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AN ETHNOGRAPHER'S TIME IN MWANZA

Reflecting Tanzanian Children's Experiences of Poverty

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ABSTRACT

Sofia Häärrä: An Ethnographer's Time in Mwanza : Reflecting Tanzanian Children's Experiences of Poverty
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In my master's thesis I have aimed to find out what kind of experiences Tanzanian children attending public schools have about poverty, and how these experiences are related to the poverty experiences of Northern European children. This thesis has been done with a phenomenological epistemology and a holistic idea of man. Following the framework of childhood sociology I understand children as active agents. Within this framework, I want to bring out the voices of children behind the statistics about child poverty. Plenty of research has been done on child poverty, but the children's own experiences are seldom listened to. This is especially true for children in developing countries, who at the same time appear in countless pictures provided by international charities. This creates an illusion of poor children being far away, and nowhere near us. However, as research on childhood poverty experiences has revealed, Northern European children have diverse experiences of poverty as well. To lessen the comparison and simplification, I have found it important to listen to children themselves and to reflect Tanzanian and Northern European children's experiences. I carried out my ethnographic field work in the beginning of 2018 while I did a three-month social work apprenticeship in a small and local NGO working with families in the Tanzanian city of Mwanza. As a part of my weekly work in the organization, I organized group sessions for two groups of children aged 8–16, who were living in small mountain villages. It was in these groups that I gathered most of my research material, through group discussions, writing tasks, and drawings. In addition, I also wrote notes in my daily life. As an ethnographer, I reflected everything I saw to the context of Finland and to the literature review I had previously made about Northern European children's experiences of poverty. Hence, I have had a reflective approach to my work all the way. I approached my material by qualitative content analysis, and soon recognized that it contains some of the categories found in Northern European research on children's experiences of poverty.

A central finding of this study is that Tanzanian children's experiences of poverty are indeed quite similar to those of Northern European children. Both have experiences of poverty related to deprivation of basic needs, and the effect this deprivation causes on friendships is also pointed out. In addition, poverty causes tension in families, which stems from the contradiction between scarce resources and the demands of the environment. This tension requires children to use various coping strategies in order to balance between the family conditions, their own needs and the expectations of friends. The experienced deprivation of basic needs is described as deficiencies in food, school materials, clothes, home environment, and health. These deficiencies are in turn described as leading to experiences of alienation, otherness, bullying, and to the need of children to regulate the amount of money spent together with friends. However, the Tanzanian children also have experiences that cannot be found in Northern European studies. In the category of food deficiencies, these include the lack of food in schools, the obligation to participate in buying food for the household, and the shame that is put on buying unnecessary snacks. Additionally, some possibilities that are self-evident for all Northern European children raise doubt in Tanzanian children. These include possibilities to attend school, to get health care and to live at home instead of in the street. From the viewpoint of friendships, it is common for Tanzanian children to spend time in free play, whereas Northern European children often see paid hobbies as a must in order to participate fully. Further, the Tanzanian children are strong moral agents in teaching their friends in how to use money properly. Having respect for elders and a willingness to help parents is especially important to Tanzanian children. The strong authority of Tanzanian parents is seen in my material as a low level of communication between parents and children, for example in parents not sharing shame or economic trouble with their children.

The children I have encountered present multiple explanations to poverty, and also share varied ways of helping poor people. The children see everyone's role important in preventing poverty, and they hope for this work to be done together from the individual level all the way to the cultural level. In my work I have moved between different levels, considering individual situations and reflecting them culturally. The aim of this thesis is to bring new perspective on poverty as a phenomenon experienced by children.

The originality of this thesis (*of the Finnish version*) has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service

This thesis is dedicated to the children of the world. Let us learn from each other. A special thank you goes to those of you who have helped me along the way. You know who you are. Asante sana!

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1 Introduction: *“My friend Sofia let me tell you”*

I am looking out the taxi window, having just arrived in this strange, new country. My surroundings are swirling with colors: market stands, houses, cows, playing children, parents returning with groceries and a wildly dancing wedding parade. We are driving on the wrong side. It is hot. The adventure has begun.

I am looking back at this memorable taxi journey with a smile on my face. My adventure began on January 7th in 2018, when I arrived in Tanzania to do an apprenticeship of three months in the city of Mwanza as a part of my Master studies in Social Work. During my apprenticeship, I also got the chance to gather material for this Master's thesis. From the very beginning, my idea was to gather material about children's experiences of poverty. I had previously written my Bachelor's thesis as a literature review about Northern European children's experiences of poverty. After this, I wished to gain more knowledge of the theme, and learning that children's experiences of poverty have not been researched much in developing countries, I wanted to deepen my understanding in that direction. I find it interesting, that while there is a lot of information produced about childhood poverty in developing countries, the children's own experiences still remain hidden. My wish with this work is to get the children's own voices heard from behind the statistics.

Imagine that you are looking at a picture collage poster you have just found in your mailbox. In the first picture you see a skinny, poor child. His expression is serious. His mother is cooking rice behind him, and there is nothing else in the pot. Above the picture is a text where you are urged to help. You think to yourself: oh, these poor children of developing countries.

Or imagine that you are watching a charity show on the television. Once in a while there is a video insert from a poor country. This time a child is crying outside a house in bad shape. In the next clip the same child is playing happily and the text says this child has now been helped. You give a sigh of relief. Now the child can be happy.

Also try to remember how you might have been told as a child that you have to eat all your food, because there are children in this world who do not get anything. You were told about the poor children of Africa, who would be jealous if they saw our food. You were perhaps thinking that the food cannot be sent all the way to Africa anyway. In any case, you were taught that you are a happy child, while there are sad children somewhere else, far away.

These are all conceptions that are fed to us about developing countries and their children. There are skinny children, villages in bad shape, dry fields, sorrow, and pain. Partly these are true. However, the image is very one sided. The nuances are not drawn and we do not see the whole scale. The pictures do not tell, what the child and the mother in the picture collage are thinking. The same goes for the child in the charity clip. We do not ask the right questions: How come the child is crying at one moment and laughing at another? And in our own childhood, we have not necessarily known anything else about African children but that they are sad and should be helped.

This also gives the false picture that the children here in the Global North are the happy and rich children, as opposed to those of the Global South. As I am going to show in this thesis, also our children have diverse experiences of poverty. They have slowly gotten their voice heard more and more in media and in research. With my thesis, I want to make the same possible for the children I got to meet in Mwanza. I have wanted to listen to them and utter their experiences about poverty and inequality. At the same time I want to mirror these with the experiences of children in Northern Europe. By doing this I want to reduce the polarization between conceptions of children in “the North” and “the South”. I have also wanted to find out the children’s opinions on why there is poverty, and how poor people should be helped. As opposed to the one sided picture of African children that Western people should help, I consider the children as experts and active agents in their own environments and life situations.

Because I wanted to get to know the children and listen to their experiences, I chose to gather my material with the ethnographic method. As part of my tasks in the organization I was leading groups of children, with whom I gathered my material through creative group tasks, writing tasks, drawing tasks and group discussions. In addition to these tasks, I also got research material through making notes about situations I encountered in my daily life. The children I met in the groups were excited about me being interested in them and listening to them. The headline of this introduction describes the children’s agency and the open-minded attitude the children had towards me; “*My friend Sofia, I am happy to meet you, let me tell you the story of my life*”, wrote a 13-year old girl. The children have been able to tell me, and I have listened like a friend. I hope you will too.

2 Onto the field of Mwanza in Tanzania

"Unafahamu Kiswahili?" (Do you understand Swahili language?)

"Unatoka wapi?" (Where do you come from?)

"Mzungu, mzungu!" (white person, white person!)

These are examples of questions and comments I kept hearing throughout my stay in Mwanza. As Tanzania and my process of settling there is central for my study, I want to give the reader an insight to the environment and its characteristics. I believe the reader can thereby better understand the context in which I have gathered my material, and the choices I have made while writing this report.

The experience of arriving in Tanzania was one of a kind. I had never been outside of Europe before, and I spent the first days just marveling at the countless new impressions. I also had to get used to the Swahili language. Before leaving, I had studied Swahili for about six months and knew some basics, but looking back I have understood that I learned most of the vocabulary on the spot. When I arrived in Mwanza, I also had to get used to all the attention I got from locals. It was explained to me that locals have many different associations considering white people: "rich", "bringer of good luck", "admirable", "beautiful", "helper", "conqueror", "one who thinks he knows better", "completely odd", and "a little funny" just to name a few examples.

Mwanza is a city with 600 000 inhabitants, situated in Northern Tanzania on the southern coastline of Lake Victoria. Despite its status as the second largest city of Tanzania, it has remained quite hidden from tourists, especially when compared to the Zanzibar-island, the region around Mount Kilimanjaro and the metropole of Dar Es Salaam. Therefore, there are few white people seen in the streets of Mwanza. For example on my way to work, which consisted of a 20 minute ride on the local bus and a 10 minutes' walk in each end, I only rarely encountered other white persons or "*Mzungus*" as we are often called in Mwanza.

Mwanza is known for beautiful lake views and its reputation of a traditional African city. On top of that, Mwanza is famous for its countless rocks, giving Mwanza the nickname "Rock City". On these rocks are villages. The villages on the rocks situated outside the city center of Mwanza, are quite rural with goats and cows brought out to graze and with small stone houses along narrow and steep village roads. Here there are many places where the only way of passage is by foot and the roads to drive are limited. The people living in these villages are mostly quite poor and not highly educated, and their connections to other areas, such as to the center of Mwanza, are limited.

The organization where I did my apprenticeship worked in some of these villages, and I have gathered my research material from two of these. I do not mention the names of the organization or areas as to minimize the identifiability of the research subjects. The organization is a small, local, non-profit organization working with children and their families. The vision of the organization is to help children and their families so that they grow up responsible and strong citizens that know their rights and dare to work for a change where needed. The organization focuses on supporting children to be able to go to school, as this is seen as the best way to ensure a good future. The focus is also on enabling children to enjoy their childhood here and now. I will come back to describing the organization throughout the report.

I found my research plan was easy to integrate with the vision and objectives of the organization. I got a lot of encouragement from my colleagues and we had many interesting discussions during the time of my apprenticeship. Having arrived, I soon found out that the organization had just set the goal of becoming more child centered in their work. They wanted children to be seen and heard more in the public image of the organization. Taking part in striving towards that goal, I styled posters, where the vision of the organization was presented by children themselves. I also composed a toolkit of creative games that can be done with groups of children, developing skills of self-expression and group work. I am happy that my research objective was a perfect match to the goal of child centered work that the organization had. My hope is that my organization and other instances working with and for children will benefit from my research.

3 Objective: Studying children's experiences

The focus of my study is children's experiences. In the 21st century, listening to children's own experiences has become more and more popular in research. The child's viewpoint has been brought up by the research tradition of childhood sociology. The tradition has long carried the name "new childhood sociology", but as the research within this tradition has continued for over 20 years now, it is getting justifiable to leave away the prefix "new". Childhood sociology has also been called childhood studies or child studies (see e.g. Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012, 81; Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen 2007; 2010).

In traditional sociology, the child has been regarded through the lens of what he or she will become. In childhood sociology however, the focus is on the child being an active agent and an experiencing being that is important in itself, here and now. (Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012; Handel, Cahill &

Elkin 2007.) James Allison was one of the first highlighting the child's agency and he is hence seen as a pioneer of childhood sociology (Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012, 25; James & James 2004, 23). In Finland, a similar pioneer and spokesperson of children's agency is Leena Alanen (see e.g. Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012, 25). Similarly to Alanen (2009) and James (James & James 2004), also Törrönen and Vornanen (2002, 34), describe that within childhood sociology "*children are meaning constructing subjects, who make their own understandings about the world and people.*"

The meanings and understandings that Törrönen and Vornanen (see above) describe are in this thesis referred to as experiences. This is based on the epistemology of phenomenology. According to Laine (2001), the central thought in phenomenology is that people construct meaning when acting in their environment. These separate meanings are gradually united into experiences as the person is shaping his or her understanding of the reality and of the surrounding world. New experiences influence old ones, and so the reality of a person is in constant movement. (see also Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen 2007, 47.) Alanen (2009, 9) states that in the framework of childhood research, childhood is seen as a part of "*the society, its structures and its culture*"

Like Taina Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen (2007, 46) I am applying the holistic idea of man. I view the human being as equally physical, psychological and social. Lauri Rauhala, whom also Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen uses as a reference, defines a person being bodily, conscious and situational at the same time. Meaning arises due to consciousness, but is not apart from the body or the situation - alias the context. Like Abraham Maslow (1987, 3) writes, the human being is a unity. Maslow hence states that not only the stomach needs food, but the whole unity that is a person. The fulfillment of the need of food (read hunger) makes psychological (read conscious) activity possible.

Rauhala defines that consciousness has two levels: psychological and spiritual. On the psychological level there are single impressions, impressions that the person can then process and combine into experiences on the spiritual level. Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen describes that impressions become experiences on the spiritual level when "*a person can process some psychological state with words (...) and share it with another person*". Based on phenomenological epistemology and the holistic idea of man my research questions are closely linked to the experiences people build up through meaning. My research questions are:

Through what kind of experiences are the children I met in Mwanza describing poverty?

What similarities and differences are present in the descriptions of poverty experiences by children in Mwanza and children in Northern Europe?

The key words of my research questions are hence, as already mentioned, “experience”, but also “description(s)”. Because I cannot read the children’s thoughts I cannot know how the children initially experience something. Essential for my research is therefore how the children have described these experiences. Like Harriet Strandell (1994), I am regarding the descriptions as results of interaction. Like Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen (2007, 63) states, the researcher is part of the world he or she is researching in. Hence Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen says it is important to remain self-critical and continuously reflect on one’s own position as researcher. This is best supported by an open-minded approach, within which the researcher regards everything as though seeing it for the first time. Embracing such an approach is called reduction. (Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen, 57.) For me it was quite easy to adopt such an approach, since I experienced so much new every single day while in Tanzania. I had to some extent planned the field work already before leaving, but as the date of travel crept nearer, I realized I did not know at all what to expect. This was quite a fruitful way of beginning a research journey, in the literal meaning of the expression.

However, like Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen (2007) points out, the researcher can never quite break away from posing hypotheses while planning and carrying out research. I see this also in my own research, especially as I have decided to do comparative research mirroring the experiences of the children I met in Tanzania with the ones of children Northern Europe. I have decided to refer to my comparative research as reflective research, because as Timo Myllyntaus (1995) notes:

“comparative international research is the mirror of society”. Myllyntaus states in his article that by comparing and reflecting, it is possible to bring out both similarities and differences between the societies compared. In my research I have adopted the concept of intercultural reflection, as comparative research can sometimes be misunderstood as quantitative research. (see e.g. Pöntinen 2004, 43). In addition, as I myself have gathered only part of the material I am examining, I do not see that comparative research in its most generalizable form is possible. Tuula Gordon and Elina Lahelma (2004, 97–100) define intercultural reflection as *“analyzing the same phenomenon in different contexts”*, and point out that it is especially suitable for defining concepts.

This is what I have been wanting to do as I have strived to scrutinize what poverty means for the children I met in Mwanza and for the children interviewed in Northern European research.

Regarding reflective research, I was in a good position as an ethnographer in a foreign country as I constantly reflected new information with my previous experiences both subconsciously and consciously (Comp. Jokinen & Kovala 2004, 86–93). Carole L. Hahn (2006, 143) describes that the reflexive method makes it possible to familiarize oneself with a new culture, but also to reflect on the own culture. Reflexivity has played an important role in my work, both in gathering material

and in writing this thesis. At the same time I have wanted to approach my ethnographic field in Tanzania with an open mind.

Next, I will present previous research concerning my research subject.

4 Childhood poverty research as framework

According to Tamara van der Hoek (2005, 6-9), much child poverty research is done based on poverty statistics or the developmental impact of poverty. However, the children's own viewpoint has not gained much attention. Still, this is important as it makes it possible to perceive children as experiencing subjects. Tess Ridge (2002), a pioneer of research on children's experiences of poverty, is emphasizing the same. Ridge stresses that important facts can be learned from statistics and from the point of view of childhood development, but that these approaches do not allow for diving as deep into the subject as when studying experiences. Ridge also points out that invaluable knowledge can be formed by combining different research approaches.

A multifaceted perspective on poverty is important also in this thesis, but my main focus is on children's experiences. I will now present previous research that essentially has to do with my own research subject, and that I hope to complement with my own research. Before moving on to poverty research, I first want to present research about the status of children in families and communities in Europe and in Africa. I find this crucial as information about the status of children will give the children's statements some perspective.

4.1 Children's status in Europe and Africa

As I noted in the previous chapter, the understanding of children and childhood has changed over time. The same goes for families. In Western families, children's experiences and opinions are being taken into account ever more. Conceptually expressed, children have moved to being the very center of the family. Kirsi Kallio (2009) states that children are increasingly perceived as active agents both in the daily life and in research. Kallio even argues that children's agency has slowly begun to get overemphasized, probably as a counteraction to its earlier ignorance. According to Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen (2010, 113) these changes are seen in Western families as a shift from a child culture based on obedience to a child culture based on negotiation.

In Tanzania on the other hand, the child culture is very obedience based. This is the case in most African countries. Courage Bobong Fon (2018) has written her dissertation on Cameroonian children's understandings of child abuse, addressing many general questions about African family culture. According to Fon (2018, 42), children are here often seen as quite incompetent beings or "*blank boards*". It is emphasized that children have to learn lots of things, but still they are not encouraged to contest or ask questions as this is seen as impolite. Also Elvis Mukumu Fokala (2017), who in his dissertation has studied children's status in African families, is of the same opinion. He stresses that children are being regarded as "*irrational beings*". Fon (2018) states that the African attitude towards children is somewhat contradictory; the children are seen as incompetent and as "*becoming persons*", but at the same time they are expected to take on much responsibility from an early age on, through house work and even bringing income. Fokala (2017, 102) stresses the same, and says children are seen as very important for the continuation of the family. They are the family's future and the "*leaders of tomorrow*". Still, the children are not given chances to practice skills needed in this leadership such as decision making and expression of opinions. The child's task is to learn by listening and watching, being a good and humble learner. These expectations also impacted my gathering of material, as I often had to encourage the children to think for themselves instead of looking for right answers. I will write more about this in the next chapter that describes my data collection.

Both Fokala, who has studied African families, and Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen with her studies about Finnish families, bring up the significance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The convention stresses children's position and their right to participate. All European and African countries have ratified the convention. As Fokala and Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen both notice, this does however not guarantee that children are allowed to participate in practice. According to Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen, the more and more prominent negotiation culture of Finnish families is contributing to making children's participation and decision making more common. As Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen points out, the parents' task however still is to keep boundaries and to regulate, which decisions can be made by the children themselves. These boundaries are important in order to guarantee the child's wellbeing, but within them, the child should be listened to as much as possible.

According to Fokala (2017, 63) the "Law of the Child Act of the Mainland" is an important part of the Tanzanian legislation concerning children. In its 11 article, it is stated that a child has the "*right of opinion and no person shall deprive a child capable of forming views the right to express an opinion, to be listened to and to participate in decisions which affect his well-being*". (Law of the

Child Act of the Mainland: 11. 2009). Fokala points out that there are similar laws in other African countries, but that their realization in daily life is rare. One reason to this is the authoritative status of parents and other adults in relation to children. Even though the law actually demands adults to listen to children, the adults' authority is so strongly rooted in the culture that parents often find it hard to give up some of it. They may think they risk losing their role as parent if they give up power, and hence fear that the children and their behavior will completely get out of control without the parents' authoritative status. (Fokala 2017.)

The significance of authority can also be seen in African parenting methods. Fon (2018, 45) says corporal punishment is regarded as a necessity in many African cultures. At the same time, on a political and legislative level, there is much talk about the need to prevent child abuse. The line between child abuse and so called normal corporal punishment is often unclear, and there are many different definitions of child abuse (Fon 2018, 55–58). In my material, there are plenty of mentions about corporal punishment as something that the children approve of if they understand they have done something wrong. Fon (2018, 128–130) has similar results, though Fon also brings up that children do not accept all methods. Causing persistent fear or handicaps was seen as child abuse as opposed to “normal” punishment. (Fon 133–134.)

Fon (2018, 45) points out that solidarity and mutual dependence are culturally vital values that an African child has to adopt. The family and the community go before the individual. Fon explains that this set of values is seen also in that an abused child or a close relative rarely seeks help because of not wanting to bring shame on the family or community. In such a cultural context, bringing forth the own opinion is understandably hard for a child. If the opinion is in conflict with the values of the family it is even harder.

As Fokala (2017, 173-175) states, many concrete actions are needed to make it possible for children to participate. And in order to be able to fulfill these actions, a plan is needed. As an example of such a plan Fokala mentions the “*Agenda 2063*”-vision that the African Union has created. The objective of the vision is to make it possible to benefit from the potential that lies in children and in listening to them. As the name implies, this should be made possible until the year 2063. Inspired of this, the African Charter on the Rights of the Child prepared its own vision, which according to Fokala is even more child centered. This vision has 2040 as its goal year. According to Fokala these goals are realistic but require much work to be reached. He states the aspirations are vital in enabling children's voices to be heard, now and in future generations.

The question about which rights should be universal is an eternal one in the field of human rights research (see e.g. Langlois 2002). I will not participate in this discussion in my thesis. Hence, my

effort is not to state an ideal regarding children's status. I find it important though to discuss this theme in order to bring perspective on the factors that might influence the children's customs of sharing their experience.

Next, I will present poverty research, first presenting studies about children's experiences of poverty made in Northern Europe, and then moving on to similar studies done in developing countries. Lastly, I will present data about the child poverty situation in Tanzania.

4.2 Studies on children's experiences of poverty in Northern Europe

As I mentioned in the introduction, my idea to start researching in this subject came from my bachelor's thesis that I wrote as a literature review based on Northern European research articles concerning children's experiences of poverty. I will now present these articles, as I will later use them to reflect my Tanzanian results.

The material of the literature review lastly consisted of research made in Finland, Denmark, Great-Britain, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands. In this thesis I refer to these studies as Northern European. The UN defines Northern Europe as a region combining the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, Great-Britain, and Ireland. Based on the articles used, I am in this thesis hence adding the Netherlands and the Danish parts of Greenland to the definition of Northern Europe.

The main results of the literature review are that children are very aware of their family's financial situation and of the influence this has on their own lives. Poverty is prominently causing a feeling of otherness: both through material differences and through unequal possibilities to take part. The children are also bringing up the impact of poverty on their families and on their daily lives, and are talking about the coping strategies they use. As I will be mirroring these results to those of my Tanzanian research in the analysis section, I will not describe them in detail here. That said, I still want to give a picture of what kind of research articles I have included in my literature review on Northern European childhood poverty research.

In most of the articles I have included, interviewing has been used as the main research method. For her classical work "*Childhood poverty and social exclusion*", British researcher Tess Ridge (2002) interviewed 40 children aged 10-17, wanting to gain knowledge of the children's understandings of their lives in poverty. In her work, Ridge aims to bring up perspectives on poverty that are important for the children themselves. Similarly, Anne Harju (2008) has put her mind to children's experiences of poverty in her doctoral thesis. Harju interviewed 14 7-19 year old Swedish children, and 8 of their parents. Besides presenting general experiences, Harju also digs into the various

coping strategies that children use. Also Tamara van der Hoek (2005) has presented both poverty experiences and coping strategies in her work for UNICEF. Van der Hoek interviewed 63 poor children in the Netherlands. Half of the children were Dutch by birth, and half of them belonged to an ethnic minority, with Morocco, the Antilles, Surinam or Cap Verde as their native countries. Van der Hoek presents the children as active agents in their daily lives, and points out that the children talked much about the emotional climate of the home in the interviews. Danish Heidi Sørensen (2010) in turn interviewed 8 children that had taken part in summer camps for poor families in Copenhagen and Aarhus. Sørensen's results were very similar to the results of the studies mentioned above.

The Danish health scientists Lene Hammer-Helmich and Kristine Sørensen (2005) have conducted a study regarding children's experiences of poverty from the perspective of subjective health. The study is based on 9 interviews with 12-13 year old children. 11-15 year old children, whose parents had an annual income of less than 145 000 Danish Crowns were allowed to participate. Even though the perspective of this study is a bit different from the others included in my literature review, the results are quite similar. Like the children in other studies, these children brought up for example the impact of poverty on friendship and hobbies. The experience of loneliness is especially prominent in this study, as also the title of the report "*A lonely fight*" ("*En ensom kamp*") indicates.

Sissel Lea Nielsen and Steen Wulff (2007) interviewed 24 children from Greenlandic families receiving social care, but also included school children's drawings and stories in their study. 9th – 10th graders (n. 71) were asked to write about what they consider a good life, and in which ways coming from a family with little money influences a child. 11-12 year old school children were in their part asked to draw a child in a family with much money and another child in a family with little money. There are significant differences on the drawings depending on the imagined wealth of the family drawn. In the drawings poverty seemed to influence both the material and mental well-being of the family. While planning my own empirical work, I was inspired by the versatile research methods used by Nielsen and Wulff (2007). In a similar way, Finnish researchers Mia Hakovirta and Minna Rantalaiho (2012) have used interviews, drawings, and imaginary stories for studying children's perceptions of inequality and their possible experiences thereof. Hakovirta and Rantalaiho worked with 5th graders (n. 9) and 8th graders (n. 17) in a school in western Finland, with pupils from families of different income levels.

While carrying out my own empirical work in Tanzania, I noticed that it was easy for the children to express themselves in written form. Lea Lemetyinen (2014) carried out a questionnaire study in 2011, with 92 participants aged 13-18. In the questionnaire, the children were asked to describe

their experiences of poverty and its duration, the impacts of poverty on participation and the feelings related thereto. Based on her empirical results, Lemetyinen describes poverty as a state that leads to otherness. The children had described poverty both through own experiences and through those of friends. The same can be seen in the text the Tanzanian children wrote to me.

Lastly, I present the only ethnographic study I found on the theme. Mari Rysst (2005) studied school children in an eastern suburb of Oslo. She participated in the daily life of two school classes in the quite multicultural and poor area. At the starting point of the study, the children were 10 years old and were in the 4th grade. Citing the title of the study report, a central result of the study was “*It costs to be cool*” (“*Det koster å vaere kul*”).

In the next subchapter, I will present studies on children’s experiences of poverty made in developing countries, presenting the results briefly. These studies were much harder to find than those made in developed countries. In the subchapter I will start making reflections of the studies conducted in developing countries, comparing them to the Northern European studies presented above.

4.3 Studies on children’s experiences of poverty in developing countries

To bring perspective to my research objective, I wanted to find studies on poverty experienced by children in developing countries. When talking about these children, research on poverty experiences is even more underrepresented. Most studies on childhood poverty in developing countries are hence focused on statistics on poverty and undernutrition. These statistics are compiled for example by UNICEF in the annual report “*State of the World’s Children*” (see for example 2016). The child poverty situation in the world is severe. According to the Save the Children UK, 569 million children live on under a dollar a day (Child poverty. Bringing hope to those left behind, 2017). It is also to be noted, that half of the poor people in the world are children. As Trudy Harpham, Nguyen Thu Huong, Tran Thap Long and Tran Tuan (2004) point out in the beginning of their research report, research on childhood poverty in developing countries is important because a big percentage of the population in developing countries are children, upon whom the future of the countries rely, and because children can be seen as especially vulnerable due to their dependent status.

Like van der Hoek (2005) and Ridge (2002), Harpham et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of a multidimensional perspective of poverty. Harpham et al. have studied Vietnamese children’s experiences and understandings of poverty. The empirical study was conducted using participatory

methods with 46 children aged around 7 years. Of the children, 18 were from poor families, 9 were from middle class families and 9 were from rich families. Regarding the results, there are quite many similarities with the Northern European studies (see references above). Hence, according to the Vietnamese children, a child can be identified as poor by looking at his or her nutrition, house, clothes and toys. There are corresponding results in Northern European studies but also in the other studies made in developing countries (see e.g. Boyden, Eyber, Feeny & Scott 2003; Phiri & Abebe 2016; Witter & Bukokhe 2004).

Differing from the Northern European results however, the Vietnamese children pointed out differences between poor and rich children when considering schooling and working (Harpham et. al. 2004). This could be explained by the fact that education is self-evident for most Northern European children, which is not true for children in developing countries. In Northern Europe, children are also used to that children are allowed to be children in the meaning that they do not have to work. In Harju's (2008) study there were some working teenagers though, but for them working was more of an own choice than a demand from parents. The Vietnamese children in turn saw the external demand of working as an everyday reality for poor children. According to them, children in poor families have to for example tend to animals and gather firewood to secure the family's income or self-sufficiency.

The importance of working for children in developing countries is also prominent in Sophie Witter's and Jenifer Bukokhe's (2004) large Ugandan study. 662 children aged 10-14 participated, and many said they work out of their own will. They even felt infuriated by people that restrict their possibilities to work just because they are seen as children. These children considered it important that children are taught to manage in life, and wanted to warn people from spoiling their children as this can lead to the disappearance of innovation skills. Similar anti-spoiling thoughts can actually also be found in some Northern European studies (see e.g. Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012, 63).

Another significant similarity when comparing research results from developing countries and Northern Europe, are the shame and otherness that children experience due to poverty. In Witter's and Bukokhe's (2004) study, the children bring up their experiences of being bullied and feeling inferior because of poverty. According to the children, bullying occurs especially due to dirtiness. The Zambian children in Phiri's and Abebe's (2016) study on the other hand bring up the importance of the home when being classified as poor or rich. They point out that a house with a grass roof is a sign of poverty, whereas a metal roof is a sign of wealth. The children living in a grass roof house did not want to invite friends, in fear of being labeled poor children. 24 9-16 year old children participated in Phiri's and Abebe's group interviews and interviews.

In a study comparing children's experiences of poverty in Belarus, Bolivia, India, Kenya and Sierra Leone (Boyden, Eyber, Feeny & Scott 2003) it is pointed out that the experience of otherness is often the most painful experience for children, and that it therefore is an experience more significant than experiences of lack of food and material goods. In the large study, both children and adults were observed and interviewed in each country. In the study of Witter and Bukokhe (2004) however, the children were especially concerned about the influence of poverty on physical wellbeing and infectious diseases. This is a concern that seems to be typical for poverty experiences in developing countries, as poverty there is more absolute and therefore influences the well-being more prominently. It has to be kept in mind though that this does not eliminate the mental burden of poverty. Similarly, it is readily assumed that the mental burden in Northern Europe is highlighted in the absence of the physiological burden, but as the studies presented above show, the phenomenon is not as unambiguous.

Next, I will proceed to describe the Tanzanian context of childhood poverty.

4.4 Child poverty in Tanzania

Alberto Minujin and Enrique Delamonica (2012) are addressing Tanzanian children's poverty in their article, and though not studying experiences, they are bringing a new perspective to the childhood poverty discussion by taking up poverty as material deprivations. They point out that measuring income only can be misleading. For example a working child can pull the family's income level up above the poverty limit, even though a child that has to work should actually be seen as an indicator of poverty. Minujin and Delamonica use the Demographic and Health Survey of 2003-2005 as their main material, and are comparing it to the same survey of 1999. Similar research has been done in the National Panel Survey (NPS) 2012/2013 (see e.g. Child Poverty in Tanzania 2016).

In the articles concerning these surveys (Child Poverty in Tanzania 2016; Minujin & Delamonica 2012), the deprivations mentioned are those in nutrition, health, shelter, water, sanitation facilities, information and education. According to the report Child Poverty in Tanzania (2016), made by the Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 74 percent of Tanzanian children suffer from at least three of the deprivations mentioned above. Most children, 92 percent, suffer from at least one. There is more deprivation in rural areas than in urban areas. This significant difference between areas can be seen also in the DHS material used by Minujin and Delamonica (2012).

By examining deprivation it is possible to detect a side of poverty that would otherwise be left unnoticed. The report Child Poverty in Tanzania (2016, 54) 26 percent of Tanzanian children are poor both through income measurement and deprivations. These are the most vulnerable children. However, out of the children suffering from deprivations, 42 percent are not poor by income measurement. These children are so not seen in the traditional poverty statistics, which in turn skews the statistics of the existence and extent of poverty.

In their article, Minujin and Delamonica stress that to measure poverty, material deprivations should be measured, as opposed to psychological ones like social deprivation or unhappiness. However, like the studies I have presented in this chapter show, these two aspects are interlinked and cannot be entirely separated when talking about poverty. It appears to me, that studying experiences is the best way to scrutinize both aspects.

5 The ethnographic method and field work

I gathered my main material in two groups of children that I was leading as part of my weekly tasks in the organization. As the ethnographic method also gives space for own reflection, I have also made notes of everyday situations, for example of what I have seen while on the bus or walking to work.

I applied for a research permit from the Office of the Regional Commissioner in Mwanza. From there I was given my official research permit on March 19th 2018. I will describe the process of getting the permit in more detail in subchapter 5.6. The process was long and demanded patience, but I was lucky to have an organization that supported me very well in my work. In the beginning of my apprenticeship we agreed that I can have the groups do tasks that give me research material as a part of the groups' normal activity. I was told, that if I for some reason would not get the research permit, we would think of the tasks just as part of the program of the weekly groups. We all were of the same opinion that the groups will already benefit from the planned tasks in their own value, and that the children will be empowered by these tasks.

I will start this empiric chapter by telling about the groups with whom I gathered my main material (subchapters 5.1 and 5.2). From here I will proceed to first discuss the ethnographic method and its significance in my work (subchapter 5.3), and then address ethical issues having to do with ethnographic research and research with children (subchapter 5.4). After this I will describe my field work in detail (subchapter 5.5). Towards the end of the chapter I will first consider the

challenges I faced in the field, inter alia with the research permit (subchapter 5.6), and lastly present my analysis process (subchapter 5.7).

5.1 The girls' group

A group of girls is eagerly running to meet us when I and my colleagues arrive to the school area. Our journey has been long; a ride in a crammed public minibus, then a walk through a crowded area with market stands, and lastly a shaky rickshaw ride up the hill with a seemingly reckless driver. A few days have passed again, and it is time for the girls' group to meet. The girls have been longing for this moment, a moment to be oneself, without pressure. The group in question is arranged two times a week, and the goal is that the girls learn friendship-, self-expression-, and communication skills. An important objective is also to enhance the girls' self-esteem.

The group is important, because such investment in girls is not self-evident in the Tanzanian society, especially not in a quite poor and rural village like this one. The girls are supported by the organization to get a good education. The girls do not necessarily have a female role model concerning school. There are many mothers that have no schooling or have dropped out of school. Many girls see their mothers and other female relatives as primarily mothers, and not as educated professionals.

The group now has 60 regular participants. The number of participants was more than doubled during my apprenticeship, as the group's operation was moved to the public school area. The age range of the girls participating at the school was 12-16, but especially in the beginning of my apprenticeship there were also a couple of older girls participating.

5.2 The creative group

I am walking up a steep hill after my colleague. There are plenty of small houses beside us, and laundry lines are hung here and there. From behind many of the houses, small children are shyly waving at us. For these children, school is still far in the future, but they seem to know where we are going; to the public school of this quite poor rock village. However, the overall image of this area does not mean that every child in the school would live in the same kind of deprivation. When I arrive at the school, I sit down for a while outside the classroom where my group will soon gather. The group consists of third-, fifth- and sixth graders, 10 children from each age group. We sometimes meet the children all together, while sometimes dividing them into two groups. The

children are 8-14 years old, and there are the same amount of girls and boys. When the children arrive, I greet everyone individually and ask them how they are.

The creative group was formed on my initiative, because I had heard the organization had had similar groups before. These groups had however ended when the volunteer leading them had moved elsewhere. I got interested in leading a creative group as I through my hobbies music and theater had gotten acquainted to creative games, and wanted to learn to use them with an objective. The objective of the group was to empower the children, which fitted well together with the organization's vision.

When I for the first time went to the school with a colleague, we were there in another matter, but at the same time I got the chance to ask whether the school would have interest in creative group activities. At the same time I told about my preliminary plan to gather research material. I was warmly welcomed and we got to start the group the very next week.

5.3 About ethnography and its significance for my field work

I used ethnography as empirical method. The choice of method was motivated by the versatility and child centeredness of ethnography. When I went to Tanzania I had no idea what to expect. Therefore my perceptions and reflections got to guide my empirical work. William Corsaro (2003, 10), who has studied children using ethnographic methodology, describes that ethnography demands the researcher to enter the world of the examinees. This in turn is made possible by the researcher participating in the examinee's lives. I had a good opportunity to do this during my apprenticeship. I met each group of children at least once, usually twice, a week. I was able to get to know the children and to obtain their trust. For this, ethnography is an excellent method (see e.g. Corsaro 2003, 10).

Except for the material gathered through group sessions, I also found much material in my daily life. I strived to live as much like the locals as possible. I went to work by foot and by the public minibus that was always crowded with people, and shopped for food ingredients at the stalls along my village road. I got to know local people, some of whom became my friends and to whom I still have contact. These possibilities enabled me to dig deeper into the Tanzanian culture and its specialties. Elina Paju (2013, 37) describes the ethnographic method as holistic in its nature. This fits well with the holistic idea of man that I wrote about earlier. As Paju expresses it; "*The studied culture gets its meaning through understanding the context*". Through my life in Tanzania, I gained an understanding of the context in Tanzania. Through this I also had a chance to better interpret

people's behavior, which is another thing that Paju (2013, 37) finds important. The behavior of a person shall be seen in its context.

A central concept of ethnography is the field (Paju 2013, 37). I consider my field as the groups I worked with and the individual experiences of the children therein, but also as the general perceptions I made during my whole stay in Tanzania. Like Harriet Strandell (1994, 38) states in her doctoral thesis, the ethnographic field is a theoretical one that depends on the definition of the researcher. There is no pure, pre-existing field from where material can be mechanically pulled out. Like I mentioned when presenting my theoretical framework, it is important to think of the ethnographic method as communication (Strandell 1994, 33). This has been important for my research. The way the researcher and the research subjects relate to one another is central to the outcome of the study (see also Paju 2013, 46). Because of this, I will now discuss the initial settings that were present in the field, and the changes that occurred in these during my work. I find the following circumstances especially important: being an adult, working in school environments and being a foreigner.

Like I described earlier, the difference between the roles of adults and children is big in Tanzania. In Northern Europe, these rigid roles that were so strongly present before, have little by little started to vanish. Still, also ethnographers working today in the Western world, have pondered over the significance of the different roles (see e.g. Corsaro 2003, 8; Paju 2013, 42). Because ethnography requires assimilation into the examined group, and obtaining trust and approval, it is important to pay attention to roles. Like this one can also think of how to break the roles or put them aside, and whether this is necessary.

I myself tried to avoid taking on the role of a typical adult. Because I worked in a school environment, the children first expected me to behave like a teacher. I did not take on this role however, but aimed to work co-ordinately with the children. The Tanzanian school system is quite authoritarian and children in public schools are often taught in very big classes. Hence, the teachers do not treat the children as individuals. I took a different approach by taking everyone into account individually, by shaking hands with them and listening to them. I pointed out that all tasks are voluntary. I also had to repeat, that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I am asking. I told the children I want to listen to them and their opinions. This was of great relevance to the children and they enjoyed our sessions.

However, I did not feel like I could escape the uneven power relationship entirely. An example of this is the way the children greeted me. In the Swahili language an adult shall greet a group of children with "Hamjambo?" that can be translated to "how are you?" or literally "is there something

wrong with you?” To this the children answer “Hatujambo”, namely “nothing is wrong”. After this the children add the greeting “Shikamoo” that is a respectful greeting to a person older to oneself. To this the adult answers “Marahaba” that indicates acceptance of the respect paid. Even though this system of greetings denotes the power relationship, I did not try to change it because it would have confused the children. I also did not want to give the children a picture that there is something wrong with their way of greeting each other. While in Tanzania I also learned, that the system of greeting elders with respect is not so much about lowering oneself in front of the elders but more about showing pride of fine and strong ancestors. This is a strong part of the spirit of unity that lives on in many African countries.

To break free from roles takes time, but I sensed some change in the power relations during my time with the children. That the children at least partly accepted this change could be explained by the fact that I through the children’s eyes was a very different adult. I was a foreigner, to both my looks and behavior. Corsaro (2003, 16) describes a similar situation from a study where he as an American researcher studied both American and Italian preschool children. The Italian children accepted Corsaro’s untypical adult role much easier than their American peers. Corsaro supposes this had to do with his status as a foreigner, because the children could explain his “oddness” with his foreignness. Corsaro also writes that because the Italian culture and language was new to him as researcher, the children started helping him. By doing this the children adopted a role which is more typically an adult’s; the expert role. This helped the a more even power relation to take form. When reading about Corsaro’s experiences, I was surprised how familiar they seemed based on my own research. In the children’s eyes I was a strange, white person, whose oddly spoken Swahili made them laugh. The children corrected my language and introduced me to expressions, customs and places familiar to them.

Paju (2013, 50) writes about her experiences about the children wanting to test, or even bully, her because of the change of roles. I did not encounter anything like this, probably because Tanzanian children are taught from an early age that adults shall not be questioned in any way. This in turn caused its own difficulties as I had to find out ways to get the children to answer my questions according to their own opinions and feelings, and not according to what they think is the right answer.

Like in most ethnographic studies, I had the chance to gather material through many different empirical methods (see e.g. Forsberg 1998, 81; Rantala & Määttä 2013, 266). Before presenting these methods in detail I have however wanted to discuss my position as a researcher and to reflect over ethical issues. Like Hannele Forsberg (1998, 82) mentions, it is important for an ethnographer

to study oneself as a researcher. Rantala and Määttä (2012, 268) are of the same opinion. An ethnographer is a participating interpreter, but he or she shall not manipulate the sayings or thoughts of the examinees for his or her own benefit. Because the ethnographic field work always leads to new insights and ideas, the whole process cannot be planned on beforehand (see e.g. O'Reilly 2009). I find spontaneity and flexibility crucial in order to successfully work in the field. Due to this flowing nature of ethnography, it is important to write out one's choices to justify them.

As a part of my work in the organization I made a report of every group session. These reports have helped me to remember the group sessions and their details. Like Karen O'Reilly (2009) points out, the memory of the ethnographer is an important ethnographic tool, and so the memories are part of the research material. I think a special merit of my material is the plentiful memories I got during my apprenticeship. I strive to write out these memories as much as possible in this thesis, so that the reader can get insight to the field of my study. Studying memories has had the benefit that I have been able to put them in context now that single impressions have formed into entities of experience. I find the strength of ethnographic method lies therein that the memories are present during the whole process. As I wrote down my results I often got in to a flow state, and this helped the formation of thoughts along the writing process. I also liked the chance to get to write out my experiences scientifically but in a way that differs from the ordinary and rigid academic writing style.

Without underestimating the power of memories, my main material arose from the tasks we did with the groups of children. As an ethnographer I got to gather a broad and versatile material. Before moving on to describe the group tasks, I will lay ground for this by discussing the ethical questions concerning my work.

5.4 Ethical considerations

Research with children requires thoughtful ethical considerations. These I have reflected upon throughout the process of making this thesis. I have done so in order to be worth the children's trust. Firstly, when doing research with children, there are always questions about the power relationship present. As I described in the previous subchapter, I have consciously strived to even this power relationship by treating the children as equals.

Because of the power relationship, ensuring the voluntariness of participating in research can get problematic. If I as an adult have influence over the children, can I make sure that the children do not feel forced to participate? I have aimed to ensure this in many ways. Like Fionnuala Waldron

(2006, 93) says, it is important to give information about the study to the children so that they can give it their informed consent (see also Sargeant & Harcourt 2012, 70-72). I told the children that I am studying children's thoughts about poverty and that their opinions and experiences are important. I also pointed out that it is voluntary to participate. These sentences I repeated in the beginning of every group session in which material was gathered. As I gathered most of my material on paper in the forms of stories, open questions and drawings, I repeated to the children that it is completely acceptable to submit a blank paper to me if they want to. The children also got to choose whether to put their name on the paper or not. Giving the children a chance to leave in a blank or nameless paper seemed like a good way to give the children a choice to withdraw from the task if they wanted to, because if a child would have had to tell about his or her withdrawal out loud, it could be that the child would not dare to do this in front of the researcher or the group (see also Waldron 2006, 93).

Every time the children submitted their papers, I numbered them and wrote a separate list with the names of the children and the numbers of the papers. I told the children that if anyone of them at some point wishes to withdraw all the own answers from the study, this is possible. The elimination of a child's papers would have been done through the lists with the names and paper numbers. I also used these lists for noting the child's age and gender on each paper.

During my empirical work I received some papers with only the given tasks or questions copied to them. There were also some papers that had answers to only part of the questions I had asked. It is also notable, that on every occasion I received papers with and without names. Even though a part of theses seeming "withdrawals" may have been caused by forgetting, it seems like the children have understood and adopted their power to choose. I also got a couple of answers that can be seen as direct critique toward me as a researcher. An example of this is the writing of a 13-year old girl: *Hello, how do we normally use money? I think if we had a lot of money, I could be using (...) like Sofia uses. We could be having a good life like Sofia*".

The girl's understanding that I as a white person have got much money is based on the general cultural attitude toward white people. It can hence feel strange, why a white, and rich by the definition of locals, person is researching in children's poverty. I find it wonderful that the girl takes up this issue. Because I was conscious about this issue, I told the children about the purpose of my study repeatedly and told the children for example that in my country, there is a very general picture about African children, a picture stating that they all are poor and unhappy. I told the children I want to give them a chance to tell their own story.

Before starting my empirical work, I thought much about in which extent to include the parents in my work with the children. At the beginning of my apprenticeship it became clear to me that the link between school and parents was non-existent. As there can be up to 100 pupils per teacher, the teachers do not necessarily know the parents even by name. Many parents are also more unknowing about the things concerning school than the pupils themselves. For the creative group I had the strong support of the teachers in the school. The girls' group in turn was well known by the parents and the organization had also earlier had Finnish students working with the girls. I, my organization and the teachers found it important to discuss experiences of poverty with the children, whether in the context of research or just as a general discussion theme. After a long consideration and reading process we got to the resolution that we will not ask the parents for permission in order to carry out the research. My organization recommended this resolution, and it was me that was most hesitant. Then however, I read in Tampere University's ethical guide that parents do not have to be asked for permission if the following terms are fulfilled:

If the research is carried out *“as a part of a preschool's or school's normal functioning”*

If *“the research topic is not sensitive and the permission from parents or other guardians is practically difficult to get.”*

If *“the examinees can understand the topic of the study and understand what participating really requires from them.”*

As I saw all of these points fulfilled in my research plan, I confirmed this with my university teachers. We settled upon that I had pondered over the ethical questions enough and concluded that asking the parents for permission is not necessary in this case, as asking the parents might even cause harm (see also Strandell 2010, 96). As we discussed ethical issues, we specifically thought about the fact that if the parents would know about the research, they could influence the children's sayings because they think their family will benefit from the research in some way. Or on the other hand forbid the children from saying anything. As I mentioned earlier, it is problematic that a white, among many locals considered rich, person comes to ask about money and poverty. These prejudices influence the communication especially with adults. As Harriet Strandell (2010, 96) states, there are situations, in which asking the parents could lead to *“so unnatural social situations that the study could remain completely undone”*. I considered this to be the case in my own study. I also noticed how important it was for the children to talk about the subjects I brought to them. In the

ethical guide of Tampere University it is stated that parents do not have to be asked for permission if “*studying subjects of which one does not get comprehensive information if parents always have to be asked for permission for the study (for example family violence, social problems etc.)*”

Strandell (2010) argues similarly that if one would always automatically ask for the parents’ permission to study children, one would at the same time be contesting children’s agency. This in turn can be seen as harmful for children and a research subject important for them.

It seemed like the children found the tasks I gave them rewarding. I was always greeted with joy and the children were enthusiastic about the tasks I gave them. Because Tanzanian schools are quite authoritative, I found I could offer the children good variation. In my sessions, the children were allowed to use their imagination, express their opinions and behave more freely than required in class work. As Waldron (2006, 92) says, it is important that research is justified also through direct benefits for the child. In my study such benefits were at least the following: practicing creativeness, strengthening self-confidence and learning to express opinions. My organization and I also found poverty and economic inequality an important theme to discuss with the children in order to enhance tolerance and a good group atmosphere among them.

5.5 Description of the group tasks

During my empirical work, I partly read through the already gathered material all along the process in order to know what I want to know more about. Because of this, I will be presenting the central, preliminary results of the tasks in this chapter, insofar as they have guided my work. I got to start working with the girls’ group soon after my arrival, because the group had operated for long already. After one first meeting on the 10th of January, we used the meeting of Saturday 13th of January to discuss about their thoughts about a good life. I got the chance to ask the girls, what a good life means for them. I asked the girls to write or draw about the subject.

After this introduction, we used the next month to get to know each other in meetings planned by me. The themes of these meetings were uplifting the group spirit, discussing friendship and feelings, and reciprocally teaching and learning Finnish and Tanzanian songs and dances. These sessions were important in getting familiar with each other. On top of this, I got much material from the discussions about friendship and feelings, even though these were not a part of the official empirical plan. The children talked about what feelings mean to them, and what is important for them in friendship. Hearing this deepened my cultural understanding.

On the 19th of February I got to start my work with the creative group. Originally there were ten third graders and ten sixth graders in the group, but the next day, 20th February, ten fifth graders were added to the group on the organization's request. This meant that I presented myself and my research project two times to most of the children. At first, this repetition felt annoying, but looking back it did not disturb at all. Besides presenting ourselves, we spent the first two sessions getting to know each other and for example doing different games of expressing made up emotions. The children found this very funny and there was much joy and laughter.

With the girls, I got to restart the systematical gathering of material on February 21st. I asked the girls to write about what children need to get a good childhood or life, and about how this is influenced if there is little money in the family. The same task was done with the creative group on February 27th. The mentioned questions are originally used by Nielsen and Wulff (2007, 95-99), who in their study asked Greenlandic children to write about these themes.

Based on the answers the children wrote me, friendship appeared especially important. Therefore, I wanted to deepen my understanding of the significance of friendship. As we had already talked about friendships with the girls' group before, I wanted to work with the creative group on the same topic. For this I divided the creative group into two, so that the first group had five third graders and five fifth graders, and the second one five sixth graders and the rest of the fifth graders. I asked the first group to discuss, whether having little money influences friendships, and why or why not. I further encouraged them to tell in which ways. The second group was asked to discuss friendship in groups of about four children. I asked these groups to imagine that half of them have got little money and that the other half has got much money. I asked the children to empathize with these imagined roles, and think of what the two different groups of children would say to each other and what they would possibly wonder about.

Because I wanted to know even more about friendships and poverty after this, I invented a creative story writing task, through which I gained much material: not just about friendships and leisure time activities but also about family life, emotions and reasonable ways of spending money. This story task was made in both groups: in the girls' group on March 14th and in the creative group on March 18th. The children were asked to imagine they are in the following situation, and write about how they would feel and act:

"A child is in the situation, that her friends ask her to do something together. What they want to do however includes spending money. The girl knows her friends have got more money than her and wonders what to do. She doesn't have the money. Describe the situation. How does the child feel?"

Has this situation ever happened to you? Is this situation common? What would the friends like to do? Is there a way to solve this, how would you do that?"

After this, I wanted to give the creative group a chance to draw as well, as the girls' group had already done a drawing task. I wanted to give the creative group a drawing task too, because for some people it can be easier to express themselves through drawing than through writing. My colleague carried out the session on March 13th, as I myself was elsewhere that week and had given my colleague instructions on beforehand. My drawing task got its inspiration from a task appearing in Nielsen's and Wulff's (2007, 100-107) study. The task is about asking the children to draw two children on different sides of a paper; one picture of what it is like to be a child of a family with little money, and another picture about what it is like to be a child of a family that has got much money. My own assignment said literally *"draw a child, whose family has got little money"* and *"draw a child, whose family has got much money"*. The children drew eagerly and the results were very interesting. When presenting the results, I will be describing the drawn children by "rich" and "poor" for the sake of clarity, even though these words were not in the initial questions.

Suddenly I recognized that I had gotten a lot of material. However, I still had some questions that I wanted answers to. Therefore I asked the children to do a complimentary task, a kind of questionnaire that consisted of the following open questions:

- Do you use money yourself? For what? Where do you get the money from?
- If you got 100 000 shillings (about 38 euros, locally a significant amount), what would you do with the money? What about if you got 100 000 shillings but would have to give the money to somebody else? Who would you give them to and why? What would you hope that he/she would do with the money?
- Why do you think some have got little money while some have got much money?
- What do you think of when you hear the words "poor child"?
- How are poor people treated in Mwanza?
- How would you help poor children living in Mwanza?
- Have you got something else you want to say? What has it been like to participate in this study?

A significant part of my material consists of the answers I got to these questions. These questions were hence very fruitful. The fifth question was however translated wrong; I had used the verb "to treat" meaning the way other adults and children get along with poor children, but it was translated

as meaning medical treatment. Even though this was not the initial thought with the question, the answers to this question have been rewarding as well. Also in the drawing task there was a similar mistake, I wanted to ask the children which one of the two drawn children they feel like they are themselves, which was, concluded from the answers, apparently understood wrong and translated to a Swahili question literally meaning “which of the children do you like (more)?” It has to be understood that the actualization of my empirical work was completely dependent on translations from English to Swahili and the other way around. I lead the group sessions mainly in English, and my colleague translated and explained the tasks to the children in their own language. My written material was however translated by two friends of mine who were fluent in both English and Swahili and also had insight to social work. These friends were accepted for the task by my organization, and they signed confidentiality agreements upon my request. The need of translations caused some trouble though, and after coming back to Finland I noticed some translations were incomplete or missing. Mainly I am however very satisfied with, and grateful for, the translation help I got. The need of translations and the problems linked therewith are a natural part of international research (see also Hahn 2006, 152).

Next, I will shed light on some of the other difficulties I encountered during my empirical work. I remember that it was very hard to know what to expect while still planning the study in Finland. I could not foresee, how difficult it is to gather one’s first own research material in a completely new cultural environment. Hence, I will now describe some of the difficulties like I remember them.

5.6. Difficulties I encountered along the way

It is Wednesday morning, and I have just planned what task we will do today with the girls’ group. When I get to work and ask my colleague which time we are about to leave, she tells me that today she is going to another meeting and cannot go with me to the girls today. The girls know a handful of English words, and my Swahili vocabulary is still quite limited. Introducing the writing task I had planned can hence be forgotten about. At last I leave for the group alone, and we end up teaching Finnish and Swahili songs to each other. We are eventually having very fun and we get to know each other better. We find creative ways of communicating.

Another time we have agreed that we will meet at the girls’ meeting place. I am there about on time, and the girls are slowly starting to drop in. About within an hour from the said appointment time, all girls start to be on spot, but my colleague is nowhere to be seen. As well over an hour has passed, I send her a text message and she answers that she is on the bus, which means she probably will not

be here in another half an hour. We have reserved two hours for the meeting. We are talking about feelings with the girls, and one of the older girls is translating. My colleague arrives when we have already ended the session, a session that was actually quite successful, though not following the original plan. My colleague is happy too, and is not bothered at all by the fact that we will now be travelling all the way back again.

I also remember a time when we had arrived at the school, and my other colleague suspected that it might soon start raining. We had just travelled for about an hour, and as we had talked for about ten minutes with the group, without yet getting to the day's subject, my colleague started considering whether we should end the session because of possible coming rain. When it rains in Tanzania, everything stops.

Like can be seen from the examples above, planning and being systematic was quite hard while on the field. Sometimes I felt like giving up, but the times things actually happened made me push forward. I had to learn to deal with being flexible and accepting that things do not go as planned. After getting to know the ethnographic method, I however realized that a change of plans does not necessarily do any harm. An important lesson in ethnography, as the field is forming the material and the gathering thereof. Next, I will describe my difficulties with the research permit.

It is November in Finland and I am leaving for Tanzania in two months. I have drafted my research permit application and press "send". Soon thereafter I get the answer that nothing can happen until I'm in Mwanza myself. As a Finn used to do the possibility to do almost everything online I wonder about this, but cannot do anything else than just wait until I arrive. According to the information I receive, the research permits are usually given in about two weeks. Well, I wonder what would have happened had I known the truth...

It is a hot day in January. The organization's cashier and I are walking from office to office with the research permit application. At last we get the information that the person we are looking for is not in office. Reputedly he has to be present for the application to go on, and he is away for nobody knows how long. For the next one and a half months, our cashier goes to the office weekly, sometimes even daily, to follow up the situation. Nothing happens. One time someone important is away, another time one more letter from my organization is missing. Then the office is closed the whole week because of the president's one hour visit, and I once already get the research permit in my hand, but it is full of mistakes. When I am at last given my official research permit, it is March 19th. My time in Tanzania is ending on April 6th.

Like I mentioned in the beginning of the empirical chapter, I had my organization's strong support for my research throughout my stay. Like this I could carry out empirical work as a part of my weekly assignment of planning and carrying out group sessions. If I for some reason would not have gotten the research permit, we would have viewed the discussed issues and carried out group exercises as just content for the group sessions. But I got my research permit, and being able to use my rich material gathered in the group sessions was worth the wait. Once I arrived back in Finland with the material with me, I felt like a winner. From here however started another demanding, but rewarding, process, namely the analysis.

5.7 Analysis

A major part of the time I spent on this thesis was consumed by the analysis process. This is because of the plentiful and versatile research material. In the beginning, it was difficult to know where to even start. I however ended up successful using the method of qualitative content analysis. In this subchapter I will go through the phases of my analysis process.

I started the analysis process by simply reading through the material. I was very interested in what the children had written. Because a significant part of the material was only on paper, with photographs of the papers as copies, I little by little started to assemble the material into the same document on Microsoft Office Word. This assembling work can be likened to the transcription done in interview studies. Because there were also drawings in my material, I addressed these by writing up remarks concerning them at the same time. I wrote down the sexes of the drawn children and details about their expressions and postures, clothes, and shoes. I also made notes about the colors used in the drawing and of possible unique details. As mentioned earlier, the drawing task I made was as inspired by Nielsen's and Wulff's (2007) study, and like them, I decided to analyze the drawings thematically. This means noting issues that are common to many drawings, but also the issues that are unique to a single drawing. Like Nielsen & Wulff (2007), I have also decided to view the items the children have drawn as what they are instead of seeking symbolical meanings in them.

Even though assembling the material was an arduous task, it helped me to better internalize the material. I had the chance to approach the material comprehensively and without yet making interpretations. One could hence say that I approached the analysis process by using data based content analysis (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). I did not have a special form or table in which I wanted to place my material. Instead, I wanted to approach the material with an open mind and see how it answers my research questions. These are what Jouni Tuomi and Anneli Sarajärvi (2018)

describe as typical starting points for data based content analysis. While reading my material I however noticed quite soon that the categories of my Northern European literature review appear also in my Tanzanian material. These categories were experiences of material deprivation, experiences of not belonging and experiences of family life and coping strategies (see also Ridge 2002). In my material, I also found advice that the children want to provide adults or their peers, and explanations for poverty. Based on these categories, I started to code the material underlining the categories by different colors. This phase Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) call the reduction of the material, describing it as the phase where *“Expressions portraying the research task are sought in the text that has been written out”*. Hence, I sought for all descriptions of experiences relating to poverty. As a part of my research task, I was looking for similarities and differences between my Tanzanian and Northern European materials. Hence, the categories of my literature review served a good basis for the reduction of the material. As such, my qualitative content analysis can be regarded as a combination of data based and theory based content analysis (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 121–129.)

Next, I made lists of the different categories (see Tuomi & Sarajärvi), and while doing this I also found subcategories to the bigger, coded categories. For example in the category of material needs deprivation, I found the subcategories of lacking food, school materials, clothes, housing, and health care. While listing the material, it also felt logical to divide each category into subtitles according to the question to which each piece of material seemed to answer. I formulated these questions as *“What is seen as good life from the perspective of this category?”*, *“How is this category affected by poverty?”*, and *“What do the children think of using money within this category”*. Making the list helped to get a view of the connections between the different types of material stemming from different group tasks. In the list I got to put everything together, one below the other. I hence got an overview of the whole material, which according to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) is the end result and the principal aim of data based content analysis.

I will now proceed to present the results of the study. I will start each of the three first result chapters by presenting the children’s descriptions of a good life from the viewpoint of the theme of each chapter. From here I will go on to describe what impacts poverty has on the fulfillment of the needs described in the chapter. The fourth result chapter is constructed differently, and there I will present the advice and the explanations to poverty provided by the children.

6 Results

6.1 Deprivation of basic needs

From the viewpoint of material needs, it seems to be important for the children to get one's basic needs fulfilled. The concept of basic needs, or "*important needs*" as literally described by the children, seems to be commonly understood by the children as many of them writes about it.

A theoretical basis for basic needs is found in Abraham Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs, an old and much developed model of human needs. The model is often visualized as a pyramid, the layers of which represent the needs' hierarchy (see e.g. Burton 2012). Like I mentioned before, Maslow follows a holistic idea of man, and hence sees the needs of a lower hierarchy as influencing the ones of a higher hierarchy. When using the pyramid visualization, the lowest layer consists of physiological needs like air, water, food, rest and health. The second lowest layer is about the need for security, for example in the forms of shelter and stability. The basic needs that the children describe are hence to be found from the two lowest levels of Maslow's model. Poverty in turn, according to the children, affects a poor child so that he or she will not get his basic needs satisfied. Next, I will go through in detail, how the children see poverty affecting the fulfillment of a child's basic needs.

6.1.1 "*Lacking chicken and fish for food*"

Many children mention food as the first of needs. The children describe that poverty affects children in them not getting enough food. A child might for example have to go to sleep hungry. The food might also be of poor nutritional value, for example lacking proteins. One child says hereto that poor children are "*Lacking chicken and fish for food*. Based on my experience, these are the main animal protein sources in the local food culture. Goat meat is also common. Significant plant based protein sources are beans, avocado and spinach. Otherwise the food is quite carbohydrate based, and especially rice and corn are used due to their low prices. Bean- and spinach sauce is often used together with meat or fish and rice or corn porridge. When there is no meat, only the sauces are served. However, meat is quite a significant part of the food culture, and based on my experience the serving of meat is important especially during feasts.

The food related statements of the children show that the children are aware of the importance of a varied diet and the influence of poverty thereon. Some of the children also specifically mention that poor children lack the food children would need. This means that the children are conscious of the fact that a good diet is especially important for children that are growing and developing. This consciousness can be a result of the projects that raise awareness about children's nutrition and the dangers of undernourishment. My organization also carried out such a project, in terms of which it was teaching parents about breast feeding and the nutrition of young children. The objective was also to teach the parents to grow nutritious fruits, roots and vegetables in their own gardens.

Even though the children mention food as important, they do not see it necessary to use money on food themselves. Many of the children say that they are given money primarily to buy school materials, and explained that if there is money left over, one should use it on for example flour that can be used by the whole family. Buying snacks for oneself is seen as selfish and culpable. Most children explain in their stories that they have sometimes indulged in buying snacks either out of own desire or because of an urging friend. As an example of a quite typical story, a 13-year old girl writes: *"One day my friend got money on her way to school. She told me that we should not go to school. So that we go to have fun and enjoy ourselves. I never refused I accepted, we ate different foods like a) chapati b) chipsi c) Thick Tea d) biscuits."* The girl describes that she in the moment was very thankful to her friend because she got her stomach full. She however ends her story by concluding: *"I asked for forgiveness and we promised to change"*.

When a child is hungry, it is understandable that snacks are tempting. Being at school with the children I noticed that the children do not usually eat anything during the school days. Children as young as 7 years old don't eat at all during a six hour school day. On top of the school hours, many children walk long journeys to and from school. Access to water however seemed to be secured, as the children carry small water canisters along. This might vary from school to school though.

There have been quite similar results in Northern European research concerning poor children's thoughts about food. The biggest difference to my own material is that Northern European children had various experiences of the food eaten in schools, either as packed lunch or lunch in the cafeteria. These experiences are missing in my material. Secondly, the Tanzanian children also describe undernourishment to be a big problem. However, even though the Northern European children do not talk about actual undernourishment, they too describe hunger and the monotonousness of food, experiences that are similar to my Tanzanian material (see for example Lemetyinen, 2014, 107; Sørensen 2010, 60).

In Finnish researcher Lea Lemetyinen's (2014, 107) research a boy writes: *"The food is cheap macaroni food and dreaming of any white mold cheese or (...) salmon is pointless"*. As the citation shows, also Northern European children are very conscious about what food is healthy and nutritious. In Northern European schools, children are carefully educated in which foods are healthy, and this can be thought to cause stress for those who are not able to fulfill the requirements of a healthy diet, for example because of the family's scarce economy (Hammer-Helmich & Sørensen 2005, 49). Northern European children also compare what food is eaten in their own homes with the food eaten in friends' homes. For Northern European poor children, the food eaten at friends' homes seems much more luxurious.

This kind of comparison is not to be found in my material. However, the Tanzanian children, like their Northern European peers, point out that some children can afford to buy snacks with their friends while others cannot. However, the Tanzanian children say buying snacks is culpable while their Northern European peers are jealous of others having more pocket money than them (e.g. Nielsen & Wulff 2007, 63-65). This difference can be due to the fact that Northern European children think of the money they get as being their own, while Tanzanian children are given money for a specific cause. Northern European researchers were astonished that children sometimes use their own money to help their parents, for example by buying food needs. In the context of my own research, I do not find this as astonishing, as Tanzanian children do not recognize the concept of a child's own money. Even the children going to work use at least a part, if not all, of the money they earn for the family's common needs.

6.1.2 "Neither uniform nor school bag"

In the terms of school, Tanzanian poor children face problems with food in school, but there are also other deprivations relating to school facing them. To get to school seems to be very important for the children themselves. They point out that school is important for the need to participate, but that school is also related to many material needs. In order for the child to get to school, the families have to buy the child a uniform, a bag, and some school materials like workbooks, notebooks, pencils, and pens. The children find these things very important and they take good care of them. Like I mentioned about the children's priorities when it comes to using money, school materials are on the top of the list. This result appeared in all tasks I did with the children. In the stories, I was told about prioritizing school materials, and when writing about a good life, the children described getting to school and the materials needed therefor. When I asked the children, to what they would use 100 000 shillings, most of them had answered that they would use them for buying school

materials. Some also said, that they would use the money to support friends or peers with school materials.

My remarks of the school uniforms are as follows: In Tanzanian public schools the children have the same uniform. Girls wear a green skirt and white blouses; boys wear white blouses and beige shorts. All wear black shoes and white socks, and by cool weather a blue sweater is worn on top of the blouse. Muslim girls wear white scarves in addition to the basic school uniform. These remarks concern the dressing in public schools, because the school uniforms in private schools differ from school to school. The children are seemingly very aware of this, as can be seen in their drawings; the poor children in the drawings wear a public school uniform whereas the rich wear for example dresses, collared sweatshirts or vests – pieces that can belong to the uniform of a private school. However, some of the children have also drawn the poor and the rich child to be quite similar as both are wearing the same public school uniform (see picture 1). This could be thought of as a sign of the school uniform's initial function: to prevent the visibility of income differences.

Picture 1 (poor child to the right)

In my material the children show that you can easily recognize, whether a child walking by is going to a public or a private school. This in turn tells a lot about the child's background. Based on my observations, everyone that possibly can put their children in a private school does so because of the

scarce resources of public schools. Girls going to public schools are recognized not only by their clothes but also by their short hair. In public schools, girls and boys alike have to have short hair because of hygiene reasons, to prevent lice and other problems that come with unwashed hair. This is an important form of prevention, as all families do not have regular access to water for washing. However, also this becomes a differentiating factor between poor and rich children, as is seen especially in the girls' drawings (see picture 2). On the other hand the girls seem to recognize the effects of poverty on the hair, as the poor children that are drawn with long hair have very tangled hair. For the boys this isn't such an issue since as good as all local boys have short hair.

Picture 2 (poor child to the right)

As we have seen, there are two sides to the school uniform: It is highlighting economic inequality between schools, but at the same time it is a measure in trying to minimize the visibility of it within schools, a goal in which it to some extent seems to reach. Still, it feels quite contradictory that poor families have to pay for uniforms in order to get the children to school at all. I heard that for some families, the school uniforms become an unmanageable prerequisite. Some families may for example be able to send only one of their children to school because of the requirement of school uniforms and materials. It must also be kept in mind that it would be good to have doubles of the clothing pieces that most easily get dirty, so that they can be washed regularly.

Some of the children had drawn a rich and a poor child wearing almost the same clothing (school uniform), the poor child however missing one or two of the accessories that are part of the school

uniform, for example a belt (see picture 3). Even though the school uniform should serve its purpose by reducing the visibility of poverty, this isn't always the case. Like can be seen from the children's drawings, poor children may lack some pieces, and their clothes may be dirty or worn out. As such, poor children are still recognizable.

Picture 3 (poor child to the left)

It is to be remembered, that the school uniform is not a one-time investment, but one that has to be renewed as the child grows and the clothes are worn out. In the girls group I noticed that some of the children use the school uniform pieces also in their free time, for example wearing the school skirt on Saturdays when there is no school. It seems that the pieces of the school uniform is a good compliment to an otherwise limited wardrobe.

In the area of Mwanza city, there are many organizations enabling vulnerable children to start school, often through providing them school uniforms and –materials. The organization I worked for was one of these, and it was wonderful to see the joy of the children and their parents, the day the children one by one were provided a school uniform, a notebook, an eraser and shoes. These items were much more than just things; they were a part of the future. It was a special day for us all.

In the Northern European studies, the costs of school vary. In Scandinavian schools, school materials are mostly free, and no school uniforms are used. In Great Britain on the other hand, school uniforms are used, experiences of which could be seen in the studies of Ridge (2002) and

Crowley and Vulliamy (2007). The children Ridge (2002, 72) interviewed, were mostly happy with their school uniforms. However, some of the children pointed out that school uniforms do not protect from all signs of poverty. For example shoes have to be bought separately, and because of that, some children have shoes of expensive brands while others have those from a supermarket. An 11-year old child also told Ridge that not all children have the money to buy a school uniform, and therefore some children wear other clothes or wear the school uniform lacking some of its accessories. Lacking accessories or worn out clothes are problems that appear in my Tanzanian material as well. It is however to be pointed out that school uniforms in Great Britain vary from school to school, and hence it is not quite as easy to identify a child going to a public school as it is in Tanzania.

6.1.3 *“Failing to get clothing”*

The lack of decent clothes might cause trouble also outside the school world. The children told me that clothes are a part of a good life, while poverty in turn causes that a child lacks clothes or is *“failing to get clothes”*. Good examples of the lacking clothing of poor children are seen in the children’s drawings. For example, the poor children are often drawn barefoot (see e.g. pictures 5 and 6 on the next page). Having no shoes can be problematic as it limits the places where it is safe to walk. Walking barefoot can also cause injuries that are easily infected, and also snake and animal bites are a greater risk without shoes.

In addition to missing shoes, the poor children in the drawings have worn out, patched and dirty clothes. While drawing, the children have hence been conscious of that poor families cannot afford to buy new clothes as frequently as rich families, and that the clothes of poor children are therefore patched when holes appear. In the drawings, the poor children’s clothing is also simpler than the rich children’s. Many girls have drawn two girls, and pictured the rich girl wearing a detailed and colorful dress, whereas the dress of the poor girl is quite straight and gray. It is interesting that the children who have used colored pencils have often drawn the poor children on a grayscale and the rich children in color. It can be reflected upon, whether the grayness portrays the reality of poor children; for example worn out colors and simplicity. In some pictures, the expressions of the children are also different, as the poor child is sadder than the rich child (see picture 4).

Picture 4 (poor child to the right, the name of the drawer censored)

As can be seen from picture 4, the clothing of poor children does not match together as well as the clothing of rich children. In the drawings, the rich children are wearing matching jewelry, dresses and shoes, as the poor children may even wear shoes of different pairs. The rich children are drawn with much jewelry, while the poor wear none. Jewelry mostly appears in drawings by girls, but also one boy has drawn jewelry; specifically “gangster style” chains (see picture 5). One of the chains has a dollar sign attached to it.

Picture 5 (poor child to the left)

It is also interesting that the children have pictured the rich children wearing more adult like clothing, such as rich girls carrying handbags instead of school backpacks. Rich boys have many times been drawn wearing suits with ties and all, and the expressions of these boys are very serious. The poor boys drawn on the other side of these papers are in turn wearing shorts and a t-shirt, and they look more playful and childish. (Picture 6).

Picture 6 (poor child to the right)

The children told me they were using money on clothes, and some said that they buy clothes for their siblings too. Some also said that if given 100 000 shillings, they would buy clothes in addition to school materials and food. One child said that he/she would give the money to his/her mother, so that she could buy clothes for the family. When asking the children what they think of when they hear the expression “poor child”, a typical answer was *“Not getting food and clothing. Not getting a place to sleep”* (girl, 12 years).

Also Northern European children have pointed out that poverty influences a child’s clothing to a great extent. The Norwegian researcher Mari Rysst (2005) has for example named her research article accordingly; *“It costs to be cool”*. In many Northern European studies, poor children have told about not being able to buy the same clothes as others. When Nielsen and Wulff (2007, 100) asked children to draw poor and rich children, the most significant differences were in clothing. When comparing the Greenlandic children’s drawings with the Tanzanian children’s, there are many similarities. Especially prominent in both are the worn out clothes of poor children. The rich children’s clothes in turn are drawn in much detail and color. They also wear jewelry while the poor children do not. (See picture 7).

Picture 7 (Source: Nielsen & Wulff 2007, 100; poor child to the right)

In the Northern European studies, the significance of clothes is pointed out especially strongly. Here, even clothing brands are mentioned, as it is seen as important to wear the right brands (see for example Harju 2008, 87; van der Hoek 2005, 28). In my own material I found only one mention of a clothing label. Another important difference between the materials is the one concerning shoes; In my material, there are drawings of poor children without shoes, while the Northern European studies contain results stating that according to children, all children can't buy "*Converses*" or "*Adidas sport shoes*" (Hakovirta & Rantalaiho 2012, 58; Harju 2008, 87). Like Rysst (2005, 10-15) emphasizes, shopping for shoes and clothes is a vital part of the Norwegian youth culture, something that based on my material isn't as common in Tanzania. Still, the children that took part in my study find it important to wear whole and clean clothes that make them look representable.

The girls I met in the girls group wished to get sports clothes in order to participate in a netball championship, and knew that the other teams were going to have sports clothes. The girls formulated many different arguments for why the clothes were so important and, when looking at these more closely, the arguments can be divided into arguments with an appeal to practical value and arguments with an appeal to a symbolical value (see Harju 2008, 69). The practical value of sports clothes is that it is easier to move in them, while the symbolical value lays in arguments about self-esteem and a way of meeting the other teams as a considerable opponent.

In the Northern European studies it is clearly visible that many items have both practical and symbolical value. These items are televisions, phones, computers, PlayStations, toys and bicycles. Things like this did not really appear in my material. An 11-year old girl writes though, that "*A child feels isolated when he/she sees others with things he can't afford to buy*". The girl does not

write about what these things are though. Northern European children see technical equipment that is needed for contact with friends as especially important. There are no mentions of this in my material, which could be explained by the fact that it is common not to get an own phone before reaching adult age.

6.1.4 *“A good house” and the deprivation thereof*

In my material, there are many mentions that lacking shelter or a good place to sleep are problems for poor children. According to the children, having a “good house” lays ground for a good life. A 14-year old girl writes that she would like to make her mother happy by building her a mother a good house in the future. With the girls group we discussed why a good house is important. The girls pointed out arguments from a variety of perspectives. Firstly the house is a safe place, but it is also connected to thoughts of family, love and caring. For the children, the home is clearly an important place that awakes many emotions. These emotions have to do with both family relations and material deficiencies that the house represents. Studying the significance of familiar items in the relocation of children in foster care, Riitta Laakso (2018) has made similar observations. According to Laakso, the familiar items create a feeling of safety for the children (Laakso 2018, 113).

The Tanzanian children state that if a child does not have a house, or at least not a good one, he/she might end up on the street. One of the children writes: *“some do leave their homes and become street children”*. Another, a 12-year old girl, points out that a *“lack of basic needs leads to people wandering on the streets”*. A 13-year old boy in turn says that a child, who does not get his basic needs fulfilled, has to *“beg from every person because of his situation”*. Lack of shelter and a home hence leads to a situation that makes the child vulnerable, and that might even put the child in danger. Neela Dabier and Naina Athale (2011) bring out their worry for street children in their study. They point out that street children are visible and invisible at the same time. Dabier and Athale describe street children as a severe and urgent socio-educational problem.

As could be expected, there are no mentions of children living in the street in the Northern European studies. There are however plenty of mentions about the effect of poverty on houses. The Northern European children emphasize the importance of an own room for inviting friends and having a place to relax. This requirement did not appear in my Tanzanian material. This could be explained by the fact that in the villages I studied, it is quite common that the family home has got two rooms: One of the rooms is the main room, to which also guests are invited. The other room is

seen as the private space of the family, where whole family sleeps. Hence, few children have a private spot in the home. In Tanzania, there is also no need for heating the house like in Northern Europe, where poverty often leads to cold temperatures in the house in winter, especially if living in a detached house. The Northern European children also state that the poor equipment of a house might lead to not wanting to invite friends to one's own home, but rather visiting friends' houses that are better equipped. The equipment referred to was television, toys and other entertainment. Remarks like this are not found in my material.

6.1.5 *"They don't have money for treatment"*

It can be seen from the writings of the children that they see poverty on one hand as an everyday way of life, but on the other hand as a life threatening condition. This becomes especially apparent when the children describe the lack of health care and medicines. A 13-year old boy describes that poor children *"die because they don't have money for treatment (or else) they are treated badly"*. Bad treatment and the lack of treatment appear in many of the children's writings. Also the difference in the treatment of poor and rich children is reflected in the writing of a 13-year old boy: *"A poor child will get treatment in local hospitals while a rich child will get treatment in big hospitals"*. Another 13-year old boy tells about the resource- and space deficiencies of health care for poor people; *"The doctor has to move you here and there"*.

However, there are also children who point out that even poor children can get treatment. These children tell about poor children who get support from "the government" or "the community", which can be a public ward office or an organization's community center. This is important work, in which also my apprenticeship organization has its part. Public services have very scarce resources for following up on families living in the area. Hence, it is mostly the organizations' responsibility get familiar with the families and their situations. The organizations can then contact the public offices together with the families. The families often do not to take contact with the public offices themselves, either because of shame or simply due to lack of knowledge of services available.

Mentions about the effect on poverty on available health care are not found in Northern European studies. This could be explained by the quite well-functioning social security systems in these countries. Social security ensures that families do not get in trouble if someone in the family gets sick. If the Western parallel would have been for example the United States, this might have looked different. However, like Danish researchers Hammer-Helmich and Sørensen (2005) state in their

study, children worry about the effect of poverty on the own health, for example through monotonous food and lack of physical exercise.

6.1.6 “*They lack basic needs*” – summary of results chapter 6.1

As can be seen above, the children point out that poverty causes lacking different basic needs. Based on the children’s answers, I have categorized these needs. The children present food, school uniform and –materials, clothes, shelter and health care as basic needs. These needs that I have presented in this chapter belong to the two lowest, and most fundamental, levels on Maslow’s (1987) needs hierarchy. The third level consists of social needs, or needs of belonging and love as described by Maslow. In the next chapter I will present the children’s understandings of friendship. I will also portray the children’s perceptions of the ways in which poverty, and the underlying deprivation of basic needs, influences friendships.

6.2 The effects of deprivation on friendships

To share joy and to cooperate is what the children find important when talking about a good life from the perspective of participation and friendships. In the material, the children tell that they themselves get happy when their friends are happy, and when being able to play together without fighting. According to the children you have got good chances to live a good life as long as you are not lonely. They stress that children should be given time to play with their friends. They also find it important that children are treated well in the community and are given possibilities to participate. Living in a calm neighborhood is something that the children find important in order for children to learn good manners and to become a part of the community.

Based on the material I have gathered, the children’s participation-and friendship related experiences of poverty can be divided into four categories: 1. Experiences about the well-functioning of friendships regardless of poverty, and about the overall importance of friendships. 2. Experiences of isolation and inferiority. 3. Experiences about valuing a sensible way of using money. 4. Experiences of conflicts relating to usage of money and the solving of these conflicts.

6.2.1 “*We are always happy once we are together*”

The children find that the most important thing considering friendships is to be together. “...*we work together, study together, sing together*”, describes a 9-year old girl. Like can be seen from this

section, to be together does not always require using money. An example of another common and cost free activity is playing ball games. In the absence of a ball, these games can be played with a lump of clothes knot together. Being together is important in itself, because like a 14-year old girl says: *"We are always happy once we are together"*. Being together is also seen as important because it develops the relationships forward. A 13-year old boy points out that *"Friends like uniting so that their friendship can last for a long period of time"*. Based on sentences like this, it can be concluded that children see the continuation of friendships vital. Hence, according to the children, friends are not just random playmates, but loved ones that are there for a long time. Especially the girls point out that it is important that friends can share things with each other and can understand each other *"without trouble"* (see also Nielsen & Wulff 2007, 22).

Based on my literature review, friends are very important even for the Northern European children. In the studies, the children have told that they do many nice things with their friends and that they talk about their lives and experiences. *"You have to be together with someone and have fun and laugh, for example doing sports together"*, answered a high school girl to Nielsen's and Wulff's question about friendships. This statement is comparable with the experiences found in my material. Like the children I met in Tanzania, also Northern European children think that isolation is the bad opposite to friendships. A child gets isolated, when she feels different and odd, and feelings of otherness arise. Next, I will present experiences related to otherness.

6.2.2 *"You can feel weak and it can lead you to be unhappy"*

Even though many of the children mention free activities and the unnecessary of using money, there are also many experiences of otherness, isolation and inferiority related to poverty. One of the groups doing the group discussion exercise have stated that *"those with much money see themselves as the best, but those with little money are being neglected because they don't have much money"*. The two other groups were talking about the discrimination that poor children face in the community. A 13-year old boy said that those, whose parents have not got money are bullied and neglected. Based on the material, many children are of the same opinion, and it seems like leaving a poor child on the outside or neglecting him/her completely, is common. This in turn arises many emotions in the children, and these emotions are described especially in the stories the children have written. Like many others, an 11-year old boy describes that the situations with friends may lead to that you *"feel weak, which can make you unhappy"*. Another 11-year boy in turn says: *"Your friends are arrogant because you come from a poor family. You will feel so bad"*. The statement of a 10-year old boy supports this in pointing out that others may underestimate a poor child. This

might lead to the poor child feeling isolated. Mentions of this kind are often found in my material. According to a 12-year old girl, poverty might even lead to poor children experiencing themselves as though *“having no value because they don't have money”*.

Another issue causing sadness seems to be comparison to friends. A 10-year old girl writes that a poor child is feeling sad about friendships, as other children's friendships are of the kind where you can give each other snacks and presents. A poor child cannot afford this, which in turn may sometimes lead to the relationship ending. A 10-year girl tells the story of a girl, whose friend asked her to buy her a toy car. When the poor girl could not afford this, the friend that had asked for the toy car ended the friendship. An 11-year old boy in turn writes about a poor boy, whose friends force him to steal money so that they can eat snacks together at school.

Northern European children have plenty of experiences about otherness too. These experiences can be listed as, firstly, experiences of otherness relating to material differences, and, secondly, experiences of otherness that relate to different possibilities to participate. Also in Tanzania, the possibilities to participate are different for poor children. Especially the importance of buying snacks becomes apparent in both my own material and in the Northern European studies. In both contexts, the children also wish that they could buy presents for their friends (see for example Sørensen 2010, 64). In Northern Europe, also the importance of expensive hobbies and school field trips are mentioned. Paid hobbies or leisure activities do not occur in the villages where I met the Tanzanian children. There a freer leisure time is common. Neither were there trips in schools that the pupils would have had to pay for separately. In the Northern European studies it became very clear that not getting to participate in a leisure activity or a school trip due to lack of money can be a very isolating experience (see e.g. Harju 2008, 83; Ridge 2002, 76).

Experiences of inferiority and sadness because of poverty clearly appear in both Northern European studies and in my Tanzanian material. This is to be noted especially when considering the statements that are sometimes heard when discussing poverty, like *“Poverty does not make African children sad because everyone is poor down there”*. Statements like this are hence revoked by my material, as the negative emotions that the children feel are related to experiences of not being able to participate like others. The children also describe experiences of actual bullying, where the poor child has been left outside or has been forced to do things that he or she does not want to do. In all the Northern European studies I have presented, experiences of bullying and neglect are present. At the same time the children are conscious of their parents' economic situation, and know that there is nothing to do about that. This is true also in my material, and the children in my material even take an active role in teaching their friends what is good usage of money, and what usage is unnecessary.

This is what I will present in the next two subchapters. As I did not find corresponding results in the Northern European studies, I will in these subchapters be concentrating on the Tanzanian context.

6.2.3 “*I advise my friends*”

In their stories, the children describe situations where they have used money with their friends even though there has been scarcely with money in the family. Like I mentioned in the chapter about basic needs, this kind of spending has had to do with eating snacks or having fun together with friends. It is emphasized in the stories that the money should actually have been used for something else, often for school equipment. Mutual learning about how to correctly use money is central in many stories, and often it seems like both parties in the friendship have to use money carefully. “*We promised to change*” states a 13-year old girl when describing a situation where she and her friend were caught spending money on a wrong cause.

In many of the stories, the moral lesson is not to be “*greedy of earthly things*”, like an 11-year old girl describes. A 13-year old girl says the same in a slightly different way as she describes that she advises her friends “*...not to be greedy, they should be satisfied with the little they have*”. A 13-year old boy in turn advises his peers: “*don't try to force yourself doing things that you can't afford*”. Many children write in their stories that they have advised their friends to use money in a sensible way. According to the children this is important in order to avoid unpleasant pressured situations, an example of which is provided by a 10-year old boy: “*I normally feel bad once my friends force me to do things that are not good*”. The children describe that they have had a bad conscience in the pressuring situations, like can be seen in the statement of a 13-year old girl: “*but inside by heart I never felt good*”. A 15-year old girl says her friends had pressured her to the decision of buying Coca Cola together. When the situation later had to be explained to parents, the friend had turned the roles upside down. The girl describes the situation difficult as she had not even invited the idea. Another girl describes the situation like this: *My friend advised me that we should go to the hotel and buy tea and snacks. I told her ‘No, I need to buy books and school items. (But then anyway) ...I decided to go and buy snacks and we ate’*. The story ends with that the brother, from whom the girl had gotten the money hits the girl and chases her away.

The stories in which the child has intervened in his or her friend’s usage of money usually have a good ending. In most of the stories, the friends accept the advice and promise to change. As an example of such a story about a child teaching her friend about sensible usage of money, the story following story by a 12-year old girl can be presented: “*Mercy (name changed) was given money by*

her father. She used the money to buy snacks and soft drinks. That's not good behavior. I told her not to repeat the behavior (...) I told her next time she should buy books and a pen, so that her parents can be happy about her. Mercy later regretted misusing the money. She thought a lot and asked herself a lot of questions, with no answers. (...) I will love you forever my friend, I will never leave you."

In the story above, the mention of the many answerless questions is especially interesting. I interpret it so that it describes the fact that Mercy did not see any reasonable cause for her behavior. This being so, Mercy decides to change her behavior in the way her friend, the storyteller, has advised her. The last sentence of the story tells about the friendship that goes above everything; whatever Mercy does, the storyteller will never leave her.

Another thing seen in the story above is the role of the parents in the moral of the story. In the stories, friends often seem to remind each other of that parents should be made proud and happy by being a good and trustworthy child. A girl writes that she got sad when her friend Jamila (name changed) wanted to waste her money on snacks and sweets. So the girl said to Jamila: *"See how your parents struggle just to raise money for you, and now you want to misuse it by buying unnecessary things. Think twice Jamila"*. The girl also writes that after this Jamila *"cried and kneeled down and asked for forgiveness"*.

Such strong emotional reactions to money spent "wrong" are quite common in the stories. These emotional reactions appear as those of the one being advised, but also of the one advising. When describing her friend's will to buy snacks, a 12-year old girl describes: *"This situation didn't please me. I felt angry, I wanted to slap her"*. In the emotional moments there is however not only unpleasant emotions like sadness, regret and anger, but also the pride of being able to advise a friend to act in the right way. In the story of a 12-year old girl, the main character is proud about getting her friend back to school by advising her to use her money more consciously, and writes: *"Her mother was so happy to see her child going back to school just because of me"*.

The children advise each other also regarding the special responsibilities that a child going to school has towards his or her family members. A 12-year old girl writes about a friend of hers misusing money: *"I pity her because she is an orphan. She had brothers and sisters too not going to school because there was no money. I talked to her and she decided to buy school items and she used the balance to buy food to take home to her siblings"*.

In the stories the storyteller usually acts as advisor. There is however also one story written by a 13-year boy that is an exception to this rule: *"One day I had money. I decided to go and buy snacks*

without remembering that I had no exercise books. Later my friend advised me not to buy snacks again (and) that I should buy books.” Even in this story, the advisor is understood and the one advised decides to change his behavior. The position of the storyteller does hence not influence this.

6.2.4 “*He was annoyed and got angry*”

Though many of the relationships in the stories stay harmonious, there are also stories where the act of advising or controlling the usage of money ends up in a conflict between the friends. A 13-year old boy describes this when writing about saying no to a boy who wants to pressure his friend to spend money. *“The boy writes: He was annoyed and got angry. I felt so bad. I told him to stop such behavior (and) he understood me and changed. He is my friend until this date and I love him so much”*. In this story the two friends manage to solve the conflict by themselves. In another story in turn, a girl narrates that she intervened in the money-related conflict of two friends: *One day Esther told John (names changed) that they should go and enjoy themselves. But John refused because he wanted to buy school materials. Esther got angry and abused* (literal translation of the word used, could refer to physical violence) *John for not cooperating with her. I told her (Esther) ‘you should stop that behavior. It’s not good.’ And she promised to change her behavior and she became a good girl, a child of God”*.

In the stories cited above, some kind of agreement is reached in the end. This is not the case in all stories, as the end of a friendship is described in some of them. A 12-year old boy states that *“the best solution is to leave friends who misuse money, (spending money in)...ways that are not necessary”*. The one initiating the end of the friendship varies between the stories; sometimes it is the advising child and sometimes the irritated advised child. A 12-year old girl writes: *“I had a friend known as Abia (name changed). One day Abia told me that she normally spends a lot of money. Because I came from a poor family I decided not to be her friend”*. Another girl in turn narrates, that after having advised her friend, the friend *“got mad at me and she abused me and rejected me as her friend”*. In addition to these one sided decisions to leave the other party, there are also situations described, where the decision to end the friendship has been done together. A 10-year old girl writes about such a situation: *“One child had a friend, whom she loved so much. The friend wanted them to use a lot of money to buy things that are not necessary, and the child didn't have money. They decided to leave each other”*.

A 12-year old girl tells the story about two that friends love each other. However one of them has got money, while the other one has not. Therefore the one who has not got money asks for money

from her friend. The friends finally end up ending the relationship. The girl points out that she could have solved the situation only by: *“sitting down and explaining to him/her that I am not capable of buying presents to him/her. I ask him/her not to ask for expensive things I cannot afford, and she should not force me (to buy)”*. Being honest and talking about the role of money in the friendship is important according to the children, like a 12-year old girl states: *“we should not lie to our peers that we have a lot of money”*.

6.2.5 *“I will love you forever my friend”* – summary of results chapter 6.2

Like can be seen in this chapter, the children find their friends very important. They write about all the significant moments they have had had with their friends. At the same time many children report about deficiencies in friendships. They feel weakness and sadness, and feel like outsiders or others. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, deficiencies on lower levels on the hierarchy influence the higher level needs (Maslov 1987, 16). The deficiencies in friendships that the children describe seem to occur at least partly due to basic needs not fulfilled. An example of this is the lack of clothes. When having no possibility to be and dress like others, it is easy to fall victim for harassment and neglect.

However, the children also explain their status as outsiders in other ways. An example thereof is that the poor children notice the “bad” wasteful ways of spending money of their peers. Here the children put the blame on these wasteful peers, who actually usually change when being advised in the stories. These stories are the children’s descriptions of how they would solve a difficult situation with friends. The advice the children give to each other can be interpreted as the moral stories that for example Geoffrey Baruch (1981) takes up in his article. Baruch studied parents’ descriptions of their children becoming ill, and he also put focus on the parents’ perceptions of their own and the doctors’ roles in the care process. The parents described their own role through moral stories, hence justifying their own behavior. There are the same moral features found in the friendship stories of the Tanzanian children.

Like the parents Baruch (1981, 280) interviewed, also the children I studied told me about different roles and their meanings. According to the children, the role of a child is for example different from the role of a parent, but the bad behaving friends in the stories had not always acknowledged this. Baruch (1981) points out that when describing roles, people seem to present the features of the roles as things that are self-evident. In the Tanzanian children’s stories these self-evident things are seen for example in the use of passive or “we” –forms, for example: *“If you have money, buy important*

things like books, pens, school uniform...” and *“We should remember to buy important things in our lives”*. Like Baruch describes as typical for moral stories, the children express some things like as self-evident. Self-evident here is the correct use of money. The children use expressions like “misusing money” and assume that others know what this means. According to Baruch, roles also include expectations of how a person with a specific role shall act. The children express many expectations and moral responsibilities, according to which children should live. It hence seems like the children are combining friendship norms to norms learnt in the family, which requires balancing between different expectations. In the next results chapter I will go through this balancing that poor children do in their families and in their daily lives. The balancing occurs between expectations and values, the needs of the family, and the own social and basic needs.

6.3 Family life as a daily balancing done in order to cope

As can be seen from the earlier chapters, poverty causes many emotions and situations that have to be coped with. In this chapter I will describe the children and the coping strategies that they use in their daily lives. It can be seen from the material that the children balance continuously between the economic situation of the family, the own needs and the expectations of friends.

6.3.1 “We should join our hands together and share”

According to the children I have met, it is crucial in order to have a good life (see also Susanna Helavirta 2011, 72-74). The children find love, happiness and peace especially important when talking about family relationships. Home means a safe place for the children (see Maslow 1987, 18-19). On top of this, important virtues of family life that the children mention are harmony, respect and wisdom. It seems like the children are saying that if one is lacking these virtues, one is also deprived of a good life. Sharing and showing respect towards parents and are seen as especially important within families. A girl is encouraging families: *“We should join our hands together and share what we have as a family”*. This thought is based deep within the Tanzanian culture, in which elder people are met with pride and respect. According to the children, poor children do not respect their parents as much as other children do, but there are no explanations why.

According to the children, the family provides a good start on the way towards achieving one’s own goals. The importance of love given by parents, and loving one’s parents back, is stressed. A 13-year old boy also points out that children have a good life when they in their family *“have the right to expression/being heard”*. This right is not self-evident in every Tanzanian family, because

children's right to express themselves is usually more limited than in for example Northern Europe (see e.g. Fokala 2017, 102). The children also describe children's responsibilities towards the parents, and helping parents is seen not only as important but also as something creating joy. A 14-year old girl describes that a good life is to "...*make my mom happy one day, by building a good house for her*". A 12-year old girl in turn states that "*Helping parents be happy makes children happy too*".

Northern European children have, in the light of the studies I have gone through, got similar ideas about a good family life; "*In order for children to be well, they shall live in a safe home. They shall have lots of food, love and tolerance*", a 14-year old Greenlandic girl described the needs of a child from the perspective of family life (Nielsen & Wulff 2007, 97). However, the significance of helping one's parents appeared stronger in my Tanzanian material, which is probably linked to cultural differences. In Tanzania, the children are there for their parents too, not just the other way around.

6.3.2 "*See how your parents struggle*"

The children describe that poor children are sad because they cannot get their basic needs fulfilled. A 10-year old girl describes, that when the parents have got no money "*they will not provide me with basic requirements such as clothing, and (I am) not being comfortable, (...) (I am) sad every day and (am) staying away from my friends*". Experiences like this have major effects on the daily life of the child, and on the whole family. In a girl's story, a girl is challenging her friend to respect her parents, to be thankful and to think of how the parents struggle for the well-being of their daughter. The children describe many kinds of struggle, and they point out that every member of a poor family struggles to make the best of the situation and to cooperate. This is not always easy.

A 13-year old boy writes that poverty influences children through lacking support from parents. A girl in turn states that poor children are not "*getting appropriate upbringing (...) because most parents spend their time (...) doing jobs for income*". Likewise, a 13-year boy points out that the hard life of poor children is due to lack of support from parents. At the same time, the children seem to understand the situation of their parents. As opposed to this, an 11-year old boy however means that there can be situations where a poor child thinks "*that your parents have money but they don't want to support you*". This kind of an experience might lead to difficulties trusting people, and it often also has to do with an experience of stigma. According to my experiences during my time in Tanzania, stigma can be caused by poverty, but also mental illness, disability, or other reasons of

being left out from the family or community. Non-governmental organizations have an especially important role in supporting people with experiences of stigma.

Many parents are probably sad about not being able to support their children more. Especially those, who work hard from day to day just to support their families, but see their children suffer anyway. However, the children do not mention that their parents would experience feelings of shame or guilt over this, which could relate to the cultural climate, where the parents are unquestionable authorities. It could be that with such a background the children cannot think of the parents having feeling shame or guilt towards their children.

The daily struggle of parents is however seen in many of the children's stories as rigorousness when it comes to using money, and like I presented in the chapter concerning friendships, it is seen important that children learn to use money in a sensible way. Parents, but also older siblings and school teachers, teach children how to use money. Even though the parents' frustration is not described as shame or guilt in the stories, it does get visible as big disappointment when money has been used wrong. Often the children describe that the parents do everything they can to have enough money. When the money the parents have earned with hard work is used for a different purpose than it was meant for, the parents show their frustration. A 15-year old girl describes in her story: *When my friend went home her mum asked her 'where is the Money I gave you to buy exercise books?' My friend answered 'mum I used the money to drink Coca Cola.' Her mum got angry and caned her accordingly*". There is much physical discipline described in the stories, especially when angry parents are pictured. The children also seem to find such ways of discipline legitimate if a child has done something wrong (see also Fon 2018, 128-130). A 12-year girl however also points out in her story, that wronging towards parents also hurts mentally as it causes a bad conscience.

The stories are from time to time tough to read. An example of this is the story of a 12-year old girl; *"Her parents caned her so that she fainted"*. The girl in the story had used the money for alcohol and going to a disco, and had not come home until the next day. This was apparently seen as misbehavior in its most severe meaning. Even in other stories, the emotional reactions of the parents are described as quite strong, and for example a 13-year old girl tells the following story: *"(When) my sister studied in class six, she got money (...) She was supposed to buy school items, but instead she used the money to eat snacks. When she got home, mom asked her 'Where are the books that I gave you money to buy? She (the sister) answered 'The money you gave me got lost.' All of a sudden my mom fell down and fainted. When my dad came from work, he saw mom lying on the*

floor. He asked 'What's wrong with your mom?' We went silent. My dad caned my sister and she asked for forgiveness and she was forgiven"

According to the stories, asking for forgiveness and being forgiven is an important part of the children's learning process and the continuation of family life. The children often describe how they through asking for forgiveness have decided to change the way they use money, and hence even to change personally. In the story cited above, it is also interesting to see the gender roles that figure in it; the mother becomes so upset that she faints, and the father in turn comes in for a caning. The story feels somewhat overdramatic, but might have some truth in it after all.

As can be seen from the stories above, the parents are strict guardians of money in the family. In most families, there is no chance for using money freely, for example through pocket money. This can be seen in the descriptions of the children; all the leftover money, after for example buying a school uniform, has to be brought home or has to be used for buying food for the whole family. A couple of children have said that one can use the balance to buy something one wants, after first having spent the money wisely. Like a 12-year old girl says however, the free usage of the balance first has to be checked with parents.

According to a girl, *"Parents should be strict and talk to their children all the time"*. This is how problems are avoided according to the children. At the same time a sensible way of using money is learnt. Even though the lessons are being described as unpleasant and even rough in the moment, there are also stories where supportive parents are described. One girl narrates: (When) *"my sister was on her way to school, she met a group of girls. They took her money by force and left her hopeless. My sister met my father on her way home. My father asked about the money he had given her. My sister explained to him about what had happened and about some (of the) challenges she faces every day. My dad is very understanding."*

It is nice to read about a child that can talk about her daily struggles with her parent. To talk helps lighten the burden the child has to carry, and further, a valuable understanding between generations is created. A 14-year old girl describes the new possibility that a mother gave, when money had first been used wrong: *"...we (...) bought snacks and we ate it all. When we came back home, mom asked us about the money and we told her. She warned us not to misuse money. We asked for forgiveness and we were forgiven. Mom gave us money again without telling us what we should do with the money. We went ahead and bought books, pens and some other school items."*

In the story above it is interesting to follow the communication between the mother and the children. The mother trusts the children that they will be wiser the second time, even though they used the money wrong first. The learning experience seems like a strengthening one, and the children seemingly enjoyed the trust their mother gave them. In some stories, also positive feedback given by parents is described. These are stories in which money has been used well. For example, an 11-year old girl writes about a good behaving friend: *“When she went home her parents were so happy that their child is disciplined and obedient”*.

From the examples above it can be noticed that it is important for the children to be loyal towards their parents. From an early age, the children adopt the parents’ role as guardians of money. When I asked to whom the children would give 100 000 shillings if they could not keep the money themselves, the by far most common answer was to their parents, because parents buy food and clothes for the family. The children also wrote that they through giving the money to the parents would thank them for a good upbringing: *“I will give it to my parents because they are the ones who raised me”*, says a 13-year old girl. A 10-year old girl in turn knows that her mother’s business would benefit from such an investment. The children also acknowledge their parents’ needs, and many say that they would give the money to their parents for the parents’ own needs. What these “own needs” are, is usually not specified, but for example one girl says she would give the money to her mother who could then buy flour for a feast.

Based on my literature review, the Northern European children, like their Tanzanian peers, feel that worries about money may create a negative emotional atmosphere in the home. According to the children, economic worries become visible through more fighting and nervousness (see e. g. Lemetyinen 2014, 108; Nielsen & Wulff 2007, 22). In the Northern European studies it also became clear that the parents sometimes share their worries directly with their children. Van der Hoek (2005, 28-29) states, that worries are shared especially with children over 14 years. In my material I did not find mentions of parents sharing worries with their children. Another significant difference is that the Northern European children acknowledged that their parents sometimes feel guilty, which influences the emotional environment at home. The Tanzanian children did not say anything about this, which could as mentioned before be due to a different kind of power relationship between parents and children.

6.3.3 *"This can lead to a child being a thief"* – descriptions of coping strategies

Like I have described above, poor children have to adapt to the family's ways and possibilities of spending money. Their daily life is often a balance between the own needs and the family's economic situation. The children want to keep up good relationships to their families, and so they use different coping strategies to get by in their daily lives. These strategies are described in many of the tasks I gave the children. Like I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the children find it important to help their parents. In the group task, in which I asked the children to emphasize with children from different socio-economic backgrounds who want to play together, a 10-year old girl stated: *"This situation can lead to a child being a thief"*. Stealing is according to the children the worst coping strategy they can think of. Other strategies that the children mention are working, loaning, begging and influencing one's own and others' money related values.

A 9-year old girl writes that poverty influences children in that *"Children and youth need to work together with parents in order to get good income"*. Many children say that they *"do business"* in order to get money. Said by a young child, *"doing business"* might feel like a strange expression. I however remember often seeing children going around the villages for example selling fruit or nuts. A 13-year girl in turn describes that she *"will fetch water for people so that they give money"*. For many children, working is a daily activity, and they do not find it strange or especially tough. Many say that they like working. According to one girl *"...all youth have to (...) work and be paid in order to get money and houses and in order to participate in developing the nation"*. In the same text, the girl describes that also getting education and having a home is important for young people.

Even though the children find working important, they however place some restrictions to work when talking about children working. A 12-year old girl says that children *"should not be given hard work"*. Later in her text the girl adds that children *"should not be sent out at night"*, apparently referring to working and safe working conditions. The girl also stresses that children should be taken to school. Most children are of the opinion that the primary place for children is in school, and that the working tasks therefore should be accustomed to the workload at school. The children hence do not fully dismiss work done by children, as long as children's needs are also taken into account.

It seems like the children find working a better way of coping than for example lending money or begging for it. According to a 12-year old girl, poverty often leads to a situation in which the poor child has to lend much money. The loans are usually provided by friends, which may lead to conflicts. A 12-year old girl describes: *"...the poor child asks for money from her/his friend and once she/he is not given, they collide (literal translation of the word, maybe have a conflict) and*

stop being friends". Also begging is mentioned, and for example according to a 13-year old boy, poverty may lead to a situation where a child has to "*beg from every person*". I remember repeatedly meeting begging children in central Mwanza. For example I often walked by a woman and a 5-year old boy. The clothes of the boy were worn out, and he had sand in his face. The boy was taught to beg from people walking by through following them individually for about 20 meters forward, trying to take the by passers' hands and asking for money or food. The mother stayed at her blanket following the boys work from there.

To loan and beg is bad in the children's opinion, but they also mean that to steal or lie to parents is much worse. There are much emotions connected to stealing and lying. A 13-year old boy writes that a poor child may feel forced to steal from home and describes how this makes him feel: "*I feel so bad because such a situation can cause you to be a thief at home*". The children explain that poor children may steal to get their basic needs fulfilled, but also to be able to spend money together with their friends. One girl writes: "*Her friends used to tell her that 'Every day you just come (to school) without money. We are tired of you.'* When she went home she stole five hundred shillings". The children find being honest to parents very important, and many of them stress that lying to parents is never acceptable. As typical situations of lying to parents the children mention stealing from them, but also not being honest when the parents ask what the children have used the money they were given. Often this latter kind of lying is related to situations where money for school items or family food has actually been used for own snacks or enjoying oneself.

Even though loaning, begging, stealing, and lying seem like common coping strategies, these strategies are, according to the children, culpable. In my material the children also point out that poor children change their attitudes and values concerning spending money, and the overall importance of money. This can also be seen as a coping strategy. When money cannot be used for anything more than the necessities, other expenses become irrelevant or even condemned. The children also share these attitudes with each other, like was seen in the friendship stories. To educate peers may in turn help the children not to feel like victims of poverty, but instead like active agents in their situations. As agents, the children show that they have decided to use money sensibly and to teach this to their peers as well. Teaching others seems to help the children to accept their own situation. It is also easier to be friends when the common norms of spending money are clear. Another coping strategy that the children use, being active agents, is to always mention education as first priority. Many children explain that through prioritizing a good education, one is ensuring a good future. School hence gives the children hope for the future, which gives them strength to go on here and now.

When reflecting the Tanzanian children's experiences with those of the Northern European children, there are many of the same coping strategies seen. Working, saving, lending and stealing are mentioned as common coping strategies in both materials, except for the difference that Northern European children do not usually work until reaching adolescent age. The forms of working may also differ; the Northern European children for example say that they sometimes get money from their parents if they do more house chores. Based on my own material, doing house chores is part of the daily activities of Tanzanian children, and they are not paid for doing house chores. Harju (2008, 120) calls the kind of coping strategies mentioned in this section proactive coping strategies, and they seem to occur in both cultural contexts, even though there is certain variation concerning the details, such as working age and the significance of house chores.

Also when looking at coping strategies, a significant difference between the materials is that the relationship between children and parents is different. In Northern Europe, the children acknowledged that they tend to "nag" trying to convince their parents to give them money or buy them something they want, while "nagging" is not mentioned at all in my Tanzanian material. However, also the Northern European children were very sensitive to their parents' feelings and often decided not to "nag" (see e.g. Harju 2008, 120). Also "nagging" can be seen as a proactive coping strategy. When the Northern European children avoid "nagging", they might according to Harju use reactive coping strategies instead, like for example letting go of or avoiding the thing wanted, or making statements against it. These reactive coping strategies find correspondence in the Tanzanian children's arguments of a sensible way of using money. However, when reading about the Northern European children, I do not find an agency as strong as the one occurring among their Tanzanian peers, when they teach their friends how to spend money sensibly.

In the Northern European studies, the agency of the poor child is highlighted through him/her taking on a very active role in the family. A Northern European child of a poor family might take on responsibilities and tasks that usually belong to adults in the family. It is hard to compare these responsibilities to the Tanzanian context, because the responsibilities of Tanzanian children are often bigger than Northern European children's. In the villages I studied, it is for example everyone's responsibility to use money sensibly, and also children are responsible for many house chores. On the other hand, it is an impossible thought in the Tanzanian context that a child would challenge the authority of a parent by taking on his/her role. Boyden et. al. (2003) found similar results from Sierra-Leone. Even though the role reversal was by no means free from problems in Northern European families either, the Northern European children seem to have many experiences thereof (see e.g. Hammer-Helmich & Sørensen 2005, 29–30; Van der Hoek 2005, 33–34) The role

reversal might happen more easily in Northern European families due to the comparably more even power relationship between parents and children.

6.3.4 *“We must respect our parents” – summary of results chapter 6.3*

The family is the firsthand environment of a child, an environment where the child adopts basic values. Hence, the situation of the family influences the child's life. If there is no money for basic needs in the family, the child may suffer and also look different to other children. The family therefore lays the groundwork for a child's experience of poverty. It was seen in this chapter, how poverty influences the family, and how the emotions arising are experienced, handled and expressed. The children say the home is a safe place for them. This basic safety might however unravel due to conflicts especially, as the children point out, when a child is punished without knowing what he or she has done wrong. Maslow (1987, 18–19) argues that experiencing safety is one of the most fundamental needs of humans. Seen in this light, it is very understandable that children aim fit into and cope with the emotional environment of the home. In my material the children describe that they learn to be sparing, because this is seen important in their families. Also in the Northern European studies the children's loyalty and understanding towards their parents was prominent. Like I mentioned before, the daily life of the children is often a balancing between the own needs, the social needs and the expectations of the family. In this chapter I have also pointed out what kind of strategies the children use in order to cope with this balancing – and with the daily challenges they face therein.

In the next chapter I will move on to explore how the Tanzanian children explain poverty, how they think poverty should be prevented, and what measures they suggest for helping poor people. This perspective did not figure in the Northern European studies, and therefore I will concentrate on the views of the Tanzanian children in this last results chapter.

6.4 *Reasons of poverty and ways of helping*

6.4.1 *“Because they have got no money”*

When I asked the children why some people have got just a little money while others have much, I was given many reasons. Some of the children have clearly understood this as a question asking why some are poor and others not; therefore there are many answers simply stating *“because they have got no money”*. Many children also explain children's poverty with that the poor children's

parents have not got money while rich children's parents have got much money. Even though such a statement could be seen as quite naïve in all its simplicity, it still tells a lot about the children's understandings of the position of the child. As we noticed in the chapter before, the children acknowledge that they are dependent on their parents' situation. In other words, a child cannot be rich if the parents are poor. Childhood poverty is hence an urgent topic as poverty places children in an especially vulnerable situation because of their dependent status (see e.g. Child Poverty 2018).

The children also give detailed reasons to why some parents, and their families along with them, are poor. The children point out that people have different incomes depending on their jobs. That some people do lower paid jobs, is in turn explained by deficiencies in education, skills or possibilities in life. Many children also explain that a small income comes from getting just a small profit from one's business, while a big income comes from a big profit. The children's understanding of businesses is understandable, as a big part of the work-aged people are running businesses, for example as farmers, shopkeepers, food sellers or tailors. The children acknowledge that in order to make a business profitable, one has to invest in it. When I asked the children what they would do if they got 100 000 shillings, a common answer was to invest the money in the parents' business or doing business themselves. An especially insightful comment about the relationship between investments and profit was provided by a 13-year old boy: *"Those with much money can run their businesses outside the country, while those with little money run small businesses within the country"*.

Even though differing education, personal skills, and abilities to invest in businesses are common explanations to income differences, there are also explanations that relate to the person's own activeness or respectively laziness. *"... I think when people work hard they will get more profit but if a person is lazy (he) will get a small profit"*, says a 13-year old boy as an example of explanations referring to laziness. Susan Weinger (2000) has studied children's explanations of poverty in the United States by showing children of different economic backgrounds pictures of the houses of a rich child, a middle class child and a poor child. A result of the study was that the children from a poor family empathized most with the child living in the poor house, while the middle class children blamed the children living in the poor house for being lazy. Based on these results, the above statement of the 13-year old boy in my study could be interpreted as a way of separating oneself from the poor. It might be that the boy has got two hardworking parents who get a reasonable income. In this case he might think that the parents of poor children, in contrast to his own parents, are lazy and therefore poor.

When explaining poverty, some children also mention people who have got no work at all. The reasons to why some people have got no jobs are similar to the reasons to a low income. According to a 13-year old girl *“some do engage themselves in different activities while others just sit”*.

However, more attention is put on education and the possibilities that education creates, and on the effects of its lack: *“Most people have no jobs to do because they are not educated”*, writes a 13-year boy as an example of a typical answer. The children see education as something important in their lives, as it makes a good future possible, while its absence is seen as a sign of a dark future. A 12-year old girl states: *“Lack of education leads to people wandering on the streets”*.

Associating poverty to lack of education or work is hence common for the children. There are however also explanations relating to the functioning of the society and the equality of people. An 11-year old girl gives the following explanation to poverty: *“Because the government also collects tax from the little we have”*. From a Finnish perspective, blaming taxes for poverty could be seen as naïve. One however has to remember to look at this statement in its context. Even though taxes are often thought to be gathered for the benefit of all, this is only part of the truth in Tanzania. It is broadly known that a big part of the tax money never gets back to benefit the poor because of corruption. According to the 2016 Corruption Perception Index, Tanzania ranked 116th out of 176, sharing its rank with Mali, Pakistan and Togo (2016 Corruption Perception Index, 2016). Where third-ranking Finland got 89 points, Tanzania got only 32. In her article for economy magazine Quartz Africa, Samira Sadeque (2018) points out that Tanzania’s sitting president Magufuli has not decreased the corruption in the country, even though it is often believed that he has done so. Dan Paget in turn writes in the CNN media that Magufuli is exercising a seemingly anti-corruption based populism that is taking Tanzania ever further away from democracy.

A 12-year old girl is also referring to corruption and inequality in her writing: *“Because we are not equal. Some are rich while some are poor. (...) Rich people neglect the poor”*. Firstly, it can be seen from the girl’s text that for her, equality is connected to poverty and richness. If the world was equal, there would be no suffering among people, and there would not be people desperate for help. But because people are not seen as equal, they are divided into two: rich people and poor people. The girl is saying that rich people should help poor people, or at least take them into account. The poor in turn are dependent on the help of others. It seems like the girl wants to say that the situation does not change as long as the rich are ignorant towards the poor, because the rich are the ones who have the power to make a change.

In the children’s texts there are many references to the continuation of poverty and the accumulation of problems. According to the children, education has a key role to prevent this. The

children however point out that some families have trouble getting their children to school because of lacking money for school uniforms or –materials. This is a vicious circle, in which the children grow up to be poor, and may themselves not get their own children into school in the future.

Except for not going to school, the children also see early marriage as a factor that may start the vicious circle of poverty. One girl states: *“Once you decide to be married young you will be poor the rest of your life”*. To engage in a relationship in an early age places Tanzanian young girls at risk. They are not allowed to continue in public schools after they have once gotten pregnant. This makes the girls very vulnerable. Dating is seen as a taboo, and it is usually done in secret. Using contraceptives is rare as there is not much knowledge about them and they may be expensive or hard to reach. The same goes for sanitary pads and tampons. It is to note that there is barely any sexual education in the schools, not even speaking of a chance for individual counselling. When a girl gets pregnant, the responsibility of the relationship, and the burden of shame related thereto, is often fully left on her shoulders. The boy in turn might leave the relationship behind him and continue his schooling as though nothing has happened.

The organization, in which I did my apprenticeship, works actively for girls that get pregnant and become mothers early. During my apprenticeship we started an own group for these girls, with the purpose teaching them to do some tailoring or handcrafts for an income. It was also thought that in these groups, there is a chance to share information about sexuality, contraception and relationships. Through this group, the organization wanted to ensure that these girls have the chance to talk confidentially with an adult if they need. This is important, as girls who have gotten pregnant are at risk to be abused by the child’s father or other men, due to their vulnerable situation. In her Master’s thesis Elina Laine (2019) studied the significance of gender in the context of Tanzanian social work, gathering texts from social workers and apprentices. In the thesis, the meaning of gender in Tanzanian girls’ lives is well elaborated, and the thesis provides insight to the taboos related to girls in the Tanzanian society, as well as to girls’ agency.

As can be seen in the sections above, the children I encountered told me that a child’s poverty is explained by his or her background. Except a background consisting of engaging in an early relationship, dropping out of school or growing up in a poor family, this can in its most extreme form mean being an orphan or growing up in the street. These children are the most vulnerable children. I remember seeing children sleeping in the streets of central Mwanza, often without any mattress or shield. For example one boy was sleeping in the middle of a paving at nine a ’clock in the evening, with just his hand under his head. Back then, I wondered why he was sleeping in such a busy spot, but I later understood that this must have been the safest place, as there were people

walking by all the time. A more peaceful and remote street would probably have been a much more dangerous choice. Based on these observations, I understood that even though there are, with a certain measure, many poor children in Mwanza, the situation of these poor children cannot even be compared to that of the street children. Street children, the most vulnerable of vulnerable children, seem to have next to no chances of getting to school or developing themselves.

Within the children's explanations of why there are poor and rich people, there are also indicators about the nature of a life in poverty. According to the children, poverty is not necessarily just a lack of money, but specifically a lack of basic needs: *"...the ones with money can buy anything they want. But for the ones with little money, the needs are limited"*, states a 13-year old boy (word by word translation). The boy is hence writing that poor people are poor because they need to limit their needs or live without the fulfillment of their needs. Rich people in turn are those who can always buy anything. A 10-year old girl argues that poverty is present *"because everybody lives according to the income/capacity one has got"*. It can be seen from the girl's statement that low income in itself is not necessarily poverty, but adapting to low income is. Some of the children likewise describe living on a small income to be *"poor life"*. An 11-year old girl for example elaborates that *"some live a poor life because of lack of money and jobs"*.

6.4.2 *"I will help them like my relatives"*

When I asked the children for associations to the expression "poor child", many children mentioned helping. When answering the question how to help poor children in Mwanza, all children were of the opinion that poor children should be helped in some way. Answers referring to each individual's responsibility of helping poor children according to the own abilities, are common in the material. Providing poor children with basic needs or a giving them small amount of money, are examples of such direct help. Many children stress that even though a single member of the community would not have much to give, his or her help is needed even if it is small. When I asked, on what the children would spend 100 000 shillings if they could not keep the money themselves, a common answer was that they would spend the money so that it provides poor people with for example food, clothes, shelter, health care or a possibility for education.

The children point out the great significance of their own education. They see education vital in order to be able to provide for themselves and also to help others in the future. *"We are told to study hard in order to pass our exams. This will help us get jobs and help other people who are in need"*, says an 11-year old boy. It is wonderful to see what a great importance going to school has

for the children, in this moment but also in their thoughts about the future. It may be considered, whether schooling is taken more seriously when it cannot be taken for granted. Many children say that poor children are helped in the best possible way if they are sent to school. The children see a link between getting a good education and getting work, but they also stress that it should be made easier for poor people to get work overall. Like a girl states, the most important thing would be *“to give children good plans for the future”*. Education and the support thereof have a key role here.

The children also stress the importance of hope, both for creating a good childhood but also a good life. A 13-year old boy says: *“I would help them by telling them not to lose their passion and to work hard (...) I would like to advise all people that they should not lose hope and that they should work harder to achieve their goals”*. In order to keep up everyone’s passion and hope, the children underline the importance of encouraging the poor. The children find it especially important for children to get support from parents. According to an 8-year old boy, a poor child can best be helped by *“raising him up”* (literal translation). In the culture of Tanzania, in the context of which the care of the community is highly valued, it can be thought that the responsibility of raising children up is not only on the parents’ shoulders. When poor children are treated well in the community, and children are *“raised up”* together, the community gives them better prospects for their whole lives. A 13-year old girl describes everyone’s responsibility by saying that if needed, she will help the poor *“like relatives”*. Calling each other relatives, sisters and brothers is very common in Tanzania, which highlights the importance of the community for the individual. A 12-year old girl adds that she would help poor children by providing them basic needs but also by *“loving them”*. Standing up for children’s rights is also considered important.

However, the children see deficiencies in the care and love provided by the community. Many say that they would like to change people’s attitudes towards poor children. A 13-year old girl states: *“I will advise people not to mistreat poor children but to help them only”* Many others say they would like to help in corresponding ways, by for example encouraging people to help poor children and telling people not to neglect them. *“We should have pure hearts of helping poor children”*, says a 13-year old girl. This could be interpreted as referring to the importance of good heartedness and caring, but also to the opinion that one should help just for the sake of helping, and not in order to show off.

Even though the children seem very eager to help poor children themselves, there are also many writings about asking for help from authorities, for example from parents, decision makers and organizations. *“I will talk to my parents so that they can help him or her”*, writes a 13-year old boy. Often the helpers seem to be close to the children, and there are not as many mentions of help asked

from officials. A 9-year old boy however says that: *“I will tell the president that he (the poor child) is poor and should be helped”*. A 12-year old girl in turn says that she would take the child to the chairperson of the area, which is maybe a bit more realistic an option than the president. The children also see orphanages and orphan centers as important institutions helping poor children. The children describe that you can take a poor child to an orphanage, or you can ask for advice concerning a child’s situation there. Many children also seem to be conscious of different projects that organizations uphold in their communities. An 11-year old boy advises: *“You can be helpful through different projects providing food/cooking”*. A 12-year old girl in turn explains that she would like to engage in projects *“providing food and sending them (the poor children) to school”*. Like a 10-year old girl expresses it, *“practical actions”* need to be taken in order to help poor children. Some children say that they in the future would like to have roles through which they can help poor people practically. Being a doctor or a researcher are some examples given

In addition to practical actions, the children also propose changing people’s attitudes. Firstly, the world should, according to the children, be changed into a place where people are not *“greedy of earthly things”*, and where sparing is a virtue. Like could be seen from the friendship stories, unnecessary use of money should always be avoided. The children also seem to be of the opinion that poor children would have easier lives if everyone spent money only on necessary things. Furthermore, like a 13-year old boy states: *“Rich people should not show off about having money. The same goes for the poor”*. The children find that the poor, and also poor children, have got a chance to teach others good ways of using money. Like this the poor take control of their situation. The children also highlight that even if you are poor it does not mean that you have to accept all kinds of treatment. A bad behaving friend that uses money in a wrong way and does not take advice can be abandoned, and maybe he/she will therefore at some point learn to behave better and be more humble. In my material it is visible that respect, honesty, cooperation, sharing, and the acceptance of all people are seen as important values. If everyone would follow these values, all people including the poor would feel much better. Upholding and teaching important values is according to the children something that even children can do to improve the situation for themselves and others.

Another thing that the children say poor children can do themselves is to work hard in school. Like I mentioned earlier in this chapter, schooling is seen important for children’s future. Like the children say, giving children a chance to go to school is the responsibility of parents or other guardians, but when school begins, the child can contribute to a brighter future for him- or herself by being a hard-working student. *I am thinking (...) what makes a child to enjoy her childhood is*

reading hard, because later when he/she passes (exams) and gets his/her own profit, he/she will enjoy life, but when a child does not do his/her best he/she will not enjoy his/her adult- and childhood”, a 13-year old boy describes. According to the boy, good future plans are needed both for having a good childhood and for having a good adulthood. In other words, the boy sees childhood as something making a good further life possible. A 12-year old girl writes correspondingly, that what is important for children is “studying hard in order to have a good life later”. In addition to creating possibilities for a good future and strength to help others, the children highlight that education also enhances the own self-confidence and makes you a “*better person*”. A 13-year old girl states: *I am studying to achieve my goal and to make my dreams come alive*. The statement of a 10-year old girl sums up the importance of school: “*Education is everything to the life of people*”.

6.4.3 “*Some live a poor life*” – summary of results chapter 6.4

The children recognize poverty as a very multifaceted problem, to which they also offer plenty of different explanations and ways of helping. Firstly, the children connect childhood poverty to the children’s firsthand environment; the family. The family’s possibilities to offer the child what he or she needs are influencing the child dramatically. According to the children, poverty is living on scarce resources. The children see that the parents’ work and education influences the economic situation of the family, and want to secure a good future of their own by working hard in school. In addition to fulfillment of basic needs, the children find that children need encouragement in order to maintain hope. Hope will give them a good childhood but also a good life. According to the children, these are things in which poor children need support from parents, but also from friends and the larger community. When describing ways of helping poor people, the children say that loved ones, like parents, relatives, and friends, have got a key role. The children hope that poor children would be taken care of even in the community, and that they even in this context should be helped with love and a pure heart “*like relatives*”.

Like I presented in the chapter, the children also take up more societal explanations to poverty and ways to help people. Here the children point out a wrong kind of taxation that should be changed and present organizations and chairpersons that are offering their help. Also the cultural attitudes towards poor people and the change needed therein are mentioned. The children hence find that poverty influences children on many levels, and the same image of a complex problem appears when the children consider ways to help the poor. In the next, summarizing chapter I will therefore concentrate on reflecting upon the different levels on which poverty affects children. I will sum up

the results of this study by looking at them through the ecological paradigm of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979).

7 Summary of results through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model

One of the classical paradigms of socialization is Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. In describing the socio-emotional development of an individual and its external influencers, Bronfenbrenner (1979, 3-14) uses the metaphor of a Russian doll. He assembles everything influencing human development into a multilayered model that consists of four systems (layers). I will use this model to summarize and further analyze the children's experiences that are found in my material (see also Fon 2018).

The innermost system in Bronfenbrenner's model is the microsystem. The individual and his or her direct relationships are included in this system. According to Bronfenbrenner, the family or a school class can together with the individual be included in the microsystem. Moving one step outward to the next system is the mesosystem. This system gets active as soon as an individual starts acting in two different social environments. Hence, a child often gets a first touch with the mesosystem when starting daycare. The relationship between daycare and family influences the child's development. In addition to this, there are also things that influence the child's daily life and his or her development even though he/she never directly gets in touch with these. These things Bronfenbrenner calls the exosystem. For example the parents' work or hobbies are examples of things happening in the exosystem. Hence, these are things that the children do not experience themselves. As an example, the way work or hobbies make the parents feel, influences the emotional environment in the home, and that in turn influences the children and their development. The outermost system in Bronfenbrenner's model is the macrosystem, which stands for the cultural level. For example family politics or the societal attitudes towards children and families are influencers of the macrosystem level.

Mary Keegan Eamon (2001) has applied Bronfenbrenner's model when studying the socio-emotional influence poverty has on children. In her article "The effects of poverty on children's socioemotional development: an ecological systems analysis", Eamon is going through all four of Bronfenbrenner's system layers, and gives examples of things happening within them, in the context of child poverty. On the microsystem level Eamon describes that poverty influences the relationships between family members. According to Eamon, parents of poor families often feel like

they have failed in fulfilling the expectations that are placed on them as parents, which may lead to stress and a continuous need to adapt (Eamon 2001, 257). This pressure may in turn lead to problems in family communication and in many cases also to neglect. Eamon states that the same pressure is also present in the mesosystem layer, for example limiting the mother's ability to follow up what is happening at school. A child lacking attention and proper upbringing from the parents may also behave badly at school. The resources of the parents are also seen in the exosystem layer, as the parents' abilities to concentrate at work, to create and uphold friendships and to engage in leisure activities, influence the children indirectly. As a macrosystem influences, Eamon mentions cultural attitudes towards ethnicity. Eamon also challenges traditional thoughts about ethnicity influencing children's development overall.

In addition to giving examples of ecological systems in the context of poverty, Eamon also advises officials and decision makers about how to intervene in the effects of poverty on different levels. Eamon's reflections upon ambiguous causal connections are worth mentioning: whereas the environment influences the child, the child also influences his environment. At the same time however, Eamon still seems to mainly portray the child as an object. The influence of the family and other social environments on the child is described thoroughly, but there is little focus on the child's own perspective as an experiencer, influencer and developer.

In this thesis however, I have concentrated on viewing the child as a performer of these active roles. Keeping this difference in mind, I want to summarize my results through Bronfenbrenner's model like Eamon does in her article. I find that the model fits well for the task of deepening my conclusions, as I through the usage thereof can examine my results on many different levels – from the microsystem layer to the macrosystem layer. In my thesis, I have studied the experiences of Tanzanian children, and reflected upon the differences that occur in comparison to Northern European children's experiences. Being so, my focus has continuously been both on local experiences and on cross-cultural reflection. I have hence been in constant movement between the different levels of Bronfenbrenner's model.

In the center of the ecological model is the individual, which in the context of my thesis is a child experiencing poverty. Following the holistic idea of man, I have seen child as a physical, psychological and social being (see Rauhala 1990). The children describe that poverty influences children especially through deficiencies in the fulfillment of basic needs such as food, school materials, clothes, house, and health care. The fulfillment of these needs essentially have to do with the economic situation of the family, and the family's possibilities based thereon. Corresponding results were also found in the Northern European results, even though health care and school

materials are mostly secured for Northern European poor children, and though malnutrition is for them not as common as it is for Tanzanian poor children.

The family is the children's microsystem, the firsthand system. Within the family, children learn their first skills and develop their understanding of themselves. In the family, children start experiencing and doing. Like I have pointed out, almost all the experiences of poverty the children have talked about are somehow connected to the family. Like I mentioned above, these experiences are often related to basic needs that the children cannot fulfill because of their family's situation. Children are dependent on their parents, and this can be seen also in the context of poverty.

Both Tanzanian and Northern European children also bring up their experiences of how poverty affects the relationships within the family. Love, respect, sharing and caring are seen as central building stones for family life in my material. Like some of the children mention, these building stones are not always visible in family life as poverty can make them fade. Due to poverty, every family member has to struggle, which is seen in the family as both cooperation and fighting. Stress is easily released upon other family members. The same is apparent in both Tanzanian and Northern European children's experiences. In addition, children in poor families need to adapt to the scarce economic situation of the family and learn to use money sparingly. The children also say that they are contributing to the betterment of the family situation by for example working or "*doing business*", which is especially common for the Tanzanian children.

A poor family as a microsystem influences the attitudes of others towards the children of the family. Hence, these "others", like for example friends, school and the community, can be identified as the mesosystem layer of Bronfenbrenner's model. Bronfenbrenner defines that the mesosystem is a system where two of the child's firsthand environments are combined. According to the children, poor children are always carrying their family's situation with them, and so there is always a combination of two systems in every social contact outside the family. This is seen in many ways in the daily lives of the children. Poor children may for example seem odd to others because their parents cannot provide them with basic needs. Especially visible of these not fulfilled needs is the deficiencies in clothing that the poor children experience, as they might have to carry worn out clothes or school uniforms that lack essential accessories. The children find that lacking proper school uniforms or –materials is especially bothering, as these influence children's ability to attend school and to have a chance of forming a good childhood and future. It can be seen from the children's writings that they find education very important. They also highlight the significance of friendships for a good childhood.

According to the children a poor family influences the child's friendships also in the way that the child has got limited possibilities of spending money together with friends. This too is visible both in the Northern European studies and in the stories the Tanzanian children wrote for me. In many of the Tanzanian children's stories, the temptation to buy snacks together with friends is described. In some stories, also a wish to be able to buy presents to friends is presented. In the story exercise, I asked the children how they would solve possible problems appearing between friends due to money. In almost every story, the children stress that children should value a sparing behavior and also teach this to others. Buying snacks is in turn seen as quite selfish and culpable, and the children find it important to highlight this when being with their friends. This is a significant difference to Northern European poor children, who instead highlight their frustration about not being able to use pocket money freely like their friends do. Even these Northern European children are however very sensible towards their parents, and do not always want to "nag" after things they want as they know that even their parents are facing many difficulties in their daily lives. The moral agency appears stronger in Tanzanian children though, as they teach their friends how to use money.

It can be seen from the Tanzanian children's behavior how the family's values and economic conditions influence the children's actions; not only within the family but also while being with friends. The act of teaching friends that the children describe in their stories could be seen as a strategy to cope. When standing behind one's own thoughts and sharing them to others, it gets easier to accept one's own limited possibilities to use money. However, there are many temptations and therefore the children often also describe experiences about having indulged in culpable ways of spending money, but having learned from mistakes made and having changed the own behavior. In many stories, there are descriptions about how a child that has spent money in a bad way together with friends, is being corporally punished by his/her parents. These descriptions are from time to time quite harsh, and they highlight the difficulties that the children face when balancing between the demands of different firsthand environments. In most of the stories, the balancing is successful, and the child understands for example the significance of saving and is able to agree with friends about the ways of spending, and not spending, money. The children also explain that they go to work to help the own and the family's situation.

Some children however also explain that poor children sometimes may have to steal, loan or beg to manage the internal contradictions linked to the spending money. Many emotions arouse in the children related to these coping strategies, as the children saw the strategies culpable. Also the Northern European children have pointed out the need to loan money and the shame that this brings with it. As yet another coping strategy, the Tanzanian children write about that it is sometimes

better to end a friendship with a bad behaving friend, who lacks the understanding of proper ways of spending money, and with whom a conflict related thereto is not solvable. When reading the children's descriptions, it gets clear that the children experience a strong moral agency in their own life, according to which they act in their mesosystems – balancing between different firsthand environments.

Based on my material, the children have also got plenty of experiences from the next layer, namely the exosystem. According to Bronfenbrenner's definition, this is the system that has an indirect effect on the child; like for example the parents' workplace, the family's social network or the community's attitude towards children. Regardless of the indirect mechanisms working in this system's environments, the children seem to be very conscious of these environments and what an influence they have got. For example, the children point out that poor children's parents are getting only small amounts of money from their work, as other children's parents earn better. Poor children's parents hence also have to spend much time at work in order to get what the family needs, which too influences the children through them for example not getting as much support from their parents as they would need. Northern European children have similar experiences, even though they also bring up that parents of poor children, as an opposite to the scenario above, may be more present in the home because of unemployment or illness, while rich children's parents may spend long days at work.

Within the perspective of the exosystem, the children I met in Tanzania also write about different projects that aim to help poor children in the community. The children find these very important, and many hope to be able to work in such a project in the future. The children say that projects have a significant task in for example teaching cooking skills. Hence, when the parents through the organizations learn to cook nutritious food for the children, the children benefit. One child also brings up the neighborhood's significance for the child's development. According to the children, poor children would benefit from a change of people's attitudes towards the poor. This they want to highlight as important all the way from the individual level to the community level.

The aim of this thesis has been to bring up children's experiences of poverty, so that we can get a clearer picture of what childhood poverty really is. It is about the children's own experiences and about them as experts based on these experiences. The knowledge gained through this expertise should be spread out, starting from the individual and interpersonal levels, and moving through the community level all the way up to the cultural level.

In my thesis I have brought the children's own expertise forward. The cultural perspective has been present in my work through the reflection I have continuously been doing cross-culturally between

my own Tanzanian material and the Northern European studies. Through this reflection I have come across significant similarities in the children's experiences of poverty, regardless of the great geographical and cultural distance. The similarities appear in poor children lacking the fulfilment of basic needs, socially feeling like outsiders and "others", facing trouble in family life and having to use different coping strategies. The biggest differences in turn concern the more absolute kind of deficiencies in the fulfillment of basic needs in Tanzania, compared to partly more relative deficiencies in Northern Europe. It has to be noted though, that experiences of for example hunger and lack of clothing is surprisingly common even among Northern European poor children. The biggest differences concerning social relationships are that in Northern Europe paid hobbies are a norm, whereas more free and non-scheduled leisure time is more common in the Tanzanian villages I studied. In the schools I visited, there were also no activities or field trips with a separate cost, as opposed to Northern Europe where such activities and trips are common. The relationship between parents and children is also different; while children and parents in Northern European families negotiate and cooperate more and more, the relationships within Tanzanian families are based on the children's obedience (see Fon 2018; Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen2010).

According to Bronfenbrenner, the cultural level, also called the macrosystem layer, influences a child through for example the society's laws and values. Also the general structure of the society has an influence on the child. In my material, the children bring up experiences about corruption, inequality and the power of the president. The children also give multifaceted explanations to poverty and offer plenty of solutions thereto. The children have a strong moral will to do right and make things better. It is visible in the children's experiences that they have assimilated to the cultural values about what it means to be a "good child".

The children I had the chance to meet in Tanzania have given me propositions of changes from the individual level all the way up to the cultural level. They wish that the poor would be helped "*like relatives*". This thought is good to keep in mind, on whichever level help is given. Based on both my literature review and my Tanzanian material, it is common that the poor are thought of as "others" – a group of their own that is avoided if possible. According to the children, it is important to notice poor children and let them participate.

Many children say that they ask the people close to them (the microsystem) for help if they notice that someone is not well. Especially parents are mentioned as helpers. A culture of communality and helping others lives strong in Tanzania, and private help is trusted broadly. The children stress that it is important to give from the little one has got. This starts from noticing the poor children and fulfilling their basic needs. According to the children, individuals also have an important role in

encouraging poor children not to lose hope. For this, getting to school is vital. The children say that in addition to individuals, also organizations and projects on the community level can support children so that they are able to start school. The children are happy about these projects and highlight the benefits of them.

The children say that they influence their own situation by working hard in school and influencing attitudes among their own peers (mesosystem). They teach their peers to treat others with respect and to use money sensibly, so that no one will feel like an outsider. The children say they like attending school, and they see education as a means to get a good future. They present themselves as hard-working students and they have got many future plans and dreams. In the realization of these plans and dreams, they are helped by their family, by their friends and by their community. Also the whole society has got a significant role here; a good childhood and a quality education should be ensured for every child.

Bronfenbrenner (1986) later added a fifth system to his model, calling it the chronosystem. The chronosystem is about time passing and the series of events that has got to do with it. Depending on the time, the children are under different influences. From the perspective of experiences that I have used in this thesis, it can also be said that in different times, children have experienced things differently. Acknowledging this, it is important to point out that these children have generation by generation become adults. Us. Hence, we have to listen to children – the future is in them. We adults should find possibilities to listen to and encourage them.

8 Closing words: Yes my friend, I have listened

By listening to children, many problems can be solved. This is important to remember as we as adults have got a tendency to categorize and simplify things, also in matters in which the children have got more knowledge than us. For example, we tend to generalize that we have rich and happy children here in Northern Europe, while the poor and sad children live in Africa. Another common option for us is that poor children living in Northern Europe are unhappy and socially excluded, as the African poor children do not even notice their suffering because “everyone is poor there”. Based on my thesis, both of these stereotypical assumptions can be proved wrong. I have found out that both Tanzanian and Northern-European children have got multifaceted experiences about poverty. The experiences appear quite similar, and they have got to do with basic needs, friendships, and family relations (see also Ridge 2002). The economic situation of the family creates boundaries, to which the children have to adapt through using different coping strategies. In my Tanzanian material, the children also bring up detailed explanations of why there is poverty, and ways of helping the poor.

Lastly, I want to highlight a way of helping the poor that the children found especially important; to encourage, support and take note of poor children, so that they do not lose hope. This is closely related to the initial objective of my thesis, which was to bring forth the voice of the children. I find that this objective has been met on a level exceeding my expectations; I have encouraged the children, and they have encouraged me. Their voice has been heard, and they and I have the chance to encourage others to take poor children into account. “*My friend Sofia let me tell you...*” that one girl began her story. In the making of this thesis, I have answered to her and other children; “Yes my friend, I am listening”. I have listened, processed, and reflected. I am happy that you as a reader have too. I also hope that you, like me, are left with many new thoughts to further process now after spending an ethnographic while with me in Mwanza.

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