SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NETWORKS WITHIN AND BETWEEN
GREENPEACE AND MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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Abstract

This research is a product of a personal involvement with two of the most influential non-government organisations, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, which spans over a five year period. It aims to contribute to the advancement of theoretical understanding and public discourse and exchange on social networks and social capital through the investigation of these two organisations, as case studies. Specifically, it engages in exploring, analysing and attempting to interpret how social networks are operating within Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace and how these two organisations have either liaised between them or to their external environment. In succession, and via adopting an ethnographic data collection method and wider research approach, this study makes insightful links between these non-governmental organisations and social capital, which is reflected upon both as element and a product of the processes and interactions of social networks.

Through the close involvement of the researcher in both of these organisations, the research makes interesting connections both to the theoretical underpinnings of social capital and to the practical applications, while being reflective of the contextually bounded nature of the approach due exactly to the proximity factor. The fluid and dynamic reality of social networks and capital is visited via the use of diverse examples at micro and macro level, following the “journey” of these organisations through time and space via a variety of research techniques such as personal interviews, observation and note-taking, participation and through the use of secondary external data.
The inherently partial nature of ethnographic" truths", which brings forth the dialectic relationship between the researcher and the subject, is used as an opportunity to generate rich data on how key internal (norms, principles, values, identity, culture and structure) and external factors (environmental and context shifts) influence the formation and communication of social capital within and across the boundaries of the two non-government organisations.
Chapter 1- Introduction

Every piece of research is a result of curiosity. About what we see, what we do, why and how others act, in an exciting attempt to explore, analyse, prove, disregard or explore something “interesting” being a theory, behaviour or a phenomenon. This is the story for this piece as well. In the attempt to shed light to the notion of social capital in two large international non-government organisations, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières this research explores the way that networks are mobilized, developed and are interacting both within these large entities, but also between themselves in relation to the outside world. Yet, apart from responding to curiosity or being “seduced” into exploring something interesting, the research questions are quite significant, if we contemplate the growing importance of both social capital theory and non-government organisations, or the third sector as it is called, in social life. Regardless of the abundance of literature in regards to social capital theory and networks, there has not been, to date, an account of how such theories touch upon two of the biggest representatives of the world of non-government organisations. It is true that one may find very thorough and detailed research on local non-government organisations or institutions and social capital or network but usually this research focuses on development or at the local level, looking into networks between non-government organisations and the local actors in the countries where they are operating. Nevertheless, very pertinent research questions still remain: how can we use social capital theory to look into the way Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières are interacting among them, with elements of the
outside world? How are they, as dynamic organisations or movements being transformed or influence by the networks and actors that comprise them? How are they communicating and positioning themselves in local and international level, as these networks evolve and as the outside environment is in a state of constant flux? These both relevant and important research questions we will strive to address through this presentation: Chapter II sets out the scene for social capital, social networks and the actors that comprise them, while in Chapter III we visit the literature relating to norms, trust and reciprocity, who can act as catalysts to the networks. Chapter IV introduces the notion of social capital through the lens of the social sciences, explaining the approach to the various elements intertwined with the research questions and elaborates on social movements and non-government organisations. In Chapter V the research methodology is introduced, followed by accounts relating to the ethnographic approach. Given the direct involvement in both of these organisations, the ethnographic research method was selected to guide through this process and provide useful insights, as ethnography is “an emergent multidisciplinary phenomenon, whose authority and rhetoric have spread to many field where “culture” is a newly problematic object of description and critique” (Clifford 1986, p. 3). The term stems from the Greek words “ethnos”, meaning people united by common culture, origin or political will and “graphein” which means writing, and describes a qualitative research method used frequently in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology and sociology in order to gather empirical data on human societies and cultures.
This method was deemed most appropriate and pertinent to explore the research questions, given the close relationship with the focal organisations and due to its potential and capacity to yield rich qualitative data. The data was collected via a variety of ethnographic methods: observation, participation, secondary sources, note-taking, interviewing. Thus, the notions of participatory action research and techniques are closely related to the data collection. Chapter VI lays out in detail the case studies of the two organisations. The next Chapter (VII) presents the key findings of the research and leads to the Discussion Chapter (VIII) where reflections, introspections and important circular links to the theory of social capital are put forward. Finally, the conclusions are presented in the Chapter IX making along with suggestions for further research.

In an nutshell, what will be presented is an account of the social networks within and between Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières that has no claims to absolute truth or proof of specific theory, but rather hopes to contribute to the ethnographic study related to non-government organisations and social capital, as seen, lived and reported by an “ethnographic involvement” in two of the most high profile, dynamic and wide-reaching organisations.

The research design as well as the presentation and interpretation of findings are depicted with simplicity and straightforwardness, avoiding grand claims or narratives, and acting rather as honest, engaging and thorough (re)presentations of a 5 year-long research engagement. And so it begins…
Chapter 2- Literature Review: Social Capital, Networks, Actors

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to introduce the rich and diverse theoretical perspectives in relation to social capital from structural to more “soft” approaches and cognitive underpinnings. By applying this wide focus, we will be able to explore the notions of social networks and actors, unconstrained from specific or specialised viewpoints. Having laid out a variety of theoretical elements and definitions of social capital, the focus is then narrowed down to the elements that form or forge social capital, to social networks and actors. Bringing in a variety of different angles, the different natures and characteristics of social networks are defined. Different network structures and formulations are visited, both formal and informal, while the way that the networks are developed and interact is explored. Moreover, the closeness or looseness of networks is examined in relation to different actors and to how these organize themselves within and between organisations.

2.2. Social Capital

The term social capital does not embody a new notion for sociologists but merely recaptures an insight present since the beginning of the discipline of sociology. The concept itself is ambiguous enough to have several different and frequently conflicting definitions for it. Scholars have even suggested that the term “social capital” altogether be discarded, for it impedes understanding due to the historical association of the word capital with economic discourse
and, thus, applying the term to civic engagement blurs analytic distinctions (Smith & Kulynych, 2002).

On the contrary, researchers such as Coleman (1990, p. 300) contend that “the concept’s value lies primarily in the fact that it identifies certain aspects of social structure by their function, just as the concept “chair” identifies certain physical objects by their function, disregarding differences in form, appearance and construction. The function identified by the concept social capital is “the value of those aspects of social structure to actors, as resources that can be used by the actors to realise their interests”.

Putnam on the other hand, cites Hanifan, Loury, Bourdieu and Coleman as an example of how “the term social capital turns out to have been independently invented at least six times over the twentieth century, each time to call attention to the ways in which our lives are made more productive by social ties” (Putnam, 2009, p.19). Under this perspective, the term may impede understanding due to its extraordinary breadth that makes it difficult to see aspects of the world of social activity.

Despite its growing popularity, social capital suffers from conceptual confusion about its level of analysis as well as its antecedent, content, process, and consequence (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 2001; Kostova & Roth, 2003; Lin, 2001; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Portes, 1998, 2000; Woolcock, 1998). Furthermore, although social capital is implicitly considered as informal in nature (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Kostova & Roth, 2003; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998), the unique attributes of informal elements have not been explicitly analyzed in depth.
There are four major debates in the research of social capital according to Li (2007). First, there is little consensus even on the proper definition of social capital (Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998), especially organization-level social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Kostova & Roth, 2003; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). For some researchers, social capital is privileged access to rare resources (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Portes, 1998). For others, it is indeed this privileged access enhanced by those accessible resources (Bourdieu, 1985; Lin, 2001). Second, little consensus exists on the proper level of analysis (Lin, 2001; Portes, 2000; Woolcock, 1998).

For some researchers, social capital analysis takes place at the level of social network as in either large communities (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993) or small groups (Coleman, 1990; Bourdieu, 1985; Burt, 2001; Portes, 1998), while others analyze it at both dyadic level and ego-centric network (with oneself as the ego at the centre of the network) level (Bian, 1997; Lin, 2001). Third, there is little agreement on the proper structure of the social networks comprising social capital (Burt, 2001). Some regard strong ties in closely-knit local groups as the best determinants and forming elements for social capital (Bian, 1997; Coleman, 1990), while others view open diverse global networks as the best (Burt, 2001; Granovetter, 1983). Finally, there seem to be major differences between researchers on the proper antecedents and consequences of social capital (Kostova & Roth, 2003; Woolcock, 1998). Social ties and trust are considered as the most critical antecedents (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Putnam, 1993) for some, while others advocate in favour of network position and status as the most critical ones (Burt, 2001; Lin, 2001).
Besides these four major debates, there are two additional minor ones. First, some researchers focus on the positive effect of social capital, be it social mobility (Lin, 2001) and social cooperation (Kostova & Roth, 2003; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) as the critical consequence, while others engage in analysis of the negative effects, such as social immobility (Bourdieu, 1985) and other negative externalities (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). The second debate is on whether social capital is primarily instrumental (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 2001; Portes, 1998) or both instrumental and sentimental (Bian, 1997; Bourdieu, 1985; Lin, 2001). Yet all the debates aforementioned (major and minor ones) converge on the uniqueness of informal elements in contrast to formal ones.

All these different perspectives perpetuate around what is social capital and how it manifests. Thus, one may find approaches focusing on the structural nature of social capital, in the form of nodes and social networks that facilitate mutually beneficial collective action facilitated by procedures, rules or precedents. Additionally, other theories put forth the cognitive aspects of social capital, in the form of norms, values, beliefs that again serve as “lubricants” or initiators of common action. On the opposite side, other social scientists defend the “bonding and bridging” substances of the term, where the former refers to the horizontal ties between equals within a specific community, while the latter to the vertical ties across different communities.

The term ‘social capital’ is used broadly enough nowadays so that it could be considered one of the new “hypes” in management or social science. Social capital extends from business and economics, to organisational
behaviour, political science, public health and, of course, social sciences. This has resulted in a great deal of research on the subject, but also in confusion as to what is meant in specific uses of the term (Knorringa and van Staveren 2006). As a consequence, social capital seems to denote almost anything related to ties between people: stock of ties, features of such ties, conditions for their functioning and their outcomes. Its “umbrella” covers both formal and informal groups, as well as the connections between them, which are termed social networks. Its features include structure, content, strength of ties and trust, shared norms or values underlying these norms.

Evidently, attempts to delineate social capital specifically have been very controversial (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 2001; Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998 for reviews), so it remains this “umbrella concept that may mean different things to different people” (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 18).

The converging consensuses lie in two key dimensions of social capital-informal and interpersonal, while the diverging debates lie in the other three key dimensions—access or resource, dyadic or network, and instrumental or sentimental. First, all scholars view social capital as informal (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Kostova & Roth, 2003; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). For instance, Portes (1998, p. 4) points out that “transactions involving social capital tend to be characterized by unspecified obligations, uncertain time horizons, and the possible violation of reciprocity expectations,” thus highly informal in nature.
Adding to all this conceptual confusion is the debate on whether social
capital yields positive or negative results for the people, groups, organisations
or societies in which it appears and operates. In the case of the positive
impact of social capital, it is beneficial insofar that it facilitates the
achievement of goals (Gabbay and Leenders, 1999) by connecting people in
a fruitful and efficient manner. The goals that may be furthered by social
capital can be economic goals, access to markets, reputation, innovation or
non-economic (Knorringa and van Staveren, 2006), such as safety,
uncertainty reduction, social acceptance and legitimization, power and
access, mobilisation of resources. Social capital is also portrayed as
contributing to the diffusion of knowledge, reducing time between transactions
and generally “producing” far more than the sum of its component parts.

Yet, and regardless of the intended effect of contributing to goals,
social capital may have unintended effects that frustrate goal achievement, as
it may yield relationships that are so close as to cause rigidities that would
actually obstruct goals. In this case, social capital may also have a “dark side”
(Gargiulo and Benassi, 1999), may have adverse effects (van Staveren,
2003), and may even become a ‘social liability’ (Gabbay and Leenders,
2001). Taking one extreme example, the mafia employs social capital
(Pagden, 1988) to its advantage and to the disaster of others. Moreover,
research by Evans (1989) and Mauro (1995) has highlighted the negative
impact of social capital embedded in powerful, tightly knit social groups that
exhibited corruption and cronyism. In addition to this, Scarbrough, Edelman,
Bresnan, Newell and Swan (2002) also point to the “dark side” of social
capital, where is not always a case of “the more the better”. The authors aforementioned note that some organisations may be fixated to accumulating social capital to the extent where they become “locked” in specific ways of thinking, referred to as “knowledge mono-culture”. Other negative aspects include social closure, where networks exclude “outsiders” and resistance to change, where social capital results in a set of norms and rules that are difficult to change.

Furthermore, researchers like Nahapiet & Ghoshal have been criticised on having a tendency in their research to oversimplify and exaggerate the merits offered or mobilised by social capital within the organisation, in neglect of important negative aspects that may arise. More specifically, social capital may also mobilise bias within the organisation, in an attempt on behalf of groups or teams of people within it, to protect their own interests (Bachrach & Baratz, 1969).

To make the issue even more ambiguous, social capital is highly unpredictable, as it may provide external ties for actors in the form of “networking relationships”, but it could also embed them into internal ties (Carter & Mueller, 2001).

Gaining increasing acceptance is the idea that social capital is responsible for mobilising resources. Bourdieu (1983/1986, p. 248) links these resources to “the possession of a durable network of institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or, in other words, membership in a group”. Social capital is, hence, dependent on the number of connections and the amount of “capital” that each of these connections bears.
Researchers like Narayan & Cassidy offer their insight on the social capital debate by attempting to break it down to its different dimensions. They note: “theories such as social capital comprise constructs that are inherently abstract and require subjective interpretation in their operational measures. Such operational measures are invariably indirect surrogates of their associated construct; thus, a useful intermediate step in defining social capital would be to unbundle the theory into its dimensions” (2002, p.62). On this issue, scholars and social scientists suggest a threefold nature of social capital comprising of, firstly, a structural dimension (in the form of ties that are forged and developed). This dimension concerns the properties of the social system and of the network as a whole. It is an impersonal configuration of linkages between people or units and forms the overall pattern of connections between actors-who you reach and how you reach them (Burt, 1992). Among the most important facets of this dimension is the presence or absence of network ties (Waserman & Fast, 1994), network configuration (Krackhardt, 1989) or morphology (density, connectivity and hierarchy) and appropriate organisation.

The second dimension of social capital is no other than the relational dimension (i.e. relationships based on trust, friendship, authority, comradeship, etc.). This dimension is broken down in: personal relationships like respect, friendship, etc. that offer sociability, approval, prestige and actor bonds (Snebota, 1995) like trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations, identity and identification. Finally, Narayan and Cassidy recognise a cognitive dimension, based on shared representation
and interpretation inside and outside the organisation (Annex, “1. Dimensions of social capital”, p. 209). These shared representations, as aforementioned, offer interpretations and systems of meaning among parties (Cicourel, 1973). They may also take the form of shared language and codes (Arrow, 1974; Cicourel, 1973, Monteverde, 1995) or shared narratives (Orr, 1990).

Putnam (2000, p.22) also distinguishes between what he calls “bonding and bridging social capital”, where the former is considered as “inward looking” and “tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous group”, while the latter is “outward looking and encompasses people across diverse social cleavages”, while these two different types of social capital are not conceived as mutually exclusive. Healy & Hampshire (2002) add another type of social capital to the category, “linking capital” which refers to “alliances with sympathetic individuals or groups in positions of power, particularly power over resources needed for social and economic development” (p.3). These linkages “enable individuals and communities to speak directly to those with formal decision-making power rather than have their views filtered by experts” (Ibid). Nevertheless, aspects of Putnam’s work have also encountered some light criticism, as they seem to reduce social capital to a property of individuals, rather than groups, due to the use of survey data in his research.

Researchers from different strands of social science contribute with interesting and diverse definitions of social capital. Baker (1990) views it as resource that acts or derives from social structures while Beliveau et al. (1996), as personal networks and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) as the sum of actual and potential resources. Boxman (1991) simplifies the notion as the
number of people that provide support and the resources they mobilize when Burt (1997) narrows it down to friends and contact from whom one could receive benefits or exploit opportunities. Brehn and Rahn (1997) introduce the idea of the “web” of cooperative relationships when Knoke (1999) refers to social capital as a process of mobilizing networks reinforcing Coleman’s (1990) concept of the different members that comprise a social structure that facilitate actions. Fukuyama (1997) on the other hand highlights different, “softer” elements such as shared informal values and norms, an idea taken one step further by Inglehart (1997) who speaks of the existence of a culture of trust, drawing upon Putnam’s contribution on networks, norms and trust, mobilized by mutual benefit. Two researchers that clearly focus on the positive aspects of social networks are Loury (1992), who refers to social relationships that promote skills and traits, and Woolcock (1998) who focuses on trust, information and reciprocity. An extensive and flexible description of social capital comes from Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) who bring forth the “marriage” of the sum of actual and potential resources that are embedded within, available through and derived from the various networks of relationships, thus offering a more holistic approach of both the network itself and its assets.

Social capital should be conceptualised as a dynamic process that involves people living in places (and working in organisations). As such it is a process with a past, present and future and its subjective, experiential dimension should also be considered (Popay, 2000).
Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) contend that social capital is necessary for the development and dissemination of knowledge within organisations. Because high-involvement relationships between employees (i.e. social capital) are valuable, not easily formed and difficult to imitate, such relationships may give organisations a sustainable edge over their competitors. Leanna and VanBuren (1999) state that social capital is created and sustained when organisations promote stability in employment, use compensation practices that reward teams and groups rather than individuals, select and reward people who value working collectively, and develop work descriptions to the point that competent employees are interchangeable. Putman (1993) argues that individuals who are engaged in affairs of their communities and have a sense of obligation to one another facilitate the creation of high-levels of social capital. Moreover, it is the co-operation, involvement and selflessness displayed by these people that contribute to the development of trust, affect and shared understanding among them, all important aspects of social capital (Putman, 1993).

Regardless of the various misconceptions or different stances as regards to social capital’s usefulness and appropriateness as a term, the notion of social capital provides a useful heuristic for capturing the ways in which social resources are created and made available to individuals and groups, and when properly operationalised, social capital becomes more than a heuristic. Social network analysis provides a coherent framework that is “able of capturing both prescribed and emergent processes” (Tichy et al. 1979, p.507), both causes and consequences. Via social and human network
analysis, managers have “the means of assessing the effects of decision on the social fabric of the organisation” (Cross 2002 p. 41), as research has shown that “while social relationships cannot be mandated by management, they are strongly affected by elements under management control” (Ibid.).

The preceding analysis highlights how relative the concept of social capital is: relative to the relationships studied. In relationships between organisations, social capital mostly lies in intermediary organisations. In relationships between people within an organization it mostly lies in other individuals, who perform (voluntary, informal) intermediary services within the organization. Between nations it can lie in informal supranational organisations, such as a variety of non-governmental agencies. Moreover, social capital is dependent on the level of analysis (micro, meso or macro) and also on the specific elements or determinants of it, which the respective researcher chooses to give priority or greater weight to. Finally, social capital is relative to the exact viewpoint of the observer or researcher: depending on her/ his position, it can be positive or negative, a catalyst for good or bad.

What also needs to be addressed at this point is that there are inherent limitations to social capital theory. As Schaft & Browner (2003, p. 339) very insightfully point out: “If detailed attention needs to be paid to local context in order to understand the constitution of the particular social capital to be found in that time and space, then wouldn’t the analysis benefit from simply dropping the use of the concept altogether and instead focusing upon conditions that have shaped and reproduced the formal and informal relationships that enable actors’ differential access to a variety of resources?”
This would imply dropping the term social capital and focusing on the character, constitution and origin of social networks. Successful communities are those that have rich stocks of social capital, in the form of developed norms of trust and reciprocity and have forged communities based in bridging and bonding networks.”

In addition to this, as Portes (1998) points out: “social capital has evolved into something of a cure-all for all maladies affecting society at home and abroad” (p. 2). Within all this entire theoretical “puzzle”, lie certain truths: for one, social capital cannot or should not be treated as panacea. The other truth is that, whatever the origins or manifestations, social capital refers to conditions or circumstances of “one plus one equals three”, meaning that the total actual sum is greater than the partial sum of its components. Another truth is that, whichever theory we would like to embrace, we will have to admit that social capital refers to some form of tight or loose notion of social structure, actual, conceptual or virtual, that encompasses relationships or nodes between individuals that form networks (closely knit or not) of individuals, groups or even societies. These different actors are brought together with ties of some kind of interdependency: friendship, mutual interest, social relationship, attitudes or as a result of a reaction to a certain action or circumstance. The value of these networks lie in the fact that they bring together different people through a common quality that fosters “commonness”. Thus they become “similar” people with norms, social relations and reciprocity. (Dekker and Uslaner 2001; Uslaner, 2001).
The difficulty in reaching a common and commonly agreed upon definition of the concept lies in the fact that the sources of social capital is both a source and a consequence; hence a flexible approach is called for in order to capture its richness and explore its value. Even more important than “what social capital is”, may very well be “what it does”, i.e. how it manifests and what it produces: benefits, flow of information, influence, solidarity, and so forth. This is actually the humble contribution that our research will strive to offer: how social capital is manifested, what triggers it, how it is expressed and nurtured and what it produces. For the purposes of this research, we will choose a “converging” pathway between the different and contesting theories: most researchers seem to agree that social capital refers to an “investment” (that may take the form of time, resources, energy or effort, engagement, emotions, etc.) in personal relationships or social structure that facilitates the achievement of either individual or collective objectives. Based on this conceptual framework, we will visit two focal non-government organisations, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace and explore how social capital is formed and “lives” inside and around them.

Yet, in order to proceed with the study, it is paramount that we first contemplate on the notion of social networks and the concepts and constructs affiliated with it: actors, values, norms, trust and reciprocity.

2.3 Social networks

While they may be considerable disagreement on the definition of social capital, it is almost universally agreed that one of the most important
components and forming elements of social capital on the subject is the social network (although bearing various different levels of importance). A network is a set of interconnected nodes that are structurally linked and communicate in certain ways. The types of nodes characterize the network, thus distinguishing one from another. In social networks, nodes are human beings or groups. All social systems are networks because they communicatively link individuals. In society we have larger connections, such of individuals, organisations, networks or social groups.

A social network consists of lines (relations) and nodes (actors, groups, things, organisations, etc.) that can be defined as the pattern of linking a defined set of persons or social actors (Gubbins & Garavan, 2005). It is a way to describe the value that can accrue through the network (Storberg-Walker & Gubbins, 2007).

Because of their basic nature, the structure of networks cannot be studied using the same analytical tools as formal hierarchies. Research on the issue of networks and network mapping by Conway (1997) reveals that interactions and information exchange between individuals may leads to convergence of norms, values, beliefs and behaviour, which in turn may lead to the formation of interconnected groups of individuals who are quite densely connected that may also be characterised as “cliques”, clusters or interlocking networks. He also recognises the value of informal networks as channels and ways to promote communication, integration and novelty, either within the specific organization or even between different organisations. In this sense,
the networks are viewed as structures that supplement, complement and add value to the formal organisation.

It is interesting to determine how exactly these networks develop and how they interact, forming something far greater than the sum of their component parts. There exists a nesting of a) actors within organisations and b) organisations within actors. An organisation as a construct consists of the overlap and sharing of individual and collective representations. The key notions here are representation and interpretation. An organisation is a representation in the eyes of intelligent members that are called actors. Examples of representations are words, pictures, semantic nets, propositions or temporal strings. A representational system learns by the creation and manipulation of symbolic transformation (some kind of “chunking mechanisms” that process and interpret stimuli). Each network within the organisation may consist of strong inter-unit and interpersonal ties (network closure) or may have a more loosely-knit nature (structural holes). In the case of the former, these cohesive ties play a dominant role in fostering a normative environment that facilitates co-operation. As for the latter, cohesive ties are viewed as a source of rigidity that hinders the coordination of complex organisational tasks. Managers within cohesive communication networks are less likely to adopt these networks to the change of coordination requirements prompted by their assignments, which jeopardised their role as facilitators of horizontal cooperation within a newly created business unit structure.

On the other hand, as Stacey contends: “the informal organisation is essentially destabilising. It exists, sometimes in place of the formal
organisation and sometimes in competition with it" (1996, p. 341). Nevertheless, whichever theory one embraces, there is a trade-off between the safety of cooperation within cohesive networks and the flexibility provided by networks rich in structural “holes”. Another characteristic of human networks is also density, concerning the overall level of interaction, which is a function of the total number of ties and centralisation (i.e. the extent to which interactions are concentrated in a small number of individuals rather than distributed equally among members). When the variance in the number of ties is low, no group member has substantially more ties than another, so no group member is more central than another.

Cohen and Prusak (2001, p.111) agree that networks “facilitate information gathering and sharing and “invite conversational serendipity that can create unexpected value”. Organisations leverage knowledge through networks of people who collaborate-not through networks of technology that interconnect. Peripheral- and often marginal-channels, people and structures question hierarchies and transgress organisational or defensive barriers and boundaries. Being peripheral is what makes them effective. When this works, the combination of people and technology produces networks of people who transform themselves into “worknets” or sub-organisations or informal groups whose collaborative knowledge accomplishes a specific task. Having achieved that, the challenge that remains is to avoid isolation and alienation between these groups or clusters and the rest of the organisation. People networks leverage knowledge through organisational “pull” rather than centralised information “push”. The “pull-not push” principle implies that the
demand for knowledge needs to be purpose driven, framed and articulated specifically.

The investigation of the reciprocal relationships and the mapping the information flow stemming from informal networks is of immense interest, since the “off the record” nature of personal encounters escape both the guarantees and responsibilities of formal arrangements, so they are likely to reflect dynamics not envisioned by the formal structure” (Reed, 2001, p. 798). In the context of non-government organisations, several pertinent questions arise: How can people know what the other person within the organisation knows (collective awareness) and mobilise these resources? How can people find timely access to useful information and the willingness to share it? When do these factors become disadvantages? How about rich networks- when does clustering and strong ties facilitate knowledge exchange and when do they hinder such efforts? For instance, Healy & Hampshire (2002) draw attention to the fact the networks may be used for exclusionary purposes by denying access or promoting vilification of particular groups who are perceived of as bearing views that are “different from mainstream”. Left completely to its own devices, a network may exacerbate rather than mediate the free flow of knowledge or other resources and, hence, the creation of social capital within the (non-profit) organisation. As Wolek and Griffith (1974, p. 411) note: “informal networks can sometimes be interpreted as signs of weakness and need for better formal systems”.

An often-overlooked issue here is that of safety: the flow of information within the boundaries of the organisation may result in information leakage.
But even when we are dealing with “closely knit” networks or, in other words, network closure, this hazard still remains, perhaps to a lesser extent, whilst, on the other hand, different problems may emerge. The strong norms of mutual identification that may exert a powerful influence can, at the same time, limit its openness to information and to alternative ways of doing things, producing “collective blindness” (Janis, 1982; Perrow, 1984; Turner, 1976). Chrys Argyris (1974) demonstrates that these close networks may carry their own “theories in use” that systematically preclude learning about ways to escape their counterproductive effects, and ultimate create organisational systems that reinforce anti-learning interpersonal dynamics. Analogous to competency traps, these are built-in impediments to learning (Argyris & Schon 1974; Argyris 1982).

At the same time, Granoveter, Lui & Duff (1973) elaborate upon the “strength-of-weak ties”, where “the “strength” is informational, while the “weakness” refers to the low overlap or proximity of the personal networks of the members of the different cliques”. Dasgupta (2000) positions himself by noticing that “the most socially beneficial networks are those that are non-exclusive, merit based and exhibiting “weak” rather than “strong” ties” (p. 382). Nevertheless, Granovetter’s stance has been refined by Burt (1992), who has drawn the implication that actors who bridge between subgroups, have access to unique resources that makes them powerful brokers in the system, while Bian (1997) emphasised the importance of ties that extend beyond the immediate social circle, regardless of the frequency of contact. Can this apply to all non-government organisational contexts and tasks? What
about the flexibility offered via structural holes? Can this be underestimated and under which conditions does this flexibility offer enhance communication and knowledge exchange? Both approaches view reciprocity as the mechanism that turns relationships into the assets that define social capital and a link with non-government organisations can be established between “gatekeepers, boundary-spanners or link-pins” (Conway, 1997) that operate within the network. These issues will be more accurately explored if we investigate specific tasks or campaigns that mobilise actors within closed or loosely-knit networks that comprise these organisations.

In the related notion of social capital and human networks, however, there are problems with treating networks as “overall systems” of clusters, bridges, structural holes, etc. The attempt to “make the network real” (i.e. present it as something solid and coherent) is mistaken, given that the network itself is invisible to many of the actors in it. Hence, knowledge of actors within the network and about the network influences their behaviour. At the same time, lack of knowledge of the network also influences actors’ behaviour, yet in an entirely different way. Networks are dynamic and fragmented; thus there is a danger to consider them as “monolithic”, when adopting a holistic view of the network in question. Conversely, the networks could be viewed in terms of competing clusters and actors, showing a high degree of fragmentation. For this reason, it might be preferable to adjust the starting point by focusing on a particular event or project-or a series of projects sharing common characteristics, as stated before. In this issue, the focal point will be the actors and networks mobilised for a particular task or
project, for instance, and the research will follow the stream of ties, norms (such as reciprocity) and the flow of relationships to determine where the particular network ends and how it is intertwined with others or influences the other networks or actors. Hence, the research may concentrate on two focal non-government organisations and the network between and around them, analysed in conjunction with specific events that directly or indirectly influence it.

These different perspectives ergo the need for a more holistic picture of the issue, in which networks are treated both as enablers and as constrainers in organisational life. Apart from the structural network attributes such as network size, sparseness and tie strength, we will need to take into account organisation context, costs of networks, difficulties in getting others to help and different task requirements.

A key observation that has to be addressed here is that the presence (or absence) of human networks within the organisation is not, per se, evidence of social capital (or lack of it). This is not hard to conceive, for the context-dependent nature of social capital suggests that neither attributes (norms, trust) nor infrastructures (networks, organisation), per se, can be understood as social capital in isolation from other issues, like access, for instance. The paradigm of access reveals that the “use value” of social capital is affected, distributed and managed by the specific social contexts in which it is embedded; access can be broken down to social relationships that may be organised at the level of dyads, informal networks (Burt, 1997; Heying, 1997), voluntary associations (Eastis, 1998), religious institutions (Wood, 1997),
communities (Bebbington, 1997; Schulman, 1998), cities (Potney & Berry, 1997), or national (Minkoff, 1997) and international movements (Smith, 1998).

In the case of non-government organisations, social structures must be appropriable by individuals and groups to really be social capital; their use value will be multiplied to the extent that they enable multiple linkages across communities and beyond them (Bebbington, 1997; Flora, Sharp, Flora & Newlon, 1997). This happens because social capital is relational; hence, it exists only when it is shared. In addition to this, Grootaert & Narayan (2000) confirm the importance of heterogeneity within a network, which is visualised as a facilitator for social capital formation. This view seems to have also gained acceptance by Rogers & Kincard (1981) who contend that “the information exchange potential of dyadic communication is related to the degree heterophily between the communicators” (p.13). An explanation for this may be that the distance from the cluster could positively influence the formation of fresh ideas and creativity. Rogers (1981) goes further to suggest that “a network’s lack of openness may simply lead to the pooling of ignorance among individual members” (Ibid.).

Networks undoubtedly facilitate mechanisms like the mobilisation and allocation of resources across an organizational field, the negotiation of an agreed goal, the production and circulation of information, all activities which are essential to any type of coalition, broadly defined; at the same time, however, they also may-or may not-facilitate the circulation of meaning and mutual recognition (Diani, 2003a, p.10). The concept of social networks promises dynamic concepts of social movements (Mische, 2003; Mc Adam,
Power is an inscribed capacity of either individuals or organisations-inscribed “in the sense that it is possessed by virtue of the social relationships which constitute you or an institution” (Allen, 1997, p. 60) or an organization. It is however “possible to inscribe causal power to networks per se when network relationships generate an emergent effect so that the sum of these relationships is much greater than that of individual actors” (Yeung, 1994, 2005). “The configurations of these emergent network relationships provide another central dynamic to drive networks” (Yeung, 2005, p. 317).

2.4. Actors

A social network is comprised of actors. These are the individuals, groups and collectivities within a network and also all the other tools or available material and technology that is available for the networks. In cases, the networks themselves can also be viewed as actors, when assuming collective behaviours and interacting with other networks. Yet, actors are not behaving in oblivion of, or regardless of, their surroundings. When acting, humans are related, connected and bound to various factors that influence how they go about their acts. The act carried out and all of the influencing factors should be considered altogether. Actors and networks are then linked together with all of their influencing factors (which again are in some way linked or interconnected).

Actors within networks reproduce and modify their network ties. The role of peripheral actors is indeed important as they seek alternative sources of resources (Cook, 1977), exert influence via strategic uses of the network,
by using brokers to bring together parties and mobilising the centrally located actors to gain support. At the same time, central actors enjoy timely and easy access to information as well as a climate of trust and trustworthiness. Stevenson & Greenberg (2000), postulate that peripheral actors may choose to remain in such a position in order to “avoid mobilising the opposition (centrally located actors) and have minimal obligations to others” than otherwise positioned, and add that “compared to the peripheral actor, the centrally located, who have honour and a number of obligations, may be much more constrained in action than the peripheral actor” (p. 656). In other words, the power of centrality may be dwarfed under the big weight of obligations. On the other hand, central actors, undoubtedly, enjoy access to more resources and information. This “dance” of power, access, obligations and ties seems to find central actors reacting to the periphery, who often initiate actions in the network. What could be expected is that “people and organisations will alter their strategies based on the organisational resources they have, like network position, the opportunity to take action and the existence of opposition” (Klandermans, 1984, p. 148).

Nevertheless, what should not be overlooked is that the position of the actor within the network reveals the potential for action and not the specific action that may actually take place. Each individual decision is a kind of ongoing, filtering process whereby actors base their decisions upon whether the resources exchanged are not perceived as confidential (because of the reciprocal nature of the relationship whereby most of the times a piece of information is exchanged rather than “dumped” on the seeker), depending on
acquaintance, trust and/or competition and the potential for action (that may again be a factor of position within the network). In general terms, equitable exchanges are preferable and richer than profitable ones because the resource needs are openly and accurately taken into account from the start, while it is always more useful to “teach” rather than dump information on the seeker.

It would be naïve to ignore social context when considering strategies that actors use within networks and the concept of organisation should be viewed in terms of the ability to raise key resources and knowledge (Kogurt & Zander. 1992, 1993; Spender, 1996).

Moreover, because the trade-off between safety and flexibility is inherent to the dynamics of social networks, actors cannot maximise these two parameters simultaneously. As Uzzi (1997) suggests, actors may have to define an optimal balance between safety and adaptability. Like the tightrope walker who maintains his equilibrium by constant movements of his balancing pole, managers may have to learn how to continuously balance the trade-off between safe (i.e. cohesive) and flexible (rich in structural holes) networks (Ibid.).

2.5 Conclusion

This Chapter provided a comprehensive look into the way that social networks, either in the form of lines (relations), nodes (groups, actors, organisations) or other elements (values, beliefs) can be defined in order to explore how they are mobilised and in which ways they can potentially form
an “added value” that can be termed as social capital. It is evident that, regardless of the theoretical approach, the micro or macro focus or the weight that different researchers may assign to specific elements, the mobility and mobilization of actors and networks generates relations, patterns and values that are far greater than the sum of their component parts. The social capital theory provides a wide array of definitions and backgrounds to incorporate all these different elements and extrapolate them into extended social system dimensions.
Chapter 3- Literature Review: Norms, Trust and Reciprocity

3.1 Introduction

Widespread throughout the social capital theory, and especially in relation to social actors and social networks, the existence of dominant or convergent norms and values are introduced both as sources, as well as outcomes of social capital. Norms, organisational culture attributes, patterns and values are considered paramount to building, developing and nurturing social relations that form social capital. When these are converging, relations and relationships between actors are better facilitated, encouraged and developed, leading to more interactions over time and higher mobilisation of resources, which are elements of social capital. The role of trust and reciprocity in this process is deemed critically important. Trust builds relationships and exchanges with minimised perceived risk, while exchanges over time produce reciprocating behaviour, stimulating future potential transactions. In other words, norms, trust and reciprocity may serve as catalysts in the mobilisation of actors and social networks, and hence in forging social capital.

Additionally, the existence of social networks or social capital between actors, groups or organisations is linked to the formation of convergent values, norms and cultures. In many cases, it is through these social networks that values, behavioural patterns and cultural attributes are infused to the members of the networks and the various actors closely or remotely connected with them. In this sense, values, norms and reciprocity can be
seen as “products” of social capital, additionally to being facilitating factors for its creation.

3.2 Norms

Narayan and Cassidy (2001) argue that the wide acceptability of the term “social capital” is due to the fact that it provides a fruitful perspective for understanding and predicting the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of organisations and societies. Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) understand norms and (organisational) culture as a complete way of life, rather than symbols, behavioural patterns and values. For example, Schneider’s (2009) research suggests that non-government organisations most often serve populations that share some cultural attributes. Organisations as well as their members carry cultures, which can evolve and change over time and conditions that facilitate the formation of social capital across different groups (which is referred to as bridging social capital) also bring about change both in organisational and in individual members’ culture.

The role of norms within the organisation is to inform members of what is considered right or wrong. Bourdieu (1980) depicts the norms of mutual acquaintance and recognition within a group that mobilise its resources, actual and virtual, and identify it as a “durable network”. Furthermore, shared norms have been linked to more “effective interpersonal cooperation” (Starbuck, 1983, p.p. 91-102) and as a way of “making members interpret and understand co-workers’ behavioural intentions” (Donney; Cannon; Mullen, 1998, p.p.601-620). Waddock (2001, p. 181) informs: “people derive meaning,
at least in a work situation, from a shared sense of working for a better world” (2001, p.18). She goes on to suggest: “this common understanding is the essence of constructive visions that aspire people to believe they are contributing to something worthwhile. Although people can derive meaning from individual or personal projects, shared vision is fundamentally a collective outcome” (Ibid.). The existence of these norms is of immense importance, for they position members within the hologram that constitutes the organisation. For example, Bourdieu (1986), Hechter (1983) and Merton (1957) elaborate on the norm of solidarity that causes actors to remain committed to the group in order to reap the benefits of membership; on the opposite case, the will face sanctions or may even be ostracized (Coleman, 1990; Merton, 1957). Commenting on the importance of community involvement in education, Hanifan (1916, p. 130) used the term social capital to refer to “goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy, and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families”. Portes (1998, 56), seems to be in the same wavelength when referring to actors’ strive to “secure benefits by virtue of memberships in social networks or other structures; this socialisation process leads to internalisation of a particular set of values and norms that can then be taken advantage of by others”.

The role of mentors is central both in the teaching of dominant norms and in conveying information within the organisation, something that Morisson(1993, p.p. 557-589) calls “normative information”. Moreover, mentoring “succeeds in efficiently transmitting the enterprise culture, as
measured by the acquisition of language specific to the enterprise and the adoption of company values and traditions” (Ibid, p.9).

Finally, norms can be influenced by external factors, due to the nature of non-government organisations to achieve goals that are “beneficial to the wider public”: social pressures acting on a non-profit organisation “originating on an external source are directed toward harder or easier levels of performance, cause members to choose higher or lower aspiration levels, respectively, than they select in absence of these pressures” (Zander, 1971, p. 184-185).

3.3 Trust

According to Bowles & Gintis (2002, p. 419), social capital refers to “trust, concern for one’s associates, a willingness to live by the norms of one’s community and to punish those who do not”. Hence, the presence of trust is inextricably intertwined with the creation of social capital. On the other hand, social capital is conceived of by some researchers as an individual attribute that constitutes a fully portable resource, the value of which does not fluctuate as the individual moves in and out of numerous social contexts (Foley & Edwards, 1998). However, such a stance is oversimplifying the issue and compromises the nature of trust which is forged within the organisation and between the organisation and its environment, if we take for example Newton’s (1999, p.54) stance that “patterns of social and political trust vary from one social group to another...in a way which makes it difficult to generalise about trust as a general concept”. In fact, it is context that makes it
possible (or not) for people to rely on others’ adherence to them that determines the significance of norms as social capital (Ibid). At the same time, Jackman and Miller (1998) argue that trust (inside the organisation) is not the source of behaviour, but merely a product of the relationships and experiences amongst members, so that it may fruitfully be considered as somewhat endogenous to the structure of the situation.

Two concepts are primarily intertwined with trust: that of cooperation and risk. Literature mostly from Gabetta (1998) supports that trust acts as a predisposed internal mechanism whereby we assume that the probability of a beneficial or at least not detrimental action is high enough for us to engage in cooperation with a specific person or organisation. Yet, this assumption does not come without risk; as Judge (1995, p. 153) correctly notes “trust is a behavioural reliance on another person under a condition of risk”. Previous experiences here act as catalysts that increase or decrease the amount of perceived risk, thus decreasing or increasing probabilities of collaboration. In the case of collectivities, or groups of individuals or organisations, a person can develop trusting relationships with a variety of different actors all bearing different attributes, experiences, etc. (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). Trust is viewed by theorists as a source, form or product of social capital. Leana & Van Buren (1999) and Putnam (1993) envisage trust as a source of social capital, while Coleman (1998) and Paldam (2000) as a form of social capital; Lin (1999) considers trust to be a collective asset of social capital, while Fukuyama (1997) and Gulati have gone as far as equating trust with social
capital. On the opposite side, Adler & Kwon (2002) are setting clear conceptual distinctions between the two notions.

Trust is important for the transfer and flow of information (Gubbins and MacCurtain, 2008) as well as for knowledge sharing and facilitates collective learning. Regardless of whether is equivalent to social capital, it is undeniable that it plays an important role in developing and nurturing it. Trust is inherent in the effective sharing of knowledge and is negatively related to firm dissolution, according to Pennings et al (1998). Yet it is not a universal lubricant that oils the wheels of cooperation within the organisation, in whichever case it is applied. Cooperation, sharing of resources or the formation of ties that constitute the base for social capital, is achieved through a variety of mechanisms like planning, formulating expectations of behaviour and carrying out activities based upon these anticipations. The social context including how such norms or attitudes are distributed in the organisation and how and to whom they are available makes all the difference in the world. This becomes evident when looking at the different roles designated to relationships built on trust between economic, sociological and social capital approaches. In the case of the former, trust is conceived as an efficient mechanism to economise on transaction costs and participation in voluntary organisations is a response to market failures caused by non-distribution constraints. Under the sociological perspective, trust is a socially constructed reliability and voluntary associations make use of representations of pre-existing trust, which is institutionalised via various routines. Finally, under the social capital point of view, trust becomes a civil virtue; it constitutes social
capital of its own. The role of voluntary organisations here is central as incubators of values and norms, which are materialised as styles of organising.

In general, a greater trustworthiness of non-profit organisations is predicated over profit-seeking ones. In other words, the fact that the founders of non-government organisations are prohibited from receiving profits as income, serves as a particularly effective signal to the potential “consumers” of the non-government organisation’s services (financial supporters) about the motives and behaviours of the organisation- it offers a kind of reassurance on the incentives and the quality of these services. Following this viewpoint, non-profit organisations should be more “immune” against moral hazards than for-profit enterprises, due to this particular nature of their legal entity. Nonetheless, there’s a downside to this: non-government organisations are vulnerable to “attacks” on their morality-from others serving conflicting interests- in a greater extent than regular firms; they have to prove in an everyday basis that their incentives are “pure” and that they act in accordance with their mission statement and morals. On the other hand, for-profit organisations may be envisaged as more straightforward: their modus operandi is to maximise profits and shareholder value without compromising quality. This concept holds true, but to limited extent as, according to Zairi & Peters (2000, p. 1742), it is widely argued that “the business ethos has started to subscribe to the principle “show me” rather than just “trust me”- corporate social accountability and reporting is therefore seen as an important stakeholder in business activity”.
Finally, Portes & Sensenbrenner (1993, p. 1325) put the spotlight on what they call “enforceable trust”, a mechanism through which “social capital is generated by individual members’ disciplined compliance with group expectations”. All these insights provide fruitful grounds for contrasting the behaviour of networks or actors within non-profit organisations.

3.4 Reciprocity

Reciprocity creates a “normative bond among people within a collective and instils in them the obligation to return, in kind, any benefits of membership received by them. Within the context of this theory, people cooperate with each other under the expectation that they will, in turn, both require and receive assistance from others” as Watson & Papamarcos (2002, p.539) ever so accurately describe it.

Theorists supporting the benefits of network closure (close ties) and those adopting the structural hole theory (loose ties), all acknowledge the significance of reciprocity as “the mechanism that turns relationships into social capital” (Gargiulo & Benassi, 2000, p. 185). When organisational members are aware that they can depend upon one another, this knowledge creates both expectations and reciprocating behaviour that reinforces these norms on the members themselves and, hence becomes a wider organisational (or social) resource.

Cohesive relations, here, act as amplifiers of reciprocity, which in the network closure viewpoint, are conceived as necessary to foster trust and cooperation. Conversely, structural hole theorists argue that this may result in
a kind of structural “arthritis”, referring to lack of flexibility and capacity to adapt. Indeed, this holds true for many non-government organisations: reciprocating expectations shape behaviour, as all (or most) members operate (work) under the umbrella of the shared vision, the foundations and principles that the whole organisation was built upon and whose statement(s) it is supposed to pursue or serve. Inside many non-government organisations, even the coffee that is consumed by the staff is viewed as a “present” from its financial supporters. This agrees with Capelli & Sherer’s (1991) assertion that: “what is unique about behaviour in (non-government) organisations is presumably that being in the organisation-the context of the organisation-somehow shapes behaviour, and it is impossible to explore that uniqueness without an explicit consideration of the context” (Mowday & Sutton, 1993, p. 196).

In Coleman’s view, social capital is an accumulative stock of obligations to reciprocate favours for others, both in quantity and in quality. He defines organisations as closed systems that put entry and exit barriers, like monopolistic or oligopolistic economies or cartels, where there are greater chances for fostering dependency relationships and reciprocating behaviour because members rely on each other to reach assigned goals. Furthermore, the nature of these reciprocating relations is highly dynamic, as Boissevain (1974, p.30) advocates “there is a tendency for single-stranded relations to become many-stranded if they persist over time and for many-stranded relationships to be stronger than single-stranded ones, in the sense that one strand role reinforces another”.


The aspect of reciprocity is not new to social theory as Homan (1950) commented on reciprocal and positive relationships in relation to three factors: interaction, sentiment and activity. As noted by Lin (2001, p.p. 37-40), he contends that “the more individuals interact, the more likely they are to share sentiments and the more they engage in collective activity. Likewise, the more individuals share sentiments, the more likely they are to engage in activities. The basis of interaction is sentiment-affection, support, respect, sympathy and liking for each other. In other words, interaction is based primarily in shared emotion”.

Reciprocity is a very important aspect that mobilises social capital, particularly in non-profit organisations. Research on the subject using an experiment that elicited subjects' willingness to co-operate as a function of group co-operation levels by Fischbacher, Gächter and Fehr (2000, p. 3) concluded that: “the often-observed decay in co-operation in a repeated public goods game can be explained as a reaction to other players' contributions”. According to their findings, half of the subjects were conditionally co-operative in that their co-operation levels increase in the co-operation of others, whereas thirty per-cent were free-riders who contributed to nothing.

In the case of non-profit organisations, there is an additional pressure to achieve organisational objectives within networks, stemming from the ideological spectrum of the members: that, perhaps, the choice to be employed in the specific organisation has to do with personal beliefs or the notion that “they work for the greater good”. In other words, employees within non-profit organisations may have taken the conscious decision to work for
them, not just as a bread-winning activity, but (also) because it is dictated by their ideology. This, however, may work for or against the (non-profit) organisation: it may increase commitment, teamwork and reciprocating behaviour, but, on the other hand, may lead to alienation of some members who are not considered as “dedicated to the cause” as others, or even cause massive resignations when there is an ideological dispute over organisational goals.

3.5 Conclusion

This Chapter describes the way that dominant or common norms and elements such as trust and reciprocity work in the direction of creating social relations, boosting interactions within actors and mobilising networks. It demonstrates the importance of these factors in building and maintaining social capital and acting as a force for “cohesiveness” of the networks and groups within and between organisations. Moreover, the variety of theoretical approaches and practical examples suggest that within and between social networks, convergent norms, and especially trust and reciprocity are fostered and encouraged. In this way, these elements work in a circular way and relationship, being both the cause and the outcome.

It seems that in the case of non-government organisations, trust and reciprocity plays a more vital role than in for-profit organisations, as it is intertwined to the adherence to the global values and trust to the organisation’s goals and mission. In this sense, these elements become critical in the study of social capital within and between non-government
organisations, both in relation to the social actors and networks internal to
them, as well as to the global picture of the interactions and capital between
these organisations.
Chapter 4- Literature Review: Social Capital and Non-Government Organisations

4.1 Non-Government Organisations

The vivid presence of social movements in the 70’s and 80’s led to the incorporation of social issues within formal state policy. Yet there are many cases where social and economic state policy is either insufficient or not enforced anymore. Non-government organisations have come to replace state policy in such areas, and can be viewed as the successors of the social movements aforementioned, after their decay in the late 80’s. The role of non-government organisations has proven to be a vital one in developing and pursuing social issues for the “common good”, as these issues presuppose international co-ordination and co-operation that would not have taken place in the absence of these organisations. Thus, non-government organisations play an important political and social role that is generally fully or partly recognised by national governments themselves. In addition to this, non-government organisations act as a medium for civil participation. Furthermore, their undoubted flexibility and the fact that they do not bear the burden of being governmental (and thus part of the status quo) allows them to approach distant and neglected social groups.

Dijkzeul and Markus (2005) postulate that one of the problems of the term “humanitarian community” is that it assumes a unity that exists in a very loose sense. As the number of non-government organisations rose exponentially, their diverse community became more fragmented than ever.
Despite attempts to create mechanisms or form of association of non-government organisations in order to develop common positions the range and variety of culture and locus of work of these organisations made such attempts obsolete.

Non-government organisations reflect ‘social dynamics’ (Houliaras & Sklias, 2002), putting forward new courses of actions that influence international politics and even act as expressions of a kind of social conscience that aims to cover possible governance or democratic deficits.

According to Hjelmar (1996), environmental organisations are social constructions, constantly produced by specific social actors within wider societal contexts.

“By non-governmental organisations are usually meant voluntary and open (non-secret) associations of individuals outside of the formal state apparatus (central and local governments, police and armed forces, legislative and judicial bodies, etc.) that are neither for profit nor engage in political activities as their primary objective ((Iriye, 1999, p. 422). International non-government organisations are engaged in pursuing cross-national agendas such as providing humanitarian relief and medical aid to victims of earthquakes, war, famine, etc. (Médecins Sans Frontières), cooperating across national boundaries to cope with pollution and other instances of environmental degradation and provide solutions for environmental problems and promote a “greener” way of life (Greenpeace), defending human rights (Amnesty International), etc.
Scott (1999, p.7) provides an extremely useful insight on non-government organisations and social capital, arguing that one of their greatest assets is that they are perceived by communities as symbols of altruism and draw to them people bearing the same values and vision and, thus act as “banks for generating and transferring social capital”. When an organisation is composed of “good organisational citizens”, or in other words, when its employees show willingness to exceed their formal job desks and subordinate their individual interest for that of the organisation, it is likely to accumulate higher levels of social capital (Bolino, Turnley, Bloodgood, 2000).

Furthermore, as Mueller (1996) suggests, while social capital may exist in one form or another within organisations, it is highly questionable to assume that it automatically exists for the organisation. Knowledge creation and appropriation may prove valuable assets for the organisation, or, perhaps its source of competitive advantage and differentiation, yet they are result of specific internal and external processes that bear costs, as in the example of time costs that have to be accounted for in order to preserve the close ties between actors within the network(s).

In the investigation of networks and mobilisation of social actors and social capital within not-for-profit organisations, literature concerning the interactions between people in such an environment, or in similar environments that are involved in campaigns or tasks can offer valuable insights. When facing a task, a working group is likely to be more effective if it has a clear criterion of what constitutes success in the specific project or task. When the group members have a clear vision where the effort is going, they
are able to better comprehend the route that leads to the desired outcome or output. Equally important within the workings of a group are the motivated beliefs of its members, that is, the views that are expressed in regards to their satisfaction—hence, welcoming further participation—or dissatisfaction, leading to withdrawal or less participation. In regards to tasks undergone by non-government organisations, the role of social pressure is of immense importance, since it influences—or even dictates—their goals and aspirations. These pressures are directed toward either harder or easier levels of performance, causing members to choose hard or easier aspiration levels, respectively, than they select in absence of such pressures. Zander (1971) stresses the importance of feedback on the performance of the group: when it is available, the quality of its productivity and work in general improves whether the task is simple or complex. Moreover, “the improvement in quality increases as the completeness of the feedback increases, that is feedback on the score of the group as a whole and of each individual member is more effective than either the two types of information separately” (Ibid, p. 185). It is also interesting to explore the reaction that group members present after repeated success and failure; these two contrasting outcomes influence group members’ levels of aspiration, evaluation of the group and appraisal, value attribution to future success, commitment and preference for easy or demanding new tasks.

It is intriguing to explore how the social pressure or external forces influence not-profit organisations in regards to their campaigns or key directions. Following the same principle, an interesting possible link between
the raison d’être or mission statement or strategic intent of the organisations and formation and articulation of social capital could contribute to the relevant social theory.

The importance of positioning social capital to the context it is said (or thought of) to operate cannot be overstressed. Non-government organisations are created for specific purposes but can also be directed to other uses as social networks may be intentionally created as investments of social capital—and they are in fact social capital to those who are able to use them” (Newlon, 1998).

In research undertaken by the Universities of Salford, Lancaster and Cardiff, there was an attempt to measure social capital that incorporated aspects of social activism separately from social involvement and social support (Popay, 2000). Non-government organisations actively encourage the public to perform social actions, by participating in some of their campaigns, either by signing a petition, or by sending letters of complaint, or even via participating in some of their demonstrations and/or actions. All these actions aim at exercising pressure to the decision making powers in order to influence a positive to the society, or at least desirable to the non-government organisations, change.

In order to comprehend the social role of non-government organisations we have to examine the process by which meaning is produced in and through them and the way they are defined by themselves and by the larger social context. As Hjelmar (1996) suggests, organisations strive to reach their objective on two levels, the symbolic and political one. On the
symbolic level they use powerful symbols, connotations and messages to raise public awareness and support to their campaigns to influence decision-making, while on the political level they use other mechanisms to influence decision-making, like lobbying, legislative, electoral and legal means.

4.2 Comparison between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace

There are basic similarities between the two organisations key to this research, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace. Notably, they bear significant resemblance to their missions and core elements. Both have advocacy, témoignage or bearing witness as one of the fundamental elements of their identity. Additionally, they were both created in 1971, from two basic events that spawned their existence. In the case of Greenpeace, it was the French nuclear tests in Amtsítka, Alaska, the heroic attempt of a handful of volunteers the stop the planned detonations and the big publicity that followed the violence of the French militaries against the activists. After a big press conference and impressive media coverage, Greenpeace was born. In the case of Médecins Sans Frontières it was the Biafra famine. A team of French doctors returning from a Red Cross mission for the famine in southern Nigeria (Biafra), wanted to form a volatile international humanitarian and medical aid organisation that would be free from the bureaucratic procedures they were facing with Red Cross at the time. They collaborated with a team of French journalists (and this maybe explains the principle of bearing witness) to form
Médecins Sans Frontières. The birth of this new non-government organisation received extensive worldwide media coverage.

Both organisations have the form of an association and a big voluntary base. They have global campaigns: Greenpeace is more campaign-oriented, with campaigns for climate change, oceans, genetically modified organisms, etc. Yet, Médecins Sans Frontières is also heavily involved in two global campaigns, the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative and the campaign for Access to Essential Medicines.

What is more important is the similarity in core values. Both organizations are action oriented, with independence being a clear prerequisite and the financial independence secures independence of action. In order to secure this, both Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace have self-imposed checking mechanisms and financial control, hiring themselves external companies to carry out audits, even though that is not required by the law. Moreover, they consider donor and beneficiary accountability paramount to their relationship with them, and invest in many feedback mechanisms, in the form of events, reports, videos, and so forth.

Of course, there are also differences between these two organisations, starting with the nature of their core action and how they materialise this action: Greenpeace develops and implements with the help of volunteers non violent direct actions against companies or states that cause damage to the environment or impede reforms for the salvation of endangered species or threaten food security. On the other hands, Médecins Sans Frontières offer medical and humanitarian aid directly to the field, by the use of expatriates
and national staff. In terms of structure, they share similar forms of organisation, with the associative and executive linked by various platforms, as for example an International Council, yet Médecins Sans Frontières seems to be more rooted to the field, with the participation of members from the societies in which it has projects and offers medical humanitarian aid. For Greenpeace, this participation seems to be more ad hoc, while it has recently started opening offices closer to its field of action, as for example in the democratic Republic of Congo. This touches upon another key difference: the bulk of the actions of Greenpeace is focused on developed countries, in order to influence change for both them and the developing world, while for Médecins Sans Frontières the field of action is very much concentrated in the developing side of the world, with a high concentration in Africa.

4.3 Social networks and social capital

Social capital is defined by Putnam (1993) as a compilation of features such as trust, norms and networks that facilitate collective action inside the society. For successful mobilization, the ideal groups form bonds and bridges with group or people. Bonding capital is viewed conceived of as the force that brings people who are known to each other together, whereas bridging capital facilitates in the same process, but between people who are not previously acquainted (Swain, 2001). Social capital facilitates the mobilization of a movement my building bonds and bridges within the movement itself and between the movement and other protesting groups.
Social network is the objective existence of social capital, while ties of trust and norms of reciprocity represent its subjective part (Paxton, 1999). The social network enhances a group’s capacity to join in action and pursue its goals (or in the common case of not shared goals) express its reaction to something and put pressure. In the relation between social network and social movement, the line of causation goes both ways. The successful mobilization of a movement (i.e. the mobilization of its actors) may foster norms of trust and reciprocity among the actors, forming and strengthening a social network. At the same time, a social network can help in mobilizing actors for protests, thus, strengthening a social movement. A social movement gets larger support through the networks of supporters.

In the case of non-government organisations, social structures must be appropriable by individuals and groups to really be social capital; their use value will be multiplied to the extent that they enable multiple linkages across communities and beyond them (Bebbington, 1997; Flora, Sharp, Flora & Newlon, 1997). This happens because social capital is relational; hence, it exists only when it is shared. Finally, in attempting to discover the link between non-government organisations and social capital, it is “important to pay close attention to the circumstances in which forms of capital are created and deployed, avoiding the assumption that a single, global variable such as “associational membership” can be taken to predict meaningful differences in human, cultural or social capital” (Edwards & Foley, 1998).
4.4 Conclusion

This Chapter concludes the literature review, focusing on the critical role of non-government organisations and social movement at the political and social level, in the process of their transition from “hippy-like” entities to global forces that influence change. In the characterizations of the group of non-government organisations as environmental or humanitarian communities, should not come as a surprise. Examples were given on the change of role and social dynamics of organisations and movements as well as their shift to being more powerful, influential or even institutionalized. The status and mandate of “non-government organisations” is even endorsed and stated in the resolutions of the European Council: the European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of International Non-Governmental Organisations in 1986 sets the frame for these organisations, while on 19 November 2003 the Committee of Ministers changed the consultative status of non-government organisations into a participatory status (Resolution Res(2003)8, Participatory status for international non-governmental organisations with the Council of Europe, 861st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) “considering that it is indispensable that the rules governing the relations between the Council of Europe and NGOs evolve to reflect the active participation of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in the Organisation’s policy and work programme”. This shift in importance was also accompanied by a change of perception of non-government organisations and movements, considered more “professional” in their modus operandi and displaying higher degrees of organisational
capacity, taking advantage of the opportunities globalization can offer. Finally, the way that aspects of social capital are going to be tackled through this research project were set out and a first blending of theories of social capital and social networks was put forth, completing a three dimensional focus.
Chapter 5- Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The Methodology Chapter explains in detail the data collection process, introducing the ethnographic lens that was used as the main approach to the collection and analysis of data, in conjunction with social network and social capital theory. The ethnographic method allowed the exploration of how social capital is manifested within and between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, which elements trigger it, how it is nurtured and expressed and what it produces. This was carried out with maximum sensitivity towards both the nature of the issue at hand, being many times very internal to the two organisations, as well as towards the participants or subjects, and with great depth and variety of analysis. In this approach, the issues of reflexivity towards the researcher and towards what is being researched are of immense importance. As the ethnographic method allows maximum involvement with the research sample and subjects and actively encourages the researcher to be part of what is being researched, it is critical that the limitations of this choice are depicted and addressed. Hence, issues of subjectivity, generalisation of findings and analysis stemming from the duality of the participant-observer role are laid out. But more importantly, the richness of data, the degree of compatibility between the research method and the main research question and focus justifies this, at times, uncomfortable data collection practice. The way this research method was carried out is analyzed by incorporating the practices of participatory action research, fieldwork and field note-taking.
Observation, note-taking (field notes), personal interviews with key social actors for the organizations, “thick descriptions” of events and secondary sources (publications, articles, news references, etc.) were the main methods used in this ethnographic approach, in relation to the two focal non-government organisations, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières

5.2 Ethnography

Ethnography “constitutes the exploration of culture and subculture through application of qualitative research methods designed to produce thick descriptions” (MacNamara, 2009, p. 164). Ethnography is, in fact, an experiential and experimental system”. According to Rheinbrger (1998, p.291) “an experimental system can be compared to a labyrinth whose walls, in the course of being erected, simultaneously blind and guide the experimenter. The construction principle of a labyrinth consists in that the existing walls limit the space and the direction of the walls to be added. It cannot be planned. It forces one to move by means of checking out, of groping”.

The utility of ethnography as research method is well elaborated by Fortun (2003, p.187) who states that “conceptualizing ethnography as devices that shape questions to be asked allows us to think of them as scientific research tools. Their significance lies less in that they conclude them in discursive resources they provide and the pathways they open up. Their aim, in sort, is to improve literacy, to enable people to read the world better. Some would consider this value neutral. I think it is what gives ethnography ethical charge”. This very accurately summarizes the rationale behind the selection of
the specific research method. The overall goal is to facilitate in making sense of what is out there by an open communication flow between the researcher and the researched, recognizing its limitations and contextual boundaries.

Probably one of the most interesting notions connected to ethnography is that it can be both a process and an outcome, it can apply to both the methodology and to the written account of an ethnographic project. Ethnography has its roots in social anthropology, which traditionally focused on small-scale communities that were thought to share culturally specific beliefs and practices. Field and Morse (1985), Byrne (2001), Mackenzie (1994) all describe ethnography as a generalised approach to developing concepts to understand human behaviours from insider's or native's perspective and point of view. This is particularly interesting in this research study, due to the researcher's close connection and relationship with the two organisations under study.

Especially when it comes to qualitative research, it has been increasingly observed that there is in fact no way of removing the observer from research in naturalistic settings (Gergen and Gergen 1991). Ethnographers recognise that they are unable to put their own knowledge of the social world aside in the hope of achieving objectivity, because both researcher and researched use the same resources to understand meaning (Barnes 1992). Moreover, they have come to realise that this can actually be of benefit to their research and not an inherent deficiency, as this mutual interaction and the duality of the relationship with the subject may in fact yield
better insights. What is of crucial importance is that this issue of “subjectivity” of the researcher towards the research as process and outcome has to be properly addressed from the beginning of the endeavour. Thus, it is suggested that researchers include a reflexive account in their report in the attempt to increase plausibility of the ethnographic research. In this case, the readers of the research piece are “made aware” of what went on during the whole research process and which was the nature of the interaction between the researcher and the researched, enabling them to decide whether the text is believable (Koch and Harrington 1998). In this direction, Manias and Street (2001) and Williams (1995) also call for an awareness of the ways in which the self affects both research processes and outcomes to be communicated to the readers of the research.

Conclusively, the first and most obvious feature of ethnography is that the researcher is a member in the social world under study, whether that world is what Joseph Kotarba (1980) has referred to as a kind of amorphous social world or reality that is largely constituted by unconnected individuals, such as those who experience physical disability like the ones that Murphy (1987) studied or the people suffering depression studied by Karp (1996). In the same sense, a social world exists with clear locales and subculture, such as the truck drivers researched by Ouellet (1994) or in our case the one of non-government organisations. In each case, the researcher represents what Merton (1988, p. 18) terms “the ultimate participant in a dual participant-observer role.”
5.2.1 Reflexivity

What seems to be a core element in establishing the much needed validity in ethnographic research is applying reflexivity, which is commonly used as a methodological tool in qualitative research in order to legitimize, validate and question research practices and representations. Qualitative researchers use reflexivity as means of addressing the politics or representation related to the research, represent difference better (Wasserfall, 1997) and establish “ethnographic authority” (Britzman, 1995, p. 229). Pillow (2003, p. 175) calls for a shift from “comfortable” uses of reflexivity and towards what she terms uncomfortable reflexive practices”. This notion of uncomfortable reflexivity is about “whether we can be accountable to people’s struggles for self-representation and self-determination” (Visweswaran, 1994, p.32) and is viewed as beneficial to the research itself. As Pillow (2003, p.193) stresses: “the qualitative research arena would benefit from more ‘messy’ examples, examples that may not always be successful, examples that do not seek a comfortable, transcendent endpoint but leave us in the uncomfortable realities of going engaged qualitative research”. Consequently, reflexivity draws upon researcher subjectivity in the research process: how does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, how I feel, affect data collection gathered, presented and interpreted, or, in other words, how knowledge is acquired, organized and interpreted is relevant to what the claims are (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). Naturally, to be reflexive “demands both an ‘other’ and some self-conscious awareness of the process of self-scrutiny” (Chriseri-Strater, 1996, p. 130).
As Lather (1993, p. 685) states, there are “few guidelines for how one goes about the doing of it, especially in a way that is both reflexive and yet notes the limits of self reflexivity”. Definitions of reflexivity are varied: Coffey (1999) defines it as engaging in an ongoing conversation about a subject or experience while simultaneously living it in every moment. Other researchers like Freshwater and Rolfe (2001) inherit a more post-modernist approach according to which reflexivity implies that scientific research is not an accurate window on external reality; it is but one “truth” among many (being loyal to the postmodernist school declaration that there is no “objective truth” out there). In this case, the function of research is not to present an analysed theory about the world, but is more of an opportunity for the research participants to tell their stories and offer their accounts Freshwater and Rolfe (2001). At the same time, Mulhall (1997) goes one step ahead to suggest that all research reports are in reality cultural artefacts, products of a researcher-subject interaction in different contexts, a kind of “conversation” between them in the wider sense. The added value of this reflexive approach and the “active communication” between the researcher and the subject may be the understanding and acceptance of the rationale by which action or attitude will not stem from extensive data gathering, but will result from the researcher being repositioned with regard to the data already possessed. Thus, the researcher is transparent about the conditions through which reports are created and the meanings that are being assigned.
5.2.2 Self reflexivity

In this concept, the researcher “knows himself”, and in this sense is self reflexive to recognize an otherness of self as well as the self of others (Pillow, 2003). In this case study, self reflexivity refers to the fact that the researcher was employed for a period of ten years in one of the two focal organisations of the research, Greenpeace, thus filtering his experiences through the lens of organizational culture, experiences and being. Moreover, the researcher is currently employed in the other focal organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières. Thus, the way the researcher had approached the research questions, the data gathering process and the analysis and interpretation of data, is through the prism of his experience with the two organisations. This, of course influenced the “objectivity” of the findings, but at the same time offered deeper knowledge in areas where a researcher with no direct involvement will have no or limited access to.

The double identity (that of both observer and participant) of the researcher, far from being schizophrenic, yields impressive insights. Rather than attempting to strip from the prejudices and biases, the limitations and cultural “embeddedness” are acknowledged before “entering the field”. Consequently, being self-conscious facilitates to capitalize on the effects of experiences, making better sense of what is researched and offering unique richness of data and depth of understanding. In other words, the fact that the researcher is changing what is written about the subject by bringing in own experiences, notions, goals, culture etc. into it is used as a tool for understanding and positioning findings in the specific context. As Pillow
(2003, p. 185) states “in our research, we have to continually question the capability of the subject to define her/his self or even the desire to do so. Reflexivity then always occurs out of an unequal power relationship and, in fact, the art of reflexivity may perpetuate a colonial relationship while at the same time attempting to mask this power over the subject”. If this relationship is not recognized and addressed, then the product of the research is subject to scrutiny. But if exposed and used smartly, it offers valuable and innovative perspectives for social science. Throughout the research process, the researcher maintained constant contact with the two organizations and a personal relationship with key actors within them. This gave enabled the deeper probing into sensitive issues that could not have easily been exposed, improving access, while this relationship was also used as leverage to ensure quality and quantity of data gathered.

Peshkin (1998, p. 17) claims that researchers should “systematically seek out their own subjectivity, be aware and observe themselves through the use of reflexive notes to themselves” and concludes that subjectivity operates anyway in the entire research process, not only at the writing-up stage. In the same way, and from the beginning and through the course of the research presented here, this subjectivity is recognized, put forth: the data collection and analysis are based on the one hand on external, more “objective” sources, which are used as secondary data (mostly published articles, reports, analyses) on the other, on own accounts and experience, through everyday (business) life and interaction with the organisations. Be it Médecins Sans Frontières at present or Greenpeace in the past, these two
organizations have influenced the researcher’s experiences, culture, views, ideas, rationale and ways of analysis, presentation or representation of what emerges from the research process. In other words, the researcher is an intrinsic part of what is being researched.

In the process of undertaking research Koch and Harrington (1998) identify an ongoing self-critique and self-appraisal that needs to take place. Williams (1995) suggests that self is not necessarily analogous with ethnographer, and could mean self as sharing some other aspect of the experiences of those in the field, such as professional status. However, fieldwork puts the self at the centre of the activity, so a continuous “vigilance” of who I (the conductor of this research) really am (i.e. white male, in my late 30’s and so forth) can be really helpful. It is for this reason that personal details of the researcher are being presented in the Annex (p. 234) in order to complete the contextual frame under which the research was conceptualised, designed, implemented and presented.

5.2.3 Reflexivity of others

As regards to recognizing the “self of others”, it is paramount in ethnographic and in most strands of qualitative research. Knowing the “other” dictates how well we will conduct the whole research project, from sample selection, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Knowing the other is about capturing the essence of the research subject and “let them speak for themselves” (Trinh, 1991, p. 57). And it is exactly in this point where the
researcher’s personal involvement with the focal organisations becomes more of an asset than an impediment. It is exactly this “closeness” that enables not only increased and privileged access to rare data, but also the opportunity to make better sense of this rare data, according to experience and contextual proximity. Practically, this proximity facilitated access to historical knowledge and data of the two organizations, as well as the possibility to interpret actions, viewpoints or organizational culture, based on an “insider look”. For instance, this positioning in relation to the two organizations offer insight on how the focal organisations use their networks, why the network between the two organizations has the specific characteristics, or on the deeper reasons for accessing or not accessing the networks, for nurturing the relationships or cutting off ties.

Finally, the recognizing of “others” refers not only to the focal organisations or the other organisations who form the network as such, but also to the people (key actors) working in the non-government organisations of the research sample. Consequently, we consider as other both the organisations themselves as entities, carrying their own values, perspectives and mindsets, as perceived from the researchers “filtered” viewpoint, but also the decision-makers, or influencers or key people inside these organisations.

5.2.4 Reflexivity as truth

Having set these important parameters it is easier to guarantee or safeguard that in the spoken word we “know what we mean, mean what we say, say what we mean, know what we have said” (Johnson, 1981 p. viii as
quoted by Lather, 1993, p. 685). Or, in other words, how can reflexivity provide validity and legitimization. As Bakhtin (1984, p.110) postulates “truth is not born nor is to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for the truth, in the process of their dialectic interaction”. Yet, given the truthfulness of this position, reflexivity in this particular research act as a methodological tool “interruptive of practices of gathering data as “truths” to practices which interrogate the truthfulness of the tale and provide multiple answers” Trinh (1991, p.12).

5.2.5 Reflexivity as transcendence

But does recognizing the biases or deficiencies of ethnographic research exempt the researcher from responsibility of objectivity and the ethnographer from bias, is the admittance of “empathy” assurance of the validity of the research? Skacklock and Smyth (1998) see reflexivity as the conscious revelation of the role that the beliefs and values of the researchers play in the selection of methodology and according to Hellawell (2006, p. 485) to “the generation of knowledge as a product of the research account.” The researcher, as Hellawell (2006) proposes, should be both inside and outside the perceptions of the researched. In other words, as Hammersley (1993) argues, both empathy and alienation are useful as qualities for a researcher. Alienation is connected to detachment, reorientation, taking a step back and looking at something “familiar” as if it was “unfamiliar”. Labaree (2002) argues that the researcher may simultaneously be an insider and an outsider (each “identity” holding different proportions) as there are elements of “insideness”
(internal) on certain research dimensions and elements of “outsideness” (external) on others.

In the case of this particular research, the researcher can be viewed as an insider, given that current employment in one of the organisations researched, Médecins Sans Frontières, and, at the same time, an outsider to the other organisation in focus, or even an outsider should the (hierarchical or functional) positions of key actors mobilizing resources in these organizations be considered.

The notion of insider/outside in action research and the assumption that the duality of the researcher’s nature exists at the same time, can be used to facilitate the process of reflexivity for the researcher. In particular, it provides insight to “who I am” in the researcher-researched relationship, with the latter being individuals, organisations, networks and so forth. As Richardson (2000, p. 929) argues “knowing the self and knowing the subject are intertwined, partial, historical knowledge”.

This insider/outside perspective can be described with the metaphor of a stereogram image. At first, one may not be able to see the “hidden image” within the image. Yet, once focused and able to see the image within the image, one can then again “zoom out” and see the whole drawing. Practically, one can then see both images at the same time without losing understanding of what is being examined. In the same way, the insider/outside viewpoint may enables focus on certain aspects of the research subject, while at the same time, maintaining a more “holistic” image. As Kadushin, (2005, p. 332) depicts “since I was present all the time, I was able
to see cultural change as an ongoing conversation over time, one that continues while outside researchers are not present. Being an insider allowed insight and opportunity. Like people, organisations present different aspects of their personal characteristics to different others”. Or in the words of de Guerre (2002, p. 333) “being an inside action researcher means walking the thin line as an inside-outsider attempting to avoid the pitfalls of both. A pure insider is too caught up in the action to practice reflexivity and a pure outsider is not close enough to understand what is going on. It is a matter of managing relations between one’s perception of self and the perception of the other. This is the essence of good action research and particularly critical for the action researcher as an inside-outsider”.

This “reflective conversation” addresses key three issues according to Mulhall et al (1999) which are crucial to the specific research and are presented below.

5.3 How the researcher affects the process and outcome of the research

The researcher comes to the study from an assumed position of “knowing”; a position where the researcher already possesses some esoteric knowledge, and an empathetic self. Having considerable experience in non-government organisations presupposes better insight on the particularities of the organisations under study, their visions and goals, the profile of the key people that work in them and the context in which they operate in country and international level. This knowledge enables understanding what is being heard, observed, recorder and presented. However, it does not come without
cost: it is impossible to fully to separate the two roles, that of employee-member of the organisation and researcher, as the experience of working for actually both focal organisations inevitably influences interpretation of data and observations on the network between the two organisations and the ones in their environment works. So, as Mulhall et al (1999) suggest, the researcher’s background will have affected why the research was carried out and also the role the researcher assumed in the data collection itself.

Coffey (1999) argues that while one of the strengths of ethnographic research is the real involvement of the fieldworker in what is being studied, a clear weakness lies not in the possibility of total immersion, but on the failure to acknowledge the influences of position, place and identity and taking advantage of these, in terms of access and insight. As Mulhall (1997) points out, reflection needs to act at both a superficial level in terms of telling and presenting things as they were, and at a deeper level in terms of identifying how the researcher’s situation, beliefs, interests and value judgements have impacted on the entire research.

5.4 How the research affects the researcher

Kleinman (1991) suggests that field researchers’ feelings not only affect the research but become part of the process itself. As Coffey (1999) points out, fieldwork is about emotions about the research setting, people and experience. Fetterman (1989) points out that ethnographers often begin with biases or preconceived notions about how people behave and what they think and that “controlled” biases can focus and limit the research effort, whereas
uncontrolled biases may in fact undermine the quality of the research. Thus in the attempt to mitigate the negative effects of bias the ethnographer must make them explicit.

Baillie (1995) identifies that some of the difficulties of using ethnography include affecting the social setting by being present as a researcher, and that participants may feel that their practice is being judged, thus engaging in defensive behaviours that bias their responses to the interview questions. To tackle this difficulty, the researcher needs to walk the tightrope between being “distant” enough to make subjects feel comfortable, whilst at the same time “close” enough to be able to understand and probe deeply.

Coffey (1999) proposes to balance self-absorption with recognition of the personal nature of research, and the potential benefits of utilising subjectivity as a recipe for researchers and especially ethnographers. This context (and self) analysis will enable the researcher to better understand the position inside the research field, exploit strengths, while at the same time, recognise deficiencies and biases.
5.5 Participatory action research

Action research, being a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social institutions or networks or organisations, serves as a useful guide to the research. The social basis of action research is involvement and the focus is that it is research with, rather than research on. With the researcher being an active part of the two participating organisations, recognizing subjectivity and position in the data collection process is of immense importance as well as asserting that the analysis of findings or interpretations will be based on intuitive, tacit knowledge. Smith (1997) offers valuable guidance by describing that in both practice and meaning, participatory action research is actually what the name implies: participation, meaning to have a share in what is being research, as well as action- bringing about an alteration while using research as a tool. At the same time he categorizes participatory action research as a dynamic process that stems from the unique needs, challenges and learning experiences specific to an individual, group or, organization. In such case the methods and nodes of action are formed and collected over time in a continuous “dialogue” between action and reflection. Here, understanding and change that evolve through participatory action research are part of the process of reflexivity, which is described as self-criticality among researchers according to Marcus (1994) and Kidd & Kral (2005). Or, according to Friere (1982) it is “living knowledge” that can be gained and actually educates the researcher in its process, informs action in other areas. Moreover, it potentially extends the field of inquiry through discovery of new and important information (Fals-Borda, 1991;
Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Another obvious benefit of participatory action research is the action component. It emphasizes “a gathering of knowledge for and about groups who are not well represented by dominant understandings, making them more broadly visible and informing their capacity to act” Gaventa, (1991), Kidd & Kral, (2005, p. 192).

Participatory action research “seeks to avoid the ethical and epistemological pitfall of covert forms of research by involving the researched in the formation and conduct of research” (Matthew, 2001, p. 13).

A really insightful depiction of reflexivity in action research is the metaphor used by de Guerre (2002, p. 347): “each local context is different. Each time is different. There is no conclusive pattern. Like a mountain climber, one has to learn on each different mountain where it is possible to get a grip, where to put one’s finger to catch hold, and what rocks are solid enough to support your weight and which are not. Like a mountain climber, the action researcher can understand such a local context only by being close up, only by being an insider, but also like a mountain climber, the action researcher must have the big picture to be able to see the mountain and to see oneself in the process. He or she can only test the mountain by climbing it.”

As Creese et al (1990) argue, the ethnographer possesses both the “I” and the “eye” in ethnographic research. Clough (2000) paints a very graphic picture of the ethnographer returning “home” from the field as a hero who, having successfully entered and lived “there”, he escapes from the “immersion with the other” and offers his account of the reality he
experienced. Creese et al (1990) develop this notion, by explaining that rather than seeing and hearing only, we begin to see, the subject/object in the process of seeking to know and the process itself. We become interested primarily in how we create or re-produce knowledge/ knowing in writing, while the details of this process are inextricably intertwined to our “self” and the subjectivities of our worlds and views of realities. Thus, “reflexivity thus becomes a requirement for how to see and write ethnography, even when the natives have become the writers/tellers of their own autoethnographic realist tales. Those who take up the inscription practices of ethnography are exhorted to do more than look critically at themselves trying for certain knowledge. We are urged to do ethnographies that make a difference by crafting these technologies to diffract the lines of seeing and knowing in ways that produce difference patterns of particular kinds in the world” (Schneider, 2002, p.462).

The theory and practices of participatory action research have complemented ethnography in the research method and process of data collection. Based on the privileged location of the researcher, the participatory nature of the research was not only a fact but also a choice for the method of data collection. Through this and by recognising all the limitations and specific characteristics to this research method, the researcher participated in many of the events related to the key research question and described in this paper (through personal involvement or via related decision making and implementation platforms), as well as in conversations, meetings, debates, conferences and presentations of the key actors within Médecins Sans
Frontières and Greenpeace. Thus, the ethnographic method of being and living with the research subject went further by actually taking part in the elements that shape data and strive to shed light on the way that social networks within these two organisations are mobilised and how this relates to social capital.

(pp. 1 G4-1 G5)

5.6 Field notes

Another key data collection method that was widely in the research was field notes. According to Erickson and Stull (1998, p. 23) “Fieldnotes are the first written products of a field team’s ethnographic gazes. The plural, gazes, sounds strange, but final reports from team ethnography are jointly constructed – or should be.... For lone ethnographers, fieldnotes serve as aides to the memory, initial analyses and archives to be visited when away from the field. For team ethnographers, fieldnotes are all these things and more; they also are a means to share finding with other team members. Unfortunately, anxiety about the adequacy of one’s own notes and professional competition and jealousy combine with this tradition of secrecy to inhibit sharing of notes and thus, the flow of information”.

According to Sanjeck, (1990), the key contribution of field notes in social research lies in their role in documenting participant observation. Field notes are in fact “thick” descriptions of accounts, occurrences, observations, experiences, etc. that are vital in ethnographic research, as they offer raw, “fresh and rich data from the field. As Hornberger (1993, p.10) notes “through the use of fieldnotes, the units, criteria, and patterning of a community’ are
described”. Through the use of such documents the researcher attempts to describe “the field” and the research subjects, as he or she sees, listens to, feels and experiences them. The data that is gathered from such practises ranges from events, stories, actions or feelings, while the researcher attempts to identify the significance of actions in the events from the various points of view of the actors themselves Shaffif and Stebbins (1991). In the course of the specific study, field notes were taken during discussions and presentations of key issues that were deemed relevant to the analysis of the two organisations: analyses, positions, debates on major internal or external factors that were influencing the current modus operandi and future directions of Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, conferences, decision making meetings and workshops. Moreover, field notes were taken during the course of key events for these two organizations, which were important either for each of them separately, or for both commonly, as for example the Lebanon wan and the Indonesia tsunami, which are going to be described in greater detail in the chapters to come. As aforementioned, this is consistent with the fact that in the ethnographic arena, the actors involved in this process are both research participants and researchers. This plurality of different realities that was lived through the course of the research and the meanings assigned them as well as their notions of what’s important and interesting (Hymes, 1980; Shafiif and Stebbins, 1991) have guided this ethnographic research.

Nevertheless, in ethnographic work the researcher also brings his/ her own reality to the documentation of the case at hand (Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani and Martin 2008). Thus, field notes involve perception and interpretation, so
“different descriptions of the “same” situations and events are possible” (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 6). As Wolfinger (2008, pp. 92-93) contributes: “The advent of reflexive ethnography has drawn attention to the relationship between researchers and their subjects, and that of texts and their readers. Moreover, it is well known that prose inevitably embodies the author’s tacit convictions.”

This can be problematic, as Van Maanen (1988, pp. 223–224) describes: “To put it bluntly, field notes are gnomic, shorthand reconstructions of events, observations, and conversations that took place in the field. They are composed well after the fact as inexact notes to oneself and represent simply one of many levels of textualization set off by experience. To disentangle the interpretive procedures at work as one moves across levels is problematic to say the least. Little wonder that field notes are the secret papers of social research”. It is only natural that these deficiencies exist in the field notes of the research at hand, as the researcher’s connection with the context of non-government organisations and the relationship with the specific ones, are in one way or other reflected in the notes taken from various conversations or through observations. In them, the researcher’s thick descriptions of events and circumstances are reconstructions and contextually or culturally bound.

Having clear the limitations, it is also true that as Erickson (1990) elaborates, the insight that field notes bring to ethnographic research has to do with offering specific understanding through documentation of concrete details of events and occurrences, assigning local meanings that these
occurrences have for the people involved in them, and offering comparative understanding in and of different social settings. In other words, they offer understanding of local meanings from the actors’ viewpoint (Erickson, 1986, 1990). And it is exactly there that their value lies. As Emerson et al. (1995, p. 8) states “the ethnographer does more than describe social discourse and action: rather s/he ‘inscribes’ it. In this way, the ethnographer is directly involved with the subject and, through this interplay, he attempts to make sense of what he or she “documents” or experiences”. This empathy is present in the field notes of the researcher when observing. Thus, “in writing a fieldnote then, the ethnographer does not simply put happenings into words. Rather such writing is an interpretive process: it is the very first act of textualizing” (Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani and Martin 2008, p. 203).

Emerson et al. (1995) and Pike (1967) accurately state that “inscriptions” serve a dual focus: they are perceptions and interpretations of what the researcher notices and considers being relevant to his participants. Researchers like Silverman (2001), Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) argue that the compilation of field notes may falsely appear to be an easy task: “writing down what you see and hear” simply isn’t good enough. The researcher will have to decide and select “what to write down, how to write it down, and when to write it down” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 146).
5.7 Basic concept and design of the research

The research is purely qualitative and exploratory. It steps into exciting territory when it comes to non-government organisations and social capital and seeks to yield new insights and stimulate further research on the subject. One of the key challenges of the approach has been the fact that the researcher plays an active role as a research instrument while inherently “belonging” in the research subject itself. Dealing with the research questions, while at the same time striving for “objectivity” and intuitiveness when being actively involved in both of the organisations in focus requires that the challenges are acknowledged in a manner that strengthens the integrity of the research process (Di Domenico & Morrison, 2003). A good piece of qualitative research should be the offspring of trust and empathy between the researcher and the subject, where the former has a firm understanding and knowledge of the latter’s social world and construction of reality (Goffman, 1959; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). In order not to compromise the research, the researcher’s involvement is acknowledged at the outset, aiming for “empathic neutrality” (Silverman, 2000). Hence, this research method is a form of writing, not a mirror that provides an undistorted view of “reality”. In this sense, it should be noted that there is no methodology that absolutely allows the researcher a completely unmediated, objective representation of reality, whether this reality is a physical object or a social network [Korty, (1979)]. The decision for the specific qualitative research design facilitated the exploration of untouched issues or virtual territory in relation to social networks within and between these non-government organisations. The importance of the flexibility offered
is indeed major; it can squeeze in ideas, notions that would not fit in pre-conceived structures or theories. Moreover, the research is completed by the identification of the researcher as Cawthorne (2001) emphatically states: “it is me picking the route—it is my purposes, my concerns and my interpretations, albeit in interactions with those of my informants—that determine that route (p86).

The specific organisations where chosen due to their size and links with their home and operations or actions societies’. Moreover, there was relatively easy access to the staff (and especially the key actors) of these organisations and participation in meetings, and decision making processes, discussions and debates. In this sense, the research sample may well be characterized as a convenience sample. The selection of key people inside these organisations as the participants follows a simple principle: they were the ones setting the course of action for each organisations and their role was central inside each one: they provided a firm picture, a holistic view of how their organization is operating in relation to the other organisations and the external environment in relation to the research questions, forming a possible network of ties, relationships and eventually social capital. Because of the fact that these organisations are highly anthropocentric, key persons are at the wheel of the interactions within and between them and in the networks’ exchanges. Hence, the research method involved personal interviews with some of these key actors, like the project leader of the reform process in Médecins Sans Frontières and executive directors in the same organization and in Greenpeace. Yet, the interviews were not approached in the standard
procedure of research interviewing, but in a more open, less formal and structured way of discussions on specific subjects. This method was complemented with that of storytelling, whereby major events were depicted and the key actors were engaged in describing and adding context to these events.

Moreover, data was compiled through participation in various conferences, like the London conference for Médecins Sans Frontières, where key future directions of the movement where discussed or in various platforms within both organizations (action campaigner’s meetings in Greenpeace, directors of communication meetings in Médecins Sans Frontières, and so forth). During the participation these events, field notes were taken relating to the issues core to our research: around key events, external and internal factors, values and dominant norms, or structural forms. All notes were organised around these key factors and in relation to the way they were influencing these key actors and networks within these organizations, as well as the organizations themselves, in relation to each other and to their external environment. Here, both secondary data, in the form of meeting minutes were collected, as well as primary data, in the form of notes on positions, patterns, outcomes, “interesting notions” relating to the research questions and own research observations and presentations or interpretations of events.

The core of our research venture was the networks and relationships between non-government organizations and what it “produced” as social capital. The issues of how networks come into play and the role of convergent
norms, trust, trustworthiness and reciprocity in forming ties and mobilizing actors were explored via the different and complementary data collection techniques.

These methods also included recording data in their “raw” form, as in Press Releases, positioning papers, opinion articles, statements or briefing documents. This is quite important, as the higher degree of objectivity that published secondary data offers a kind of “triangulation” to this research. Again, the criteria for the selection of these external sources related to the networks and actors, to the forces that trigger their interaction and mobilization and to the effects they have in the society or the fields of action of the organizations.

### 5.8 Overview of key data collection sources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collected</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Method used</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary, Médecins Sans Frontières</td>
<td>International Meetings, Conferences, debates, discussions</td>
<td>Notetaking, observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary, Greenpeace</td>
<td>International Meetings, conferences, debates, discussions</td>
<td>Notetaking, observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary, Médecins Sans Frontières</td>
<td>Press releases, reports, positioning papers, published interviews</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary, Greenpeace</td>
<td>Press releases, reports,</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
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5.9 Issues of generalization, validity, objectivity

Given the fact that the research sample includes only two organizations, the issue of generalisation needs to be addressed. The objectives, design and implementation of this research have no ambition to produce results that may be generalized. Of course, part or more of the findings may hold true for a wider organizational audience, but the aim of this research is not to produce data that can be “representative” of bigger groups; if that were the case, the research vehicles and instruments would be quite different. As stated before, the overarching goal was to explore. By
purposively selecting a small sample of organizations but with high degree of penetration and access to them, we were able to produce rich data using a variety of research techniques. Hence, the findings may not be representative, but very indicative and shed light to facets of organizational networks and social capital that are quite innovative and advance existing ethnographic and sociological research.

In regards to validity, the danger that Wroth and Mehta (2002) reveal, in regards to the fact that actors may have a stake in how the present “facts” and, thus, researchers have to take precautions and evaluate “truth claims”, is a real one. To that end, the upfront description of the relationship of the researcher to the research subject and of the inherent limitations of the particular research set a clear picture for the reader that allows no misinterpretations. At the same time, the reflexivity towards the self and the other of the research were guiding the way that the data was collected (practically, in the course of note taking, the researcher set the context for each “case” by providing details on the parenthesis relating to the issues, underlying factors, or background and details of the research subjects) and in how events are presented. It is of course true that regardless of these measures, a degree of subjectivity certainly exists, but if we “walk away from the challenge on the grounds that we cannot come up with perfect answers, we diminish (public) confidence in the very purpose of social science Newman (2002, p. 127).

Rather than being defensive, this paper puts forth the qualitative researcher who is “elastic and holistic, just as the dancer relies on the spine
for the power and coherence of the dance” (Janesick, 1998, p.48). This is why this study viewed the subject and its potential uses in its entirety; avoiding “methodolatry”, where “the preoccupation with selecting and defending methods and theory excludes the actual substance of the whole story being told” (Ibid.).

5.10 Conclusion

In simple terms, the various ethnographic methods used in the research approach explore the networks of ties and relationships within the key actors in these non-government organisations and between them, relating to the external environment, even if they are quite “invisible” from the outside or even to the participants themselves and the interplay between these networks. The variety of methods used allows to probe deeply into the factors that mobilize these resources, under which circumstances, and to attempt to establish the role of the key research questions and elements in the forming of ties, the mobilization of actors and the formation of social capital. The added value of this reflexive approach and the “active communication” between the researcher and the subject is also faced with the the challenge to “disentangle movements of the external world from the researcher’s own shifting involvement with the same world, all the while recognizing that the two are not independent” (Hollander, 2004, p. 613). In order to tackle this, the issues of generalisability and validity of the findings are addressed, under the perspective of qualitative research and the reflexivity that is paramount in this process. By doing so, the accounts are presented in a holistic way, with
openness on the challenges or limitations, yet also demonstrating the clear potential for rich data and insight into the research questions.

In this sense the research method contributes to the theory with an analysis based on a variety of qualitative ethnographic data but that generally, fails to verify, falsify or otherwise justify theoretical positions outside scopes and commitments to empirically or culturally embedded conceptualisations (Gergen & Joseph, 2000).
Chapter 6 - The Case Studies of Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières

6.1 Introduction

Having set the theory and the research methodology, noting Becker (1998, p. 4) that theories are “at best a necessary evil, something we need to get our work done but, at the same time, a tool that is likely to get out of hand, leading to a generalized discourse largely divorced from the day-to-day digging into social life that constitutes sociological science”.

In this Chapter the research enters finally in the contexts of the two focal organisations. Two different approaches are juxtaposed here in order to determine the most suited and suitable to explore the social networks and social capital between Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières: the grounded theory approach and the case study method. Both stemming from the field of social research, they can provide rich data and insights to answer the main questions of our project. The advantages and advances of each of the different perspectives are laid out and the rationale under which the case study research method was selected is presented. Sequentially, the two organisations are presented, stressing the most important aspects relevant to the research and the historical origins, founding principles, modus operandi principles of action and overall purpose.

6.2 The case study approach

Two different conceptualizations of sociological fieldwork, grounded theory and the extended case study, promise to provide comprehensive
accounts social life, albeit through invariably different paths. In the case of the former, theory is constructed from the field, from the interplay between the actors and their surroundings. The theory emerges from the field and the researcher attempts to discern and distinguish all the necessary and sufficient conditions that caused the phenomenon to take place (Katz, 2001). On the other hand, the case study method “applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the “micro” to the “macro”, and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on existing theory” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). The “case” refers to the way the various observations will be analyzed and situated within the boundaries of the research context. Thus, one of the key differences of the two methods is their starting point: whether is it the theory itself, as in case study, or the social world, as with grounded theory. Sceptics of grounded theory argue that narratives or theories coming from the field alone are “epistemological fairytales” (Wacquant, 2002, p. 1481), thus the looking towards the theory-field-theory continuum, that of case study research.

It is true that case study theory and research offer a really insightful way to walk the tightrope between the pre-existence of the theory and the emergence of empirical data that informs and contributes creatively to it. It treats the ethnographic field as a way to revisit the context and boundaries of the case that already exist within the boundaries of the theory.
According to Ragin (1992), setting a case in case study research consists of elaborating theoretical constructs with specific empirical instances and occurrences or events. This research method was selected as most applicable to tackle the research questions, as the theoretical underpinnings will provide the general framework or “casing” and the empirical findings will either reinforce the theory or force us to rethink it. So, in this research project, it is the theory that paints the general picture of the social world at hand, not only setting the boundaries of the research, but also interacting with the findings. It ties the empirical findings again to the outside world: it provides the reasoning, possible explanations why things are happening the way they are and how to “make sense” of the data. It helps form the research approach and method, informing the researcher what kind of observations he or she should be looking out for; not in a binding way, but so as not to lose focus or “sharpness”. After the research phase is concluded, the theory comes back in the analysis where it again plays a vital role by “providing the punch line” (Tavoli and Timmerans, 2009, p. 255) either by reaffirming the theoretical casing or proposing alterations, additions and further reflection.

The tying of field and theory is one of the most profound outcomes of the work of Burawoy (1979). The case study researcher knows a priori which theory he will use to proceed and analyze his/ her data. What is important here is the fit (or misfit) of the theoretical framework and the empirical findings. In the case of a positive fit, the researcher will strengthen the validity and application of the theory to the specific context. In the opposite case, (s)he will be forced to revisit the theoretical background and critically reflect
why there was no “match”. Nevertheless, in both cases the researcher will have contributed to the development of the theory, either by backing it up, or by discovering significant gaps or areas where it cannot be applied per se. This degree of “sensitivity” to what cannot be applied to the selected theory, rather than the rigidness of attempting to fit the reality of empirical data in a specific theory is what offers richness to case study research and the primary reason for its selection. As Tavory and Timmermans (2009, p. 257) postulate “this kind of theory-driven ethnography is primarily aimed at expanding and modifying the scope of these formal theories with anomalous cases. Although the very notion of the “anomalous case” must, to some degree, assume that some kind of narrativity of social life can be detected, these narratives can themselves only be cased with the help of an existing theory.”

6.3. Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières was formed in 1971 from a small team of doctors, who returned from a mission of the Red Cross for the Biafra famine and a small team of journalists. It is an international, medical, humanitarian international non-government organisation has been setting up emergency medical aid missions in more than 65 countries in the world. Based in its core and founding principles it sets out to alleviate human suffering irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation, to protect life and health and to restore and ensure respect for the human beings and their fundamental human rights. In doing so, it strives to balance the tightrope between ensuring proximity and unhindered access to the populations in danger while at the
same time remaining neutral in the provision of humanitarian and medical assistance and independent from political and economic interests. The organisation also tries to ensure that the majority of funds raised for its work come directly from contributions from the general public. In this way, Médecins Sans Frontières guarantees equal access to its humanitarian assistance.

Another one of the organisation’s core values is témoignage, or bearing witness. In carrying out humanitarian assistance, Médecins Sans Frontières seeks to raise awareness of crisis situations, acts as a witness and will speak out, either in private or in public about the plight of populations in danger and in cases of violations of international and humanitarian law. Two classic examples of exercising this principle involve the public awareness of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda and the speech in the United Nations conference against the violations of human rights by Russia in Chechnya, in the occasion of Médecins Sans Frontières being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

Core role in bearing witness play the Médecins Sans Frontières expatriates who travel and live together with the beneficiaries in places few people have been and have a story to tell. Thus, they use their experiences to speak of what they have seen. Whenever possible, Médecins Sans Frontières volunteers give interviews and make presentations, while this communication can also be used to exert pressure on the actors violating human rights or inflicting violence to populations and mobilise of the international community.
Médecins Sans Frontières International is a global body to which national member centres are affiliated. Médecins Sans Frontières is a decentralised organisation with most strategic and operational decision making occurring at operational sections, (Barcelona-Athens, Geneva, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam) or national sections and branch offices (26 in total, including the international Office). An International Council (IC) exists that enables the Presidents of each Médecins Sans Frontières sections to elect the International Council President, and the International Council Treasurer to collectively develop strategic agreements and discuss the direction of Médecins Sans Frontières. Presidents are usually the chairs of this International Council from the respective board of trustees who are in turn elected by the membership of each Médecins Sans Frontières national section.

6.3.1 The Médecins Sans Frontières Charter

According to the Médecins Sans Frontières Charter (online at http://www.msf.org.uk/about_charter.aspx) the organisation offers assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict, without discrimination and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation. At the same time Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and demands full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions. The Médecins Sans Frontières' volunteers (expatriates or humanitarian workers) undertake to
respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic and religious powers.

6.3.1 **Medical action, “temoignage” and key principles**

The actions of Médecins Sans Frontières are first and foremost medical and consist of providing curative and preventive care to people in danger, and may also include the provision of water, sanitation, food, shelter, or other non-food items.

Médecins Sans Frontières action is mainly carried out in crisis periods when a system is suddenly destabilised and the very survival of the population is threatened, but there also long-term missions relating to endemic diseases or HIV/AIDS.

According to the organisation’s Charter (translation from French from online document in http://www.msf.lu/connaitre-msf/les-valeurs-de-msf/le-code-ethique.html#c512) “temoignage is done with the intention of improving the situation for populations in danger. It is expressed through the presence of volunteers with people in danger as they provide medical care which implies being near and listening, a duty to raise public awareness about these people, and the possibility to openly criticise or denounce breaches of international conventions. This is a last resort used when Médecins Sans Frontières volunteers witness mass violations of human rights, including forced displacement of populations, refoulement or forced return of refugees, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In exceptional cases, it may be in the best interests of the victims for Médecins Sans Frontières
volunteers to provide assistance without speaking out publicly or to denounce without providing assistance, for example when humanitarian aid is ‘manipulated’.

Médecins Sans Frontières missions are carried out according to the rules of medical ethics, and in particular, the duty to provide care with humanity, impartiality and in respect of medical confidentiality. The organisation ascribes to the principles of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. This includes the duty to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of each individual and the right of victims to receive assistance, as well as the right of humanitarian organisations to provide assistance.

The independence of Médecins Sans Frontières is characterised by an independence of spirit which is a condition for independent analysis and action, namely the freedom of choice in operations, in conducting evaluations and in the provision of medical humanitarian aid.

This independence is evident in the organisation’s strive for strict independence from all structures or powers, whether political, religious, economic or other, while this concern is also financial. Médecins Sans Frontières endeavours to ensure a maximum of private resources, to diversify its institutional donors, and, sometimes, to refuse financing that may affect its independence (as for example in missions like in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the organisation refuses to receive institutional funds from many states, as they are connected to the peacekeeping force that is supporting the national government which is at war with rebel groups).
Impartiality is fundamental to the mission of Médecins Sans Frontières and is inextricably linked to the independence of action. Impartiality is defined by the principles of non-discrimination and proportionality: non-discrimination in regard to politics, race, religion, sex or any other similar criteria, and proportionality of assistance as it relates to the degree of needs - those in the most serious and immediate danger will receive priority.

Médecins Sans Frontières does not take sides in armed conflicts and in this sense adheres to the principle of neutrality. However, in extreme cases where volunteers are witness to mass violations of Human Rights, the organisation may resort to denunciation dropping its strict principle of neutrality and speaking out to mobilise the forces necessary to stop the violations and improve the situation for the populations.
6.4. Greenpeace

Greenpeace is a global environmental non-government organisation, consisting of Greenpeace International (Stichting Greenpeace Council) in Amsterdam, and more than 28 national and regional offices around the world, providing a presence in over 40 countries. According to the description in the international website of the organisation (http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/how-is-greenpeace-structured/) “Stichting Greenpeace Council (SGC) is a Dutch Foundation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The SGC is governed by a Board of Directors which is selected by the voting member -i.e. representatives from eligible national offices. While the Board is the legally responsible party, it is Council who elects the Board, yet they are jointly responsible for decisions and each has exclusive authority in certain designated issues. There are two categories of membership, voting and non-voting offices. Non-voting offices are also known as candidate offices and are expected to meet voting criteria after meeting certain criteria set by the Council. Greenpeace International, the body that coordinates global Greenpeace policy and strategy, is an organisation of about 175 staff who are largely based in Amsterdam. Its role within the global Greenpeace network is to facilitate decision making processes, international planning and coordination on global Greenpeace campaigns, monitor global strategic and financial performance, develop presence and provide other organisational support.”

The national/regional Greenpeace offices are largely autonomous in carrying out jointly agreed global campaign strategies within the local context.
they operate within, and in seeking the necessary financial support from donors to fund this work.

Greenpeace was also formed in 1971, by a small team of activists who, motivated by their vision of a green and peaceful world and believing that a few individuals could make a difference, set sail from Vancouver, Canada, in an old fishing boat. Their mission was to "bear witness" to the US underground nuclear testing at Amchitka, a tiny island off the West Coast of Alaska, which is one of the world's most earthquake-prone regions. Amchitka was the last refuge for 3000 endangered sea otters, and home to bald eagles, peregrine falcons and other wildlife. Even though the boat was intercepted before it got to Amchitka by the US Navy, the journey sparked a flurry of public interest. The US still detonated the bomb, but the public outcry was massive. Nuclear testing on Amchitka ended that same year, and the island was later declared a bird sanctuary. Since then, the organisation is campaigning against environmental degradation. Its cornerstone principles and core values are non-violent confrontation, financial independence from political or commercial interests, defending against environmental degradation and seeking and promoting solutions the society's environmental choices.

Moreover, the organisation "bears witness" to environmental destruction in a peaceful, non-violent manner, using stories, images and testimonies to raise the level and quality of public debate and expose threats to the environment.

Greenpeace's cornerstone principles and core values are reflected in its environmental campaign work, worldwide. These are: "bearing witness" to
environmental destruction in a peaceful, non-violent manner, using non-violent confrontation to raise the level and quality of public debate, exposing threats to the environment and finding solutions to environmental problems. The organisation strives for financial independence from political or commercial interests.

6.4.1 No single founding manifesto

Unlike the Sierra Club or Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace was not founded at a single moment but was born out of an ad hoc citizen's group, the 'Don't Make a Wave Committee'. In 1969, when the United States announced a nuclear bomb test on Amchitka Island in the Bering Sea, many organisations in Vancouver, Canada, responded to stop the bomb test.

Bob Hunter a member of one of these organisations wrote 'Don't Make a Wave' on a demonstration placard, in reference to a possible tsunami caused by the bomb test and together with a small group of activists, chartered a fishing boat, renamed Greenpeace (uniting the pacifist with the environmental) and set sail towards the area of the US nuclear testing. Their fishing boat was stopped by the US navy, but their story made the news worldwide. In a few years, Greenpeace became one of the most famous and influential environmental non-government organisations.
6.4.2 Greenpeace international architecture

In regards to the global structure and architecture of Greenpeace, according to the organisation’s Council rules and procedures (online, http://www.greenpeace.org/international/PageFiles/24182/Rules%20of%20Procedure.pdf) “the Board of Directors of Greenpeace International consists of seven members. Its role is to approve the annual budget of Greenpeace International and the audited accounts, and to appoint and supervise the Greenpeace International Executive Director. The International Board is also responsible for monitoring the operations and activities of the wider organisation; deciding organisational policy; approving the start of new campaigns and new national offices; ratifying the Greenpeace International Annual General Meeting (AGM) decisions; granting the right to use the Greenpeace trademark; and for determining the voting status of national and regional offices in the AGM.

6.5 Conclusion

Both of these organisations, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, do not have an “official” mandate, in the sense of the one of the International Committee of the Red Cross or the Red Cross, for instance. The work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols, its Statutes – and those of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The ICRC is an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. It
takes action in response to emergencies and at the same time promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law. The four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I confer on the ICRC a specific mandate to act in the event of international armed conflict: it has the right to visit prisoners of war and civilian internees. The Conventions also give the ICRC in non-international armed conflicts, the right of humanitarian initiative recognized by the international community. Wherever international humanitarian law does not apply, the ICRC may offer its services to governments without that offer constituting interference in the internal affairs of the State concerned (ICRC, “The ICRC, its mission and work”, International Policy Report, 2009).

In contrast, both of our focal organisations seem to have “mandated themselves” to establish their identity, action and modus operandi. This was more the result of international meetings and agreements, and not of conventions or State- involving processes. The case study method provided the lens with which the characteristics of two organisations, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières are explored, allowing the research to move from the micro to the macro level. Thus, the data, findings and observations will be analysed within the boundaries of a specific theoretical context, which is nevertheless wide enough to incorporate diverse elements that are pertinent to the research questions. This method guides the data collection process and the presentation and representation of the accounts that have taken place. The descriptions and information show remarkably that these two of the biggest non-government organisations were formed at approximately the
same period, even the same year, and with quite striking similarities, even though the fields of action are different: environmental and medical/humanitarian.

Through the presentation, the main principles, key values and organisational structure were articulated, as the data and analysis will make important references to these elements, as factors that are influencing the way that actors, networks and social capital are intertwined and dynamically evolving. Starting as responses to a challenge, a threat (nuclear tests or famine) these organisations developed into major actors in the third sector, with great capacity to respond in huge crises and mobilise substantial parts of the global society. Their case study can contribute to the theoretical discussion on social networks and social capital, as regards to both the networks and resources mobilised, as well as to the outcomes of these mobilizations which have greater impacts in social life.
Chapter 7: Findings

7.1 Introduction

The current Chapter presents the main findings relating to the two focal organisations in relation to core incidents, events, historical occurrences and structure and investigates how the networks within and between them are affected, how they affect the organisations internally, between them, and in relation to the external environment. The research is based on an ethnographic approach dictating a high direct involvement of the researcher in the data collection process as well as the “everyday life” of the organizations as the events occurred. As explained in the methodology Chapter, many of the accounts are representations and presentations of what took place, as viewed by the researcher and collected via various methods (interviews, participation and observation, note-taking, external sources) that were presented in the Methodology Chapter. In this sense, differentiating data and analysis is impossible.

Hence, the Chapter follows the route of the two organisations and the actors and networks within them in multiple levels, from major events that have influenced their operations and the relations and relationships between them, to visiting the changes in their structure over time and the way these networks and organisations are reacting to them. Focused around key factors and events, we look into and analyse differences in network flow, structure, actor and organisational behaviour. These key factors and elements are both internal to the organisations, such as norms, values, and external, such as the
environment they operate in and the changes to it or notions of trust and reciprocity between them.

7.2 Key events for organisational/ network behaviour- the impact of context on networks and social capital

The presentation of various forms of qualitative data collected through different methods and tools is followed by further analysis of how these events relate to the key research questions. These events have played a central part in the mobilisation of actors and networks within the organisations, as well as in the network between the two focal organisations and their external environment. As the core findings are presented, specific references to the Annex are made, where “representative” samples of this data are shown.

In the unfolding of the social network theory, we visited the notion of networks as dynamic and fragmented entities whereas a holistic view of the networks was required to unfold all their characteristics and dynamics. In this sense either in a micro or macro level, networks can be viewed as complementary or competing clusters and actors, revealing high degrees of fragmentation and mobility. Thus, by focusing on the particular “contexts” of organisations and networks we can observe how they stimulate actors and networks to mobilise themselves we can follow the stream of forces or characteristics and the flow of relations that determine or define where and how network is intertwined with other or how its own “behaviour” is influenced. In this sense, networks can be both enablers and constrainers in organisational life. In our two case studies, we unfold the story of the networks
within and around the two non-government organisations, in relation to the forces in their external environment.

Social capital should be conceptualised as a dynamic process that involves people living in places (and working in organisations). As such it is a process with a past, present and future and its subjective, experiential dimension should also be considered (Popay, 2000). Hence, by visiting and revisiting the overall context whereby these two organisations are operating, we can arrive to very interesting findings relating to how the social networks are mobilized, developed and nurtured and how internal and external factors and forces influence the formation of social capital.

7.2.1 The Indonesia tsunami and the Lebanon war - access to resources as social capital

Through the data collection process, two of the most characteristic "events" that came across through the exploration of secondary sources (notably Press Releases and published documents) was the mobilisation and collaboration between the two organisation around two big emergencies. During two distinct circumstances, the networks within the two non-government organizations were activated to respond to the needs of populations in need.

Specifically, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace in 2005 worked together to bring medical supplies to survivors of the tsunami that hit Indonesia, and especially the Banda Aceh area. Greenpeace's flagship the 'Rainbow Warrior' carried supplies, food, gasoline and medical supplies to
Aceh, northern Sumatra, where access was proving difficult for humanitarian organizations. David Curtis, emergency coordinator for Médecins Sans Frontières at the time in Jakarta declared that "the northwest coast of Sumatra is one of the areas hardest hit by the tsunami. To save lives we must make a huge effort. With the support of the Greenpeace ship “Esperanza” (“hope” in English) we can reach people who are in remote areas and whom we could not otherwise help. The boat is coast carrying a cargo of food, medical and logistical supplies such as mosquito nets and plastic sheeting to construct tents and shelters and fuel for the helicopters. An MSF team composed of 40 people has organized four mobile clinics which are carrying out medical tasks along the coast. We are treating people who have been stranded for days with nothing. "The 'Rainbow Warrior' is now one of the means of transport that MSF is using in this emergency, as well as helicopters, planes and cars." At the same time, Gerd Laipold, the executive director of Greenpeace International at the time was commenting: “we want to assist in any way we can- we are bringing relief to the devastated areas, we hope to contribute to efforts to alleviate this tragic situation”.

One year later, in 2006, the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, which was at the time working in the Mediterranean, assisted in the transport of 100 tons of medical supplies and Médecins Sans Frontières teams to Beirut, in order to offer humanitarian aid to the victims of the war with Israel. The material was transported from Larnaca (Cyprus) to the capital of Lebanon. Due to limited security guarantees, there were only very few ships sailing to Beirut, hence the difficulty of getting the material. Juan Lopez de Uralde,
executive director of Greenpeace at the time stated “we are very concerned about the consequences of war in the Middle East on the civilian population, so we are happy to assist where possible in delivering humanitarian aid”. In turn, Médecins Sans Frontières noted “we have two transportation problems. It is very difficult to move large amounts of material from Beirut to southern Lebanon by road, as roads are in poor condition and unsafe. Some trucks have been targeted by missile and drivers refuse to go south. We also have difficulties getting our materials to Beirut quickly. In the short term, Greenpeace is offering a partial solution to one of our two grave problems.”

Faced with constraints on delivering humanitarian action, Médecins Sans Frontières turned to another international non-government organisation, Greenpeace, in order to reach the affected populations. This is not of course new, as many organisations collaborate in the field. But it was the first time in 2005, when these organisations with different fields of action, humanitarian and environmental had collaborated in response to the devastation of the tsunami in Indonesia. In fact, it was an excellent opportunity for both, as Médecins Sans Frontières was facing difficulties to transport the aid fast and Greenpeace was looking for ways to help the affected population, even outside its usual “mandate” or core action.

What is more interesting though is the fact that the success of the collaboration between the two organisations in 2005 served as basis for a repeated joint effort in 2006. The speed in which the venture was materialised in 2006 was impressive- within a day the Rainbow Warrior set sail to transport the Médecins Sans Frontières supplied to Lebanon. This was due to the
affinity between the two organisations and the networks that were formed between them from the first successful attempt. This is important as it underlines the importance of trust, which is portrayed in literature by social scientists like Gabetta (1998) supporting that it acts as a predisposed internal mechanism to assert the probability of a beneficial action in order to engage in cooperation with another party. Moreover, there seemed to be an optimal balance in the relationship of the two organisations in both occasions, each respecting the “vital space” of the other and not exploiting the publicity of the effort, as the statements and articles surrounding this collaboration suggest (Annex, p.p. 216-220).

These events reveal the catalytic nature of events to the mobilisation of key networks within Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières. Facing an emergency, the operational/ campaigns and logistics departments of both organisations activated their rapid response mechanisms (to assemble the medical humanitarian aid for Médecins Sans Frontières and prepare the ships Esperanza and Rainbow Warrior for Greenpeace). Then, faced with the problem of access to the populations in need, key actors (logistic coordinators and operational managers) had to use “shortcuts” to find the optimal solution. How can Médecins Sans Frontières transport the much needed aid fast suing outside help, while keeping its principles intact? How could Greenpeace offer support to the populations devastated by the tsunami in Indonesia (which was channelled also by pressure coming from its social base to “act”), when its operational field is limited to environmental action? Based on the mutual recognition of common values principles and modus operandi, the key social
actors within the organisations engaged to explore the collaboration and the idea was communicated to the top management of the organisations. After some quick discussions and coordination and within a period of just two days the plan was materialised.

In the case of our two focal organisations, the similarities in principles that facilitated the common decision to cooperate in the occasion of the joint intervention for the Tsunami in Indonesia. Médecins Sans Frontières needed a quick an efficient way to transport medical and humanitarian aid to remote areas around Banda Aceh, in Indonesia, whereas Greenpeace was looking for ways to contribute to the global effort, but independently from state actors or the United Nations. As aforementioned, the core similarities in the values of these two organisations, served as catalysts in developing a common approach: independence, proximity to the populations, emergency action. And with what a symbolism it was materialised: the Greenpeace flagship, the Rainbow Warrior was made available so that Médecins Sans Frontières expatriates and supplies, mostly jerry cans, water and sanitation material and tents, be transported to the remote areas. But the collaboration would not have taken place if the conditions were not appropriate: a condition of complementarity of the needs of both - the need to contribute/ help and the need for help in delivering the aid. In other words, it was a condition of mutual benefit, under common principles that govern the interventions and action of both organisations: a condition of maximum benefit with minimum compromise, but also the sheer desire to provide aid, to translate the unprecedented civil support and solidarity into action, swiftly and efficiently,
contributed to these values serving as shortcuts for the decision. After that, the paradigm for Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace was set: the pre-existing successful collaboration and relationship that was forged through intervention for the Tsunami, served as the catalyst to repeat a similar endeavour in the case of the Lebanon war. Again, the same needs were identified: the needs to transport emergency medical and humanitarian aid via an independent actor, from Médecins Sans Frontières, and the need to provide support and aid to the victims of the war, who were civilians by majority, from Greenpeace.

During these two common projects, there were certain parameters that had to be kept: Médecins Sans Frontières had the leading role in the two interventions whereas Greenpeace had a supporting role, providing the means (vessel) to transport supplies and personnel to the affected region. This balance had to be kept in the external communication of the interventions, which were in both occasions, highly media-tized events. Having the opportunity of being in charge of the external communication of the Greenpeace office in Greece at the time, I received the briefing from the international office in regards to the communication lines for the Press Releases of the joint intervention. The briefing paper made clear that the project was an Médecins Sans Frontières - led one, with Greenpeace having a supporting role. In the course of the Press Releases and all the external communication that followed, both in national and international level, these lines were kept. This is not coincidence or can be attributed just to “compliance” to the lines from the international office. Bearing in mind the
media frenzy surrounding the Tsunami (and to a lesser extent, the Lebanon war) there were ample opportunities to exploit media interest and augment the role of Médecins Sans Frontières in the interventions, in interviews given in TV, radio, etc. Yet, respective balances were kept.

This was evident in the respective Press Releases in both occasions and especially during the war in Lebanon, both in the tone and in the weight that is given in the pupation of each of the organisations, by both of them. On behalf of Greenpeace, the Campaigns Director states that the organisation is “happy to contribute”, whereas the Operations Director of Médecins Sans Frontières emphasizes that the organisation is “very grateful” for assistance. The joint operation for the transportation of medical aid for the victims of the war and the network used in the case of the Tsunami, were the same, due to the precedence of the previous successful collaboration that provided fruitful grounds for the next and speeded up the processes of “greenlighting” the operation.

At a more macro level, the emergency of the tsunami in Banda Aceh pushed the two organisations to come closer to each other- their own informal and formal networks to engage and the organisations as entities to collaborate- thus forming a greater network. This network remained “alive” through the next year, when it was activated again for the victims of the Lebanon war. Similar or common key values and principles of the two organisations (independence, action orientation) have played a paramount role in the initiation of the collaboration. Then, the success of the initial attempt reinforced mutual trust, thus minimising the perceived risk of
repeating the “transaction”. Finally, the success of the second attempt multiplied the positive effects and further reinforced trust between the two organisations. To this date, there relationships between the organisations are quite close in various hierarchical levels, while “mutual respect” has led to increased exchanges through common workshop, conferences, peer to peer collaborations and professional mobility between them. Therefore, these cases suggest that key external factors can have significant effects on networks, mobilising them in ways that augment their separate added value, foster ties and exchanges over time and produce high benefits for even greater audiences, all of the above being “traces” of social capital, if we think of social mobility (Lin, 2001) or social cooperation (Kostova & Roth, 2003; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) as some of the critical consequences.
7.2.2 Médecins Sans Frontières and Israeli doctors in the Democratic Republic of Congo- the “butterfly effect”

An interesting and starkly contrasting picture was that of the interaction between Médecins Sans Frontières and another humanitarian actor during the emergency response in Uvira, at the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In 2010, at least 230 people were killed when a fuel tanker overturned and exploded in a populated area, unleashing a fire ball that tore through homes and cinemas packed with people watching World Cup soccer. Eye witnesses described scenes of devastation in the town of Sange, where houses were burnt, some people died while trying to steal fuel leaking from the tanker, but most were killed at home or watching World Cup soccer in cinemas. United Nations helicopters began airlifting injured people to hospital, while Médecins Sans Frontières who had been working in the country for years, offering assistance to victims of violence, displaced populations begun offering medical assistance in the hospital where the injured were referred to. In the same location, Israeli burn specialist Dr. Eyal Winkler, deputy director of the department of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Sheba Medical Center, led an Israeli delegation of five medical specialists to Congo to treat fifty people who were severely burnt. Winkler’s five-man squad was the first team of specialists to arrive in the hospital to treat the injured, but the relationship with the volunteers of Médecins Sans Frontières, begun on a sour note, according to Winkler and the other Israeli specialists. “Doctors from international aid organisations treat a delegation of volunteer Israeli doctors to Congo as though we were occupiers”, Winkler had told the media (namely the
Israeli newspaper “Haaretz” and the American “The Huffington Post”) adding that he got the impression that some volunteers for Médecins Sans Frontières did not want to be around him or the other team members. “I came to save lives, but also because it’s important to me to show that Israel is not the Flotilla Country that it is painted out to be” noted Winkler (Haaretz, “Israeli doctors in Congo to aid burn victims get slammed for occupation” by Cnaan Liphshiz, July 29, 2010).

This caused quite a stir. The story and statements were featured at the newspaper “The Huffington Post” in the United States and were replicated in a variety of blogs. In a matter of days, it became an international issue, starting from the field teams in Congo and the local authorities to the Israeli Médecins Sans Frontières donors calling up offices of the organisation to ask for clarifications. In two days, Médecins Sans Frontières released a statement of clarification regarding the collaboration with the Israeli Doctors in Eastern Congo and its intervention in the Palestinian Territories. According to the statement and Médecins Sans Frontières, the articles and commentaries published were presenting false information concerning the cooperation between Médecins Sans Frontières teams and Israeli burn specialists. Médecins Sans Frontières declared that, after having carried out a thorough internal investigation with its team in Congo, found no basis for the allegations made against it and that any accusation that it places politics above patients is rejected. It presented that during the intervention in Congo, both the Médecins Sans Frontières and Israeli teams on the ground collaborated extremely well and appreciated each other’s contributions to assist patients.
Furthermore, according to the organisation, cooperation continued with the exchange of medical data and reiterated that its humanitarian action is guided by the principles of alleviating suffering through the provision of impartial and neutral medical assistance that is independent of political, religious, or other interests.

The truth of the fact is that the organisation’s principles of bearing witness in regards to violence against civilians and issues connected to the International Humanitarian Law were the basis for Médecins Sans Frontières speaking out in 2009 during “Operation Cast Lead,” the Israeli military response to rocket attacks against Israel. According to that communication, Médecins Sans Frontières teams working in Gaza observed a significantly high number of civilians wounded and killed in a very short period of time. Furthermore, Médecins Sans Frontières also had a track record of speaking out when its teams have witnessed civilians injured or killed as a result of internecine Palestinian violence in Gaza, as it did in 2007. In the case of the Israeli organisation and Médecins Sans Frontières, it sparked debates at international level, with the two organisations’ contrasting positions, principles or viewpoints around the Occupied Palestinian Territories at the core of the discussion or the hidden origin of the debate.

It is interesting to juxtapose this story to the one of Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace. In both cases, the organisations involved responded to an emergency that requested their collaboration. Based on their principles they quickly reacted to the emergency and that brought them next to each other. In the first case, Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace
seemed to have collaborated seamlessly, whereas in the second, that of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Israeli doctors, it was quite the opposite and resulted to an almost international incident. When probing deeper into the specific characteristics of the two separate cases, we can assume that the fallout between Médecins Sans Frontières and the Israeli doctors was deeper than what related to the field: it was a political, if not cultural clash. This brings into mind the dominant role of norms and "softer" elements in social networks and social capital. In the particular incident, pre-existing diverging norms may have played an important role in the degree of understanding or acceptance of the role of the other party.

Examining the public discourse of the two organisations on the issue, the political issue that exists in the background suggests fundamental differences of principles. The fact that Médecins Sans Frontières offers medical care in Gaza and not in Israel is viewed by the members of the Israeli burn specialists as partisan, whereas for Médecins Sans Frontières it is based on the evaluation of needs and gaps in access to health care. In the specific example, it is highly unlikely that the two parties will engage in future collaboration, unless clear differences are settled. The unsuccessful history will increase perceived risk of repeated attempts, while the networks between the two organisations or teams are most likely inactive or even not existing. In short, all the factors that would serve as lubricants for the mobilisation of actors and networks seem to be missing (shared vision, principles and values, previous positive experiences, mutual respect and recognition, etc.) leaving little room for social networks and therefore social capital.
7.2.3 Greenpeace versus the Bush administration

Dominant roles in Médecins Sans Frontières had strongly impacted its positioning in relation to global actors, like the United Nations and influenced its rhetoric in explaining the action as of the organisation. For Greenpeace, it is the core founding values of the organisation that really created a “cultural and value collision” between itself and the Bush government to the extreme, resulting in the latter indicting the Greenpeace entity in the US, while the case was dismissed later.

In a published articles in 2002 by Greenpeace International (available online at http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/features/no-war/) that were reproduced in various Print Press in the Netherlands and globally, the organisation commented on the “lessons learnt” from the cold war, the disarmament movement and the intricate history of arms control.

Greenpeace’s main thesis had always been against the development, production and use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, while calling for nuclear disarmament by all nations as a fundamental prerequisite of a sustainable future for. During the mandate of the Bush administration, the organisation urged the United States government to tackle the question of nuclear proliferation and nuclear, while arguing that a full-scale attack on the nation of Iraq for seeking to acquire nuclear weapons would be without precedent, especially given the double standard if one considers Israel, India or Pakistan. There are three military strategies available to prevent proliferation: counter-proliferation strikes, nuclear
deterrence, and military assault to create a "regime change". According to the organization, all three are flawed.

In the case of military counter-proliferation the organization opted for a new theory of deterrence when it comes to nuclear weapons. It argued that at its root, deterrence was a matter of perception of threat, supposed response, and risk/benefit analysis. Touching the "moral ground", the organization had put forward that morality and acceptable behaviour by states and their leaders was also a perception that changes over time. Thus, the need for world-wide moral deterrence against the possession of nuclear weapons would be based on the accountability towards civil society. Greenpeace and other action based organisations mobilized actors and networks globally and globalized local action in order to create a "considerable force" based on common and shared values, by whose standards of conduct and morality, global agreements and government should abide to. These standards were set for the "the global good", and they would set the parameters by which global powers should conform to the most global definitions of acceptable behaviour.

This of course was in stark contradiction to the doctrine put forth by the bush administration, where moral and acceptable behaviour was defined by external policy and summarized in the dilemma "if you are not with us, you are against us". Starting from a series of public confrontations mostly through media and then escalating to series of non-violent direct actions by Greenpeace, the public standoff between the organisation and the American government reached such high levels that the government attempted (with no success) to declare Greenpeace a criminal organisation.
7.2.4 Médecins Sans Frontières and the reaction to UN’s cluster approach to humanitarian response

In exploring the relationship between non-government organisations and external networks, example of Médecins Sans Frontières and the United Nations cluster is a case in point. In 2005, the United Nations (UN) review of the global humanitarian system highlighted a number of gaps in humanitarian response, which lead it to recommend the strengthening of the humanitarian coordinator system through a central emergency response fund and the adoption of a ‘lead organization concept’. Hence, the UN’s Inter-Agency Standing Committee established nine ‘clusters’, consisting of groupings of UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and other international organizations around a sector or service provided during a humanitarian crisis, as for example, water and sanitation activities, health, emergency response, etc. In addition to this, it produced an operational guidance on designated cluster/sector leads in emergencies (United Nations, online http://unmit.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=760).

The cluster system was officially rolled-out in Timor-Leste in 2009 with the formation of eleven clusters, lead by both non-governmental organizations and UN agencies in an attempt to provide a holistic and comprehensive response to the humanitarian emergency. The United Nations Cluster Approach operates at global and national level, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – has the responsibility to
ensure coherence and effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

According to the UN, the experience has proved quite positive, albeit facing challenges. Several agency’s reports, analyses and international conferences’ minutes suggest that in numerous international responses to humanitarian crises, some sectors have benefited from having clearly mandated lead agencies, while others have not. As the UN statement commented in its Preliminary Guidance Note (2005) the cluster approach had repeatedly also led to ad hoc, unpredictable humanitarian responses, with response gaps. In order to respond to this challenge, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed to designate global “cluster leads” at the country level.

This attempt was actually part of a wider reform process in order to presumably improve effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability and accountability, while at the same time strengthening partnerships between non-government organisations, international organisations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and UN agencies. This reform process was meant to be an inclusive one, where all relevant stakeholders would review and revise the cluster approach at both the global and country level. Nevertheless, while the aim of the cluster approach was to achieve more strategic responses and prioritize available resources by clarifying the division of labour among organisations, and to better define roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organisations within the sectors, Médecins Sans Frontières chose not to be part of this initiative.
While many organisations and humanitarian aid groups joined the initiative, envisaging benefits of being under the umbrella of the international body Médecins Sans Frontières abstained, claiming reasons of independence and different principles of action: “The current reforms are also a UN process: clearly stated, we will not be a member of the clusters and the action of MSF will not be placed under the responsibility of UN humanitarian coordinators nor be accountable to them. In the face of the challenges to be met, however, we can only welcome the willingness of the United Nations to improve their humanitarian response”, (Médecins Sans Frontières International Activity Report, 2006, available online at the following link, http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/ar/report.cfm?id=3230). In the same official report, the organisation explained its analysis and the rationale for its positioning in relation to the UN reform, through Fabien Dubuet, UN Liaison Officer and Emmanuel Tronc, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator of the International Office of Médecins Sans Frontières: “Officially, reform aims to increase the role and authority of humanitarian coordinators in the field to better defend humanitarian space and principles. Everything rests on two pillars. The first is financial resources that are more predictable and more readily available in emergency situations. The second is a mechanism (“cluster system”) allowing the humanitarian coordinator in a given country to clearly identify and quickly mobilise the agency responsible for overseeing a response to particular needs, with the aim of eliminating any gaps between sectors. This “cluster lead” then relies on the other members of its cluster to carry out a response: the UN operational agencies and NGOs it
will mobilise to address an identified need. MSF continues to follow this process of reform with attention to its potential implications for the organization of emergency relief and the response to humanitarian needs in the field. We have abstained from publicly taking position on the current reforms, as we considered it did not fall within the competence of a medical-humanitarian organization to comment on, or make proposals regarding the internal workings of the UN. The current reforms are also a UN process: clearly stated, we will not be a member of the clusters and the action of MSF will not be placed under the responsibility of UN humanitarian coordinators nor be accountable to them. In the face of the challenges to be met, however, we can only welcome the willingness of the United Nations to improve their humanitarian response.”

Whilst determined to retain its independence in the face of current reforms, Médecins Sans Frontières continued the dialogue with the UN agencies yet maintained its independence of analysis, action and resources so as not to jeopardise the impartial nature of the organization, particularly in conflict situations.

According to Emmanuel Tronc (online article available in the following link  [http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/ar/report.cfm?id=3230](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/ar/report.cfm?id=3230) and full article in Annex, page 210, “United Nations: deceptive humanitarian reforms?”): “The humanitarian landscape is currently made up of a large number of actors with widely differing aims, resources and modus operandi. It is not only impossible and unrealistic to believe that all these actors can work
in perfect synergy under a single banner, but it can also be at times perilous, as some actors operate with mixed agendas, the humanitarian goals falling second to political, security or developmental objectives and resulting in unmet needs. The existence of a diversity of approaches is what helped save the lives of thousands of children in Niger in 2005, illustrating that independent actors may well offer people in need the best chance at effective assistance. Further, diverse approaches to humanitarian aid help assure that if one strategy fails, all do not fail, with deadly consequences. We have already seen this to be the case in contexts such as East Timor and Angola’.

Médecins Sans Frontières’s stance on its relationship with the rest of the international aid system was well summarised by Eric Stobbaerts, director of operations for the organisation, who raised the dilemma of what would better serve the populations in need: and independent approach or a collective effort? The organisation came to the conclusion that the best service for populations in need comes as a result of independence of action rather than participation in integrated effort, while keeping an open and bilateral channel of communication with all major aid actors.

Nevertheless, this was perceived by several organisations and actors in the field as one more example of Médecins Sans Frontières isolationism and arrogance. Yet for Médecins Sans Frontières it was a way of ensuring impartial provision of humanitarian assistance to populations at risk. As Mr. Stobbaert explained over recent years the organisation had witnessed a proliferation of other organisations involved in crisis response that eroded the capacity for efficient coordination, and further challenges an idealistic view of
a homogeneous aid system. Amongst these actors on the ground, there is the notion that humanitarian action should go well beyond the basic humanitarian imperative of saving lives and operate as part of a larger framework for peace and development, while many non-government organisations depend heavily upon institutional funds, increasing the politicization of relief.

For Médecins Sans Frontières, such a development was indeed perceived as a dangerous confusion between political and humanitarian agendas, especially in conflict contexts, as big donors’ agendas are not always compatible with humanitarian imperatives while the integration of political, military, civil affairs and humanitarian agendas are many times portrayed as the best option around a common response. While multilateral platforms (UN, national governments, non-government organisations under the leadership of the UN) have emerged for crisis management, the experiences of Sierra Leone in the 1990s, with the tacit abandonment of civilians living under the control of an armed group, or in Darfur and Lebanon have demonstrated to the organisation the danger of working within a coordinated and politically-led governance system.

For non-government organisations like Médecins Sans Frontières the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality would be compromised should they be obliged to divert their operations away from impartial priorities such as delivering care and providing relief. According to the organisation, while the UN believes that the political and humanitarian agendas should be “equal partners” in decision-making, in practice this would lead to
subordination of humanitarian imperatives. This assessment underlined Médecins Sans Frontières’s decision to withdraw from collective efforts in order to best serve populations in need according to its humanitarian principles. What was perceived as an arrogant move for many, was actually for the organisation a way to safeguard independence of action, in order to safeguard humanitarian response.

Of course, there were important challenges attached to that decision. A primary challenge was that Médecins Sans Frontières was misunderstood by many members of the “humanitarian community” and evoked a stereotype of arrogance. But for the organisation itself, a key challenge was to confuse independence with isolation- the tension between remaining independent while sharing and exchanging, attending platforms of coordination still exists from the organisation in the field and in headquarters. If independence is confused with isolation, it will contradict the very essence of Médecins Sans Frontières’ “temoignage” (bearing witness) and proximity.
7.3 Networks, organisations and new paradigm shifts

Médecins Sans Frontières had been noticing a new paradigm shift with direct influence in the way organisations and humanitarian relief agencies are perceived and operating was taking place over the years. The character and the different elements of this shift were mentioned in various platforms, forums of Médecins Sans Frontières and were often the subject of “corridor talk” between meetings. These trends were seamlessly elaborated in the Médecins Sans Frontières positioning paper: “The Elusive Principles of Humanitarian Action” by Michiel Hofman, Head of Mission for Médecins Sans Frontières in Afghanistan, and Sophie Delaunay, Executive Director of the organisation in the United States office (http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/article.cfm?id=4311&cat=sp ecial-report), initially an internal publication of the organisation in 2009, which was then also featured in interviews and website articles. A characteristic extract painted a vivid picture of choices that international non-government organisations have to make in a landscape of increased polarisation and militarisation of humanitarian aid:

“In June 2009, the U.S. military invited a diverse range of organisations involved in emergency relief, development and conflict-resolution activities in Afghanistan to a conference at West Point aimed at bridging what they called “the cultural gap” existing between the military and non-governmental organisations. A background document circulated before the conference concluded that both sides had to come to a mutual understanding because they share “some common purposes such as preventing conflict and creating stability in fragile and failing states.” This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of humanitarian principles. The line separating humanitarian and military action is one that by definition under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) cannot be bridged. While humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières may share the same area of operations with military forces, our purposes are not the same. Delivering emergency medical aid in war zones does not make Médecins Sans Frontières a pacifist
organization, nor do we judge the legitimacy of war ends pursued by any belligerents in a conflict. While we demand adherence to IHL – particularly the respect for patients, medical ethics, and health staff and structures – our aim is not to end wars, bring peace, build states, or promote democracy. The only ambition of humanitarian action is to limit the devastations of war by helping people survive in decent condition, no matter what side of a frontline they may find themselves on. Impartial humanitarian assistance requires acceptance from all communities and warring parties – whether national governments, armed opposition movements, international forces, or even criminal gangs. In all conflicts, creating working space needs to be negotiated and then maintained over time by actions that demonstrate we are only motivated by the wish to provide lifesaving medical assistance. Nostalgia for a Golden Age when access and protection were granted automatically to aid workers is pure fantasy, and Afghanistan is no exception. With the multiplication of aid actors, some combining a variety of goals in one organization – relief, development, human rights, conflict-resolution, civil society promotion, justice, rule of law – claims of neutrality, independence and impartiality can at times seem hypocritical or simply invocations aimed at reinforcing an organization’s own illusions of purity. Neutrality is often abandoned for a so-called “pragmatic” approach by organisations hoping to participate in the integration of development and nation-building efforts.

Such an approach chooses to sacrifice one’s ability to respond to immediate needs for the sake of a brighter future. Although there is no fundamental opposition between relief and development assistance, there is a need to make distinctions, in particular when a conflict is ongoing. No matter the intent, organisations that engage in a development or nation-building agenda during a conflict will be perceived as taking sides. For the sake of preserving the space for impartial humanitarian assistance, in war zones multi-mandate organisations should make a choice between relief and development assistance, a choice between saving lives today or saving societies tomorrow. Independence is also compromised by the need for financial resources as many aid organisations rely on state-funding for survival. This gives donor countries undue leverage for co-opting assistance in service of their political needs and leads beneficiaries to question the motives of aid workers. Médecins Sans Frontières teams in Pakistan were asked repeatedly by displaced people this past summer, “Where do you get your funds?” In Afghanistan, the majority of countries who fund Western aid organisations are part of the international coalition. But financial independence does not automatically make an organization a neutral or impartial actor – that can only be obtained through action. In the struggle to access those most in need, the only tool humanitarian aid workers have is the clarity and transparency of our intentions. Since it is difficult to distinguish among the various actors that make up the alphabet soup that is the aid system in a place like Afghanistan today, humanitarian action requires, at minimum, the practical demonstration of neutrality, independence, and impartiality, probably at the price of taking distance from the larger aid community. Even so, there can be no illusion that such actions will guarantee
the safety of humanitarian aid workers who are inherently vulnerable in any war.”

These reflections touch upon the fundamental dilemmas and choices that organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières are faced with, ever increasingly today. The blurring of lines between humanitarian assistance and care, with the militarization and politicization of aid makes can make working in the field quite challenging for non-government organisations in terms of security, acceptance and access. Today, the United States army is offering “humanitarian aid” in Afghanistan alongside international and national non-government organisations, while Al Qaeda offers “nutritional aid” under the “blessings of the martyr Osama Bin Laden” in Somalia through Al Shabaab. Where does this leave organisations that have based their identity and action, as well as the support from millions of people worldwide, on public discourse on “independent medical humanitarian action”? How can such organisations balance the tightrope between access and protection, neutrality vs. access, increased funding challenges and security? It is evident that decisions regarding these issues require and demand a holistic and inclusive approach from many different strands and layers within Médecins Sans Frontières, both at executive and associative level. After the diagnosis period, where reflections such as the one above were diffused and discussed both publicly and privately, the highest associative (the International Council) and executive (the Executive Directors) bodies within Médecins Sans Frontières decided to initiate an ambitious project: that of the governance reform of the organisation.

As a first step, Médecins Sans Frontières hired in 2010 Adrio Bacchetta as a full-time project manager for the Médecins Sans Frontières
reform. In the interview presented below, he talks about some of the challenges the organisation faced and some key elements required for success. Mr. Bacchetta was an independent consultant and was formerly the General Director of Médecins Sans Frontières Germany and had worked for Médecins Sans Frontières in head offices and the field from 1997 to 2008.

For many, it seems that the Médecins Sans Frontières reform process is a new project, but it really started in 2008, while the main issues it aims to address are also not new. How to increase the inclusiveness and improve the effectiveness of the associative system? How to reduce waste due to executive duplication? How to improve coordination of field projects? How to do better in advocacy and public positioning? How to improve accountability? How to manage growth as the organisation increases in both volume and number of entities? Reading through papers written over the last fifteen years, ambitions to address most, if not all of these issues seem to be repeated like broken records every few years. Despite the best intentions, they remain unresolved.

Médecins Sans Frontières has not been static though. For sure, it is a very different, much bigger and probably more unified organisation than in the nineties. However, Médecins Sans Frontières’s prolonged inability to seriously address the fundamental issues just mentioned and, possibly at the root of this, the chronic inability to create a respected international decision-making system, are probably the strongest justification for many who are promoting the need for significant change.

With so much at stake there are naturally strong opinions on how Médecins Sans Frontières could, should, or should not, be reorganised. Views range from the need for radical, rapid reform through to simply trying to improve the functioning of existing structures. Simply considering the reorganisation of the Médecins Sans Frontières movement is complicated, let alone implementing it! Any change will take time, so whilst there is a drive to get some building blocks agreed, detailed development and transition will need to be step by step. The process has to be inclusive.

And so the project started. As agreed by the Executive Directors and the International Council, a combined executive and associative working group started work on the process to reorganise Médecins Sans Frontières. In short, the process comprised an intensive development phase led by the working group up until the next International Council meeting in December 2010, where several options for the future were discussed. Thoughts and
ideas from members were collected through various channels and there were major moments of consulting the movement at conferences and international meetings, as well as through online forums and during the Field Associative Debates, a process whereby meetings with beneficiaries and field staff were carried out in several Médecins Sans Frontières missions over a period of time of three months.

Ultimately it was the General Assemblies that voted on proposed scenarios. The Médecins Sans Frontières reform conference that followed had gathered a wide range of views from people and groups throughout the movement. This was facilitated via individual contribution, outcomes from ad hoc debates, inputs from planned moments such as the Field Associative Debates and from the structured process (linking with the International Council, Growth internal Working Group, Executive Directors platform, etc.) by which the governance internal Médecins Sans Frontières working group had followed in order to develop possible options for the organisation’s future. The “Reform Conference” conference where all this input comes together debated and informed the International Council on their submission for voting in the 2010 general assemblies. It was a key moment where people from both the associations and the operations of Médecins Sans Frontières met to give their opinions on the option(s) that have been developed up to that point. The process was completed the International Council and Executive Directors approved the reform proposal (Annex, Médecins Sans Frontières: Possible future association models, p. 2210). In the end of 2011, the new governance structure of the organisation will be a reality, starting from the associative
level, as the executive process is still under way. The associative life of the organisation will include more external representative and will be more inclusive in its membership, but at the same time more directive towards the executive, in regards to the global vision of the organisation and its operational project.

This process involved a significant mobilisation of resources, actors and networks within and around the organisation. Another extract of Mr. Bracceta’s interview described this activation of local, regional and international networks.

In Médecins Sans Frontières, with so many members and employees spread across nineteen sections, three branch offices and well over a hundred field missions, the process of consultation and involvement is a challenge that we are trying to meet. Discussions within boards, office teams and associations are increasing in frequency. The Field Associative Debates are planned and there will be a special conference in March that will use all that input to debate and inform the final proposals for the general assemblies.

It is unrealistic to imagine that such a vast number of people will all be able to understand all aspects of the organisation at the same level, or in the same way, before giving input or voting at the general assemblies. The most important thing is that people input and give views based on their personal experience and exposure to the Médecins Sans Frontières system. For example, the most valuable input from field teams are their ideas or even ‘demands’ of what organisational changes will enable them to better meet the needs they confront; fundraisers, human resources and communications people will have their views on changes that may improve their area of work; members and boards will have views on the composition, duties and rights of those that ultimately govern Médecins Sans Frontières.

As a result of this reform and other initiatives we are seeing international teams such as human resource, communications and logistics directors putting forward united and ambitious visions. This is inspiring as it is happening despite a lack of organisation-wide vision and not because of it. It shows a spirit and commitment towards Médecins Sans Frontières as a cohesive movement and that is a clear sign of health.

The challenge for the organisation is to harness the energy Médecins Sans Frontières has generated around the idea of a clearer organisational future and a way of functioning that is best suited to dealing with challenges ahead. While this may mean some differences from the status quo, it will also be important to retain, or even enhance, the innovative, diverse and dynamic character of Médecins Sans Frontières. So, is change needed? Whilst the
scale is debatable, the need seems clear. Is change possible? Yes, absolutely, but such processes are vulnerable, both through their complexity and the lengthy timeframe over which they must be implemented. Although the technical construct of the organisation is crucial, ultimate success will not be defined by the ability to achieve a universal technical understanding of all elements of the governance system for Médecins Sans Frontières members and staff. It will be defined by a spirit, trust and willingness for Médecins Sans Frontières to act more as a single movement, rather than continue to be simply the sum of its component parts.

This highlights the unprecedented mobilisation of internal and external networks to Médecins Sans Frontières, in response to environmental changes or changing variables in the context of its core action: the field. This mobilisation entailed a large number of actors and networks within the movement, as well as external focal points and referents. The participation in this process was quite diverse, from the field to the headquarters, from the associative members to the staff and executive. It required an impressive number of meetings, debates, documents circulated, consultations, observations and, of course, produces a fair amount of internal conflicts and tension.

Similarly to Médecins Sans Frontières, Greenpeace underwent a similar process of revisiting and reflecting on its current and future architecture. Hence, a governance reform process was initiated, some years prior to the one in Médecins Sans Frontières. Facilitating the overall decision making processes was the priority laid out in the Governance procedures. The problem diagnosis consisted of poor coordination an international level even for global campaigns, and minimal optimization of resources and support even for commonly agreed campaigns, like the campaign against genetically modified organisms or the climate change campaign. Thus, facilitating
international planning and decision making processes on global Greenpeace campaigns, coordinating and carrying out global Greenpeace campaigns, monitoring Greenpeace’s global strategic and financial performance and developing Greenpeace presences in priority regions for the organisation were identified as core objectives of this exercise. Yet, the reform process did not evolve at the same depth and width of the Médecins Sans Frontières one. It reached only the level of restructuring the way global campaigns are identified and decided at Greenpeace and elaborated on the role and responsibilities of the sectional offices, in coordination with the international office. It was nevertheless a significant shift that required the mobilisation of actors and networks within the organisation, resulting in meetings and debates at local through to international level, before setting the campaigns that would guide at least the period of the next three years (2002-2005), namely the forest campaign, the sea campaign, the campaign against climate change and for the promotion of renewable energy, and the campaign against genetically modified organisms. Characteristic examples of the international campaigns in that spiraled from this process included the “Energy [R]evolution” campaign and the “Forests for Climate” campaign which aimed at halting deforestation for priority areas such as the Amazon, the Congo and the paradise forests of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, and globally. These campaigns were organised efforts to mobilise big worldwide networks in order to provoke “positive change”.

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The outcomes and how these relate to the social network theory and the underpinnings of social capital will be discussed in the next Chapter. Nonetheless, it is already at this point safe to assume that the reform process for both organisations is evidence of a clear mobilisation of network and resources in response to key events or environmental shifts, with paramount implications for the future movement directions, communication/public positioning/advocacy, coordination and redefinition of priorities. The added value of this remains to be seen, yet the effort is dominated by the assumption that the restructuring of networks and redefinition of strategic orientations will facilitate the better serving of the populations in need, the translation of social capital in the humanitarian and environmental arena.

7.4 The media landscape and communication as key challenge for Médecins Sans Frontières

The aspect of external communication and public positioning is central for Médecins Sans Frontières and in the way the organisation presents itself but also in the way it related to its core activity, providing medical and humanitarian aid in the field. Hence, communication is not always targeted towards the society that support the mission of the organisation but also towards the beneficiaries themselves as it is imperative that they understand and accept its presence besides them, through the expatriates and national staff. Consequently, the exchanges through the various actors and networks through communication exist in various layers and are influences by a variety of factors, internal and external to them.
A review on Médecins Sans Frontières Operations and Communication was conducted via the use of semi-structured interviews involving the Operational Directors of the five Operational sections of the organisation, their Executive Directors and respective Directors of Communication (Annex, p. 214). The main findings of this research concluded that the external environment was characterised by an increasingly global communications reality that requires greater coherence in the organisation’s public communications and positioning, especially due to the growing prominence and manipulation of human rights, justice and humanitarian discourse in political confrontations. Moreover, it was identified that governments and parties operating in the field of Médecins Sans Frontières activities were increasingly sensitive and aware and reactive of public communications, while communications were becoming a point of negotiation and leverage with authorities.

Some key quotes from the interviews underline the significance of re-aligning the organisation “as speaking out and advocacy remain important components of Médecins Sans Frontières ’s work, it must develop a more strategic set of networks (international, mission and project levels) to build capacity for acceptance and negotiation” (Juan Tubau, Director of Operations in Operational Center Barcelona- Athens), “silence is also considered position and consideration of the positive/negative impact of our silence should take into account consequences beyond that specific mission” (Erwin Van’t Land, International Communications Coordinator).
From the above it is clear that over the past few years, Médecins Sans Frontières public communications and capacity to speak out have generated a series of questions, debates and a feeling of dissatisfaction within the movement. This process of self-examination seemed to be both healthy and necessary for the organisation, seen as opportunity to re-clarify objectives and public communication strategy for the future, aligned with key trends and changes in the environment. Defining the new strategic objectives meant that the organisation first needed to “internalize” the major challenges, along with the communication tools required meet these challenges. These objectives stimulate reflection on the way the organisation will need to organise tools, structures and public communication resources in general, with the allocation of human and financial resources to serve the new goals and directions.

Acting upon the diagnosis, the organisation tasked one of their internal networks, the Directors of Communication of the Operational Centers (a group of five directors) to identify and propose actions and directions relating to the public positioning and global communication. The network of the five embarked on a series of meetings, debates and reflection with central actors within the organisation (as, for instance General Directors and Humanitarian Affairs Officers) as well as with other key networks, like the Director of Operations platform of the Operational Centers and produced a Communication Strategic Paper named “A Way Forward” which was endorsed by the Executive Directors. Characteristic excerpts are presented hereafter, revealing the outcomes of the reflection processes and the new
directions that the organisation sets forth, as a response to the challenges
aforementioned.

The objectives for our public communications can be summarised
under the pillars of visibility, acceptance, and leverage. There is no hierarchy
among these objectives. Visibility and acceptance of Médecins Sans
Frontières operations, both in the field and in our home societies, is essential
to building and maintaining our operational independence. The third pillar of
leverage will remain the most divisive and controversial aspect of our
communications, but what remains clear is that without the willingness to
invest in strategies to increase Médecins Sans Frontières ’s visibility at home
and overseas our capacity to gain acceptance for our action, and at times
exert leverage on actors and the situations our teams operate, will be
compromised. At the same time, how Médecins Sans Frontières chooses to
exercise its leverage in a given situation can play an important part in
distinguishing ourselves from other actors and, in turn, promoting acceptance
as a truly independent, neutral, and impartial actor. Our communication
strategies should fall in line with supporting these pillars.

The three pillars of communications detailed above need to be backed
accordingly by communications and other departments, the field and all
sections. We all need to reach a global understanding of communication
objectives and roles. For too long, operational and institutional communication
objectives have been played against each other – one being perceived as
nobler than the other; one form of communications seen as deserving the
involvement of operations and field teams, the other being delegated to
fundraisers. The reshuffling of communication objectives under three pillars
aims to suppress this logic. It means that operations and other departments
should clearly understand, accept, and support the need for communications
department devote time and resources towards the visibility as well as
acceptance and leverage objectives. On the other hand it requires that
communications departments properly balance and strategically support to
the three pillars. (This implies that communications define the precise
objective of each communication effort).

The second element that requires a clear commitment and re-
affirmation from the movement: pillar three, our leverage capacity. Speaking
out is not only part of Médecins Sans Frontières identity, it is part and parcel
of Médecins Sans Frontières ’s credibility. This means that we should use this
capacity in not only a strategic, but also a coherent manner.

While the past decade had brought diminishing coverage of
international affairs in most Western countries with the closure of foreign news
bureaus, reduction in airtime, and an increasing reliance on news wire
services and freelance journalists, due to the budget restrictions imposed on
much of the national press, in Médecins Sans Frontières there was unanimous agreement that the organisation has to remain in the international media spotlight to be visible. This was crucial in terms of the strategic allocation of resources.

At the same time, it has also been true that when targeting international and pan regional media, Médecins Sans Frontières had focused on “western media” for too long. As key actors within the movement (in the general direction and communication areas) admit “we must now think outside the traditional media box, in order to combine the two elements as follows: incorporate the strategic evolution of the international media landscape and target media with some influential capacity to back specific operational objectives” (excerpt from the Directors of Communication meeting in Brussels, November 2010). That signified the increased need to enlarge scope of analysis and networking, as knowledge about and justification for the name of Médecins Sans Frontières and its activities was by no means a given or universally accepted.

For instance, the Khartoum government (Sudan) had used tremendously well media to manipulate rhetoric against non-government organisations. Due to lack of knowledge about the Médecins Sans Frontières name and activities in certain opinions and lack of capacity towards media in the Arabic regions, the organisation felt vulnerable and incapable to respond to these accusations. At the same time as the development of media outlets in certain strategic regions, the audience for news and information had become increasingly fractured and segmented with the rise of the Internet and advent
of social networking and content-sharing sites. These social media entities give consumers the ability to simultaneously and rapidly filter and share information, while the expansion of mobile technologies and the penetration of broadband networks into the countries and regions where Médecins Sans Frontières teams operate poses new challenges and opportunities as well. Just as governments and rebel groups have increasingly monitored Médecins Sans Frontières communications, patients and communities are becoming able to document and expose inconsistencies between words and action. Thus, the need to develop new standards of transparency and accountability to donors and beneficiaries was depicted.

When documenting this process of reflection and course setting for Médecins Sans Frontières external communications and positioning, data was collected through notes, observation and participation in a series of from key meetings, teleconferences and working groups: the platforms of the Directors of Communication of the five Médecins Sans Frontières Operational Centers (Amsterdam, Paris, Barcelona- Athens, Brussels, Switzerland and USA), the Directors of Operations of the Operational Centers, the ExDir (Executive Directors of the 19 sections) and the DirCom19 (Directors of Communication of the 19 Médecins Sans Frontières sections). Throughout this process, the influence of external factors on network and organisational behaviour, as well as the way external networks perceive and position themselves in relation to Médecins Sans Frontières was examined.

The de-contextualization of communications from events and conditions on the ground, the reporting of “violence as weather” phenomenon
and the highly politicized environments in which the organisation’s medical teams find themselves operating together with the disconnect between the networks on the ground and the public communication through the headquarters was identified as a key constraint for the networks responsible for advocacy and lobbying efforts towards strategic audiences, aimed at increasing humanitarian space. Moreover, security threats and incidents experienced by Médecins Sans Frontières have largely impacted on the way it thinks and considers communication in a number of contexts, forcing it to reconsider the importance of strategically ensuring the visibility of its activities to build levels of acceptance. Yet, a main contentious issue when it came to international communication, was the security dimension, especially in the interactions between the managers of communications and those of the operations. Some key positions in the different meetings stress that “not so long ago, we made the strategic gamble that silence would help our operations in highly insecure contexts, guarantee our security and prove our neutrality. The limitations of this default approach have now become clear. In our meeting with the Islamic Court in early 2008, we were asked why we never make statements about the situation in Somalia, its on-going war and the consequences for the population. Our silence has been interpreted.”

(Erwin van’t Land, Médecins Sans Frontières’s International Communication Coordinator). Moreover, characteristic quotes from operational directors describe: “In Pakistan, new communications approach has been initiated to increase visibility at the national level to help distinguish Médecins Sans Frontières from others actors on the ground. This will take time to develop,
however, and resources have been specifically allocated towards this endeavour as well as an intersectional strategy. The recent expulsions of Médecins Sans Frontières sections from Niger and North Sudan are weighing heavily as well on our decisions to communicate and on our public positioning towards the governments and rebellions vital to our access to populations in need of assistance. Médecins Sans Frontières communication is seen to some extent as a threat to preserving operations; the Niger syndrome is more than present in the back of Médecins Sans Frontières ’s mind. These fears need to be constantly re-examined. Have we failed in this case in meeting our operational objectives?” (Directors of Operation platform meeting minutes, April 2010).

These findings clearly depict some of the new worrying trends for Médecins Sans Frontières. “Access against silence” was identified as the common deal kindly proposed by some governments like Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, or Nigeria. Médecins Sans Frontières was experiencing crucial precedents and control on its voice did not solely impact on its capacity to denounce a situation but even on the capacity to say what it does and what it sees (Ethiopia– cholera summer 2009; Sri Lanka—conditions in the Internally Displaced Populations´ camps 2009; Burkina Faso—measles outbreak 2009). In January 2009, the International Committee of Médecins Sans Frontières expressed its concern over its booming silence on the issue of Zimbabwe. After years of silence, with great difficulty Médecins Sans Frontières finally spoke out; it did not get expelled from the authorities.
Since 1971, Médecins Sans Frontières has gone through diverse periods, all related to specific political environments, which did impact on the way it perceives its role in terms of external communication and its capacity to speaking out or denounce situations. It may have come to a more realistic approach towards its role and its appeals to the outside. Again, Médecins Sans Frontières may need to readapt and readjust its speaking out capacity to the present political environment, but adaptation does not mean compromising on its identity.

As a public actor, Médecins Sans Frontières doesn’t control entirely its communication and global communication about its image. The media management around abductions, for example, was identified to illustrate how vulnerable it can be- it cannot only communicate at a time when Médecins Sans Frontières wants and chooses to communicate. There was a widespread notion within the organisation that it is currently losing its bearings on how to position itself and on what used to be called témoignage (bearing witness). And the reflection went much further than the dimension of denunciation: on what do Médecins Sans Frontières speaks out? Are there domains that Médecins Sans Frontières doesn’t want to position itself valid any longer? As a medical humanitarian organisation, should it have a stronger medical voice? As a humanitarian organisation is there specific criteria it should meet before denouncing a situation? Can the medical and humanitarian character of Médecins Sans Frontières coexist in this increasingly difficult environment to develop operations? Is focusing on the provision of medical care really a means to escape all these dilemmas?
These issues were dominant in discussions, agreements and disagreements, in different layers and levels within the organisation, bringing people in debate for the areas of field operations, communication, humanitarian affairs and policy-making, general management. The social actors pushed their individual positions and agendas through these discussions, while the different networks (especially the two poles, Operations and Communications) balanced a tightrope between maintaining power (traditionally, the clearance process for public communications in Médecins Sans Frontières presupposes that operational managers sign-off the final texts) and fostering desired change (which meant they would have to make compromises). At the same time, important decisions involving other actors within the organisations were taken, as for example the decision to re-deploy thirty percent of communications staff closer to the field of operations. Moreover, formulations and development of future networks were decided, with the key one being the formation of “media hubs” in Hong Kong, Buenos Aires, Nairobi, Dakar and Dubai to complement the existing ones in New York, London and Paris.

It is evident that the key issues relating to public communications brought increased actor and network mobilisation in the organisation, as it sensed major changes to its environment. This mobilisation and interactions spiraled from top-down o bottom-up within Médecins Sans Frontières for a period of two years, bringing important changes to its strategy but also its structure. Moreover, it brought major change in its interaction at field level, with the hiring of communications officers in the field (who are increasingly
national staff, and with “perception and acceptance” strategies developing for the missions of the organisation with the help of local media and partners.

Thus, it will be interesting to link this network behaviour under the lens of the theory of social capital, especially in relation to the mobilisation of the networks and the generation, the formulation and shifting of values and norms and the generation of exchanges between social actors and networks.
Chapter 8- Discussion

Having set the scene with the literature review and the presentation of the key findings, the discussion chapter immerses in the research issue of how social capital is manifested, what triggers it, how it is expressed and nurtured and what it produces. Via the use of participatory action research that “seeks to avoid the ethical and epistemological pitfall of covert forms of research by involving the researched in the formation and conduct of research” (Matthew, 2001, p. 13) and the case study method attempting “to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on existing theory” (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5) the various emerging observations are analyzed and placed within context.

8.1 Key norms and values as facilitators of network engagement, resource mobilisation and social capital

As presented in the literature review Chapter, the organisations and actors that share the same principles are more likely to engage in relations, exchanges and relationships than others who have contradicting or unrelated ones even when pursuing the same or similar goals. The value system is also the force that ensures the viability and longevity of the network; the transactions, mobilisations and flows within the network or between networks, be it humans or organisations, create values. These new values are products of norms, ideas and notions that are formed from the relationships between the actors, over time.
In social network and social capital theory, the abstract notions or norms are crystallized into something more concrete, into values that "accompany" the specific actor, characterising the organisation or person in relation to the outcome and relationship the stemmed from the various exchanges: good or bad, effective or not, trustworthy or unreliable, valuable or worthless. These norms will affect whether the transaction is likely to be repeated in the future- with the positive norms increasing the probabilities of repetition. Tried over the course of time, these norms are transformed into values that may be inherited to new members of the network and create mutual respect. For example, as stated before, it is no coincidence that these organisations succeeded to coordinate and collaborate within a matter of two days, as it is no coincidence that there is high professional mobility between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace.

As described in the literature review, norms, organisational culture and values are linked with the development and nurturing of social relations that form social capital. In the case of converging norms, relations and relationships between actors are better facilitated. This, in turn, brings more interactions over time and higher mobilisation of resources. Trust builds relationships and exchanges minimising perceived risk. At the same time, exchanges over time produce reciprocating behaviour, stimulating future potential transactions. In other words, norms, trust and reciprocity may serve as catalysts in the mobilisation of actors and social networks, and hence in forging social capital. At the same time, values and organisational or culture are channelled through social networks. Consequently, values, norms and
reciprocity may be seen both as “products” of social capital, as well as causes or determining factors.

Moreover, the relational dimension of social capital prescribes relationships based on trust, friendship, authority or comradeship as key in its formulation and to the binding of the networks within it. This dimension may also include personal relationships like respect, friendship, etc. that offer sociability, approval, prestige and bonds between actors (Snebota, 1995) like trust and trustworthiness, norms and sanctions, obligations and expectations, identity and identification. These relationships and bonds, especially those of mutual understanding and respect as well as the common principles have played a vital role in the collaborations between Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières. The common principles of action and similarities between the mandates of the two organisations played a key role in initiating the first collaboration, as well as the need and perceived effectiveness of the common operation. Having proven successful, the first collaboration helped create a relationship between the two organisations and the key actors within them, based on mutual respect and trust. This bond provided the basis for the second collaboration.

As seen while unfolding our theory, Narayan and Cassidy recognize also the cognitive dimension of social capital, which is based on shared representations and interpretations inside and outside the organisation. These shared representations, or in other words, how the organisations appear to each other, offer interpretations and systems of meaning among the parties (Cicourel, 1973). In other words, they work as heuristics for future decisions
and actions. Especially in cases when the call for action is urgent, the action itself is related to high complexity environments, and the outcome will be highly visible (as in the case of the emergencies in Indonesia and Lebanon) the organisations need to take actions swiftly, with the minimum amount of risk possible. In this case, the representation of each organisation to the other and to the public opinion (with the characteristics of efficiency, neutrality and independence playing dominant role) minimized the perceived risk. They created the right "system of meaning" to the decision makers in terms of efficiency, representation, trust and perceived risk.

Putnam's "bridging social capital" which is "outward looking and across diverse social cleavages" (2000, p. 22) and Healy & Hampshire’s (2002) "linking capital" which refers to "alliances with sympathetic individuals or groups in positions of power" (Healy & Hampshire, 2002, p. 3) can also provide context analysis for this case study between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace. On the one hand, we may well speak of bridging social capital between the two organisations that transcends their boundaries and reaches the local communities of their beneficiaries as well as the home societies of their donors. On the side, we can also refer to linking social capital when referring to the individual decision makers within the two organisations: the relationship forged in the first collaboration in the Tsunami "enabled individuals to speak directly to those with formal decision-making power rather than have their views filtered by experts" Healy & Hampshire (2002, p.3). Moreover, as Putman (1993) suggests, it is the co-operation, involvement and selflessness displayed by these people that contribute to the
development of trust, affect and shared understanding among them, all important aspects of social capital.

Finally, under the social capital point of view, trust becomes a civil virtue; it constitutes social capital of its own. The role of voluntary organisations such as Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières can be seen as incubators of values and norms, which is in line with theory by social capital researchers, like Adler & Kwon, (2002) and Portes (1998) who speak about privileged access to rare resources, as in the examples of the emergency response to the tsunami and the Lebanon war. Or, in the cases of Bourdieu, (1985) and Lin (2001) privileged access enhanced by the accessible resources.

Either we think of these two organisations as large communities (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993) or smaller groups (Coleman, 1990; Bourdieu, 1985; Burt, 2001; Portes, 1998) we can attribute causal power to them as networks as relationships generate a sum that is much greater than that of individual actors” (Yeung, 1994, 2005).

Moreover, they key positions of actors driving the processes in the organizations are examples of “configurations of emergent network relationships that provide other central dynamics to drive the networks” (Yeung, 2005, p. 317).

In regards to the key role of trust, alignment with Leana & Van Buren (1999) and Putnam (1993) is observed, who position it as source of social capital, but as well with Coleman (1998) and Paldam (2000) who consider it more as a form of social capital. Both in the cases of the tsunami and the
emergency aid to the victims of operation "hot lead" in Lebanon, trust can be seen as a collective asset of the social capital between the two non-government organisations, in agreement with Lin (1999) with wider positive side effects for the communities served by the two interventions.

Finally, the issue of whether trust can even be equated to social capital considers, as Fukuyama (1997) or should clearly distinguished from it, as Adler & Kwon (2002) suggest, this remains unanswered, as it is more of a viewpoint and conceptual perspective rather than a more practical or evidence-based one.
8.2 Different values versus common goals

According to social theory, norms inform members of the organisation of what is considered right or wrong with Bourdieu (1980) identifying mutual acquaintance and recognition as the norms that mobilise resources and produce a “durable” network.

In the prescribed cases of Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières, it became evident that the shared norms could be directly linked to more “effective interpersonal cooperation” (Starbuck, 1983, p.p. 91-102). Then, the networks between the two organisations facilitated the mechanisms for mobilisation and allocation of resources. But what happens if these key norms do not converge? As Diani (2003a, p.10) comments: norms may-or may not-facilitate the circulation of meaning and mutual recognition that would lead to the negotiation of an agreed goal, of the diffusion of information, all activities essential to any type of coalition, broadly defined”.

The importance of the case of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Israeli doctors in the Democratic Republic of Congo lies in the fact that regardless of the presence of a common goal (treating the victims of the tanker explosion, providing medical care) the two actors failed to interact successfully with each other. The operations were carried out, but in a “forced way” which makes a repeated interaction and collaboration highly unlikely. This is in total agreement with the aforementioned position of Diani, as it clearly shows that in the particular example, the presence of dominant norms acted against the final negotiation of an agreed goal, while there was no mutual recognition. In this sense, they acted as “negative social capital”
impeding current and future network transactions and are examples of producing negative outcomes of social structure (Erickson, 2002).

If we take Brehn and Rahn’s (1997) idea of the “web” of cooperative relationships or Knoke’s (1999) position on social capital as a process of mobilizing networks reinforcing Coleman (1990) it is evident that this cooperative relationships never in fact came to be between the two organisations. In the case of Fukuyama (1997) and shared informal values and norms, or of Inglehart (1997) and the culture of trust stimulated by mutual benefit, our findings suggest that this never existed, with the obvious outcomes. In this case, no “bridges” could be made to Woolcock’s (1998) assertion on trust and reciprocity. An extensive and flexible description of social capital comes from Nahapiet and Ghosal (1998) who bring forth the “marriage” of the sum of actual and potential resources that are embedded within, available through and derived from the various networks of relationships, thus offering a more holistic approach of both the network itself and its assets. In the case of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Jewish doctors, key differences in political views and perspectives may have been the background for the fallout. As we can notice (Annex, Press releases, p.p. 220-223) there seemed to have been increased contentious rhetoric before and after the common operation for the fuel tank explosion took place. But it was they the key difference in organisational values and principles that clashed: those of (perceived) independence, neutrality and humanitarian response. The “butterfly effect” or domino effect created by the public communication around the response and the clash, escalated
disproportionately to the size or significance of the specific event in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It became a clash in political and “humanitarian principles” level, whereby worldwide networks from both sides were swiftly mobilised to defend their organisation or to exert pressure to the other.

Dominant values ("common good", "accountability", "global trust") are used as mobilising and binding forces to build and connect actors and networks at a global level in order to provoke collective action and behaviour. Values are assumptions upon which implementations can be extrapolated. Principal or core values are foundations upon which other values and measures of integrity are based. Organisational values are beliefs that specific modes of conduct are preferable to opposite or contrary modes of conduct (Rokeach 1973). Another way to think of values is as representing frameworks for the way of doing and relate to how organisations deal with their beliefs about people and work, defining non-negotiable behaviours.

Thus, the values and values systems of Médecins Sans Frontières and the Israeli doctors have impacted the network and relationship between them in two ways. Firstly, values or value systems are the bounding forces within a network: the glue that keeps it together. When these elements contradict in essence each other, this “glue” or binding force disappears. Secondly, values serve as catalysts to network flow; their existence of commonly accepted values between the organisations or the actors is a prerequisite for the transaction to take place, serving as a form of assurance about the success of the exchange and the mobilisation of the network. As was very graphically
obvious in the case study presented, this assurance was absent, significantly
hampering collaboration and even co-existence.

8.3 Identity and principles as causes for isolation, arrogance or
differentiation

During the unfolding of the theoretical underpinnings, Narayan and
Cassidy’s (2001) highlighted that the wide acceptability of the term “social
capital” is due to the fact that it provides a fruitful perspective for
understanding and predicting the norms and social relations embedded in the
social structures of organisations and societies. In the same sense, Bourdieu
& Wacquant (1992) understand norms and (organisational) culture as a
complete way of life, or as Schneider (2009) suggests, non-government
organisations most often serve populations that share some cultural
attributes. It is indeed true that organisations as well as their members have
cultures, which evolve and change over time. Various internal and external
conditions that facilitate the formation of social capital across different groups
(bridging social capital) change over time, and as a result bring about change
both in organisational and in individual members’ culture.

The dominant principles and norms prevailing in Médecins Sans
Frontières those of independence and impartiality, had effectively lead the
organisation into a choice of “isolation” in relation to main directions of
humanitarian aid and response. The core values prevailing in major decision
making centers both in the field and in headquarter level played a key role in
the positioning of Médecins Sans Frontières towards important networks in the humanitarian field, placing it in the periphery.

At macro level, Médecins Sans Frontières establishes links the government and local authorities, state institutions, local civil society and other stakeholders that enable it to carry out its interventions, while the nature of these links depends on the situation in each country or context and on the willingness and capacity of each of these actors to lead or participate in humanitarian activities. In some cases, government and local authorities may be in a strong position to lead the overall humanitarian response as is sometimes the case in natural disasters. In other cases, particularly in situations of ongoing conflict, the willingness or capacity of a government or state institutions to lead or contribute to humanitarian activities may be compromised, and this will clearly influence the nature of the relationships which it establishes with international humanitarian actors. Similarly, the nature of the relationships established between international humanitarian actors and local civil society, as well as other stakeholders, depends on the political and security situation and on capacities and willingness to lead or engage in humanitarian activities.

Médecins Sans Frontières does have stronger or looser links with these different actors and actor networks, but outside any cluster. Its approach to engage unilaterally with each actor or network enables it to act independently and in many cases with greater flexibility. On the other hand, there are increasing cases whereby access may be hampered in the attempt to remain independent and isolated. Many key thinkers in the Médecins Sans
Frontières movement even argued that Médecins Sans Frontières structural inability to develop networks is linked to a certain degree of arrogance and a short term modus operandi that makes it impossible to maintain networks. Since the context-dependent nature of social capital suggests that neither attributes (norms, trust) or nor infrastructures (networks, organisation), per se, can be understood as social capital in isolation from other issues, like access, for instance, the paradigm of access reveals that the “use value” of social capital is affected. More importantly, it supports evidence of “negative social capital” in the sense that it fosters exclusion (Erickson, 2002).

It is probably true that Médecins Sans Frontières had spent too much time doing inward looking and self-centered analyses that are a consequence of years of inner-fighting to define the organisation’s identity. In many cases, Médecins Sans Frontières’s obsession with security procedures had built a wall between the organisation and the population, not allowing important networks with the society at local level to grow, which has had a prolonged and long term impact in the perception of the organisation in the field and at many time to the security of the field staff, as many of the local networks would constitute a way of proceeding with operations within a certain degree of safety. Stevenson & Greenberg (2000, p. 656), argue that peripheral actors may “avoid mobilising the opposition (centrally located actors) and have minimal obligations to others” than otherwise positioned, and that “compared to the peripheral actor, the centrally located, who have honour and a number of obligations, may be much more constrained in action than the peripheral actor”.
Both organisations, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières seem to have sparked out of a “reaction” to something. In the case of Médecins Sans Frontières it was a reaction against the beaurecratic mechanisms of the Red Cross and the need for swift intervention to provide humanitarian and medical aid, even without formal procedures and clearances from the governments or authorities that operate in the region. Moreover, it was a call to the need of the founding members to be able to alleviate human suffering but at the same time be free and able to speak out about the things they see in the contexts they work and in that sense, the “marriage” of doctors and journalists was no coincidence. Due to this principle, Médecins Sans Frontières has been expelled from many contexts it has operated, simply because it had chosen to speak out. This principle sets the organisation aside from many other medical and humanitarian aid entities. It is this principle, together with that of intendance and impartiality that “isolates” this organisation from others of its kind and of “clustered” approaches. In the case of Greenpeace, the principle of independence together with the confrontational (albeit non-violent) modus operandi has created an “extremist” profile of the organisation, increasing its distance from other. Both organisations walk the tightrope of remain true to their true nature, while struggling to find its space in the humanitarian or environmental field. Either talking about “umbrella approaches” to humanitarian action or collaboration to provoke social action, both Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, in order not to sacrifice its independence, impartiality and the ability to speak out about what they see, have been in various occasions isolated in the field.
8.4 Organisational principals versus “organisational reality”

Medical, humanitarian and environmental action take place in a very complex contemporary context, where boundaries of humanitarianism, politics and power plays are very much blurred. Moreover, due to the nature of non-government organisations to achieve goals that are “beneficial to the wider public”, social pressures acting on a non-profit organisation “originating on an external source are directed toward harder or easier levels of performance, cause members to choose higher or lower aspiration levels, respectively, than they select in absence of these pressures” (Zander, 1971, p. 184-185). Thus, social pressure influences-or even dictates- the goals and aspirations of non-government organisations. It is intriguing to explore how the social pressure or external forces influence not-profit organisations in regards to their campaigns or key directions. At the same time, new paradigm shifts with direct influence in the way organisations and humanitarian relief agencies are perceived and operating are taking place. On the one hand the rise of strong or stronger states in Africa and Asia, has resulted in non-government organisations are to be seen sometimes as merely “implementing partners”. Moreover, there are increasing phenomena of changed perception of non-government organisations and of their “charity” is sometimes seen as a form of neo-colonialism. There seems also to be a more intense cultural clash between the East and West, while the long term development approach is many times more appreciated by local societies than the short “in and out” intervention in emergencies of Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace.
These new or more intense characteristics have multiple effects in different levels in non-governmental organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and how their networks are reacting and mobilized to adjust to the new situations. For one, it has really made the organisation be far more cautious in its external communication (when, say, bearing witness to a humanitarian crisis) or to the way of engaging with local actors, governments, authorities or groups, as this may have an impact in the field.

Thus both the networks inside Médecins Sans Frontières like the operational centers active (Annex, notes from Médecins Sans Frontières Director of Operations meeting, p.212) in a region are affected, in the way they are interpreting the different contexts and interacting with one another, when developing humanitarian interventions in new contexts but also in the everyday modus operandi. Teams in the field, living in the home societies are in constant interaction with the local population: treating patients, providing humanitarian assistance, but also forming relationships with the locals, negotiating access with the authorities, diffusing information to villagers on protection and providing counseling, etc. Hence these networks are constantly interacting both in headquarters and at field level, according to the conditions that exist in the field and the political readings of the various situations-field teams and heads of missions are in constant interaction with the headquarters, while mobile teams in the field are interacting with various actors (from government and authorities to rebel groups) in order to reach remote areas. The most important external factor that catalyses changes in these interaction is security: of the beneficiaries, the patients, the expatriates,
the local staff. As the number of different actors and networks has increased and control and power have been dispersed geographically and politically, the number of interactions has increased accordingly, pushing the networks to become more active, and moving from the headquarters to the field in order to be able to interpret and adapt to the context more swiftly and effectively. If we focus on one of the core fields of action for Médecins Sans Frontières, conflict and displacement, there seem to be nowadays fewer “traditional” conflicts (i.e. two or more opposite forces fighting for control of resources, territory, power, status recognition, etc.) and an increasing number of non-governmental organisations or other humanitarian aid agencies are facing difficulties of access to the populations in need. The new reality, based on data collected through participation in numerous meetings at various levels of the organization and interviews (Annex, Semi structured interviews, p.214; London Conference, p. 215; Notes, on international meetings, p.p. 225-231) consists of conflicting powers being more fragmented, more volatile, loyal to different causes and following different agendas, while there is a presence of loss authority in many groups that are changing tactics and coalitions (Sudan and especially Darfur is a very good example to highlight this). There are fewer “classical’ refugee camps, but more settings where displaced populations seek refuge. This practically translates into far more complex contexts and environments for non-governmental organisations to read and operate in, more security and safety hazards, more ambiguity surrounding decisions, and far greater (in number) actors to interact with to obtain access or improve perception at local or regional level.
Discussions, reflections and debates around these issues had been fundamental for Médecins Sans Frontières not only for setting forth future actions and decisions, but also internally, in the way the organisation is perceived by its own members and the various networks, be it staff at the local or international level, decision making platforms, hierarchical levels etc.

Moreover, these challenges reflect possible discontinuities and disconnections from existing social capital, i.e. in the nodes, relations and relationships between the organisation and its environment, and especially the field and local societies. This explains also the importance with which this problematic is treated within Médecins Sans Frontières. As Bebbington, (1997); Flora & Newlon (1997) note, social structures will have to be appropriable and appropriated by individuals and groups to be social capital, as their use value will be “multiplied” to the extent that they will be able to enable numerous linkages across and beyond communities, organizations and structures. In this sense, we can assume that the changes in the environment and context that the organisation is “living” and operating in can cause these nodes, linkages exchanges to be disconnected, thus hampering the end “use value” of thee networks. Consequently, the “institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, or in other words, membership in a group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248) will have to be redefined or even re-negotiated. On the other side, these challenges have also been significant in the way they have mobilized resources within and around Médecins Sans Frontières.
As presented through the core findings, these issues have resulted in a high number of meetings, discussions, debated and decisions regarding the way the organisations should move forward, these processes involved an abundance of actors, at local, regional or international level who were mobilised to provide input at the discussions and influence their end results. They have spiralled not only mobilisation of actors, but also produced concrete actions, in the form of the reform processes that both Médecins Sans Frontières went through and in the deployment of resources or alignment to decisions on future directions. Hence, it can be assumed that the key challenges and the reaction to external forces and factors spiralled processes that, in turn, led to the generation of social capital" in the sense of the production of new information, organisational knowledge or new nodes and relations and resource exchange.

Another clear and agreed implication of these shifts was that the organisations have started to pay more attention to profiling themselves as independent from (western) political interests, while in the rhetoric of aligning them to the abundance of these new developments, the dilemma of will/desire versus duty/obligation remains pertinent: does “moral duty”, automatically translate into action? For instance, in the case of action, Greenpeace develops forms of collective action are based on solidarity, carrying on shared common principles (Melucci, 1985) and consisting of networks of groups and organisations prepared to mobilize and protest actions to promote social change (Rucht, 1996). These networks engage in campaigns of collective claims on target authorities, whilst putting forth public representations of the
cause’s worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment” (Tilly, 2004). Nevertheless, the findings suggest that both social actors within the two organizations and the networks inside them and between them and the other external actors (other organizations, states, groups etc.) have had to adapt to the external environment, while this adaptation at times involved significant mobilisations, cultural and strategy shifts, and even compromise in ways of working or “business conduct”. As Kraatz (1998, p. 621) states, this adaptation responds to questions of “how and if organisations respond to types of exogenous challenges” while according to Levinthal (1994, p. 171) “change in a significant organisational attribute such as business strategy or organisational structure can be a result of environmental change”. In the case of Médecins Sans Frontières this is very vividly depicted in the book by Claire Magone, Michaël Neuman and Fabrice Weissman “Agir à tout prix ? Négociations humanitaires : l’expérience de Médecins Sans Frontières” (2011, Editions La Découverte) where it is stated that far from being the result of a policy, the freedom of action of aid agencies must be negotiated and depends on their capacities to make themselves indispensable, to identify tactical alliances with all kind of powers- government, army, combatants, interests groups, institutions that would be liable to promote their actions.
8.5 How researcher and method affects process and outcome of the research

By introducing the main reflections relating to the data collection, presentation and analysis process in connection to the research questions and the theoretical background the deficiencies and limitations of the theoretical approach to the research of the way that it was carried out, and, more importantly, the way that the data were presented and analysed emerge. This provides a more complete picture of the research project and the various aspects of social networks and social capital in these organisations. The discussion around this limitations is paramount to the research itself as a project, as it adds a “pragmatic” element to both the theoretical conceptualizations but also to the ambitions of tackling the research questions and contributing to the advancement of the theory of social capital. This is achieved by the presentation of the actual challenges that the research faced, both in its theoretical basis, but also in much practical terms, while it was being carried out. Ethnography as a science is very much wary of the deficiencies embedded with ethnographic research. The description of these challenges aims not to defend the main findings or approach, or even safeguard against criticism. Rather, it serves more in supporting the advancement of the sociological research relating to social capital and non-government organisations, as well as in making the research project account more thorough and complete.

This research project was conducted by “conceptualizing ethnography as devices that shape questions to be asked allows us to think of them as
scientific research tools. Their significance lies less in that they conclude them in discursive resources they provide and the pathways they open up. Their aim, in sort, is to improve literacy, to enable people to read the world better. Some would consider this value neutral. I think it is what gives ethnography ethical charge” (Fortun, 2003, p.187).

The first and most obvious feature of such an approach that can be identified with autoethnography, is that the researcher is a complete member in the social world under study, whether that world is a kind of amorphous social world (Kotarba, 1980), or a social world with clear values, locales and subculture, such as the truck drivers studied Ouellet (1994). In each case, the researcher represents what Merton (1988) refers to as the ultimate participant in a dual participant-observer role process and role.

As with every piece of research, this study is subjected to several limitations that relate to inherent characteristics of qualitative and especially ethnographic methods in primary research. One of the major deficiencies of these approaches and research methods is that estimates may contain substantial amounts of undetected bias. Moreover, convenience non-probability samples (as in the case studies of the two organisations) allow for a great deal of interviewer discretion in selecting members of the sample and this may again bias estimates of population values. In addition to this, the lack of an experienced “interviewer” and the difficulties of when to probe and how to word the questions in order not to affect responses should also be taken into account. As many of the accounts and data have been collected analysed and interpreted with the researcher being part of the social world in study
there have been struggles to define “social reality”, and thus to ensure that certain interpretations of observations would be detached from bias or non-contextually bound. Moreover, descriptions can carry silent assumptions and connotations that influence the discourses or analysis by constituting taken-for-granted commonsense beliefs that may escape critical scrutiny (Smith & Kulynych, 2002).

Instead of viewing culture as descriptive object, contemporary ethnographers practice disrupted ethnographies that openly declare their ideological productions and reproductions of cultures (Koro-Ljungberg, 2005, p. 285). Ideology as used in this article refers to an assemblage of ideas held by a certain constituency that provide conceptions of past, present, and future social conditions (Platt and Williams, 2002), and which produces truth effects within its discourse that is in itself neither true nor false (Foucault, 1994).

Upon returning from the field, the skilled observers translate the cultural experiences of “natives” into the writings accessible to the public, constructing from their field notes, often through textual or descriptive analysis, a story that will interest a certain outside audience (see Boyle, 1994; Emerson et al., 1995). Hence, field notes as written descriptions of verbal accounts or observed behaviours in the field are the stock in trade for the fieldworker (Manning, 1989). Constructionist ethnographers believe that this process of constructing a description from field data requires a process of interpretation. Geertz (1983) argued that the hermeneutic circle is central to this process of ethnographic interpretation. Therefore, for him the analysis of culture was an interpretive science in search of meaning in culture (Geertz,
1973, 1983). In fact, the hermeneutic circle points to the argument that being human constitutes the inescapable condition of being an interpreter and the construction of meaning lies in a circular sequence of interpretations (Schwandt, 1997). It also sees science as a cultural – and thus socially constructed – practice (Audi, 1995).

Similarly, Muecke (1994, p. 194) proposed that “good (critical) ethnographies are explicit about the nature of the reflexivity that shaped them”. Furthermore, the author’s position is often viewed as a mediator between two separate worlds: the world of the researchers and the world of “the other”. The researcher’s epistemological beliefs have influenced and shaped the interaction with participants and thus they have produced data as well as interpretation in the whole process of the data collection and analysis. Yet, critical ethnographies question the classical ethnographic authority and openly call for different understandings of the other (see Clifford, 1988). They depart from classical ethnographers when establishing new forms of writing, alternative purposes and audiences and by redefining their relationship with research participants taking into consideration historical relations and dominance. Moreover, they break apart the interpretative and representational rules and roles of individual disciplines, something that Marcus and Fischer (1986) might call crisis of representation. Critical ethnographers emphasize the critical act of interpretation and the practical act of promoting cultural change. They prefer intensive empirical investigation of everyday cultural experiences using participant observation, key informants, and interviewing as their methods. However, while drawing from conventional ethnographical data
collection methods, critical ethnographers differ from classical ethnographers in that they ask different questions, have different concerns related to their research projects, and propose a philosophical critique of cultural studies (see, for example, Bennett deMarrais and LeCompte, 1999; Carspecken, 2001). For instance, Wolcott (1999) described the role of critical ethnography by arguing that critical ethnography connects itself with broad social movements and conducts its cases in ethnographic fashion, while drawing more universal lessons.

Another key challenge in the research process has been the absolute length of it and the intensity of the researcher's involvement. The "experiential" approach that had worked wonders in discovering rich qualitative data made it very hard to detach the researcher from what was being researched and allow critical distance between the two. It proved also extremely difficult to really cease collecting data, even when it was evident that the collection had yielded enough in quality and quantity to commence blending the theory and data in order to produce insights. How can really the ethnographer stop "collecting" data when he is still in the field while writing the analysis, discussion and reflections?

Similar to critical ethnography, the neutrality of observations is disrupted also by feminist ethnographers, like Skeggs, (2001) who introduced the notion that knowledge is not neutral, 'objective', or purely descriptive. Instead, feminist ethnographers propose that negotiations and dialogue between participants and researchers are needed when politicizing gender is blended with the empirical grounds of cultural understandings. According to
Skeggs (2001, p. 429) there has been a “shift from ethnographies on women to ethnographies informed by feminist theory” in the field of feminist ethnography. Hence, many contemporary feminist ethnographers believe that a researcher’s culture, race, gender, class, beliefs, and sensitivity affect how participants and data are presented (Behar, 1996; Harding, 1987a; Skeggs, 2001).

Deconstructive ethnographers read and write ethnography with suspicion by adding elements of multiplicity, fragmentation, and uncertainty to their cultural descriptions. Noblit (2004) labelled deconstructive ethnographers who worry about objectivity, positioning, and representation as postcritical, acknowledging the crisis of representation. As in critical ethnography, epistemological neutrality and permanent cultural locations as sources of truth are disrupted by allowing local and situated cultures and truths to reinvent themselves. These alternative ethnographic accounts do not reflect the cultural real but are representations of cultural systems, which are created via the complexities of language and under particular historical connections and influences (see, for example, Lenzo, 1995).

However, the same critique can be viewed as potential benefit or contribution of disrupted practices because textuality within ethnography has a lot to offer. Tierney (2002, p. 429) placed the potential power and fear of any qualitative researcher again in front of us: “words have meaning; Authors have power”. Also, we believe that arguments for disrupted practices are defensible and justified based on diverse data, unexpected cultural stories or complex field experiences. These reflect the qualitative process as flexible,
data driven, researcher and context sensitive as well as culturally and theoretically diverse. In addition, we believe that in qualitative research “textuality” and alternative representations of cultural “objects” and subjects shape how we view ourselves as researchers as well as how our audiences connect with our writings and the labels we use.

The sort of “tale” told that the fieldworker chooses for the product ethnography is interdependent with the actual fieldwork. Additionally, the label of ethnography has been used to refer both to the research process as well as to the finished product (Schwandt, 1997). Ethnography as a process focuses on the collecting and analyzing of qualitative data, while ethnography as a product refers to the completed written work. In both cases, labels, traditions, and epistemological identifiers influence the ways researchers approach both the process and the representation of the complete product of ethnography. As Burawoy (2006, p.p.16-17) comments “in the positive view participant observation brings insight through proximity but at the cost of distortion…even the most passive observer produces ripples worthy of examination, while the activist who seeks to transform the world can learn much from its obduracy”. And by recognising a priori the deficiencies, this piece of sociological research may produce texts that capture different pluralities for the actors and the networks, convey multiple representations for Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières and, via utilizing a variety of methods, media and descriptive languages, brings the flexibility required to incorporate different theoretical perspectives, while being critical on itself.
8.6 Conclusion

Through these two case studies we can take notice of several parallel or similar issues are emerging. Based on our observations, can we then find “evidence” of social capital within these two organisations in a micro level and in which cases? More importantly, is there any connection or correlation between the internal processes that produce, reinforce and nurture it and their external manifestations or similar multiplier “effects” of social capital between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, hence, in a macro level? Interestingly enough, Coleman (1998, p. 101) argues that “social capital provides an aid towards making micro-macro transitions. Drawing upon Glanville and Bienestock (2010, p. 1516) “the patterns of micro-level social capital that individuals have access to contribute to what constitutes social capital in the macro level. If we take the notion of reciprocity for instance, to achieve high levels of community social capital “at least some proportion of individuals in a community needs to be embedded in networks that are reciprocal. At the same time, patterns of macro-level social capital influence the degree to which individuals will invest in social capital” (Ibid.).

The data presented and the research involvement in the two organisations suggest the existence of a very loose network between these organisations. These weak ties exist between people who rarely meet and whose relationships are carried away in memory than in regular interaction. These (loose) connections between the organisations can even form a platform that may potentially serve as a social space in which members reinforce their social webs, resulting in what Coleman (1990) could describe

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as new intentional organization. This organization can create two by-products of social capital: (a) a public good that benefits others (with “others” being members, supporters, etc.) who did not invest directly in the organization and (b) a social organization that can be appropriated for other purposes, greater than the ones of the “strategic intent” of each specific non-government organisation, such as a coalition in response to specific needs or as result of operational strategy. In this way, social capital is being produced in both “private” (non-government organization focus) and public (society focus) good that would be in line with research by Putnam (2000).

An interesting feature of this network is its own “looseness”. Is this something that these key actors actually prefer, or is it due to specific circumstances? As Gargiulo & Benassi (2002) point out, because of the inevitable trade-off between safety and flexibility in a network, actors cannot maximize these two parameters simultaneously. Therefore, as Uzzi (1997) has suggested, in his discussion on paradoxes of embeddedness, actors will have to balance the tightrope between safety (of a cohesive network) and adaptability (that the not closely-knit networks offer).

In addition to this, the fact that having direct relations with others involves time in building and maintaining relationships (and time is a luxury that these actors do not seem to have). This is a cost to be considered. Moreover, getting help from a network may be a non-trivial issue as Hansen, Polodny and Pfeffer (1999) comment.

In the observation from participation in key “moments” (meetings, conversations, interactions), and the analysis of raw data in the form of
meetings’ minutes, public communications, events) as well as stories, described by some key actors in the two focal organizations, we echo Clifford (1986, p.98) in treating “ethnography itself as a performance emplotted by powerful stories. Embodied in written reports, these stories simultaneously describe real cultural events and make additional, moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements. Ethnographic writing is allegorical at the level both of its content (what it says about cultures and their histories) and of its form (what is implied by its mode of textualization).” The importance of this is depicted accurately by Beaujour, cited in Clifford, (1986, p. 99): “Literary description always opens onto another scene set, so to speak, “behind” the this-worldly things it purports to depict. “Ethnographic texts are inescapably allegorical, and a serious acceptance of this fact changes the ways they can be written and read…the very activity of ethnographic writing- seen as inscription or textualization- enacts a redemptive and Western allegory (Ibid, p. 99).”

In applying such a research spectrum, we may observe what Stevenson & Greenberg (2000, p.651) report: “strategies to take action and mobilize others in a network of inter-organizational relationships can vary depending on the social context, which consists of the political opportunity structure defined by government regulators, whether the actor faces opposition and his position in the network”. We may be able to establish whether the norms of reciprocity provide cohesiveness around shared goals wherein a collective identity is created and nurtured [Adler & Kwon (2002); Inglehart (1997) p.188; Putnam (199) p.67]. Or in terms of ties, are they more
affective, satisfying emotional sentiments, or moral, abiding to codes of fairness and reciprocity [Conway (1995)]?

Finally, a key observation that has to be addressed here is that the presence (or absence) of human networks within the organisation is not, per se, evidence of social capital (or lack of it). Neither attributes (norms, trust) nor infrastructures (networks, organisation), per se, can be understood as social capital in isolation from other issues, like access, for example, which shows that the “use value” of social capital is affected by the specific social contexts in which it is embedded and may take the form of dyads, informal networks (Burt, 1997; Heying, 1997), voluntary associations (Eastis, 1998), religious institutions (Wood, 1997), communities (Bebbington, 1997; Schulman, 1998), cities (Potney & Berry, 1997), or national (Minkoff, 1997) and international movements (Smith, 1998).
Chapter 9- Conclusions

Shaping the global agenda of international non-government organisations such as Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières requires new mandates to gain trust, identify solutions, make decisions, take action and generate new thinking to manage networks – across regions, formations and multicultural and polyvalent groups and teams within the organisations. Their goal when dealing with networks both within and outside the organization is not just to navigate, but to create the most favourable conditions for the years to come, create their future so to speak.

In this process, they need to address some “global fault lines” like shifting balance of power – regional and global implications, politics, terrorism and new forms of conflict, disparities, rise of populism and anti-western rhetoric both in the field of operations, but also in their “home societies”. More importantly, the organisations are trying to bridge an “identity and communication disconnect”: the factors shaping identity today, the new backlash to globalization, cultural shifts and conflicts, tribalism and cross-cultural trends, nationality and the individual, convergence, digitalization and channel fragmentation, reputation and branding, the influence of religion, research and ethics, the metamorphosis of the networks and actors through time and space constitute a new reality they will have to adapt to. In this process, networks, form, mobilize get closer of further apart, are diminished, expanded or nurtured.
9.1 The dynamics of social networks and social capital

Hence, the whole mandate of leadership is defined and redefined while the power of the networks fluctuates between the long-term versus the short-term, incentives, and external forces, collaborations and engagement, management of social network systems, institutional and corporate organizational models, emerging power and actors, governance, “business” and the global agenda.

Both in the cases of Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, the organisations are striving to scale up solutions that will enable for sustainable models operations, consistency and positioning, development of opportunities, resource management and needs driven urban and field operations and responses. The drivers of these solutions have been the different networks either within the organisations or between and around them. Through the long period of data collection and analysis using a variety of methods, there are several core issues that seem to be evolving on common grounds but without interaction between the focal organisations. Complementarity, operationally and institutionally, seems to be an integral part of the attempt to organise and act as part of and in pursuit of mutualised thinking, action, relevance, impact and influence. The rationale of cooperative logic is being put forward in order to promote the sharing of resources and the pooling of capacities in general, increasing the interdependence of sections and offices or groups in order to reinforce commitment to a common social mission, to create conditions for greater efficiency (interdependence will effect de-fragmentation and expose duplication) and to facilitate inclusiveness
(interdependence means a more heterogeneous core). This defines for the actors, networks and organisations a “mindset” that makes effective complementarity possible, a way of thinking and behaving that enables the fostering or enhanced relationships over time and exchanges that bring values added, or in other words, social capital.

The principle of plasticity refers to organisational structure, as in structural dexterity. It is to ensure that functional issues, protocols, processes and roles are subordinate to operational and campaign prerogatives. It can be understood as a compass, where operations/ campaigns are "North" and the organisational structure is the compass' housing and dial. The arrow is or should always be pointing towards operations and campaigns, and the housing must be repositioned as often as needed to keep aligned with the arrow. This is what both of these non-government organizations are trying to achieve or guide themselves towards. In practice, it means that high-level executive functioning and governance is designed to fulfil operational needs and is subject to redesign whenever it is deemed necessary to answer prevailing operational and organisational needs. But this is also a matter of political will and coordination, a task not easily achievable in huge and disperse networks with links to different cultures and local societies. Yet, the commonality of values and principles makes this venture possible.

Apart but not in opposition with the efforts of the networks for coherence and consistency, is the notion of “responsible autonomy”, which involves a very advanced degree of delegation, where decision-making capacity is distributed amply and formally. Each decision-maker assumes
responsibility for and reports on the outcomes of his/her own formally delegated authority. This also means that each delegating member hierarchy must be committed to having critical decisions taken by its subordinates while assuming overarching responsibility for having granted that authority to said subordinates.

On the other hand, both organisations seem to be opting for leadership based on relevance but also diversity: The governing and guiding bodies of the networks are determined essentially relative to the responsibilities at hand, while preserving a single principle-based political factor: cultural, geopolitical and philosophical diversity. This is to safeguard against monolithic tendencies and to provide structural assurances of internationalism and impartiality that needs to find its way next to coherence. That in essence has led both organisations in assuming different positioning from dominate actors (such as the United Nations) and similar to each other, due to their converging principles.

Finally, the issue of social accountability remains at the core of the response both in the humanitarian and the environmental field. This is of course required for responsible autonomy to exist, but it is not pursued only as a prerequisite. Transparent, practical decision making mechanisms, enforcing mechanisms and conflict resolution mechanisms are critical pieces of networks whose strength is derived of meaningful, committed, clearly defined participation of many actors, since that strength is also the network’s “Achilles Tendon”. The goal of accountability is pursued in various level top-down and bottom-up within the organisations and is an exercise that includes
donors and beneficiaries, local and international staff. Yet, failure to make
timely decisions with sufficient buy-in from members of the network would be
very damaging. Indeed, a prolifically used argument for many decision-
makers maintaining their stranglehold on power in the non-government
organisations is the spectre of operational or campaign gridlock, but such
arguments cannot resist scrutiny if responsibility for outcomes is assumed
wherever decisions are taken, not passed up and down the line.

As Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace have and are
continuing growing in size and reach, they know that they must evolve. While
doing so, their growth slows for no one. To address resource concerns and to
contain bureaucracy and fragmentation, the evil twins of institutional growth,
without compromising operations and campaigns, efforts are made to improve
coherence, which implies efficiency and effectiveness. These, in turn, entail
monitoring if not control, which calls for a measure of centralisation of certain
aspects. These notions, with widespread proponents and opponents
throughout Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace, cover the cardinal
points of the unfinished debates, meetings and interactions on growth and
governance, and ultimately on the future directions of two of the biggest
international and most powerful independent non-government organisations.

Their purpose is their social mission, a term that is used more for
Médecins Sans Frontières and only the last period for Greenpeace, but for
both translates into what they contribute to the society, and could easily be
interpreted from a sociological standpoint as social capital. The discernable
progresses of these processes were repeatedly de-prioritised as a result of
political and power interplay between the different groups, networks and offices in both organisations. It is still one of the biggest expectations and for many, one of the biggest frustrations. Only by applying provisions for a strengthened international consistency and positioning have they approached something meaningful in practice but beyond that, extrapolating sectional or intersectional network initiatives and interests may be the only way for Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace to progress as movements in coherence, effectiveness or efficiency.

More and more operational centres in Médecins Sans Frontières and different offices in Greenpeace are expressing interest in collaborating to improve overall relevance in operations and campaigning (i.e. effectiveness, coherence, efficiency), beginning with mutual accountability and rounded out by developing mutually assured support mechanisms. This has immediate and obvious significance and will help establish the way forward for movement-wide coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

As a result of their history, several partnerships between Médecins Sans Frontières and Greenpeace have evolved over time and have shown significant developments in certain areas: resource sharing, joint participation in specific operations, joint meetings. Despite these achievements, the current partnerships are not fully optimal and mostly operate on an ad hoc basis. They need to be reaffirmed through action and structured through better processes. It seems that both organisations would have to solve overarching problems and challenges, before being in position to define more long term and mutually beneficial relationships. Most of the dimensions of their areas of
concern can be asset out in specific common categories. In the political level, there exist challenges that no single section or network within them can address, while political intentions to work together that are not always translated into concrete actions, there is little or no overall, shared vision with respect to joint and/or delegated dossiers and in many time failures to take adequate responsibility for decisions and international issues. On a more functional level, the data and analysis of the core events that these organisations were involved with during the course of the research, reveals problems moving from the level of intentions and setting out an environment of bilateral, rather than cross-cutting and multi-lateral, relationships among sections and networks, partnerships that operate and share responsibilities based on a center/periphery approach, lack of clarity regarding information flows and processes for making decisions and conflict resolution mechanisms and fragmented development of action plans on the basis of bilateral relationships. There is also a discrepancy regarding the adequate division of responsibilities between headquarters and field.

On a more structural level, looking into the organisations as big networks of existing polyvalent and dynamic networks reveals a growth that is difficult for the headquarters to contain and little or no joint work on optimizing resources across sections at times. Yet, there are significant attempts to tackle these challenges and pay the way towards a more consistent representation of communication, image and identity, as well as better organization at local regional and international level. These processes would have been completely alien to both organisations some years ago. This is not
only a needs-driven approach, but also a matter of maturity and reflection on ways to be more effective in pursuing their reason d’être. Throughout the course of the research, there is one overarching element that really characterizes both organisations: their commitment to accountability, in the sense of translating public and social support towards the maximum of medical, humanitarian and environmental response and being very transparent (financially and otherwise) both in the process of doing so and in its shortfalls.

9.2. Suggestions for further research- social movement theory?

According to Diani (2000, p. 8) “a movement is a form of collective organization with no formal boundaries which allows participants to feel of broad collective efforts while retaining their distinctive identities and/or as specific organisations”. In this context, social movements may be part of a conflict which is “at the same time embedded in specific “local” orientations, interest, identities, but at the same time exceeds their boundaries, while maintaining the individuality of specific actors (Ibid., p. 9).

Literature on the subject ranges from “heavy” definitions that describe them as “a form of collective action (a) based on solidarity, (b) carrying on a conflict, (c) breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs” (Melucci, 1985, p. 795) and “networks of groups and organisations prepared to mobilize and protest actions to promote (resist) social change (which is the ultimate goal of social movements); and individuals who attend protest activities or contribute resources without necessarily being attached to movement groups
or organisations” (Rucht, 1996, p. 186). Other researchers describe them as “campaigns of collective claims on target authorities; an array of claim-making performances including specialist-purpose associations[…] public representations of the cause’s worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment” (Tilly, 2004, p. 7) or “a sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities […] by a field of actors (organisations and advocacy networks), some of whom employ extra-institutional means of influence” (Gamson and Meyer, 1996, p. 283).

Research about social movements has also had its share of lack of agreement, most notably, researchers attempting to “frame” social movements (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988) have criticized previous analyses of neglecting processes like grievance interpretation and of therefore suggesting a static view of participation and over-generalizing participation-related processes.

The emergence of a social movement is not determined, but a complex result of crisis, resource-mobilisation, self-production; searching for singular laws of the emergence of movements is an expression of one-dimensional, linear and deterministic thinking. One of the basic characteristics of social movements is that of self organization. In a self-organising system new order emerges from the old system, this order cannot be reduced to single elements, it is due to the interactions of the system’s elements. Hence, a system is more than the sum of its parts. Fuchs (2006, p. 111) argues: “the various definitions of social movements can be combined by describing social movements as self-organising systems. Yet, as a self-organising system is
based on an internal logic, it produces itself, but it is not a closed autonomous system; its internal production processes are based upon an open character, ie. such a system is coupled in an environment, it exchanges resources with the environment in processes of import and export”.

When a movement is ‘founded’, its goals, strategies, and tactics are far from being clear. During the life cycle of the movement, ongoing discussions among the members may result in a fragmentation of the movement. In some cases, resources and actors mobilizing for a movement do not even share agreement for what they are mobilizing. They would go on negotiating their aims while the formation of the movement is already in process. This means that the collective goods the movement is supposed to be fighting for are far from being clearly defined when it takes off. The process of reaching an agreement upon what to fight for and how to proceed can become rather costly, because, social movements provide a good of a very special kind besides their explicit goals. They provide particular interpretations of events, problems, or individual concerns (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; Polletta and Jaspers 2001). These interpretations determine all other efforts of the movement: They give a particular ‘meaning’ to events and problems and, by that, determine valuations and impact future strategies for the movement. They form the ideology of a movement, in the sense of interpretations, strategies, tactics, and, most of all, of the primary collective goods the movement fights for. Yet, this ideology or “shared identity” is not explicit and unilaterally agreed upon; it is, most of the time, a subject of negotiation and power struggles and constantly dynamic, in flux.
To take this one step beyond, a social movement is not a singular group but a network of (protest) groups that are communicatively linked. It can have varying degrees of centrality and hierarchy. It can be characterized by pluralism, decentralization, or it can be very central-oriented, with certain actors dominating the movement. The degree of centralization refers to the distribution of resources inside the movement.

The process via which a social movement adopts an ideology involves reaching a fundamental agreement between its heterogeneous members about the collective goods that the movement will fight for because the concrete goals, tactics, and strategies derive from the ideology. Thus, ideologies effectively influence the members’ perceptions and evaluation of events, goods, and beliefs. These ideologies transport meanings, perceptions, and directions about how to act, and it is up to the actors’ willingness to adopt this ideology. There may be occasions where inside the movement itself, there is no consensus of shared ideology. Furthermore, there may be the case that the movement’s ideology does not remain unchanged during the process of being adapted. However, as Hechter (1990, p. 16) observes: “The demand for cooperative institutions [like social movement groups] arises from individuals’ desires to consume jointly-produced private goods . . . that cannot be obtained by following individual strategies.” Besides the satisfaction of organizing activities together, the emotional support by others, and the feeling of doing the ‘right thing’, social movements offer alternative selection and interpretation rules which help one to ‘understand the world’ and to act successfully in ambiguous situations. In other words, there are undoubtedly
benefits for the social movement and its members from a shared ideology. There may, in fact be an “umbrella” ideology that links the members or groups together that bear their own-even contrasting at some point- ideologies or viewpoints.

What could the connection between social networks between the two focal organizations and social movements be? If one of the criterion is self-organisation, is a constellation or network of non-government organisations a social movement? Whatever definition of social movement we may chose, there should be an element of collectiveness, whether it is “collective enterprises” (Blumer, 1969, p. 99) or “collective actions” (Castells, 2004, p. 3) or “collective identities” (Diani, 1992, p. 13). If we take the various definitions of social movements and analyse them into their component parts, we come to the conclusion that social networks have the potential to form “social movements” or to be sources for such movements. Yet, to be characterized as social movements, they need to have an “internal logic” not respond barely to external forces. They will need to “produce themselves”, as the factors that may stimulate the formation, access and usage of the network (movement) will only succeed in a form of collectiveness that occurs sporadically.

Social movement theories put these organisations more in a cultural context, shedding light in their ideologies, identity, community and self organisation. They can provide the useful context in which Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières are organised and are forming their organisational behaviour.
For instance, the Greenpeace campaign against genetically modified organisms had an unparalleled success in many European countries. It raised the matter into a major public priority for food safety. Could it be argued that this campaign formed a “social movement” against the introduction of such organisms? In the same context, Médecins Sans Frontières has a similar petition against the Swiss pharmaceutical company Novartis, as a reaction to the latter’s law suit against the Indian Government in regards to patented drugs. Considering these two international, “historic” and similar in founding principles organisations (i.e. bearing witness, independence and global scope) despite the fact that they are operating under different contexts, we can observe similar lines of action, or global “patterns”. Can they be characterized as social movements? The process of revisiting the three dimensions that differentiate social movements from other forms of collective action processes as defined by Diani and Bison (2004): presence or absence of conflictual orientations to clearly defined opponents, dense or sparse informal exchanges between individuals or organisations engaged in collective projects and strong or weak collective identity between members of those networks, may yield interesting insights for further research on the subject.

9.3 The fascinating world of ethnographic enquiry into non-government organisations for social capital

It is said that research into social worlds resembles looking into a house with many rooms, from which many and different people pass through
over time- they come and go, yet the house remains the same. In the humble attempt to present and represent the social facets of Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières this house is inhabited with people from the poorest of countries to the most fortunate ones. Our journey through time passed through different events and milestones, bringing these organizations closer and further apart, influencing their thinking and acting. The richness of data produced make up for the lack of representativeness, as they provide insight into accounts new to this date. Both organizations are dynamic and fluid- they call themselves movements even if strict theory definitions do not agree. In defining and redefining their environment, sensing the context and content of their action and how it is viewed or experienced in the complex web of the inherently different societies they exist in, social values, networks and actors play an unmistakable role. For the least, this research reveals that the different accounts from both these organisations as well as the “evidence” provided through the secondary research and historical accounts of events, show clear links between the social networks and the capital produced.

Even though “ethnographic truths are inherently partial- committed and incomplete” (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p. 6) it is also true that this ethnographic journey “contextually drew from and created meaningful social milieux” (ibid.) In this sense, the social network theory in conjunction suggest that social capital is indeed produced through the silent function of different elements (values, norms, trust, reciprocity) or more public function of others (external environment, context shifts). This is in alignment with the work of Fukuyama (1997) who highlights “softer” elements such as shared informal
values and norms, an idea taken one step further by Inglehart (1997) who speaks of the existence of a culture of trust. In any case, or the end “product” seems to be far greater than the sum of its component parts, whether that is translated into humanitarian or environmental assistance or by fostering and facilitating change within the organizations. This is coherent with social theory, namely on social network analysis that is “able of capturing both prescribed and emergent processes” (Tichy et al. 1979, p.507), whereby social capital exists both as cause and consequence.

As Burawoy (2006, p. 7) elaborates “reflexive science sets out a dialogue between us and them, between social sciences and the people we study. It does not spring from an Archimedian point outside space and time, it does not create knowledge or theory “’tabula rasa’”. The interaction between the “us” and the “them” in the course of the specific research has been manifold. There has been a multilevel interplay between the researcher and what is being researched, creating a dynamic process over time that brings to surface aspects of the social life of two of the most influential non-government organisations of our time. In this sense, the research followed “the journey” of these organisations, changing through time, creating networks and social capital in local, regional and international level, being imperfect and subjected to change, in the pursuit of noble goals. As promised, it strived to contribute to the reflection in relation to the dynamics of social networks within and between non-government organisations, providing insight on two of the most influential ones, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières. The research and analysis suggest that there is significant “added value” in further
engagement with the non-government organisations' field for the development of reflection and discussion around social networks and social capital.

Or, according to Friere (1982) it is “living knowledge” that can be gained that may educate the researcher in its process, inform action in other areas, and potentially extend the field of inquiry through discovery of new and important information (Fals-Borda, 1991; Reason & Bradbury, 2001).
References


Cross, Rob; Parker, Andrew; Prusak, Laurence; Borgatti, Stephen P. (2001): “Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and


ANNEX

1. Dimensions of Social Capital

2. Médecins Sans Frontières: Possible future association models

How is MSF set up Internally?

Governance reform proposal

Possible Future Associative Models

Minimal Change

Expanded entity membership

Transnational association of individuals

Transnational Association of individuals and Entities
2.1 Médecins Sans Frontières - Chantilly principles

Two Forms of Action

Two inseparable elements are combined in Médecins Sans Frontières’s work: medical aid first and witnessing described as an integral complement of our medical action both of which imply that Médecins Sans Frontières is present with those in danger and that they are the focus of its work. These two elements are twinned together both in the interest of the victims and in order to achieve our overall objective which is to contribute to the protection of life and the alleviation of suffering out of respect for human dignity.

Witnessing consists of:

The presence of volunteers among people in danger, motivated by concern for the willingness to be at their side and to listen to them, as well as to carry out medical work among them, and:

Raising awareness on the situation and on the fate of these people, which is seen as duty. Where Médecins Sans Frontières is present as a witness to large-scale human rights violations, such as forced population displacements, sending refugees back from their country of refuge (refoulement), genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, then Médecins Sans Frontières may ultimately be forced to make public denunciations. In exceptional cases, it may be in the best interests of the victims for Médecins Sans Frontières volunteers to provide assistance without speaking out publicly or to denounce without providing assistance.
2.2 Médecins Sans Frontières - La Mancha principles

La Mancha outlines some basic additional parameters to guide Médecins Sans Frontières ’s speaking out in the context of global pandemics and in recognition of past experiences in fields such as Rwanda and Bosnia.

— To make results and critiques of our action public, and analyse and document our actions and any obstacles preventing patients in our programs from access to quality care…This can, and at times should, contribute to elements of a response that can benefit patients outside of our programs.

— In case of massive and neglected acts of violence against individuals and groups, we should speak out publicly, based on our eye-witness accounts, medical data and experience…but not profess to ensure the physical protection of people that we assist.

2.3 Médecins Sans Frontières Communication Strategic Paper- A Way Forward (based on discussions in the Director of Communication of the Operational Centers platform, endorsed by the Executive Directors platform)

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<th>Visibility</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
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<tr>
<td>To maintain and grow our base of human and financial support to ensure Médecins Sans Frontières operations</td>
<td>To facilitate access to populations in danger</td>
<td>To overcome obstacles to provision of our medical humanitarian action or expose flaws in the aid system</td>
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<td>To draw attention to a forgotten crisis by describing Médecins Sans Frontières medical action and the humanitarian needs and conditions</td>
<td>To distinguish ourselves as independent, neutral, and impartial actor</td>
<td>To expose or alert in circumstances of massive violence, forced population displacement, organized destruction or ethnic cleansing of populations, or genocide</td>
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<td>To promote awareness of Médecins Sans Frontières principles and actions in fields of intervention</td>
<td>To protect the independence of our humanitarian action and preserve or expand humanitarian space</td>
<td>On the basis of our medical experience, to provoke or catalyse an improved humanitarian response to crises beyond the scope of our capacity for intervention</td>
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<td>To ensure transparency and accountability towards our donors and beneficiaries</td>
<td>To contribute to the security of Médecins Sans Frontières staff and operations</td>
<td>To confront governments and other actors (e.g. aid system,) with the humanitarian consequences of political choices</td>
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2.4 Structural Review on Médecins Sans Frontières Operations--Semi-structured interviews conducted with the participation of Operational Directors, Executive Directors, Directors of Communication

**Questionnaire**

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<th><strong>A. Hierarchy &amp; Function/Accountability</strong></th>
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<td>1. What are the lines of accountability and functioning around your post/department?</td>
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<td>2. What mechanisms of accountability are used (plan/monitor/evaluate/adjust)</td>
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<th><strong>B. Support to Operations</strong></th>
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<td>3. What is your role in direct/indirect support to operations and how does that support reach the field?</td>
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<th><strong>C. Communication/Information flow</strong></th>
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<td>4. What do you need to know and how do you get to know it?</td>
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<td>5. What do you need to communicate and how do you communicate it?</td>
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<td>6. How do you learn from others and others learn from you?</td>
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<th><strong>D. Gaps</strong></th>
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<td>7. What is not getting done and why?</td>
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2.5 Médecins Sans Frontières – notes from interview with the Project manager of governance reform and Concept Paper from the Médecins Sans Frontières Reform Conference – Concept Paper

**Ownership**

The Médecins Sans Frontières Reform Process was instructed by and is therefore owned by the International Council. In that regard the conference is not a component of the Governance Working Group (GWG) work plan, but rather a moment where the International Council is consulting representatives from the movement.
3. Press Releases

3.1 Rainbow Warrior completes joint mission with Médecins Sans Frontières to transport humanitarian supplies to Lebanon

Feature story - August 10, 2006

Over 75 tons of essential medical supplies have been safely transported to Lebanon via sea, following a joint operation between Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières, in which three voyages were made by the Rainbow Warrior between Larnaca in Cyprus and Beirut.

Rainbow Warrior arrives in Beirut with supplies for the Médecins Sans Frontières humanitarian mission to Lebanon.

The humanitarian cargos consisted of essential relief equipment, including medical equipment, dialysis material, drugs, hygiene kits and fuel, which was transported on the three shuttle voyages, starting on 2 August and ending today at 0900 when the Rainbow Warrior arrived back in Larnaca.

"We are very happy to have been able to play our part in delivering much needed humanitarian supplies to parts of Lebanon which have become inaccessible due to the current conflict" said Bruno Rebelle, programme director of Greenpeace International. "The crew and volunteers on board the Rainbow Warrior worked tirelessly to load and transport the cargo under difficult conditions, and have completed the missions in a professional and efficient manner."
At every stage, Greenpeace and Médecins Sans Frontières ensured through close liaison safe passage for the ship and crew. On each leg of the journey between Larnaca and Beirut the Rainbow Warrior obtained security clearance with the Israeli Defence Force.

"We are very grateful to Greenpeace and the crew and volunteers aboard the Rainbow Warrior. Use of the ship has allowed us to transport large volumes of relief goods into Beirut, which had previously been a major logistical problem due to damaged roads and lack of security guarantees on vehicles." said Jérôme Oberreit, operational director for Médecins Sans Frontières in Brussels. "Médecins Sans Frontières 's challenge now is to continue that transport on land from Beirut to the south of Lebanon, where the need is most acute."

The Rainbow Warrior will shortly resume her tour of the Mediterranean to highlight the severe problems for the marine environment caused by unsustainable and illegal fishing and coastal development, and continuing Greenpeace's campaign demanding the setting up of marine reserves in the Mediterranean and elsewhere.

Médecins Sans Frontières has around 50 international staff working in areas in Lebanon that are severely affected by the conflict. The emphasis in Médecins Sans Frontières's activities is on supporting Lebanese health workers, setting up additional health posts and mobile clinics where necessary, and distributing basic materials (shelter, hygiene kits, cooking utensils, baby powder milk) to displaced families.
3.2 Rainbow Warrior to transport supplies for Médecins Sans Frontières' humanitarian work in Lebanon

Feature story - August 2, 2006

We have offered Medecins Sans Frontieres the use of the Rainbow Warrior for transporting much-needed supplies to Lebanon. The vessel was already in the Mediterranean and has now docked in Larnaca, Cyprus for loading medical supplies.

The Rainbow Warrior will help Médecins Sans Frontières deliver vital medical supplies to Lebanon.

"We understood that there were major difficulties for humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières in getting bulk supplies quickly from Cyprus to Beirut," says Bruno Rebelle, programme director of Greenpeace International. "We are very happy that we can contribute to a temporary solution to these problems as we are, like everyone else, deeply concerned about the consequences of the fighting in the Middle-East for the civilian population."

Médecins Sans Frontières currently has almost 100 tonnes of medical materials and other relief supplies waiting for transport in a warehouse in
Larnaca, with another 80 tonnes scheduled to arrive there soon. Though some of the supplies get through to Beirut, the bulk of them are stuck in the absence of sufficient transport capacity. Very few boats are available for sailing to Lebanon as there is little guarantee for safe passage.

"We have two major transportation problems," says Jerome Oberreit, operational director for Médecins Sans Frontières in Brussels. "To date it has been very difficult to move large volumes of relief goods from Beirut to southern Lebanon by road. We rely on cars which we stack with boxes to drive along the severely damaged and insecure road to Tyre; trucks have been hit by missiles so truck drivers are reluctant to move into the southern region. On top of that, we have major problems in getting our materials to Beirut quickly enough. In the short term, the offer from Greenpeace means a partial solution of one of our two problems."

The Rainbow Warrior has capacity for transporting 40 tonnes, equivalent to 105 pallets. It is not clear yet how many rotations the vessel will make for Médecins Sans Frontières.

Médecins Sans Frontières has around 30 international staff working in areas in Lebanon that are severely affected by the conflict. The emphasis in Médecins Sans Frontières's activities is on supporting Lebanese health workers, setting up additional health posts and mobile clinics where necessary, and distributing basic materials (shelter, hygiene kits, cooking utensils, baby powder milk) to displaced families.
3.3 Médecins Sans Frontières responds to Haaretz article

Statement of clarification regarding Médecins Sans Frontières collaboration with Israeli doctors in eastern Congo and its intervention in Palestinian Territories, 12 August 2010

Recent articles and commentaries published in Haaretz, the Jerusalem Post, and the Huffington Post present false information concerning the cooperation between a Médecins Sans Frontières team and Israeli burn specialists treating victims of a fuel tanker explosion in the eastern part of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in early July of this year.

The articles and commentaries allege anti-Israel sentiment expressed by Médecins Sans Frontières staff and the staff’s refusal to work with their Israeli counterparts. Médecins Sans Frontières has carried out a thorough internal investigation with its team in DRC and has found no basis for the allegations made against it in the various publications.

Any accusation that Médecins Sans Frontières places politics above the best interests of our patients is rejected.
The fact is that during the intervention in DRC, both the Médecins Sans Frontières and Israeli teams on the ground collaborated extremely well and appreciated each other’s contributions to assist patients. Both medical teams shared — and worked together toward — the common goal of providing the best possible treatment to those most in need. Cooperation continues with the exchange of medical data on the 64 remaining burn patients in our care.

Both Dr. Eyal Winkler, who led the Israeli team from the Sheba Medical Center, and Gila Garaway, who escorted the team, have reassured Médecins Sans Frontières that there was good collaboration and cooperation throughout the five-day intervention and they have rejected any suggestion that this was not the case. Media reports and commentaries alleging otherwise are unfounded and irresponsible.

Médecins Sans Frontières’s humanitarian action is guided by the principles of alleviating the suffering of victims of violence, epidemics, and natural disasters through the provision of impartial and neutral medical assistance that is independent of political, religious or other interests. All Médecins Sans Frontières staff members are obliged to respect medical ethics and international humanitarian law, as well as to display a general attitude and conduct characterized by neutrality, impartiality, and non-discrimination. Any deviation from these principles by an Médecins Sans Frontières staff member is deemed unacceptable.

Regarding references in some of the coverage to Médecins Sans Frontières’s work in the Palestinian Territories: Médecins Sans Frontières
routinely describes publicly the humanitarian impact of hostilities on civilians, as witnessed by our medical teams on the ground. Operating under the rubric of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions, Médecins Sans Frontières pays particular attention in conflict situations to the measures taken by belligerents to spare civilians during the conduct of hostilities.

3. 4 Médecins Sans Frontières USA president’s response on Huffington Post

These principles were the basis for Médecins Sans Frontières’s speaking out in January 2009 during Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli military response to rocket attacks against Israel. Médecins Sans Frontières teams working in Gaza indeed observed a significantly high number of civilians wounded and killed in a very short period of time. Contrary to references in some coverage, however, Médecins Sans Frontières representatives never stated that the consequences of the Israeli military offensive in January 2009 resulted in a greater overall toll than the violence in Sudan’s Darfur region. Médecins Sans Frontières also has a track record of speaking out when its teams have witnessed civilians injured or killed as a result of internecine Palestinian violence in Gaza, as it did in June 2007, for example.

When working in conflict areas, Médecins Sans Frontières assesses the level of needs and local response capacities on each conflicting side. Israel has a comprehensive and advanced emergency response capability and medical infrastructure. While Médecins Sans Frontières has offered its services within
Israel, including during the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, to date Médecins Sans Frontières’s assistance has not been required there.


Responding to many of the same crises and often working alongside United Nations relief efforts within the field, Médecins Sans Frontières has given much consideration to the nature of humanitarian aid offered under the UN relief system. Increasingly, there has been a feeling of a great discrepancy between the needs to be covered quickly and the effectiveness of the UN response.

The past two years have raised many questions regarding the operational engagement of the United Nation’s agencies: there have been inappropriate or slow UN responses to emergencies in Niger, the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Somalia; difficulty understanding strategies and agendas, such as in Northern Uganda, the Caucasus and in Colombia; poor coordination of their delivery partners in Indonesia following the tsunami or more recently the earthquake in Pakistan, and the virtual absence of UN aid in very fragile regions such as the Central African Republic.
Spurred on by increasingly public failures to adequately respond to the 
needs of displaced persons in various contexts — Darfur being the most 
egregious example, the UN, on occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, initiated a 
series of reforms intended to improve its response to humanitarian crises. 
Marked by the modification of its emergency fund to establish the Central 
Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in December 2005, these changes fall 
within the scope of a wider process of organizational reform proposed by the 
UN Secretary General under pressure from many Member States.¹

**MSF and current reforms: independence and pragmatism**

Nine different clusters have been validated by the members of the 
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in the UN’s cluster system. These 
clusters are:

- Nutrition
- Water and hygiene
- Health
- Coordination and camp management for displaced people
- Emergency shelters
- Protection
- Logistics
- Means of communication
- Re-launch of the economy in the post-conflict stage
This organization applies mainly to relief efforts in favour of internally displaced populations.

Officially, reform aims to increase the role and authority of humanitarian coordinators in the field to better defend humanitarian space and principles. Everything rests on two pillars. The first is financial resources that are more predictable and more readily available in emergency situations through the new CERF. The second is a mechanism (“cluster system”) allowing the humanitarian coordinator in a given country to clearly identify and quickly mobilise the agency responsible for overseeing a response to particular needs, with the aim of eliminating any gaps between sectors. This “cluster lead” then relies on the other members of its cluster to carry out a response: the UN operational agencies and NGOs it will mobilise to address an identified need.

MSF continues to follow this process of reform with attention to its potential implications for the organization of emergency relief and the response to humanitarian needs in the field. We have abstained from publicly taking position on the current reforms, as we considered it did not fall within the competence of a medical-humanitarian organization to comment on, or make proposals regarding the internal workings of the UN. The current reforms are also a UN process: clearly stated, we will not be a member of the clusters and the action of MSF will not be placed under the responsibility of UN humanitarian coordinators nor be accountable to them. In the face of the
challenges to be met, however, we can only welcome the willingness of the United Nations to improve their humanitarian response.

We must also take a critical look at the possible effects of the reforms on the effectiveness of aid. While it is doubtless too soon to fully evaluate the impact of proposed changes, the slowness of the UN response to the recent cholera outbreak in Angola, including at the peak of the crisis in May 2006, or in the face of the latest population displacements in Katanga province, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) makes one wonder whether the reform will deliver better assistance for those most in need. In DRC, the military operations launched in November 2005 by the Congolese armed forces against certain Mai-Mai groups resulted in the displacement of several tens of thousands of people, yet the World Food program needed several months to become fully operational. In Northern Uganda, chosen as a pilot country for the implementation of reforms, the needs for water and latrines were not always met in most districts more than six months after the reforms came into effect.

Placed respectively in charge of the nutrition and health clusters, Unicef and the World Health Organization (WHO) have a chance to play a leading role promoting and adopting new strategies for the treatment of malnutrition, following the discovery of a new therapeutic product (in the form of an enriched ready-to-use paste). Given this possibility, their position and operational decisions surrounding this issue will also constitute a full-scale
test to see if the new coordinated cluster structure results in any real improvements in meeting human needs.

Whilst determined to retain its independence in the face of current reforms, MSF will continue a dialogue with the UN operational agencies and also accepts the need for context-related, operation-oriented coordination between the head offices as well as in the field. MSF will maintain its independence of analysis and action and resources so as not to jeopardise the strictly humanitarian and impartial nature of our organization, particularly in conflict situations, where it is critical to keep the trust of the belligerents to be able to reach those who require our assistance.

Coordination: to what end?

Coordination cannot be an end in itself; it must be useful, guided by the reality of the situation on the ground and directed toward concrete action. The limits of the mechanisms of coordination must be recognised: faced with political interference in humanitarian aid, the solution resides not in multiplication or strengthening of technical measures, but rather in the need for humanitarian organizations and the international community to highlight political constraints and ascribe responsibilities. The setting up of coordination structures at national (Joint Monitoring Committee) and decentralised (District Disaster Management Committees) levels did not, for example, help to improve the quality of assistance provided in Northern Uganda.
It is also crucial not to maintain the illusion that a unified aid system steered by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or any other agency would lead to an automatic significant improvement in the efficiency of relief efforts. Presented as a model of coordination, the international response to the tsunami at the end of 2004 was nonetheless severely criticised by an international evaluation mission.\(^2\) According to the conclusions of that investigation, the international relief effort did respond to the actual needs of the affected populations, but was driven more by political and media considerations. Faced with the scale of the public response, the humanitarian organizations spent the money “quickly and ostentatiously” and “to find something to do”.

The humanitarian landscape is currently made up of a large number of actors with widely differing aims, resources and modus operandi. It is not only impossible and unrealistic to believe that all these actors can work in perfect synergy under a single banner, but it can also be at times perilous, as some actors operate with mixed agendas, the humanitarian goals falling second to political, security or developmental objectives and resulting in unmet needs. The existence of a diversity of approaches is what helped save the lives of thousands of children in Niger in 2005, illustrating that independent actors may well offer people in need the best chance at effective assistance. Further, diverse approaches to humanitarian aid help assure that if one strategy fails, all do not fail, with deadly consequences. We have already seen this to be the case in contexts such as East Timor and Angola.
The increasing politicisation of humanitarian action

According to United Nations official line, the reforms initiated in 2005 should better defend the humanitarian space and principles and improve the efficiency of the UN’s crisis response. This can be doubted, however, in light of the UN Secretary General’s note on integrated missions, adopted on 17 January 2006. This document reaffirms the central role of integration for the mounting of UN peacekeeping missions. It is not only a matter of achieving “a more consistent UN system” in the field, but also of “ensuring efficient coordination between the peacekeeping mission, the UN’s operational agencies and non-UN partners.” The note also specifies that the UN presence must be based on a clear and shared understanding of the priorities and the willingness of all actors to contribute to the achievement of shared objectives — subject to reorientation based on the global objective of the UN mission. This document clearly shows that in the UN’s view, humanitarian action remains subordinate to the UN’s political arm and that humanitarian aid comes second to the political objectives pursued by the peacekeeping missions. The DRC provides a perfect illustration of this: the weakness of the international assistance given to Katanga and the slow response of the UN’s operational agencies to the renewed displacements of populations that occurred at the end of 2005/ beginning of 2006 were linked to the reticence of the Security Council and donors to examine the situation in this “Presidential province”, for highly diplomatic reasons.
MSF has on a number of occasions publicly stressed the risks of the politicisation and the militarisation of the system of aid brought about by the “coherence agenda” and integrated missions, in particular in conflict situations. This approach has notably led in the past to certain groups in need being excluded from immediate assistance in Angola, Sierra Leone and Burundi. In Sierra Leone, for example, the UN in 1997 withdrew staff and cut off emergency assistance to support its political aim of weakening the AFRC/RUF, the result of which was deliberate and unnecessary suffering and starvation of the population. This year, Darfur and the occupied Palestinian Territories served once again to remind us that humanitarian action constitutes a crisis management instrument. In April 2006, the World Food program (WFP) announced a halving of food rations to the people displaced by fighting in Darfur because of a lack of finance. This was brought about because the donor countries had decided to make assistance to populations conditional upon the signing of a peace agreement.

Following the victory of Hamas in the January 2006 parliamentary election, several countries including the United States and the European Union decided to suspend their bilateral financial aid to the Palestinian Authority whilst proposing to redistribute these funds towards international relief organizations. Humanitarian action thus became a palliative for a retaliatory measure and was effectively asked to act as a substitute for the Palestinian Authority.
Improving the effectiveness of relief actions depends mainly on
upholding and implementing humanitarian principles by the operational
agencies of the UN (WFP, Unicef, HCR) and by the NGOs, in other words,
strengthening the impartiality and independence of humanitarian action. The
increasing politicisation of the international system of aid over the past few
years does little to inspire optimism, particularly as the majority of
humanitarian relief actors are actively contributing to the process — or do not
have the means to escape from it.
3.6 Personal details of the researcher

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Experience

Médecins Sans Frontières, Barcelona SPAIN Dec. 2006- present

Director of Communication, Operational Center Barcelona/ Athens (OCBA)

- Responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Annual Communication Strategy for the organization, including public relations, marketing, web, production and media relations in order to achieve overall objectives.
- Overall responsibility for the implementation of all communication activities in order to ensure coherence, international standards and team spirit within the department.
- As a member of the management team, contribution to the development of the overall strategy of the organization.
- Development, management and review of the Communication Department Annual Budget.
- Analysis and modification when necessary of the Communication Strategy in light of internal or external developments affecting the organization.
- Development of networks with key national and international media.
- Management of the communication department staff.
- Management of the design and production of communication audiovisual material and publications.
- Direct and indirect communications and public relations support to Fundraising, Human Resources and Program Departments.
- In collaboration with the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) movement, supporting the definition and implementation of communication activities for projects managed by other MSF sections as well as for general medical and humanitarian issues related to MSF.
- Ensuring that effective media relations are carried out to provide media with optimal information on the plight of populations in danger, and on MSF international activities and projects in the field.
- Initiating and participating in national and international meetings in support of MSF medical and humanitarian action.
- Recruitment, supervision, training and evaluation of all staff in the department.
• Preparation and submission to the general director weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual reports regarding the performance of communication activities and external factor affecting the organization’s image.
• Contribution to MSF international communications strategies, priorities and policies.
• Participation in the strategic planning process of MSF OCBA, debates and decision-making to recommend, develop and implement MSF OCBA and MSF International strategic orientation, goals and policies.
• Serving as chief editor of the organization’s donor newsletter.


Campaigns Communication Officer

• Designed, developed and implemented communication strategies for Greenpeace campaigns.
• Participated in overall development of campaign strategies.
• Developed and managed the Campaign Communications budget
• Served as chief editor of Greenpeace donor newsletter.
• Worked as link between Fundraising, Communications and Campaigns departments, ensuring communication message and strategy coherence.
• Planned niche communication strategies, promotional tools and plans for new target groups.
• Acted as core focal person for all media within designed campaigns (Greenpeace international campaign for the Mediterranean Sea).
• Developed online campaigns.

Greenpeace, Athens GREECE Jan. 2003 - May 2005

Direct Marketing Manager

• Developed, analysed and monitored the Annual Fundraising Plan.
• Developed, analysed and monitored the Fundraising budget.
• Contributed to the development and evaluation the organisation’s overall budget in collaboration with the Senior Management Team.
• Managed the fundraising department team (4 full-time, 14 part time staff).
• Managed all direct marketing projects.
• Served as chief editor of the quarterly newsletter.
• Served as one of the two web editors of www.greenpeace.gr.

Marketing Assistant

- Developed marketing projects and events to support organizational goals.
- Translated user manuals for printers and copiers.
- Created corporate presentations for major clients.

Volunteer work

- AIESEC (educational foundation) – University of Athens 1994-1996
- Society for study/protection of Carretta-Caretta sea turtle 1997
- Society for study/protection of Mediterranean Monk Seal 1998-2000
- Greenpeace 1997-2006

Education

MPhil in Social Sciences, University of Leicester, UK (in progress)
Research focus: social capital within and between non-government organizations in Greece.
Ethnographic approach and research method; field work.

Master of Science in Marketing (distinction), University of Leicester UK (2000-2001)
- Dissertation topic: ‘The marketing of smell: What will the internet smell like in the future?’ (distinction)
- Courses covered marketing, management, financial management, communication, research methods, etc.

Bachelor Degree in Economics, University of Athens, Greece (1994-1998)
Courses covered economics, political economy, mathematics, finance, statistics, economic history, etc.

Skills

- Excellent computer skills: MS Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), Photoshop
- Oral and written communication skills in four languages: Greek (native), English (excellent), Spanish (fair) and French (basic).

Interests

Photography, traveling, cinema, sailing, swimming.