PANTEION UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES

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Humanitarian
Organizational Analysis and Decision Making

By

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<u>**Advisory Committee**</u>

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Abstract

Since 2010 Greece has become involved in a maelstrom of conflicting political, financial and social forces. For the humanitarian sector, the crisis has been a challenging opportunity: the five-year crisis period marked a recession of state-sponsored welfare, which led to a heavier burden on the civil society, while at the same time, the consequent turmoil has eroded the humanitarian sector by further restricting its resources and by politicizing humanitarian action. In the wake of the ever growing donor demands, and in order to meet growing standards in openness and accountability, NGOs seek to maximize their understanding of their own selves.

This research aims at enhancing our knowledge on how decisions are formed by humanitarian NGOs. By utilizing a systems approach, the study suggests a strong correlation between the structural elements of the organization and the decision making outcomes. The research performs an application of three theoretical decision making models on three case studies (MSF, MDM, HRC) within the Greek context.

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the study utilizes a) an extensive literature review on the organizational theories and b) primary data collected by a series of twenty-two semi-structured interviews of humanitarian aid workers, with considerable experience within the case-study NGOs. The data was coded and analyzed in relation to the theoretical expectations. The research concludes in a discussion of the findings and a series of implications and recommendations for both the humanitarian and the academic community.

The original contribution of this research to knowledge is located within four elements: a) a detailed connection between the notions of organizational structure and decision making in humanitarian NGOs, b) a reassessment of how accurately the theoretical models on decision making could predict organizational nature, behavior and culture, c) a record of the country's history of humanitarian action, referring to the NGOs of the 'Dunanist' tradition, and d) a critical reflection on the practices of the three NGOs of the study.

Dedicated to the volunteers of the humanitarian organizations

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Panagiotis Ioannidis
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List of Acronyms

AADMER	Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response		EMAK	Special Disaster Response Units
AAR	After Action Report		EMC	Ebola Management Centers
ACF	Action Contre la Faim		ER	Emergency Room
AFAD	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency		ERC	European Resuscitation Council
AHA	ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Center		ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome		FEMA	Framework Partnership Agreement
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action		FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
ANT	Actor-Network Theory		FRY	Former Yugoslav Republic
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations		GA	General Assembly
BDP	Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party		GPS	Global Positioning System
BoD	Board of Directors		HRC	Hellenic Red Cross
CAS	Complex Adaptive Systems		HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
CBO	Community-based organizations		HIF	Humanitarian Innovation Fund
CDC	Center for Disease Control		HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CE	Current era		HNO	Humanitarian Need Overview
CEDPA	Center for Development and Population Activities		HoM	Head of Mission
CEO	Chief Executive Officer		HQ	Headquarters
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund		HR	Human Resources
CHF	Common Humanitarian Funds		IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation		IB	International Board
CRS	Catholic Relief Services		IC	International Council
DFID	Department for International Development		IGOs	International Governmental Organizations
DRC	Danish Refugee Council		ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Aid Office		ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
			IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross

IHL	International Humanitarian Law	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	PET	Population Ecology Theory
IOM	International Organization for Migration	PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control	POW	Prisoner of War
IRC	International Rescue Committee	PPD	Preparation Primary Departure
ISIS / IS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria	RDT	Resource Dependence Theory
KKE	Communist Party of Greece	RFID	Radio-frequency identification
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis	RnD	Research and Develop
LWF	Lutheran World Federation	SAR	Search and Rescue
MdM	Médecins du Monde	SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières	SMS	Short Message Service
MUAC	Middle-upper Arm Circumference	SONAPI	Société Nationale des Parcs Industriels
NAEMT	National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	START	Simple Treatment and Rapid Triage
NCT	Neo-Contingency Theory	TCT	Transaction Costs Theory
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development	TERA	Trilogy Emergency Response Application
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	TQM	Total Quality Management
NIT	Neo-Institutional Theory	UN	United Nations
NPO	Non-Profit Organization	UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Coordination
OC	Operational Center	USAID	US Agency for International Development
OCBA	Operational Center Barcelona-Athens	WASH	Water Sanitation Hygiene
OCG	Operational Center Geneva	WFP	World Food Programme
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	WHO	World Health Organization
		YPG/YPJ	People's Protection Units

1. Introduction

1.1 Preface

The sun was about to set over the vast fields of Anatolia, blending some red tint into the azure of the cloudless sky. The hill overseeing the city was full of people; over a hundred of them in a rough estimate. Their eyes were fixated on the city - some hundred meters in front. Their worry was engraved in the expression of their faces, but their pride was evident too. They had their sons and daughters fighting and bleeding for their community. Without trying one could easily hear the sounds of a relentless battle waging; explosions and machinegun fire echoing towards the crowd. But the crowd stood still, waiting to see the next black flag go down. You could also see the fumes coming out of buildings in the east part of the city. Kobanê had been under a heavy siege by the forces of ISIS for about a month. The Kurdish people of northern Syria which had fled to Kobanê earlier that summer, now had to seek refuge inside the Turkish borders, through the Mürşitpınar crossing. Their number is estimated to over ninety thousand and most of them were women and children, now scattered in various camps in the predominately Kurdish rural district of Suruç, or Pîrsûs, as the locals would call it. The refugees felt at ease with the Kurds of Turkey, and most of them managed to settle in the houses of relatives and friends.

We were sent there to perform a needs assessment mission as part of the Greek NGO Médecins du Monde. The organization, sensing the solidarity of the Greek society with the Kurdish people and their cause, felt like they would be able to accumulate the needed resources to send aid to the victims of the war. Certain individuals, Kurds living in Athens, provided the necessary network for this assessment team to reach the area.

We had spent the day visiting refugee camps and now our team had made a small detour, trying to estimate the validity of conflicting data concerning the presence of people being stranded at the border fence. Darkness would fall soon and we were obliged to leave. We headed back to the village of Çaykara, a five minute drive from the border, were the Kurds had prepared dinner. The Turkish Army was in control of the area, with security

checkpoints everywhere. "The Turks are helping Da'ish[1]" said one of the villagers. "They have made us evacuate the settlements near the borders so that we would not witness them letting IS fighters around the YPG/YPJ forces". His words, as well as similar accounts, escorted us for the rest of our stay in the area. It is true that the Turks and the Kurds are not on good terms, fighting each other since 1984. Especially in that area, the Kurdish regional authorities seemed to defy the Turkish central administration, even though an armistice was in place since 2013. How could we know if the information by the Turks was real? Could we trust the villager's words?

The hostile relations between the Turkish administration and the Kurds affected greatly our planning, as well as our actions. Humanitarian aid in the area was provided by two actors, and neither of them was neutral. Half of the refugee camps in the area were administered by the Turkish central administration and AFAD – the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency. These camps met all quality standards but access was restricted to registered refugees and controlled by soldiers performing frisking. The other camps were administered by the BDP – the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party, which was in control of the regional government. These camps had less to provide, but people would live there under a spirit of ethnic solidarity. In order for the refugees to gain access to the health system, they had to register with the authorities and amongst other requisites, provide biometric data. Most of the Kurds were distrustful of the government, so they rejected the idea of either living in one of AFAD's camps, or register. It was a common secret that most of these people were somehow affiliated to members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which was involved in attacks against the Turkish police and army. The recent days have seen an increase in violent protests between the residents of the city and the police. We kept wondering, why there were no other international NGOs present in the area?

As a humanitarian NGO coming to Turkey from Greece which works under a certain framework of principles, notably impartiality and neutrality, decisions are not easy. By and large, we were forced to balance between the will of the central government which

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[1] Da'ish, or DAESH is the synonym for the acronym ISIS in the Arabic language. Although ISIS members consider this name degrading and has threatened to kill anyone who uses it, most of their opponents have already embraced it.

provided de jure access and the Kurds, who provided de facto access. Was there a way to support the Kurds, who brought us there and not override Turkish authority? We had to be extra careful of our any action or word. We were cautious even about our emails, not to mention Facebook or Tweeter. On the contrary, the media attaché which had been following us from Athens, was untrained and uncontrollable. Her presence had been deemed important to cultivate donor interest in the upcoming mission. Without steady sources of income, the organization often depends on the donations that are given when a crisis reaches the front page of the papers. How could we keep the media at a safe distance?

Back in the HQ the dilemmas were not easy either. Playing the 'solidarity to the fighting Kurdish people' card could resonate well with the Greek society, especially at a time of leftist elation, but could also prove disastrous given the Greek-Turk-Kurd tripartite political situation. The desk officer was anxious about securing access for the relief supplies inside Turkey. Moreover, some of the BoD members were unconvinced about the usefulness of such a mission and restricted financial and logistical support to a minimum. One of the members participating in the mission had to cover his own travel expenses via a third-party sponsor. The negotiations at the board meeting during the previous days were fierce. Why should MdM invest a considerable amount of money for a five-day mission in Kobanê, when the same amount could support domestic operations for a month?

(Author's field notes, Şanlıurfa, October 2014)

This small account was based on the personal field notes of the author. Even though these notes were not initially intended to be part of this study, as the research developed, it seemed more appropriate to start off with a story: A story, out of thousands of similar and even more captivating stories that would illustrate the enormous range of questions being raised during the practice of humanitarian work. Each and every one of these questions is connected to a decision that has to be made, and that will affect the course of events. These decisions are not just being made in the field, but also at a central administrative level. They have to respond to the contingent requirements of the environment as well as the constant needs of the organizational character. And these decisions are never easy. Upon

them depend, among others, the effectiveness of one's intervention, the reputation of the NGO one represents, and the security of one's colleagues.

However, this study is not intended to provide blueprints for action- not because we simply decide not to, but because we believe that there are no single solutions that would satisfice all sides. The donors, the society, the media, the governments, the dominant norms, the principles of the organization, your colleagues, the senior organizational members and yourself, are tangled together in an eerie ensemble. This ensemble is sometimes harmonious and sometimes cacophonous, but in most cases manages to provide the end result: humanitarian aid to the hands of the people in need.

The complexity of the environment and the infiniteness of interactions between the affecting factors of decision outcomes renders the production of an exhaustive flowchart or algorithm improbable. Effective management of humanitarian NGOs demands a high skill level in "reading the situations" that we attempt to organize and manage (Morgan, 2006, p. 3), followed by our effort to yield favorable decisions. This skill will develop as an intuitive, almost subconscious process. This study therefore aims to empower individuals in understanding the inner workings of the subject, and permit a higher level of flexibility, accuracy of insight, and depth of interpretation.

Our research draws heavily on the works of James March (March, 1994, 1991a) and the collaboration of Cohen, March and Olsen (Cohen et al., 1972) for the typology of models in organizational decision making. Another major influence has been Richard Scott (Scott, 2003, 2001) with his analytical work concerning the nature and structure of organizations in general. Heyse (Heyse, 2006) originally conceived the idea of using March's models in order to analyze humanitarian NGOs, by examining two cases of Dutch organizations. Our study combines elements of these three approaches, and by taking into account their innate limitations, it will try to take our knowledge of the subject one small step further ahead. *Accordingly, o*ur *focus is neither on decision making alone, nor on the structure upon which this processes is being executed, but on a combination of both.*

This study will be essentially presented in two main parts, plus an introduction and a conclusion, for a total of four chapters. Hence, in the first chapter we will provide an introduction to the current study, and we will present the research objectives and the

methodology that we will use in order to reach the desired objectives. At that early point we will discuss the important theoretical assumptions of the research. Accordingly, in the second chapter we will discuss matters of organizational analysis in the humanitarian sector. More specifically, we will first consider the various theories that could be of interest in exploring in depth the nature of the humanitarian NGOs. Then, we will present a model structure of the organizations, with the elements provided there defining the glossary of the next chapter. Lastly, we are going to argue about the behavior of the humanitarian NGOs in their environment on both local and global scales. In the third chapter we will tackle the issue of decision making, first on a theoretical basis and afterwards using three case studies of our primary data collection. There are three models for decision making that are going to be thoroughly analyzed, and will produce some expectations for the organizations of our research. Afterwards, these expectations will be contrasted to the findings in the case studies. Finally, in the last chapter, we should consider the results of our findings and provide practical recommendations and proposals for research beyond the limits of this study.

1.2 Aims of the Study

Considering NGOs as one specific possible form of collective action and trying to set the stage for a comparative analysis of the different configurations of these forms is a challenging task (Fisher, 1997). Amongst a plethora of reasons, unfortunately humanitarian work is covered by a thick veil of misconceptions. This veil is cast upon it by various sources and with various motives, sometimes inadvertently and sometimes willingly – and there are two sides to this veil: a bright one, and a dark one.

The bright side of the veil covers the truth with an attractive visage; a sentimentally charged showcase. The image of the humanitarian aid workers helping the malnourished African child always puts some pressure on the lacrimal gland while at the same time it benumbs the critical eye to what goes on backstage. The reported 'scandals', over the past decades by the international humanitarian community cover a great "gamut of embezzlement to mismanagement", while at the same time researchers "identify issues and trends in governance and management problems" (Gibelman and Gelman, 2004). The dark side of

the veil befogs and befouls the image of humanitarian action. Irresponsible sources make claims against the civil society without proper and evaluated evidence, damaging the image of even the most respected NGOs, while at the same time there is lots of well-established critique on their activities (Bell and Carens, 2004; Hadjor, 1998; Hendrickson, 1998; Hilhorst, 2002; Macrae, 1998). This is particularly true in the Greek case[2], where the NGOs image is negative to the point of questioning even their legitimacy (Frangonikolopoulos, 2014). And while it's in everyone's interest to expose NGOs poor practice, generalizability of such claims must be done with a certain amount of caution, which is most often missing. Eventually, this reckless approach could lead to desensitization of the societies and would progressively undermine the independence of NGOs, since they rely on these societies for donations.

Whatever side of the veil one is looking at, there is so much more than what meets the eye when it comes to understand the core of the issue at hand. It is indeed convenient, especially for non-specialists, to settle for the looks of the surface. *How do humanitarian NGOs actually make their decisions? How do they formulate objectives and preferences? How is anyone able to assess their activities?*

Some may argue for the application of the common managerial guidelines and benchmarking tools in order to direct decisions, formulate objectives and identify underperformance. Unfortunately, there are certain objective barriers to achieve concrete results in such a way. Even the most sophisticated information systems to this day usually do not deliver on their promise due to inadequate organization and management support (McDonnell et al., 2007). How is it possible to produce trustworthy feedback from the beneficiaries? How is it even possible to measure performance in the extreme circumstances and environments of disasters and armed conflict? How could one identify those bureaucratic strongholds that resist change and constitute breeding grounds for corruption? Although it is accepted that the best evidence comes from an empirical approach relying on a systematic inquiry into the phenomena through interviews, surveys,

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[2] Tragically enough, a simple Google search for "Health Alliance" (A Greek health NGO-type initiative) provides 3,580 results; a search for "Doctors of the Heart" (another Greek health NGO) produces 5,120 results, while "Well Organized Business" ("Μπίζνες καλά οργανωμένες», a play on words insinuating corrupted practices, with the acronym "MKO" which stands for "NGO" in Greek) provides more than 9,300 results.

observations or experiments, most of these tools are scarce in this context (Collier, 2002; Sampson, 2005; Trivunovic et al., 2011), and our research aims at addressing this gap.

One of the main arguments of the study is in support of the principle of *equifinality*: for two organizations that "share the same goals but reach them through different means, not only the outcomes are not predetermined, but there is no best way to achieve success" (Tompkins, 2005, p. 241). In a sense, this study is more about finding what is going on, and less about conceptualizing a certain, universally accepted truth of how things should be working. This would be a far too optimistic and vain attempt going well beyond the aims of the study. We should not rush to judge decisions and decision making processes in terms of 'good' and 'bad'. With fear of supporting a relativist position, we agree that our understanding of what is 'good' and 'bad', or 'right' and 'wrong' is strictly in parallel with the case context. While this is correct, it also remains true that gaining a better understanding of the physical or social mechanics of our world could prove a powerful aid to better our efficiency at any given point, with respect to temporal, cultural, social, and other diversities.

The aim of this study is to go around this impasse, through a wholly different path, with the utilization of a holistic approach, of a diversified theoretical toolkit and a dexterous methodology: *We argue that organizational structure and decision making are interconnected in such an extent that it is imperative that they are studied together.* Consequently, it is our ambition to shed some light in the correlations between structural characteristics and behavior within the humanitarian organizations. The outcome of this analysis could be a tool for predicting future behavior, ceteris paribus, in the same context.

The first declared objective of this research is to produce useful information to assist high-level humanitarian organization managers understand their organizations better, and eventually improve themselves and become more productive, sustainable, and agile to pressure from the environment. This phenomenon occurs within the organizations quite as it does in the individual scale, by cultivating self-concepts, in particular to the organizations' sense of self-determination, self-distinctiveness, self-enhancement, and self-continuity (Shamir and Eilam, 2005).

The second objective is to support aspirational or, hopefully, even experienced aid workers in their effort to understand the inner workings and brass tacks of their work environment. An accomplishment of this goal might be able to reduce the stress that affects humanitarian workers, by making their "own" environment, even more coherent and comprehendible.

Equally important is the third objective which is to help individuals, beneficiaries and donors understand the internal processes that define the result and interpret humanitarian action. This will definitely strengthen the trust of the supporters and bring valuable confidence to both the giving and receiving end of the humanitarian supply chain.

Last but not least is a special objective that derives from the distinct environment in which the research takes place. This it is to briefly sketch, in the greatest extent possible within the objectives of the study, the Greek humanitarian system and perhaps the reflection of Greek mentality in humanitarian affairs, even when these are imposed with international standards (Birtek, 2005, p. 87). That, by no way means that the study could provide for a detailed analysis of all actors and interactions between them in the past years, but nevertheless outline an insightful observation.

At the same time, since the study focuses exclusively on Greece and especially on the three most prominent organizations, all three of them belonging to the 'Dunanist' strand of humanitarian NGOSs. An unexpected, yet fortunate byproduct of this research is the documentation of an important part of the humanitarian history of the country. Historical information will be recorded along with the unique testimonials of people who experienced first-hand the events of the last twenty five years. Such information might prove useful for foreign researchers, organizations, donors and others who are lacking understanding of the idiosyncratic characteristics of the Greek context.

1.3 Research Design: Methodology

This research follows a post-positivist epistemology, with a critical realist ontology, while utilizing a deductive strategy. It examines three decision making models, linked to three organizational theories. These, are tested against the empirical findings of a qualitative examination of decision making in three humanitarian NGOs in Greece. It is a primary

research using semi-structured interviews, observations and data collection from official documents.

Although the sentence above might seem complicated, we shall try to explain below, step by step, every piece of the sentence that holds some methodological significance. After all, our aim is for the reader to have a clear view on the research strategy by which this peculiar and multifaceted subject is being studied.

In the first place, as far as the epistemological aspects of the research are concerned, a middle path is opened up between positivism and interpretivism. Post-positivism retains some of the positivist ideals, while imposing humility and less faith in the power of method (Greene, 2007). Consequently, social reality can only be known imperfectly and probabilistically, even if objectivity remains the ultimate goal (Blaxter, 2010). Critical realism alternatively, goes one step further to acknowledge that all we can know of this world is just incomplete and fallible pieces of a grand puzzle that is real, yet not necessarily tangible or perceptible. In a sense, these are the missing links between ontological realism and epistemological constructivism and relativism (Sayer, 2000, p. 47), which are also fundamental elements in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). Under the flag of critical realism, the research hunts for truth nuggets in the world of "real", yet beyond the phenomena that appear to our sense-perception (Gandesha, 1992). The critical realist perspective seems like a really useful tool for decoding, understanding a humanitarian organization and "providing insight into the interrelationship between its structures and potentials, and individual action" (Kontos and Poland, 2009).[3]

The research hypotheses were formed under the consideration of certain theories and on the basis of what is already known about decision making. This means the implementation of a deductive approach that comes in contrast to the "atheoretical" (Lijphart, 1971) or "configurative-idiographic" (Eckstein, 1975, p. 135) types of inductive approaches. On the contrary, we consider this research to be "disciplined-configurative" (ibid), as we use a theory in order to direct our examination of the actual cases. Even if we cannot initially exclude the possibility that the cases might produce some feedback to the theory, the

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[3] For a more detailed analysis on the epistemological and methodological implications of a critical realist approach to the subject, please refer to the relevant following subchapter.

theory-practice gap does not provide prescriptive implications to the cases themselves, rather than contribution to the theory (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999).

Decision making, is a widely used term that is utilized in various situations of human experience when a group or an individual (or even a non-human object), engages in a cognitive process that results in the selection, between alternate options, of a belief or course of action (Ranyard et al., 1997; Reyna, 2012). Decision making lies both at the core of the organizational, as well as our personal, daily routine. We identify alternatives, we measure them according to the suspected outcomes, our values and preferences, and we prompt ourselves for action or inaction. Whether we do this consciously or instinctively, having adequate or inadequate information, reaching an acceptable level or less of effectiveness, with more or less formality, all these are questions that follow and make no difference to the fact that we engage in the process. Decision making has been the subject of active research from several different scientific areas, namely neuroscience, psychology, sociology, information science, political science and history; just to mention some of them (Friesen-Storms et al., 2015; Hislop et al., 2000; Laffont and Tirole, 1991; Malecek and Schonberg, 2015; Swami, 2013; van der Pligt, 2015). For the purposes of this research, decision making will not be examined singled out, standing out of context. On the contrary, we are interested in examining the active processes of how decisions are made from the individual (humanitarian worker) or the group (humanitarian organization), in the midst of their interdependence, and their interaction with the external environment. The study is concerned more about how decisions are really taken, than how the same decisions are ought to be taken. For methodological purposes, we shall not limit our focus vertically (strategic, mid-level, and frontline) but rather horizontally (operational decisions rather that non-operational, on a wider sense). This is decided on the basis of non-homogeneity amongst the case studies, since in certain organizations every member could take part in operations, irrespective of their position on the hierarchical structure, making the vertical limitation senseless.

The decision-making theories that will be put to the test in the current study have been formulated and evolved in various scientific domains, such as organizational studies, sociology and public administration. We pinpointed three distinct models of organizational

decision making based on James March's typology (1994). Firstly, we have "Logic of Consequence", which is a predisposition towards rational procedures. Then, we have "Logic of Appropriateness", which is decision making that fits the rules and the identity of the organization. Lastly, we explore the cases of "Garbage Can" model of decision making (Cohen et al., 1972), or a model of "Organized Anarchy" (Moch and Pondy, 1977), or as we shall refer to "Logic of Capacity" – which is our slightly modified approach of the same idea. These three models will be presented to a greater extend later in chapter three.

Moreover, we decided that more emphasis needs to be given to the connectivity between various elements, and this made us look for theoretical solutions in three different theoretical perspectives, that would match the three decision making models that we will adopt for the analysis of the case studies. After the exclusion of alternative options[4], it was preferred that the partial implementation of three organizational theories, the Contingency Theory, the Neo-Institutional Theory, and the Complex Adaptive Systems Theory would better suit the research requirements. Each of these theories derive from a different perspective (rational, natural, and open) and correlate to a different decision making model (Logic of Consequence, Logic of Appropriateness, and Logic of Capacity).

At a first glance it might seem academically provoking to employ a qualitative methodology and at the same time engage the concept from a post-positivist, critical realist angle. The truth is that this combination is far from being anything new for science. Several theorists have already explored the significance of realist influence into social science research (Campbell, 1988; Cook et al., 1979; House, 1991; Lakoff, 1990; Manicas, 2006, 1991; Shweder, 1991). There are several reasons for which the choice between adopting a qualitative instead of a quantitative approach was an easy one. First and foremost, it enables our research to go into greater depths and detail on how humanitarian workers act within the organization, and the interactions with each other. There is so much more to see in the behavior, attitude and experience than what can be efficiently analyzed in counts and ranks

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[4] Initially, there was a consideration on using a novel 'umbrella theory' that would host such an approach. It had originated from the Science of Studies and is named Actor-Network Theory (ANT). The reason for which we considered ANT was to facilitate the interconnection between material and semiotic nodes, as well as to underline the important role of non-human agents in the humanitarian relief chain. On the contrary, ANT would prove obstructive to decode the essential entities of our research, since its constructivist stance is incompatible, if not mutually exclusive and antithetical with our epistemological basis.

of numeric data and organizational charts. A second, important reason for the adoption of a qualitative approach was to employ the openness that it offers, and to encourage and stimulate participants to open up and express themselves creatively. Thirdly, since we focus on relations within a complex system, we need ways to include contingent and contextual instances. We are particularly interested not only in "what happened", but also in the why and the how, and this information would not surface by any other methodological means. Still, our aim through the interviews was to generate "facts" that would hold independently of the research or the researcher, and that would manifest through the questioning (Maseide, 1990).

The choice to conduct a primary research was dictated by the fact that research in this field remains limited. There is extensive bibliography on the matter of organizational decision making (Pettigrew, 2014; Shapira, 2002; Singh, 1986), but humanitarian NGOs are so fundamentally different, that render these studies inconclusive when it comes to drawing generalizations. Decision formation within intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) could be seen as a contiguous field, but as we shall argue later on, it still presents fundamental differences (Grande, 1996; Kerremans, 1996; Reinalda and Verbeek, 2004; Spiro, 1995). Decision making in the third sector (Hofstede, 1981; Schwenk, 1990) is much more relevant but still, we argue that the environment of humanitarian organizations is so much different that a more specific approach is required. The work of Liesbet Heyse (2006) on humanitarian decision making was a major influence as well as the articles of Gostelow (1999), and Tong (2004). Furthermore, Greece – seen as a host of humanitarian organizations which is also spearheading today's economic crisis – has already developed reactive dynamics on the social level (Harkiolakis, 2015; Matsaganis, 2011) that makes for an interesting case that deserves some distinct attention. As a consequence, primary research has been preferred, taking into account the lack of relevant, country-specific data. The researcher's professional background and personal network also allowed for the conduction of elite interviews of key-persons inside the NGOs[5]. This access was further

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[5] The author also took advantage of the leverage provided by the Master's Programmes of both Panteion University (MA International Law and Diplomatic Studies) and the Medical School of the University of Athens (MSc International Medicine – Health Crisis Management). It must be noted that the association of the author, and consequently of his research, with both of these academic endeavors provided an initial boost in confidence to the gatekeepers of each of the three organizations.

facilitated by the members of the thesis advisory committee, which are people respected people within the Greek humanitarian community. Elite interviews are seen as "able to give substance and meaning to prior analyses of institutions, structures, rule-making, or procedural controls" (Hochschild, 2009), a perfect fit for our research's stated goals and objectives.

Finally, the qualitative tool that was employed (semi-structured interviews) was formulated in a way that is closer to being structured (broken down to small thematic elements) so that the same issues are covered by each respondent (Nazroo and Arthur, 2003), and still leaving enough space for emergent themes and ideas. Personal involvement of the interviewer was limited to encouraging the participants to engage in the process. The engagement was non-reciprocal but more of a neutral facilitation for aiding the disclosure of information. A standard interview protocol was followed, as questions were always asked as they were worded and in the same order as they appeared on the schedule (Biemer et al., 2011). In this way, the interviewer's involvement was kept to a minimum, in accordance with our research and ethics standards.

1.4 Research Design: Research Hypothesis and Questions

Our initial hypothesis is that three specific models of decision-making correspond to the three organizations selected as cases to our study. More precisely, the hypothesis suggests that:

> [H$_1$] Médecins Sans Frontières-Greece matches mostly a consequential reasoning, the Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans follow a rule/value based direction, whilst Médecins du Monde-Greece is performing mostly out of opportunities and capacities.

This hypothesis will be challenged as we will subject it to scientific scrutiny against the empirical findings of the study. It is expected that none of these organizations will fit any of the theoretical models perfectly (Heyse, 2006, p. 48; Perry, 2000), but be that as it may, we are still interested in the level of deviation from the expected model or nearing a

different one. At the same time, we will try to refute the null hypothesis, which is defined as such:

> **[H₀]** None of the three organizations correspond to the respective decision making models.

The study will try to provide answers to a big variety of research questions, all evolving from (and revolving around) the research hypothesis. Following subsidiary questions:

a) At what level do the case studies correspond to the three presupposed models of decision making? (Logic of Consequence in Médecins Sans Frontières-Greece, Logic of Appropriateness in the Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans, Logic of Capacity in Médecins du Monde-Greece)

b) How do the three case-study organizations vary in terms of decision making across various contexts? Does the decision making model of the organizations remain the same domestically as it is in operations abroad? (parallel presentation)

c) Does variation in decision making model predict variation in leadership style?

By now, we have briefly sketched the major epistemological as methodological grounds of the research. Hereon forth we continue to do the same with two particular subjects, which are inspected separately in the following subchapters and those are a) of the definition and selection of cases, and b) the selection of participants in the study.

1.5 Defining and Selecting the Case Studies

According to social research specialists, case study research should be used whenever we want to cover contextual conditions that are pertinent to the single multi-faceted social phenomenon that we study (Feagin et al., 1991). As an empirical inquiry, it works best when we cannot identify the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context, when the researcher relies on various sources of evidence (something that is not always necessary), as well as when comparing cases between them (Lijphart, 1975). Most importantly, case study research in grounded on "prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2013). It seems important that

while obtaining the case through empirical examination of the phenomenon, one should not manipulate or be able to manipulate neither the context nor the phenomenon itself (Kaarbo and Beasley, 1999). The sum of these statements corresponds well with our study's profile.

The criteria of selecting the case studies were defined as such: a) the organization had to be of Greek origin or be the Greek branch or an independent delegation of an international organization, b) the organization had to be active at the time of study and during the timeframe of interest, c) the organization had to be identified as humanitarian, d) the organization had to be of a non-profit nature, e) the organization had to be non-governmental, f) the organization had to have a medical orientation and lastly g) the organization should have a substantial experience of at least 10 years in the humanitarian field with activities inside and outside Greece.

The study also reserved some exclusion criteria. No faith-based organizations were considered, as well as for-profit organizations, and organizations strongly affiliated with the State. These three criteria are relevant to the *values*, *objectives*, and *principles*, respectively[6]. Both three of these aspects are determinants in decision-making and would produce methodological inconsistencies in the way that will be briefly explained below. Another elimination criterion was that of an organization being exclusively specialized in Search and Rescue Operations. These organizations were excluded because even if some of them could marginally fit the inclusion criteria (some of them see themselves as 'humanitarian organizations'), their activities are too short-termed and fundamentally different and distant from what could traditionally be considered 'humanitarian organization'. The last exclusion criterion was the self-identification of an organization as being of "charitable" nature.

The rationale behind filtering the cases was to satisfy the three most important tasks in case selection. The first and most important is to have comparable cases. Comparability sits at the heart of scientific exploration, whether that is comparing case against case, or case

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[6] We describe the quintessence of the organizations working within what is understood as the *"humanitarian space"* - *"l'espace humanitaire"*. For additional information concerning the humanitarian space refer to the works of Marouda (2000; 2013) and Perrakis and Marouda (2009).

against ideal case or even theory. In this particular study, the cases are not compared to one another, yet maximization of comparability is ensuring a desirable homogeneity. Przewoski and Teune (1970) describe that "systems as similar as possible with respect to as many features as possible constitute the optimal samples for comparative inquiry", and name this understanding as "Most Similar Systems Design". The second task is identifying variation between the cases in the selected variable. In this study which focuses on decision-making, it was preferred that cases would *macroscopically* differ in that aspect. The reason for which the second task is not treated meticulously, is because the cases in the study are not compared to one another in order to draw conclusions on the variables themselves, but to achieve the restated similitude. The third task is to choose our cases across a different population subgroups. This task, too, since the objective of the study is not to draw conclusions on the greater group (i.e. Greek NGOs, medical organizations, etc.), was not taken under consideration.

In the end, only three organizations fit the inclusion criteria and did not fit any of the exclusion criteria. These organizations are the respective Greek branches of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Médecins du Monde (MdM), and the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) Samaritans. For each of those cases, a clear "case study protocol" was defined, with a structured set of questions, common for each organization, while at the same time identifying the potential sources of evidence for answers (George and Bennett, 1979).

It has been stated above, time and again, that the cases will not be compared with each other. Such a comparison would have very little to show, as within this narrow selection there are known fundamental differences that would produce systematic errors in any conclusions drawn. Although this may be true, in order to secure scientific evidence we should make at least one comparison, and in this case the comparison will take place between the case and theory.

1.6 Choosing the sample of participants

In this study we chose to focus on various levels of the organizational hierarchy. Even though it might seem more appropriate to allocate higher level of attention to those

members whose roles are more entailed with the concept of 'decision-making', such as board members, CEOs and directors, that way we could have missed a lot of precious dynamics coming from the bottom up.

The argument is founded on the truth that every position of a knowledge-worker is played out in two simultaneous modes: boss and worker. This means that the same person who is doing the actual work, is at the same time taking several decisions that affect the end result. This 'low level' decisions might be of various natures, including command decisions (within job description limits), avoiding or postponing decisions, delegated decisions, or taking part in collaborative decisions (Tracy, 2007). It is expected that these decisions, or their consecutive actions will be restrained by policies and operational procedures. Still, within their internal environment, the employees seem to hold a certain level of official capacity to decide and act (Shrode and Brown, 1970). That happens mainly because "the managers are, to a great extent, left to their own devices in meeting the responsibilities attached to the position they hold in the organization" (Spray, 1962).

Even more important and well documented is that mid and low-level management, as the one found in the decisions taken by the people described above, affects the course of the whole organization (Callaway and Esser, 1984). Still, for reasons of being thorough, the interviews were conducted with all levels of decision-makers, from low-level to the elite groups.

Therefore, the sampling pool was defined as the people strongly associated with the organization who, within the timeframe of study (1990-2015), held a certain position that involved any level of managerial decision making, as widely defined as above. These criteria include both paid staff as well as long-term volunteers, and unpaid board members. Exclusion criteria is not having enough experience within the organization (a minimum 12 month involvement is expected).

The type of sampling in our study falls under several sampling typologies. Even if the individuals participated voluntarily in the study, that wouldn't account for 'voluntary response sampling', since selection was targeted and not open. Likewise, 'convenience sampling' is ruled out because relevance was prioritized over proximity to the researcher. On the contrary, the goal of the sampling was "to sample cases in a strategic way, so that

those sampled are relevant to the research questions being posed" (Bryman, 2012). We can argue that in this case we adopted 'purposive' or 'judgmental' sampling, which happens because we know both the characteristics of the population and the purpose of our study, according to the research agenda, and because there was no systematic effort to produce a randomized sample.

In order to maximize the reliability and generalizability of the data drawn from the sample, the selection was done in collaboration with the respective staff directors or general directors of each organization, after discussing the limitations and the requested characteristics of the participants. The original sample limit was set as such, in order to achieve a proper representation of the general population of the study. This of course took under consideration the total number of people working in each of these humanitarian organizations in Greece. Eventually, the sample size was decided to fluctuate according to the needs of the study, up to the point of theoretical saturation, where all new data presented would offer few, if any, new and pertinent information.

Ultimately, twenty-two humanitarian aid workers, members of the three organizations took part in the study. None of them expressed any reservation before or after the interview. Their number was balanced between the three NGOs, with a slight exception of MDM who reached information saturation earlier, and no further interviews were deemed necessary.
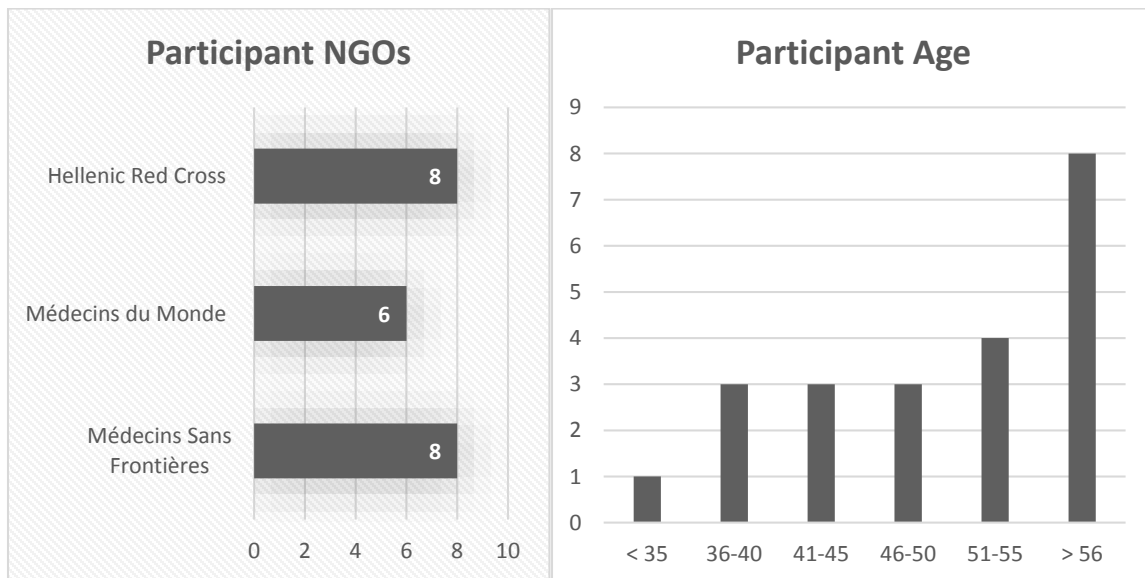
Graph 1. Participant demographics: NGOs & Age
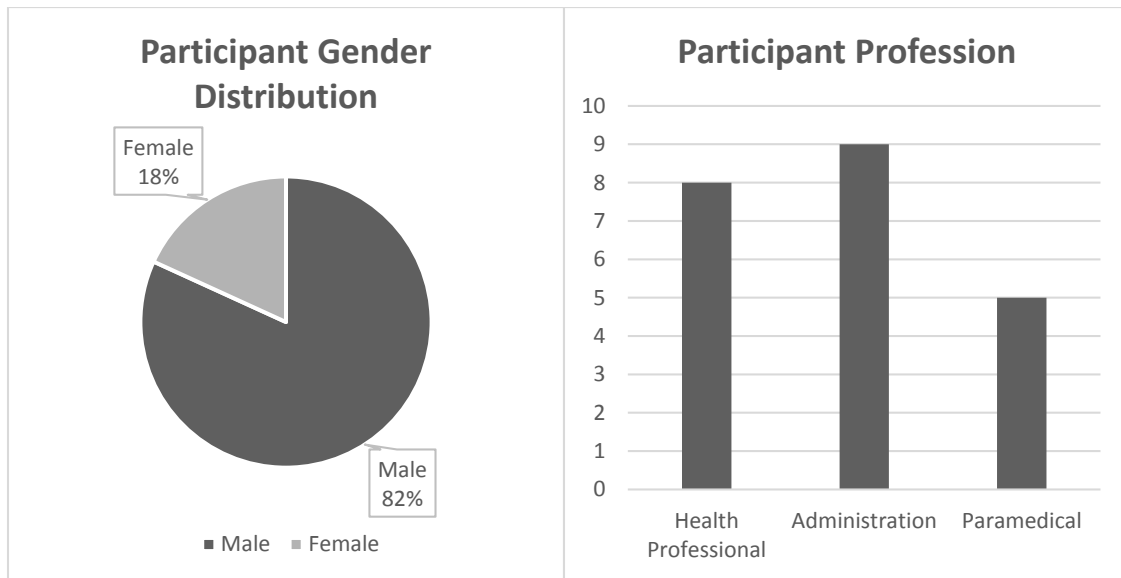
Graph 2. Participant demographics: Gender & Profession

1.7 Theoretical and Epistemological Perspectives

In all innocence and naivety of the initial research conception, this study was intended to follow a *practitioner perspective*, and try to generate theory through practical knowledge. Soon afterwards, it became evident that we should take a step back and inquire about theory, only to see that by that from this novel, *observer perspective*, there are many questions that could not be sufficiently or conclusively answered. Alas, if the role of social science is to create theories that will help organizations and their members understand any of the causal regularities of their reality, then at least some these questions have to be answered.

The study shares the ideas of Miles and Huberman (1994) about the world of knowledge. In their work on qualitative research, they humorously argue that even though theorists (realists, interpretivist and critical theorists alike) tend to encamp themselves at the poles of positivism and relativism, they rarely follow through with this stereotyped continuum. Pure deterministic approaches and untainted hermeneutics are a thing of the past, and at the actual practice of empirical research everyone tends to approach a hypothetical center (ibid). This self-obsessive dualistic debate holds strong, with proponents of

positivism arguing against hermeneutics, quantitative against qualitative, objectivity versus constructionism, inductive against deductive methods. Many social scientists today are reluctant to take part in this deadlock where both sides arguably hold part of the truth (Danermark et al., 2001). Without evading taking a standpoint, or eluding making any epistemological commitments that are essential in developing proper methods in data collection and analysis, we shall advocate the same approach. Comparatively, lots of questions expressed by various scholars provoke meta-theoretical reflexivity, i.e. how to generate valid and pertinent knowledge and how to compare and evaluate the various competing knowledge claims (Chia, 1996; Lynch, 2000). It falls beyond the scope of this study to go into greater depth regarding reflexivity, knowing the 'documented risk' of the search becoming self-obsessed and narcissistic (Weick, 2002).

It is good practice for researchers to reveal their preferences from the start; a position that holds especially true for qualitative social research which is an area of extreme epistemological ambiguity. At the time of writing, the author sees himself in the lineage of post-positivism, meaning that the described social phenomena are not just a construction of the mind but do exist in the objective world. These manifestations seem to hold a certain amount of lawfulness and regularity, which can be proven by the concurring patterns displayed in the physical world. Fear of personal injury, as an incentive for adhering to the organization's security manuals and SOPs is a *subjective* sense with an *objective* result, that, to the point that is repeatedly expressed, it holds truth. Moreover, these manifestations fabricate the intricate social constructs with which we interact in our lives. It might be again the subjective conception of hierarchy, as a humanitarian aid worker feels it, that holds the objective and observable chain of command – or even the unseen, yet effective informal hierarchy (Diefenbach and Sillince, 2011). There is no doubt that there are parts of those constructs that are inconceivable or immeasurable, but still this does not make them invalid.

In the course of our analysis we are fully cognizant of the inherent limitations of the human mind as an instrument of research. In this regard, this study of humanitarian organizations must seek knowledge not only in the world of *phenomena*, but also scientifically test *noumena* (as defined by Schopenhauer, rather than Kant), the transcendental and the empirical, theory and practice by adjusting their cognition accordingly (Archer and

Bhaskar, 1998). For this attribute of taking cognitive limitations *a priori* into account, the research bends towards philosophical concepts as critical realism (Collier, 1994), or transcendental realism (Bhaskar, 2008). Our understanding of the world that we study might be constructed and fallible, but yet again this superficially interpretive epistemology (that most realists would rush to throw off the window), is founded on a solid realist ontology (Bygstad and Munkvold, 2011). By and large, the nature of the scientific object should be determining the analogous epistemology and not the other way around, which will constitute *epistemic fallacy*.

In this point, it is really important that we take a deep breath and dive even further and deeper; for the tools that we need to unlock our understanding of critical realist ontology are hidden in great depth. We arrive, yet again, to Bhaskar (1978) for a division of the reality into three dimensions or domains that coexist: the empirical, the actual, and the real. The *real world* includes casual mechanisms and structures. The world is a system operated by causal laws. It is a world of potential that expands way beyond our grasp and understanding. The *actual world*, on the other hand, is a subset of the real world. It is the real world potential, put into action. It is the events generated by the causal laws of the *real* world. It utilizes the structures of the *real* and produces events or things; 'entities' that exist because of, and by virtue of, some functioning in their aspects. The actual world expands irrespectively to our capacity to observe or analyze it. Lastly, the *empirical world* is the world that our human brains understands with its senses (naïve realism) and with is critical capacity (interpretation). It is indeed a subset of both the *real* and the *actual* domains. It is a world of experiences, formal experimentation, analytical thinking and investigation. In this sense, critical realism achieves a depth ontology, where other approaches retain a 'flat' understanding and fail to focus on one out of these three domains (Sayer, 2000).

	Domain of Real	Domain of Actual	Domain of Empirical
Mechanisms	✓		
Events	✓	✓	
Experiences	✓	✓	✓

Table 1. Domains of Reality (Source: Bhaskar, 1975)

The complexity and variability of the real world's structures' outputs (emergent properties) produce empirical events and it is our job as social scientists to "arrange empirical events in the course of an experiment so as to isolate the action of a single mechanism and thus identify it" (Elder-Vass, 2008). Our reality is produced by the causal powers of these *generative mechanisms* whether these are our activities and attitudes or our encounters with social structures (Connelly, 2001).

This understanding of the *generative mechanisms'* emergent properties comes in accord with the black boxes of open systems theories in which the intermediaries are able to transport forces without transforming them. This does not need to take under consideration the internal complexity of the subsystems, nor does it need anything more than the inputs to define the outputs (Latour, 2007). It is indeed the same 'black boxes' that the cyberneticians were referring to when, on a diagram of connections and interactions they drew a box for which they cared only about its inputs and outputs. By no means do we underestimate the importance of opening up, unboxing these 'black boxes' and the implications that this might have in our understanding of the social world. Most likely, the result would be rich and confusing; ambiguous and yet fascinating. On the other hand, from a practical perspective, it would render impossible and counterproductive to continuously break down everything to the atomic level (and perhaps beyond!). With the opposite intention, to become productive and efficient, we should focus on each *generative mechanism* at a time and see how it fits within the organization (super-system) and the individual (subsystem).

One other concept of ever-increasing value and relevance at this point, is *emergence*. This concept goes against a popular doctrine in social sciences called 'methodological individualism' which is a type of reductionist method that supposes that the aggregated sum of the properties of the individuals account for the properties of the whole; the society (Arrow, 1994; Langlois, 1983). That is what happens in the physical world when two entities of the real world conjunct, give rise to new phenomena with attributes and functionalities different from their predecessors. Water, for instance, which is a rather simple chemical compound has different properties than either hydrogen or oxygen, even if there is nothing more to it than these two fundamental ingredients. Thus, emergent

properties cannot be deducted back to their previous state, not more than an automobile can be broken down to wheels, chairs, and bolts, and still be able to explain how it is capable of motion. In our study of humanitarian organizations, the set of people (along with technology) form a great mechanism which interacts in the greater environment (for example with governments, the beneficiaries, or other non-state actors) but the output of this mechanism would not necessarily be the sum of the component inputs (the will or capacity of each individual member or the properties of technology).

So, humanitarian organizations can be seen as subject of focus by themselves, as a black box, or as a generative mechanism for a greater system. At any photographic instance, the structural part of the organizations is "a result of the result of prior social relations conditioned by an antecedent structural context" (Archer, 1995, p. 165). Could this rationale go all the way upwards to the macroscopic level, or all the way downwards to the individual? Is this connection bidirectional or unidirectional, or both? In this way we subtly enter the discussion that spans for half a century about the relations between structure and agency, and the relative force of the individual within the organization and vice versa. This dispute extends outside the scope of this study, and there is only one thing that we should keep in mind for now. This is the fact we should strongly resist against the argument that, in the end, everything is subject to pure contingency (i.e. society, organizations, humanitarian actors, and individuals). If that was the case then "any notion of the study of society, let alone more presumptuous notions about some version of 'social science' could not even be voiced" (Archer, 1995, p. 166). History would have nothing to teach us, because history would be, by default, a matter of context specific contingencies. In the end, we have to put some order in the world, to warrant for the cumulative successes of science as practice (ibid).

On the other hand, Archer (ibid) continues to argue that society as a whole can merely be imagined as a simple cybernetic system "which presupposes a particular structure capable of carrying out goal directed, feedback regulated, error correction", because of its complexity. Within it, we encounter the terms '*morphogenesis*' and '*morphostasis*', which describe "processes which tend to elaborate or change the system's form" (Buckley, 1967, 1998), or processes within the system which tend to preserve the settled form, respectively.

To tackle with the challenges of emergent properties of the generative mechanisms the research should understand the limits of the toolkits at hand. Various levels of focus, might dictate the need for a more variable *academic arsenal* of theory and method. In this respect, we shall avoid canonical sterility and methodological rigidity. As Mishler (1990) accurately described, the trustworthiness of any particular study comes not from the level of conformity to the standard methodology, but from the ability of the research to bend and fit to the situated practices in the field of inquiry.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

With respect to the author's academic background which is international studies and humanitarian action, the research is limited to a perspective of social sciences. This, by no means equals to an attempt to silence the polyphony of different voices and theories that contribute to the field of organizational analysis. As Scott (2003) mentions, "This is a circumstance to be celebrated, not condemned or ignored"; and as far as this study is concerned, we could not agree any further. Every distinct theory or approach is like one single guitar string. Every string, sounds "right enough" if it is not out of tune, but is unable to reproduce the complexity of a song; that is, explain the whole picture. But the skilled guitar player may strike multiple strings at once, producing a chord. This arrangement of different pitches constitutes together the chords of a song that is as close to reality as one might get. With this in mind, as was mentioned before in this chapter, this study will try to hold on to its multidisciplinary potential.

One of the major limitations of the study comes straightforward from its epistemological and methodological position. By adopting an objectivistic outlook, we fail to incorporate discourse analysis into the game. This omission was done with no disregard for the invaluable information that we could be able to produce from the use of a different approach. This neglect, which goes well beyond the borders of the study, characterizes the realist-objectivist paradigms and has been strongly criticized. In order to partly overcome the limitations, the research design was developed as such so that significant semiotic

events would not be missed. The use of qualitative methodology (interviews) and *semiosis* via mechanisms "that are intelligible form a critical realist perspective" (Fairclough et al., 2004), is an example of an act to mitigate the loss of information.

Yet another interesting limitation that must be addressed is the declared *holistic* approach of the study. Durkheim's holistic approach to social science is argued to hide, rather than uncover social processes (Moksony, 1994). Systems theory's holism focuses on the arrangement of relations between parts that connect into a whole, but the doctrine guides the researcher to study the whole without consideration of the parts (Heylighen, 1992; Langlois, 1983). The dangers of taking these views literally are taken into account. Thinking that naïve-holist macromodels of society (or even of the humanitarian organizations, or of the 'humanitarian space') could provide a sufficient or even exemplary code of conduct, is rejected upfront. For the purposes of this research, the term 'holistic' will be limited semiotically. Our holistic approach is an emphasis on the context, the environment, the interconnections of actors and mechanisms in various levels.

Even if the current study aims to help the reader understand humanitarian action, it is self-limited to only certain versions of it. We could for instance take a wide understanding of humanitarian action as the provision of protection to the victims of armed conflict, as well as the provision of help to all those in need, and the promotion of dialogue between belligerents in order to abide to their legal obligations under international humanitarian law. Unfortunately, this wide definition would most likely include the actions of actors so diverse that could not be studied under one single research. Most importantly, it would have to squeeze and fit the actions of the heroic Red Crescent volunteers in the 2014 Gaza invasion by Israel, together with the actions taken by international actors such as the NATO 'humanitarian bombing' in the Kosovo war in 1999 (Shank, 1999). Our understanding is that the notion of 'being humanitarian' is not restricted to the ends, but extends also to the means. There is no true humanitarian action that does not employ means built on the same value system as the ends. Such an interpretation provokes suspicions and is dangerous for the NGO aid workers as it eventually restricts the vital 'humanitarian space' (Marouda, 2012, pp. 103–112). A more detailed ontological analysis on the notion of 'what is

humanitarian' is well beyond the scope of this study, which is focused intentionally to the actions of humanitarian organizations.

One other major limitation of the study comes in relation to our focus on NGOs and their structure, thus rendering unfitting a correlation with decision making in *international* or *intergovernmental organizations* (IGOs). Their difference is both practically and theoretically grounded, and their collaboration in practice is of particular importance (Aall et al., 2000; Reimann, 2006; Steffek, 2013). International organizations are often closely guided by the policies of cabinets or chief executives (Keohane and Nye, 1974) and formation of these policies are a product of negotiations analyzed through a totally different perspective (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999; Cox and Jacobson, 1976; Peterson, 1995; Raftopoulos, 2005, 2001). Also, within international organizations there is often a considerable democratic deficit which shifts the dynamics into an entirely different path of inter-governmental negotiations; democracy is not transferable to the international realm thus weakening formal governance structures (Dahl, 1999; Nye and Donahue, 2000, p. 24). In our research design we have already acknowledged that organizational structure is a fundamental factor in how decisions are formed, and since NGOs and IGOs have such a profound difference in structure, there is clearly not much ground for mutual conclusions.

Yet another limitation became evident during the collection of primary data, due to differences between the three organizations. Even if both three NGOs were cooperative, there were some practical limitations to data collection. The former, ousted HRC Samaritan leadership had left, taking all files, data, and information about past activities with it. Moreover, they hadn't ever published annual financial or activity reports and so, unfortunately, all data was collected through the interviews. In order to combat this limitation and in order to produce a more balanced result, a part of the interviews with the HRC was focused on acquiring relevant data.

The author needs to clarify that all measures were taken for the elimination of the cognitive bias that might have led to perceptual distortions or inaccurate judgments. This cognitive bias arises from the fact that the author has personal experience, as a humanitarian aid worker, with two of the three NGOs of the study. The author has been an active member of the Hellenic Red Cross since 2007, and has also received a year's training with the

British Red Cross. From that time onwards, he was able to participate in numerous Red Cross operations. From 2010, the author developed a strong relationship with Médecins du Monde, as a volunteer who participated and held managerial positions in missions inside and outside Greece[7]. Contrariwise, his relation with Médecins Sans Frontières is much less direct and fairly fresh. From 2012, the author served as a volunteer external associate, providing travel medicine services for MSF expats. Considering this, we can see that there is no operational experience with MSF, while in MDM and the Red Cross, there is some experience from the 'inside'. That might result in a cognitive bias in the form of information-processing shortcuts (Kahneman et al., 1982) and emotional and moral motivations (Pfister and Böhm, 2008). A technique called *'debiasing'*, which is using controlled, instead of automatic processing of information was employed in order to decrease the biases (Baumeister and Bushman, 2010, p. 110).

1.9 Ethical considerations

Primarily, the research was approved by the Committee for Deontology and Ethics of Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences. The methodology of the research as well as the nature of the data collected from the organizations was discussed with the relevant authorities of each participant organization. This research involves human subjects and consequently, ethical awareness was essential for the whole process (David and Sutton, 2004). The research followed a standard set of responsibilities (Diener and Crandall, 1978; Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Miller et al., 2012), in order to protect the privacy and social well-being of the participants from any risks due to their contribution in the study. Moreover, measures were taken so that the organizations themselves were actively protected from being harmed for taking part in the study.

As far as anonymity was concerned, the participants' identities were kept confidential by assigning a unique code to each interview. Interestingly enough, during the interviews,

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[7] The author participated in the MDM-Greece Mission in Haiti in 2010 as the Mission Administrator/Logistician and representative of the mission in the country. In 2014, the author participated in the MDM-Greece assistance relief mission in Kefalonia earthquake in collaboration with the University of Athens' Medical School. Also, in 2014, the author took part in the needs assessment mission and humanitarian aid distribution following the floods in Serbia/Bosnia, and finally took part in the mission in the Kobanê region, for the needs assessment of the displaced populations inside Turkey.

some of the participants expressed their opinion that their identities should be disclosed, seeing that they are confident about their opinions, and that they would gladly express the same things in public. Nevertheless, it was decided that it would be safer to maintain participant anonymity under consideration of not causing any harm due to unknown risks.

All the participants of the research were informed about the general nature of the research before we met for the interview, by their respective gatekeepers. Voluntary informed consent is a prerequisite for a subject's participation in the study, and therefore it was obtained before the interviews. The subjects were informed orally and on paper, with the exception of two interviewees, whose interview was conducted via Skype. These two participants received the informed consent form electronically and consented orally. All the relevant precautions were taken under consideration (Cater, 2011; Esteves, 2010; Hanna, 2012). There were no concerns raised by any of the participants, although active engagement and continuous negotiation of access was promoted by the researcher, as it is considered to be fundamental in this kind of interaction (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

2. Analyzing Humanitarian Organizations

Inevitably, one of the first goals that we should strive to succeed is defining the nature of organizations in true ontological terms. We should care to conscientiously place these theoretical foundations, and not just for the sake of theorizing. Without a proper layout of how this study is supporting its arguments, we open up numerous vulnerable critical spots that will afterwards backfire against the objectives of the research. In its complexity and generality, this practice of logical discussion as employed in investigating the truth of a theory in organizations, acts as the map of the minefield for the reader.

We focus on organizations because their essence lies in the core of the NGOs that we study, and in the absence of specialized 'humanitarian organization' theories, we turn our attention to general organizational theories. Organizations are goal-oriented social entities, with deliberate structure, coordination and activities, linked to the external environment (Daft et al., 2010) and humanitarian organizations are nothing more than specialized

organizations. In that sense, they came into existence to achieve a very specific set of goals. While narrowing down their scope, humanitarian organizations are still of a very complex nature. Recognizing the complexity of our research object, Boulding (1956), arranging systems into a hierarchical framework of increasing levels of complexity, places social organizations at the eighth level, out of the total nine.

By and large, organizations as they exist today, are no less than the evolutionary offspring forms of preceding social dynamics. Unfortunately, the historical, political and social complexity of the context is obstructing our sight and lessens our understanding of this peculiar evolution. What is more, this ingenious evolution is far from being linear. On the contrary, it is highly branched and split geographically and chronologically. For decades, researchers were investigating them, but "rarely attempted to generalize beyond the specific organizational forms they were studying; the subject was prisons or parties or factories or unions- not organizations" (Scott, 2003, p. 9).

Organizations play such an important role in our societies and have redefined the relationships in social experience. Their omnipresence acts as indisputable evidence that organizations merit our attention. Their significance is underlined vividly by the fact that even Marxist scholars are revisiting their understanding of class struggle as such: the need to wield organizational authority is even greater than ownership of the means of production (Dahrendorf, 1959).

There is no commonly accepted truth about organizations pertaining to the reason of their existence, their structure, their intra-system dynamics, and the terms of interaction with their environment. With the aim to analyze these properties, academics from various disciplines "engage in an intellectual activity which is necessarily implicated in the social and historical context in which it is made and remade" (Clegg et al., 1996, p. 33). But this polyphony does not come without some form of harmony: there is some consensus on the definition of organizations, and we concur with this definition:

> "Most analysts have conceived of organizations as social structures created
> by individuals to support the collaborative pursuit of specified goals. Given
> this conception, all organizations confront a number of common problems:
> all must define (and re-define) their objectives; all must induce participants

to contribute services; all must control and coordinate these contributions; resources must be garnered from the environment and products or services dispensed; participants must be selected, trained, and replaced; and some sort of working accommodation with the neighbors must be achieved." (Scott, 2003, p. 11)

There is not much to add to Scott, but underline that this particular conception of organization does not refer just to the inner workings, the 'black box', but also at the relationships (contingencies) of the structure with the outer world. Concepts like 'goal' and 'objective', instigate a *rational* understanding, while 'induction' and 'accommodation' have a slightly more intense *institutional* flavor. Beyond the definition, there is a great world of questions.

How did humanitarian organizations end up being what we perceive them to be? What lies in the core of the organization and drives their actions and decision making? What kind of forces are there, inside the 'black boxes'? Market theory and economics offer alternatives for such fundamental questions as the existence of organizations (Barney and Hesterly, 1996). Could evolutionary approaches such as organizational ecology offer a complete guideline for understanding organizational behavior? For some theorists, especially in studies coming from the United States, the individual psychology has been in the focus of organizational analysis (Nord and Fox, 1996), whereas in others 'the subject *is* organizations' (Scott, 2001). Maybe the said forces are hidden between the texts of critical theory and postmodernist positions. In order to answer these questions and arrive to a certain set of defining properties and objectives, first we should review the basic conceptions of organizational theory, in all its elaborate intricateness.

2.1 Theorizing Organizations

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, western societies were marked by a shift of social formulation around large-scale organizations. These organizations were of such scale and intensity of interaction within their members that overpassed the traditional

understanding of centralized administration as well as its coordination capacity (Waldo, 2006).

While considering the earliest forms of organizations, we see that the term "organization" itself is quite broad and includes numerous diverse types, ranging from armies to churches, from businesses to NGOs, and from political parties to universities. One of the earliest known business is the Japanese Kongo Gumi Ltd., a construction company which operated continuously from 578 CE till it succumbed to excess debt in 2006 (Hutcheson, 2007). Likewise, the Order of Saint Benedict was formed in 529 CE and is still operational today. More, and perhaps older examples can easily be found. More than a thousand years have passed and these organizations managed to stand through time and reach our days. What made them withstand the unimaginable challenges through the ages? Perhaps part of the answer is hidden in the question of *why* and *how* they came to being in the first place. For us now, this evolution and adaptation to the environment holds precious information. This change in nature of the organizations, and the concurrent progress in our knowledge and understanding of the theme, lead to a continuous shifting of the dominant paradigm.

At this time, there is an ongoing debate that holds strong for more than a century on the narrative of answering the same *why* and *how*. This debate that developed "within and between narrative traditions that will indelibly shape the field's evolution" (Clegg et al., 1996), resembled more a series of disconnected conversations than a real dialogue. The different views are founded in fundamentally different assumptions about the philosophy of science, which underwrite totally different routes, eventually, in social science. In this part of the study, we wish to present the most important paradigms that developed as coherent schemes in order to analyze organizations.

One also very important reminder must be noted as early as possible. Scientific theories hold truth from their own perspective. Others, ostensibly contradict them, while at the same time hold their own part of truth. Even whole paradigm shifts in history are unable to overcome the confusion of those overlaps in truth or truthiness[8]. That is because theories are like metaphors; they guide our thinking to understand a phenomenon (i.e. humanitarian

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[8] The term 'truthiness' is coined by an American television comedian, named Stephen Colbert, and refers to a certain instinctive or intuitive knowledge of truth, without regard to scientific evidence, logic or facts.

organizations) in a distinctive yet partial way. What is more important is our acceptance of the fact that "any theory or perspective that we bring to the study of organization and management, while capable of creating valuable insights, is also incomplete, bias, and potentially misleading" (Morgan, 2006).
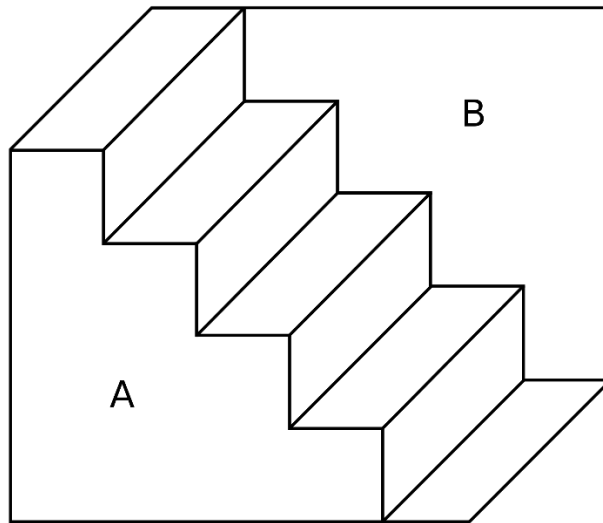
Fig.1 - Schroeder's reversible staircase

As Gareth Morgan (2006) continues to eloquently content: "all theory is metaphor and has far-reaching consequences". Indeed, seeing our organization as "a machine" is a metaphor, highlighting some aspects of the system while downplaying some other attributes. He goes on to argue that "In recognizing theory as metaphor, we quickly appreciate that no single theory will ever give us a perfect or all-purpose point of view" (ibid).

The array of theories is somewhat confusing. In order to inject some order into this commotion of perspectives we should briefly categorize the prevailing schools of thought. We shall name two strata: the grand perspective and the micro perspective. In the grand perspective, we have the functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist, and radical structuralist theories. This typology was proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979), and emphasize in two axis: (a) stability and regulation versus radical change, and (b) subjective versus objective (individualistic versus structural) theories. In the micro perspective there is neo-contingency, resource dependence, transaction costs, population ecology and neo-institutional theory. These five approaches are selected by McKinley and Mone (2003), as being the most influential on all empirical research on organizations conducted nowadays.

2.1.1 The Grand Perspective

Functionalism is concerned with "providing explanations of the status quo, social order, consensus, social integration, solidarity, need satisfaction and actuality" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). According to the functionalist paradigm, there is a rational explanation for social affairs. The historical and ideological roots of rationality, as a way of describing organizations, are to be found in the writings of Henri de Saint-Simon (1998, 1975), and stretch all the way to our days. The proponents of this paradigms view organizations as rationally constructed artifices providing solutions to issues connected with administration and order. Under it, efficiency and effectiveness became the alpha and the omega, and the rules and principles of scientific management overshadow the seemingly intractable human emotion. As Alvin Gouldner (Gouldner, 1980) describes, these axioms formed the blueprints which guided organizations to be seen "as autonomous and independent social units, above and beyond the purview of moral evaluation and political debate". Many important and influential theorists belong to this school of thought, with the most prominent being Frederick Taylor (2011, 2004) and Henri Fayol (2013). These two founded the idea of 'scientific management' and initiated the 'Classical organizations theory', in which their ideas coexisted historically with the Weberian understanding of bureaucratic organization (Waldo, 2006). Of course, both Taylor and Fayol were closer to describing what "ought to be" in terms of maximizing organizational efficiency and focused on a managerial perspective (Guillén, 1994) rather than describing the real world. While Herbert Simon's *bounded rationality* acted as a Trojan horse to the naïve-rationalist outlook, by accepting by default the cognitive limitations of human experience, it still supplemented the rational school of thought. *Humanitarian organizations, under this prism, should be seen as structures created to fulfil a certain, expressed purpose, and their inner workings could be described as being almost mechanical. Their decision making "rests on the rational analysis of all the options available, based on certified expert knowledge and deliberately oriented to the established legal apparatus"* (Reed, 1996).

Interpretivism is associated with a constant effort to understand the world at the level of our subjective experience, through individual consciousness and participation of the

observer in the social phenomena. Immanuel Kant was the philosopher that laid the foundations for such an understanding of the social realm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 227). According to prominent theorists of this school of thought, such as Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Alfred Schütz, and Edmund Husserl who followed in this neo-Kantian understanding, together with Wilhelm Dilthey who believed that the examination of organizations by an external observer should try to relate to the people and groups in their own terms, with an empathic eye; the *verstehen* approach (Makkreel and Rodi, 1989; Muggleton, 2000). Practically, there are four different dimensions to interpretive theory, which are solipsism, phenomenology, phenomenological sociology and hermeneutics (Ardalan, 2012, p. 7; Kamoche, 2000, p. 169). Moreover, this general orientation is implemented in a series of interpretive theoretical frameworks emphasizing knowledge production and formation of organizational structures as strategic interest. Actor-Network Theory (Law, 2009, 1992), postmodernist organization culture and symbolism (Calas and Smircich, 1991) as well as poststructuralist theory (Clegg, 1994; Cooper, 1992), are all examples of this category. *From this very delicate angle, humanitarian action retreats into the vagueness, since the goals of humanitarian actors become more abstract, equivocal and ambiguous. Authors like Masini argue that "needs can be understood abstractly to refer to those human requirements calling for a response that makes human survival and development possible in a given society"* (Burton, 1990, p. 10) – *a statement that highlights how difficult and risky it is to externally set humanitarian objectives. As a negative consequence of humanitarian action, autonomy, which is an essential part of human dignity can be either empowered by the acts of humanitarian NGOs or even restricted* (Coyne, 2013; Duckworth, 2011).

Radical Humanism is, in concordance with interpretivism, a nominalist, ideographic and anti-positivist perspective. It offers a revolutionary critique of the status quo and the role of the individual in society. The basic notion is that human consciousness interacts with various socially enforced ideological superstructures, eventually alienating it and imposing a false consciousness. Organizations are being developed and survive within a highly contingent environment of power relations, where organizational structures were the "means of production of new forms of power itself" (Cerny, 1990). Emphasis is given to the explanatory significance of social powers such as 'state' or 'class'. Organizations

become "the portable carriers of sociotechnical knowledge and skills through which particular patterns of social relationships emerge and reproduce themselves in specific material and social circumstances" (Clegg et al., 1996, p. 42). The most noticeable thinkers are Kant, Hegel and Marx, in his early works. Similarly, the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School (Wiggershaus, 1995), the French existentialists, Jürgen Habermas, Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault would fit under these scheme. Burrell and Morgan (1979), interestingly enough, say that this paradigm is actually the prelude to a "nascent anti-organization theory". *Rainer Forst* (2013, p. 242) *contends that the moral approaches to the problems of severe poverty and underdevelopment, as they are often adopted by humanitarian organizations and by international NGOs, often against their intentions, "veil rather than expose the situation of global injustice". Christie* (Cristie, 2015, p. 42) *offers some reflection on the application of such theories on international relations, supporting that some scholars argue that "humanitarianism is an important component in the modern reproduction of state sovereignty"* (Campbell, 1997) *while others that "humanitarian action is complicit in the reproduction of sovereign politics, since it maintains the very separation upon which sovereignty depends"* (Edkins, 1997).

Radical Structuralism sees inherent structural conflicts within society that generate constant change through political and economic crises. Its main commitments are modes of domination, structural conflict, and radical change. With this in mind, we expect a conflict with "the assumptions that underpin the rational, organic and market frameworks by conceptualizing the organization as an arena of conflicting interests and values constituted through power struggle" (Reed, 1996). Marx, in his latest works, was the dominant figure of this paradigm, followed by Engels, Lenin and Bukharin. Outside the soviet world, the ideas of radical structuralism were embraced by theorists like Louis Althusser, Nikos Poulantzas and Lucio Colletti. Humanitarian organizations through this set of eyes, could be quite different, compared to the prevalent image. International organizations like the UN or the African Union or ASEAN are seen to "overrule national sovereignty with the stated aim of protecting people from human rights abuses or imposing peace settlements of various sorts" and that "political humanitarianism developed among NGOs like Bernard Kouchner's Doctors Without Borders to complement U.S. interventionism" (Foley, 2010). *In other words, humanitarian organizations could be seen*

as playing a role in the promotion of neo-liberal economic models through the use of aid and development programmes, while "the existing humanitarian advocacy paradigm risks legitimizing further erosion of weak states" (Pupavac, 2006).

2.1.2 The Micro Perspective

Neo-Contingency Theory (NCT) contends that there is no single structure that could ideally fit all organizations. On the contrary, organizations should strive to 'fit' into the changing surroundings of the environment. A very important concept of this theory, so important that the whole theory is named after it, is 'contingencies'. Contingencies are the various factors that define the changes of the environment. Examples of contingencies are: strategy, size, leader and subordinate characteristics, available technology, environmental hostility, and task uncertainty. Every time that one of these, or any of the other, factors changes, it produces a gap within the environment. There is one theoretical 'fit' of the organization to this new surroundings that is coupled with optimal organizational performance. Its philosophical basis is structural functionalism (Donaldson, 1999, 1988), which even under attack by multiple directions (see for instance Kemp and Holmwood, 2012), has still much to offer under certain safeguarding preconditions. Virtually, this theory is adjacent to other concepts like Systems Theory, Complexity Theory and Actor-Network Theory, in that they all emphasize the role of environmental relations and interactions. In that matter, neo-contingency theory focuses on the adaptation capacities of the organizations to the contexts that challenge them. Lex Donaldson (1999), Alexander and Randolph (1985), Gresov (1989), Gresov and Drazin (1997) and Van de Ven (1985), were the major developers and contributors to the theory. Criticism on the neo-contingency theory include unwarranted generalizations, fragmented and conflicting findings (Tosi and Slocum, 1984), ill-defined concepts of 'performance' and 'fit'(Weill and Olson, 1989), as well as a theoretical gap in decreases and downsizing strategies (Mone et al., 1998).

Resource Dependence (RDT) is a theory that crosses the borders of the organization (or even departments of the same organization) through a vantage point of power. The relative power of organizations within their environment forces them to forge alliances, mergers, acquisitions, and co-optations with others (Thompson, 1967). Here, the notion of

'contingencies' is transformed to a 'strategic' version, where "power results from a combination of capacity to cope with uncertainty, of non-substitutability, and of centrality, which provides control of contingencies that are strategic for other dependent activities" (Hickson et al., 1971). The theory dictates that the acquisition of critical resources, such as money or knowledge, results to the attainment of even more power, which consequently shapes the relations with the internal or external dependencies (Masuch, 1985). Thus the structure of the organization is ultimately molded by way it procures, manages, and distributes available resources (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). RDT holds an interesting testimony for why not-for-profit organizations, such as humanitarian organizations, have become more commercialized nowadays. As it holds truth in the case of neo-contingency theory, here also there is some undeniable ambiguity in some of its key constructs such as 'inter-organizational dependence', and 'vertical integration', something that makes appealing it's rhetorical application, but its testability problematic (Casciaro and Piskorski, 2005). This ambiguity, along with further reasons (such as narrow perspective and theoretical proximity) caused RDT to fail in taking a leading part in organizational analysis.

Transaction Costs Theory (TCT) offers a stimulating insight on the very nature of organizations, seeing them as products of the markets, set to minimize the transaction costs that take place within them. The idea was first put forward by Ronald Coase (Lai, 2011), but has evolved dramatically ever since. Alchian and Demsetz (1972), managed to explain the existence of hierarchies but it was Oliver Williamson (1981) who finally reached the core of TCT. What Williamson debated is that markets, hierarchies (organizations) and hybrid governance structures complete the economic transactions on a basis of adequacy and cost-efficiency. The organizations become, under those circumstances, "a bundle of interrelated transactions managed through hierarchical forms of governance" (Barney and Hesterly, 1996). Eventually, the attributes of these transactions become the configuration factors of organizational structure. Criticism on the transaction costs theory is based on two axons, the first being its focus on cost minimization (Conner, 1991; Madhok, 1996) while underestimating the cost of organizing (Jones and Hill, 1988). The second axon is a serious downplay on the role of social and cultural forces, such as relationship history and friendship, in social and economic activity (Granovetter, 1985). Organization economics

provide an important set of tools for organizational theorists even if, to this date, there is still much work to be done (Barney and Hesterly, 1996).

Population Ecology Theory (PET), in sharp contrast with the previous three theories which concentrate their attention to the adaptation strategies or performance of structural entities to environmental contingencies and contextual pressure, this theory zooms out for a wider frame. Hannan and Freeman (1977) formulated this model, by borrowing "from models of population biology to study the demographics of organizational populations and the rates of organizational birth and death that drive those demographics" (Baum, 1996). This means, in simple terms, that the theory is interested in a 'community of organizations', its internal dynamics, and their effect on the organizations that operate within it. Hence, instead of studying adaptation, they claimed that *selection* was the key to understanding. Structural inertia, organizational experience (lifespan), bigger size (*liability of the smallness*), as well as product and service delivery reliability were deemed as the factors that favor this selection and prevent death (Hannan and Freeman, 1984). Another interesting approach, within the PET is that of *population dynamics* and the *population density*. According to the first, organizational birth is influenced by the prior rates of birth and death (Delacroix and Carroll, 1983). As for the second, births and deaths are functions of the total number of organizations existing in the population at that certain time (Hannan and Carroll, 1991). Most critique on population ecology theory comes from the little attention given to the structural characteristics of organizations (Donaldson, 1997, 1995) and devalues the capacity of the organization to alter its environment (Smircich and Stubbart, 1985).

Neo-Institutional Theory (NIT), spans its attention across the relations of organizational fields (i.e. NGOs in the 'humanitarian space') just as population ecology does. Introduced by Meyer and Rowan (1977) is one of the most influential theories in organizational analysis. According to NIT, organizations "are molded by 'institutional rules', which are to be taken for granted templates that define the appropriate way to manage organizations and to structure internal or extra-organizational relations" (McKinley and Mone, 2003). The rules are component and differ largely from on organizational field to another, but within the same field homogeneity is expected. That means that between organizations of

the same goals, size, cultural background, we should predict similarity in structure. This happens because certain 'institutional rules' become through time and practice forms of 'rationalized myths'. People who abide to them might suppose they are behaving rationally, but truth might differ, as following the rule becomes an end in itself. An interesting notion in NIT, introduced by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) is 'institutional isomorphism', which describes the fact that organizations in the same field tend to become similar. This process of homogenization can take three forms; it can be either a coercive process through environmental pressure, a mimetic process via imitation tendencies, or a normative process through contextual development (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). NIT like TCT gives its version of the story to the question of how organizations come into being, through the 'reciprocal typification' of certain activities that are shared by members of a social group (Berger and Luckmann, 2011). Critiques of the neo-institutional theory include downplay of the notion of *managerial rationality*, which is exchanged for practices targeting gains in legitimacy. Others, like Donaldson (1995) contends that NIT is weak in conceptualizing its key constructs, such as 'performance', 'isomorphism', etc.

Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS), is the application of complexity theory to the study of strategic management and organizational studies. Complexity, which is defined as "the domain between linearly determined order and indeterminate chaos" (Waldrop, 1994) is found in every organization. Chaos is not to be equated with randomness by no means, but more as a precursor of order (Littell, 2006). *Complexity* is a characteristic of the organizational structure, as seen in complex hierarchical matrix systems and diagrams, and more importantly, in the dynamic networks of invisible interactions between members or members and the environment. The organizations are also *adaptive*, in a way that each individual member or groups of members alter their behavior and self-organize in the sight of change-signaling events. Organizations also emerge, evolve, and develop interdependence. Irrespective of having a hierarchical or leaderless nature, most social systems could be considered to be (and act as) complex adaptive systems (Andrus, 2005). According to Anderson (1999), these complex systems are "characterized by four key elements: agents with schemata, self-organizing networks sustained by importing energy, coevolution to the edge of chaos, and system evolution based on recombination". Perrow (1967) is connecting the level of complexity of the organizational system with the

ambiguity of its operations. Finally, a really interesting point in this approach is that we take for granted the idea that individual behavior does not account for or cannot explain collective behavior as seen at the macro level.

2.1.3 Further approaches

Beyond the perspectives analyzed above, there are many more pieces that need to be mentioned in order to complete the mosaic of theoretical knowledge on organizations. These theories are all important in their own way to interpret the behavior of the organization, as well as the behavior within the organization itself. One could identify three most important omissions from the list above. Firstly, the Quality Management Theory was spearheaded by Juran (1945) and later Deming (1994) and placed Total Quality Management (TQM) and product quality as the purpose of organizational existence. Secondly, a less structural and more behavioral perspective was proposed by the Human Relations Theory, by Elton Mayo (1975) who connected clinical psychology to organizational studies. Third come the theory of Sociotechnical Systems, which was developed by the Tavistock team of researchers, and focuses on the relation between technical and social aspects of the organization (Miller and Rice, 1967). An extensive analysis of these three, as of every other theory goes astray, far from our research objectives. After all, the objective of this chapter is to build the necessary tools for understanding humanitarian organizations rather than to catalogue organizational theories.

2.1.4 Transition to an open systems perspective

Inside the 'fog of war' of paradigms and theories, we consider as a major milestone the shift that happened during the 60's where the closed systems gave in and were supplanted by the open system perspective. Analysts, having examined the internal characteristics of organizations for several decades, were now ready to shift their focus to the external relationships of the system, and the way that these relationships affect its internal elements. As it was stated from the first chapter, we undertake an open systems approach to this study, considering its valuable advantages, as described below. Even if 'open systems' is

a term that acts as a container to include numerous different theories, most of them share vital characteristics. From its foundations, in the first half of this century, General Systems Theory declared that it did not intend to replace all special theories of various disciplines and place them under a 'general theory of practically everything'. It is reasonably argued that "such a theory would be almost without content, for we always pay for generality by sacrificing content, and all we can say about practically everything is almost nothing" (Boulding, 1956). Its purpose was to provide a framework or structure of systems and serve as a bridge for interdisciplinary dialogue between autonomous areas of study. It is argued that open systems theory "has failed thus far to produce a general systems model capable of predicting and controlling organizational behavior, it nonetheless provides public managers with an implicit theory of organizational effectiveness" (Tompkins, 2005). Whatever the role 'systems' as a theory of science might be, this study borrows many tools from it to attempt this current analysis of humanitarian organizations. Once again, we have to take a deep dive into theoretical waters, so we can then apply the theory in the specific case of the humanitarian NGOs.

One of the fundamental ideas of this research is introduced at this point. Based on General Systems Theory, proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and based on Hans Driesch's term, open systems are subject to the principle of *equifinality* (Bertalanffy, 1968). The term derives from the latin word '*equi*' and '*final*', meaning 'same end'. In contrast to closed systems, where the initial conditions are the absolute determinants of its final state, in open systems there are multiple ways to reach the end state. The major difference is the fact that where the system ends up "is not predetermined by its initial conditions because new resources are constantly being imported. The principle of equifinality introduces an important theme in organization theory: freedom of choice" (Tompkins, 2005, p. 241). There are two distinct perspectives for the concept of equifinality within the strategic management and marketing literature. The first perspective is named 'strategy approach' and contends that "an organization can achieve an outcome by a variety of strategic actions or strategies" (Miles and Snow, 1978). The second perspective is named 'strategy-structure fit' and argues that there are "equally effective, internally consistent patterns of strategy and structure" (Drazin and Ven, 1985). Rabin and Miller (2000) reviewed a series of empirical studies, investigating the management strategy – organizational structure –

organizational performance using equifinality. These studies provide interesting feedback regarding the interrelation between equifinality and 'conventional wisdom' that suggests that there is only one best way (Rabin and Miller, 2000).
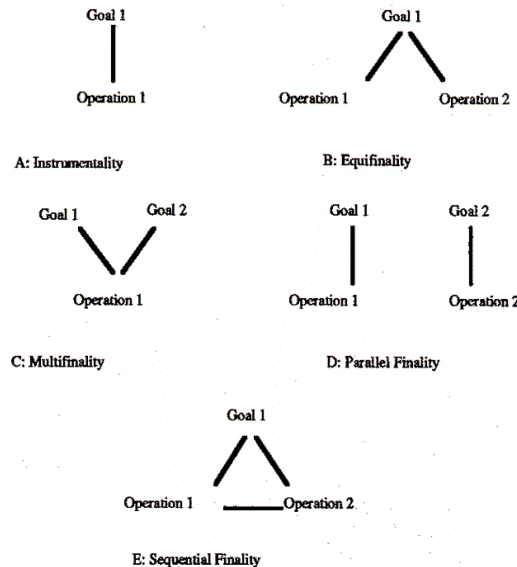
Fig.2 - Operation – motivation connection and equifinality (Pieters, 1993)

The discipline of cybernetics also affected our understanding of open systems, as it introduced a mechanistic conception of organizations, with the continuous transformation of inputs into outputs through throughputs. By seeing organizations as self-regulating systems, the notion of '*feedback*' becomes the major determinant for a need of corrective action or preservation of the status quo. At the risk of considerable oversimplification, humanitarian organizations are seen as a system that transforms inputs (in forms of donations, information), into outputs (humanitarian aid in general), through throughputs (such as its technical knowhow, its people, its infrastructure, etc.). The assessment of their action (needs assessment or self-assessment) is the feedback that guides managerial decisions. Interestingly enough, Stafford Beer (1965), while exploring the implication of cybernetics in organizational management, sought that a '*black box*' must be placed between inputs and outputs. This means that, always according to Beer, "we can neither identify all system variables nor determine how a change in one variable will affect all others, and Management must experiment with various interventions, seek to discern basic patterns, and adjust its model accordingly" (Tompkins, 2005, p. 243).

One great, path-breaking view was expressed by James D. Thompson (1967), where he attempted to break the Gordian knot between rational and natural identities of the organization. He proposed a synthesis where organizations could still retain their goal-oriented, rational identity in the face of complexity, while at the same time they would strive to survive as viable systems. In other words, under the open systems perspective, the organizations could act as rational and natural systems at the same time. What is more important is that he combined this synthesis with Parsons' three levels of responsibility and control. What Parsons (1960) had previously done, was to identify three distinct levels for these two features, with the first being the technical, the second the managerial, and the third the institutional. Jonathan Tompkins summarized in a very precise way the Thompson model:

> "Thompson provided concreteness to his synthesis of rational and natural systems theory by drawing upon Talcott Parson's distinction between three organizational levels of responsibility and control. Decisions at the technical level, where the productive work is carried out, are governed by the nature of the productive task. This level is the most closed off from external influences and a considerable amount of certainty and control is possible. The managerial level represents an intermediate level at which managers address input and output irregularities so that the technical core can operate as efficiently and predictably as possible. Finally, the institutional level is that level where responsibility for the organization as a whole is highest and the possibilities for certainty and control are the lowest. At this level executives perform a boundary-spanning role in which they are responsible for obtaining resources, building alliances, and dealing with output disposal problems by adjusting, or adapting to, external forces. Thompson emphasized that, whereas it is appropriate to employ closed system thinking at the technical level, it is necessary to employ open system thinking at higher levels". (Tompkins, 2005, p. 245)

From the time we accept the aforementioned principles, that all organizations are systems of interdependent variables operating within a greater system, we should immediately

realize that there is no single best organizational structure. This axiomatic deduction derives from the fact that every single organization has unique features and characteristics, and so does its surrounding environment. To place this into an example, a Greek humanitarian organization which depends mostly on government or EU funding is affected from different stimuli in comparison to a humanitarian organization that depends on private, independent funding. Humanitarian organizations operating in the sub-Saharan Africa setting are prone to different stimuli and perhaps faith-based humanitarian organizations develop different dynamics than others.

There is no perfect way to formulate an organization. Joan Woodward (1965) offered hard evidence that amongst firms of various structures, those which followed the principles of classical management were not always the most successful. Some organizations perform effectively under centralized command and rigid control, while others perform equally effectively in decentralized structures while loosely controlled.

Structural contingency is compatible with this open systems approach, since it is founded on this very same axiom. As we already discussed briefly in the previous chapter, organizations constantly 'search' for the best 'fit' in their environment, which is shifted by internal and external factors. These factors are called 'contingencies' and act as variables that specify the nature of the structural arrangement that is best suited for a certain organization, at a certain situation. Phrased simply, when a contingency factor is high or low, a certain feature of the organization must change accordingly in order for the organization to fit.

So, which are these contingency factors and what part of the organizational structure do they affect? Lots of researchers during the 1960s through the 1980s identified specific factors, but there was not always consensus on what kind of an effect they had on the structural part (Daft et al., 2010, p. 67; Mintzberg, 1980). The first factor refers to the external environment and to the degree of stability and *uncertainty* that it entails. Practically, the more the uncertainty, the lower the level of standardization, formalization and role specialization. The second factor is the type of *technology* that is utilized to achieve the desired goals. In that manner, changes between technologies may produce variances in the amount of function specialization, formalization of work, span of control,

reward and control systems, as well as conflict resolution methods (Lawrence et al., 1967). Another, third contingency is that of organizational *size*. It has been found that organizations tend to have more formalization, task specialization, and standardization as they grow bigger in size (Pugh et al., 1969, 1968). *Strategy* is identified as the fourth factor, since the way that organizations tend to pursue their goals, seems to have a direct relation to their structure. An interesting example, and pertinent to the humanitarian context, is when organizations want to enhance their community relations so they have to adopt less hierarchical, more decentralized and team-based structures (Chandler, 2003). The interdependence of organizations for financial, material or other support makes resource dependence another factor of contingency. The existence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments of corporations are a fine example of structural change for reasons of satisfying the stakeholders including consumers, investors, employees, communities, and others. The last contingency factor that we identify is public accountability, referring to the degree to which decisions made by the organizational managers are being controlled by external actors or they are being subject to public scrutiny. The bigger the value of the public accountability factor, the more it affects structure, as authority tends to become increasingly centralized at the top of the organization.

Likewise, the institutional theory is also compatible with an open systems approach. Many theorists have, up to this date, utilized both systems theory and institutional theory in their effort to analyze social phenomena (Bjorck, 2004; Geels, 2004; Mitchell et al., 1997; Scott, 1987; Zsidisin et al., 2005). The driving forces of the institutional nature of organizations remain within the organizational structure, which is seen by members as efficacious and necessary (Berger and Luckmann, 2011; Zucker, 1977). This implication actively "serves as an important causal source of stable patterns of behavior" (Clegg et al., 1996, p. 179), shaping the relationships between the various systems.

2.2 Elements of the Organizational Structure

We should now focus a little bit deeper, steadily nearing the specific target of our research. We have been through the panoramic vista of organizational theories and we have come across the diversity and variation of outlooks surrounding them. As it must be obvious by

now, the natural habitat of organizational theorizing is indeed more like a dense jungle, and less like a well-kept garden. Lots of plants, all fighting for a place in the sun, but none reaching the canopy. No single theory has managed to reach that sanctuary of inviolability.

Having discussed the various, divergent theories, it is now proper to revert back to the practical sphere. In this logical step we concentrate on humanitarian organizations as elements. Our approach will resemble the way that biology textbooks investigate the nature of the cell: we want to identify the parts of the organizational anatomy, as well as their functions. We do not disregard that the cell is part of a life system extending way beyond its outer membrane. No form of life can survive away from its nurturing environment, let alone organizations. In due time, we will broaden our view, but for the time being we need to focus.

Given these points, let us think about an organization, for instance the Medical School of the University. What are the elements that comprise this organization? We can think of students, professors, assistants and janitors. We can also think of classrooms, auditoriums, labs and libraries. More than that, the university is also exams, publications, presentations and graduations. For the most part, the university is a place to gain knowledge, to socialize, to lobby and to profit. Finally, the university is also its relations with the local society, the government, the academia and the market.

If all these sound like an unsystematic aggregation, the whole list could be even worse. To make things a bit more orderly, Leavitt (2013) proposed a four element model of organizations. He suggested that they are comprised by participants, social structure, technology, and tasks. Scott (2003), whose work on analysing the structural elements of the organization was a major guidance for our research, adds a fifth element, which is environment, and renames 'tasks' to 'goals'. We continue now, by presenting these five components and the way they are featured in the special instance of humanitarian organizations.
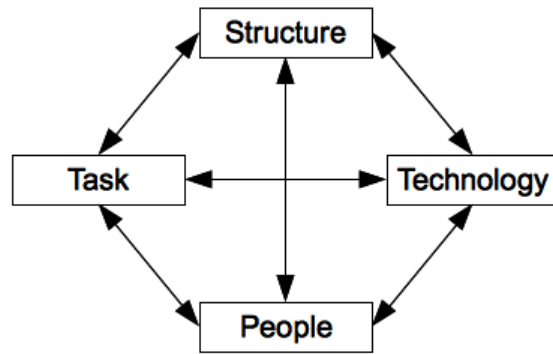
Fig.3 - Leavitt's Diamond (Leavitt and March, 1962)

2.2.1 Participants

Participants in an organization were considered all these who, in turn of a variety of inducements, made contributions to it (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1976). This definition implies some form of active participation in the organization per se, and does not necessarily include every person that could be affected by the organization one way or another. For that broader group of people, who could be influencing, regulating, taking advantage or claiming part in the organization, we employ the term 'stakeholder'. Some theorists go as far as to proclaim that communities (Greenwood, 2007) or even states (Yamak and Süer, 2005) could be considered solitary participants. Markedly, every person is at the same time member of more than one organizations (Scott, 2003, p. 21).

Even if defining 'participation' seemed like an easy task, defining who is actually a participant is more difficult since individual participation may differ greatly from person to person and from time to time. This means that the property of participation is neither linear nor constant. For example, a person in the University could be participating in the organization as an undergraduate student, then a Master's student or a doctorate student and then perhaps even a lecturer. In between these distinct roles, which differ in intensity and qualitative characteristics, there might also be periods of inactivity, where no physical or other connection might be traced.

A point often overlooked is that each participant of the organization affects, with his or her personality traits, cultural background, demographic characteristics and idiosyncrasy, the

composite physical and psychological make-up of the specific organization. The point to which organizational functioning and structure is affected, depends on some of the characteristics of the organizations, as these characteristics restrict or empower individual expression within the structure. The other way of looking at it is that the structure itself is defined by the collective expression of the participants, which are indeed social actors. Hence, the variable capacity of each person to "have some effect on the world, to alter the rules or the distribution of resources, is referred to as agency" (Giddens, 1984, p. 9)

So, in the case of humanitarian NGOs, one might ask the exact same questions: Who are these individuals that can be distinguished as 'participants'? How do these participants shape our view of the NGO? Let's answer each question at a time.

As for the first one, the easy choice would definitely be those who work for the organization and have a formal, legal, connection with it. That might be operational directors, logistics officers, human resource managers, doctors, nurses, field admins, delegates, and auxiliary staff. People who are members of the Board of Directors, might not be on the payroll but participate critically in the processes. Aside from the employees, there are, in most cases, numerous people who are working for the organization on a steady but voluntary basis, and this also accounts for active participation. Associates and affiliates of the organization could also be included. Somehow, individual donors with their monthly or yearly subsidies also take part in enabling the organization achieve its goals. The beneficiaries, which are the people that receive the services (humanitarian aid) of the organization could not be considered as participating in the organization intrinsically, mainly because they do not contribute directly to the organization. More often than not, organizations have a preset, official participant status – *the member*. Taking under consideration that most humanitarian NGOs have the legal form of association, the member is also a regular endorser as well as an individual that participates in the general assembly and has voting rights. Membership rights could be claimed on an at-will basis, or might be reserved for a certain amount of people that fulfil some criteria, different from one organization to another. The notion of *membership* is a key component of NGO governance and defines decision making at all levels (Kamat, 2004; Moore and Stewart, 1998).

As for the second question, the answer is much more difficult. Unfortunately, this one is context specific. A new member in the NGO does have to abide to the ways of the organization, but at the same time, even insignificantly, can alter its shape by his actions. The more individual power a certain person holds inside the organization, the more perceptible his footprint is on the whole. Even more evident is the case of certain individuals who played critical role in the foundation or *birth* of the organization. It is difficult to argue that founders' personalities would not have an impact on the organizational culture of the establishment (Crant and Bateman, 2000; Judge et al., 2002; Nahrgang et al., 2009). Equally so, it wouldn't be fair to presume the same thing about the personality of Bernard Kouchner and the 'French doctor's movement' (Khor, 2013, p. 255). The equilibrium between agency and structure hangs in the balance. For sure, it helps as a reminder not to emphasize just the pre-existing social arrangements, but to consider also personal initiative and individual imagination (Scott, 2003). Only by being too careful we can presume to minimize the chances of falling into a sociological, either structuralistic or individualistic, bias.

2.2.2 Social Structure

Social Structure regards all the relationships between the members of the organization. An aspect of a relationship between two members requires two elements in order to qualify as part of the organizational social structure: it either has to follow a steady pattern, or it has to entail some form of regulated behaviour. In this respect, Davis (1949) and Scott (2003) recognize three distinctive components to social structure, the first being the normative structure, the second the cultural-cognitive structure, and lastly the behavioural structure.

The normative structure is nothing more than the values, norms and role expectations of the organization. The *values* of the organization are the base of strategic decisions, and also have a great impact in daily decision-making. They practically define the mission statement and the vision of the organization, and characterize the organization from its recruitment policy to its marketing and advertising strategies. The same set of values may guide when there is no rule in place, and allow for consistency in approach and interpretation of

information across all members of the organization (Mayhew, 1981, 1980). The *norms* are the beliefs within the organization of how the member-participants should behave. These norms might be preserved within the borders of the organizations but often might not coincide with the norms of the society. So, a newcomer must go through the process of conformity with the standards and rules of the group. Inside the organization there might be norms concerning the expected performance of the member (how effective one is or how hard does he work), his or her social behaviour (how one expresses one's self in social settings), his or her way of allocating resources (i.e. working overtime) and even his or her appearance. On the other hand, the *roles* inside the organizational structure are predefined, templates of behaviour which correspond to specific positions. So, each certain position matches to a specific manner of conducting oneself.

The cultural-cognitive structure acts as an interpretive framework for the special way in which every member of the organization translates information according to his or her cultural background. This happens because, although most cognitive content is universal, the inferential procedures vary greatly across different cultures. Even some of the most basic assumptions about the world could differ and, to complicate things further, cultural practices "encourage and sustain certain kinds of cognitive processes, which then perpetuate the cultural practices" (Nisbett and Norenzayan, 2002). The 'common' reality that members of the same organization experience might not be so common, in both its nature and their interests.

The behavioural structure is the final element of the social structure of organizations. It relates to the normative behaviour but it essentially refers to the actual behaviour. Without desire to underestimate the impact of regulations, values and model behaviours as they are prescribed in organizational documents and envisioned in CEO speeches ("*Let's be the change we want to see in our organization!*"), there is much more in casual participant behaviour than that. When these everyday actions form patterns and regularities, they present scientific interest because they demonstrate, for example, power, preference, or avoidance networks.

It is really a part of the organization's identity, the way the three aforementioned elements balance with each other. One aspect of differentiation has to do with their interrelations.

As Scott points out, the normative structure is there to constrict any major deviations from the behavioural structure, while at the same time the cultural-cognitive structure acts as a regulator between the two. He continues by expanding this structural troika to all collectivities, where there is "a normative structure applicable to the participants, cultural-cognitive frameworks supporting shared understandings, and a behavioural structure linking participants in a common network or pattern of activities, interactions and sentiments" (Scott, 2003). Another aspect of differentiation among organizations, in reference to their social structure is the level of formality, where in *formal* social structures normative behaviours take precedence over personal characteristics and quirks, while in *informal* social structures, it is the personalities that shape the structure.

In reference to the humanitarian organizations, the social structure displays an analogous arrangement. Of course, on the steering wheel of humanitarian action sit the humanitarian principles, orienting the conduct of humanitarian organizations. The values of humanitarianism have their roots extended deep into history, in the ancient scripts of the Sanskrit Mahabharata, Sun Zu's The Art of War, and the Ancient Greek "Koina Nomima" (Common customs) (Gaggas, 2000). Intertwined with the evolution of the Laws of War (later to become the International Humanitarian Law, IHL), humanitarian principles per se, were a late bloomer: Gustave Moynier, in the early years of the International Committee of the Red Cross made the first proposition of what would become the fundamental principles of the Red Cross movement (ICRC, 1996; Pictet, 1967). These seven principles might not be shared across all humanitarian organizations, but most of them are. The Sphere Handbook, a collective initiative by various humanitarian organizations, also provides a set of principles for humanitarian action. The *normative structure* of these organizations is defined by illustrious documentation: The Code of Conduct, the mission statement, organizational charts, internal regulations, international associations, working legislation, reference documents, security manuals, amongst several other material, together construct an extensive foundation for the regulation of behaviour. Likewise, most humanitarian organizations have a huge overlap when it comes to organizational roles that members take inside them. Medical doctors of various specialties, nurses, midwifes, administrators, logisticians, interpreters, HR managers, public communications managers, fundraise specialists, analysts and executives, are among the seemingly endless list of the

available roles. Each and every one of these roles, comes with a certain, on-paper 'job description', a raison d'être, with tasks and responsibilities, and a perceptual understanding of what the job really entails.

The cultural-cognitive structure is of a huge significance when it comes to humanitarian organizations, since they normally operate under conditions of immense cultural diversity. This diversity places barriers in the mutual understanding of intentions and sentiments, making humanitarian work challenging and often dangerous. This non-homogenous basic layer, provides a perfect breeding ground for misunderstandings and conflict. Although this may be true, at the same time it may nurture empathy, acceptance, and promote true dialogue (Harroff-Tavel, 2003; Meredith, 2009).

Lastly, the behavioural construct inside the humanitarian NGO should not differ much, at least in principle, with any other types of organizations. Human behaviour in this context is expected to extend beyond rules and regulations. Conflict between employees, power struggles, dismay, preferential treatment and disappointment are frequent. The effects of dysfunctional dynamics within the group and personal disillusionment notably affect the organizational culture. The extent of this effect is relevant to many factors, one of which is the level of formality that has developed between the various relations-nodes of the social structure of the humanitarian organization.

2.2.3 Goals

Goals are perhaps the most distinctive element, alongside with *values*, differentiating humanitarian organizations from all other types of NGOs. Goals, as elements of organizational structure, are one of the most difficult concepts to analyse. This fact is founded on the presence of some fundamental questions, mostly of philosophical nature, that need to be answered before we can reach safely to conclusions: Do organizations have goals, or is it the individuals who do, or is it both? Who sets the goals of an organization? How are these goals set? These questions should not be strange to us by now, since we already discussed about the continuous debate between structure and agency; the ability of the individual to act on his own accord, set and follow individual preferences within the

social and organizational structure. What is certain, is that in order to avoid methodological and semiotic fallacies, a way to distinguish between these options should be created.

Interestingly enough, theorists, after presupposing that these two are clearly distinct, have managed to connect individual and organizational goals. Simon (1964), first suggests that only if individual and organizational goals are compatible (not necessarily coincide), then the individual will decide to remain and contribute to the organization. Then he proposes an extraordinary distinction, by labelling the individual's goals as *motives*. Here, we separate our view from Simon's and we go one step further to suggest that *motives* are for a *goal*, what *reason* is for a *cause*. Elaborating on that, we know that cause is that which produces a direct effect, while the reason is the underling justification for the same action. At the same time, we understand that *goals* are what the individual or organization wants to happen; the way they want to see the world changed – for example 'end world hunger' or 'rid the world of HIV/AIDS'. The *motives* for doing this are embedded in our cognitive education, which in these examples perhaps is a feeling of solidarity or humanism. With these in mind, we understand that there might be goals of the organization, and goals of the individuals within it. There might also be different goals, unstated, unofficial, and secret goals, as well. Even in this polyphonic context of different opinions and goals, one way or another, the actuality of goal-driven action remains and can be scientifically observed. The researcher just has to go one step further than simply exploring the 'declared' goals, and assess them through hard evidence.

To add to the confusion, Scott (2003, p. 292), considers five different 'natures' of goals, which exist simultaneously, depending on alternative outlooks: cognitive, cathectic, symbolic, justificatory, and evaluative. *Cognitive* goals are utilized by rational systems and use them as guides to provide courses of action and guidance through the decision-making processes. In this fashion, we don't look at vague goals, such as the ones we would find behind the vision of the organization (*mission statement*), but those who show direction in each step of the way (Simon, 1976). *Cathectic* goals (from the psychoanalytical term *'cathexis'*: where we invest our libido) on the other hand, work in the exactly opposite way, since they are used for their motivational attributes. Natural system analysis favours this way of understanding organizational goals (Selznick, 1949; Whetten and Godfrey, 1998),

where ambiguity and abstraction work in favour of motivation, and are usually seen in many cases – for instance "fight against corruption". The third perspective of looking into goals is seeing them for their *symbolic* character. This means that a goal might not necessarily have a direct connection with the actions of the organization, but can be used efficiently to rally participants, resources, alliances and to invoke beneficial political consequences (Milakovich and Gordon, 2012). A fourth, totally different way of looking at goals is as means of *justification* for actions already decided or actions already completed. From a socio-political perspective, this has to do with gaining legitimacy for our actions or acting in accordance to a sense of duty. From a psychological perspective, according to cognitive dissonance theory, proposed by Leon Festinger (1957), an individual (or organization) has a powerful motive to maintain cognitive consistency between his actions and his beliefs. In order to avoid the discomfort and to provide an acceptable account of his past actions, the goals are set afterwards. As for the final function, goals could be a way of *evaluating* our organizational performance. In this case too, behaviour precedes the setting of goals. Criteria for carrying out the evaluation are related to the extent that the goals are achieved.

Strategies are the determined "long-range goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler, 2003, p. 13). An important separation and clarification was made to this definition, by adding a triple layer to it: the layer of intention, one layer of contingency and one of reality. It was Mitzberg (1987) who first argued about the necessity of this layered approach, since most organizations have "intended" strategies, in form of plans, but they also have strategies to cope with emergencies. Of course, none of these two are the same with what he refers to as "realized" strategy, which is the way the organization actually behaved irrespective to the plans. Policies are, likewise, a substitute term for strategy. Policies are by default non-specific, and are produced by the senior governance bodies to guide action across the organization in both objective and subjective decision making (Lipsky, 2010).

All things considered, we should now go again down the same mental path, but in the humanitarian world. Let's try to identify if there is such thing as 'goals' in humanitarian

work, and if the answer is yes, then who decides upon these goals? How are these goals formulated and hierarchized?

First of all, we should start by arguing that all humanitarian actors, more or less, have stated goals. We argue that these goals derive mostly from the organizational part and individual contribution is very subtle. The main argument is based on the fact that personal incentives for contributing to a humanitarian organization are somewhat special.

Personal motives for participation in such an organization could be numerous. The most noticeable might be to acquire a sense of purpose, to challenge one's self physically and mentally, for reasons of emotional security and to combat depression and boredom, for professional career development and networking, or even just as a way of socializing, just to mention a few. According to a typology developed by Clark and Wilson (1961), there are three types of incentives for individual participation: (a) material incentives, such as money and other tangible rewards, (b) solidary incentives, such as prestige, social status or identity, and (c) purposive incentives, which are intangible rewards that come from the matching of organizational and individual purpose. In most of the humanitarian NGOs, personal motives would most likely fall under the last two categories, since material incentives are somehow counterbalanced by the considerable personal security and health risks. Even if some solidary incentives place distance between personal and organizational goal setting, the gravity of the purposive incentives balances it out.

Humanitarian goals may come in various flavours as well. For example, the goal of the international organization Care was to empower women in Bangladesh in order to combat child malnutrition (CARE, 2010). This was a perfect example of a cognitive goal that could easily be translated into a funded programme. According to the Sphere Project, "the primary goals of humanitarian response to humanitarian crises are to prevent and reduce excess mortality and morbidity" (SPHERE PROJECT, 2011), also a very tangible perspective. On the other hand, Oxfam during 2014, made an appeal to "end extreme inequality" (Seery et al., 2014), which is a neat example of how an organizational goal might have a *cathectic* or *symbolic* function, by being intentionally ambiguous and non-measurable, but still inspiring and exhilarating.

It would be interesting to also present a totally different approach to what humanitarian goals might be. This alternative view would be through the eyes of radical structuralism. Consistent with this view, the humanitarian NGOs could act as an extension of the country's foreign policy, which is the case for "Wilsonian-type" humanitarian organizations (see subchapter 2.3.2). In this case, one might find irrefutable evidence that, indeed, foreign aid can improve both regional influence, and provide "soft power" benefits (Coticchia and Giacomello, 2009; Shepherd, 2009). Even if having the NGOs acting in cooperation with the State might seem far-fetched, the same argument might hold more truth in the aspect that NGOs might be promoting their own norms and values (Cooley and Ron, 2002; Fast, 2014; Murdie, 2014), or even neoliberal dogmas, as was the case in Laos with the French NGO Action Contre la Faim (Daviau, 2010). Could someone go as far as to argue that the Red Cross *neutrality* is indeed the same *neutrality* as the one promoted by the foreign affairs policy of Switzerland, which is the country that founded the organization?

2.2.4 Technology

Technology is also a big determinant for organizational structure, a fact brilliantly proposed by researchers, as early as in the mid 50's (Thompson and Bates, 1957; Woodward, 1965, 1958). It is often that we underestimate the importance of technology, especially when we view it from a *narrowed perspective*: The logistics side of organizational operations. This accounts for the equipment, machines and instruments that the participants utilize to achieve the goals (Orlikowski, 1992, p. 399). For example, the buildings, the warehouses, the offices, desks, the computers, the printers and the IT network, the phones and the communication systems, are part of the technology. From the software used to design the product to the carton boxes which are used for packaging it, each non-living material object, relevant and important to the achievement of organizational goals, can be referred to as 'technology'.

Another way to look at technology is through a *wider perspective*: this view advances well beyond hardware and tangible equipment, and includes (a) the technical knowledge required to carry out tasks and (b) the intrinsic characteristics of the objects used during task completion. And thus emerges a new definition for 'technology', by Hulin and Roznowski (1985), as "the physical combined with the intellectual or knowledge processes by which materials in some form are transformed into outputs". This definition includes the technical skills and knowledge of the participants, who know how to manipulate the machines and the objects alike, and make important decisions on the basis of their know-how. These technical knowledge might also be part of a formalized knowledge base of the organization, such as instruction manuals and technical procedures, in forms as simple as 'checklists'. At the same time, the definition includes the impact and implications of technological objects' characteristics on the organizational structure. This means, for example, that a company that delivers online services (or any other kind of intangible goods) can be small, in relation to the global market, in contrast to companies who trade physical objects (tangible goods) which have to spread physically across countries. Likewise, companies like Samsung or Apple, by virtue of their products' nature, are expected to emphasize more on their Research and Development (R&D) units, than companies who trade bread, wine or olive oil (Bolton, 1993).

It is important that we understand that even if technology by default limits our options within a certain range of possibilities, it is not necessarily dictating neither our methodology nor our precise configuration of the machines (Weick, 2000). For example, if we were to build a house, we would have certain restraints imposed to our choices by structural and architectural engineering, but still, we could choose between a range of constructing material (using cement, metal, stone or wood), the arrangement of rooms, the number of floors, and the overall aesthetics of the construction. This important distinction, draws the line between technology and *technical system*, which is "a specific combination of machines and methods employed to produce a desired outcome"(Goodman and Sproull, 1990, p. 255). Consequently, an organization might have access to a greater 'technology' than the 'technical system' it adopts in order to accomplish its objectives. Within the same organization, migrating from one technology to another might produce structural change, as was the case for example with electronic filing systems, where the need for clerks gave

way to the need for IT departments. In any case, the choices an organization makes in terms of technology formulate its 'strategic choice' (Child, 1972).

Technology has a great impact on organizational structure and in order to determine the level of impact, analysts have identified three major variables. The first of the three is *complexity* or *diversity*. How many, or how different tasks should each organizational production unit tackle at a given time? The complexity of tasks is implicitly connected and inversely related to productivity (Spear and Bowen, 1999) – and in order to compensate for this, organizations employ methods as expansion, delegation and decentralization consistent with core processes (Steger et al., 2007). The second determinant is *uncertainty* and *unpredictability*. What kind of technology do we have at our disposal at any given time? Can we know the type, its behaviour and the characteristics beforehand? From a system point of view, uncertainty is caused by input inconsistency, output fluctuations, and contingent behaviour in the work process. The third variable is *interdependence*, and refers "to the extent to which the items or elements upon which work is performed or the work process themselves are interrelated so that changes in the state of one element affect the state of others" (Scott, 2003, p. 233). There are three levels of interdependence in this dimension, as identified by Thompson (Thompson, 1967, p. 55). The simplest form we might find is '*pooled*' interdependence, in which various tasks are associated only in the sense of their being contributing elements of completing a larger and more complex task. Then, the next form is '*sequential*' interdependence, where one task needs another in order to be able to conclude. The last form is '*reciprocal*' interdependence, where certain tasks or elements influence each other mutually. From a system point of view, each of them acts as both input and output to the other.

Consequently, these three variables - complexity, uncertainty, and interdependence, affect the organizational structure. Scott (Scott, 2003) predicts a series of associations between the three variables and the outcomes. He argues that as technical complexity becomes greater, so does the structural complexity. The organization starts expanding and differentiating as a reaction to the stimulus of enhanced technical diversity. Comparatively, as technical uncertainty increases, so does the need for decentralization and deformalization of processes. Last association is between the technical interdependence,

and the amount of resources that the organization needs to dedicate in inter-departmental coordination mechanisms.

One last very significant aspect that we need to investigate further is the way that organizations tackle issues concerning technology. Although the total number of options is bigger, here we examine six important ways, in order to avoid going deep into a theoretical territory that expands beyond this research's intentions. Firstly, organizations develop *rules* for routine tasks in order to secure minimum deviance in their outcomes. These rules come in the form of general guidelines, specification guides or even activity checklists. Although it is impossible to predict, contain and regulate all contingencies, a lot of the unpredicted behaviour caused by uncertainty and complexity, can be avoided. The second mechanism is appointing *schedules*, where the '6W' principle takes action: Who Does What, Where, When, With Whom and With What effect (Sheldon, 1982, p. 99). Scheduling is what keeps together complex systems, such as airports, and can be of great aid when we there is technological interdependence and complexity. The third mechanism is *departmentalization*, which is division of work within the organization. Through this strategy, the organization can develop departmental specialization to better manage diversity. The mechanism and method of departmentalization is closely connected with interdependence and allocation of various tasks (Thompson, 1967). The forth mechanism is developing *hierarchy* to manage the information flows, needed to operate the complex technology. While information exchange can be lessened by departmentalization, an efficient hierarchy mechanism becomes more important when interdependence becomes greater. The fifth mechanism is *delegation* of tasks to systems outside the control of the organization, a form of process outsourcing. Outsourcing has several benefits, such as cost advantages and increased efficiency, and overall improvement via appointing complex technological elements to third, specialized parties (McIvor, 2013). The last mechanism in dealing with technological concerns is to employ the device of '*client coordination*'. This means that 'clients' of the organization's services are expected to provide guiding information back to the process. This information may come in the form of assessment, reporting, or troubleshooting and collaboration. This breaks the trial and error processes, and lessens uncertainty, and improves overall efficiency.

Eventually, all the aspects of technology as an element of organizational structure can be seen in the case of humanitarian organizations. It is true that humanitarian organizations take great advantage of technology, and this happens in both the narrow and the wide perspective. From the narrow perspective, humanitarian NGOs are seen to have their own buildings, which serve as headquarters or warehouses or even practical space that is used to facilitate operational goals (clinics, care centres, refugee support offices, etc.). In these buildings we encounter even more technology: computers and networks, communication devices, as well as digital storage equipment. Workers in the humanitarian industry, such as doctors, nurses and midwives become more and more dependent on complex medical equipment (from the simplest diagnostic tools such as stethoscope to X-ray machines, portable sonograms, material for external fixation osteosynthesis, etc.). Several NGOs have developed their own technology, such as the MUAC band from the MSF, to help with diagnosing cases of severe malnutrition in children. Likewise, the Red Cross has developed the TERA (Trilogy Emergency Response Application) system for the facilitation of information exchange in disasters via SMS messages (IFRC and Rogers, 2015; Kawasaki et al., 2013; Kniveton et al., 2015). Moreover, the humanitarian supply chain is becoming more and more a highly technological one (Baldini et al., 2011). The humanitarian warehouses are nowadays enhanced with the use of RFID chips and it is important that there are tools in place "to keep track of the delivered crates are well designed against tampering" (Özdamar and Ertem, 2015; Yang et al., 2011; Yang, 2014). In an impressive count, the ground fleet stands for more than 70,000 units, owned by various organizations (Vinck, 2013, p. 211), most of them operating with the help of real-time GPS tracking using, since 2011, the services of HumanNav, which "aims to improve the safety, security and effectiveness of humanitarian transport missions by providing tracking, navigation and data capture for vehicle fleets of operational agencies" (UNITAR, 2011) .

Correspondingly, from the wider perspective, technology in humanitarian organizations implies the professional knowledge and skills in order to deliver the humanitarian services. The era of 'amateur humanitarianism' is long past as we are living in an even more 'professionalized' humanitarian world. This reflects the views of humanitarian health workers, which "viewed themselves as humanitarian professionals nearly to the extent they viewed themselves as health-specific technical experts who happen to work in

humanitarian assistance" (Kene et al., 2009). It also reflects the need of a global industry, which is the international humanitarian response to crises, where 210,000 people are employed and accounts for nearly $15 billion in spending globally each year (Walker et al., 2010). Even to this day a universal certification system for aid workers is still missing, core competences are not yet defined, and an international professional association is still not founded. Nevertheless, even in the absence of those typical criteria, the skills and knowledge for effective deliverance of aid are there, undoubtedly. These skills either belong to the aid worker and are part of his or her academic or vocational training (e.g. university degrees such as a medical or nursing degree) or belong to the organization and form some part of common knowledge (e.g. the WHO Guidelines for Cholera Control). In most cases, organizational technical knowhow is developed at both axes, and we take the case of the Ebola pandemic in 2014 to set an example: MSF, who spearheaded the global response against the deadly virus in West Africa, issued various specific guidelines on the creation and management of the EMCs (Ebola Management Centers) and the overall Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), though it took for granted the basic knowledge and experience of its members in infectious disease control and treatment (Wolz, 2014).

Technology has relatively big implications in the structures of humanitarian organizations because all three variables (complexity, uncertainty and interdependence) take rather high values. There is great uncertainty and unpredictability in the 'object' of the humanitarian task, which is to reverse the negative effects of disasters. Apart from that, work methodology becomes even more complex with difficulty of access from a geographical, political and security perspective. Dependence on volunteers and individual donors, which is the case for many NGOs, also accounts for part of the unpredictability. It is still improbable that most humanitarian NGOs hold the capacity to obtain and analyse satellite images in order to estimate the impact of natural disasters.

Nowadays, NGOs are making use of cloud based technologies to a steadily increasing degree: the IFRC e-learning platform is a perfect example. The web-based platform aims at training humanitarian workers and providing skills and knowledge valuable for their profession. The platform is providing active knowledge under certain fundamental principles, which are: ubiquitous learning, formative assessment, multimodal meaning,

active knowledge-making, collaborative intelligence, metacognition, and differentiated learning (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012). The platform hosts learning modules produced by IFRC but also other organizations, such as the Sphere Project.

It is often the case that in the humanitarian context, the words 'technology' and 'innovation' are used interchangeably (Vinck, 2013). In a world characterized by an increased 'accessibility' to technology, humanitarian actors are able to develop new tools for better coordinating, managing information, and facilitating action across the facets of the disaster management cycle. Bessant and Tidd (2013) provided a trimodal model of innovation: product, process, and paradigm innovation. *Product innovation* in the humanitarian world refers to the implementation of novel technological elements and technological fusion for humanitarian purposes, such as electronic bank transfers, food supplementation formulas, and web based trainings. *Process innovation* in humanitarian action refers to the choice of modern methods for completing a task, such as collecting data via mobile phones, instead of the traditional pen and paper techniques. *Paradigm innovation* refers to a new method of understanding our work as humanitarians. Technology uncovers new horizons when it comes to beneficiary participation and involvement, which abandons the necessity for a traditional top-down approach.

Fine examples of R&D within and around humanitarian NGOs are the HIF and Epicentre. The Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) is a grant-making fund, hosted by Save the Children UK, with an objective to support organisations working in the humanitarian environment, to develop, test and share new technologies, products and processes and help them become more effective and cost-efficient in the future. Epicentre, which is a non-profit association created in 1986 by doctors from MSF and has a mission to contribute to the design and promotion of original operational medical projects in MSF intervention settings. Beyond providing training for MSF personnel on topics such as epidemiological assessment and monitoring, Epicentre has developed specialized software (FUCHIA/Epitryps) to help with the epidemiological surveillance of major epidemics.

In order to cope with issues of technological complexity, uncertainty and interdependence, humanitarian organizations also resort to the same mechanisms that we mentioned above. Members of the humanitarian organizations have to follow 'rules', with reference to

guidelines, checklists action steps and manuals. Quite interesting examples are the ABCDE protocol of emergency medicine, applied in disaster victims, the START triage protocol for the quick classification of victims during a mass casualty incident (MCI) based on the severity of their injury. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also published action steps for the responders (and the public alike) with dos and don'ts to follow in a disaster situations (Veenema, 2012, p. 735). At the same time, humanitarian organizations depend on good *scheduling*. Fleet management and overall logistics, distribution of goods, timetables of operating theatres in a warzone – all depend on a elegant orchestration of time, people, as well as task appointment and monitoring (Martinez et al, 2011). *Departmentalization* is another mechanism by which NGOs meet the demands of the complex technological environment (Zimmermann, 2003). Depending on their size and capacity, most humanitarian organizations have specific departments to meet specific issues; issues chaperoned by their distinct technical challenges. *Hierarchies* also evolve inside the organizations to meet with a better management of information. These hierarchies might come in many different forms, although typically, for practical reasons, there is a more flat hierarchy than in other types of organizations (Allgauer, 2006). *Delegation* is seen often throughout humanitarian action. Lots of technological issues are delegated to specialist third-party solutions. Especially in the latest decade there is also a disposition of empowering commercial actors, and cooperation between the third sector and private companies, also endorsed and promoted by EU and Global funding (Albareda et al., 2007; Pfeiffer, 2003; Teegen et al., 2004). Lastly, humanitarian organizations tend to utilize the mechanism of *client coordination* with the intention, not only to surpass technological concerns, but also to take advantage of its concordance with the principles of participation, empowerment and sustainability.

2.2.5 Environment

Environment can be defined, with a broad sense, as all aspects of reality outside the organization and with which it has direct or indirect relationships (Byrne and Callaghan, 2013). Whether we see the environment from a systems, contingency or ecological

perspective, its impact on organizational structure is always decisive. As we have already stated, the original Leavitt's Diamond includes only four elements and omits environment. On the other hand, Scott (2003) proposed that the environment should be considered as an external fifth part, beyond participants, social structure, technology and goals. In our understanding the border-line distinguishing the organization from the environment is dashed, for what we understand it as a porous boundary, with continuous tradeoffs between the two spaces. Without going astray from this view, we emphasize on the co-evolvement of the environment with the rest of the organizational components. As a result, the environment is much more than just a vague space where inputs 'come from' and outputs 'go to' for our organizational systems. It has filters, and defined pathways; interconnections with the core elements.

First thing to remember is that participants were part of the environment before they started being part of our organization. Most likely, members of one organization are already members in other organizations as well, with notable exceptions, which present special sociological interest, the case of 'total institutions' (e.g. prisons, boarding schools, mental care facilities). These total institution systems that people grow up inside the organization,
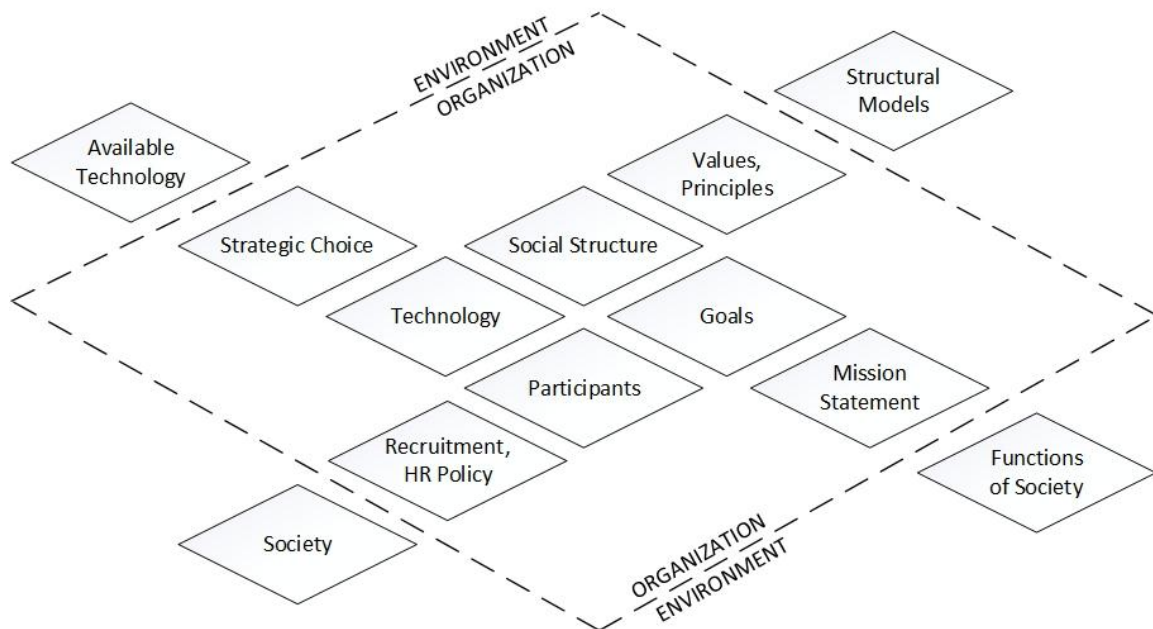
Fig.4 - Elements of the Humanitarian Organization

like the Janissaries of the Ottoman Army, are a rare case in our world and time (Abramson, 1976). With this in mind, time will only tell what the long-term effects of children indoctrination in the ISIS or Boko Haram occupied territories will be, and how these people will grow up to resemble 'total institution' behavior (Onuocha, 2014). In either case, participants in most organizations, have interests and commitments beyond the organization boundaries. The first time they enter the organization, they bring with them a part of their world, their understanding, their physical, cognitive, spiritual, and emotional backpack. Each time they interchange between roles in different organizations and contexts, again, a piece of the environment comes inside the organization. Human resource policies act as a filter at the initial recruitment phase, and while a member is active at the organization the environment can affect him. Still, we should think of how the economic crisis or political instability might have a negative effect on the psychology of the participant and consequently in his efficiency. For humanitarian organizations these environmental stimuli might produce unexpected influence on participants, as generally perceived negative events might have positive effects, and encourage aid workers to invest more in the organization's interests.

Technology as well, is in most cases 'rented' from the environment. It is in the environment that most technologies are developed, as it is expected. Most organizations neither invent the machines they use, neither establish most of the knowledge and skillsets for their workers. Humanitarian organizations depend on the environment for the acquisition of every kind of technological assets. They buy their computers. They buy the operating systems of these computers, and the software with which they handle their documents and spreadsheets. They buy their medical equipment. They depend on construction companies, communication companies, automobile industries, pharmaceutical industries, and the list is practically endless. Equally important is the fact that most humanitarian aid workers have acquired their skills by a third party, which most often is a university. In the last decades though, with the perpetual professionalization of the aid industry, there are cases that skills and knowledge are a valuable commodity, offered at great prices. Most noticeable examples are RedR, Institut Bioforce, INTRAC, People in Aid, and Mango. These organizations provide training for humanitarian aid workers in topics such as security, disaster needs assessment, logistics, leadership, accountability, monitoring and

evaluation of projects, WASH, and many more. Except for training for the aid workers as individuals, most of these (and other) companies offer consultation services for the organization as a whole. These interventions aim at empowering the NGO and making it more efficient in coping with environmental fluctuations. As we mentioned above, the organization has various options to form its very distinct 'technology tree' (seeing that most decisions on technology are interconnected and interdependent, they form compatibility branches) and decisions on this aspect is part of its technological 'strategic choice'.

Goals are again connected to the environment in a very interesting way. Thompson and McEwen (1958) argue that "the goal-setting problem is essentially determining a relationship of the organization to the larger society, which in turn becomes a question of what the society (or elements within it) want done or can be persuaded to support". This sentence holds more truth than we can bear, as it strikes organizational agency in its Achilles heel. Hospitals, as organizations, define their goals in accordance with the society's need for higher health standards. Corporations, as organizations, define their goals in accordance with the market's demand levels and product appeal. The level of environmental control over the goals of any organization is perpetuated by their necessary interaction, as systems. So, even if the motives of those who set the organizational agenda and goals, may be "profits, prestige, votes or the salvation of their souls, their efforts must produce something useful or acceptable to at least a part of the organizational environment to win continued support" (ibid). Parsons (1960), seems to adopt the same view, contending that what we understand as 'goals' for organization are nothing more than 'specialized functions' of the larger society. From the sum of specialized functions, each organization selects those special few, as by its mission statement. From this point of view, the humanitarian organizations' goals are set by the need of the 'environment' to fill the void of 'humanitarian needs' that any other international actor is unable or unwilling to do, but part of the global society wants to see done.

Social structure also, is unlikely to be original in any organization, and it is mostly influenced by the environment. Most organizations will just "reflect important features borrowed or impressed on it by the environment" (Scott, 2003, p. 24). The set of available

features 'out there' are an evolution of trial and error processes in order to achieve rationality within uncertainty and eventually lead to a level of homogeneity of structure. This view is partly consistent with the notion of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), which as a matter of fact is the case in the humanitarian NGO society. In that manner, humanitarian organizations started to borrow ideas or 'templates' of internal social structure by other types of organizations. Health organizations, businesses, government and even armies have inspired their social structure. Of course, even at the core of normative social structure, the principles of humanitarian action were themselves inspired by the social environment: the ideas of Jean Jacque Rousseau and the Enlightenment, and way before that, the rationality of Sun Zu and the ancient Greeks (Marouda, 2012). Of course, each organization is able to filter the amount of environmental control on its social structure by introducing its own combination of values, principles and norms.

All things considered, we want to conclude this analysis of the organizational relation to the environment, by paraphrasing the metaphysical English poet John Donne in his famous *Meditation XVII*:

No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe;
every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine;[9]

Which now becomes pertinent:

No organization is an island, entire of itself;
every organization is a piece of the setting, a part of the environment.

2.2.6 Summary

It must be clear by now, through the analysis of Leavitt's Diamond, or its updated version by Scott, that no certain organizational element is of greater importance compared to the others. Beyond this four or five element model, there are such as the McKinsey 7-S framework (Pascale and Athos, 1986). As we stated in the beginning of the chapter, we

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[9] Donne's original spelling and punctuation.

pursued the study of humanitarian organizations through an approach similar to the study of anatomy. We understand that there is so much more in the complexity of this system. This complexity occurs as a result of two major factors. First, there is a huge level of functional interdependence between the five elements. We have seen the inner mechanics of each component but we did not invest enough effort to analyze how they affect one another. We believe that goals affect our choice of technology, that social structure –as values and principles- magnetize or repulse certain types of participants. Moreover, it is presumed that changes in any of these four rarely occur in isolation, and changes to more than one of them at the same time would cause problems (Smith et al., 1992). Second, as we stated earlier on, it is not proper to deduct the whole to the sum of its parts. When the four components are put together, goals, social structure, participants and technology, they will produce emergent properties, previously unseen. Humanitarian organizations would not be the same if any of these variables took a different value, which is often the case.

In the analytical narrative that follows, we will see how humanitarian organizations came to existence, as a part of the *third sector* of societies (also referred to as civic or social). The third sector itself is a large system of non-profit organizations (NPO) that coexists with and relates to government and private sector activities (Taylor, 2010). The historical path, with all the divisions and bifurcations, which gave the humanitarian world the shape we witness today is a matter of collision: the organization against the contemporary contingency factors and broader environmental context.

2.3 Extra-organizational interactions and dependencies

Decision making is affected not only by the structure of the organization as such, but as we already discussed, by the environment within which the organization is active. In the following subchapter we deem important to analyze some interesting subjects concerning these interactions. Specifically, our first concern is to understand the relation between the humanitarian NGOs and the NPOs in general with the public and private sections. Then, we shall focus in depth on the special role of the humanitarian NGOs as part of the global third sector. Moreover, we will try to answer questions concerning how and why humanitarian NGOs grow and expand throughout the world. We shall furthermore analyze

the various forms of interaction between the NGOs and the States, as well as the forms of interaction between the NGOs themselves. Finally, we shall try to highlight some of the most important present-day challenges concerning the humanitarian NGOs.

2.3.1 Interaction with the public and the private domains

Common ground between the NPOs and the public or private sector

The illustrative journey that we took in the previous chapter, was designed around the basic presumption that all organizations are alike. This presumption holds true to some extent. Most influential organizational theorists, like Simon (Simon, 1976), believe that organizations of either of the three sectors are equivalent on key dimensions. The proximity of the sectors was also stressed out by Thompson (1962), who contended that the similarities overshadowed the differences. All three sectors feature (a) separation of ownership and control (which is explicit in NGOs where there is no 'ownership'; true in the public sector and also true in big firms) (Bowen, 1994), (b) satisfying behavior (demonstrated by organizations who seek satisfactory profits or growth rather than maximum profits, due to their bounded rationality) (Simon, 1956), (c) group-choice decision problems (in director boards, legislative bodies, shareholders), and (d) goals of self-perpetuation and self-expansion (Ahmed, 2012, p. 27). Whether we are looking at private, public or third-sector organizations, we can always identify a wide range of procedural overlap, spanning from budget planning to recruitment.

The public sector and the NGOs are also similar in more than just the aforementioned ways. Firstly, they tend to have a broader impact, due to their goals. Moreover, the way that decisions are taken is usually under great scrutiny due to the nature of their controlling mechanisms. In that sense, the stakeholders (constituents or donors) make claims for increased performance and accountability. Most of the NGOs also have a political core that pertains to that certain amount of openness to the public, as is the case also in public organizations. Lastly and most importantly, similarly to the public sector, the NGOs are expected "not only to produce goods and services but also have to work on behalf of the 'public interest', which is conceived as a broad and a normative action" (Pesch, 2008, p. 175). Most humanitarian organizations are engaged in actions that promote public interest,

like protecting and promoting public health, empowering communities and caring for the vulnerable groups of society.

The private sector and the NGOs share important features as well. Initially, they share internal processes like hiring and firing their staff, forming their financial strategies with planning, budgeting, etc., without much external control. The degree of flexibility in most NGOs is comparable to those of the private sector. An interesting second similarity is the 'market competition' in which NGOs operate. A humanitarian NGO, for instance, has to compete for human resources or funding with other NGOs, as well as the private sector. This contingency-producing environment is really close to what the private sector organizations experience. Relationship building also seems to be as important for NGOs as it is for private companies. For our humanitarian organization, this refers to its affiliation to the donors, the government and the communities (Hecht and Ramsey, 2001). Humanitarian marketing and the NGOs' communication strategy thus comes into play, correspondingly to what we would expect from a for-profit organization. Last and paradoxically, the not-for-profits are expected to adopt a maximization of profit strategy. These paradox springs from the idea that "managers of nonprofits want to be viewed as active entrepreneurs rather than as passive bureaucrats, and launching a successful commercial venture is one direct route to that goal" (Foster and Bradach, 2005).

Differences between profit, non-profit and public organizations

It is true that organizations share some common features, but at the same time, we encounter humongous differences. Most importantly, the NGOs are not 'owned' by neither the government, nor are privately owned. This vital feature has great implications and produces variation. More precisely, we have been mostly concerned in changes in structure- although we know for fact that there are many other things that change. For its most part, empirical research has been conducted to examine the differences between private and public sectors, and unfortunately there are just few findings regarding the civic sector. Humanitarian NGOs are neither profit nor public organizations us such, but seem to share characteristics of both worlds.

So what are these *non-structural differences* between the three versions? Wallace Stanley Sayre once said that "business and public administration are alike only in all unimportant respects" (Rhodes et al., 2008, p. 372). We beg to differ, but yet we understand how this purposeful exaggeration manages to accentuate the point. For instance, there is indisputable evidence that people working for the nonprofit sector have different *motivators* than people working in the commercial sector. For example, their main incentives might be social status and power, instead of monetary incentive earnings (Rawls and Nelson, 1975). This devaluation of monetary incentives becomes greater as the person is climbing up the hierarch of the non-profit (Liou and Nyhan, 1994). Another interesting fact is that even though "public employees have greater security seeking tendencies than private employees" (Baldwin, 1990, p. 7), employees in the NGO sector were an exception to the rule. In other words, the stereotype that non-business employees were preoccupied with job security was debunked (Wittmer, 1991). Additionally, research was done concerning the efficiency of either sectors (public and private) and most studies agree that, against intuitive presumptions, employees of both were equally committed and diligent (Rainey, 1983). Managers in the private sector tend to have fewer and more informal meetings with external interest groups, in contrast to their counterparts in other sectors (Kurke and Aldrich, 1983; Mintzberg, 1979). Lastly and most importantly, employees in the public sector (and we argue that this is also the case for the NGOs) are at least equally or more sensitive, empathic, broad minded, forgiving, polite and helpful than those in the for-profits (Baldwin, 1990, p. 9).

Huge differences also occur between public, private and third-sector organizations when it comes to *decision-making*. It is reasonably argued that decision making practices have no golden rules and are largely sector dependent (Nutt, 2000), while at the same time the differences stem from the role they play and relation they have in society (Rainey et al., 1976; Ring and Perry, 1985). Private sector imposes more restrictive procedures thus rendering decision making less autonomous (Buchanan, 1974; Mainzer, 1973; Millett, 1966). Oversight bodies (board of directors, politicians), even if in cases they can derail decisions, have little impact on decisions in some studies (Nutt, 2000), while in others they end up making decision making slower than in the for-profit sector (Golembiewski, 1985). It is important to understand that this delay is not considered intentional, but most likely

indicates a managerial 'tendency'. To demonstrate this, studies found that "decision makers in public organizations were much more likely than those in private organizations to engage in more interaction with other members of the organization when making decisions" (Hickson et al., 1986). Eventually, this participative nature and 'publicness' that is found in the public and some parts of the NPO sectors, is correlated with more recycles, turbulence, interrupts and conflict. For the most impressive part, this conflict (that emerged earlier in NPO than in the private sector) was found to be perceived by NPO managers as a positive thing; one that defined issues and helped the organization produce better decisions (Schwenk, 1990).

2.3.2 Humanitarian NGOs as part of the global third sector

The humanitarian architecture

So, what are the elements of the international humanitarian community? What are the structural ingredients which combine to produce the end result that the beneficiary bears witness to? If seen in forms of systems, which major systems interact and on which grounds? The intensification of humanitarian action in the last twenty years and the consecutive increase in resource spending (both human and material) dictate the establishment of a sound understanding of this complex structure.

We identify the NGOs that we study as just one pillar out the five that support the humanitarian architecture. First pillar would be *the states*: the state is an integral part of humanitarian action and one of the key players. Because of the multidimensional role of the states in humanitarian crises, states are often overlooked as humanitarian players[10]. The states are often seen as obstacles, or even as the agent of the crisis itself. States often wage war on each other, commit atrocities including certain war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and might restrict the human rights of their own citizens. It is understandable that we, more than often see the states as being on the 'supply-side',

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[10] For a more thorough understanding of this point, it is important to recall the distinctions made in the introductory chapter and the way in which we proclaim military humanitarian intervention to be of a fundamentally different nature and thus irrelevant to the scope of this study. The omission of 'humanitarian action' through the use of force is deliberate and purposeful.

providing job objectives for the intergovernmental and NGOs. These 'accusations' might be true, and there is more than enough evidence to support the charges, albeit states remain a very important humanitarian actor. Governments are providing most of the fuel that keeps the humanitarian engines running: US$16.4 billion in 2013 alone (75% of total) (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2015). This aid is channeled towards its target through various routes. The most evident is through the government or intergovernmental organizations dedicated to distributing aid, such as the USAID, the DFID, EuropeAid and ECHO. A second route is via the direct financing of programmes for action, as is often the case within the EU. Another route is via the provision of important infrastructure or resources to facilitate the humanitarian action. A good example on this is the use of military planes, such as the famous Hercules C-130 for the transportation of emergency aid (Kazmin and Lynch, 2008). States can also facilitate humanitarian assistance by using political leverage in favor of organizations, by coercing other states to provide access, and by providing information (satellite imagery or intelligence).
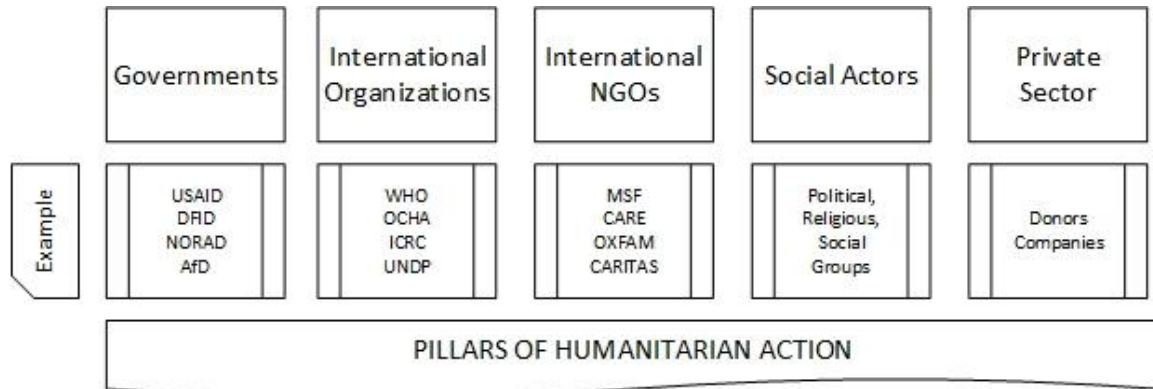
Fig.5 - Pillars of humanitarian architecture

Second pillar is the *international organizations* such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which are intergovernmental organizations. Both of the terms 'international organization' or 'intergovernmental organization' denote "an association, established by governments through a treaty, which pursues common aims and

has its own special organs to fulfill particular functions" (Rona, 2004). Moreover, these 'association' forms are not restricted to governments, and could be huge networks of NGOs, such as the case of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). For the role and implications of these suprasystems, we will provide a detailed analysis later on in this chapter.

At the third pillar, in the center, we expect to see the *international humanitarian non-governmental organizations* such as Care, MSF, Oxfam, and others. All these are private non-profits, non-governmental organizations (INGOs) that comprise the international third-sector, play an important role in international affairs by virtue of their activities. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is often considered an NGO, but it is not. By and large, it is neither an intergovernmental organization nor an NGO. The mandate of the Committee is specified by the Geneva Conventions, which give the ICRC an 'international legal personality'. Thus, it is indeed a private association formed under the Swiss Civil Code (much like an NGO would be), and yet it enjoys privileges and immunities comparable to the UN agencies such as "exemption from taxes and customs duties, inviolability of premises and documents, and immunity from judicial process" (Rona, 2004). This pillar is also the center of our research. Dodging unproductive repetition we move along, since a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of this international third sector will be done later on.

In the fourth pillar, there are social actors like political parties, religious groups, volunteer groups, worker associations, and other social groups. Altogether, these could stand under the general umbrella of '*community*'. Communities are usually the 'first responders' in every humanitarian crisis. It is the same communities who "can organize their resources to prevent, mitigate or respond to protection threats and increase the safety and dignity of the most vulnerable" (Berry and Reddy, 2010). For example, during the siege of the city of Kobanê in late 2014, the Kurdish 'Peace and Democracy Party', was spearheading the relief operations for the population who fled the attack of ISIS, within the Republic of Turkey. Food distributions are also very common by local churches or other active social groups, in cases of disasters. Community-based organizations (CBOs) and local NGOs can

also take part in the humanitarian effort. People from the community also play an important role in humanitarian action by acting as cultural mediators between the big international NGOs and the local population. Most organizations interact so heavily and place such focus in their relation with these social entities within the community that we strongly believe them to be a force to be reckoned with; a pillar of their own.

The fifth and last pillar is *private sector* participation. This usually takes the form of individual, private institutions or corporate donations. It might also refer to actions that help other humanitarian actors under a for-profits corporate social responsibility strategy. Actually, one-third of the funding that ends up in the humanitarian NGOs comes from private sources and seeing that private involvement in humanitarian action has risen steadily since the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, it "is likely to play an even larger role in the post-2015 development agenda" (Heba, 2013). For instance, British Airways has offered aid agencies a relief aircraft to fly emergency aid and supplies to Tacloban, Philippines, right after the shattering destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan (British Airways, 2013). Even if, up to this date, there remains a lot of distrust and misunderstanding between the corporate and the humanitarian worlds (some form of a bizarre 'culture clash'), no one can underestimate the importance of the contribution in both financial terms, as well as in skills and capacity.

Humanitarian non-homogeneity and typologies

The global third sector comprises a great plethora of international NGOs. Their number might as well be exceeding one's expectations, with 4000 different legal entities in the western world dealing with issues of disaster relief and community or social development (Forman and Stoddard, 2002). But are these organizations all so much alike that they be studied under one single umbrella? The answer to this question is apparently negative. From this sum, only 261 are identified as *international* humanitarian NGOs, a big figure still. Out of this number, one could identify a handful organizations with considerable financial and operational capacity, to be considered as the 'major players'. From all these NGOs, only few have the capacity and dynamic to stand from the crowd. In the latest data available, which dates back to 2010, five international NGOs seem to account for 38% of

the total expenditure of all INGO for that year (Taylor et al., 2012). Notably, more than 2.8 US$ billion were spent by Médecins Sans Frontières, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Oxfam International, Save the Children and World Vision International. As can be seen, if we combine the top five aforementioned organizations with the rest of the INGOs with expenditure that exceeds 100 US$ million per year, then we get a group of 32 organizations (out of 261, 12% of the 'population') that account for 5239 US$ million, a rough 70% of the total INGO budget (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 28). All things considered, this illustrates a form of reverse pyramid, with the fewer entities at the top getting most of the resources. This is no surprise to the experienced eye: getting funding through modern donor mechanisms demands a know-how, proof of experience, accountability systems and some form of effectiveness and efficiency assurances. Most of the small NGOs might not be lacking in vision and will, but they lack in most of the abovementioned features. The complex methodologies adopted by major donors and funding institutions exceed the logistical capacities of many international and most local NGOs.

	Number of organisations/ federations	2008 combined estimated humanitarian expenditure	2009 combined estimated humanitarian expenditure	2010 combined estimated humanitarian expenditure
TIER 1: top5 organisations / federations	5	2.623	2.534	2.753
TIER 2: >$100 m/yr+ (excl. top 5)	28	2.266	2.118	2.486
TIER 3: US $50-99 m/yr	21	647	587	670
TIER 4: US $10-49 m/yr	89	932	897	1.034
TIER 5: < US $10 m/yr	118	445	418	470
TOTALS	261	$6.913 billion	$6.554 billion	$7.433 billion

Table 2 - Combined humanitarian expenditure of international NGOs grouped by budget size, 2008-2010 (billion US dollars) (Source: Taylor et al., 2012)

Within the humanitarian NGOs we can further identify three separate typologies. In order of historic appearance, we encounter religious, 'Dunanist', and 'Wilsonian' humanitarian organizations (Stoddard, 2003). The religious or 'faith-based' organizations are the oldest, with their precursors founded in the missionary work of European colonialism. Henry Dunant was the inspirational figure behind the Dunanist strand of humanitarianism, and parallel to his vision many organizations were formed whose roots more or less connected to the Movement of the Red Cross and its fundamental principles. Last were the NGOs of the Wilsonian tradition, which evolved well within the last century.

In most organizational features, like the basic organizational elements and structure as well as internal processes, organizations of either kind are much alike. The differentiation between the three types is really important, as it dictates huge dissimilarities in terms of decision making. The prime motivators as well as the normative and behavioral social structure can be markedly different. Since our research is focused on three case studies, all deriving from the Dunanist tradition, we see purpose in identifying the major differences between them and the other two strands. Generally speaking, this tradition has become the leading paradigm and what is widely conceived as the 'traditional' humanitarian practice. The unique features and characteristics of the Dunanist NGOs will be extensively analyzed in the following chapters, as we examine its major agents.

Religious NGOs differ in two aspects: one has got to do with motivation and one with its constituents. The first aspect is virtually self-explanatory, since it is by default that religious faith is the prime motivator behind humanitarian action. Most religions have included in their teachings a duty to help those in need; for example the second pillar of Islam is Zakat which orders every Muslim to give 2.5% of his savings to the underprivileged. In Christian teachings the role model is exemplified by the 'Good Samaritan', from the Gospel of Luke (10:29–37), who shows a charitable person rescues and helps out a needy stranger. Also according to Luke "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise". In Buddhism, in the 'Points to the Great Path' says that "Total willingness to give is the wish-granting gem for fulfilling the hopes of wandering beings" (Malloch, 2009). In Judaism we encounter the notion of *tzedakah*,

which is signifying the religious obligation for charity (Donin, 1991). As can be seen, giving to the poor and the needy is a moral imperative in most of modern religions. Being a faith-based NGO could have implications also on how broad or narrow your geographical limitations are: Christian NGOs are seen in action across the world, but their Islamic and Jewish counterparts seem to be unofficially 'restricted' to operate in countries with Muslim and Jew populations, respectively. This is interconnected to the special, fundamentally different value system, where, in the case of the NGO Islamic Relief, "Islamic perspectives on humanitarian and social justice issues inspire all aspects of *[their]* work" (Islamic Relief, 2015). In the Christian major NGO equivalents, assistance and religious indoctrination is separated – at least in theory. On the contrary, Evangelist organizations often complicate things by integrating missionary and humanitarian work, a practice that has serious repercussions on all faith-based humanitarian organizations (Ferris, 2005).

Similarly, Wilsonian NGOs have few formative or structural differences from the dominant paradigm of traditional humanitarianism. Even with this in mind, it is important to understand the quintessential dissimilarities: the NGOs see themselves as the 'long arm' of their governments. Humanitarian action in this sense is a way of doing good, but at the same time promoting the foreign policy, the values, the ideas, and supporting the interests of your country. This phenomenon is not as wide spread as neither the Dunanist nor the religious perspectives, as we find examples only in a few countries. Most notable cases are Care and the IRC (International Rescue Committee) which get most of their funding directly from the United States government (Lischer, 2007). In these cases, we can see the NGOs becoming more flexible in their behavior in order to fit in with the needs of their country's foreign policy demands. Likewise, it is often that these organizations show less reluctance to cooperate with military bodies in order to support their operations (CIMIC). Similar acts have also been recorded by peripheral branches of other major NGOs such as Oxfam Australia, which developed close ties to the Australian Defence Force for logistical purposes, even if Oxfam International is affiliated to the traditional camp of humanism (Christopher and Tatham, 2014). The Netherlands also have a similar tradition of government-NGO collaboration (O'Malley and Dijkzeul, 2002), though more subtle and with less implications, due to the liberal nature of the local government (Stoddard, 2003).

2.3.3 Humanitarian development and franchising

There is also one additional consideration concerning the networks of NGOs. It has to do with their strategies on how they go about expanding into new societies and countries. Nearly all NGOs have evolved historically from an initiative that took roots inside a certain society, like a contingent event that often includes a unique combination of circumstances and personalities. After the establishment of the paradigm, the organization usually is introduced and reproduced in other contexts. The newly found 'copy' establishes some variant relations with the preexisting counterparts. These can be categorized as such:

a) The new section becomes part of a group of similarly organized organizations in a structure of flat hierarchies and autonomy. Collaboration between sectors could be organized by a network whose mandate is the coordination of autonomous activities.

b) The new section is semi-autonomous, as has different degrees of freedom according to the type of activities it wants to undertake, i.e. domestic or external missions.

c) The new section is directly related and hierarchically dependent on the 'mother' organization. It acts as a peripheral node of a centrally managed international organization.

Examples of the first case would be the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International MSF Association, the MDM International Network, Oxfam International, etc. In these networks the various national sectors are exchanging information, coordinating activities or delegate their duties. The degree of power bestowed upon the International Boards are case-specific, following the above typology.

There is also a noteworthy issue concerning the rationale behind this expansion. Besides the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, whose foundation is really old and in most cases date back in the 19th century, the rest of the NGOs expanded during the 1980's and 1990's. We recognize three distinct types of NGO development: a) self-initiation b) facilitation and c) colonization. These three types correspond to the aforementioned typologies of relations,

but this relation is rather lax. Firstly, in the case of self-initiation of an organization we witness that indigenous people, being inspired by the organization's work abroad, decide to establish a section of said organization in their own country. In doing this they do not ask for or receive but negligible support, but mostly 'reproduce' a given ideal type. Secondly, the facilitative paradigm, where the newly formed sector is taker 'under the wings' of the parent organization, usually supported financially and technically until it reaches a stage of maturity and self-sufficiency. Thirdly, the case of organizational colonization is the case were the humanitarian organization decides to move into a new country, and does that in the same way that a corporation would do. These types of expansions are dictated by a need to open up to new sources of funding and human resources. The criteria is always the 'added value' and the facilitation of the organization's interests in financial, political and geostrategic terms.

2.3.4 The foundations of humanitarian expansion

There are several explanations for the phenomenon of humanitarian proliferation across the globe. These reasons do not supplant the empirical historical evidence as we described above, but coexist as causal mechanisms in the actual world. In a sense, these reasons can also coexist with each other thus enhancing the justification for action. There are five distinct theories arguing from the 'demand-side' for aid, and one from the antipode.

The first case, most profoundly, would be *Government failure*. For various reasons the government itself might be unable or unwilling to provide necessary services or deliver necessary goods to all individuals or groups of individuals. The underlying cause might vary, and consequently we identify four different versions of how a government might fail. First is the case where the state is willing but unable to deliver. For instance Haiti, we might be talking about a failed government structure - seeing how the state has inability to deliver, irrespectively of will. Second is the case where the state is capable but unwilling to deliver. For this we can see the case of Myanmar after typhoon Nargis, were the Burmese government was unwilling to assist the minorities. Third is the case where the state is unable to deliver, irrespective of its willingness. Such might be the case of Somalia and any other failed state. The fourth and last version is the case where the state is capable and could be willing under other circumstances, but it remains inactive. A reason for this could

be that the needs of specific groups might not be able to gather enough political support to get it into the government agenda. Interestingly enough, it has been observed that in certain cultures who discredit government expansion, the third sector would be preferred even when political support could be mustered (Salamon, 2001). Adding to this, in a more specific way concerning humanitarian organizations, we should also talk about the *collective government failure*, meaning the inability of the big inter-governmental organizations, such as the UN System with its subsidiary organs, specialized agencies and their affiliated organizations, to provide sufficient responses to the humanitarian crises of the last century. As we will argue later on, the UN System undertook a coordinating role, rather than a comprehensive solution by itself.

The instance of government failure happens more frequently in the developing world and accounts for explaining most of the 'humanitarian expansion', but it is not enough to support all cases. In addition to it, there is the theory of *market failure*. This practically refers to the occasion when the market system is unable to address the needs of the people or certain groups. Hansmann (1987) and Weisbrod (1975) before him, have identified why markets tend to fail and leave a gap for the third sector to act. This happens mainly in products or services which either relate to "free rider" problems, or do not yield any profits. We can think for example the provision of the legal aid to asylum seekers or food distributions to the homeless. *Contract failure* is another condition under which the beneficiary might prefer the third sector services instead of the private sector ones. This is mostly the case when there is an 'information asymmetry', like when a consumer needs to make decisions that require technical knowledge (medical care), or is unable to evaluate the service (persons with intellectual disabilities), or is not the primary consumer of the service (nursing homes) (Ahmed, 2012). Moreover, we should consider that any civic sector initiative would bloom with the existence of *supportive conditions* in the environment. Such conditions are the political and cultural heritage of the society as well as its dominant values and ideologies (Frumkin, 2002). A last correlation is described between the *heterogeneity* of the society and NPO growth. That is, the more heterogeneous a society is, in terms of culture, religion and ethnicity, the more benefactor it becomes as a substrate for the growth of NGOs (Ahmed, 2012).

Even if we were to take all five of the previous reasons to explain the growth of humanitarian society, still we wouldn't be able to explain the cases were the NGOs 'compete' with either the public or the private sector. For a proper explanation we should look through a new dimension; a dimension that places not demand, but supply in the center of the frame (Bryce, 2006). Theorists supporting this argument see the NGOs as dynamic systems, full of 'action potential'. Aid workers, organizations and donors, have all amassed great amounts of energy that needs to be channeled according to their worldviews (Frumkin, 2002, p. 180). Eventually, the needs of the beneficiaries become the final piece of the puzzle. This is indeed the *supply-side theory* of humanitarian expansion. A perfect example for this concept, in the Greek context, is the provision of first aid services by the Red Cross in athletic and musical events. The Red Cross would offer this services for free, even when the respective organizing companies could have paid a private first aid service provider.

2.3.5 Governmental coordination and control systems

Apart from the single-entity systems, humanitarian action is often performed by associations of actors. These conglomerates are often found in the form of intergovernmental organizations. Consequently, the United Nations (OCHA), the European Union (DG ECHO), ASEAN (AHA Centre), the African Union (NEPAD), virtually every global or peripheral intergovernmental association has a part that is dedicated to this purpose: to support, coordinate or even regulate and control humanitarian assistance. The complexity of these organizations is beyond imagination and perhaps ascribe to the 'transcendental systems' of Kenneth Boulding's *level nine complexity* (Boulding, 1956). These organizations pursue a functioning equilibrium by handling the goals of their member-states, which on their own turn pursue the goals of their ever alternating governments, which pursue the goals of their constituents. It is not surprising that this functioning equilibrium is always fragile, but when it is reached it can produce great implications for the rest of the humanitarian actors. The dynamics and power-playing that define this kind of organizational behavior are very interesting and for most part fall under the study of political science and international relations (Rittberger, 2001). It will be neither creative nor productive to present these organizations here, in a thorough way. For

our research it is only important to identify the major players if this category and how they relate to the humanitarian NGOs – relations that will eventually affect their internal decision-making processes.

The UN System

The supernational system of the United Nations is not surprisingly heading this list of how intergovernmental organization coordinate and control humanitarian action. There are various positive and negative aspects in this respect. Fortunately, the UN has indeed a global capacity that resembles procumbent plants: its roots might not run deep, but they run long; the UN has little connections with the communities, but strong relations with the local governments and institutions. Moreover, the UN has regular and generous funding in order to finance its humanitarian activities, from United Nations Regular Budget and from Member States' voluntary contributions. On the negative side, it is important to understand that since the UN is a political organization, coordination under the political mandate of the UN or its bodies compromises the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. A fine example of such a situation can be seen in Somalia where "combining humanitarian with political and military support functions risks undermining effective delivery of aid" (NGO Voice, 2013). Even if we could surpass the political nature of the UN, it is reasonably argued that centralized coordination has some serious drawbacks. Eventually, when the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (or in previous years the Consolidated Appeals Process –CAP, discontinued in 2013) controls the funding, in a way also controls the humanitarian agenda. This works at the cost of NGO independence and eventually limits the flexibility of the whole humanitarian system to overcome potential political or cognitive biases.

The Security Council has several ways in which it interacts with the humanitarian processes. Even if action on the grounds of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter was excluded as 'humanitarian action' in this study (see limitations of study), still peace enforcement operations sponsored by the Security Council, might affect the NGO working environment. A report by the ICRC points out that "Although peace-keeping operations are in principle conducted with the consent of all the parties concerned, they nevertheless have diverse mandates and are set up by a body which has an essentially political function",

and that these operations add to the confusion and to the insecurity of humanitarian work (ICRC, 2014, 1998). On the positive side, the Security Council can always call on belligerents to uphold their legal obligations, safeguard truces, negotiate peace agreements and punish perpetrators of IHL, in order to produce a safer environment for humanitarian action by the NGOs (United Nations, 2014). Since the mid 1990's, the Security Council started to recognize the importance of INGOs in the field of humanitarian relief and development, and granted them the role in consultation and information exchange they have been claiming for long (Paul, 1996). In recent developments, in order to facilitate humanitarians, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution on July 2014 that essentially allows humanitarian organizations to bypass the Syrian regime, which denied access to NGOs, and deliver aid to the country (Banco, 2014).

OCHA, which stands for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is the UN humanitarian flagship. The organization has a fivefold mandate which includes the coordination of humanitarian response in emergencies, the development of policies based on international law, advocating on the behalf of the people in need, analyzing and sharing information on crises, and financing humanitarian actors and monitoring donations. *Coordination* is the first and central objective of the organization. The specific aim of bringing together humanitarian actors is to reduce the amount of duplicate efforts, to ensure predictability, to enhance accountability and to promote partnership. The *cluster approach* was introduced during the humanitarian reform in 2005 and provides a practical grouping of humanitarian actors into sectors of action: health, shelter, logistics, communication, etc. The cluster approach proved sailworthy during most disasters since, even when it reached its coordinative limits in the complex crisis in Haiti (Stumpenhorst et al., 2011). OCHA also provides *information management* services during emergencies through specialized personnel. Other organizations can get access to valuable information such as the Who What Where (3W) database, contact lists, meeting schedules, maps, and needs assessment information. Last aspect of coordination is harmonizing the reports from the field, identifying what needs to be highlighted and "enable humanitarian leaders to make informed decisions and speak out effectively and coherently" (OCHA, 2015). *Financing* the activities of the NGOs is the last and one of the most important. The amount of resources that go through OCHA's distribution mechanisms is enormous: only in 2013, 5.4

US$ billion were obtained to cover only 58% of the appeals to support humanitarian programmes (OCHA, 2014). OCHA finances NGOs for their projects through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in an indirect way, and the Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs) and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) directly. OCHA manages the Humanitarian Programme Cycle which acts as a base for the coordination of funding, by using HNOs (humanitarian needs overviews).

IASC, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, is another important global actor in the humanitarian network. It stands between two worlds - the UN and the non-UN humanitarian organizations, since it was founded in 1992 by a collaboration of both, on the basis of the General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance. The IASC acts as a forum of humanitarian actors: a platform to promote dialogue, address common issues and attend to challenges in the provision of aid. Members of the IASC are stratified in full members (mostly UN agencies) and standing invitees (like the ICRC, IFRC, and various NGO consortia), with no particular practical distinction between the two, but with a policy of limited members in order to ensure functionality and focus (IASC, 2013). The IASC interferes with NGO activities in a less active way, since its objectives are to develop policies and allocate responsibilities, to advocate for the core humanitarian principles and to promote an ethical framework for relief activities, to promote respect for all relevant international law applications (mainly the international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law), as well as to identify gaps in the provision of aid. One last interesting function of the IASC is its role as a medium for the resolution of disputes or disagreements between various agencies on system-wide humanitarian issues. This function takes place in a rather informal way, with the IASC assisting the conflicting parties through the facilitation of discussion and negotiation.

Peripheral systems

ECHO is the European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department, which is the European Union's equivalent to OCHA for the coordination and control of humanitarian response coming from within the EU states. The EU's mandate in humanitarian affairs stems from the Article 214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, as it was agreed in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007. Humanitarian aid in

particular was regulated via the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (ECHO, 2014a), as well as the Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996, were the EU decided that "humanitarian aid shall comprise assistance, relief and protection operations on a non-discriminatory basis to help people in third countries". Special consideration was given in order for the EU/ECHO mechanism not to mesh with EU foreign policy goals and undermine the principle of humanitarian neutrality (Orbie, 2009). Ever since its creation, OCHA has been active in coordinating humanitarian affairs within the EU and with its partner organizations. OCHA does not fulfill its mission by implementing the programmes of humanitarian assistance directly, but as an aid donor it funds other organizations to do so. These organizations are EU's humanitarian partners and include the Red Cross, UN agencies and various NGOs that have signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the commission. To grasp a sense of proportions, the EU and its Member States are providing over half of the global funding for international organizations and NGOs in order to address the needs of man-made or natural disaster victims (ECHO, 2014b, p. 3). The level of NGO-EU collaboration is evident by the fact that nearly half of the funding agreements are carried out with NGO partners (ECHO, 2014b, p. 17). Within ECHO, where humanitarian aid and civil protection are treated in parallel, there is also a supporting mechanism by the name of Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC). The ERCC has the mandate of coordinating disaster response in order for EU institutions to maximized their response efficiency and minimize duplication of relief efforts.

AHA Center, is the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management. The AHA Center is based in Jakarta and was established in 2011 as a consequence of the major disasters that happened in Southeast Asia in the first years of the millennia, namely the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, and Typhoon 'Nargis' in Myanmar in 2008. The regulative basis can be traced back to the Bangkok Declaration in 1967, while the operationalization was based on the Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) that was signed in 2005 by the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN members. The AHA Center is imposed with the responsibilities to collect, consolidate and analyze data concerning risk analysis and disaster implications, which is a valuable resource for NGOs operating within its jurisdiction. Furthermore, it reviews policies and standard operating procedures in order to

facilitate joint emergency response. The AHA Center also acts as a platform for the exchange of technical and scientific assistance, enhancing the collaboration between humanitarian actors, as well as coordinating its Member-states on the mobilization of resources (equipment, facilities, materials, human and financial) in order to respond to disasters (Collins, 2013). The latest typhoons 'Bopha' in 2012, 'Haiyan' in 2013 and 'Hagupit' in 2014, provided considerable challenge as test cases for the newly established AHA Center, were there was considerable confusion between the role and responsibilities of the AHA Center and other international coordination systems (Brassard et al., 2014, p. 29).

2.3.6 Building Coalitions and Alliances

Organizations are not mere subjects to their environmental dynamics. Likewise, humanitarian organizations do not simply adjust to the needs of the environment as it is formed by the humanitarian needs or the policies of the institutional donors. On the contrary, beyond their internal strength they compete and cooperate with similar organizations. They develop *alliances* with similar NGOs and merge into broader systems. This merging does not come at the cost of losing their operational independence, neither by expanding and raising the cost in infrastructure and personnel. These strategic alliances "involve agreements between two or more organizations to pursue joint objectives through a coordination of activities or sharing of knowledge or resources. The partners remain legally independent but share benefits and control over-specified tasks" (Scott, 2003, p. 207).

There are various approaches and theories regarding the creation of inter-organizational networks. In this study we draw heavily on the works of Emerson (1962), Blau and Scott (1962) as well as Pfeffer and Salancik (2003). The base of understanding is Emerson's idea that the more dependent one entity is on another, the more the latter has power on the former. If an organization needs a certain resource from another organization, then it is

dependent on it, on some level. Furthermore, when the significance of goals that are mediated by the other entity is greater, this dependence is greater as well. Conversely, the capacity of the former to secure its goals outside the relationship with the latter weakens the dependence between the two. Understandably, this is an oversimplified example of an essentially bilateral system, never to be found in reality. The notion of power is, consequently, not an abstract value attributed to a certain organization, but is specified as relative - one entity upon another, based on their unique resource dependence (Thompson, 1967). What is even more important is that in complex systems there are no direct zero-sum power relations. This effectively means that two organizations might gain power by increasing their interdependence, rather than losing.

Depending on the level of differentiation and specialization between the organizations of a given sector, their interdependence might vary in nature. Borrowing from the natural systems perspective, we might characterize their relationship as (a) *mutualistic symbiotic*, when the organizations benefit from each other, (b) *commensalistic symbiotic*, when one organization benefits from the relation while the other is left unharmed and (c) *competitive symbiotic*, when both organizations are harmed each by the other, (d) *parasitic symbiotic,* when the dependence of one upon the other brings harm to the second. In reality, and due to the dynamic character of organizations, we might encounter cases where this typology shifts from one paradigm to another, on a case by case basis. For instance, two humanitarian organizations might be competing for funding from a limited resource pool (competitive symbiosis), while at the same time participating in an alliance advocating for a common goal (mutualistic symbiosis). Even further, the two humanitarian organizations might have an agreement, under which the first can make use of the security training manuals of the other (commensalistic symbiosis). The effects of organizational competitive symbiosis is specialization and differentiation (Blau and Scott, 1962, p. 217).

In order for organizations to facilitate this symbiosis, they need to orchestrate their activities. Eventually, trying to address issues of interdependence, organizations eventually cede control over each other's activities in order to enhance coordination (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003, p. 43). There are various ways through which organizations accept to respond to this interdependence, and these are called '*bridging tactics*'. Scott (2003, pp.

204–211) lists some of the most common bridging tactics which are bargaining, contracting, co-optation, hierarchical contracts, joint ventures, strategic alliances, mergers, associations, and government connections. Even if the detailed analysis of all bridging tactics is irrelevant to the scope of our study, we see that co-optation, joint ventures, mergers, strategic alliances and associations are common enough to deserve some further analysis.

Co-opting is when organizations decide to include representatives of other organizations in their midst, in the form of joint board memberships, liaison roles, inter-organizational brokers. This tactic is fairly popular in the public and non-profit sector since the 1960s, mainly because amongst other benefits, it promotes coordination and fruitful collaboration between various actors. Humanitarian NGOs often co-opt as a method of minimizing environmental uncertainty or to increase legitimacy (Benini, 1997, p. 340). Other scholars, such as Baur and Schmitz (2011), argue that co-optation is a really useful tool for NGOs in order to assist their relationship with the private sector as part of fulfilling its corporate social responsibilities.

Joint ventures are found in some cases where organizations would create a new entity in order to pursue a common goal, by mutually pooling some of their resources. These ventures might be initiated by organizations that see each other as competitors or as exchange partners (Harrigan, 1985). In certain cases, especially in the for-profit sector, this tactic can be restricted by monopoly and anti-trust legislation. In the humanitarian world, notable examples of combinations that create "high level of engagement, intensive interactions, broad scope of activities, and extensive resources" are the integrative partnerships of between WFP and TNT (since 2002), as well as between DHL and UN OCHA (since 2005) (Cozzolino, 2012).

Mergers are not rare in the world of humanitarian organizations. Most often, these mergers are horizontal, meaning that two or more organizations that are quite similar in character decide to become one, usually in order to take advantage of the economies of scale that follow, or to become more powerful and subsequently more appealing in the eyes of donors. According to some theorists, merging is also a way in which certain organizations that operate in volatile and ambiguous environments "attempt to find ways to re-envision

themselves, to revise their view of who they are and what they can do" (Santos and Eisenhardt, 2001). There are some notable examples of mergers in the humanitarian sector. In 2007 Net Aid merged with Mercy Corps, in 2008 Self Help Development merged with Harvest Help, in 2009 The Task Force for Child Survival merged with the International Trachoma Initiative, in 2010 the Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke merged with Action Aid, in 2012 Plan International merged with CEDPA, in 2012 as well The Fundación Luis Vives merged with Acción contra el Hambre, and lastly in 2013 Save the Children announced a merger with Merlin (Villarino, 2013).

Strategic alliances and associations of organizations are an ever increasingly popular tactic because of the fact that their members are gaining numerous benefits without really having to risk or invest much. On the contrary, most of the alliances or coalitions of NGOs operate without the costs of any facilities or personnel or with a minimal secretariat. Within the coalition, the members continue to be legally independent, yet part of their operational independence is ceded in order to give control over specific tasks to the allied parties. Most often, alliances in the humanitarian sector have to do with (a) coordination of activities, (b) promotion of a common 'language', (c) harmonization of policies, (d) gaining leverage in negotiations, (e) strengthen advocacy, (f) promoting transparency and accountability and (g) networking for funding. Out of the four bridging tactics that we encounter in the humanitarian world, this last one deserves some space in this research, so that we can examine some examples of this tactic in practice.

Examples of humanitarian NGO alliances

Seeing that the dynamics of the humanitarian world today rely heavily on actor interactions, it would be a gross underestimation to downplay the role of certain NGO alliances. Indeed, these new entities that emerge from these partnerships seem to have detrimental effects on the system as they amass the dynamism of their members, while producing emerging potential in all levels. In this subsection, we see fit to present some major cases of NGO cooperation, as humanitarian decision making is eventually affected by their existence or presence, or even concurs within them.

The *Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response* (SCHR) is one of the most prominent examples of a humanitarian alliance at work. It was founded in 1972 and was comprised of the chief executives of all the member organizations. Initially it was intended that it would act as an information bridge between the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) and the operational NGOs during disasters. SCHR aims at effective information sharing and needs identification, producing common positions on challenge issues when possible, engaging in joint advocacy, conducting scientific research on humanitarian activities and closing the gap between policy and practice. Members of the SCHR are Care International, Caritas Internationalis, the ICRC, the IFRC, Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Oxfam International, Save the Children, Act, and World Vision International.

Another big NGO alliance is the US based *Interaction*. It serves not just as an information hub, but also for production of common policies between its members. It strengthens the advocacy and exposure capacities of its members, it enhances their technical and operational capacities, and it generates increased credibility with international donors. Interaction has an impressive number of member organizations. What is even more important is that by participating in this alliance, the NGOs have greater access to negotiations with the US government itself. What is even more, the said network is vast, covering with their presence nearly every developing country. Out of its 180 members, some stand out: Catholic Relief Services, Action against Hunger, Doctors of the World (MSF USA), the International Rescue Committee, the Medical Corps, Islamic Relief USA, and Mercy Corps. Within the network the NGO can increase its visibility, by publishing its work and reports, while at the same time, the alliance itself is able to provide certification of processes or of accountability. Finally, Interaction members have access to training courses regarding issues like operational security, civil-military relations (CIMIC), evaluation and monitoring, risk reduction and many more.

Claiming to be the 'only global alliance of humanitarian NGOs', *ICVA* is indeed a platform of collaboration, consultation and coordination between its members and other humanitarian actors. ICVA stands for the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, and its primary objective is to enhance the protection and assistance of crises-affected

populations. Its activities focus on areas such as forced displacement, humanitarian coordination and resourcing. Membership in the ICVA offers several advantages to any humanitarian NGO, such as opportunities for increased networking, information exchange, strengthening leverage in negotiations, and connection with donors and stakeholders. Notable members of the ICVA are Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Concern Worldwide (CONCERN), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Greek Council of Refugees (GCR), the - International Secretariat of Médecins du Monde (MDM), Save the Children, and World Vision.

ALNAP, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action is another inter-organizational partnership, which focuses particularly on the issue of performance enhancement through evaluation, learning and action accountability. Even if the network was founded in 1997, its roots date back to the Rwandan Genocide and the evaluation of collective humanitarian action. Interestingly enough, its members cut across all sectors of the humanitarian chessboard: typical NGOs, like CARE, Oxfam, Action against Hunger, and World Vision; Red Cross Movement elements, such as the ICRC, IFRC and several Red Cross Societies; UN system bodies, like UNICEF, UNHCR and OCHA; governmental agencies, such as USAID and Irish Aid; and even firms such as RedR. Practically, ALNAP helps its members with toolkits for evaluating their work or even through the publication of 'lessons learnt' documents from past humanitarian responses. Through joining forces under such an umbrella, NGOs have the opportunity to participate in self-reflexivity activities regarding their accountability, structure and leadership, as well as access important knowledge banks concerning innovative response themes.

HAP, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership is another case of NGO alliance, this time dedicated to the promotion of an effective accountability framework for all humanitarian actors. The fundamental idea is the adaptation of the HAP Standard (latest version by the time of writing is 2010) by every NGO within the network. The HAP Standard, through a series of benchmarks provides the tools for the design, implementation, improvement and recognition of accountable programmes. By joining this alliance, NGOs become more resilient against operational mistakes, abuse or even corruption – always with

the broader scope of increased efficiency, through transparent processes. ActionAid, ACT, Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, the Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam UK and Save the Children UK are among some of its 96 member organizations. Beyond the HAP Standard, the HAP also provide training, certification and research services to its members.

The Sphere Project, is the last example of how humanitarian NGOs collaborate by forming a new entity in order to promote their goals. The Sphere, since its establishment in 1997, is focusing on increasing the quality of humanitarian organizational output. Its main tool, the 'Sphere Handbook', provides a comprehensive set of principles and standards to guide disaster response and to provide more for the people in need. Members of the Sphere's board include ACT, CARE, Caritas, the IFRC, International Medical Corps, the Salvation Army, Oxfam and RedR. Interestingly, the MSF were part of this network when it started but later decided to withdraw due to irreconcilable differences on the basis of over-standardization (Tong, 2004).

It must be evident by now that while humanitarian NGOs struggle to remain independent and autonomous, at the very same time, they partner up and ally with other organizations in order to better achieve their objectives. In this brief list of humanitarian NGO alliances stated above, it is easy to notice that most organizations are members of more than one alliance at the same time. This is due to the distinct vision behind each collaboration, but also due to the fact that the added value of each partnership is cumulative.

2.3.7 Identity Crisis

In the latest decades, the third sector has been going through an identity crisis (Ahmed, 2012, p. 16). By and large, humanitarian organizations are not an exception to rule, as this crisis is pertinent to them as well. There are three pivotal questions around which this crisis evolves. The questions themselves are interconnected and extending to levels of what we would humorously describe as 'organizational existentialism'.

Where is the line between commercialization and voluntarism of the sector? The financial difficulties, the need for increased efficiency, the pressures by donors and legislations, and the operational specifications imposed by partnerships, all these factors coerce the NGOs

to increasingly adopt business management practices. The humanitarian NGOs are using for-profit template solutions for human resource management, marketing strategies, and highly trained professional aid workers. Nowadays, in Greece in particular, with the significant impact of the economic crisis, most NGOs are depending on EU programmes and heavily regulated funding to continue and expand their activities. This adaptation to market and political pressure comes in conflict with the non-profit and voluntary character of the institution itself (Salamon, 2012, p. 46). Others believe that over-professionalization and commercialization of the sector, along with weak roots and political restrictions, undermine NGO legitimacy (Banks et al., 2015).

Where is the line between public and non-profit sector? This question sits at the heart of a huge political debate, as non-profits, are seen over time, to "have become a strong and steady partner of the government as a preferred vehicle for service provisions" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 17). In modern-day Greece, again, issues like access to health services and essential medicine for uninsured, unemployed and patients in need, are provided by NGOs such as the Metropolitan Community Clinic at Helliniko (a suburb of Athens), or PRAKSIS and Médecins du Monde 'polyclinics' in Athens and Thessaloniki. The unwillingness or inability of the government to provide the critical human services that the humanitarian NGOs deliver, in the long run, provides for an unending gap. If humanitarian NGOs *guarantee* to fill this gap, then they are supporting a rationale that identifies them as "mere engines of service production" while "non-profit organizations must strive to be more that that" (Frumkin, 2002, p. 168). International NGOs are also seen as the media of social transformation that should eventually contradict with state practices, advocate against it, and incite independent action by local civil society groups. We argue, together with other authors as Tandon (1989), that the role of humanitarian NGOs is neither to become sub-contractors of the State, but genuine partners. Together, the NGOs and governments should work on the problems of communities with "mutual respect, acceptance of autonomy, independence, and pluralism of NGO opinions and positions" (Tandon, 1989). Even when the circumstances dictate an adversarial relationship, the humanitarian NGOs must strive to engage in consultation, constructive dialogue, and productive processes. In this respect, O'Malley and Dijkzeul (2002) have mapped the humanitarian NGO world according to the relations between the organization and the state. From critical perspective, the map is

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thought-provoking, but one must not forget that organizational behavior is not curved in stone and in each case there are notable exceptions.
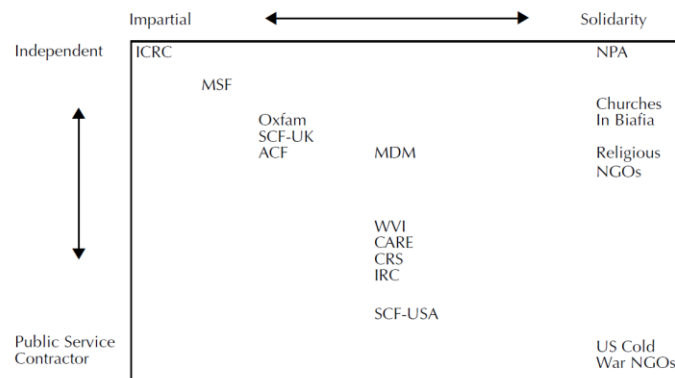
Fig.6 - Mental Map of INGOs (Source: O'Malley and Dijkzeul, 2002)

Where is the line between being 'means to an end' and an 'end in itself'? By this question one seems to wonder about who is actually benefiting more from the existence and actions of the humanitarian NGOs. Humanitarian organizations at our day and age form a huge society that except for giving aid to people in need, also give work to thousands of others and a 'raison d'être' for thousands of organizations. From a greater systems perspective, the same system that causes poverty, is the same system that produces the means to combat it. Pierre Rabhi brightly described this condition as one that "gives us the impression of saving lives and places us in the position of a pyromaniac firefighter" (KAIZEN, 2013)[11]. It may be argued that certain NGOs see their own growth as an end in itself that is more important than their impact in the real world. This eventually dictates a passive or fretting stance against humanitarian donors, governments, and global actors; yielding to pressure, avoidance and appeasement become the underlining strategies. This balance between providing for the beneficiaries and providing justification for one's own existence could be detrimental. It is important for humanitarian NGOs to try and answer this question with honesty: not only it is critical for their own legitimacy, but also determines their relevance in the 21st century.

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[11] The extended original French version was as such: «*Si l'on avait organisé la vie avec humanisme, on n'aurait pas besoin de l'humanitaire, qui évoque une idée de secourisme et nous place dans la position du pompier pyromane. D'un côté le système engendre de la misère, de l'autre il cherche à en éteindre le feu*».

3. Decision making in humanitarian organizations

Aristotle contented that "thought alone moves nothing" and a simple professor at the University of Oregon's College of Business went the extra step by arguing that "'decision' implies the end of deliberation and the beginning of action" (Buchanan and O'Connell, 2006; Schutz and Sandy, 2011). But how to know when to end the deliberation? When have we given enough thought for our decisions to be good? The study of decision making stretches back in history, mainly because man identified its importance early on. The cost of risk-taking decisions, or even the cost of opportunity costs from paths not taken could be considerable. Alas, humanity for a long time was bounded by beliefs that men had no control over their lives, and consequently decision making was more a thing for priests and oracles, and less for mathematicians. It was as late as the 18th century when Daniel Bernulli, the famous Swiss mathematician and physicist was the first to systematically relate human preferences with possible outcomes and help the individual "estimate his prospects from any risky undertaking in light of specific financial circumstances" (Bernoulli, 1954). A very interesting review on the history of decision-making was done by Buchanan and O'Connell (2006), which indicates the long endeavor of men to understand the workings of the human brain and what came to be organizational behavior.

3.1 Decision making models

In this section of our study, both the individual and the organization become the agents of decision making, and the two terms might be used interchangeably. Human beings, as well as human organizations, are cognitive agents; their cognition is constantly bombarded by their dynamic environment with needs, choices and consequences for their actions. From a philosophical standpoint, what makes us any different from any other living organism (or organizational system) is the capability for self-reflexivity. It is this introspection that enables a deeper choice-generating capacity, for choices connected to needs at the top of the Maslow's pyramid (belonging, esteem, and self-actualization) (Maslow, 1943). One of the implications of being a 'cognitive agent' is taking part in a never ending cycle of evaluating our environment and thinking of ways to make it somehow change, in order to

fit our liking. The actions produced by this process alters the environment, which then evokes changes that make the cycle repeat anew. Pollock (2006) describes this cycle as the 'doxastic-conative' loop, while "cognitive agents implement the doxastic-conative loop by thinking about the world and acting upon it in response to their deliberations". We take it from there to go a step further, integrating this loop with the various organizational system perspectives out there, and producing a revised version of it.
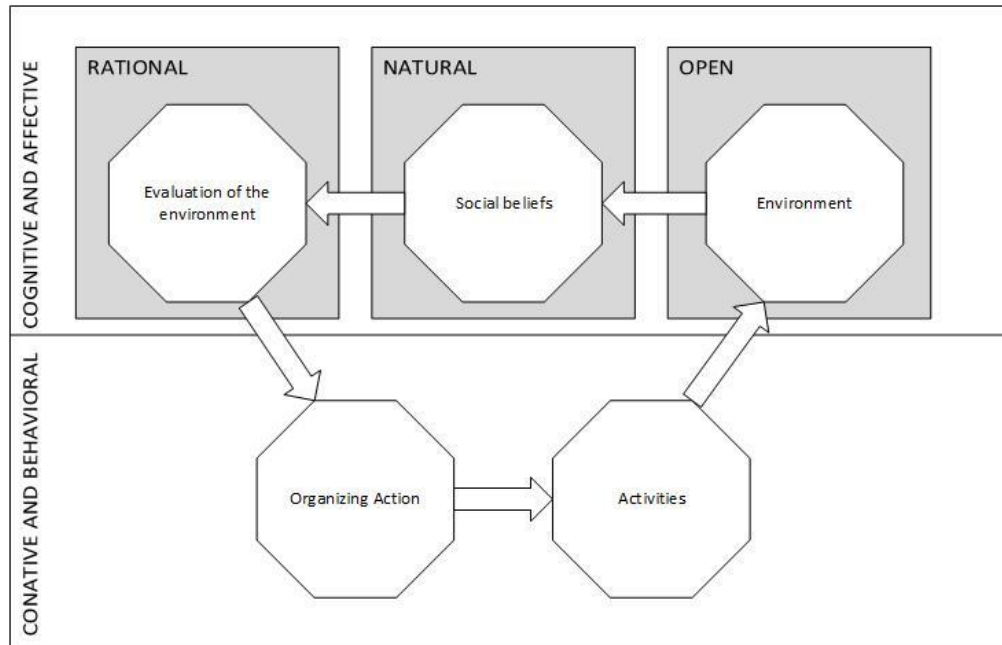
Fig.7 - The revised 'doxastic-conative' loop

So, how come from a single stranded loop emerge more than one decision making model? We believe that the answer to this question is relevant to the point of cognitive and affective *accentuation* that the actor places on himself and the environment. The conative and behavioral aspects are seen mostly as directly depending on the previous logical steps, without any intention of downplaying their role in reforming the environment. Each agent, irrespective of where he places the emphasis, he would still go through the same loop. The single stranded loop takes its idiosyncratic characteristics from single point of emphasis itself, though it shares with the other two. From our understanding the loop takes the form of a 'three-sided Möbius strip', or, to be less transcendental, a three sided twisted polygon.

In order to facilitate this connection between organizational system perspectives, the doxastic-conative loop, and the decision-making models, we recall here the basic characteristics of each perspective. It has been extensively argued in the previous chapter that a rational approach to organizational collectivities sees them as goal seeking constructions. On the other hand, natural approach systems see organizations as being more than just a collective of goal-seeking individuals: every person has his "individually shaped ideas, expectations, and agendas, and they bring with them distinctive values, interests, and abilities" (Scott, 2003, p. 59) . Except for rational and natural systems, we also saw the open systems perspective, where emphasis is given on the several levels of interdependence of various actors that perform within the system (Wiener, 1965, 1964, p. 334)

Thus, the rational model stresses evaluation of the implications and consequential reasoning. These characteristics are shared with the rational system perspective, as well as the 'logic of consequence' decision making model. Likewise, the natural model stresses the importance of beliefs, values, and identities. These characteristics are to be found in 'rule following' decision making models, as 'logic of appropriateness'. Lastly, the open model stresses the interaction of complex tangle of actors, problems and opportunities. This last one has characteristics that coincide with ambiguous and complex environments, where decision making models like 'logic of capacity' takes place. Each 'stop' in the loop is in a relative connection with each organizational perspective, and each perspective is in concordance with a relevant decision making model.

In the following three chapters we will examine these distinct ways of making decisions within the organizations. Our main guides in this theoretical venture are the influential work of James March (1994) on organizational decision-making, and the skillful synthesis of Liesbet Heyse (2006) with its methodological and thematic relevance.

3.1.1 Rational models: Is this decision better than others?

From rational choice theory to bounded rationality

Being and behaving in a rational way is not only productive and useful, but is also in consistency with what we anticipate from our human nature, as a deep and long-sought

expectation. From the dawn of human history, and from the ancient Greek philosophers the human spirit has used 'rationality' as its major weapon against medieval-type obscurantism. Our skill in handling this weapon was grown exponentially ever since. The craze of the last century was to try and explain every possible thing using mathematical equations, predictions and graphs. At the base of the rationale we always come face to face with the same question: 'is this decision better than others?' The idea of a rational choice, where the actor balances out costs against benefits to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage (Friedman, 1953), fits well with the rational systems perspective as was described in a previous chapter. From a simplistic perspective, it is describing a mechanistic decision making process in a mechanistic environment. Unfortunately, things seem to be more complex than that.

The interpretation of decision making as a rational procedure is not uncommon. On the contrary, the belief that most of our decisions are made in a rational way is quite popular, both on an organizational or an individual level. Initially – and ironically, this happens mostly because the alleged deterministic results of a rational choice are exposed to the interpretation of 'what is rational' in the first place. From its first appearance in the 14th century, the word has come to mean many different things. With no particular order in mind, we suggest that 'rationality' might be equivalent to being 'sane', 'materialistic', 'calculative', or even 'intelligent' according to the given context. Yet another reason for misinterpreting what is rational and what is not, is connecting the process with the end result. Do rational choices produce bad outcomes? Do irrational choices produce good outcomes? The answer to both questions is definite. It is possible for decisions made rationally to have bad results. On the other hand, decisions made irrationally could as well have good results. In this broad definition, the word has been used by various sources in a much inconsistent way, not at all helpful for the needs of our research. Indeed, we need to become clearer as to when we refer to 'rationality' as an attribute in decision making, and when we use the word figuratively.

This is what some theorists call Type I behavior, and some consider it to be a valid description of behavior for all social sciences (Becker, 1996; Coleman, 1986). Maximum satisfaction is the goal for any individual or collective decision making, and the psychology

behind it is qualified as 'utilitarian'. Because of the great importance that actors place in the implications of their decisions, the term 'consequential' can be used side by side with the term 'utilitarian'.

Eventually at this stage, we should clearly identify the components of rational procedures. March (1991), counts four different cognitive components that must be in place for a choice to be rational. The first one is knowledge of alternative *choices*, meaning that the actor must be aware of the complete list of possible actions, as different solutions to the given problem. For a task or goal that could be achieved in various ways, we need to be aware of our full selection of options. The second one is knowledge of what will the *consequences* be for each of our choices. Since all decisions do not follow the same path to the objective (or some of the choices we do might not even reach the objective itself), we need to be aware of that path and its implications. The third component of rational decision making is the ability of the actor to arrange the possible outcomes of his alternative choices in order of *preference*. Not all decisions produce the same amount of personal or organizational advantage, thus we should be able to know which one is more desirable. Fourth and last criteria of rational decision making is the application of a certain, *common rule*; a framework under which all preferences and outcomes are evaluated. It is often that one option is preferable from an economic perspective, another option from an ethical perspective while a third option might be preferable from a sustainability perspective: it is most important to adopt a single framework for assessing the outcomes, even if that means combining all levels of analysis, and borrowing from diverse analytical methodologies.

Nowadays there is no one that would argue that these four criteria could be satisfied in real life scenarios. The effort to achieve the requirements of pure rational decision making is almost irrational. For this reason, most researchers endorse the notion of limited or bounded rationality, which is a form of rational decision making that takes under consideration the numerous constraints of the human nature.

There are several different domains in which the decision maker seems to have limited capacity, thus restricting his 'rationality'. Indeed, most of these restrictions could be traced back to the biological sphere and the data-holding and computational capabilities of the human brain-processor (Rachlinski, 2000). Although this finite brainpower is indeed

restrictive, there are more restrictions to it, especially in the case of collective or interactive decision making, as is the case in organizations. *Time* is the first constraint, were most of our decisions have to be taken within a reasonable timeframe. Time is a truly important factor, since if time was infinite and thus taken out of the equation, then most of the other restrictive factors would vanish as well. Alas, most of our choices in life boil down to how we invest our time in the world. *Attention* deficits are our second biggest enemy. Due to the fact that decision makers are rarely isolated from external stimuli irrelevant to the choice itself, it is often argued that absolute concentration in all relevant matters of a single decision is improbable. The next obstacle comes from the limited *memory* that the person or organization has, in order to be able to calculate and reach a decision. It is almost impossible to expect that an organization has kept full record of all data relevant to its various decisions (Goodenough and Zeki, 2006). Lessons learnt from our past experiences are not always properly processed and helpful in future decisions either. Yet another issue is that of *comprehension*, meaning our often limited capacity to infer causal relations and effectively use pertinent information. Information concerning any choice in real life comes in a complex package, unordered and mixed with considerable information noise, and our ability to organize it, is again, limited. What is especially true in organizations, is that there could be problems of *communication* that hinder proper information flow and data analysis. These communication limitations might be due to cultural diversity issues, or even differences in mentality between employees.

Decision makers adapt to these challenges using various strategies. From a psychological standpoint, there is a number of core processes that we identify: editing, decomposition, heuristics, framing and satisficing. *Editing* is when we decide to simplify the problem at hand, via discarding information or eliminating alternatives. *Decomposition* is when we divide the problem into its core components and deal with each of them separately. This strategy presumes that the elements of each problem are loosely connected and can be dealt independently. *Heuristics* is when we identify patterns in situations and presume concurrence of outcomes. Practically, this is using our memory of situations "as a proxy for the projection of future probability" (March, 1994). *Framing* is the predetermined way in which we look at our problem. By framing in a narrower manner, we exclude alternatives and tradeoffs, thus simplifying our problem. *Satisficing* is yet another strategy, which is

employed subconsciously. That comes in contrast with the notion of 'maximizing behavior' that we would expect from our organization. On the contrary, the organization (or any individual) is most likely unable to know what the maximum value of the outcome of its choices might be. Thus, it is constrained to code the alternatives between being 'good enough' and 'not good enough', hence being above or below an aspiration level. These strategies are not to be conceived as conscious choices of the decision-maker. In fact, at their most part, our individual or collective 'brains' employ them subconsciously as a form of 'defense mechanism' against an unproductive overloading.

It must be evident by now that the logic of consequence describes a decision making model that occurs within an organization that tries to maximize its efficiency, in accordance to the functionalistic theory and the neo-contingency theory as well. The organization would assess its surrounding, set its preferences and goals and then make decisions. The decision that the organization takes, must be in conformity with the idea of enhancing organizational performance: financial optimization, human resource management that is oriented to get the most out of each member, optimizing engagements in terms of time and resource allocation. Therefore, the organization that follows this particular decision making model, is not that far from the concept of the organization that tries to find the best 'fit' in an ever altering environment – as described by the contingency theory. Organizations are thus assessing environmental changes and pressures, and acting accordingly to conform to the new surroundings, as fast and as cost-effective as possible.

The logic of consequence

The notion of the 'logic of consequence' is coined by James March, and is closely related to the ideas of instrumental rationality (Nozick, 1994). According to this view, the organization is seen as trying to maximize its preferences, weighting benefits versus costs, systematically order preferences and acquire all relevant information to facilitate these decisions. Eventually, organizational decision making will be characterized by instrumentality (as described above), as well as rational sequentiality, and a form of prospective and anticipatory reasoning (March and Olsen, 1989; Perrow, 2014). These attributes offer several implications for decision making: Agents should first define the problem, collect and analyze information on alternative courses of action, take into account

future consequences of action, compare alternatives in terms of maximizing their goals, and choose an optimal route. This model of decision making is best described by Herbert Simon in his theory of administrative organization, first published in 1947 (the edition we use in the current study is Simon, 1976). In his work Simon describes the idea of an organization with these particular characteristics, which we expect to witness in our empirical findings.

So, what are the characteristics that we expect to see in an organization in order for it to be the 'administrative organization' and follow the 'logic of consequence'? First of all, the administration of the organization should be focused on maximizing organizational efficiency, meaning that it would strive to achieve the predetermined goals with the lowest cost possible. Secondly, the administration is expected to make efforts to investigate as many alternatives as possible and then choose the best one of them. The third expectation is concerning the organizational structure, which should be clearly designed in a way to facilitate efficiency and goal-attainment. Each part of the organization should be fairly specialized and have a clear understanding of what is expected from it. Consequently, this means that several sectors of the organization or even individuals are restricted in taking the initiative or acting on their own accord, in order to maximize the orchestration from the top down. Fourth expectation is a high degree of specialization, which refers to the optimal and detailed recruitment and assignment of skillful manpower in relevant jobs. In the same way we would expect to see precise job descriptions and the lack of 'Jack of all trades' types of positions. The fifth expectation is a clear-cut hierarchy and an emphasis on the notion of authority, which "is important to secure high quality decisions in terms of rationality and effectiveness (Simon, 1976, p. 188). It is through this authority that harmonization of choices between members is achieved, even through the use of incentives and sanctions. Another, sixth, expectation is that decisions and behavior will be strongly regulated by the existence of nominal regulative text in the forms of manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Seventh, the organization adopts strategies so that the members internalize its objectives, often done via training. Training and SOPs are typical ways to standardize procedures and avoid discussion and conflict. As a direct result to that, the eighth expectation is that the decision making fora are the place where members

exchange information and talk technical issues, rather than negotiate on what is already known to be true.

Heyse (2006, p. 35) did an excellent work putting this information altogether to produce a coherent framework for analyzing 'logic of consequence' whenever it is to be found. We quote:

> *The formal structure prescribes behavior, norms and rules, and dictates the decision-making process*: Daily decision-making processes correspond closely to the formal procedures for decision-making in the organization, and the decision-making outcomes correspond closely to the formal (i.e. paper) objectives of the organization.
>
> *Compliance is secured through sanctions and incentives*: People are sanctioned if they do not make decisions according to the formal policies and procedures.
>
> *Specialization and hierarchy coordinate the decision-making process with help of procedural and substantive mechanisms*: The decision-making process is facilitated by specialization on the basis of expertise and skills required to decide, i.e. decision-making is partly decentralized to the person who has the expertise to decide. Nevertheless, there is also some element of hierarchical decision-making. Decisions are made with help of standard operating procedures and/or manuals.
>
> *Decision-making fora have a technical character and focus on information exchange*: Since decision-making is information-driven and based on expertise, decision-making fora are meetings of experts exchanging information.
>
> *Decision-making is characterized by a low degree of conflict*: There is a clear understanding of decision-making authority: there is little conflict about who should decide, even in the case of disagreement

Decision-making is an intra-organizational process: Because the organization defines its own goals, decision-making is only related to those goals. There is no interest for outside pressures and demands that are not related to those goals.

The 'rational' humanitarian organization

Decisions on this type of humanitarian organizations are made on the basis of specialization. In Plato's Republic, it is Socrates that reminds us of the definition that "justice is when everyone minds his own business, and refrains from meddling in others' affairs"[12] (Plato, 2000), or simply –as the Latins would say "Suum cuique". This is exactly what happens in the organization were the BoD, the directors, the managers, the field staff, the auxiliary stuff, and the members of the association just stick to their 'job descriptions'. Everyone was placed in a particular position inside the organization based on his or her skills and competences in this area. Therefore his or her opinion (as well as the opinion of others with the same position) is what matters most when it comes to decisions that have to do with his or her sector. Since their guide is also objective and technical criteria, mostly following guidelines, policy papers and SOPs, disagreement and conflict in the collective decision processes must be rare. Reporting and evaluation, as well as end-mission assessments are to be expected, since the organization needs this information to monitor and control its activities and plan its next steps.

Activities tend to run on specific budgets, and within those budgets managers try to maximize cost-effectiveness as much as they are trying to achieve the organizational goals. The budget is drafted around the needs of the activities, which are directly related to the goals and, in turn, with the mission statement.

Activities are initiated upon a calculation of the overall effectiveness of the intervention. Overall humanitarian needs are not only assessed, but also compared with other humanitarian needs elsewhere, in conjunction with the expected value of the intervention.

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[12] From the Greek translation of "...τὸ τὰ αὑτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν δικαιοσύνη ἐστί..." Socrates is replying to Glaucon about justice: "That, then, is what injustice is. Conversely, its opposite - the ability of the commercial, auxiliary and guardian classes to mind their own business, with each of them performing its own function in the city – this will be justice, and will make the city just" (Book 4, 434c)

Both data on the humanitarian needs and the 'value' of intervention is quantified in medical terms: the organization should be considering number of people sick and dying, case fatality rates, vaccination rates, etc. The 'value' of intervention should again be quantifiable, as in 'providing water to x number of people' or 'reducing prevalence of x disease by y%'. The indicators that are being used by the 'rational' humanitarian organization are usually targeted in a very specific issue, measurable and calculable as in showing progress or failure, achievable and realistic, and placed into a predetermined timeframe. Activities are also terminated by thorough reassessment of contemporary needs and also assessment of intervention impact. Assessment of interventions are carried out against the planned objectives.

3.1.2 Normative models: Is this the most appropriate decision?

The nature of the institution

Instead of the *homo economicus* of the previous subchapter, that is the individual that looks for ways to maximize his personal preferences, theorists devised a new species: *homo sociologicus*. So what is different with this new kind of person? Practically, the decisions made under this prism are mostly affected by social, psychological, cultural and biological forces. Society, our norms and regulations, our perceptions of what is right and what is wrong, ethical or unethical, appropriate or not, these are the factors that mostly affect our decision making processes. Most of these, it is argued by anthropologists, that can be traced back to the biological sphere. The psychologist attribute this kind of behavior to a causal relation between previous mental states of the individual, such as his beliefs, intensions and desires – rather than his rational calculations guiding his decisions.

Is there indeed a person out there who does not try, consciously or subconsciously to maximize his personal gain? Which are the forces that impinge on his choice of a less 'rational' decision? Sociologists and anthropologists have long since found the Achilles heel of the *homo economicus*: Indeed, while trying to be as rational as possible, we see that we restrict ourselves in various ways. For example, when we seek for alternatives, we seek only alternatives within the limits of what we understand to be 'acceptable' – for instance

we might bargain for a better price in the local market, but we would rarely think that robbing the shop would be an option, even if we could get away with it. In terms of 'rational' decision making, this would exclude some of our *choices*, for reasons irrelevant to their capacity of fulfilling our goals. Likewise, the *consequences* of our choices are almost never cynically calculated according to their potential profit alone, but most likely we consider collateral effects on the environment, other people, and ourselves. Moreover, even if all alternatives are there, we can expect that the *preference* list would be influenced heavily by our personality traits, ideas, beliefs, taste, etc. It is the same factors that impede the adoption of a universal *common rule*, which ends up being self-restricted.

The reason for this 'unorthodox' behavior is that social systems are capable to 'program' the behavior of their members, by socialization and education. This idea is really old and we can see scholars like Augustine, Michel de Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to comment on the vigorousness of *socialization effects* (Boss et al., 2008, p. 86). Social behavior is able to replicate itself, in the form of what Dawkins (1976) described as *'memes'* – the parallel of biological *genes* (that predispose the tendencies of the biological self) in the social realm. Psychologists explain the same phenomena through the use of biases (Tooby and Cosmides, 1992). All things considered, we identify two concepts that play a vital part in reshaping organizational decision making from being 'rational' to being 'appropriate': *rules* and *identities*.

Every individual describes himself in terms of the various roles he has adopted in his social life: you could be a mother, a doctor, a daughter, a Greek, and an atheist. For each of these roles or identities, there is a cognitive process of accepting a certain, particular behavior. In this way the individual comes to harmony with his social environment. A mother is expected to care for her children, while a doctor is expected to care for his patients. In the social context we use these identities so that we can anticipate certain behaviors from certain people, while at the same time these people use their own identities to formulate their behavior (March, 1994). Likewise, the organization is 'expected' to act in a particular fashion because of its role or identity. A hospital is expected to care for patients, a school is expected to help children learn, and the police department is expected to protect the lives and property of the citizens.

These roles and identities are often followed by a certain regulatory framework, which constricts the behavior even more. A logistician in a humanitarian NGO is executing tasks, following a set of more or less precise rules that he accepts as being part of his own identity. Administrators, field coordinators, delegates and even field doctors and nurses all alike, they limit their decision making spectrum within what the rules of the game dictate for their specific identities, leaving a little space for personal input. In the decision making process that takes place in each position inside the organization, there are rules that regulate aspects such as (a) who has the right to participate in the decision making process, (b) what is the timeframe for decision making, (c) what tools should be used to set preference standards (such as 'crude mortality rate' form emergencies), (d) how to justify our decisions. These rules can be written or passed on from person to person inside the organization, and in that way we encounter formal and informal organizational rules. Eventually, what matters is that members of the organization take them under consideration and acknowledge their normative nature. The identity of the organization would reflect on its legal structure as well, most often starting from the statute.

One last clarification should be that a great mistake is to be made, if someone estimates that rule-following decision making is easily predictable. Quite on the contrary, it can be argued that the multiple identities of the individuals often clash and contrast each other with unexpected results. Rules are unlikely to fit exactly in all situations, leaving enough space for ambiguity. On the other hand, "the existence and persistence of rules, combined with their relative independence of idiosyncratic concerns of individuals, make it possible for societies and organizations to function reasonably reliably" (March, 1991b). It is true that if every social actor was behaved in a totally 'rational' way, then the world as game of Prisoner's Dilemma would end up in a huge disaster for mankind. Everyone would defect constantly, to avoid the cost of being betrayed by the other player. Only when the game is played again and again, in the 'Iterated prisoner's dilemma', then the players could effectively use the 'tit for tat' strategy and end up in a mutually beneficial situation, avoiding mutual destruction (Axelrod, 2006). The iterated prisoner's dilemma is a practical example of an actor refraining from trying to maximize his benefits (acting rationally and always defecting), in order to self-restrict his choices into an 'appropriate' mode that assures benefits for both parties. In this sense, the end result of appropriate decision making

is still reasonable but it is analyzed differently than rational decision making (March, 1994).

We cannot help but highlight the obvious relation between the *homo sociologicus*, the inhabitant of the 'rule-following' organization, and the institutionalized character of members within the Neo-Institution Theory (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). It is practically the same world, were organizations and individuals limit their decisions and actions in various ways, each time with the subjective belief of acting the proper way. Isomorphism eventually occurs, first within the departments of the same organization (the new member will reshape to resemble the old, experienced member), and then organizations will try to reshape and take forms from bigger, older, more experienced and more successful organizations in their field - which we refer to as 'field homogeneity'. There is, literally speaking, a presumption of rational behavior: the organization thinks it is acting according to a systematized and calculated manner, when in fact it is following template behaviors which were found in the past to be effective. On the other hand, as it is anticipated from theory, in low-level management and decision making we might be able to see shreds of 'rationality' in practice, mostly from humanitarian practitioners who want to gain legitimacy.

The logic of appropriateness

James March with Johan Olsen continued to describe the notion of 'logic of appropriateness' in order to designate "action is often based more on identifying the normatively appropriate behavior than on calculating the return expected from alternative choices" (March and Olsen, 1989, p. 22). What this practically means is that people have agreed to act in a certain way that is deemed 'appropriate', so as to be treated in a proportionately 'appropriate' way. The study shifts its focus from a behavioral model that wants people to try maximizing their benefits, to a model that people often act against their obvious self-interests, and follow the rules of the organization. These rules might be set out by various regulatory documents such as the code of conduct, SOPs, medical standards, internal regulations, safety guidelines. Moreover these rules within the organization could be relevant to the culture of the society or the organization itself.

In order for the person to make a decision, first he needs to set up a reference point. This reference point is relevant to the particular situation, the person's or organization's identity, and a certain set of relevant rules. More specifically, in the real dynamic world, each situation is by default different from the next one. Something in the state of the environment or the state of the person will be somehow different, and thus the context in which the decision takes place is also different. Likewise, the decision maker must have a clear understanding of his identity. It is, as we argued above, the guide of internal and external expectations, and therefore pivotal for the actions taken. Lastly, there must be a connection between the identity and the situation. In this point, we see the application of predetermined rules (in case a situation is predicted) or the interpretation of the most 'appropriate' behavior in accordance to the rules for the most closely related situation.

These rules are not constantly adaptive to the environment, but are, interestingly enough, products of the same environment in past tense: they have evolved over time, storing coded information of endless series of trial-and-error processes. In this sense, the organization is *learning* from its interaction with the environment, in an *adaptively rational* manner. March (1991b, p. 106) argues that in this way, organizations finally end up producing good results which might be 'local optima', and have distance from an unknown 'global optimum'.

So, how are we able to recognize an organization that uses the 'rule-following' or 'appropriate' decision making model? According to Peters (1999, p. 40), we expect that the members of such an organization must be placing "emphasis on normative integration and the creation of *collective values* within an institution or organization does provide a way of judging the success of that institution". According to Selznick (1957), a really crucial point in which adherence to the organizational rules is assured is the recruitment process. The human resources of each organization are somehow homogenous, not in the sense of having a common technical competence level, but sharing a common perspective on how the organization should work like. Their value system holds more importance than the technical specialization that could be achieved in a later stage. What is more important is that the organization has ensured control over certain training mechanisms (formal or informal) that would guarantee that all members internalize the values and adjust their

behavior accordingly (Peters, 1999, p. 35; Selznick, 1957, p. 58). A point often overlooked is that in this case, the training process goes well beyond simply disseminating the contents of technical manuals and guidelines; the idea behind this training is for the newcomer to be able to fit into his new role or identity within the organization. Decisive role in this 'unorthodox' training play certain persons who take up the role of *mentors* and role models. Another interesting expectation that we would have in such a 'rule-following' organization, would be to see effective peer-pressure mechanisms in order for the members to abide to their expected roles (Boin, 2001, p. 128; Langlois, 1998).

According to theory, we again cite from Heyse (Heyse, 2006, p. 41) the framework of identification of organizational behavior that is compatible with the 'logic of appropriateness':

> *The formal structure reflects the organizational values and norms, and facilitates decision-making*: Decision-making will occur without the help of formal rules and procedures. It is a coherent value system, in combination with strong socialization mechanisms that determines the decision-making process. In other words, decision-making is a quite invisible, unconscious process.

> *Compliance is achieved through socialization, training, and informal social control*: Compliance is guaranteed by providing newcomers with role models and mentors, and by teaching them the organizational history, language, and rules. New organizational members learn to appreciate and internalize the rules, norms, and values of the organization, and consequently act almost unconsciously. In addition, social control mechanisms ensure compliance.

> *Coordination is achieved through a clear and common value system*: Formal rules and procedures are not needed to achieve coordinated action in the organization. A shared understanding of the organization's mission and way of working results in coordinated action.

Decision-making fora either confirm the shared value system or pass these on to others: Since the shared value system guides behavior in the organization, decision-making fora are in fact not needed to discuss decisions - these are obvious to all. Decision-making fora are places where the shared values, norms, and rules are confirmed or passed on to newcomers.

Decision-making is characterized by a low degree of conflict: People know what is expected of them, share the values of the organization, and therefore hardly any conflict in the organization will arise. However, if there are value conflicts, they will have a fierce, and potentially destructive, character.

Decision-making is a contingent process: An institution takes into account outside pressures from the public, interest groups, the media, and politics as well as inside pressures while making decisions.

The 'appropriate' humanitarian organization

Decision making in this model is based on retrospective reasoning and for this matter alone, experienced members have the leading role in defining the organizational course. Through their invaluable experience they are the ones who understand 'what needs to be done', as well as 'what the organization is supposed to do' in each circumstance. They believe to be bearers of the single 'truth' which has been developed in the organization's past, and reflects the guide of action in accordance to the organizational purpose (Heyse, 2006, p. 55).

The 'appropriate' humanitarian organization is selective about the situations in which it decides to intervene. We expect it to express some kind of psychological obligation towards assisting in a situation of need, and this obligation would derive from organizational values and beliefs, former experience, as well as the expectations of the public and the press. The same sense of obligation and dedication will be active when it comes the time to disengage from a certain activity, a decision that is to be made with discomfort and with efforts from the part of the members that beneficiaries will be able to take care of themselves.

Individuals inside the organization are making their decisions and actions keeping in line with all the *internalized* rules and regulations. The big difference that we should encounter in contrast to the logic of consequence is that rules and guides need not to be written down explicitly, but rather felt as being lawful; an *opinio juris sive necessitatis* if we may. The common understanding of rules and values of the organization is the reason for which we expect to encounter low occurrence of conflict, but also, when conflict actually occurs, it is expected to be of big intensity (because differences are less technical and more value-based. We also expect, that there is not much (or actual) debate or persuasion done within the groups. There are two extra points that are also argued: the first being that the level of specialization at work will be low and so will be the degree of hierarchies on the organizational structure, and the second that we will not see any manuals, policy plans or specific decision making procedures (Heyse, 2006, p. 55).

3.1.3 Capacity models: Is this decision suiting me?

Amartya Sen, the Nobel-prize winning Indian economist, argued that men are not bound to oscillate between the two extremes, "either as a *rational idiot* being rational exclusively in the instrumental sense or as an *irrational idiot* led by forces beyond his control" (Boudon, 2006). We have tried harshly in the last two subchapters to explain why such an extreme position, as the one taken by Sen, is unfair and gives a wrong impression. Neither case produces machine-type individuals and absolute predictive behaviors. On the contrary, both rational and rule-following models are compatible with a more-than-expected amount of interpretation. Rationality and appropriateness are more of a guide than a rule. Even if this is true there is still enough space left for a third decision making model.

The void space is practically left when someone envisages a world in which ambiguity and uncertainty[13] play a big role; a world much closer to the real world. Unfortunately, neither of the aforementioned models performs optimally in such ambiguous and uncertain

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[13] There must be a clear distinction between these two terms, since they are not being used interchangeably. *Uncertainty* refers to a situation where we are unable to know for sure, to forecast or preconceive the outcomes of our actions. Uncertainty is a direct result of our finite capacity to know, analyze and store information. On the other hand, *ambiguity* refers to our lack of understanding the true nature of our alternatives, which are subjects to various interpretations or might hold multiple meanings.

environments. In the previous subchapters we utilized a pretty solid, stable, and clear-cut framework when it came to the consistency and stability of either the organization or the individual within it. On the contrary, in the second chapter we argued that people might have pledged allegiance to more than one organizations at the same time. Their choices (or preferences between them), are not defined by their single identity within the organization itself, but from their interaction inside greater systems. We shall therefore be talking about an ambiguity decision making model.

Organizations, as we saw, have invested a lot into constructing member hierarchies, defining rules that describe actions and reports, providing training that could harmonize the activities of their members, and other similar constructs that should produce decision coherence. Instead, unlike what should have been expected, there is lots of ambiguity left in the mix. We can see that organizations often have ambiguous goals, or use ambiguous means to achieve these goals. The justification for their actions could at times be equivocal or evasive, their chains of command are often breached, informal hierarchies are developed, and past actions cannot be understood by present standards. All this ambiguity often reflects on the organization's history, which provides numerous examples of cases that can't be understood easily. Even if this sounds like a chaotic situation, March (1994, p. 193) argues that this chaos is mostly a result of our trying to understand what we observe through the previous theories. What this actually entails is the idea that there might be another form of order within this chaos that is simply unexplainable through the rational or rule-following toolkits, and that organizations manage to control this ambiguity otherwise.

Let's take a quick look into a typical organizational order: one of the most common aspects that we have analyzed before was the breakdown of processes via decentralization, departmentalization and hierarchies. In this way, the organization is able to focus in dealing with specific challenges of specific environments. Each subunit of the greater system is trying to fit into the pressures of its own micro-environment, facilitating the whole organization. Among the most relevant issues concerning decentralization is that the benefits it provides to the organization come with equal cost: a distribution of power, and a consequent raise in ambiguity. Between the various subunits an amount of decision

inconsistency is produced, while each one of them pursue their own objective and develop their own identities, and even different subcultures and beliefs. Most importantly, the basis for this form of friction is based in (a) *gray areas of responsibility* between the subunits, leading to 'territorial issues' within the organization, (b) *conflict of interest*, especially when the member's individual goals are "at odds with the goals of the organization, the individual may be tempted to fight for his personal goals, creating a conflict situation that will hamper success of the project" (ICWAI, 2012), (c) *limits in resources* such as money, time and materials, might turn one subunit against another, (d) *interpersonal relationships* that might produce, sustain or even reduce and resolve conflict.

The final stage for understanding the ambiguity decision making model goes through the decomposition of the notion of the organization itself. What happens when we see the organization as the means through which certain people pursue their common interests? What if their interests are not always common? What if they agree on the goals and disagree on the means to pursue them? For instance, the famous environmental NGO Greenpeace could be a seen not as a rational entity or a rule and role-imposing institution, but rather as a coalition of individuals who want to protect the environment. Protecting the environment is a rather general objective and can be approached in various and often distant ways. The end-result of what came to be the more specific objectives of Greenpeace was the result of the negotiation of the initial members of the organization. In that sense, in each organization, members "may share some objectives, but characteristically their coalition is a negotiated coalition of convenience as much as it is one of principle. The clarity of a negotiated decision is more a consequence of negotiation than a technical matter of competence" (March, 1994, p. 195). In the constant processes of re-negotiating some of the members might be gone or missing or busy, or some might be just observers with no negotiating powers. For that reason, it is often that the re-negotiation takes place with a continuously renewed set of actors.

All things considered, the level of ambiguity in decision making is in direct relation to the special characteristics of each organization. It has to do with all five elements of what we described in the previous chapter to be the structural elements of the organization, in all

their variations. In light of the aforementioned complexity we can argue that decision making can become rather coincidental.

As was the case with the previous two decision making models, we shall identify a fit for the ambiguous organizations in theory. It is evident that a functionalist perspective of the organization has a hard time explaining the amount of conflict often seen within the organization, and in the exact same way the institutional theory would be unable to provide us with clear explanation about organizational change and evolution. All things considered, the theory of Complex Adaptive Systems seems to be better suiting the environment with high values of uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity. Through this theories conceptual and computational tools "new approaches to modeling non-linear interactions within and between organizations" has become possible (Anderson, 1999). Even if the 'ambiguous' organization presents with a 'rational' guise, it is already empirically known that systems as complex as social organizations could produce surprisingly simple and predictable behavior (Perrow, 1967).

The logic of capacity

The theory has been developed by the name of 'garbage can theory', by Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), in order to describe the decision process as a can in which we throw problems, solutions, participants, and technology. In this study we shall refrain from using the term 'garbage can' for two reasons: (a) to avoid the negative connotation that comes with the usage of such a title for a model - since it is hard to imaging great ideas coming out of a garbage can and surely it does not describe an inferior model in comparison to the others, and (b) our constructive intention to focus on the issue of 'capacity', as the main concept behind these ambiguous dynamics in which the members of the organization can activate their otherwise inactive competences.

The main concept of this model is seeing solutions and problems as independent. By disconnecting the two, and canceling their consecutive nature (problems followed by solutions), then you have (a) problems looking for solutions, but at the same time (b) solutions looking for problems. The members of the organization are the vectors of solutions: a dentist is a solution-carrier for dental problems, a pediatrician is a solution-carrier for problems concerning children's stunted growth due to Kwashiorkor, an

orthopedic is a solution-carrier for amputees, and a camp logistician a solution-carrier for the sheltering needs of a population. All these people who were trained to do certain tasks, are not just available to do them whenever they are asked, but moreover they might be actively searching for them (Cohen et al., 1988, p. 297). It would be useful to bring once again in mind the supply-driven theory of humanitarian expansion that we developed in the previous chapter: humanitarian action is not always driven by the needs of the populations, but also by the same system which delivers humanitarian action.

What is really interesting in that sense is a great difference in the way that prioritization happens. Since the solutions are 'creating the need for problems' and since they are looking actively for the answers, it is likely, that decision makers will mostly care about problems that have "attractive solutions and a choice opportunity attached to it" (Heyse, 2006, p. 42). Time is a crucial factor, as it defines the state of the organization at that moment that a problem enters the stream. At that moment, the problem should be able to (a) find a solution within the capacity of the organization, (b) to present itself as something 'attractive' or at least more attractive than other problems that might fight over the same organizational resources, and (c) gain enough backing within the organization of member who support this particular solution-problem combo. Seeing that not all organizational members are participating equally in the decision making processes (because they might be more or less available, interested, influential, specialized) the exact combination of participants dealing with a problem at the time of 'arrival' to the organization is of big importance.

So, problems might be 'true' and 'pertinent' even if under a 'rational' analysis the same problems might be overlooked. This could happen because the organization might not have the proper tools to solve them, or might be engaged in other more important activities, or even because the idea of their engagement did not gain enough leverage within the organizational decision making process.

It is expected that even if the role of individuals was downplayed in the initial conception of this theory (Bendor, 2001), in reality, individuals play a significant role. Not only do they bring and add items to the organizational agenda, but they are also the ones who push them higher up or tone them down. Their attention and preferences are impressed upon the processes. Entrepreneurial behavior is thriving in a decision making system such as this,

were the environment necessitates the skillset that lays in the very essence of the entrepreneurial spirit, such as leadership, management ability, and team-building (Drucker, 2012; Kingdon, 2011).

Similar to Simon's administrative organization and Selznick's institution, the case of a 'logic of appropriateness' fits well with March and Olsen's idea of 'ambiguous organization' (1988). The nature of the 'ambiguous organization' provokes as well its own set of expectations in processes, structure and practice. Theorists expect the organization to decide using unclear preferences, often utilizing less standardized technology and also having fluid participation in the decision making processes (Cohen et al., 1988, p. 294). Members are expected to come and go in a greater rate than in the other types of organizations. Moreover, these members are also expected to have a fragmented understanding of the past experiences, vision, goals and prospects of the organization – eventually leading to 'trial and error' activities and an individual experience based on past accidents that is not properly disseminated and never actually upgraded to organizational experience. What is also an important expectation is that the policies and policy instruments are also somewhat ambiguous and prone to fluctuations. In this regard it is argued that "what the organization does and why it happens is subject of continued discussion, ad-hoc decision-making, and fragmented sense-making processes" (Boin, 2001, p. 22). The aforementioned discussion targets at the building of a group consensus, through group dialogue, persuasion and concessions.

This decision making model would most likely blossom in instances of high workload, environments of great uncertainty, and work processes that are not highly detailed. When the workload of the organization is low, then there is more spare time and less pressure for simultaneous processing of information or delegating decisions. Likewise, when the organization is working on issues that can be considered 'organizational routine' then we would expect that specific processes would be in place, and equally, an explicit structure (normative and hierarchical) would leave little room for entrepreneurial behavior.

For a last, third time, we shall be quoting directly from Heyse (2006, p. 44), in order to get a template decision making framework that we would recognize as 'logic of capacity':

There may be a formal structure, but this structure is debated and hardly influences decision-making: Although formal policies, goals, and procedures might exist, we expect that these are debated constantly and do not have a significant impact on the decision-making process. Decision-making outcomes will hardly reflect the formal goals of the organization due to a lack of clear goals and work methods, as well as fluid participation.

Compliance mechanisms are absent or debated: There might be formal compliance mechanisms, but when present these are debated and therefore do not influence decision-making.

Coordination mechanisms are absent or debated: There might be formal coordination mechanisms, but when present these are debated and therefore do not influence decision-making.

Decision-making fora are places of discussion, persuasion, and compromising: Since there is a lack of agreement on goals and work methods, decision making fora will be places where matters are discussed, people need to be persuaded, and compromises will be made.

Decision-making is characterized by a high degree of conflict: An institutionalizing organization does not have a coherent framework that guide the actions of its members. Instead, there is continuous discussion and conflict with concern to problems and solutions.

Coincidental decision-making: Timing is an important factor in the decision making process: it depends on the entrance time of participants, problems, and solutions, as well as on the dynamics within each stream, as to what choice eventually will be made. Decision-making is therefore highly contextual. This is reinforced by fluid participation of organizational members.

The 'capacity-driven' humanitarian organization

Decision making in the capacity-driven humanitarian NGO will be no easy task. The continuously shifting dynamics inside the decision making fora, with inconstant participation of members and their non-harmonized reasoning, makes the nature of the organization very dynamic. This is expected to reflect on the largely informal nature of decisions, which are often taken spontaneously, might not run through the chain of command, and might sometimes not even be reported.

Organizational goals and preferences are not clear or precise and so, they are the 'bone of contention' among the people who discuss and persuade each other about their own preferences. The organization is ought to have an imprecise understanding of where it intervenes, especially on global scale, where the effect of the lack of information collection, and analysis is more visible. On the contrary, we would expect that the humanitarian NGO will most likely depend on a 'what resources are available' in order to define its activities, where resources might take the form of money, networks, medical stuff, gifts-in-kind, etc. Entrepreneurs are expected to run their 'own show' within the organization, by managing group dynamics and deviating the aforementioned resources to activities that match their own preferences. Their presence, combined with fluid participation will constantly bring discussions within the organization back to basics: questioning whether or not the activities taken are good practices, how to know when to set up or end a mission, and if the organization is doing well or not. Since decisions about the organizations' activities are taken through dialogue, persuasion and coercion, the processes are expected to be intense, and often see conflict to take place.

Goals and policies in this ideal type are rarely a true guide for decision making. Usually they are vaguely stated or understood, and they might be defined in more detail when actual engagement brings less uncertainty. Humanitarian projects will not follow a steady pattern that would build a technical know-how for the organization, but they will seem more like spontaneous decisions based on opportunities. In the same way that opportunity feeds a temporary capacity for the organization to act, when the resources dry up (since the projects are not planned to be funded in the long run) the organization is obliged to forfeit their engagement.

3.1.4 Critical overview of the models

It is important to remind that all three models have received a fair amount of criticism. The criticisms are based on four axons: (a) the abstruse nature of the models; varying between theories, perspectives and ideal types, (b) the considerable practical overlapping of the models, (c) their considerable analytical utility, and finally (d) their normative virtue (Bacharach, 1989; Goldmann, 2005). Both three models have their downsides as in that the logic of consequence hits on the brick wall of uncertainty and bounded rationality, the logic of appropriateness is deterministic and is unable to explain change. The capacity model on the other hand, does not give enough attention to the effect of formal structures and regulations in the decision dynamics (Mucciaroni, 1992). In this study, we made clear that there is no objective to argue against these criticisms. Accordingly we argue that, even with certain drawbacks, the use of the models is providing a decent guide in the exploration of decision making in practice within the organizations of interest.

In this way, we have concluded building the three frameworks through which we will analyze the data that was collected directly from the organizations. It is expected that no single organization would eventually end up being a perfect match for any of the three models. Nevertheless, we expect that dynamics will eventually pull the organization one way or another, and we will be able to see which (if any) model will prevail as the main rule of decision making, and which models will follow as secondaries or exceptions. It is estimated that even though the three models are not mutually exclusive, the organizational preconditions for the nurturing of one model or the other will in fact exclude features of the other models. For instance, let's take a humanitarian organization that has no clear normative social structure, no regulations concerning reporting from the field to the decision-making bodies, then it is reasonable to expect that it would have a great difficulty following a consequential decision making model due to lack of information.

Decision making model	Logic of Consequence	Logic of Appropriateness	Logic of Capacity
System Type	*Rational*	*Natural*	*Open*
Ideal Type	Simon's Administrative organization	Selznick's Institutional organization	March and Olsen's ambiguous organization
Mode of Reasoning	Sequential or Organizationally prospective.	Instant.	Simultaneous or Individually prospective.
Structure	Organizational structure formulates the decision making process, prescribes behavior.	Maintenance of the integrity and continuity of the system itself. Reflects the accepted values.	More or less formalized structure. Debated nature with low influence on decisions.
Governance (external)	Connected, harmonized. Coordinated actions.	Autonomous, value-based coordination.	Independent, often in conflict. No visible coordination.
Governance (internal)	Clearly defined governance configurations. No mix-ups in mandates.	Typical distribution of responsibilities. Governance reflects organizational values.	Unclear or debated governance mandate leading to mix-ups.
Decision making	Visible, having specific processes, prospective. According to specialty.	Invisible, centralized process. Spontaneous and retrospective. According to vision.	Decentralized. Simultaneous. Outcome of negotiations.
Outcome of decisions	Optimal.	Agreeable.	Entrepreneurial.
Training	Technical training based on job requirements.	Life-long affair, serving the needs of an identified group. Mentors. Teaching organizational history.	No specific formal training. Use of pre-existing individual skills.
Compliance	Sanctions and incentives. SOPs, manuals, guidelines and reference documents. Specific assessment tools.	Achieved through training. Internalization of rules, unconscious adherence. Social control mechanisms.	Unclear compliance mechanisms. Documents formulating behavior could exist but ignored. Actions often go against rules. No clear assessment tools.
Coordination	Substantive and procedural mechanisms in place. Formal authority, specialization.	Rules are there, but not referred to. Importance is placed in understanding the mission.	Coordination mechanisms not agreed upon. Variable, ad hoc solutions.
Decision making fora	Exchange of technical information. Consultative dynamics.	Decisions are not actually discussed, no negotiations. Authoritarian dynamics. Fora also have a training nature.	Place of negotiation, persuasion, compromising. Collaborative or anarchic dynamics.
Conflict	Very low prevalence. Arguments of mostly technical character.	Low prevalence. Value conflicts potentially devastating.	High prevalence. Often seen as integral part of the decision making process.
Environmental pressure	Public pressure is restricted to a minimum.	Public pressure is taken into account.	Environment produces choice opportunities, and affects decision making outcomes.
Chief decision makers	Specialists.	Experienced members.	Entrepreneurs.
Type of Behavior	Maximizing or Anticipatory.	Obligatory or Rule-based.	Capacity-driven or Persuasive.
Inference pattern	Objective-based calculations.	Mission statement analogy.	Coupling of opportunities and capabilities.

Table 3 - The framework of analysis

Each case will be therefore analyzed in a similar manner, using this framework. With no particular order in mind, rather than the objective value of organizational 'age', we should proceed first with the Médecins Sans Frontières, then with Médecins du Monde, and lastly with the Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans. In each of the cases we think that it is crucial to keep a predetermined structure, beginning with a general description of the organization. At this first stage we will try to briefly sketch the organizational structure, in a manner consistent with our analysis in the relevant chapter. This will be followed by a brief but consistent presentation of its history. History as knowledge acquired by investigation (Joseph and Janda, 2008), is nothing more than "the handing down of tradition; and tradition means the carrying of the habits and lessons of the past into the future" (Carr, 2008). Knowledge of the origins of each organization might give away clues for why certain routes were taken and why others were sidestepped. Important decisions are based on organizational experience, especially in the case of 'rule-following' and 'institutional organizations'. Decision making processes are not always the same across the lifespan of each organization and in this research, even if the span of interest is limited to the last twenty five years (1990-2014), the cutoff line should be drawn with caution to the past. For this reason we deem quintessential that we delve into the dusty files of old documents and files and distill this information and present it accordingly. Following this, we should focus on the core question of identifying connections between decision making processes in practice and in theory. This will in fact be separated into two parts: the first will be directly connected to our research hypothesis (H_0) as it was expressed in the introductory chapter, and the second will be identifying the connections between organizational practice and other (not hypothesized) decision making models.

3.2 Médecins sans Frontiéres - Greece

3.2.1 Organizational Profile

Médecins sans Frontiéres - Greece (hereon forth MSF-G) is a not-for-profit medical association founded in 1990 in Athens, Greece. It is the Greek delegation of the international humanitarian Nobel Peace Prize laureate NGO 'Doctors without Borders'. It is part of the MSF International Movement, which is now comprised of 24 national

associations, and works in operational collaboration with MSF Spain, under a common Operational Center which is based in Barcelona (OCBA).

The MSF mission is providing emergency aid to people all over the world in need of medical assistance. It specializes in war torn territories, epidemics, natural disasters, as well as exclusion of vulnerable populations from the healthcare system. Since the Movement was founded by ex-ICRC members, it operates under a solid ethical framework of core principles, such a humanity, impartiality and independence. In contrast to the Red Cross, the MSF also believe in speaking out and alerting the public about government inadequacies, malpractices, and human rights abuses. It is imperative for each MSF association, and therefore for MSF-G as well, in order to retain its independence, to secure its financial autonomy through the support of private donors. For this reason, the organization accepts only a marginal portion of our funds to come from governments and intergovernmental organizations. As it is shown below, MSF-Greece has managed to remain true to this principle for the last decade, even during a period of economic hardship for the Greek citizens, which has eventually limited their capacity to fund the organization.
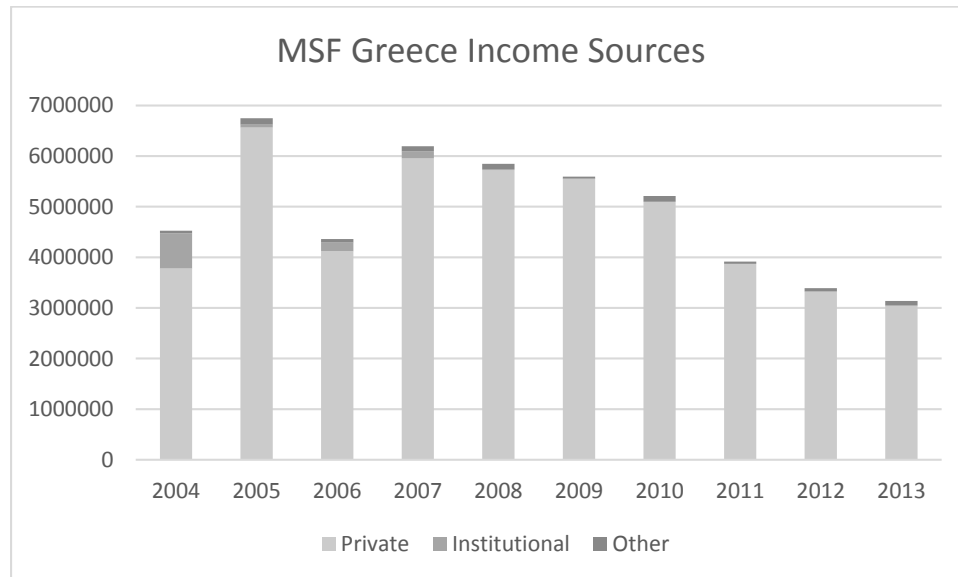
Graph 3- MSF Greece Income sources

Another principle of operation concerning MSF is to try and provide as much as they can in the field, by lowering managerial and administrative costs (i.e. for fundraising and HQ support), and by providing more for programmes on the field, témoignage (awareness-

raising) and other humanitarian activities. In MSF jargon this is referred to as the 'London ratio' and is nearly 75% to 80% of the total budget (programme expenses / total expenditure). Again here, we can see below how MSF-Greece has responded to such a challenge in the last decade:

MSF Greece Tooth-to-Tail Ratio

Year	Mission Expenses	Support Expenses
2004	78	22
2005	80	20
2006	78	22
2007	56	44
2008	72	28
2009	70	30
2010	66	34
2011	62	38
2012	62	38
2013	59	41
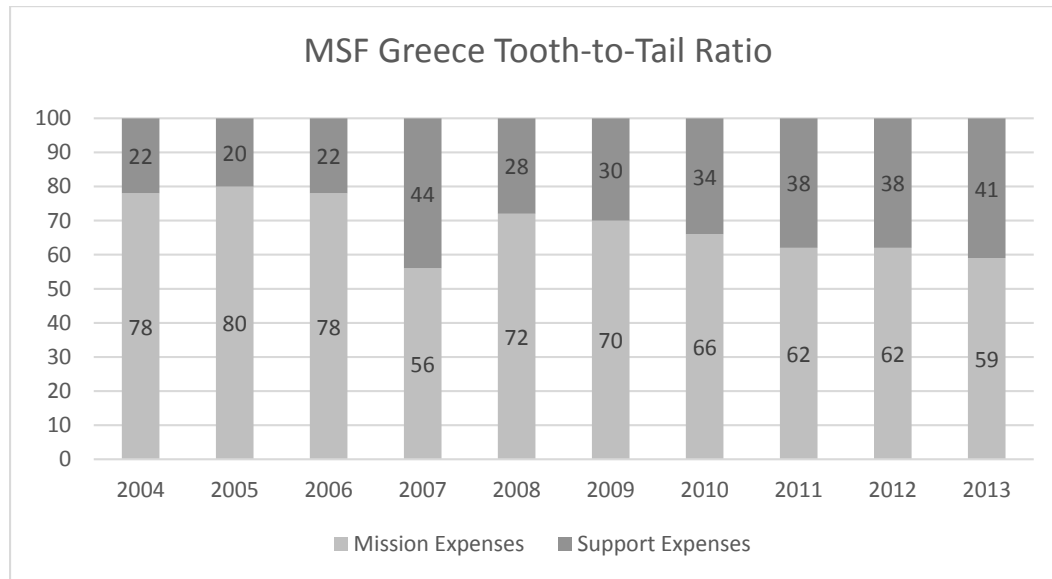
Graph 4 – MSF Greece Tooth-to-Tail ratio

MSF Greece is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, which is elected directly from the annual General Assembly and the members of the BoD are all volunteers. The role of the GA and the BoD is to establish and review the strategic plans of the organization, to monitor financial performance and receive programmatic updates. The board of directors is elected every two years. The GA is also responsible to set the organizational direction, the mission, vision and values – although these are more or less settled by the international MSF Movement. In order to become a member with voting rights in MSF-Greece, one has to be working for at least six months as field staff or at least a year at the MSF headquarters in Athens. There is also an option for volunteers to become full members, but this rare occurrence requires special prerequisites.
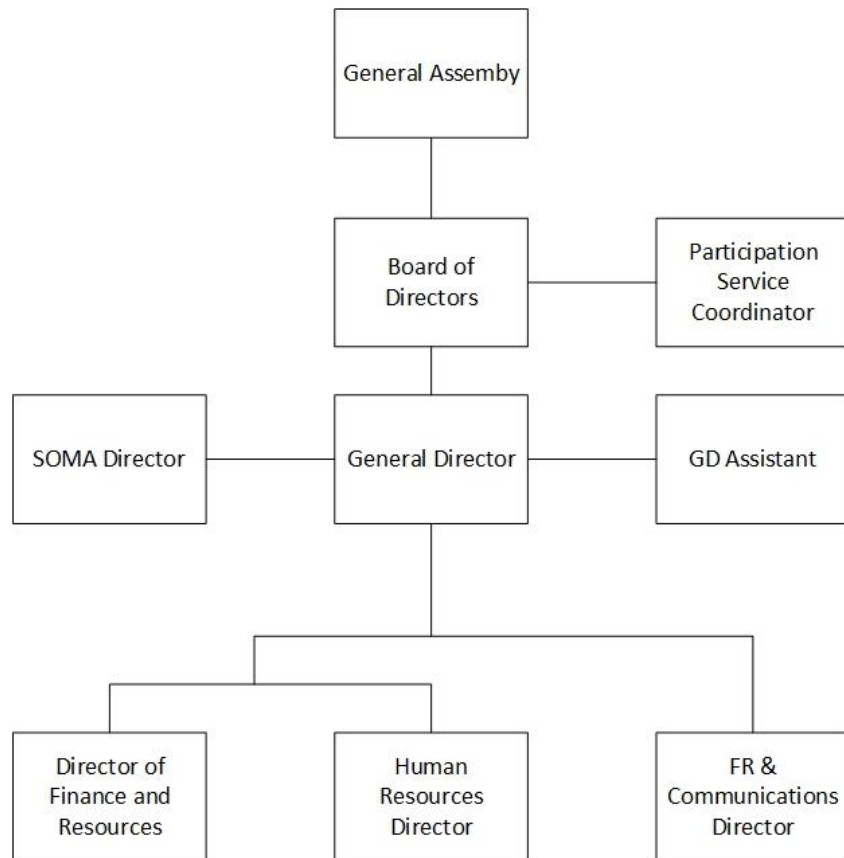
Graph 5 - MSF Greece Structure

3.2.2 History of MSF Greece

The history of the development of MSF in Greece is of particular importance, as it shapes the way in which decision making processes are today. The idiosyncratic structure of MSF, and the peculiar case of the Greek delegation is nothing more than the result of a 25 years old odyssey, which we will briefly outline below.

First early years

The initial steps of MSF-Greece history are found in 1979, Paris, France, where the 16 year old Sotiris Papaspyropoulos, a high school student, saw an MSF advertisement on television. Astonished by the images of MSF in action, as well as their vision, he took note of the contact details and made two important decisions: to become a medical doctor and to establish MSF in Greece. For the next two years, he daydreamed over flyers and

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information material that the organization sent him, since he had enrolled in its mailing list. Soon after succeeding into the Medical School of Athens in 1981, Sotiris became a member of MSF France and was thus invited to take part in the next year's annual MSF conference in Paris. It was that year's conference that Rony Brauman was elected as the new president of MSF France, holding this office for the record time of 12 years, and playing a catalytic role in the Greek affairs. Attending the conference were members of MSF, travelling from all around the world:

> "With their backpacks, their experiences, their photos and films, their vivid conversations, they were fabricating a new outlook on the idea of medicine and health, as well as the political and social dimension of things. It was a breathtaking experience." [Int. MSF06, 2015]

For the next six years, and while still a student of medicine, Sotiris attended each and every annual conference in Paris. He witnessed the expansion of MSF beyond the borders of France, in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, Switzerland and Spain. He saw how the enthusiasm and the experience of people that took part in missions abroad was able to propagate within societies, and how these dynamics could help people develop, in their own country, an invaluable alternative course of action. In those years, the creation of a new MSF delegation in another country was an atypical procedure: It most often started with few doctors from one country participating in missions of a preexisting delegation, gaining enough experience, growing roots within their own medical community and their society. When these few people reached a 'critical mass', they would present themselves in front of the French at first, or the French and the Belgians at a later stage, asking to become a national delegation. The prerequisites were to have demonstrable experience, and being able to guarantee that the new-coming organization could represent the movement correctly and efficiently.

Eventually, in September 1988 Sotiris was the first Greek physician to ever participate in a MSF mission, as a field doctor in El Salvador. For nine months, he was caring for Salvadorian refugees within Honduras, in Tegucigalpa. The fascination and admiration of the organization grew exponentially, when he witnessed the operational standardized procedures, the efficiency orientation, and the international logistics support, which were

impressive by the standards of that time. When the mission was over, Sotiris came back to Greece and was determined to reproduce a model that succeeded six times in the past. Even though he was all by himself, the French were willing to listen.

Not only did the French listen, but they also gave Sotiris the green light to use the brand name of the Médecins Sans Frontières in order to recruit people and sent them in France to join missions abroad. At the same time, he could be working to establish the presence of the movement in the Greek media, the local medical community and the Greek society. It is notable that at that time, the third sector was still undeveloped, and the notion of an NGO would sound somewhat 'exotic' in the ears of both Greek citizens and public officials alike. Despite those challenges, in 1989, there were seven doctors who took part in missions abroad and their stories were published in mainstream media, heard over the radio and brought more interest in the idea of humanitarianism in Greece.

Ultimately, in October 1990, the international council gave the green light for the creation of MSF-Greece, which eventually became the seventh structure of MSF, and the last one following the pattern of the section – that is, being created by its own initiative, and having an independent administrative council and headquarters.

The first years of the experiment were hard, and the challenges were big. First of all, there was no financial capital to begin with. The MSF-France gave a loan to the Greek delegation (200,000 Francs per annum[14]) for the first two years, under the condition that MSF-G would become financially independent after that period. Due to the lack of resources, for these first years, the MSF headquarters were situated in the kitchen of the president's parents' house! Their only inventory was virtually a FAX machine and some dossiers for bookkeeping. Help had to come fast, and it had to come from the Greek society. Unfortunately, as was already mentioned, Greek society was unfamiliar with this kind of endeavors, and to make things more complex, another humanitarian NGO, 'Médecins du Monde', had just been founded in Athens, some months beforehand. Another challenge emerged from the subtext of the deal to create the section in the first place: MSF-G would not be directly independent, but for that trial two-year period, it would be running under

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[14] This is approximately equivalent to the buying power of 45,120 euros in the time of writing (calculated taking into consideration the inflation indexes in France, and the equivalence of FRF to Euro)

the directions of MSF-France, in an unprecedented in MSF history trusteeship. That meant that although MSF-G was able to initiate missions abroad, those missions would come under MSF-F Desk direction, and that Desk would also be responsible for the HR management. In a sense, there was the 'mother-section' which was helping the developing section to mature. Maturity of the section was accordingly defined as the reaching of certain objectives.

In the following years, MSF-G had overpassed even the more optimistic expectations. It had initiated successful missions (Armenia and Zambia), and had trained more than 80 experienced expats. Moreover, the local society and media had embraced with enthusiasm the return of those people from the field: the image of a Greek doctor returning from months of harsh work in the African context was something new and exciting! Consequently, the delegation managed to exceed 25,000 subscribers and became financially autonomous. The organization's cold lists managed to get a return rate of 2.5-3%, with a 0.6% covering the mailing costs. MSF-G followed a difficult road by not relying to get 'lots from few' such as with fat public subsidies, but trying to get 'a little from many'.

MSF-G seemingly had passed the test, and could become a totally independent section. Alas, in 1992 the Greek delegation presented itself in front of the International Board (IB) with an outstanding portfolio, but in return got another two years of 'probation'.

> "These were the last days of innocence. It was the time where MSF-F had raised their flag in the United States, MSF-Holland in Canada, Belgians in Germany, etc. in order to promote missions and recruit specialized personnel. The traditional model that the organization should sprout from within the roots of the society was abandoned." [Int. MSF06, 2015]

The formation of Delegate Offices (in contrast to the independent Sections, which had full operationality) in several new countries in those years established a new reality for the international movement. The Greek case was 'stuck in between' two models of expansion, and in sight of the new situation the International Board was hesitant to allow the emancipation of the Greek delegation with full operationality and independent action. In this respect, in 1994, the Greek case stood again in front of the IB, with an even more impressive 'dossier'. Four sections (CH, S, F, Lux) voted in favor of the creation of the

section and two (B, H) were against. Even with the majority being in favor, the Belgians and the Dutch used their veto powers to automatically cancel the decision. The veto had nothing to do with Greece meeting the demands of the moral and practical contract, but was a result of the international polemic between MSF-F and MSF-H, the lack of coordination that the organization witnessed in Rwanda, and the fear of further proliferating 'sectionhood' and operationality.

The 1994 veto had historical implications for MSF-G. First of all, Sotiris Papaspyropoulos decided to step down from the forefront of the organization, in a two-year transition process were others had to step forward and replace him as General Director (Thanasis Papamichos) and President (Odyseas Voudouris). The second implication was the acceptance of a 'transitory status quo', an intermediary status were MSF-G retained its independence (and was not demoted to become a Delegate Office) but came under the wing of MSF-Spain as a supervised section.

It is really interesting that at this period there was a talk within the midst of MSG-Greece about the future of the organization. Vital questions were raised concerning the external governance and some important decisions were actually made at this stage:

> "One of the most complicated and strenuous decisions was to accept the verdict of the international council. Under Greek standards we were a powerful organization, with volunteers, subscribers, income, press support, operational capacity… don't think for a while that we didn't consider leaving the Movement. After all, we felt like it was the IC that had abandoned the MSF principles and not us. That we should continue fighting for these principles by ourselves. But we all knew too well that our future was inside the Movement – for a better future for both the Greek sector and the rest of the organization" [Int. MSF06, 2015]

It is true that at the same time, MSF-G continued to grow steadily. It had become one of the most prestigious NGOs in Greek society, it had more than 60,000 subscribers (individual donors, as of January 1997), an annual budget of $3.7 million dollars, and 130 operational expats. Together with other sections, it operated in Georgia (with MSF-S), Armenia (with MSF-B) and Mozambique (with MSF-Switzerland). Still, unable to open

up autonomous missions, there was much energy accumulating in Athens. Funding sources were left unexploited and pressure was growing from the members. With the IB refusing to find a solution to the problem the Greeks became impatient.

Number of Individual Donors

Year	Donors
1990	65
1991	910
1992	3390
1993	10068
1994	25953
1995	33753
1996	60000

Departure of Volunteers

Year	Volunteers
1991	10
1992	15
1993	20
1994	25
1995	39
1996	58

ANNUAL BUDGET (IN $US)

Year	Budget
1991	69595
1992	234783
1993	886957
1994	1508686
1995	2434783
1996	3782608
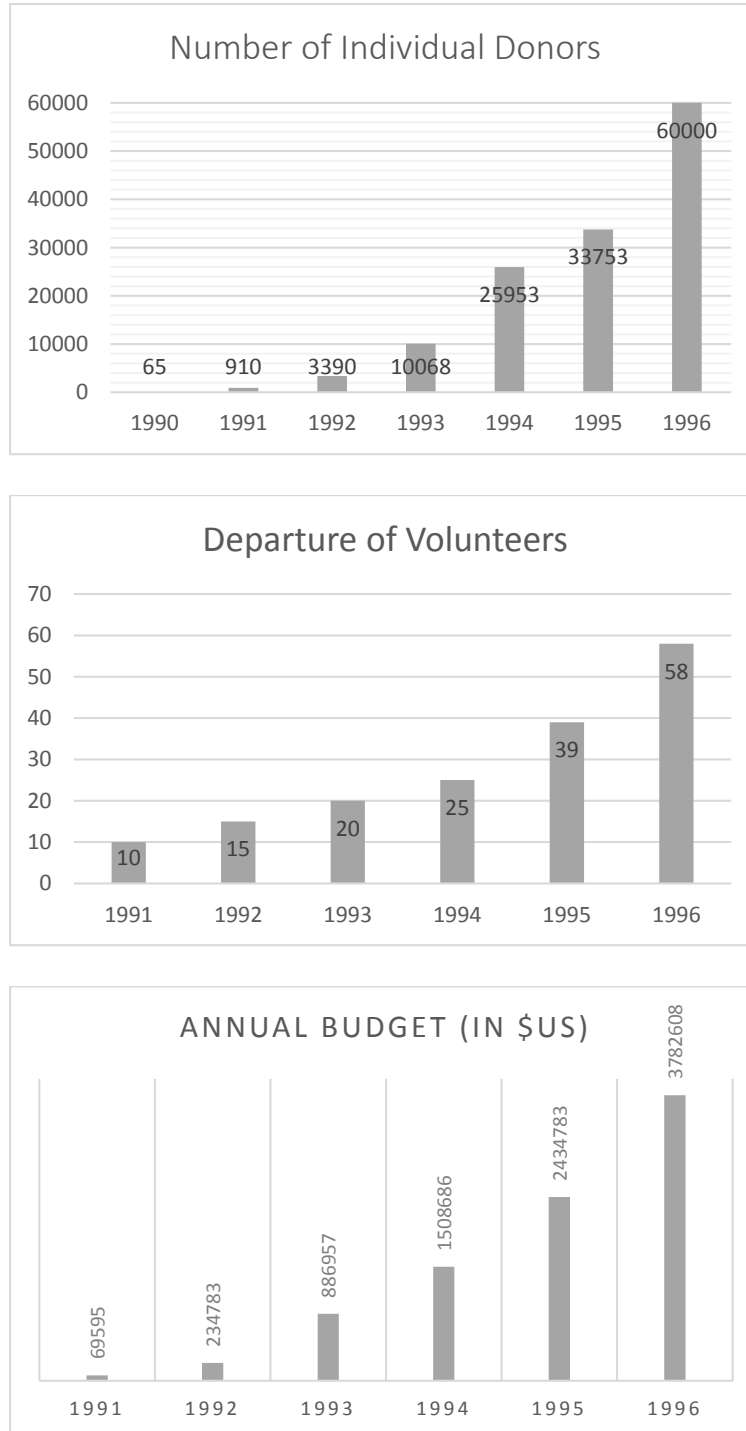
Graph 6 - MSF-Greece development in numbers 1990-1996 (MSF Greece, 1997)

In 1996, MSF-G created a satellite organization named Medeco (Medical Development and Cooperation Operations) in the example of other similar organizations created by other MSF branches (such as Epicenter, AEDES and Healthnet). The idea was to be able to absorb volunteers and keep them within the movement, and at the same time to experiment with development interventions, which was not an MSF specialty. When Medeco was ready to begin its first aid programme in Gaza in collaboration with local NGOs, the supervising sector was informed, as well as the International Council. The reaction was loud and clear: "*cette structure était inacceptable dans le cadre de MSF*", said the letter of the president of the IC to the president of MSF-G Odysseas Voudouris. The Greeks halted their operations with Medeco and a new series of negotiations with the IC begun over the Greek issue. A year later, in March 1998, MSF-Greece left the supervision of MSF-Spain in order to join with MSF-Switzerland in the newly formed Operational Center Geneva (OCG). The concept of the OC was to be co-owned by both sections, which would be responsible for international operations and field projects, while at the same time would remain autonomous in their domestic issues. The General Director, as well as the Operational Director would be appointed in collaboration of the two sections as well. This newly fledged 'wedding' was the operational status of MSF-Greece when the Kosovo 'storm' hit in 1999.

The Kosovo crisis and expulsion of MSF-Greece

In order to understand the run of events that followed the Kosovo war, one must first establish an understanding of the geopolitical situation at the area. For the decisions of the organization to make any sense, we must take into account the information given in the previous subchapter (that is, internal organizational perturbations) and the external historical and political environment. A detailed analysis of the events of the Kosovo war goes well beyond the scope of this study, and a handful of illustrious publications are available for both the military events (Bacevich and Cohen, 2001; Daalder and O'Hanlon, 2000) as well as the legal commentary (Perrakis and Marouda, 2009).

Greece had some preexisting psychological ties with Serbia, mainly due to their common orthodox religion, their geographical proximity, and most importantly a shared

understanding of national purity and ethnic nationalism (Michas, 2002; Willert, 2014, p. 128)(Michas, 2002; Willert, 2014:128). For all these reasons, the Greek people were against the NATO campaign, and somehow found themselves as the sole supporters of the Serbs at an amazing 96% rate (Kondopoulou, 2002). At the same time, the Greek state was part of the NATO alliance that was bombing Serbia in order to coerce its army to withdraw from Kosovo. The humanitarian impact of the crisis was not only accepted but also promoted to being the major argument for military intervention (Heinze, 2009). It was the first time that a war was waged on 'humanitarian' grounds, a fact that would ultimately put the humanitarian actors in the corner. Indeed, the regime in Belgrade became increasingly unfriendly towards all foreign organizations, including all humanitarian organizations.

At that time, the MSF movement was already on the ground with Belgians operating in Pristina and Belgrade, the Dutch in FYROM and the French in Montenegro. In March, the Belgians withdrew from the area "in reaction against the Serbian forces' systematic campaign of torturing, raping, killing, and expelling Albanian citizens of Kosovo" (Fox, 2014). From the initiation of the bombing campaign, all MSF nationals of the countries participating in the war were not able to get visas to enter the country. This situation left only the Swiss and the Greek sectors able to enter the Former Yugoslav Republic (FRY) and Kosovo. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, managed to strike a deal with Milosevic, to allow humanitarian aid to be sent from Greece into Serbia.

The Greeks felt that they should not remain inactive in front of this great chance. The international council thought that operations within Serbia and under the regime's oversight did not leave enough room for independent and impartial activities. It also believed that MSF activities could be manipulated by the authorities and the freedom to operate, help, and speak out was severely diminished. The director of the Operational Center, Thierry Durand held the same opinion and resigned from his post in late April, stating in his resignation letter his inability to work with the Greek section due to the unwillingness of the other side to cooperate productively (MSF, 2006). On the other hand, MSF Greece was still dependent on the decisions of the OCG and thus could not initiate a mission unilaterally. Being headless, though (by the resignation of the OD) an emergency

cell was formed to make operational decisions, and the decision was to go to the side of the Serb war victims and see what actions MSF could take.

Here, we should open a brief parenthesis to mark out an exceptionally blurry part of MSF-Greece history. In the confusion of those days, and in the face of disintegration and practical absence of proper and adequate structural mechanisms, decision making processes were largely spontaneous and consequently prone to errors and incoordination. At the same time, it left the area unguarded for entrepreneurial and individualistic behavior, personal and secret agendas, persuasion, and vague interpretation of principles, values and organizational goals. All things considered, MSF-Greece was facing the fact that an exploratory mission was on the boarders of FYROM, ready to leave the country without proper clearance from MSF.

In light of this mission, the president of the IC James Orbinski, made clear to the president of the Greek section, as well as the operational director, that this action was 'unacceptable'. That is, both the exploratory mission in Kosovo, and the appointment of a Greek operations director:

> "MSF Greece must maintain its integration with MSF Switzerland […].
> Your action in launching an exploratory mission in Kosovo and in appointing an operations director in Greece are unacceptable, and beyond the scope of existing IC resolutions governing this issue". [Email from IC President James Orbinski to Odysseas Voudouris, 6/5/1999]

In the following days, the IC brought its positions via email in front of all members of MSF Greece, presenting the two options: (a) accepting the Swiss proposal for new management or (b) ask the IC to revisit the MSF-Greece operational needs within the MSF Movement. The IC at the same time urged Athens to abandon the mission or even try to dissociate it with MSF-G (leaving Odysseas Voudouris as the sole person responsible). For a month, the Greek mission practically ignored all the IC demands and eventually, in 12 June, the IC adopted a resolution, which annulled the common operational center with MSF-Switzerland and prohibited MSF-G to carry operations outside Greece. The response of the Greek side was a June 26th General Assembly vote to intensify MSF-G activities within the FRY.

The credits rolled in September 16, when the IC voted practically unanimously (seventeen to eighteen votes, with the exception of the Greek vote) to finally expel the Greek section from MSF Movement. Again, instead of accepting the resolution that would mean abandoning use of the organization's name, logo and emblem within Greece or abroad, the Greek sector decided to go rogue.

The years of separation

MSF Greece might have left officially the MSF Movement, but to the unaware eyes of the bystander, not much have changed in the organization's HQ back in Athens. The organization became also a bit stronger through the crisis, since its recalcitrance and the story of its expulsion brought more sympathy in the Greek society. It had surpassed the 100,000 subscribers, its HQ was now organized '*in image and in likeness*' of a proper operational sector, with its HR, finance, and operations departments. The MSF logo, written in both Greek and French was to be found everywhere: advertising material, signs, vehicles, and of course in all formal communication.

The organization had been fairly busy as far as activities were concerned. Inside Greece, the organization assisted the victims in the 1999 Athens earthquake, in four huge camps, providing medical aid and psychosocial support. It also provided support for migrant populations in 2001 in the islands of Evvoia and Zakynthos. At the same time, MSF Greece established and developed two polyclinics (one in Athens and one in Thessaloniki) which cared for vulnerable populations, and people excluded from or with limited access to the health system.

MSF-Greece was not only active inside the country. Even without the precious support of the *MSF Logistique*, (the logistics base of MSF in France), the Greeks did not perform badly. On the contrary, in 2000 they were already active in Palestine were they supported the emergency missions of the organization, in Mozambique supporting the local population against the effects of a flood, vaccinating more than 95000 people in Zambia, and combatting malnutrition in Ethiopia. In the next year, the organization was active also in India (in Rapar after the Gujarat earthquake) and in Pakistan in order to care for the

displaced people coming from Afghanistan. In 2002, MSF-Greece was again active in Palestine, providing medical care to the people of Bethlehem and Ramallah. Also, in Malawi the organization's volunteers helped in the fight against the disastrous cholera outbreak. During 2003, the organization aided the population in Bagdad and nearby cities, and also in Iran after the Bam earthquake. The operational capacities of the organization were seriously limited, especially when it came to emergency response, where logistical capacity played a major role in operational efficiency.

All things considered, even if the ship of MSF Greece had mutinied, it kept holding the fleet's flag with pride for what it was worth. Most importantly, decision making during those years was taking place with respect to the organizational principles and values.

> "We were essentially doing the same thing that we would have done if we were still inside the MSF Movement. We were trying to be where the rest of the MSF were, so that we would be close. We were essentially spying on our own self: we were photocopying the manuals, medical protocols, everything. The only thing we couldn't do was to use the shared MSF logistics, so what did we do? We took all the *MSF-Logistique* standards and we tried to replicate everything in Athens. We had the strong belief that one day we would be back inside the family, so we never wanted to miss our connection to the Movement." [Int. MSF07, 2015]

Bridging and return to the Movement

After three years in isolation, both sides seemed to be more eager to bridge their differences. The Greek side had understood the serious limitations of being left 'alone', and the implications of such a reality in their operational capacity. For the international side, having one branch left outside the movement was felt as a 'thorn in the lion's paw', which felt 'scratchy' despite the insignificant implications in the overall operations (Greece even today amounts to less than 3% of the global MSF inputs).

Eventually, in 2002, there was a preliminary two-person assessment mission from the International Council to Greece, with the mandate to assess whether or not negotiations of

reintegration could start with what the IC was referring to as 'former MSF Greece'. The Greek side, under the presidency of Kostas Papaioannou, was more than ever willing to discuss the processes of reversing the excommunication. The fact that MSF-Greece had stayed in tune with the core values of the Movement and all the standard MSF principles, namely having more than 80% of its funds coming from private donations, resulted in a positive first assessment.

Another important factor was attributing responsibility for the events that lead to the expulsion to certain key people. The most important figure in this case was the former president Odysseas Voudouris, who was eventually ousted from the organization with a decision from the Greek General Assembly. The members themselves felt as if they had been tricked by his entrepreneurial behavior:

> "Getting back in the international Movement had to do with dealing with certain people. The whole thing was a game between Odysseas and the IC. He decided to restrict information flow to the Greek GA, cherry-picking information, allowing only coded and selected messages through, and eventually leaving the other members to make decisions based on wrong data. Fortunately, history is not written on the fly but in the aftermath, and it soon became obvious that all these was his way of getting into politics."
> [Int. MSF07, 2015]

With those people gone from the organization, the IC decided that the ground of dialogue would be fertile, if three non-negotiable preconditions are met: (a) The section would only be operational through one of the five preexisting OCs (Operational Centers), (b) that MSF-Greece would accept the legal ownership of the name and logo of the Movement to MSF International, and (c) there would be a shared critical analysis of the Kosovo crisis in 1999.

MSF-Greece accepted the conditions and the reintegration process started. In the following years, all the structural reforms in the organization took place and most importantly operationality was delegated to a common operational cell with MSF-Spain, the Operational Center Barcelona Athens (OCBA). The debate on the events of Kosovo was held finally in Athens in 2007, marking the end of an era for the organization and the reincorporation of MSF-Greece into the international MSF Movement.

Since then, the organization in Athens is mostly concerned with issues of providing financial and human resources to the international organization, while at the same time providing invaluable support to the change of focus that is happening:

> "Let me give you a fine example of the dynamic of MSF Greece, which is exemplary highlighted in the case of migration issues. For long time now, the traditional model of dealing with migrants' health in terms of morbidity and mortality rates had been challenged, and an alternative approach was proposed. The November [2014] IB and EXCO (executive committee) meeting essentially confirmed this change of attitude for the organization. Despite its weaknesses, its problems, its advantages and disadvantages, a major contributor towards this change was Athens, with its continuous and consistent ant-like work, trying to keep the pain of all these people high in the organizational agenda." [Notes from MSF Annual Meeting, Jan 2015]

3.2.3 Decision making model analysis

International Governance

It is absolutely important to analyze MSF Greece's external governance, meaning the relation with the international organization and with decision making bodies outside the NGO itself, while being mindful of the evolution of the organization and the historical events that paved the road to the present situation. While this is kind of true for all International NGOs, and is true for all organizations in the current study, there are many more reasons for which this truth is imperative in the case of MSF Greece.

The peculiarity of the case is marked by the fact that MSF Greece never became truly independent and autonomous organization, except for the period of expulsion in 1999-2004. In contrast to other organizations, MSF Greece is lacking operationality, which means that it does not have any self-initiated activities, rather than it co-authors and participates in the activities decided by the other operational sectors of the MSF structure. Of course, this does not imply that MSF Greece is not legally independent or that its governing bodies (like the general assembly) are simply agents or representatives of any

other international body. On the contrary, it is a vocal and active part of a greater institution that is the MSF Movement. The organization nowadays seems to be content with the status quo, but things did not always seem like that:

> "Operationality always played an important role. We were the untamed children of the Movement. We have always wanted and demanded operationality, and believed that we were going to get it; the International Movement was denying us of all claims. It was like having a father, which was the International Movement, and an untamed child which did not want to become an adolescent, but rather a grown-up. We insisted that we have the mentality and the knowledge to support operationality, while the MSF said that operationality should remain centralized. They were giving away something, by the decentralized cells, but we wanted everything. It was our own bedtime story. When we became operational by ourselves, from being active in 2 countries, we expanded it to 10. We always had the arrogance to decide for ourselves." [Int. MSF07, 2015]

There is a big and complicated story built on this issue and it was extensively documented in the previous chapter. The result of this complex sequence of events ended up when MSF-G came under the umbrella, together with MSF-Spain, in a joint Operational Center in Barcelona (OCBA). In this center, Greeks and Spanish collaborate, but in fact, since the Spanish are contributing the most in the OC (financially and in terms of human resources) they get to have the practical lead. Within OCBA, both sectors are autonomous, and together they have a relative autonomy from the International Movement, as they have their own budget and design their programmes as long as they are in conformity with the general directions, as prescribed by the IB.

> "As far as working in the Athens HQ, there are rules that apply for the way you manage finances, rules that are the same across all MSF sectors. These are rules that have to do with being financially accountable to your donors. They are not strictly 'regulatory' in that sense, but nevertheless every MSF sector abides to them. There is a culture in MSF that even if the five OC's

are autonomous, everyone tries to act in the same way as everyone else. You won't see any huge differences." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

The different OC's are able to work independently but often work together, in close collaboration in the same country. This interesting 'multiple personalities' of the organization (the five OC's) is often put to strategic use. For instance, in Sudan, where the MSF meet a lot of obstruction from the government's side regarding visas and human recruitment, MSF-Belgium decided to leave the country and accuse the Government that it is impeding the organization's work. Even with MSF-B storming out like that, MSF had another three operational sectors on the ground, seeing it could not afford leaving the population high and dry. Indeed, this strategic use of the multiple OC's is one of the arguments that supports the idea that the organization should not unify under one single operational center. The idea behind such an international structure is that "you can be vocal and provide advocacy, while at the same time you can play your cards as in 'it wasn't me, it was him' kind of way" [Int. MSF03, 2015].

There is also another issue worth noting, that has to do with the fact that there are MSF operations taking place inside Greece, with various levels of MSF-Greece involvement. Practically it seems that there is some sort of subsidiarity principle in practice, were involvement of the local section depends on the needs of the situation. Although this might be true, it is not absolute, as operations inside Greece could also be autonomous and not related to the Greek sector at all:

"In theory and in practice we follow a certain procedure. In case of an emergent issue, the operational center would send a team to make an assessment. Inside the country, this kind of information might come from a whole different set of sources; for instance, the Municipality of Athens could report a problem with the homeless people. We go, using objective criteria, and we will talk with the Mayor, the other NGOs, the people in need, and judge if there actually is room for MSF involvement. There is no need for someone from Spain to come and do this thing. Depending on the assessment results, we propose to the Operational Center a course of action.

In the case of the homeless, OCBA decided that we should go at it by ourselves, with our resources as an association." [Int. MSF01, 2015].

Another, second, system was in place with the MSF malaria programme in southern Greece in 2012 where MSF France had the lead, and under their umbrella and guidance, MSF Greece worked in collaboration with the Greek CDC to avert the re-institution of malaria in the country. Yet another system was introduced in September 2013 until March 2014, where MSF Belgium was running a programme in the migrant detention centers inside Greece. In this case, the team was comprised mostly by people from outside the country and MSF-Greece was limited to providing network and technical support.

In the latest years, MSF Greece has found a new important and upgraded role to play within the International Movement. This role has to do with the rise of migration inside Europe, a situation that was always there but in the last five years has reached new levels and has challenged the countries in the core of Europe. Greece, as a country in the European rim and a major entry point for migrants, has developed a considerable know-how in dealing with these vulnerable populations. The subject of migration did not seem at first to be 'MSF material', in the sense that it is not strictly medical. For this reason, even if MSF-G had tried to push it forward in the organizational agenda, it didn't quite reach high enough until recently.

"We were that section that was constantly nagging everyone to put migration in the agenda, the same way we had put HIV/AIDS in the agenda a long time ago. It is not purely medical, and we are not a human rights organization, but still, there are medical needs to be met. The idea needed time to gain momentum – we were going around other European sectors talking to them about it, about how what we see in Greece with the crisis we would much likely see elsewhere. We were talking about human dignity. We tried to bring together that wondrous wording that would create the winning argument. At the same time, those people in the International Movement who could think outside the box were acknowledging the problem and were positive to use inside Europe the experience MSF had on migration from other contexts." [Int. MSF04, 2015]

Without a doubt, there was a lot of negotiation within MSF-G and between MSF-G and the international movement about this subject. There were indeed, some bounded rationality choices being made, as countries in the core of Europe did not feel as pressed by the issue and felt like priority should remain with migration within Africa, where the number of migrants is exponentially greater. By applying lots of pressure, investing in debates, and with good politics, the Greek sector managed to achieve some policy changes within the organization.

MSF Greece, attuned to the rest of the sectors, does not take part in any international humanitarian networks. The reason that the organization is either rejecting such initiatives or simply participating as an observer (and not as a member), is the fact that it does not accept the idea that there are some minimum standards that have to be met. Moreover, it is the organizational policy to try and protect the humanitarian ethos and to not reduce the disaster response to a simple mechanical and material exercise (Tong, 2003).

As it must be clear by now, MSF is an organization that promotes dialogue and tends to put everything into question: its structure, its values, its operational principles and strategies. That does not necessarily mean that the organization is constantly changing and on the contrary, the organization seems to show some considerable inertia. However, it is declarative of a culture of rationality, where no idea or practice stands beyond reproach or has a lifetime immunity. Within a considerable period, even the most treasured ideas seem to have to renew their value. In recent years a talk has resurged in the International Movement about the way the organization is governed, and how it can become more inclusive, especially towards the communities of the beneficiaries and receiver societies of the MSF services. MSF Greece is involved actively in this dialogue.

Internal Governance and Organizational Structure

MSF Greece has a very clean cut, clearly outlined structure. It wasn't always like that, especially in the first years of the organization, where some could argue that there was lots of ambiguity in the roles that each element and each member had to play. As most participants in the study stated, MSF Greece is going through its 'golden era', despite the

great challenges of the environment which are mostly related to the economic hardships of the financial crisis of Greece. The crisis is producing needs inside the country while at the same time reducing the society's capacity to fund the organization. Regardless of these challenges, the organization is sought to be at its most efficient and productive form, with everything running like clockwork. This is attributed to the quality of the people in leading positions, but also to the fact that the organization has settled its inner processes appropriately. That means that each and every element of the organization acts exactly as it is expected and does not interfere in the workings of other elements. This might sound obvious in the ideal-type of the big, international NGOs, but thinking of MSF Greece's past, where a small group of friends grew into one of the biggest NGOs in the country, this *definition of roles* was a milestone.

> "Roles were not always clearly defined, maybe because this is the natural course of things, or just because this was the way things happened in Greece. There was a great haziness in separating the associative and executive spheres. There were authoritarian BoD's that went beyond just co-signing decisions, to getting together with the general director and doing things 'quick-and-dirty' because the circumstances of those days demanded that they did so. So, we had to put everything again on paper, make series of reforms, define everyone's role, review the Statute and the internal regulations and eventually separate the associative from executive." [Int. MSF04, 2015]

The legal basis of MSF-G is the form of association. The association is a forum open for all members. Through the General Assembly, which convenes annually, it observes and controls the executive components of the organization. The association, currently, provides the room for active exchange of information and ideas, as well as the participation in collaborative decision making processes. The Board, which is elected from the General Assembly does not affect neither the daily management, nor the operations in the field. The political aspect of the activities, as well as their conformity with the principles of the organization is what is expected from the board and the General Assembly, while operations and daily management is expected from the executive. The executive

component is also referred to as the 'management team'. A big differentiation of MSF Greece comparing to other NGOs in the country is the emphasis and the power bestowed upon the executive sphere, a strategic decision made by the organization in order to facilitate and expand its operational capacity. In a more detailed fashion, what makes MSF different in lots of ways from other associations, and in some way limits or tones down their democratic profile is the notion of 'medical emergency'. The 'medical emergency' produces some heavy implications on the organization in two separate ways, one that has to do with being *medical*, and the other has to do with the idea of *emergency*.

With the organization identifying itself as medical it gives precedence to the medical argument, evidence-based medicine, and medical doctors as members within the organization itself. For instance, the president of the organization has to have a medical profile, and major decisions in missions go through both the operational director as well as the medical director. The medical coordinator also has a stronger opinion on the field, when contrasted to other positions:

> "Unlike other NGOs where 'what you say' is what counts, MSF are really action-oriented, and so what counts is 'what you do'. Also, it is an NGO with 'medicine' built-in all over its DNA, with most of its activities being of medical nature. Eventually, people calling the shots are people who have knowledge of the medical science, and the more specialized you are in this, the more your leverage becomes. This is reflected also on the hierarchical structure, where under the head of mission you get three seemingly equal positions, admin, log, med; but we know that the MedCo is both *de facto*, and in a certain sense also *de juris*, higher than the rest." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

In MSF Greece there is an effort to promote democratic processes, and bring to the General Assembly for debate every matter of strategy. This is a process that takes time, as the dialogue might take days, months or sometimes years in order to take the organization one small step ahead. The product is important, because it is indeed manufactured by the consensus of the members (wide processes), and helps promote the sense of ownership for each separate member. Although this may be true, there are many activities that the organization has to decide and act with little to no consultation. For instance, MSF

involvement in the Ebola crisis in 2014 in western Africa was a decision that had to be made fast. It was a decision that was made through the 'technocratic' route, rather than the associative and democratic one. Of course, this is understandable since a) it would take a considerable amount of time to consult the sum of members (a timeframe which is not compatible with the impetus of the disease) and b) the democratic justification is practically already there, when the MSF decision making have agreed to bestow powers upon the executive sphere to act on medical emergencies in general. It is so, that great amounts of money could be spent (for the record, the provisional 2014 budget for MSF's Ebola response in West Africa is €51 million, and the epidemic is still ongoing) without consultation from the base, but still without hurting the associative and democratic principles of the organization.

Within the executive sphere, as well as in the operations of the organization there is a sharply defined hierarchy, in contrast to the associative flat hierarchy. Even more, every position inside the organization and every employee has a very specific job description for which he is informed and upon which he is eventually assessed for his performance. This is true for each person from the general director, who is appointed by the board, to the last employee. Of course, this is a privilege that MSF has, since all the people on the chain of command are paid staff and not volunteers. As a result relations within the organizational structure are mostly professional and interactions are defined by the procedures. The hierarchical pyramid of MSF is steep, but has developed as such for specific reasons:

> "Beyond the various tools and the somewhat complex processes, we have considerably more layers of management. Practically, as the organization grows it needs more money and more people. It needs them in order to safeguard the good spending of those money and to manage those extra people. Growing also means that you have less experienced people to run more programmes, so you have to put more layers of management to protect your resources, and this ramps up the bureaucracy by adding extra controls. We know well the symptoms of growth, but it is the decision of the organization to keep on growing, since you get to save more lives this way."
> [Int. MSF03, 2015]

Even during the years of separation and international isolation, the situation within the organization was not at all disordered. There was, for example, an 'emergency unit' which was responsible for the emergency operations. During the earthquake in Turkey in 1999, the emergency unit decided, with the consent of the general director that MSF-G should provide aid at the disaster area. The members were medical stuff who were on call: surgeons, nurses, logisticians, all included in the organization's emergency lists. The processes for the initiation of missions were likewise specific.

Concerning the aforementioned tight structure on which MSF has decided to operate, there are some drawbacks and some criticisms. One has to do with the institutionalism of the organization and the other has to do with participation of the local communities. Initially, with membership being a right only to people who are either under contract or have been in MSF missions for a certain amount of time, participation in decision making is severely limited. There is an option for volunteers to become MSF members with voting rights in the General Assembly, but this practice has not been implemented much. The problem created by this situation is a growing dynamic of the expanded bureaucracy to control the decisions made by the General Assembly. When indeed the majority of members are somewhat professionally connected to the organization, it would be naïve to presume that it is only the humanitarian arguments that prevail. There is the risk of having a self-regulated establishment, where the controlling nature of the associative upon the executive will essentially diminish as the second has the power to control the first. The second criticism regarding the participation of the community goes beyond the etiquette and the aesthetics of humanitarian action and touches the very essence of sustainability:

> "Perhaps one of the greatest problems concerning decision making in MSF has to do with the participation of the local staff in the decision making processes. Should they have their say on the project? In MSF, for the time being, there is no such thing. We are more like a humanitarian 'corporation' that goes around hiring people and producing marvelous results. Still, decisions are being made either outside the country or at the capital or by the HoMs or through a certain process; and this process is not as inclusive

as it could be. Of course this is part of a big discourse that has to do with most NGOs in the humanitarian space." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

Conflict prevalence

The organization has a very distinctive relation with the concept of conflict. By all means, at the time being, it fulfills the criteria expected from theory on Simon's administrative organization, where the number of conflicts are low and their intensity low as well. Most of the members believe that the environment within the organization is characterized by amity, harmony and accord. This extends to both the associative and the executive sphere. Small arguments that arise, are more often than not of technical character. For instance, field doctors on the Ebola crisis in 2014 might have been arguing on whether or not they should take the extra risk of using more IV fluids on Ebola victims and save them; a conflict of strictly technical nature.

Alas, throughout the organization's history things did not always look the same way: in the previous periods, when the organization had a much different *modus operandi*, conflict dynamics were different as well. There could be no example more evident than that MSF Greece had to expel its own former president in order to resolve its internal crisis, nearly a decade ago. Even back then, and today as well, conflict is most strongly connected to the 'people factor', rather than anything else. The intensity of conflict is related to the strong types of personalities that the world of humanitarian action attracts, and the dynamism that is expected from people working in harsh environments. Their strong beliefs, their somewhat rebellious personalities and their sense of co-ownership of the organization sometimes produces clashes that defy the hierarchical structure.

Nowadays there is an innovative, perhaps hybrid approach to conflict within the organization. This is the use of conflict in order to provoke constructive discourse. In order to differentiate it from other models, here conflict is evoked instrumentally. It is a natural component of the organizational environment which is put to good use. In this process of course there is collateral damage, but way less than expected. Characteristically:

> "Self-created conflict and self-criticism always come hand in hand. We are constructing perpetual debates just to force ourselves to think differently.

You'll see what they say and then you say the exact opposite so as to see the response, to see how we overcome the challenge. Culturally, we create tension just to go ahead. People killing each other in verbal fights and after an hour drinking beers together? You can't see that often in other institutions." [Int. MSF03, 2015]

Compliance

Most of the activities in the HQ or the field are defined by specific procedures. These procedures are in place in order to secure efficiency and homogeneity between the various sectors. They are also there in order to protect the employees and the beneficiaries, as well as to maximize transparency and accountability.

Of course, since MSF is an emergency organization we already know that it is impossible to prepare and have set procedures for every single future contingency. So, in that sense, even if there is a pre-determined course of action for most things, there is still room for improvisation and interpretation. As the organization grows in size, so do the number of documents, procedures and every other form of action-formulating element. It is often seen as a problem, as it makes the organization act slower in certain issues and because it also feeds the bureaucracy. Beyond being seen as the inevitable result of organizational growth, this plethora of procedures is also seen as the reason for the growth itself, since it guarantees the necessary transparency to the private donors that fund the activities.

However, there are exceptions to the case. The exceptions have to do with emergency situations in which the organization would need to act nearly instantly. In case of great disasters, when time is of the essence, the team would not have to do a proper plan on paper, neither follow SOPs by the book, nor even comply with all standards. This kind of operations might take as long as many weeks, depending on the situation, and the main factor driving decision making is efficacy and saving lives rather than being efficient.

In case a member does not comply with the procedures or acts in his own accord, then there are specific sanctions in place. Most of the members are bound by a specific contract and of course this entails specific obligations. In case the obligations are not fulfilled or the

behavior is unacceptable, then there are warning systems and the member could be fired. A common tactic in case a member creates problems while on mission is that he is 'blacklisted' and therefore excluded from future missions. A member also could be expelled from the organization in case his behavior goes against the fundamental principles of the organization. This is really important for the organization, because it jeopardizes the image of MSF to its donors who would not tolerate inconsistent behavior.

Assessment of the individual is also something that is being done extensively, and therefore it should be expected to influence decision making in members, as they know that at some point their actions and what was expected of them will be put to comparison. Each member is therefore assessed based on the goals set for his position and his competences. The specialized tools being used are no different than the classic HR tools available in the corporate world, and they aim mainly at providing objective criteria in the assessment process and helping the members overcome their subjectivity while assessing their colleagues.

Decision making fora

Decisions have a planning phase and an implementation phase. In MSF, broadly speaking, there are different key actors in each phase. The collaborative fora in which planning, consultation and discourse takes place are the General Assembly, the Board, think tanks, and various less formal debates that take place during the year that facilitate the promotion of ideas. The strategic assessment of operations is also done at this level, so that these bodies do not interfere with operations directly. This is also in accord with the principle of the organization to act unperturbed and leave the internal criticism to be done only after the completion of the operations.

A motion that is initiated by members of the association can be part of the General Assembly's agenda, and if appropriate, it could be forwarded for further consideration at the International General Assembly. This way, even small groups of members could have their say and take a chance in affecting the direction of the whole organization.

"If we need to characterize the climate inside an MSF-Greece's General Assembly in the recent years, I think it is all about sharing of information and sharing a feeling of unity. There is considerable trust by the GA to the executive, and most of the proposals brought by the management team are being accepted bona fide. There are always questions: sometimes for clarification and sometimes just for provocation, but essentially it is a process of briefing and confirmation rather than redesigning and controversy." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

All things considered, the theoretical expectations of the 'administrative organization' were met, since the decision making fora are mainly utilized for technical information exchange while other uses are practically of subordinate (though no less important) nature.

Member behavior and perception

Effectiveness is the key term when it comes to decoding both MSF behavior and perception of individual role within the team. Members strive to 'get things done', whether that be at the office or at the field. The main objective of the organization is to 'save human lives' and 'providing medical aid to the people in need' and under that prism everything is a matter of interpretation, as far as the end result is maximizing to this account. The organization runs a constant effort to be both effective and efficient, even when facing serious dilemmas. The same maximizing attitude is expected from prospective members and newcomers:

"We 'take advantage' of their need and passion to be volunteers. Instead of working for a big hospital or the big pharmaceutical industries, they could be working for the other side. All we ask is that they work under specific principles and rules, and comply with our system in a way that maximizes the expected results. If you want to work outside this framework it might still be beneficial for your conscience, but neither the result would be decent, nor could it evolve thenceforth. So we say, bring yourselves and your know-

how, let's agree on some minimum and see how we can get the most out of it from there on." [Int. MSF04, 2015]

The members of MSF Greece, when operational, like to think like they belong in a sailing team. There are great challenges and dangers in the environment and this produces a lot of stress. In this context, they stick to the operational hierarchy, try to keep conflicts to a minimum and just follow orders from 'the captain' – those in charge. If someone is being used to another way of working, the organization expects that he puts that aside and conform to the new norm.

"Every single member of the organization is a cogwheel; a part of a great engine. You can't stop turning and do what you please- you have to follow the rules because the next cogwheel will be unable to turn as well. This is the evolution of MSF. Everything is a procedure, from the way you interact with the beneficiaries to the way you write your report. This is not bad, since it helps you maximize the results, but I personally enjoy being able to go one step off the line, to feel and act somehow unrestrained, without putting the organization in danger." [Int. MSF05, 2015]

So there are times were this 'maximizing' behavior seems to bother the members of the organization, as increased efficiency means more increased control, which in turn means restrictions in spontaneity and impetuosity. There are other times were the decisions for the maximization of efficiency go beyond the mandate of the organization and therefore individuals might act *beyond the call of duty* in order to achieve what they think is right:

"Sometimes we do things that the HQ are agreeing to, but still you would go ahead and whatever you can for a certain patient. I recall, in some missions for HIV patients, we would go ahead to the local pharmacy and buy the drugs ourselves, if they were not covered by the programme. The thing got out of control. Protocols are designed by priorities and by capabilities: Is it a priority and can we do this for everyone? However, as a doctor, you connect with your patients – not only in a sentimental way, but also in a positively egoistic way: 'this guy here, I want to save him'" [Int. MSF04, 2015]

Behavior, except for maximizing, is also often anticipatory, meaning that actions are not always judged on the basis of today's yield, but on their future consequences. This kind of decisions are not easy to understand and should definitely take under consideration the geographic and geopolitical underpinnings of the context. The most typical example is the decisions to continue operations in countries where there is no apparent crisis dictating the presence of MSF, just because there is a projection that MSF would have to return there in the near future. So, in order to save precious time it utilized the preexisting network setup and registration of the organization by deciding to maintain its presence with some insignificant projects. In this way, a little bit of efficiency is sacrificed for tons of effectiveness when it really matters.

As an interesting exception, MSF-G decision making was not always defined by rational calculations and fulfilment of the environmental needs, but also used to present with capacity-driven behavior, especially in the early years after its creation:

> "After the operation in the psychiatric clinic of Leros Island, in 1991, there were other projects in Armenia in 1993 in an orphanage and another programme of psychiatric health in a rural town near Azerbaijan. The founder of MSF-Greece, Paraspyropoulos, was a psychiatrist, so he was keen on this kind of medical interventions. There were no other psychiatrists, but the team was consisting of occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers… Everyone was better equipped to understand mental health issues." [Int. MSF07, 2015]

Training and mentoring

Training is a very important aspect of the MSF experience. Apart from having sophisticated demands as prerequisites for employment (preceding personal assets that relate to his academic and professional background), the organization has extended its requirements from its employees by adding in-house training in the mix. It seems to be a *sine qua non* for every position, from the headquarters to the field, and from general director to field logistician, to be trained. Even if there are various aspects of institutional character, the

general trend of the training processes in MSF are in parallel with our theoretical expectations of the Logic of Consequence, as well as Simon's Administrative organization (technical training based on job requirements).

These in-house trainings are offered by the organization but do not necessarily take place in Greece. On the contrary, most of them are being held in other sectors and target various members in similar positions from all over the world. Most typical is the initial training that every member would have to go through before joining his first mission, which is called Preparation Primary Departure (or Préparation Premier Départ / PPD). The goal of such a training is to prepare the members not only on how to provide technical training but also on the organizational philosophy, values, working methods and structures. It was referred to as "a good introduction; while the rest you are going to learn from your team on the field, and this takes time" [Int. MSF04, 2015]. Apart from the PPD, MSF does provide 'technical' training for every position there is in the organization. These trainings are offered to all members, who may apply in order to participate, and might be able to do so if they are justified and approved. Beyond the executive sphere and the operations, specialized training is also offered to members of the BoDs so that they are able to fulfill their roles more efficiently and to help them overcome the various obstacles that they may encounter.

This continuous training system is vital for an extra reason: the retention rates in MSF (and MSF-G as well) are so low, that it is important to always train new members – irrespective of organizational growth. One third of the members will do only one mission, one third will do two or three missions, while only the other third will stay on for longer.

Atypical training in MSF Greece, in the form of mentoring, does not take place often. It was a thing of the past, where some very specific persons were active in the organization and when the official training was not so formalized and intense. In the years prior and during the isolation years (1999-2003), the organization did organize meetings with people from the medical community and even students of medicine and talk about the political aspects of aid, the alternative course of humanitarian medicine, and of course about the MSF Movement. Generally speaking, these people who undertook the role of atypical mentors in the organization belonged to the first group of members to join, if not found,

the organization. Atypical training, but not in the strict sense of mentoring also occurs at the field, where the management tends to place first-missioners together with experienced staff, so that they are able to learn by working on their side.

Interestingly enough the term mentoring in MSF is also standardized. There are *mentors* whose role is to travel around in missions and stand by the side of people who are in their first mission or first time in their position. MSF even offers mentoring for persons identified for future coordinator positions. Their objective is to help with the ropes and to train them. There are mentors for different positions and sometimes they are very specialized: they are called 'flying officers', and they travel around the world in various missions and provide specialized technical support on demand to the field staff.

Model of reasoning and important actors

MSF Greece nowadays thinks and acts closely to the standard MSF pattern. Even if MSF Greece does not vertically plan or implement missions, it follows a standard behavioral pattern in each activity it undertakes. This is an organizationally perspective reasoning, one that tries to maximize the results in the long run and achieve certain goals within a given timeframe. For this to happen, the organization has borrowed from the non-humanitarian sector a certain methodology of planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing its activities, by using logical framework analysis (LFA), problem and solution trees, stakeholder analysis frameworks and other tools. At the same time, the organization has developed certain tools which are departmentally specific, as well as IT solutions and software for financial, HR, and educational purposes. Everything targets at achieving the goals as well as maximizing the organizational performance.

There is also a piece of retrospective thinking in MSF, but this again happens in a very formalized and standardized way, and with clear prospective objectives. For every big crisis that has sparked an internal crisis within the organization, MSF has decided to publish a series of books called "MSF Speaking out" where the organization openly examines and analyses its actions and decision-making processes. They contain written and oral recollections, as well as interviews of people who played important roles during those

periods. These publications were designed as educational tools for associative members, but now their self-reflexive value is open to the public and distributed broadly. Opening to criticism in such an absolute and continuous way, transforms the nature of this strategy and acts as proof of a prospective, rather than retrospective reasoning.

People who 'call the shots' within the organization are people of high technical expertise. Experience also plays an important role, but it can't have big implications on the decision making process unless it is accompanied by a similarly important position of that person within these processes. That of course does not exclude experienced members from taking part or affecting important decisions. It simply stresses out the fact that there is a congruence between being experienced and having a position at the top hierarchy of MSF Greece. Experienced members who are not working for the organization at the time, are unable to affect the decision making process mainly because they are lacking direct accessibility to the decision making elements, which is reserved for employees of the organization. In case of a clash between argument by experience and technical argument, the result is clear:

> "The winning argument in MSF-G is always the scientific one and this is why: In MSF Greece, most of the decisions are taken by the executive sphere. The old, experienced, member - the 'dinosaur' as we would call him, if he is working at the office, he most likely has a top-level position. If not, then he is either hanging out socially or participating in a board meeting. Board decisions again, are detached from the operational sphere, they are of a more strategic nature, so you won't be talking numbers there. The organizational structure resembles the corporate counterparts, so the 'dinosaur' won't be influencing operational decisions. He might be affecting decisions on a political scale or on an interpersonal basis, but that's not at all often." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

Impact of the environment

Decisions made by the MSF bodies seem to be in conformity with the environment. We should contrast the term 'being in conformity' with being dependent on environmental contingencies, since the environment in this case only affects the limits of what is

acceptable for the organization to do. Referring to the environment at the receiving point of humanitarian aid it has an impact on the organizational decision making as such: since the decisions of the organization are targeting at helping communities in need, MSF seeks out the information regarding the needs and shapes its activities around these results. On the supplying point (which is the Greek society), the organization claims to have a very restricted relation with any other social groups who can press and shape the humanitarian agenda, such as the media, the medical and scientific community, or political parties.

The financial independence of the organization has given it the privilege to be able to respond globally, without always having any external support, a situation that translates to independence from the media and the public. Support seems always welcome but is not a prerequisite. In this way MSF are able to respond to crises that the majority of people are unaware of, the so called 'neglected crises', and then provoke the media to pay attention to that situation. This reversed relation, where the humanitarian organization is able to drive the attention of the media and not vice versa, is a direct consequence of the strategic choice of being supported by a large, constant pool of private donors and not institutional funds or ad hoc fund pooling.

All in all, MSF strives to keep up being objective and unswayed by external forces. Although this may be true, it seems that the growing pressure inside the Greek society, with distressing images of impoverished people and with escalation of vulnerabilities, has somehow affected MSF-Greece. These effects are translated to numerous projects initiated in the recent years inside Greece, and a rationale of obligation towards the host society itself:

> "You feel the pressure of the local society; a pressure you have to respond to. They keep asking: 'I have been supporting you all these years, shouldn't you now do the same?' It is a matter of compensating the Greek society and at the same time it sustains fundraising. Since there are real needs to be met inside the country and people would support us financially to do it, why shouldn't we? MSF despise being donor-driven, but this is important." [Int. MSF08, 2015]

At times, MSF Greece also has to be reactive to the environment, in the sense of responding to challenging issues and provocations of other institutions. Notable examples could be the creation of the 'Doctors with Borders' in 2012, by the extreme rightwing nationalist party Golden Dawn and the mandatory testing and prosecution of the seropositive sex workers, again in 2012 by the Greek CDC and the Ministry of Health. In those cases the organization decides autonomously to react according to the principles of the organization for the protection of the people in need and medical ethics in general.

3.3 Médecins du Monde - Greece

3.3.1 Organizational Profile

Médecins du Monde – Greek Delegation is a non-profit organization based in Athens, Greece. It was founded in 1990, as the Greek section of the Médecins du Monde, a medical humanitarian NGO which was initially based in France. It is part of the International MdM Network. Currently, its headquarters are situated in the city center, in a building that serves both as organizational headquarters and a polyclinic.

The objectives of the organization are outlined in the Internal Processes Regulation (put into effect by the BoD decision 1312A - 09/10/2013) and include a) the provision of care and humanitarian aid in countries suffering from war or disasters, b) defending human rights against racism, xenophobia, social exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups, c) protecting women and children, d) the registration of disaster victims' problems as well as speaking out for them, and finally e) témoignage, which is a French word for being a witness of the suffering and publicly advocating for it.

The organization has distinguished its activities in four different categories. The first one is responding to crises, where the organization would provide aid to the people affected by either a health crisis, an economic crisis (that hinders access to health services), a political crisis that produces armed conflict, or an environmental crisis. The second category is disaster response. The third and fourth categories are referring to mid and long-term programmes that either have to do with reconstruction or development of affected communities.

Organizational funds are secured through four different sources, which are the subscriptions and donations of the members and donors of the organization, the sponsoring from companies and other institutions, the European Union's funds, national and international organization's funds, and finally the bequests. As we can see from the diagram below, the organization mainly depends heavily on institutional funding.
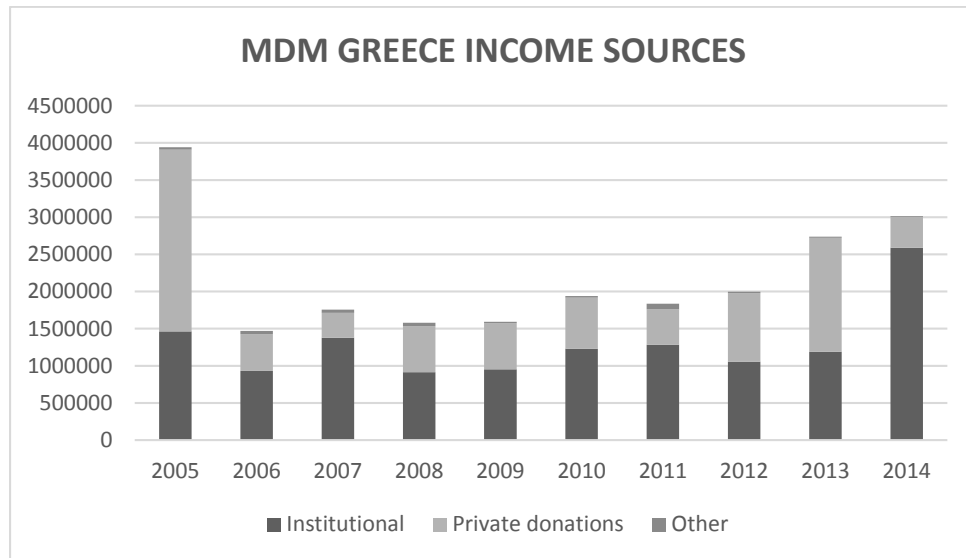
Graph 7 – MdM Greece Income Sources
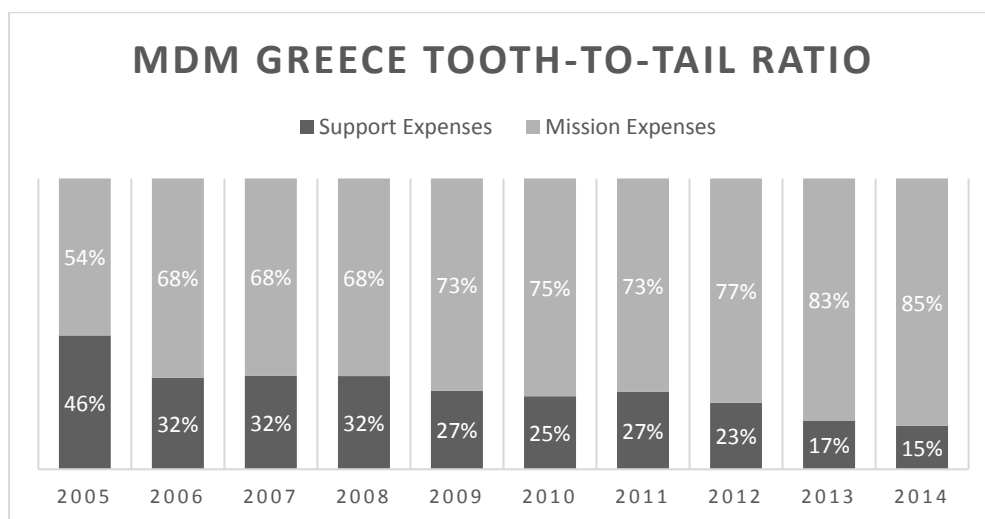
Graph 8 - MdM Greece expense balancing

Since the organization is an association, the highest authority is the General Assembly (GA), which convenes yearly and every two years votes and elects the Board of Directors. The role of the GA is to monitor the activities of the organization and take strategic decisions about the general direction in which the organization should move towards. The BoD on the other hand is very active in MdM Greece, and even though its mission is closely related to that of the GA, the board is present in the daily life of the organization. The structure of the organization is condensed, without many ranks, and every employee has direct access and supervision by the General Director.
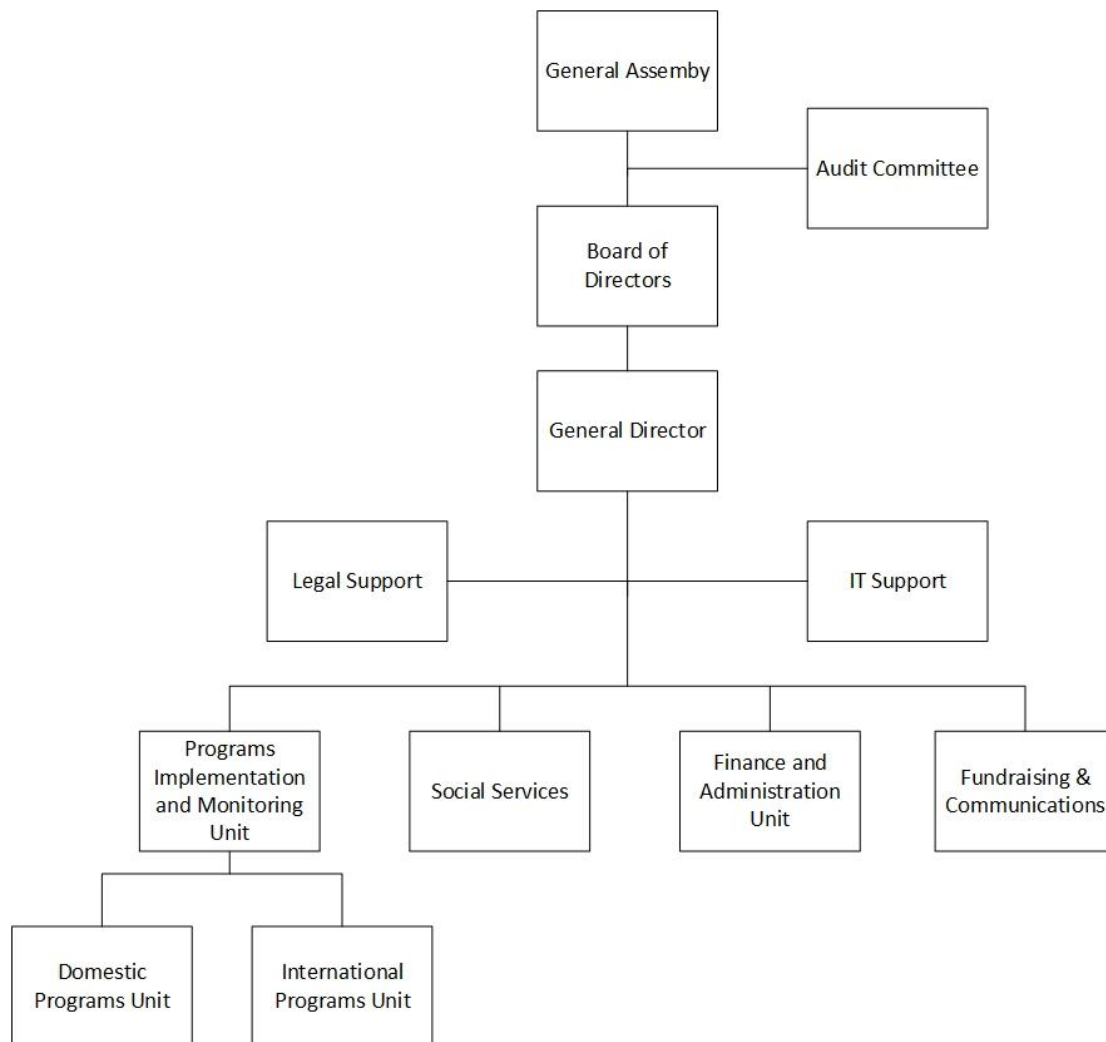
Graph 9 - MdM Greece Structure

3.3.2 History of MdM Greece

Médecins du Monde did not just come out of the blue to become one of the most well-known NGOs in Greek society. As with most organizations of this type, their roots can be traced in a series of contingencies, context-specific instances and even chance. Similarly with the Médecins Sans Frontières, the birth of the organization itself was in concordance with the national and international dynamics of the era. Researching the history of their creation, as well as the evolutionary process of their early years goes beyond the important and stimulating practice of recording history; it is deemed paramount for understanding the organization's decision making processes of our days. The organizational culture, as it was cultivated through years on end, from the first draft paper and forth, steers the operational and strategic decisions in various directions.

The early years

The prelude to the story of the Greek MdM section dates back to the early eighties, and is nearly as old as the history of the international organization itself. In the same way, as with the Greek sector of the MSF, the driving force behind the creation of the organization was, by and large, based upon the efforts, the ambitions and the humanitarian vision of a single man: Theophilos Rosenberg.

Theophilos was a medical doctor who, after graduating from the medical School of Athens, went to Paris in order to complete his specialization in surgery and upon completion, he did a further specialization in cardiovascular surgery. Bernard Kouchner, who would become the leading figure behind the organization for several years, already worked as a gastroenterologist at Cochin Hospital in Paris from 1975 to 1987. It was the year 1980, and it was at that time that Theophilos bore witness to a series of cataclysmic events in the humanitarian world:

> "One should think about the context of that time: the founding of MSF and MdM later on, coincide with the aftershocks of the May 1968 events in Paris. In these events, the doctors and the students of medicine played an important role, while at the same time the restrictions of the state

mechanisms against the dreams, ambitions and aspirations of a young doctor became obvious." [Int. MDM06, 2015]

It was the social events of that period that fueled the creation of MSF in 1971, branching out of the Red Cross Movement. Speaking out and advocating for the vulnerable people became a new paradigm for humanitarian action, parallel to the neutral Red Cross. In the next years within the midst of the 'rebel' MSF, a new discussion took place: should the organization grow, and become more structured or should it remain 'a small commando unit of emergency doctors'? The 1979 General Assembly of the MSF decided that they should become more organized, while approximately 20% of the votes were still in favor of remaining small (*rester petits*) and versatile, like a band of guerilla doctors. Kouchner resented the choice, believing that the organization would eventually become "the bureaucrats of misery" or the "technocrats of charity" (Vallaeys, 2004).

At the same year an event took place that would reshape the humanitarian map once again. The Malaysian government denied entry to the boat people coming from Vietnam. The European media reproduced the images of distress recorded from inside the *Hai Hong* boat and eventually the French society was enthused to send a boat of its own, to show solidarity and assist the refugees. Kouchner along with other doctors and intellectuals would sign in for the campaign. The boat was christened "*Île de lumière*" and while anchored in the Pulau Bidong, in Malaysia, it provided medical treatment to more than 36,000 Vietnamese refugees in dire medical conditions. The MSF believed that this was more a show for the media and not the meaningful assistance that the organization should provide, and thus refused to help the mission. The intense argument between the MSF President Claude Malhuret and Kouchner in a board meeting signaled the rupture. In the next year Bernard Kouchner decided, along with some other of his distinguished colleagues, to officially break away from the MSF Movement and decided to form another humanitarian organization, the Doctors of the World, or Médecins du Monde in the original French.

At the anatomical theater located in Fer-à-Moulin road in Paris, Theophilos Rosenberg was working side by side with some of the early members of MdM. These people were characterized by their passion, their strong political (mainly socialist) stance, and as a consequence captivated the mind of the young Greek doctor who had absolutely no

experience in these issues at the time. For the next years his French associates continued to encourage Theophilos to establish an MdM sector in Greece when he returned back, in 1984.

> "The timing didn't seem right for the creation of such organizations in 1984 Greece. The society at the time was still going through the *metapoliteusi* era[15], social-democrats were on the rise, and the struggle of the young doctors was more about syndicalism and politics and less about something as exotic as 'humanitarian action', which at the time was a thing left for the Church". [Int. MDM06, 2015]

It was only until 1989 that Theophilos decided that the time was right to make his move. There were two events that made the moment ripe. The first was the catastrophic *Spitak* earthquake in Armenia that claimed thousands of lives and produced an inspiring international response, including the dispatching of a C130 aircraft with aid from Greece. Then, there were the events of the Romanian Revolution in 1989. The civil unrest in Bucharest and Timisoara, and the consequent clashes between the Ceaușescu government and anti-government protesters led in many people losing their lives or becoming injured. A plane again was prepared from Greece to go and assist the people in need, but the mission ended up in a fiasco. The necessity to become organized became more evident and the need more pressing.

In December 1989, Theophilos was already a member of the Board of the Medical Association of Athens, and a lecturer at the Athens University's School of Medicine. Using the Medical Association's newsletter, he posted an announcement about his intention to establish a Greek section of Médecins du Monde, in order to battle disorganization and promote the universal humanitarian principles in the provision of aid. His post provoked innumerable responses from within the medical community that wanted to join in. The initial meetings, prior to the official creation of the organization, were being held in Theophilos Rosenberg's private practice, opposite to the American Embassy, in Athens:

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[15] The term is referring to a turbulent time in Greek politics, with the political transition from the military junta which ended in 1974 to a new, democratic model.

"Every day, a handful but enthusiastic team of people would meet in the office and discuss related issues. Those people were somewhat incongruous, having no ideological or other consistency. It was just doctors who read the ad and responded to it. Amongst them, some were old Red Cross members, others were political activists, and others were religious people trying to save their souls. Some had experience, while others had courage. Besides their apparent lack of cohesion, they were all respected and welcome. Given this, Médecins du Monde were built on an extreme, nearly pathological democratic substrate for Greece." [Int. MDM06, 2015]

A date was announced for the first assembly in March 1990. In the months prior to that meeting, Theophilos travelled back to Paris to meet with his French MdM connections. There, the word had spread about his intentions to establish MdM in Greece, and that a MSF sector was about to be established as well. Odysseas Voudouris, a future member of both organizations, who was at Paris in January 1990, arranged for Theophilos Rosenberg to speak directly with Rony Brauman, who was President of MSF France, about the possibility of not establishing two, but one new organization. Theophilos told Brauman that a date was already set for the first meeting of the MdM in March, and with this in hand, both men agreed that '*Alea iacta est*' and that it was too late for a change in plans. Plans were also made for Theophilos Rosenberg to meet Sotiris Papaspyropoulos who was spearheading the creation of MSF in Greece, and was at Paris, similarly to no avail.

Right before the inaugural meeting, the zealous members of what would become the organization, were working together on drafting the charter. Extreme emphasis was given on producing a charter that reflected the democratic and direct character of the organization to the society. This followed the example of the typical MdM expansion, internationalization that was based at the enthusiasm of a core team of people in each country, subsidized technically by the international association. Except for a wide base of acceptance, in some countries like France and Spain the social-democrat governments provided support to these initiatives, while in other countries the effort was fueled by the devotion and boldness of a few people. In contrast to the MSF internationalization process, most cases were self-initiated and there were no standardized prerequisites by the candidate

sectors. The major concern from the international part was for the national sections to abide to the newly drafted Krakow Charter, also called European Charter of Humanitarian Action, which sets out fundamental principles that underpin the work of Médecins du Monde on a global scale. It is really interesting to note that the preamble of the Charter defines humanitarian action as a necessity within the democratic political structure, further reaffirming the view that humanitarian action is a form of political expression.

The inaugurating meeting took place as planned in the Athens University's premises, in March. More than 150 people attended, which was more than what was expected, given the restrictions of that time. Between them, distinguished members of the medical community and members of MdM France, notably the former President Patrick Aeberhard. With a few exceptions, only a handful of people attending the meeting had any field background, but the lack of experience was substituted by an excess in passion: it was indeed the age of heroism (Voudouris, 2010). The university also provided space for the setup of the organization's headquarters, located in the city center, which facilitated the operational needs until its final relocation in 1999.

The first two 'trial' missions of the organization were 1990 Manjil–Rudbar earthquake in Iran, where MdM Greece sent tons of food and clothes, and the second was an exploratory mission of two doctors in Turkish Kurdistan, to see the conditions of Kurdish refugees fleeing from Saddam Hussein's wrath in early 1991. The Sha'aban Intifada was the first international mission for the organization, where in collaboration with the Greek state that offered logistical support, they sent people and material aid to northern Iraq – perhaps what could be considered as the first Greek humanitarian mission ever. The mission lasted for about a month and provided assistance to the Hospital of the town Ranya.

At the same time, Greece becomes the host country for hundreds of Kurdish refugees that arrive via Turkey (the eastern Mediterranean route). MdM Greece was quick to respond to such an unprecedented event, and managed to effectively support that vulnerable population with the support of the Greek state, providing them with shelter in old army camps. It was thus established in the minds and hearts of all MdM members, soon after the creation of the organization that the organization would be operational both within Greece and outside it.

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One of the first milestones for the international experience of the organization was its mission in Somalia. It took place in early 1994 and lasted for nearly 2 years, providing technical assistance to the local clinics in the towns of Xuddur and Wajid. Practically, MdM took over the infrastructure of MSF, which by mid-1993 had decided to scale down its operations in Somalia due to increasing security concerns. When the MSF left the area, they decided to give over possession of their infrastructure to MdM, who were willing to establish activities in the area. Even if MSF, with their amazing infrastructures by the standards of that time and place, gave a certain initial boost to the inexperienced Greek Médecins du Monde, it was the first time that the organization had to provide continuous logistical support for such an amount of time and in such a distant place, a fact that soon challenged its operational capacities.

There are two main issues concerning the Somali experience for MdM Greece that had implications for the whole organization. One had to do with the organizational structure and the other had to do with standardizing procedures. It soon became obvious that in order for the organization to be effective it should have a separate mission support desk, moving away from the absolute voluntary character of all members at the field or in HQ. At the same time, the dire security concerns in Somalia, as they were notoriously highlighted by the assassination of the logistician of the mission George Glyptis in 1996, also triggered a standardization of security policies. His loss, although attributed to his involvement in problems of the community, was also connected to the MdM policy of 'staying close to the people, and don't fortify yourself behind barbed fences, huge jeeps, etc.'

Another fundamental characteristic of the organization was practically developed during those years, and one that is going to play a major role in decision making even to this day: the national identity of the organization.

> "In Somalia we were enthused about having to administer former MSF structures, with their standards and level of efficiency. What happened, was that we came in contact with these international standards and we started to implement them. That was, prescribing to the standards while at the same time giving a distinctive Greek signature to it. For example, a common practice was to promote Greek drugs. We had produced a list of the essential

drugs available in the Greek market, and we started to ask various pharmaceutical companies to provide the drugs they could. The pharmaceutical producers were willing to help because we would procure large amounts of drugs, and so we pressed for even better prices. We had the belief that as far as the infrastructure and logistics are concerned, by promoting the 'Greekness' of the mission, we would be able to compete against the gargantuan pharmaceutical industry." [Int. MDM06, 2015]

At the same time, back home, the organization started to advance rapidly through the implementation of humanitarian programmes inside the country with funding from the European Union. ECHO funds did not only boost the organization operationally, but at the same time they promoted all structural changes that were vital for the proper implementation and monitoring of such initiatives. Even the relocation of the organization to a self-owned building was co-funded by the EU Structure Funds, providing for a new place where the new headquarters would be, alongside with the polyclinic and a hosting service. Unfortunately, the events following the big earthquake in Athens in 1999 disrupted the relocation and challenges the organization's repositioning.

From 1999 to 2014 there were no significant historical events that shaped the organization. MdM Greece remained active in several activities, mostly inside Greece, while at the same time launched initiatives in disaster areas around the world, most notable being their missions in Western Sahara, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Haiti.

3.3.3 Decision making in MdM Greece

International Governance

For the Greek sector of MdM, one of the most enlightening clues about its organizational behavior is its relations to the international movement of Médecins du Monde. Interestingly enough, the relations with the mother organization is in concordance with the pattern found within the organization itself on a local level: an ambiguous relation of variable character, ranging from caring to antagonizing, and from consultative to indifferent. It is notable that the relations between the national sector and the international organization had no

considerable fluctuations through time, meaning that there was a more or less standard motif of interaction, irrespective of who was in charge of the organization in Athens.

> "We identify ourselves to be some sort anarchist-autonomists[16] within the Movement; an accusation that is often indicted upon Greek MdM for making decisions on our own. We believe that according to our Statute, we are an independent organization. We sincerely believe that there must be some sort of coordination and exchange of information, and thus we strive to succeed in these aspects. In cases that we think that international involvement would hinder or limit our operationality, we have ways of evading the problems without offending the principles of the organization."
> [Int. MDM04, 2015]

The idea of independence is heavily embedded into the minds of the Greek MdM members. Some went as far as to recognize an effort of the International Movement - not just in MdM, but in other organizations as well, as an effort to patronize the national sectors. This in their understanding corresponds to a form of humanitarian imperialism of the western paradigm. International governance within the MdM framework is a subject of negotiation between the national sectors, often related or grounded to geopolitical analysis:

> "We often have to negotiate the terms of how we will end up on the field and we are lacking the leverage: we are a small, Balkan country; some weirdos carrying backpacks that build clinics in Haiti and Kobanê. We had been often pressured by the Movement, especially the French and the Spanish, but in the end the reasonable arguments always prevailed and we reached an agreement". [Int. MDM02, 2015]

Additionally, the form of relationship between the national sections could even take a curious 'friendly competition' that seems to be as old as the organization itself. Another participant elaborated deeper into the idea of intra-organizational competition:

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[16] This seemingly extreme term was surprisingly used by several senior MdM members in order to characterize the attitude of the organization towards the international Movement.

"Another factor for which decision making within MdM Greece is fast is the competitive climate between MdM sister-organizations. This is common ground for anyone working in an NGO in the humanitarian sector; a competition of good intentions about who is going to arrive first and be more effective […] This competition dictates that we act fast to secure a much needed 'humanitarian space' that would otherwise not be reserved for Greece". [Int. MDM05, 2015]

The ambiguity model in MdM external governance also has some exceptions. In some part, there is recognition of the great assistance that comes from acting within the network. The case of Haiti in 2010, was a perfect example of how the organization (that nevertheless autonomously initiated its presence there) harmonized its practices with MdM International, due to the enormous logistical and administrative challenges of working in such a distant and unfriendly environment. This practice was accepted by MdM International, which provided full access of the Greek delegation in the logistics base in Santo Domingo, signaling a *de facto* acceptance of MdM Greece's operational independence. Contrariwise, members of the organization understand and accept the fact that there must be some form of international coordination in the relief efforts and that there is no point for all MdM delegations to try and work together at the same place. In other occurrences, such as the case of the MdM mission in North Korea during the famine in 1997, MdM Greece collaborated operationally with MdM France. This coordination though does not always have to be on the basis of rational calculations but can also be an automated process on a value-basis, thus resembling an international institution.

Internal Governance and Organizational Structure

The discourse about internal governance and organizational structure will develop around two main axis. The first has to do with the nature of the organization, identifying itself as hanging in the balance between professionalism and volunteerism. The second axis concerns the structure of the organization itself, and the way it facilitates the activities. Both these axis intertwine and produce the unique characteristics of the organization.

MdM Greece has a very distinct balance between professional and volunteer staff. This ratio is a major determinant in the decision making processes, as well as a major factor shaping the character of the NGO. In the last decades, it has become evident that dealing with complex humanitarian emergencies necessitates professionalism, which means having specific, professional staff. This entails the risk of producing a growing internal bureaucracy. This bureaucracy could either deal with problems produced by its existence or even create problems to justify its existence. Whatever the case, the ideology of humanitarianism is in danger:

> "Of course everyone accepts the positive aspects of volunteerism in humanitarian action. There must be a balance between the volunteers who respect, endorse and enforce the Statute of the Organization, and the employees who provide technical assistance without affecting the ideology of the organization" [Int. MDM05, 2015]

The Board, which is being elected by the General Assembly every two years, is a) formed always by volunteers and b) is under close scrutiny of the society that elects it. This acts practically as a safeguard to the democratic processes and a restraining factor against the bureaucratic takeover of the organization. The growth of the organization, with the initiation of lots of EU and private donor funded programmes, proved risky for this delicate balance:

> "As the organization grows, the administrative and logistical needs grow as well. The funded programmes, which are essential for our development, are becoming more and more complex. To tackle this problem the development of an equally effective bureaucracy is vital. It is this that decides which programme to run, how to run it, and how to assess its performance. For the time being, we have achieved the balance between the hierarchical structure of the employees and the volunteer Board." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

Moreover, the MdM Greece's board of directors meddles in the daily life of the organization as a matter of strategy. It is believed that in this way the volunteers can have an oversight on daily management, and not lose connection with the reality of the organization. This is contrasted to another model of governance where the board mandate

is restricted to matters of defining the NGO agenda and general strategy, and refrains from interfering with the employees. Although acknowledging the difficulties that this practice involves, MdM Greece believes that this is the way to achieve a balance between the two worlds. It is most thought-provoking that most of the participants to the study based their understanding about this peculiar and decisive balance in their direct or indirect experiences in the political affairs, and more specifically, the role of the bureaucracy and nomenclature of the Greek Communist Party (KKE).

To inverse an incorrect perception of hostility between the bureaucracy and the volunteers, we should understand that it was the volunteers that helped the bureaucracy develop and stabilize. Indeed, during the first years of the organization, the board would have to substitute for the physical lack of –or inadequacy of- the bureaucracy that would support the organization. It was a very long and persistent struggle by a selected few, who envisioned a more efficient and effective NGO. By and large, the nature of the problem became a matter of balancing.

Now, within the volunteer structure there is a definite aversion for any kind of hierarchical structure, and pure detestation for any notion of pyramid hierarchy. In this sense, most of the senior members of the organization perceive themselves as part of a team of equal people, whose ideas and opinions matter in decision making as much as their own. The only difference between them and the rest would be that in the end, they (or whoever was in a position of power) should make the final decision, and most often, after consultation with the rest. Due to the nature of the organization, being a medical NGO, there is an exception to the rule of 'equality of opinions', and that is that the medical doctors, by virtue of their profession, have to be Heads of Mission and thus they get to have the final say to all decisions made in the field.

Conflict prevalence

Conflict between the members of MdM Greece is nothing rare and exotic. On the contrary, conflict is seen as occurring naturally, like a part of everyday life within the organization. The organization is described as a model of society on a small scale, like a family, and

tensions are to be expected. Albeit having a certain value system for all members of the organization, personal weaknesses can't vanish and often find ways to surface and fuel clash between the members. These clashes often involve groups rather than individuals, and it has been recorded that there were times that the organization witnessed 'factions' to fight against each other for the promotion of their ideas.

Most importantly, conflict is not considered a disadvantage but a trait for the organization. It is seen as a factor facilitating change and constructive dialogue, stimulating the organization into action:

> "This is why we promote having debates, negotiation and even conflict in the organization. We don't want to hide it. It is indeed a positive aspect. Democratic processes are difficult to manage but they lead to a creative synthesis of opinions that produce solutions to problems that would otherwise have to be solved by the bureaucracy, without anyone knowing what is going on. The organization has gone some tough internal clashes."
> [Int. MDM05, 2015]

These conflicts are not restricted only to think-tanks and within the closed doors of decision making fora but also seem to diffuse also to the operational scale, with incidents of tensions to be found in missions. The most typical case for this would be the mission in Haiti where for more than a month, the expats in Port-au-Prince would spend their valuable energy trying to resolve internal issues rather than being productive. This, in combination with restricted financial means to support them, resulted in the termination of the mission.

Compliance

Again here, whilst analyzing MdM Greece's compliance mechanisms it is evident that there is a match between the organization and March and Olsen's ambiguous organization ideal type. That being said, we had expected that there would be unclear compliance mechanisms, that there would not be many documents formulating or constricting behavior, that actions would often go against the rules and that there would not be any clear-cut assessment tools for the members to act as an incentive.

Assessment of members can be separated into two different categories, one concerning the employees of the organization working in standard positions and the other concerning the volunteers. The employees of the organization are most often assessed on the basis of their job description and against the outcomes of their work. Their activities are most often defined at their contract, and there is some form of management by results (or management by objectives) within the headquarters. Quite the reverse happens for volunteers, which are most often the ones staffing the missions abroad. Volunteers are left without specific tools for assessment, and this happens as part of an internal policy:

> "It is really important that we endorse a volunteer perspective. We already know that the bureaucracy feels uneasy about that, because the bureaucracy is judged by its efficiency and so it needs specific assessment tools. In this respect, MdM Greece differ from other organizations, for better or worse – no one can tell. It sure gives them an advantage in Greek society because it is close to the Greek attitude and mentality, but at the same time falls short in efficiency; I don't believe we can compare these two." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

When it comes to documents, rules, SOPs and guidelines, it becomes most evident that MdM Greece is an organization that has found alternate ways of operating, albeit successfully, without their systematic use. In most participants it was apparent that they didn't need to formulize their behavior or did not have acknowledge any kind of documents as a decision making modulator. A vital exception had to do with SOPs concerning security, although even then, the processes are not as sophisticated as one could expect.

For MdM Greece, compliance to the rules might seem loose, but definitely has some red lines. These lines are evident when it comes to the basic principles of the organization and more specifically in racist behavior. In cases where there is such a violation of the principles or there is a breach in the code of conduct, there are certain procedures in place that a member could be expelled from the organization, by decision made from the General Assembly. The same decision is dependent on the General Director in case the subject is an employee with a work contract. Remarkably enough, the Board of Directors is directly

responsible for the correction of erratic behavior of volunteers in the field if they disobey the Head of Mission.

In some cases, compliance is achieved through social control mechanisms. In some cases, in the absence of regulatory mechanisms, a person with behavior that does not match what is expected from an organizational member, has had both employees and other volunteers systematically isolate him and eventually drive him away. Matching the institutional typology quite accurately, compliance is consequently achieved through a constant filtering process:

> "There is a sense of protection by the members towards the organization. Any member with unacceptable behavior would end up being isolated. We have established a volunteer desk which tries to provide information on both schedules and rules, but also on our values and principles. But this is theoretical… Practically, every person has an induction period within a society of volunteers. As a new member, he follows keenly the rest, and while doing work, he gains experience on how exactly to behave. At that phase, you either stick with us or you leave." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

Decision Making Fora

The decision making fora of MdM Greece are a constructive and fruitful breeding ground of ideas, organizational self-reflexivity, and purposeful dialogue. At the same time, they are the place to negotiate, persuade, and compromise. Collaborative decision making occurs often and leaves room for entrepreneurial behaviors. Within the organization 'forum-like' or collaborative decision-making processes occur in a) the General Assembly, b) The Board of Directors, and c) between informal decision-making bodies in missions. The prevalence of that last one is dependent on the personality of the mission administrator.

Again here, the element of negotiation seems to play a really important, integral part in the democratic essence of the organizational structure. For example, in the case of the Kefalonia earthquake of February 2014, initiating a mission or not was put through

negotiations in order to reach an agreement and send a mission on the island. The creative nature of negotiations is however often put into question:

> "Negotiations within the GA and the BoD are some form of a quality criteria of their correct functioning. Members of the board are expected to negotiate their 'truths' until a common 'truth' is found. This used to happen a lot. Nowadays, more and more often, the majority team within the MdM Board is enforcing its own 'truth' upon the rest" [Int. MDM01, 2015]

The majority rule seems to be an acceptable model of collective decision making. Consensus is hard to achieve and in due course, negotiations do not always take place under the best circumstances. Personal arguments and dissention between participants is noted, as they do not always seem to be at best terms with each other. Some argued that there is an unacceptable lack of information flow, which hinders the proper and substantial functioning of the collective decision making bodies.

> "There were periods of time where the atmosphere within the BoD was majestic, everyone felt like being amongst brothers – without going as far as to say that we were missing the fights! The amity and the solidarity were exceptional. However, there are times were the atmosphere is hostile; members see others as adversaries." [Int. MDM01, 2015]

Member behavior and perception

In the absence of a clear organizational and often operational mandate, what is left there to drive the behavior of the participants within the organization? The void is apparently filled by a capacity-driven behavior, where the organization makes decisions based on the opportunities of the environment. These opportunities must be consistent with the aspirations of the members of the organization and compatible with the general mandate and the principles of the organization as a whole.

A fine example is the mission in Kobanê which was initiated in October 2014. As we already established, the first ever mission of MdM Greece was in the region of Kurdistan

25 years earlier. The advancement of ISIS towards northern Iraq and Syria, the consequent pressure on Kurdish populations, the forced relocation of thousands of civilian, all these accounted for sentimental reasons for MdM to consider engagement. But way beyond that, there was a very convenient substrate: a) the Greek society was very moved by the resistance of the Kurds in Kobanê and as a result it was easy to collect resources (financial or gifts-in-kind) to support a mission, as the Siege of Kobanê had already taken a symbolic character, b) previous engagements with the Kurdish population had established a very convenient network of people which were now willing to facilitate the aid efforts, c) a good relation with Turkish authorities that provided a rather friendly and secure environment to operate, and d) within the organization there was a big debate about the international character of the organization that in the last four years (the peak of the economic crisis in Greece) had been underplayed. Moreover, during the exploratory mission and in the board meetings that followed actions were driven through the same 'capacity' framework, as in '*what can we do*?' rather than '*what should be done*?'

This understanding seems to be enveloped in the core of the organization's activities. Yet again, it is the revival of the idea of Bernard Kouchner about 'remaining small' and not enlarging the bureaucracy that is needed to produce efficiency. Only that this time, this strategic vision is not just a product of choice, but also of capacity:

> "The whole point of exploratory missions is to see if there is potential for action, given the organizations capacities. Every following activity is grounded upon this calculation. You should consider that MdM have decided to be autonomous, thing that restricts our operational capacities considerably. We are a small country, in a crisis, with limited resources and logistics capabilities… Lots of our actions are of a symbolic character rather than aiming at having a deep impact in the target communities" [Int. MDM05, 2015]

Accordingly, the effects of capacity-driven action are diffused from the organizational level to the individual level as well. Personal conduct also feels unrestrained and guided solely by the general mission objective:

"It might sound a bit provocative, but in a way being a humanitarian worker resembles the psychology of a young and aspiring football player. You know that the goal is to help the people in need. When the ball is at your feet, it doesn't really matter what the coach told you the day before. You have to improvise, and if you are lucky, you'll make it. And most of the times we make it." [Int. MDM03, 2015]

At the same time, there are lots of instances where the behavior of the members of the organization match an obligatory or rule-based behavior, one that we would expect in the ideal type of an 'institutional organization'. There is a reported 'sense of duty' which 'activated' the organization several times, notably with the war in Bosnia and then Kosovo being the most characteristic examples as in "it was happening in our neighborhood, the Greek doctors could not be absent from this" [Int. MDM04, 2015]. In Kobanê, the sense of obligation derived from the psychological ties with the people of Kurdistan, due to the fact that MdM Greece first mission took place there. In Haiti as well, because of the historical connection between the two countries[17], MdM Greece felt like they were obligated to be there and contribute to the relief efforts.

Other exceptions to the rule are provided also towards a more mechanistic and rational model of organizational behavior. For instance, there are numerous calculations that have to do with the amount of resources being spent in the administrative and logistical support of the missions. Others were supporting a value-for-money analysis for the restitution of organizational goals:

"It has always been a tantalizing question, whether we can put our financial resources in a better use. We have to take under consideration the unfortunate fact that a small mission abroad might cost as much as six months of the polyclinic in Athens. We have to prioritize." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

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[17] The Republic of Haiti was the first state to ever recognize Greece, soon after the Greek War of Independence in 1821.

Training and Mentoring

Médecins du Monde Greece as an organization has not invested in training its members in a formalized and standardized manner. Without any kind of disregard towards the beneficial results of such a training, its members do not have to go through any kind of official training before they assume positions. Although some of the members see themselves as 'self-taught artists' in the humanitarian affairs, the organization invests in the proper academic and professional training of its volunteers. Some of the first volunteers of the organization had the chance to participate in a limited amount of humanitarian context related trainings, organized by other MdM sectors:

> "In the beginning, we started with no particular training, like amateurs with faith and love for the cause. The first team started reading, participating in seminars and some few trainings by MdM France, and then we tried to make a few trainings of our own […] But besides scientific knowledge, there is so much more knowledge that you'll need, that you will get only through experience" [Int. MDM04, 2015]
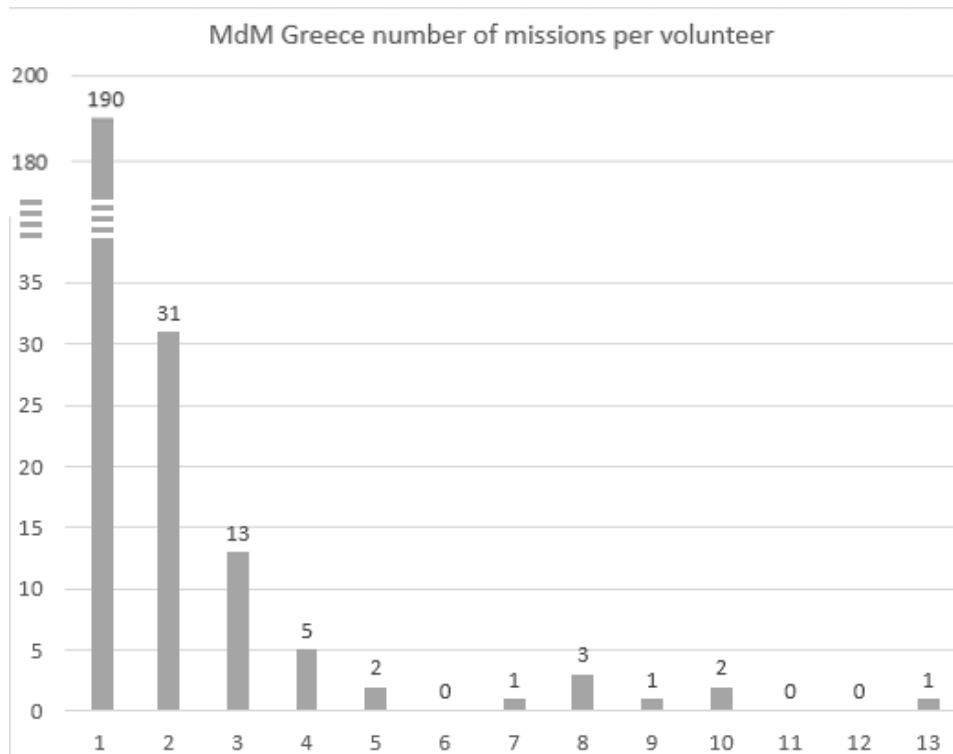

Chart 10 - MdM member experience in missions abroad

The organization is still running practically on the experience built through time, mainly during the period 1992-2005. In this time, defined by the initiation of MdM Greece in international missions and up until the Indian Ocean tsunami relief effort, there was a core team of members who participated in most missions and gained significant experience to pass it on to newcomers. Below we present the graphical breakdown of experience level of members within the organization.

It becomes evident that MdM has a clearly small retention rate, with more than 76% of the volunteers (190 from 249) participate in just one mission. Relatively limited experience is a fact for 88% of the volunteers (221 from 249) having 2 or less missions on their roaster, and 93% (234 from 249) of the volunteers having participated in 3 or less missions. It is evidently obvious that there are indeed just a selected few with enough experience in missions abroad.

In case of huge emergencies, the organization mobilizes "conscripts of all ages", both new volunteers and the reserves as well. This has certain advantages, since the new members can learn by operating side by side with the older, experienced members. In this way, not only technical knowledge is passed on, but also the mentality of the organization as well. At the other hand, this practice has certain disadvantages. First of all it is liable to errors, as misconceptions and erratic behavior might be passed on to others. Secondly, the organization is dependent on always having an available experienced overseer, thing that is not always true. For example, in Haiti, after the second rotation of staff, volunteers were being sent to Port-au-Prince with minimal training; just a three-hour crash course on basic issues regarding the environment.

Within MdM Greece, there was a definite consensus that there are certain people that acted as mentors to most members of the organization. Those persons indeed played an important role in shaping the organization by shaping its members, the way they acted and perceived the humanitarian world and the role of MdM Greece within it. The persons recognized as such were Theophilos Rosenberg and Iro Varsami, both founders and prominent members of the organization. The identification of a clear mentoring system is correlated with an institutional nature of the organization.

In the last years there has been a considerable effort by the Volunteer desk to keep the volunteers up to date with the programmes and goals of the organization, while at the same time provide some minimal training concerning the code of conduct and the principles of the organization. In some small periods of time, through the history of the organization, the Missions Desk also aspired to provide training for those volunteers who depart in missions abroad. Lack of a specified curriculum and training methodology, unavailability of human and time resources, prohibited this idea from turning into a sustainable standard.

Interestingly, the organization found another way to battle the problems that come with the absence of training. That is, a collaboration with the University of Athens, School of Medicine, which is running a Master's Course that trains aspirational humanitarian workers in disaster management. Since 2010, in every major mission of MdM Greece, there is always at least one person from the university, who is participating as a member of the organization, and has a general consultative role, providing at the same time technical and state-of-the-art solutions. The university, could also be consulted on specific issues, without necessitating a physical presence of any of its stuff on the field. All things considered, this solution does not constitute an alternative to in-house training, nor it provides the same results, but indeed it has many advantages for both parties.

Model of reasoning and important actors

Definitely some very stimulating aspects of the organizational decision making are highlighted when we analyze the general model of reasoning and identify the chief decision makers. In its majority, we recognize a tendency for simultaneous reasoning which is capacity-driven, and opportunity-dependent. In a considerable portion of cases, operational choices are coupled by some favorable circumstance that the prime decision makers have to acknowledge and pursuit. Another supporting argument has to do with the sustainability and the viability of the missions. It is most often that activities might commence without actually knowing if the organization has or will find the means of supporting it through time. That gives MdM Greece an amazing advantage of being able to act nearly spontaneous and improvise in the process.

"In most missions you just start off like that, knowing that you have to be there but not knowing for how long you will be able to keep on being there. […] In the Iran earthquake in 2003, we found a small funding that lasted us throughout the emergency phase. When the mission evolved from emergency to development, we could not support it anymore financially and we had to shut it down. The gargantuan NGOs like Caritas, Save the Children or even MdM France, amongst others, took all the funding and we were left with essentially no resources. […] If you don't have the money, what can you really do? Most of our missions end because of this" [Int. MDM04, 2015]

The instantaneity and simultaneity in decision making are very sketchily exemplified in the events that had to do with the establishment of the MdM Greece's mission in Haiti. We recall that the most important activity of the NGO in Port-au-Prince was the establishment and operation of a polyclinic in the industrial complex of the Société Nationale des Parcs Industriels (SONAPI). Indeed, this was a product of instantaneous reasoning:

"How did we end up in SONAPI? We were in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, before we reached Haiti. When we were just about to enter our vehicles to drive to Haiti and meet with MdM Belgium, a lady showed up, telling us that she has a niece who is a nurse in Haiti, and that she messaged her about this place that people need immediate assistance. On our way to meet the Belgians we decided to go and have a look. There, we saw people dying, so we stopped to help. We had no idea what was going to happen. […] You have to be open to suggestions, else you are going to find out that you provided a lot less than you could have. When you are open, remarkable things happen. When Air Canada came and asked to help, we were positive. We didn't know that we were going to end up with a 'field hospital' because we hadn't planned ahead for such a thing. Within two days, the cargo had arrived and we were ready to initiate our operations."
[Int. MDM03, 2015]

In contrast to this model of reasoning, where the organization is responding to environmental contingencies, there are exceptions. Most notable is the mission in Kobanê in 2014, where MdM Greece provided relief supplies to the refugee populations in the greater area of the Turkish town of Suruç. In this particular case the organization had to respond to pre-determined and analyzed needs assessment data.

This model of reasoning is in fact a matter of strategy, as the organization knows well that there are other ways of decision making and operating. A lot of the problems that arise from simultaneous decision making could easily be avoided. Instead, the decision makers stick to a methodology that seems to be working, even partly efficiently, for specific reasons:

> "We have all the limitations that a Greek humanitarian organization might have. Everything is practically tailor-made to fit the needs and the challenges of each different context. There might be what we would call 'international experience', but it is unable to provide universal solutions for a Greek equivalent – and because we have strategically chosen our missions to be 'Greek', they were also peculiar." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

Coupling opportunities and capabilities is an integral policy of the organization. Characteristically:

> "Most often we get to have this exact reasoning: 'we have this budget, so we get to make this mission'. We rarely get the chance to have a reasoning like 'we want to make this mission, so we have to find this budget'. […] In the Kefalonia earthquake in 2014, we had to make a draft budget for the minimum expenses that were expected in the field, but beyond that, the continuation of the mission depends on the response and the solidarity of the Greek society, and the resources that the organization will be able to muster" [Int. MDM02, 2015]

In this environment of continuous responding to environmental contingencies, there is a lot of space left for entrepreneurial behavior. It has to be explicitly clarified that by the term 'entrepreneurial' we don't necessarily imply a personal self-interested motive for

action. The term is suitable because it underlines the self-initiated, often innovative, persuasive and dynamic approach in decision making. These entrepreneurs are seen as a driving force for the organization, as they are often able to redefine the organizational agenda. Their actions are guaranteed by the democratic processes of the decision making bodies, whether that be the general assembly or the board of directors.

Here again, we identify a better correlation with the ideal type of an institutional organization as most of the times the key decision makers are the more experienced members. These are the people whose familiarity with the humanitarian world shapes the way the organization prioritizes its activities. Through their experience, together with their personality, they are able to modify the agenda, and shift the opinions towards supporting or oppose certain activities.

> "There is a certain bunch of people who essentially call the shots. They are some form of the 'old guard' who have been on the wheel from the start. These people have experience in missions abroad, and the feel like they have to contribute in decision making. Their leverage though, as well as their will to intervene varies greatly from time to time." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

Impact of the environment

Organizational decision making in MdM Greece is strongly connected to the environment. That means that the decisions that are made by the organization reflect the needs of the society as well as the expectations that the society has from the organization itself. In reality, it is difficult to categorize the organization-environment relation by the predetermined theoretical expectations between the Logic of Consequence and the Logic of Appropriateness. The environment does affect the decision made by the organization in both strategic and operational levels.

The connection that the organization desires with the Greek society, is a key factor in decision making. Eventually, this factor comes in a clash with rational decision making. The organization understands that there are humanitarian crises around the world that desire more attention than others, but since the Greek society is not sensitized to those

particular crises it would not provide enough support and eventually no action could be taken. Most evident is the relation of the strategic choices of the organization concerning the media:

"The role of the media in Greece concerning our activities is threefold. Firstly, they are a source of information about what is going on in the world. Secondly, they are a source of pressure for us. Finally, they are the means through which we reach our donors and collect our resources. It is a relationship of dependence, since you have to sensitize public in order to ask for its support for anything that you want to do. This resource-dependence from public opinion makes our organization more vulnerable, but at the same time makes us more alert. We have to be observant of what the society wants, watchful and attentive of what the Greeks want, because we are a Greek organization and this is critical. That does not necessarily imply that you would follow the opinion of the majority, but you have to know what they want – and this is one thing that MdM Greece does quite well." [Int. MDM05, 2015]

At a more operational level, the organization has made a strategic choice to be really close to the people it provides help to. This gives the advantage of a direct connection with their opinions, as well as their fears and aspirations. The precious interaction produces results (in the form of information or changes in perception) that is collected, analyzed and is usually transmitted by the field staff to the higher levels of decision making bodies in Athens. Alternatively, the same results may affect decisions made on the field by the members of the mission.

"There is no doubt about the environment influencing our decisions. In Somalia, we were influenced by our guards who insisted that we were in danger and we had to leave. In Kobanê we were influenced by the Kurds, because we felt sympathetic to their cause. In Palestine, we are more influenced by the Palestinians because we consider them friends. That of course does not mean that we do not accept the word of the Israelis just because they are Israelis." [Int. MDM01, 2015]
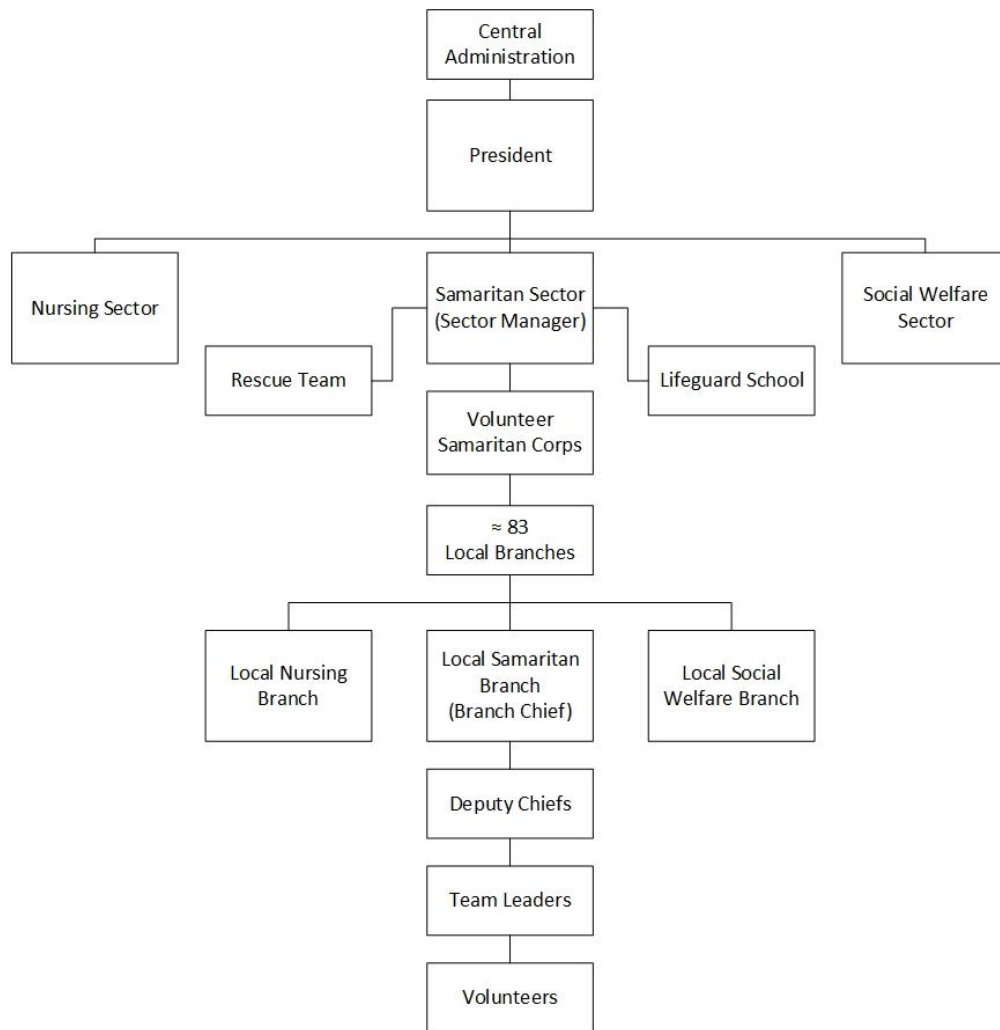
3.4 Hellenic Red Cross - Samaritans

3.4.1 Organizational Profile

The Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) Samaritans are one of the three operational sectors of the Hellenic Red Cross. The full name of the organization is 'Hellenic Red Cross Samaritan, Rescuer and Lifesaver Corps', since the composition of the organization also includes members of both three disciplines, but for the purposes of the study we might refer to the organization as just 'Samaritans'. The Samaritans in a strict sense are not an autonomous or individual organization by themselves, and are therefore studied within the framework of the super-organization that is the Hellenic Red Cross. The Hellenic Red Cross is a charitable and national benefit society, under private law and governed by its statutes and its constituent law L.3711/1927, as amended by L. 552/1945 and under Civil Law provisions. The HRC Nurses and the Social Welfare are the other two operational sectors, and there is also the HRC Youth. There are significant differences in the internal regulations, the structure and the decision making processes between the three operational sectors. These differences render the study of the Red Cross as a whole impossible, especially in parallel with other organizations. As has already been explained in the first chapter of the study, the Samaritans would hereon forth be treated not as a representative case for the HRC, but as a single entity that operates within its framework[18]. For that matter, the HRC Samaritans also work under the General Secretary of Civil Protection of Greece, since 2001, when they were included in their registry (reg. num.2001/022).

The mission of the organization is threefold. First and foremost is the provision of first aid and the provision of first aid training to the general public. Second, and equally important, is the participation in rescue operations after disasters. Third and last, is the provision of lifeguard training and lifeguard services, as well as rescue within water. For the HRC Samaritans to succeed in those goals, the members go through a 15-month training, and further specialized training throughout their life within the organization. Of course,

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[18] What actually is encountered quite often is the phenomenon of having organizations nested inside other organizations (for instance UNHCR within the UN, or a worker's union within the corporation). It is a matter of perspective, and falls within the discretion of the researcher, within reason, on where to focus.

members are considered to equally be members of the HRC, and so, they often take part in activities of general interest.

Graph 11 - HRC Samaritan Structure (within the framework of the Hellenic Red Cross)

The organizational structure of the HRC Samaritans is somewhat complex, comparing to the other two organizations of the study. This has to do with complexities of the Hellenic Red Cross, but is also expected due to the size of the organization, that is present in nearly 35 different local branches all over the country. Practically, organizational governance is being done by the General Assembly and the Board of Directors of the HRC. Due to peculiarities of the HRC that practically means that the head of the HRC Samaritans is the President of the Hellenic Red Cross. Under him, are the Managers of the three Sectors

(Nursing, Samaritans, Social Welfare), and so, the second in command in the organization is the Manager of the Samaritan Sector. The Sector Manager has direct control over the Rescue Team (a team operating in disaster sites and in missions abroad), and the School of Lifesaving. The local Samaritan branches though, are *de jure* managed by the local Red Cross branches[19] – although *de facto* command remains with the Sector Manager. In each local Samaritan branch there is a Chief and two deputy Chiefs, under which are the volunteers.

There is about a 10:1 ratio between the volunteers and the people employed by the Red Cross, although this ratio is way smaller when it comes to the Samaritans. There are about ten to twenty staff (countrywide) which occupy themselves with administrative and logistical support, while the number of active volunteers is near a couple of thousand. The ratio between men and women at the moment is 2:3. The number of new volunteers that enter the organization each year is really big, but the total number of active Samaritans remains relatively stable due to the similarly huge number of dropouts and people who stop taking part in the activities.

2011	2012	2013	2014
625	637	670	720

Table 4 - Yearly number of new trainees in the HRC Samaritan schools, countrywide.

3.4.2 History of the Red Cross Samaritans

The early years

It would be a mistake to examine the history of the Red Cross Samaritans disconnected from the history of the Red Cross movement in Greece. Even if today the organization operates in a way that enables us to study its decision making processes autonomously from the rest of the organization, this was not the case in the earlier years. As the Greek

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[19] In the same local Red Cross branch, there might be both Samaritan, Nurses and Social Welfare branches active; it truly depends on the case.

national society happened to be one of the old members of the Red Cross family, the story takes us real back in time.

In the few years prior to 1877 the Greek society was reaching a boiling point. The political situation was turbulent to say the least, with eight different governments exchanging positions in less than two years. The country was in a crisis, with a huge financial deficit, and in desperate need for external loaning. The poor and the middle-class were the ones that suffered most as their living conditions became more dire since the government had to raise taxation in order to meet the terms of the loans already in place. At the same time Europe was destabilized, with Germany establishing its European hegemony in the mainland, after defeating France and Austria in war. The Russians were coveting Ottoman territory and the Greek populations in Thessaly and Macedonia were on the verge of revolting. The Greek army was on standby to support the Greeks of the north, which were practically at the mercy of the Turkish civil shuffling (Kordatos, 1958).

In this turbulent context the Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinova, granddaughter of Tsar Nicholas I, who married the King George of Greece and became Queen, was augmenting her popularity by engaging in extensive charitable work. In 1875, the Queen established the 'Educational Institute for Nurses' in order to provide training for nurses; this establishment would in the coming years evolve to be the country's biggest hospital, Evangelismos. In the same period, Red Cross societies were being developed in most European countries. In 1876 also, the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded had just adopted its new name - International Committee of the Red Cross. Queen Olga decided to promote the idea of founding a similar society in Greece, and therefore begun to amass support to accomplish it. The Ottomans had an operational Red Crescent society since 1868, and in 1876 neighboring Serbia had established its own RC society, and Bulgaria was about to do exactly the same. The King decided to provide a Royal decree with the government of the time, headed by Alexander Koumoundouros. The decree number 44/1877 practically founded the Hellenic Red Cross, while at the same time laid the foundations of the decision making processes of the organization in the future. The decision was welcomed by the International Committee who greeted the newest member into the ever expanding Red Cross family.

Within the Royal decree, membership status is defined, as well as the details of how and when the board of directors should meet and decide. Specifically, according to article 6, the board should meet every two weeks and decisions about the activities need at least five of the eleven members to be present. The metropolitan bishop of Athens, the head of the Orthodox Church in Greece, is appointed as honorary President of the Red Cross. Also, the decree assigns board responsibilities to specific people, most of them members of the social elite. The first board came directly under the protection of the palace, and the Queen herself (Michaloudi, 2007).

The newly found organization did not have much time to spare in order to become organized before the eyes of the people in need turned towards it asking for help. In 1878 there were uprisings in Crete, Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia, were the Red Cross built field hospitals for the provision of first aid to the war victims. Later the same year, the first, Nursing Division of the Hellenic Red Cross was established. Some years later, in 1981 a huge earthquake in Chios Island killed more than 4000 people and more than 7000 people were injured (Altinok, 2005). With the three quarters of the island's structures turning to ruble, the Red Cross provided aid in the form of field hospitals, food and NFI distributions.

Eventually, in 1897 war broke out between Greece and the Ottoman Empire over the status of the Ottoman province of Crete whose population wanted union with Greece. This was the first war for Greece after the war of independence and the first war for the newly founded Red Cross. The organization had to support both the Greek army, as well as the civilian casualties and the displaced populations. Field hospitals were again the preferable course of action, in various places parallel to the battlefront. The provision of aid continued throughout the conflict and for a short period afterwards. Likewise, the capacity of the organization to cope with similar events was put to the test short afterwards, in a series of conflicts that lasted from 1912 with the Balkan Wars and continuing to the First World War and the Asia Minor Campaign up until 1922. There are reports that Hellenic Red Cross nurses eventually passed away from exhaustion, denying to withdraw from the front lines. Beyond providing for the war-wounded, the Red Cross also organized huge fundraisers inside Greece, as well as abroad in order to muster all probable resources. With the exchange of populations that followed the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, and more

specifically the Article 1 of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, more than one and a half million Greek were deported from Anatolia to the Greek mainland. The Red Cross facilitated the initial health monitoring of these people in four different centers, and covered some of their basic needs as far as clothing and food was concerned.

At that same period, a paradox occurred, impinging on the Red Cross fundamental principle of 'Unity'. Due to a complex political situation concerning the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos and King Constantine A' the country had practically two governments, one located in Athens and the other in Thessaloniki, from August 1916 up until June 1917. For nearly the same period of time, the Provisional Government of National Defense led by Venizelos, in northern Greece, designated the local Red Cross sector as being autonomous and independent. For nearly a whole year, a single country had two Red Cross societies, something unheard of in the global organization's terms. The resolution of the political issue and the unification of the country's government, also resulted in the reunification of the Red Cross's structure under a single command.

In 1932 a new division within the Red Cross was formed: The Volunteer Stretcher Bearer Corps, which was the prelude to what would be the specific organization in which we focus on the current study. The idea was to be able to organize people, including men (who were somehow excluded from becoming nurses) to providing voluntary aid within an operational platform. The exact circumstances under which the division was formed have been lost in time, but we know for a fact that the idea became really popular, really fast, since in less than 10 years – from its creation until the Second World War, there were more than 1195 volunteers listed on the registry. In the year 1936, the corps was renamed to 'Volunteer Samaritan Corps', a name which –with few alterations- holds to this day. The year 1937 was the year that the division started enlisting women as well in its ranks, while in 1955 it halted the training of female members by a decision from the organizational board, which was eventually toppled for good in 1975.

During the Second World War, the country came under the occupation of the Nazi rule and suffered much: the Great Famine of 1941-1944 exemplifies the horrible situation in which more than 300,000 people estimated to have lost their lives. The Hellenic Red Cross, in

collaboration with the Türk Kızılayı (Turkish Red Crescent), and the ICRC provided much to the desperate population. In fact, the multi-organizational operations during the Great Famine could be considered the first international humanitarian operations of that type and scale in Greece. OXFAM was also created on that particular occasion. Unfortunately, the Volunteer Samaritan Corps had ceased to train volunteers for the whole period of the occupation. Nevertheless, the Hellenic Red Cross managed to remain active during the war, and initiated many activities, like organizing blood banks and food distributions, sending packages to soldiers and POWs, supported the wounded of the war, and provided wheelchairs and prosthetics for the amputees.

The next milestone in the Hellenic Red Cross history, as well as the Red Cross Samaritans, was in 1953 when a huge earthquake struck the Ionian Islands, and leveled the Island of Cephalonia. Nearly half a thousand people died and more than two thousand people were injured. Dozens of volunteers went the opposite direction of the fleeing population, and with minimal equipment managed to rescue numerous people from the rubble in all three affected islands. They also provided tents and basic healthcare.

In 1965 the Hellenic Red Cross decided to add the third and final division to the Red Cross family, and that would be the Social Welfare Division with a mandate to care for people with disabilities, senior citizens, refugees and migrants as well as people in need of psychosocial support. With the Social Welfare, the Samaritans and the Nurses, the Hellenic Red Cross had assembled all the operational pieces that comprise its puzzle today. The Red Cross Youth is also another sector, established in 1924, but its nature differs vastly from the other three, since it is not operational but educative, promoting the values of the organization to the younger citizens.

The turning point between the past era and the present is undoubtedly the big earthquake in the town of Kalamata, in the south of Greece, in September 1986. The disaster itself might not be able to impress the eye by its statistics, but be that as it may, its implications were great for disaster response in Greece and the Samaritan Corps more specifically. At the time there were only three Red Cross branches that had operational Samaritan teams: Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. They were all running under the command of Nikos Orfanos, who was the appointed sector manager in charge of all the Samaritans. Impressed

by the performance of the international response teams operating in the disaster sites, the Red Cross officials decided to take a huge step forward:

> "Up to that day, the Samaritans were all about training and providing first aid. The idea was shaped by the image of the international response teams. They operated as 'Rescue Teams' with specialized equipment, rescue dogs and vehicles. After the Kalamata earthquake, in 1986, we decided to organize our own Rescue Team – something unique and unprecedented in Greece. At first, we could not qualify as being more 'specialized' but rather as more 'daring', as we were just like all Samaritans except that we were willing to go wherever the rest wouldn't" [Int. RC02, 2015]

In order to become 'specialized' the members had to undergo special training, which at the time was unavailable in Greece. The first members of the Samaritans who participated in disaster response were practically improvising, basing their actions on spatial information that was available at the time. It was more of a trial and error process than a proper implementation of tested and effective operational protocols. A partial solution was found with the collaboration of the Hellenic Red Cross and the German Red Cross, and specifically with the members of the Frankfurt branch. The Germans provided all the technical knowledge in series of trainings that took place in Germany (five in total up to this date), starting in 1989. Some trainings were also held in Greece and were open to a wider audience, with participants coming from RC branches all over the country. For the facilitation of the harmonization of the educational curricula, the Germans had to reform the First Aid training from the scratch. At later stages, more specific training took place that had to do with mountain rescue, aquatic rescue and lifesaving, urban search and rescue, and other fields. The head of the German delegation who was leading the these series of trainings was Theodor Herbert Brand, who was Deputy Country preparedness manager at the German Red Cross in Hessen.

In the following years, until 1999, the Hellenic Red Cross was active inside and outside the country. Most of the domestic missions had to do with response to seasonal disasters: wildfires during the summer season and occasional floods during the rest of the year. Some minor earthquakes also occurred (Kozani and Grevena), and the RC Samaritans were quick

to respond. It must be noted that at the time, there was no official organization in Greece that was responsible in dealing with these situations. The Special Disaster Response Units (EMAK), which were under the command of the Hellenic Fire Service, were established by a Presidential decree (96/1987) and needed time in order to organize and gain relevant experience as well. As a result, the official, government units were being trained often together with the Red Cross Samaritans, in order to achieve the same purposes.

Contemporaneously, from 1991 and forth, Greece also became a receiving country for immigrants. These populations came initially from Albania, but then large groups followed from war-torn territories like Kurdistan, Iraq and Afghanistan. The HRC became increasingly active in the facilitation of these people's needs, with the Social Welfare division playing the leading role and the Samaritans helping alongside.

This decade also marked great changes in terms of people in charge, a fact that had great implications in the reality of the organization. Most importantly, Andreas Martinis became President of the HRC, and by the time he assumed office he started making sure he would remain there for a long time. This would be achieved by securing majority votes in the elections of the BoD. Voting rights were reserved for 'members of the Red Cross', while at the same time the notion of membership remained somewhat void (volunteers were excluded from voting), and employees (who could vote) were controlled by the chain of command. At the same time, Martinis initiated an employee overgrowth, and in the next fifteen years the HRC would find itself employing 720 persons, while IFRC calculated that number as three times as much as it needed to be. In the meantime, in the RC Samaritans a new leading figure rose to the operational hierarchy, Anastasios Gerasimatos, whose charisma and leadership would alter the image of the Samaritans. Gerasimatos worked along with Orfanos, and while concentrating organizational control in Patras, gave a newfound dynamism at the organization, which spread and blossomed across Greece. Most of today's key persons and leading figures begun their involvement in the Red Cross during that period.

As was the case with all humanitarian organizations in Greece, the year 1999 proved to be a landmark. The NATO bombing of Kosovo, followed by the devastating earthquake in Athens, as well as the one in Turkey gave enough room for action. RC volunteers

participated in missions in Albania in order to provide help to the fleeing refugees, while in Turkey, the Greek Rescue Team played a major part in what happened to be the Greek–Turkish 'earthquake diplomacy': the use of humanitarian action in order to ameliorate the relations between the two countries, which were tainted by decades of mutual hostility.

> "In Turkey we had one of our members, who is a Muslim and speaks fluent Turkish, to facilitate the negotiations with the local authorities. We asked permission to operate, even under their supervision. In sight of the horrid situation, they were convinced and allowed us in, even supported us with extra personnel and the Army logistics support. We had two doctors with us, a pediatrician and a surgeon and so we established a field hospital. With the tents still under construction, the line of patients waiting to see the doctors was unimaginably long." [Int. RC04, 2015]

The Turkish Government soon returned the favor, sending financial aid and equipped teams, like AKUT, in Athens, after the September 1999 earthquake. Both three HRC divisions initiated several actions at the municipalities of the western metropolitan Athens area, which suffered the most from the disaster. Rescue operations, emergency communications facilitation, temporary sheltering, food and NFI distribution, and psychosocial support was their main goals, which they admittedly succeeded. After the disaster, the RC Samaritans further developed relations with AKUT, by organizing joint trainings. The Secretary General of Civil Protection in Greece embraced the vision of the HRC Samaritans and provided them with enough funding to upgrade their technical equipment in order to meet the international standards of that time.

In 13 January 2005, the HRC took part in the relief operations of the Indian Ocean Tsunami, organized by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The members of the RC, mostly Samaritans, went abroad the '*Ocean Monarch*'[20], a cruise ship carrying humanitarian aid that had been collected by various donors. The mission was coordinated by two members of the Ministry, who were responsible for the proper delivery of the cargo. The ship sailed

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[20] The *Ocean Monarch* was initially built as a freighter in Newcastle, UK, in 1955. It was later converted into a cruise ship, in a Greek shipyard, and nine years after the Sri Lankan mission, the ship (which by then was renamed to 'Princess Daphne') was scrapped at the Alang ship-breaking yard in India.

for Sri Lanka's capital of the Eastern Province, Trincomalee, where it arrived after several days. There, after distributing the shipment, the ship became a ship-hospital for several days. The HRC members included a pediatrician and a surgeon, and in collaboration with the Médecins du Monde staff, it provided primary health care for both the victims of the tsunami, as well as the victims of the ongoing conflict and the standard medical needs of the population that could not be met by the local health system.

Inside Greece, the HRC became actively involved during the disastrous wildfires that broke out in several areas across Greece throughout the summer of 2007. They were one of the most deadly cases of wildfire disaster in Greece, with 84 people killed and numerous settlements were destroyed. The Red Cross operated alongside the fire brigade, and facilitated in providing first aid to the victims, as well as distributing humanitarian aid to the affected population right after the end of the emergency phase.

> "In those horrible wildfires there were 120 Samaritans from all over Greece, operating under a single command. The casualties wouldn't be nearly as low as they finally were, and we could be looking at a three digit figure. We facilitated the evacuations of whole villages that turned to ashes a little later. We had to carry people in our arms practically through the flames. It was a great feat and a courageous performance by everyone." [Int. RC04, 2015]

Also, another activity of the HRC Samaritans worth mentioning was the deployment and operation of a first aid station inside one central subway station during the peak of the anti-government protests in the summer of 2011. For a short period of two days, the Greek government used extreme brutality tried to crush the crowds in the Syntagma Square, sent more than a thousand wounded to seek the help of the Red Cross. The Samaritans, wearing helmets and gas masks defied the hail of stones, stun and tear gas grenades, and transferred dozens of injured people to safety.

From 2005 onwards there was no major participation of HRC and the Samaritans in a mission outside Greece. The Red Cross has in numerous occasions sent humanitarian aid in major disasters that happen all over the globe. More specifically, the earthquakes in

Pakistan in 2005[21], the Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, the War in Lebanon 2006, a famine in Malawi in 2007, in Myanmar's typhoon Nargis in 2008, Haiti's earthquake in 2010, and Serbia's floods in 2015, amongst others. Most of these activities were organized through the headquarters, by the Foreign Relations department, and most often than not are done in collaboration with the IFRC and other organizations.

Unfortunately, the operational capacity of the Greek sector had been severely restricted by the financial problems of the organization. With enormous problems inside the organizational structure, having most of the employees left unpaid for months on end, and with the organization's leading figures being under the scrutiny of the judicial authorities, participation in international missions seems now as a pleasant dreamlike fantasy. Starting from 2010, when the economic crisis restricted the flow of money inside the organization, the true weaknesses started to show. The ostensibly invincible structure started to fall like a house of cards. The once almighty leader of the HRC Samaritans together with some other leading figures were ousted, and were accused of embezzlement. The President of the Red Cross, Andreas Martinis, was also brought against the courts for embezzlement, financial mismanagement, insurance fraud and other charges. The name of the organization was constantly vilified across the social media and the public.

In the latest years, the Hellenic Red Cross has made a tremendous attempt to remain operational. This attempt has been successful through the efforts, the sacrifices and the relentless struggles of a tiny portion of the employees and the vast majority of the volunteers. The organization stands at the crossroads, and important decisions must be made in order for the Red Cross to reclaim the lost ground of legitimacy within the Greek society. The research itself had to acknowledge these facts and their great implications on the organizational decision making.

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[21] Actually, in the Pakistan 2005 Kashmir earthquake, the Hellenic Red Cross had sent a small team comprising of 2 Samaritans, under the auspices of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their objective was to procure food, sheltering material, clothing and other goods in order to be distributed to the victims of the disaster. The team collaborated with IFRC and the local Pakistani Red Crescent.

3.4.3 Decision making in Red Cross Samaritans

External and International Governance

In order to better understand how decisions are formed in all kinds of international organizations, where a number of national branches coexist together with institutionalized networks, we should first see these relative relations. In the case of the Hellenic Red Cross, there is the organization together with 188 other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. There is also the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) with a mandate to coordinate international relief actions between the Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which is not directly related to the Societies, but could potentially affect their work, especially in case of armed conflict. The role of the IFRC as the lead coordinator of the national societies in natural disasters, as well as in reconstruction and rehabilitation is outlined by the Seville Agreement in 1997. Additional details were also added in the supplementary measures adopted by the Council of Delegates in Seoul in 2005. Even National Societies could take the lead under certain circumstances (Forsythe, 2005). Red Cross international governance sits at the nexus of this threefold relation.

Even if the IFRC is not directly responsible for the *modus operandi* of the national societies, it has evolved in a de facto provider of guidelines and training, at least for the Greek case. Publications of the IFRC as well as live and online trainings have been utilized by the organization in order to keep its methodologies and procedures up to date with the international standards. This is particularly evident in the case of security procedures and needs assessment methods. Of course, other sources are also utilized for the same purpose, such as the European Resuscitation Council (ERC), and the United States' National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT). Consequently, decisions of a technical nature could be affected externally, by either the RC network or other, extra-organizational institutions.

When it comes to activities of the HRC outside the Greek soil, the IFRC is supposed to be coordinating and leading them. In fact, the way the Federation operates in disasters is that it makes a cost-effective analysis of who is able and convenient to intervene in each case. For instance, in a disaster in Chile, the local Latin American Red Cross Societies will be

prompt to operate and send assistance. This is because of their geographical proximity to the incident, which will lower the cost of logistics and it often ensures a cultural proximity as well. Red Cross Societies from far away, such as from Europe would most likely help financially or by providing technical assistance. Therefore, the HRC might express its willingness and capacity to help in various circumstances, and through the coordination of the Federation (which will decide on the need and nature of this help), it would be sent to the beneficiaries. Another important feature of the Federation is that it acts as an information sharing hub for all National Societies, and the HRC Samaritans try to collaborate in enriching and making use of this database. With this in mind, we observe the Greek case to be paradoxical in more than one circumstances. Although the proper route (via the IFRC) has been followed, there are also notable exceptions, where the HRC operates and coordinates its international activities via other routes. Such was the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami relief efforts[22] and the Pakistan earthquakes, both in 2005, were the HRC was coordinated by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The financial dependency of the HRC on the government and its sources (i.e. the transportation of aid by military aircrafts) has placed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at a position of control over RC international activities. In order for the organization to avoid annulling its own fundamental principle of Independence, it is forced to limit its operations to the lowest common denominator with the will of the Greek government.

The Red Cross is supposed to also contribute to the Federation financially, in the same way that national states contribute to the UN budget. In the latest years, the HRC did not pay its dues to the Federation, presumably as a result of its own economic hardships. When the IFRC's Secretary General, Bekele Geleta made an effort to facilitate the consolidation of the administrative situation in the HRC, he was denied access. A Geneva-Athens head-on collision was evaded at the last minute by the moderate spirits, but still in the time of

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[22] In Sri Lanka, the Samaritans who were on board the ship worked hard to transform the ship into a hospital. This was a decision that was made ad hoc and was materialized with the aid of the ship's crew. There was no apparent pre-arranged plan for this, and the strong cooperation between them and the Sri Lankan Red Cross was also an unforeseen but fruitful event. Interestingly enough, while still in the roadstead, the Samaritans spotted a car wearing the Red Cross symbols on the port. They made contact, and through this connection they managed to secure access. The most likely alternative scenario would have been that they would have to unload the cargo and return home.

writing there is no clear conclusion nor elucidation of the relationship between the Federation and the Greek national society.

The IFRC does not seem to interfere with domestic activities and in this respect the Federation simply gets informed via the activity reports. The HRC decisions are also affected greatly by the General Secretariat of Civil Protection, which runs under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection. Practically, the HRC Samaritans would only operate when commanded to do so by a higher government authority. The RC Samaritans see themselves as having to work in a complex association with the State:

> "It might seem as the HRC has a passive and dependent stance. It seems this way because it is imposed by the Greek legislation; and is a Greek unique phenomenon. While the Red Cross globally is supposed to work *on the side* of the governments, here we have to work *under* the government. In order to mobilize, we need a formal request – either from the Civil Protection, or the Fire Service, or the Police. Practically, we never wait for the request. For instance, in the case of the "Norman Atlantic[23]", we had already mobilized our forces in the nearby cities, and we waited for an appeal by the authorities. We can't take the initiative and act, because of the law, so we have to hold and wait for someone to make use of us." [Int. RC07, 2015]

The submissive stance of the organization to the state authorities is partly due to the legislation, but at the same time it safeguards the RC leadership against security pitfalls. With the volunteers being practically uninsured, the 'higher authority request to intervene' transfers the responsibility, at least on an ethical level, away from the RC command structure. The same stance is also limited again to actions that are compatible with the fundamental principles of the organization. In this way, the organization maintains its integrity and identity. There are numerous examples where the HRC administration had to refuse orders demanding actions that go against the principles[24].

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[23] The *Norman Atlantic* is an Italian ferry boat chartered by the Greek ANEK lines that caught fire in December 2014 while in the Adriatic Sea, en route to Ancona.
[24] A case worth noting was recorded in the great wildfires of Peloponnese in 2007. The HRC Samaritans were, amongst other things, responsible for the distribution of humanitarian aid to the victims. When the local authorities tried to

Internal Governance and Organizational Structure

In order to clarify decision making procedures in the HRC Samaritans, we should make another partition, only this time it is between the branches of the super-organization, namely the HRC. In the pyramidal hierarchical structure of the operational nature organization, under the President (who gets to have the last word in all operational matters) there are the Nursing, Samaritan and Social Welfare Sectors. There is no clear mandate for any of them, and collaboration between the three sectors has not been always in the best terms. On the contrary, it has often been seen antagonistic.

> "There are sometimes that we actually manage to collaborate and coordinate our actions, but generally speaking this is the chink in the Red Cross's armor. We insist that a common coordinating body should exist and have the overall control in emergencies. Let's take for instance, the 2014 Kefalonia earthquake. Locally, the only HRC volunteers were a small team of eight Samaritans. We started relief operations with them alone, until we could secure funding to send in more people. When the rest of the Samaritans and the other two sectors finally arrived, the problem began. We had been asking, what has to be done? Who is responsible to do it? What are the procedures that need to be followed? And there was no consensus on that, so we ended up having three parallel activities instead of one. Is it bad to have three parallel activities? Not necessarily, but at least you should make sure you have a consistent result." [Int. RC07, 2015]

From a historical standpoint, this intra-organizational conflict seems to be long lasting:

> "This intra-organizational conflict was there from the beginning, it was fierce and it has never ceased. […] Let us not forget that traditionally, the Samaritans had always been the ugly stepchild of the Red Cross. There was a characteristic advertisement in a newspaper during the 1960's were it says,

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intervene and abuse the distribution to gain political advantage, the Samaritans withdrew from the scene, accusing the authorities of forcing the HRC to act against the fundamental principle of impartiality.

in black and white, that '*The Red Cross is accepting volunteers for the Nursing School. Minimum entry requirements: basic schooling. In case you fail to meet entry requirements, refer to the Samaritan school.*' This has to do with the fact that when the Red Cross was created back in 1877, the volunteer nurses were the ladies of the good society – and also explains the momentum gained by the Samaritans at a later stage." [Int. RC03, 2015]

The Operating Rules of the HRC Samaritans were issued back in 1950's and henceforth are way out of date and not responding to the organization's operational needs. There have been series of circulars and other regulatory documents that try to amend the problem at hand. The haziness produced, had the effect of enhancing the development of a matrix organization which at the same time necessitated new support mechanisms, organizational culture, and behavior patterns. Many of the organization's decisions had to go through the President of the RC himself, even operational matters such as whether the HRC should initiate activities in one emergent situation or another. Another side effect of this was that decision making became largely affected by personalities and relationships. Being in good terms with the right people became another way of promoting actions and ideas. Depending on the President, the organizational hierarchy would become more or less of a feudal type. Once again, reversing these negative effects is one of the targets of the structural reform of the organization today.

Resource allocation between sectors could also be a factor that affects decision making. This was particularly important in the era when the RC was actually able to support its sectors. Nowadays, with the financial situation being as is, this factor has limited effect. Additionally, it is important to note that the HRC Samaritans have managed to achieve a certain level of financial autonomy. Their income comes from the small fee of first aid courses, and also the donations that they receive for their services by the corporate and public sector. This helps the organization to remain operational and with the relative luxury of being technologically up to date with the international standards. It must be noted though, that even when the Samaritan HQ (or a peripheral branch) has secured enough funds in order to acquire new equipment (or any other kind of expenditure), the procurement procedure might have to go through the central administration. Of course this

applies only for large sums of money, while otherwise even the peripheral branches are self-directed.

Before reaching the purely Samaritan-level, the decision making processes also go through yet another filter. This is the administration of the peripheral RC branches, in which the peripheral Samaritan branches belong to. This acts as a control point and also acts as a link between the local Nursing, Samaritan and Social Welfare sectors, as well as a link with the local society. The peripheral RC branches could also support the local Samaritan branch financially in certain activities.

Finally, at the peripheral Samaritan branch level, which is the basic operational entity of the HRC Samaritans, the high command rests with the three key persons: the Chief and the two deputy Chiefs of each branch. These people used to be appointed by the Samaritan HQ, but in the latest Operating Rules a more collaborative, semi-democratic model was applied[25]. There are so many decisions and responsibilities that go through these key positions that make them the quintessential control point of the Samaritan structure. This explains why, in previous times, when compliance and control was of the essence, the Samaritan HQ was keen on creating a convenient camarilla:

> "They *[the Samaritan HQ back in the day]* used to appoint the Chiefs of all peripheral branches. Docile volunteers so that they would have their own personal armies. They had a craze for power. They had changed the organizational chart, so that the peripheral Samaritan braches would take direct orders from the HQ, and could surpass and ignore the peripheral RC branches. […] Now, all this has changed. The Chiefs are elected by their teams, and they report to the President of the local RC branch. There are still some people stuck in the previous mindset, but they will soon become obsolete." [Int. RC08, 2015]

So, operationally and administratively, each one of the Samaritan branches is dependent on its Chief. This problem of dependence could be battled through another way, and that

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[25] What happens in most branches is that the outgoing Chief, in collaboration with the Samaritan HQ, nominate three other volunteers from that branch to become the commanding team. These nominees are then voted by the base of the branch's volunteers.

would be making use of the Samaritan ranks. That is, the ranking system that volunteers are granted which has to do with their experience and is in relation to their sum of hours volunteering for the Red Cross. Unfortunately, the ranking does not entail extra training, and therefore the ranking Samaritans are lacking the capacity to perform such duties.

What holds absolute truth in the case of the HRC Samaritans, is that there is no separation between the notions of governance and management. Let us consider the definition of NGO governance, as "the board's legal authority to exercise power and authority over an organization on behalf of the community it serves" (Boardsource, 2010). For the HRC Samaritans, the only board existing is the 25 member Red Cross board, which serves that function for the whole organization, and that was malfunctioning, and still is at the time of writing. The President of the HRC was responsible for all decisions relating to governance and daily administration. This created innumerable problems, as the administration could not take harsh decisions in order to retain the favor of its subordinates, since they had the power to reelect it in the same position of power. To make things even more complicated, the Greek legislation provided that some of the HRC BoD members are appointed by the government, and specifically from the Ministry of Health. These members' power to influence decisions combined with their total lack of interest and knowledge of the organization proved a challenging issue. Essentially, part of the organizational governance was made by the government itself, since the organization was financially dependent on the government subsidies, and eventually became a convenient breeding ground for political favors. That slippery slope left the HRC Samaritans with nothing more than their own administration, which also had limited power and autonomy.

Conflict prevalence

Conflict within the HRC Samaritans is experienced in two different levels. The one is silent and the other one is expressed. The silent or 'internalized' conflict that occurs is more prevalent: it has to do with the institutional character of the organization and its values. There is a considerable amount of dropouts each year from the Samaritan schools. Volunteers commence their training and soon realize that the organization they have so eagerly joined, is not suitable to their taste. This might be attributed to the seven

fundamental principles, which they get to know early on in their training. It might also be attributed to the military image of the organization: the military style hierarchy, the uniforms and the army boots. Whatever the reason might be, there is a considerable difference between the number of people who start the training and those who finish it, which means that lots of people quit without getting into an expressed conflict. The expressed conflict is not that frequent. Considering the fact that the life of the HRC Samaritan entails a considerable amount of socializing amongst fellow Samaritans, most instances of conflict are based on personal rather than organizational grounds. Most of these types of conflicts are also resolved extra-organizationally and are not allowed to be expressed during operations. "Is there a house without conflict? We want to keep the will-intentioned conflict and expel the malevolent one – it does not belong in our house." [Int. RC07, 2015] Of course, there are expressed cases of intra-organizational conflict of very high intensity, such as the case with the former Samaritan leadership. Such was the intensity of this conflict that is ongoing for years, and is waged from the social media to the Greek courts. All things considered, as far as conflict is concerned, the HRC is precise to the theoretical expectations, which were that we should expect few cases of conflict with potentially high intensity.

Compliance

Decisions being made by the members of the organization, as well as their behaviors have to comply with certain rules that are described by the Code of Conduct, the volunteer's job description, the mission coordinator's job description, and the Chief's job description. The HRC Samaritans had an Internal Regulation that was drafted in 1931, when the organization was still under construction. It has not been updated entirely ever since, and all need have been covered by series of circulars that try to reform it. The members are informed about these rules during their initial training or upon request if it is necessary. A new Internal Regulation has been drafted in the latest years, but up to the time of writing has not yet been applied. This Regulation has been crafted through an assessment of the modern operational needs, and in this process the sponsors of this amendment have

consulted with numerous members of the organization and have taken under consideration the propositions of several different people.

It is impressive though that most of the participants in the study expressed their belief that most volunteers are practically unaware of the specific details of their job description, or any other regulatory document. Some of them went as far as to be unaware of their existence. In either case, it seems that member compliance is achieved through following direct orders and social control from experienced members. Apart from the seven fundamental principles that all RC volunteers must be specifically aware of, the rest of the rules seem to be partially communicated to the volunteers. With this vagueness in mind, compliance is restricted to order-following, a harmless '*Befehl ist Befehl*', rather than a true and comprehensive understanding of the decision making procedures. All things considered, most of the volunteers are uninterested about the processes themselves, and focus more in the end result, which is their chance to provide aid to the people in need - irrespective to procedural issues which are considered trivialities.

The strong organizational culture of the HRC demands that the organizational members have to comply not only to operational guidelines and direct commands, but also with some very interesting restrictions concerning their social life:

> "For example, I do not allow our members to have Facebook profile pictures of themselves in the Red Cross uniform. It's alright if they want to have any other kind of photographs. It is your personal profile and not the organization's, therefore don't try to promote your image by using the Red Cross emblem. You have to find balance between things in order to avoid getting into trouble, and you also have to be fair. If you are not fair, you are in trouble." [Int. RC05, 2015]

Compliance to the rules and superior orders is achieved through specific sanctions. If a member of the Samaritans fails to act appropriately, which means that he disobeys orders or breaks a certain rule, then he might get disciplined. This is most often an oral warning, but in certain cases might mean that the individual could be restricted from participating in HRC activities for a certain amount of time, or even be expelled from the volunteer corps. The harder the punishment, the highest is the authority that needs to issue such a decision.

In all cases, the member reserves the right to explain and support his case if he believes he has been wronged.

Compliance is also often achieved through social control mechanisms:

> "The volunteer has to understand the limits of his actions; what he is expected to do and what not. Many of them become overconfident and self-assured, thinking they've become 'super rescuers'. It is up to the local Chief to make the volunteer understand that you can't become that so easily. We shouldn't get full of ourselves. People come to the Red Cross for several wrong reasons: some come for the uniform, others looking to find women, others in search of power. Nevertheless, most people come in order to help. The rest will go away on their own, they won't be able to follow through, and they are ejected by the group itself." [Int. RC05, 2015]

All the above rules and sanctions account to the ways in which the RC member may in advance and concurrently comply to the expected behavior. Compliance however can be also be achieved by means of post facto assessing the actions of a member. Eventually, each member of the HRC are assessed for their performance in two separate ways, depending on their rank and on whether they are employees or volunteers. For most volunteers there was no official assessment, so the only criteria through which one could objectively assess their output was the time they spent volunteering for the organization. The ranking system is also corresponding to this database and reflects the same values. There can also be some After Action Reports (or AAR) with specific mentions to individual members, but it is unclear of how these are evaluated at a later stage. Since 2014, the volunteers are also assessed annually on their technical competence level, through a training process they have to go through. Moreover, assessment of employees, ranking staff and trainers has no obvious methodology and is largely dependent on the hierarchy – meaning that the Samaritan Branch HQ assesses the local branches' command, but again, without visible or specific methodology.

Decision making fora

Collaborative decision making is a rare phenomenon in the HRC Samaritans. Most decisions run up and down in the pyramidal hierarchy directly, while some of them could be affected by a unidirectional consultation process. There are only a few collective decision making bodies, all of them with unclear mandate, authority and substance. First there is the 'weekly meeting of the volunteers', which in fact acts more as a briefing platform for upcoming activities and a debriefing platform for past activities. There are limited subjects that are put in open discourse with the intention of reaching conclusions and finalizing decisions – something that is reserved for the branch command. Ultimately, the volunteers are practically excluded from the decision making process but could be utilized to enhance the brainstorming of ideas, which is something that occurs often in several local branches. The branch command is also perceived as a small forum of collective decision making between three specific people: the Chief and the two deputies, which have to make most of the decisions that concern the local Samaritan branch. On a larger scale, decisions that affect the Samaritan branch country-wide, are made by an informal group, which is the 'organization's employees', that is people on the HRC payroll. These people, whose number is less than a dozen, would convene on an ad hoc basis and decide collectively on various issues, such as operations, training, disciplinary charges, changes in SOPs and regulations, and various other things. Issues and decisions of a wider character, that might be concerning other HRC branches apart from the Samaritans, are made by the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Red Cross. As it has already been analyzed, the character of this body is hazy, due to the lack of transparency. It is safe to suppose from the facts that there was no actual 'control' over the organizational administration by the BoD during all the latest years. It was indeed a place where the dominant governing system confirmed its power by providing all necessary powers to the President. Again, especially at the higher level, theoretical expectations of the HRC acting like a pure 'institutional organization' are confirmed.

Member behavior and perception

> "Humanity and civilization call imperiously for such an organization as is
> here suggested. It seems as if the matter *is one of actual duty*, and that in

carrying out the cooperation of every man of influence, and the good wishes at least of every decent person can be relied upon with assurance. Is there in the world a prince or a monarch who would decline to support the proposed societies, happy to be able to give full assurance to his soldiers that they will be at once properly cared for if they should be wounded?" [Henry Dunant, *A Memory of Solferino*, (English) 1986]

Henry Dunant has managed to convince the world of the need for the Red Cross societies, on the basis of moral duty. Humanity has a duty towards itself, to promote the humanitarian spirit and act for the alleviation of human suffering in the field of battle. We might not be able to prevent war, but indeed, we can prepare ourselves in order to help the victims of war when the time is right. The rationale was simple and resonated with the hearts and minds of the Europeans of that period. We have gone a long way since the days of Dunant, but still this spirit is active and heavily influential on the way the members of the organization understand their role. We could say that member behavior, and consequently organizational behavior lays in the balance of obligatory and maximizing behavior.

The organization itself acts in its totality within the idea of rule-following and obligatory behavior. As we have already discussed, when it comes to handling disasters, it has placed itself as part of the Civil Protection, as it is prescribed by the Greek legislation. For all other activities that are not of a national concern, the HRC Samaritans retain a passive-accepting stance towards the Hellenic society. That refers to an initial acceptance that the Red Cross is there to provide for the needs of the society and that it would always do so, given that a) it has the operational capacity and b) the requested activity is in conformity with the organizational principles and fulfills an expected level of security criteria. In some particular aspects of decision making, participants also expressed ideas that match a maximizing behavior:

"What we always target for is completing the mission successfully. The operational objectives are directly linked to the context itself and proportionate to the circumstance. So, depending on the situation, on the type of disaster we are dealing with, we define the best expected outcome and we strive to achieve it." [Int. RC05, 2015]

Obligatory and rule-following behavior is seen from the base to the top of the hierarchy. The military discipline is evident throughout the training and the operations of the organization and supports the operational hierarchy and the chain of command. The uniform of the HRC Samaritan has several psychological and practical implications on the members. In detail, the uniform: a) gives a sense of belonging to the group, and so it is given to the cadets only after the successful completion of their first stage of training, b) it promotes a sense of equality between members, and clarifies the chain of command (CoC) as the ranking members are visible by their insignia, c) it protects the wearer by virtue of the legal implications of the Red Cross symbol, d) it encourages caring for their fellow colleagues and finally e) it promotes the unified image of the organization. In big operations, as well as in big training events and other special occasions there is also military-like courtesy, like salutations, standing at attention, proper forms of address and other related concepts. The importance of such discipline within the Samaritan's ranks is considered to be essential, due to the nature of their mandate which is to act in emergencies, either single-person medical emergencies, or large scale emergencies due to mass casualty incidents and other disasters. It is the same discipline that manages to orchestrate a harmonious response in chaotic circumstances, by minimizing the behavioral variance due to differences in personalities, backgrounds, and individual capacity:

> "It has become evident, time and again, that what is needed in disaster relief operations is not specific knowledge, but helping hands. You could see doctors and scientists carrying cases of food supplies, hygienic material, and medical supplies. Therefore, it is impossible to have an elitist attitude – such a behavior would be unreal. The benefit of the HRC is that you train your members for 15 months and there is a chain of command and a specific way doing things. Operationally, this provides for a common language and a common understanding between members." [Int. RC08, 2015]

Member behavior could be boiled down to three very specific aspects. The first is respecting and following the seven fundamental principles of the organization. This is a non-negotiable request for all members. The only level of tolerance that we could recognize is attributed to the level of ambiguity with which the leadership of the organization

understands these principles. The second is following the power structure of the organization. That means that each member is expected to recognize the chain of command and follow orders as they are given down the line of authority and responsibility. The third is acting within an acceptable level of competency. This refers to the minimum levels of technical competency that are required, and the member must attain, in order to provide positively to the organization.

Training and mentoring

Training sits at the core of volunteerism in the Red Cross. Nobody is entitled to identify himself as a RC volunteer unless he is in the process of, or have completed, training at one of the three 'schools', organized by the three sectors. More specifically, the Samaritans go through a year-long training that includes technical subjects like first aid, trauma management, urban SAR, and advanced rescue techniques. Their training is initiated by a small course on the organizational identity, which includes history of the Red Cross, the operating principles, issues concerning the use of the emblem, and the code of conduct. It is a prerequisite to pass some exams on these subjects in order to continue with technical training. This training takes place by Red Cross trainers, who are experienced volunteers that specialize in a particular subject and are certified in providing these courses. The training takes place at a synchronized pace everywhere in Greece. The training material (books and multimedia) is also specific and used throughout the country, in order to facilitate harmonization of practices and minimize output variance.

After the conclusion of the ex-cathedra and the in-house training, the volunteers are expected to work in the ER departments of local hospitals in order to familiarize with trauma care and medical emergencies. Upon completion, the volunteers maintain their 'cadet' status, until they conclude a requested amount of service time, alongside with experienced members, in events and minor operations so that they could learn the ropes. Only after the successful completion of these three stages, and the oath-taking ceremony one becomes a full member of the organization.

In the latest years, training requirements became somewhat more complex, as it was decided that in order to maintain their member status, volunteers had to participate in some annual training courses. The goal of this training is keeping the members up to date with the operational protocols.

It is very interesting that the HRC Samaritans proud themselves nearly unanimously about having the most strenuous, exhaustive and lengthy training of all the volunteer organizations in the country. Their training is lengthier than that of other RC sectors as well, like Nursing and Social Welfare (approximately 140 hours in total, each). This comparison has been utilized by the leadership in order to promote group cohesion, a sense of identity (separating the HRC from other rescue teams) and has also falsely been identified to act as a quality reassurance indicator.

The ultimate goal of this life-long training within the Red Cross Samaritans, and most likely across all sections of the HRC, is the creation of '*Red Crosser*'. The *Red Crosser* is more than a person who delivers first aid, does rescue or lifesaving. He is a living ambassador of an idea and of a very certain set of seven core principles. The degree to which this goal is succeeded is highly variant by regional and personal factors. This also means that there are expectations that go beyond the call of duty, and beyond the time that the member is wearing the organizational emblem. There have been cases that members were forced, through unofficial ways and through social pressure, to quit the organization because they were active supporters of the Golden Dawn party. Alas, it has to be noted that these were extreme cases, and that compliance with the fundamental principles when off-duty is neither monitored nor strictly requested. All in all, becoming a *Red Crosser* is more about connection than exclusion:

> "There is a certain culture built-in the organization. This culture is based on the seven fundamental principles. If someone understands them and acts accordingly, all the rest will directly fall into place. All you have to ask yourself is: do I follow the principles? If the answer is yes, then you should see what you want to do. Whether it is first aid, technical rescue, dog training or whatever you like, you can have specialized training and do it. And you will be able to do it again, alongside with other Red Cross members in

countries where you won't be even able to speak the language. In Sri Lanka we had been using body language!" [Int. RC01, 2015]

Model of reasoning and important actors

Reasoning is more than often instant in the HRC Samaritans. This happens for a combination of reasons, but most importantly because the organization has a mandate to deal with matters of emergency, but at the same time lacks the proper tools to assess the situations in a methodical manner. Therefore, reasoning is often based on a preexisting knowledge of how to operate in each particular circumstance, and if there is no predefined directive or SOP, then it falls to the commanding person to make the decision:

> "Decisions are being made based on an ad hoc assessment of each situation, but without any directions or training in doing so. Some of the key personnel have been trained in Germany on such matters. The problem is that the German model is based on a rational decision making model which balances the possibilities and capabilities - or *Möglichkeiten*, in order to reach optimal decisions. […] In Greece, alas, the incident commander is lacking the staff which would collect and analyze information needed in order to make the decisions. Ultimately, he has to depend on his own gut feeling and experience. Admittedly, there has never been a problem for the single reason that the RC has no exact mandate. There is no specific goal, so it is impossible to see if you have achieved it." [Int. RC03, 2015]

This eventually brings us to the next important aspect of decision making in the organization, which is the nature of the decisions' outcomes. The outcome of decisions for the HRC is also characterized by a coincidence with the institutional presumptions as set by the theoretical framework. Most decisions' outcomes are congruent or agreeable, rather than maximizing or optimal. There is a very thought-provoking explanation for this finding:

> "The Hellenic Red Cross does not generally work in a goal-oriented way. As a result, when operating in a disaster the organization *does* what the

organization *can do*. And by doing what you can do, it looks as if you are doing well. For instance, should a disaster occur as we speak, a ranking RC Samaritan employee would take some vehicles and a hundred volunteers and would start doing things – and the list of things he should do is not fixed, but improvised based on the capacity and the skill level of the particular team." [Int. RC03, 2015]

So who is eventually calling the shots in the HRC Samaritan structure? Once more the theoretical expectations are met, as the more experienced members are those with the heavier influence on the organization's decision making, either by imposing peer pressure or by directly influencing activities. Seniority is defined mostly by experience (years of volunteer service) and the depth of involvement (the level of responsibilities). In the long run, seniority is made official by the promotion of volunteers in various ranks, depending on the hours spent volunteering for the organization. In the military-like structure of the organization this promotion has several implications in the decision making process, as the ranking member has –under circumstances- commanding powers over the others. On a greater scale, the most important actors are the local branch Chiefs, who are similarly selected by virtue of their experience and leadership skill and the nation-wide Samaritan Command who were also selected on similar criteria.

Impact of the environment

The HRC Samaritans are connected to their environment, and the local societies in which they exist and operate. Apart from the major cities, where the organization tends to be more impersonal, the local RC branches are a living part of the local society. In this sense, there is great dependence on the relationship built with the local authorities (the police, the fire service, the coast guard, etc.) and the local people as well. The local community is the one that is expected to support the RC on an ethical and material level in times of need.

On a greater scale, the environment has an even more complex impact on the organization. The media had long been hostile towards the prior direction, and especially the social media were ravaging. There are efforts from the current direction to reconstruct the bad publicity of the organization, but things are still in the process. By the same token, political groups

were never able to influence decision making in the organization, except for the governing party which could, by promoting its own people in the BoD, as it is expected by the organizational statute. Political dependence has declined historically, since the RC has ceased to be the driving force behind the development of health-related infrastructure, and has move on to reform its mandate in the new era.

In order to identify the roots of the connection between the organization and the environment, we should again turn our eyes to the pages of Dunant's influential book. Dunant himself addressed the society and believed that for the idea of national societies to work, the good citizens of each country should make it their personal matter to alleviate the suffering of the soldiers wounded in war. Nowadays, the Red Cross still preserves this feeling of belonging to the general public, and that part of the HRC mandate is connected to a moral duty towards it. That has to do with fact that the Red Cross (with the exception of the latest years) has been operating through the support of the population, through the annual countrywide fundraiser.

> "It's a long and sad story. The Red Cross not only was connected to, but was part of the Greek society. Somewhere down the road we kind of lost this connection, and now we try to restore it. We ought to, because it was interwoven with Greece itself. When it comes to healthcare, whatever the country has to offer, was once a part of the Red Cross. It was all donated to the country. The hospitals, the personnel, the ambulances, the health centers. In the recent years there was an abatement – but we will manage to get back on track." [Int. RC07, 2015]

4. Conclusions

4.1 Discussing the findings

The backbone of the research has been an initial hypothesis that three particular decision making models would fit the three case study organizations. What we had expected was that MSF-Greece would fit to the rational/consequential model, the MdM-Greece would fit to the capacity-driven/ambiguous model, while the Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans would fit to the rule-following/appropriate model. For each of these models we have identified a series of practical findings or expectations that should be observed in order to categorize them as fitting to one model or the other. In the previous chapter we extensively analysed how decisions are being made in each of the case studies, in addition to the several structural and environmental factors that could affect the decision making processes. All things considered, in this part of the research we should evaluate whether the research hypothesis (H_1) was verified or falsified. We should proceed with a step by step analysis of each of the three case studies.

The **Greek Médecins Sans Frontières** were expected to act as a 'rational humanitarian machine', and in a lot of different ways it stood up to that expectation. The organizational structure seems to be fitting well for both the facilitation of effective decision making as well as the facilitation of the associative character. The 'distance' between the associative to the executive spheres acts as a buffer that prevents environmental fluctuations to act as disturbances in an ever-ending effort to optimize internal processes and maximize both effectiveness and efficiency. Organizational members are being trained in all technical aspects concerning their position, so that common standards apply throughout the members during operations and upon those standards the members are assessed using standardized methodology. There are numerous SOPs and written guidelines that formulate behaviour and so decision making becomes a visible and specific practice which is actualized by specialists. Ultimately, the goals of MSF-G, at the time of writing are determined by the notions of efficiency and instrumental rationality.

At the same time, the study of MSF-G provided lots of data which complies better with the logic of appropriateness and an institutional view of the organization. Although this might

be true, it is restricted to issues with indirect effect to decision making processes, such as a strong sense of organizational identity. Of course, the ever-continuing issue of the organizational operationality would definitely fall under that same discourse. During the years of the isolation from the International Movement, MSF-G also fitted with the theoretical expectations of autonomous and value-based coordination, relating to external governance. One other issue has to do with MSF being overly sensitive to pressures coming from the Greek society, especially in the earlier stages of the organization. Social control mechanisms are also observed, but are insignificant compared to the official sanction/incentive mechanisms. Equally unimportant were instances where the organization fits the logic of capacity model. Most of these instances relate to a version of MSF-G of the past, when decisions were made using imprecise procedural mechanisms and when the governing bodies were still accepting entrepreneurial behaviours. It was more frequent back then to act according to its capacities and environmental opportunities, but since 2004 the processes were harmonized with the standard MSF decision making procedures, and implemented by the common chain of command of the OCBA.

We had initially hypothesized that **Médecins du Monde – Greece** would fit the ambiguous organization model, where decisions would be made mostly through the Logic of Capacity. Again, the assumption was partially verified. For the most part, elements of the decision making processes of the organization fit quite well into the theoretical scheme. MdM Greece more than often have had goals that were based on choice opportunities rather than choice priorities. The environmental contingencies play an important part in how the decisions are formed. That means that most of the decision making is not rational, since the capacities of the organization take precedence over its priorities, and not vice versa, which would be to set the priorities and develop the capacities in order to achieve the desired goals. Conflict has a very high prevalence and is seen as an integral part of the decision making process. Important decisions are not taken centrally, nor instantly, nor via a standardized rational procedure but instead they are the outcome of negotiations between the important members that are active and available at the time. Rather than authoritative and autocratic practices, consultation and collaboration in decision making are the prevailing practices, even under stressful conditions. Even if there is a formal hierarchy, it is perceived by most members as a flat hierarchical structure that is congruent with the

liberal political nature of the organization. What is more, the organization hardly provides any training, does not formulate activities based on SOPs and operational guidelines and finally has no methodical assessment mechanisms in place.

Even if these elements are compatible with the main assumptions, there are few others that fit better in the other two schemes. MdM Greece resembles the institutional organization in some aspects of its functions. Public pressure is taken into account and could reshape the priorities of action. Also, the most experienced members, often without having any institutional position might have the great leverage in the decision making processes. The organization emphasizes a critical need to act in accordance to a certain set of values and principles, which not only affect the decisions on the group level, but are also used to suggest the acceptable limits and evaluate personal conduct. Compliance to any existing rules within the organization, especially for persons who are not bound by contract, such as volunteers, is being done through social control mechanisms, rather than a clear-cut system of sanctions. At the same time, MdM Greece functions with a consequential reasoning in several of its functions. First of all, the organizational structure is designed to formulate and facilitate the decision making processes. Secondly, there are consultative dynamics between the experienced decision-makers and the volunteer basis. Thirdly, once a decision has been made and the NGO has been committed to a certain activity, admittedly there are efforts to maximize or optimize the outcome of these decisions, rather than settle for agreeable outcomes.

The **Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans** were expected to meet the appropriate and rule-following decision making model and a more institutional character as a whole. This actually was verified to some extent, with minor exceptions. The mode of reasoning is indeed instant, without any known data collecting and analysing procedures to facilitate methodical decision making. With a retrospective outlook as in "if this has worked in the past, it will work again in the future" (Int. RC06, 2015). The decision making is made centrally, and there are few to none collective decision making bodies. There are few to none SOPs or guidelines as to how the organization or individuals should act (and indeed very few members are referring to these documents), and still everyone acts with sense of duty in following the rules – some peremptory norm or *jus cogens*. With few exceptions,

the replication of the rules is done through social and operational interaction between new and old members. Decisions are expected to be congruent with the organizational values and the dominant understanding of the role that the organization should play in an exact circumstance. The organization therefore fails to act in ways that enable the optimization or maximization of the decision outcomes, but without taking any risk, it settles for agreeable outcomes. The notion of past experience is particularly important, with most leverage given in decision making processes to seniority. Since senior members are tested through time and are guaranteed to comply with the norms and expectations of the institution. These members moreover are able to select the other members on key positions, regarding administrative and operational decisions, and therefore the institution reaffirms itself based on a certain, common and shared value system. This value system is also the cornerstone of the training, in which the organization takes pride.

There are notable exceptions to the institutional character of the HRC Samaritans, where the organizational practice does not conform to the theoretical expectations. In some of its ways, the HRC Samaritans prescribe to the LoC, such as the case of coordination, where there are substantive procedural mechanisms and formal authority in place. As far as the organizational structure is also concerned, it seems to formulate the decision making processes. On the other hand, the HRC Samaritans also share common attributes with March and Olsen's ambiguous organization. The most notable issue is related to the entrepreneurial behaviours of several persons leading the organization that were recorded in the last twenty years. Also, the frequency of conflict is relatively high, and even if the strict discipline of the group manages to conceal an expressed version of it, it and is eventually observed as high dropout rates. Moreover, it could be argued that as far as the activities outside the country are concerned, the HRC also presents an inference pattern of coupling opportunities and capabilities, since most of its activities were initiated by a third party and the HRC joined in.

As demonstrated by the above analysis, the three decision making models do not fit the three case studies completely. The reason for this phenomenon is twofold and for convenience and precision we should divide the explanation into two parts. One has to do with the nature of theory, and the other has to do with the nature of the organizations that

we studied. As far as the theory is concerned, the most evident and important explanation has to do with the complexity of the organizational reality. If in reality there was no tolerance for deviations from the theoretical assumptions, then there would be just a few types (limited, if not three) of organizations in the world – a thing we know for fact that is not true. On the contrary, the spectrum of options is wide and colourful. Most likely, another initial choice of different case studies could have made it a lot harder to make the initial assumptions for the formation of the research hypothesis. After all, as we have already mentioned before, the analysis framework was intended as a heuristic guide to navigate our exploratory empirical study rather than a binary choice. As we already knew from the start, the three decision making models were not mutually exclusive (Heyse, 2006: 48). On the other hand, we are concerned about the nature of the three organizations. We should acknowledge that the three NGOs are working in a fairly common setting – that is the humanitarian aid projects, and have a comparable mandate. However, the differences between the organizations are immense. This difference is simply delineated through the respective comparison with the three organizational ideal types, and the three decision making models. All things considered, the level of conformity of the case studies to the theoretical models is of such level that is deemed significant.

The research also answered the secondary questions that have been established by the research design and were expressed in the first chapter:

1) *At what level do the case studies correspond to the three presupposed models of decision making?* The level of correspondence of the three case studies to the three decision making models is significant but not absolute. By and large, each of the three organizations supports the case by acting roughly in accordance with the theoretical expectations, but with a number of exceptions. The empirical findings are the inductive by-product of this research on the theory.

2) *How do the three case-study organizations vary in terms of decision making across various contexts?* There is practically no variation in the way that the three organizations behave across various contexts. In domestic activities or activities outside the Greek borders, the general rules of decision making seem to be the

same. The exception here is the case of MdM Greece where their domestic activities that are project-based exhibit different procedural patterns than missions abroad. In both three organizations there is a considerable amount of flexibility when it comes to responding to major disasters. This is related to the character of the humanitarian work and inclusion of emergency response to the mandate of all three organizations. With the MdM being the most versatile, closely followed by the MSF and finally the HRC Samaritans, the decision making processes could be overridden in extreme circumstances.

3) *Does variation in decision making model predict variation in leadership style?* Variations in the legal basis, statute, and internal regulations concerning 'openness' affect the decision making model. The institutional organization seems to have ways of defending its norms and practically conserve its character. This is reflected in the openness of its processes to the environment. Membership is restricted and conditional. Decision making fora are less accessible and less powerful. The more intense the institutional character of the organization is, the more difficult it becomes to affect its decision making. Therefore decision making in the Red Cross and the MSF is shielded, significantly more than in MdM which exhibits a more open character. Eventually, the level of openness is related with a higher level of susceptibility to environmental instabilities. Although this may be true, openness of decision making processes cannot be correlated with quality of decision outcomes.

4.2 Implications and Recommendations

The current study is not intended to hover over the theory, unable to connect to the humanitarian practice. On the contrary, the methodological choices were targeted at facilitating that connection between theory and application. On the other hand, drafting and specifying recommendations was indeed harder than expected: As we already established, neither in theory nor in practice there exist golden rules or standards. The strategic choices of each organization remains rightfully theirs and as such, there is not much room left for

a *manichaeistic* approach, seeing 'right and wrong' in these strategies. It is acknowledged that all three of the case studies are the genuine expression of the benevolence of the society, not only as the end result (which would be the delivery of humanitarian services to the beneficiaries), but as the process itself (organizing and taking part in such a venture).

We should, as a result record a list of recommendations for each of the three cases; a list that is not intended to be exhaustive. We aim, beyond the obvious, to have the analysis of the previous chapters become an incentive for internal and external reflection upon the organizational practices. Still, with the organizations being alive inside their evolving super-systems and hopefully this research could shed some extra light in their path, whatever the direction of the said path might be. The rationale is that all three have the need and capacity to adjust to an ever changing environment. The process of organizational learning is what continually enhances their capacity to create solutions to the problems presented in this environment (Senge, 2006).

Greece's *Médecins Sans Frontières* section seems to be going through its golden age. MSF in general is widely considered to be one of the most well respected and able organizations in the humanitarian sector. Eventually, the part of the charm of the International Movement is reflected in the Greek section as well, due to the high degree of connection between the two. MSF-Greece has decided, since 2003 and the renunciation of its operationality, to follow a path of unity and conformity to the demands of the international movement. In order to give credit where credit is due, the Greek section has gone through a lot of troubles, conflict, self-criticism, and hard work in order to finally be able to cherish this period of relative calm. Nowadays the MSF-G is feeling the pressure of a society in crisis, where the idea of 'humanitarian action' has migrated from the distant 'developing world' to our own backyard, next to the organization's headquarters. This also provides for a major challenge, as the organizational members who have been used to work in the African and Asian context, would now have to make a quick adaptation to this, ironically, 'new' environment. This would mean, perhaps, the establishment of special considerations or even reassessing the organization's *modus operandi* in order to better fill the gap between the two contexts. Another major challenge is appertained within this gap, this being health concerns relating

to migration in Europe[26], which has become a priority for the MSF Movement. With Greece being one of the major entry points in the Europe, MSF-G stands at a strategic proximity to any pertinent operations. Modern challenges for the MSF mostly have to do with issues like participation and inclusion, and part of these issues are shared with the Greek sector. There is a growing concern that members should not restrict themselves to having a professional relation with the organization, but also take part in the associative sphere and the strategic policy and decision making, in order to maximize their sense of ownership. MSF-Greece should, in light of the recent shift of focus for the International Movement, try to claim a rightful part in the management of the issue of migration, and consequently a part of its decision making autonomy. Efforts that address the issues of participation and inclusion should continue and even intensify in the next years, as the organization will be in need of experienced volunteers to get behind the wheel in these times of peril.

For *Médecins du Monde Greece*, the major challenge is to find a perfect balance between being a professional humanitarian NGO and still be able to retain that volunteer, spontaneous vigour that gives them the competitive advantage and promotes them to one of the most popular NGOs of the Greek society. The organization often acts with flat hierarchy with accessible decision making processes, and is highly political, and is the most open compared to the other two case studies and is consequently being more 'in connection' with the local society. In many ways the organization acts as the guardian of that 'good old humanitarian spirit'. This advantage does not come without drawbacks. It is important to realize that this is technically possible because MdM are flexible, due to a lack of stiffness and standardization of operational processes. Should the organization decide to adopt more sophisticated decision making and operative procedures, it would require effort and would consequently have vast implications on the organizational behaviour. Should it remain operating in the current fashion, preserving their wild, unchained and enthusiastic character, it would still be legit; alas, on the negative side, it would often paid in terms of efficiency. In addition, and in relation to the absence of standardization, one of the most

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[26] The issue concerns the provision of primary health care to migrants, their access to health systems inside Europe, as well as the prevention of death during their journey. International advocacy on the subject was intensified after the April 2015 events, where more than 1500 migrants were drowned in their effort to reach Italy and Greece.

important decisions that the organization must make at the moment is how to preserve its technical know-how regarding missions abroad. In the recent years, the economic hardships of the Greek society have led the organization to turn its head and focus on projects inside Greece. From 2010 to 2014 the organization was hardly active outside Greece, with the exception of a small mission in Uganda. Although it is true that there are numerous domestic needs to be met, and is therefore logical to reshape the organizational agenda, it is also true that the organization also has an enormous amount of experience in missions outside, while hardly any other NGOs in Greece have similar experience. We have already established that this experience rests with a limited number of members. Looking into the future, MdM Greece should look for opportunities to 'train' more members, through their atypical training processes or look for alternative ways of passing this experience to newcomers. Another major challenge relating to the organization is to protect itself from pitfalls of openness and leniency towards individual behaviour that should be inconsistent with the humanitarian principles. Hence, it goes without saying that a humanitarian organization should not identify with a specific political party, in fear of violating the principles of neutrality and independence. It is crucial that the organization draws a clear and visible line in this kind of relations.

Finally, relating to the *Hellenic Red Cross Samaritans,* the organization's challenges as well as future are tied to that of the super-structure that is the Hellenic Red Cross. Any development in the case of the latter would definitely affect the former. Most importantly, the major changes envisaged by the new Statute, if the proclaimed initiatives are to take roots, could signify a sudden democratization of the governance bodies which in turn would affect the decision making processes tremendously. At the time, the HRC Samaritan sector acts like a sleeping giant. Hurt by all the recent pitfalls, still retains enormous potential that could be unleased, given that proper changes in its structures and norms take place. Most of the recommendations concerning the organization, would eventually target the HRC as a whole. Openness, promotion of self-reflexive practices and true standardization of processes would definitely be of help. The HRC Samaritans have a lot to gain by investing more into the new talent, highly knowledgeable and scientifically educated people would breathe new life into the institutional character that should fear of growing old in this age of speed. The Samaritans as part of the Hellenic Red Cross share

part of its burden, and should understand that the immense distance between the operational capacity of its international counterparts (other national societies, the IFRC and the ICRC) is not merely a matter of differences in budget, but also of attitude and organizational culture. Best practices are out there, published daily and implemented by other national societies in which one eye of the HRC should focus, while the other remains with the peculiarities of the Greek environment. The immense power of the Samaritans has always been, and still is to our day, the volunteers – which outnumber every other organization in the country (humanitarian or not). This dynamic should be utilized to bring about change: organizational change – as in being the change they want to see in the organization, social change – as in changing peoples' attitude towards benevolence and volunteerism, political change – as in legislation in matters of public health, pre-hospital medicine and first aid provision. With a considerable portion of the population living at the poverty line, depending on any kind of material or psychosocial help, as well as with a State that is unable to provide for the vulnerable, the Red Cross should adopt a more vigilant stance, facilitated by more versatile decision making processes, that would act with the appropriate scientific method and humanitarian rigor. Venturing beyond the 'logic of appropriateness', would be the only appropriate thing to do.

In conclusion, the original contribution of this research to knowledge and practice, and hopefully humanitarian policy in Greece, is therefore located within four elements: a) a detailed connection between the notions of organizational structure and decision making in humanitarian NGOs, b) a reassessment of how accurately the theoretical models on decision making could predict organizational nature, behaviour and culture, c) a record of the country's history of humanitarian action, referring to the NGOs of the 'Dunanist' tradition, and d) a critical reflection on the practices of the three NGOs of the study.

4.3 Suggestions for further research

One single research project is by nature restricted to what can be accomplished in a limited amount of time. It must be highlighted though, that during the research design, there where various intersections where both directions seemed equally charming and intriguing. Researching humanitarian NGOs is an interesting theme by itself, let alone doing such a

research in the curious case of Greece, where the idiosyncratic temperament of the Greeks evidently results in organizational particularity and variance.

With more time we thought it would be interesting to explore a more extensive gamut of humanitarian organizations in Greece, such as Praksis, ActionAid, and the Heart Doctors, World Pharmacists, and other relevant NGOs. A case study, comparing those NGOs with their counterparts in other countries could help highlight inferences in the organizations as a whole. Perhaps, one step further would be to recognize the factors leading to this geographical variance. Another pertinent research would definitely be one that focuses solely on the Hellenic Red Cross and see in which ways the various Sectors operate similarly or differently.

One truly prolific standpoint, alternative to the current study, would be to aim attention at the humanitarian community as a whole, and see how this whole responds to humanitarian various crisis. This is 'decision-making' on the grand perspective. A correlation between global needs assessment and decision making in humanitarian NGOs, international governmental and multilateral donors. This issue has been rigorously investigated (HPG, 2003), but given the dynamic nature of the humanitarian world, an updated research seems to be in order.

The restrictions of the study were admittedly self-imposed due to a need for specificity and targeted findings. However, such a study in the organizational behaviour of humanitarian organizations in Greece would definitely be well accompanied by a huge variance of other, interdisciplinary studies from neighbouring perspectives. Additionally it would be interesting to find out if there are any significant correlations between individual personality types or personal value systems and the various organizations of the humanitarian sector.

4.4 Endnote

Unfortunately, as the years go by, the world does not seem to become a better place: Inequalities that were considered preventable, are now exacerbated, and more people are now in danger because of conflict, food insecurity, natural disasters and disease. The

international humanitarian movement is becoming more and more sophisticated, but doesn't seem to be able to counterbalance the negative effects. Since the political solution to those problems does not seem to be anywhere near implementation, enhancing humanitarian response seems like humanity's only option. In absolute concordance with the not-so-secret wish of all humanitarian aid workers to end up self-negating the purpose of their existence, we strive for rigorous, effective, quality humanitarian assistance.

As this research has reached its conclusion, the great poem of Alexander Pope's comes into mind, and with a bit of luck, we too "are not forced to rush in where angels fear to tread". Scrutinizing the benevolent work of 'society's best', comes with a great responsibility and risk. It can't be stressed enough that the essence of this study was to produce a creative incentive for reflection upon the humanitarian affairs. Hopefully, the reader – whether that be an experienced organizational member, a fellow researcher or an aspirational humanitarian worker, would find some value in these pages. For all we know, the research process itself has been one remarkable and informative journey.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PLAN				
#	NGO	CODE	VENUE	DATE
1	MDM	MDM01	Participant's home	12-Jan-15
2	MDM	MDM02	Participant's home	14-Jan-15
3	MSF	MSF01	MSF HQ	27-Jan-15
4	MDM	MDM03	Participant's home	27-Jan-15
5	MDM	MDM04	Participant's home	27-Jan-15
6	MSF	MSF02	MSF HQ	2-Feb-15
7	MSF	MSF03	MSF HQ	2-Feb-15
8	MSF	MSF04	External venue	4-Feb-15
9	MSF	MSF05	MSF HQ	6-Feb-15
10	HRC	HRC01	Red Cross HQ	7-Feb-15
11	HRC	HRC02	Red Cross HQ	7-Feb-15
12	HRC	HRC03	Red Cross HQ	7-Feb-15
13	HRC	HRC04	Red Cross HQ	7-Feb-15
14	HRC	HRC05	Red Cross HQ	7-Feb-15
15	MSF	MSF06	External venue	9-Feb-15
16	MSF	MSF07	External venue	9-Feb-15
17	MSF	MSF08	Athens University	13-Feb-15
18	MDM	MDM05	MDM HQ	16-Feb-15
19	HRC	HRC06	Skype	17-Feb-15
20	HRC	HRC07	Red Cross HQ	19-Feb-15
21	MDM	MDM06	Athens University	24-Feb-15
22	HRC	HRC08	Skype	21-Mar-15