are not invited to take part. (Member 4, April 14, 2021)

It is a very white member base, there are a lot of classic Save the Children Sweden members that are social workers or have some kind of academic background and have worked with societal issues before. And that means that you attract people who look the same way and have the same backgrounds. So, if you have a completely different background and experiences in life, I think it's harder to get into [the organisation] and make your voice heard. (Employee 2, March 12, 2021)

As such, it was suggested that an increased focus on diversity and inclusion is needed if the members are going to continue to play an active role in the organisation.

To summarise this section, the members and employees shared a similar understanding of the obstacles which hinder member involvement. While it was

argued by a minority of the respondents that the increased emphasis on service-delivery can constitute an obstacle for member involvement since it, compared to advocacy work and fundraising, requires more from the members in terms of time and resources, a majority of the respondents also saw it as the way forward for the members to remain relevant to the organisation. Organising activities for children was also referred to as a way to make outsiders interested in the organisation and it could as such also increase member involvement.

5.2.3 Incentives

The need for more recognition of the members' contributions was unanimously pointed out by the members. As previously discussed, several of the members reported a feeling of distance towards the rest of the organisation which also made them question their importance for the overall organisation.

Because when you are a puzzle piece, you might feel alone. But when you know that you are a part of a big puzzle, you feel important.
(Member 1, March 11, 2021)

The respondent furthermore stated that the members need more encouragement from the organisation to keep them motivated. The lack of incentives for the members was also emphasised by some of the employees.

[T]he incitement for being a member has sort of disappeared. For example, at these operational conferences, you would get great goodie bags. Well, you got more back, both physical things but also a feeling, I think, of being important. (Employee 2, March 12, 2021)

The cut back on gifts and other incentives to the members is arguably connected to a diminished budget for member related matters from the national organisation. Similarly, one of the members stated that they would like to be able to encourage people to become active in their local association by providing gifts and other incitements, however, their own budget does not allow it.

How the organisation is communicated internally and externally was also referred to with regards to members' feelings of belonging. The respondents pointed out that there used to be regional communicators that could communicate local stories and spread information about the members' role in the organisation, however these positions no longer exist.

There used to be regional communicators [...], and I think that would be great [to have it again]. Partly to collect stories [...] both nationally so that everyone understands what is going on among the members and the staff-led part of the organisation, but also externally to get new people to want to become involved in our activities.
(Employee 2, March 12, 2021)

As suggested in this quote, better internal communication at different levels of the organisation would create more insight to what both members and employees are doing. Similarly, more external communication could help increase outsiders' interest in becoming involved in the organisation. One of the respondents pointed out that many problems, i.e. members' feelings of detachment, stem from flawed communication. However, as indicated by a majority of the respondents, the problem is not necessarily a lack of communication, but rather the opposite. The members are overwhelmed by information from different parts of the organisation, but it is not always clear what applies to them.

In summary, the members and employees agreed that there need to be more incentives for members to want to become actively involved in the organisation. An increased focus on the members' work and contributions in internal and external communication was specifically suggested as a way to both strengthen employees' knowledge about their role but also to generate interest externally to increase people's interest in becoming involved as members.

5.2.4 Collaboration

Similar to many other CSOs, Save the Children Sweden has in recent years become increasingly reliant on external funding. This type of funding is often tied to specific projects which the organisation is supposed to carry out. To produce

results, people have been hired to work specifically with projects for a longer or shorter period of time. As such, there are today employees that work at the local level with issues that members also are involved in, such as Swedish language training, collaborations with schools, and other types of projects. According to some of the respondents, this has caused the organisation to fall out of step in some areas and made members feel uncertain about what their role is. To overcome this problem and make the members feel more involved, the employees unanimously agreed that more collaboration between employees and members is needed.

I'm thinking that collaboration is the way forward, to do something together and sort of, create more ownership among the local association for staff-led activities. (Employee 4, April 6, 2021)

While there is often a close collaboration between active members and operational development planners, who work at the regional offices providing support to the local and district associations, the members reported that it is less common that they collaborate with employees from other parts of the organisation. Hence, by including members in different projects from the start, their role in the organisation will become more visible. As such, it was suggested by the majority of the employees that it should be a prerequisite before starting a project or applying for external funding that employees and members of the specific local or district association where the project is supposed to take place should sit down together to make a plan for how to work with it together. As furthermore pointed out by one of the members, the organisation should be better at tapping into the members' knowledge about children. Save the Children Sweden has a lot of active members who have previously worked with children and as such have a lot of knowledge. Thus, there are arguably great possibilities for members and employees to collaborate more and learn from each other.

Three of the respondents also pointed to the positive aspects of hiring more employees. It was suggested that increasing the number of employees could help strengthen member involvement as these would be able to make the work currently carried out by members more structured and effective. As previously discussed, a majority of the members were positive to the increased focus on

service-delivery since it can attract new people to join the organisation and as such make the role of the members more relevant to the organisation. However, as furthermore pointed out, this also contributes to a heavier workload for the members. Thus, to support the members and facilitate the shift towards becoming more of a service-oriented organisation, more employees are arguably needed. As the quote below suggests, there is often a strong will among the members to create activities and actively help the organisation's constituency, however since activities are carried out on a volunteer basis, they do not always reach their full potential.

When you say "We have this activity for single mothers" for example, on paper it looks great that you have an activity for single mothers. But when there are seven mothers, but there are more, then there is something missing. It is great that there are seven of them, but you should work to get more. (Member 2, March 31, 2021)

The respondent in this quote referred to the fact that local and district associations do not always have enough capacity in terms of how many people they can include in their activities, however with the help of employees, in particular operational development planners, it would be possible for them to reach out to and take on more people. Even though only a minority of the members clearly stated that they would like there to be more operational development planners, all of the members mentioned that they were happy with the support they receive from them now.

Overall, the members' and employees' views regarding collaboration complement each other. Whereas the employees primarily pointed at increased collaboration between members and employees from different parts of the organisation as a way to strengthen member involvement and ownership, the members referred to collaboration in the sense of increased support from the side of the employees towards the members. Ultimately, both parties agreed that members and employees do not stand in opposition to each other, but rather, they can help each other, and the whole organisation, become stronger.

6 Discussion

This aim of this thesis was to empirically contribute to the ongoing debate about the changing role and relevance of members in CSOs. More specifically, it sought out to explore members' and employees' understandings of how the increasing professionalisation has impacted members' influence and involvement in hybrid organisations. This chapter analyses the findings from the interviews with members and employees of Save the Children Sweden based on previous literature and theories on the topic of professionalisation and member activism.

The presented results indicate that members of Save the Children Sweden have many opportunities to participate in internal decision-making, particularly through the bi-annual General Assembly and various issue-specific working groups. However, in line with previous findings by Steffek et al. (2010) and Piewitt et al. (2010), the results of this thesis also suggest that members' influence is limited to long-term decision making, whereas day-to-day decisions are made by the employees themselves. According to Michels' (1915) iron law of oligarchy, when organisations grow in size and the complexity of issues dealt with increases, decisions are more likely to be made by employees. This contributes to a centralisation of power and an increased distance towards the members.

Furthermore, with more funding, a predominant focus on fundraising at the national level, and an increasing number of employees, member-related issues have received less attention. As noted by Heylen et al. (2020), professionalised organisations often hire people based on their expertise in a certain field, rather than an understanding of the specific needs of the members. This might result in the organisation's core values, e.g. democracy, being compromised. In line with the "professionalisation paradox" (Saurugger, 2012), the increasing professionalisation of Save the Children Sweden has increased the distance between the members and employees to such an extent that some employees hardly know that the members exist and that they are the ones who, in fact, decide upon the course and overarching goals of the organisation. As the findings suggest, democracy, which traditionally has constituted the foundation of

Sweden's civil society, is today rarely discussed. Ultimately, it becomes more difficult for members to influence the organisation if the organisation's employees are not aware of their existence or do not consider their contributions a critical resource. Hence, the findings regarding members' possibilities to influence internal decision-making follow a traditional logic of professionalisation and does as such support previous findings on this theme.

Nevertheless, as stated above, there are several ways in which members can influence long-term decision-making. However, the findings also indicate a relatively weak interest among the members in participating in these forums. This follows a general trend, pointed out by scholars such as Putnam (1995) and van Deth and Maloney (2012), suggesting that people are becoming more content with outsourcing their democratic rights to professionals and instead limiting their participation to paying membership fees and reading the occasional newsletter. This research did not set out to specifically explore the reasons for members' interest, or lack of interest, in participating in decision-making processes, hence the results of this research only hint to possible answers as to why members' interest in influencing decision-making has diminished. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that members are more likely to feel like they are able to make a change if they are informed and encouraged by other members or employees to participate and contribute with their knowledge to the organisation. If members do not have any connection with the rest of the organisation, they will not be as informed about their possibilities to impact the organisation's course. This relates to Knoke's (1981) research on organisational commitment and detachment which suggests that if members are not communicated with and part of decision-making processes, they will feel detached from the organisation. As such, if members' possibilities to influence the organisation are not communicated properly, they will likely obtain from exercising their democratic rights.

With regards to the recent studies on the effects of an increased professionalisation on member influence by Bolleyer and Correa (2020) and Heylen et al. (2020), as presented in the conceptual framework, this thesis arguably confirms both of their findings. Whereas Bolleyer and Correa (2020) findings suggest that the more staff-driven an organisation is, the more difficult it will be for members to influence it, Heylen et al.'s (2020) research states that an increased number of employees can even be beneficial for the member influence.

As the findings of this thesis show, employees who work with member-related issues actively seek to encourage members to participate in decision-making processes. Their support was also valued by the members. Thus, this thesis argues that more employees can be positive for member influence, contingent upon the employees working with supporting the members and as such actively seeking to include them in decision-making processes. If, on the other hand, employees do not know about the members and therefore do not seek to encourage their participation in decision-making, an increase in employees will have a negative impact on member influence. As such, the findings of this thesis advance previous research regarding member influence by distinguishing the different roles employees can have in a CSO. However, this needs to be tested in other contexts to strengthen its validity.

Regarding how organisations seek to generate and sustain member involvement, the findings in the context of Save the Children Sweden point to both obstacles and opportunities for increased involvement. Little to no member recruitment, a heavy workload, a lack of diversity, and few incitements were identified as some obstacles for members to become involved or extend their involvement. To address the issue of diminished member involvement, the respondents pointed particularly to increased collaboration between members and employees, and more focus on service-delivery as possible solutions. However, whose responsibility it is to specifically work with these issues is less clear since the national organisation shares the responsibility for member recruitment and member care with the associations. Hence, initiatives are arguably needed at both levels to strengthen member involvement.

Overall, the results confirm previous findings regarding the developments within Swedish civil society, which point to a move towards service-delivery and volunteerism, rather than a focus on advocacy and democratic ideals, which has previously been at the core of CSOs (Enjolras & Strømsnes, 2018; Wijkström, 2011). The general shift from advocacy towards service-delivery can be seen as a result of the drawback of the welfare state which has pushed forward civil society actors (Maier et al., 2016; Wijkström, 2011). Service-delivery has been found to accelerate professionalisation since it, in comparison to policy-oriented activities, is more labour-intensive and thus requires more resources (Mota & Mourão, 2014). Yet, as the findings from this thesis indicate, an increased focus on service-

delivery has also become a way for Save the Children Sweden to stay relevant and to attract new people, who might not possess characteristics of the traditional Save the Children Sweden member, to become involved in the associations. This was pointed out by the members in particular who expressed a positive attitude towards this new type of organisational involvement. This finding adds to previous research regarding hybrid organisations with an increasing focus on service-delivery. While previous findings have pointed particularly to strengthened legitimacy and a closer contact with the constituency as positive effects of working with service-delivery in addition to advocacy (Gates, 2014), this thesis also suggests that it can be positive for generating more involvement in the organisation. The increased interest in service-delivery reflects the increasingly individualistic tendencies in civil society, as referred to by for example Harding (2012), Wijkström (2011), and Enjolras and Strømsnes (2018). Whereas in the past, civil society was about ideology and shaping the society, it has today become more focused on the individual (Wijkström, 2011). People want to participate in fun and enjoyable activities which suit their interests, and which can be carried out whenever they have time for it, rather than routine work, such as board work, or long-term efforts, such as policy-oriented activities.

Related to this, the findings furthermore suggest that people generally are more likely to want to become involved as volunteers rather than members. This supports previous research which points to a growing trend towards short-term engagement in specific issues, rather than a long-term formal commitment to established organisations (Harding, 2012; Wijkström, 2011). Interestingly, the members expressed a positive attitude towards people becoming involved even if it were ‘only’ as volunteers, since this would enable them to do more for the constituency and possibly also make people interested in becoming members, whereas the employees, on the other hand, were more sceptical towards this development. Even though the employees, just like the members, acknowledged that volunteerism could be a first step towards becoming a member, they also pointed to the risks of the organisation becoming too professionalised and foundation-like, with employees handing out tasks to volunteers without them being able to influence decisions made in the organisation. Ultimately, the findings suggest that an increased focus on service-delivery can be positive for generating involvement, as it can attract more people, however, it can also be

negative in the sense of generating *member* involvement specifically, since people may find it more appealing to only become involved as volunteers. As discussed by Wijkström (2011), this represents a move towards a civil society similar to that in the US and the UK, where emphasis is not as much on democratic ideals as in the Swedish context. By pointing to the discrepancy between the members' and employees' attitudes towards volunteerism, this research adds to existing literature on developments in Swedish civil society (e.g., Wijkström, 2011; Harding, 2012).

Nevertheless, if an organisation wants to create change effectively, organisational leaders might consider it safer to rely on paid employees rather than members or volunteers (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020). This assumption was reflected in the interviews which showed that members often feel like their contributions are not valued by the organisation and that employees increasingly have been assigned with tasks that typically belong to the members. Yet, similar to many professionalising organisations (Saurugger, 2012), Save the Children Sweden employees are often hired to carry out certain projects for which the organisation has received specific funding. As such, it is important to achieve results and it may thus be considered too risky to rely on members who do not necessarily have the resources in terms of knowledge or time required for this (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020). The increased focus on projects carried out by employees has arguably contributed to a growing distance between the members and the rest of the organisation. As Olson's (1965) logic of collective action suggests, even if a group shares a common interest, collective action will not occur unless there are incentives that motivate participation. This argument was reflected in the interviews where the respondents particularly referred to the need to lift members' contributions in internal and external communication if they are to remain involved and committed to fulfilling the organisation's mission.

The employees also suggested increased collaboration between members and employees from different parts of the organisation as a way to reduce the distance between the two parties and increase the members' feelings of ownership. This contrasts with traditional understandings of both professionalisation (e.g., Michels, 1915; Saurugger, 2012) and resource dependence theory (e.g., Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978/2003; Neinhüser, 2008), which suggest that organisations will move further away from their members in an attempt to reduce their dependence on them. However, it can be argued that

increased collaboration between members and employees potentially could be problematic as the two parties work at different paces. Hence, either the employees would have to slow down their pace, and therefore risk not being able to produce as noticeable outcomes as hoped, or the members would have to increase their pace and thus contribute to a heavier workload.

The findings furthermore point to the role members who work directly with the members can play to strengthen their involvement. As civil society scholars (e.g., Heylen et al., 2020; Bolleyer & Correa, 2020) increasingly have come to recognise, and as also discussed above with regards to member influence, CSO employees can help facilitate member involvement by supporting them in for example carrying out activities, organising meetings, and fundraising. This logic was also mirrored by some of the respondents who expressed a positive attitude towards the organisation hiring more employees who could support the members in their work and encourage more people to become involved. Though it may be easily assumed that members will be sceptical towards increasing numbers of employees, since these may overshadow the members' contributions, the findings indicate that this is not necessarily the case. As such, this thesis argues that it is important to differentiate between employees who work directly with the members and employees who work in other parts of the organisation or with specific issues without cooperating with the members. Whereas an increase of the latter may further distance the members from the rest of the organisation, an increase of the former can instead help lift members' contributions, support their work, and therefore strengthen their role in the organisation.

7 Conclusion

CSOs are often claimed to contribute to the development of stronger societies by representing citizen interests, enhancing democratic values and providing people with a meaningful occupation beyond work and the home. Members have traditionally been considered the core of CSOs since they are the ones who decide upon the course of the organisation and carry out the organisation's work. However, with the increasing professionalisation of CSOs, concerns have been raised about the future role of members. This thesis has contributed with a Swedish perspective to research regarding the consequences of the increasing professionalisation on member influence and involvement. Member influence and involvement have in the past mainly been discussed as separate issues; however, this thesis argues that they are closely connected and should therefore be discussed in parallel. The thesis has furthermore taken into consideration the hybrid nature of CSOs, meaning that organisations are combining features of service-delivery and advocacy. Unlike organisations that work predominantly within just one field, i.e. advocacy or service-delivery, hybrid organisations must balance the "needs" from the two sides. The increased hybridisation of CSOs has received little scholarly attention, hence this thesis has arguably contributed to filling this gap.

Through interviews with members and employees of Save the Children Sweden, the thesis has answered the following research questions: *What possibilities do members have to influence internal decision-making in hybrid organisations?* and *How do hybrid organisations seek to generate and sustain member involvement over time?* The findings show that members of Save the Children Sweden have good opportunities to influence long-term decisions, whereas day-to-day decisions are made solely by employees. While employees who work specifically with member-related issues actively seek to encourage members to participate in decision-making forums, the findings also suggest that the members' role is not as pronounced in the organisation as a whole and that the democratic aspect of being a member-based organisation has not received much

attention in recent years. Similarly, member involvement has not been a main priority for the organisation. However, an increased focus on service-delivery and collaboration between members and employees were pointed out as possible solutions to increase member involvement. Whereas service-oriented activities have potential to attract new people beyond the “usual suspects” to become involved in the associations, increased collaboration can increase members’ feelings of ownership and reduce the distance to the rest of the organisation.

Through the lens of professionalisation, the findings ultimately show that employees hold a lot of power in the organisation as they are the ones who carry out a significant part of the organisation’s work and the operational decisions made in the organisation are primarily made by the employees rather than the members. This means that the members are excluded from many internal processes and that membership has become second tier to other issues. Moreover, employees are increasingly tasked with carrying out similar types of activities as the members which further reduces their value in the organisation. However, even though the organisation’s member base is relatively anonymous for a vast share of the employees, there are also those who work to strengthen the members’ influence and involvement in the organisation. As such, it is argued that employees working with member-related issues can facilitate member influence and involvement. Hence, by pointing to the importance of differentiating between employees who work directly with the members versus those who work with non-member related issues, this thesis adds to the growing body of literature that suggests that an increased professionalisation with more employees potentially can be positive for members’ role in CSOs.

The thesis findings furthermore support previous research that point to a diminished interest in ideology and democracy in Swedish civil society. CSOs have, as discussed, historically held a prominent role in Swedish society and civic engagement has almost been considered a duty. Today, however, people are generally less interested in traditional ways of organising and prefer short-term involvement that suits their own preferences. This has arguably spurred Swedish CSOs’ shift towards an increasing hybridisation with more focus on service-delivery. Nevertheless, service-delivery requires more resources which makes it difficult for members to muscle it by themselves. Collaboration with employees who can support the members in carrying out activities does as such appear to be

a fruitful path to strengthen member involvement. Furthermore, employees who actively work with facilitating member involvement can provide incentives and communicate what the members do for the organisation, hence strengthening their role in the organisation. Thus, the research suggests that collaboration between members and employees arguably is needed if organisations are to manage to work with both policy- and service-oriented activities.

In conclusion, it appears that the shift towards a hybrid form of CSOs has more of an impact on member involvement than member influence. The increasing professionalisation, on the other hand, affects both aspects of member activism. However, in contrast to Michels' iron law of oligarchy, this thesis maintains that CSOs do not necessarily have to become run by a few without any member engagement. Rather, it is argued that if organisations want to keep their members active and involved, there is great potential to do so, granted that they are willing to invest in employees and structures that can facilitate their engagement. A final issue to mention is the organisational investigation that Save the Children Sweden currently is carrying out, which was also referred to in the results chapter. While the investigation has not received any specific attention in this thesis, it shows the relevance of studying the current and future role of members. The outcomes of the investigation, and its potential convergence or divergence with the findings of this thesis, are however yet to be revealed.

7.1 Recommendations for future research

Research on the effects of the increasing professionalisation of CSOs is, as argued throughout this thesis, limited and there is still much to be known with regards to how members are affected by this transformation. Existing literature regarding the consequences of professionalisation on member activism has primarily focused on the organisational perspective whereas members' experiences have received less attention. This thesis sought out to address this gap, however it would arguably be relevant to explore this more in-depth through a larger study of both active and passive members. This could allow for interesting insights regarding why people

want to be involved in CSOs, and how they perceive their role in the organisation. Similarly, this research focused solely on employees who work specifically with member-related issues. To complement these findings and generate a more complete picture of how the role of the members is understood within the organisation, it would be relevant to include employees who work in different parts of the organisation.

However, due to differences with regards to civil society's function and role in different national contexts, there is no universal theory that can explain the consequences of professionalisation. Thus, more research from different countries and civil society regimes is needed to further strengthen and add to existing findings. Moreover, much of the literature on the topic of professionalisation and member activism is set in democratic contexts, primarily in Europe and North America, even though the professionalisation of CSOs is a global phenomenon. It would therefore be relevant to apply existing findings in non-democratic contexts where the premises for civic engagement differ from democratic states.

Lastly, knowledge gaps remain concerning the increasing hybridity of CSOs, even though it represents an increasingly common organisational form. More research is needed to understand how organisations are affected by working with both advocacy and service-delivery, for example with regards to legitimacy, funding, and member activism. Current research on hybrid organisations is primarily set in the US, hence there is great potential to explore this further in other contexts.

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Appendix 1: Interview guides

Questions for employees

Background

- Can you tell me about your role at Save the Children Sweden?
- How long have you worked there?
- How did you get involved?
- Were you involved as a member before you started working there?
- What do you do?

Interaction with members

- Can you tell me a bit about how you interact with the organisation's members?
- How often do you talk to them?
- In what ways? (E.g. emails, phone calls, meetings)
- What is the purpose of your interaction with the members? (E.g. to spread information or to ask for their input)
- Is it easy or difficult to come into contact with the members? Why? How have you overcome those challenges?

Member involvement

- How would you describe members' involvement in the organisation?
- Do people want to become involved? Why/why not?
- What do they do?
- Do you think members are more interested in working with advocacy or service-delivery? Why?
- Do you think that the members should work mostly with advocacy or service-delivery? Why?

- Why do you think a lot of people choose to become volunteers rather than members?
- How free are the local and district associations in terms of deciding what they want to focus on/which issues to work with?
- How do you think colleagues who do not work directly with member related issues perceive members' contributions to the organisation?

Member influence

- What possibilities do members have to influence internal decision-making?
- Can members influence day-to-day decisions?
- How important would you say that the members are in terms of identifying problems or coming up with suggestions of what the organisation should work with?
- Do you feel like the members are interested in participating? Why/why not?

Employees

- What is the role of paid employees? How has it changed overtime? Can you provide a practical example?
- Do you feel like the increasing number of employees has affected the members' role?

Other

- What would you say are the pros and cons of being a member-based organisation?
- What do you think about the future for the organisation's members?

Questions for members

Background

- Can you tell me about your role at Save the Children Sweden?
- How long have you been a member?
- Why did you join the organisation?
- What do you do?

Interaction with employees

- Can you tell me about your relationship with the organisation's employees?
- Do the members/local association and the organisation's employees collaborate, and if so, how?
- Do you only collaborate with other employees than the operational development planners?
- How often are you in contact with the organisation's employees?
- What is the purpose of your interaction?
- Is it only board members who are in contact with the employees?
- Would you say that the employees are helpful in facilitating the member's issues and interests? Explain how.

Member involvement

- How would you describe people's interest in becoming involved in your association?
- What do you think about your possibilities to get help from the organisation, e.g. in terms of member recruitment?
- How would you describe people's interest in working with advocacy versus service-delivery?
- What do you think the organisations should work with?

Member influence

- How do you see your and other members' possibilities to influence the organisation's internal policies? Have you done that? Please provide a practical example.
- How important do you think the members are for identifying problems or providing ideas about the organisation's activities?
- Do you feel like there is an interest among the members of your association to participate in decision-making processes? Why/why not?
- Do you yourself participate in these forums/make suggestions to the organisation? Why/why not?
- Do you feel like there is an interest from the employees' side in taking members' thoughts and ideas into consideration?

Other

- What do you think about the future for the organisation's members?

Appendix 2: Codebook

Research question	Category	Code	Description	Frequency
What possibilities do members have to influence internal decision-making in hybrid organisations?	Avenues of influence	Democracy	References to democracy within the organisation	12
		Possibilities to influence	Mention of the ways in which members can influence the organisation	32
	Interest	Interest in decision-making	References to members' interest in influencing the course of the organisation	32
How do hybrid organisations seek to generate and sustain member involvement over time?	Activity	Advocacy	References to advocacy-oriented work	10
		Service-delivery	References to service-oriented work	24

	Collaboration	Distance within the organisation	References to a feeling of distance between members and employees	26
		Professionalisation	Mention of the organisation becoming professionalised	21
		With operational development planners	References to collaboration between members and operational development planners	35
		With other employees	References to collaboration between members and other employees than operational development planners	30
	Incentives	Communication (Internal / External)	Mention of internal and external communication	41 (7 / 34)
		Lift members' contributions	Mention of a need to lift members' contributions to the organisation	18

	Interest in being involved	Attitude (Positive / Negative)	References of members' attitudes towards becoming involved	15 (10 / 5)
		Member recruitment	Mention of the recruitment of members within the organisation.	36
	Obstacles	Diversity and inclusion	Mention of diversity and inclusion as an obstacle for member involvement	17
		Workload	Mention of the workload involved with being an active member	23