Talent Management in the Humanitarian Aid Context

Riitta Lumme-Tuomala

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To Olavi Lumme, my Father, who to me was always a Doctor, albeit without a degree.

To Virva and Veera, my most precious achievement, my pride and joy.

And to Jussi, who always has my back.

I love you all to the moon and back.

Abstract

Talent management is currently seen as a high-priority issue in organizations worldwide, and a critical determinant of organizational success. Organizations spend a great deal of resources on identifying and developing talent necessary for strategy implementation and to achieve strategic targets. When looking at critical factors for competitive advantage and business success, 'talent' is gaining status as an important element, almost equal to financial resources. Furthermore, both management researchers and practitioners have found the identification and development of high potential employees to be one of the major challenges of the current human resource function.

Even if talent management has in recent years received much attention in academia, research on different contexts, such as that of non-profit organizations, is limited. This dissertation explores talent management in the context of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and more precisely in humanitarian aid organizations. The focal organization of this study is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The main question of my study is: *"Do the managerial or business approaches to talent management and the principal assumption of organizations as money-making entities make talent management frameworks and theories non-applicable in the context of e.g. non-profit organizations?"* I studied this question by beginning with the pivotal matter of 'what is talent', and how it is defined both in academia and by practitioners. The notion of potential is of essence in talent definition, and is thus included in the way I advocate that 'talent' should be defined: it is a formula multiplying competence by commitment and contribution. Furthermore, each of these components is divided into two distinctive time dimensions: the present and future. Particularly the future dimension of 'contribution' involves factors that epitomize potential; insight, curiosity, and determination, to name a few.

Talent management, i.e. attracting, identifying, recruiting, developing, and retaining people, is a strategic process that should contribute to competitive advantage by first identifying the strategically pivotal

positions in the organization and then making sure that these positions are filled with talent: right people at the right time in the right job. Talent management at its most mature stage should both inform the overall strategy of the organization and be informed by it.

Overall, the results indicated that talent management frameworks and related activities are applicable to non-profit organizations, and can contribute to better attraction, identification, and retention of talent in humanitarian aid organizations. Traditionally, particularly in humanitarian aid organizations, the determining factors in recruitment and retention have been experience in similar organizations and a significant number of required competencies. The results suggest that these so-called competency frameworks are not ideal in the current VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world, since they do not take e.g. meta-competencies into account, and tend to be rather mechanical in their approach.

Furthermore, the development approach of humanitarian aid organizations can arguably be beneficial for corporations as well. This is particularly the case when developing high potentials or talent at the early stages of their careers. Namely, the way these organizations use mentoring – equaling to strong involvement of one's supervisor in the corporate world – and deployments to emergency operations – i.e. not simulations or experiments in 'safe' environments – are among development activities corporations could benefit from. The ability to identify potential remains to be one of the priorities of any manager, be it in non- or for-profit organizations. The competencies that guaranteed success in the past will most probably not be adequate, and managers need to learn to detect potential, with its components of curiosity and learning agility seeming crucial.

Acknowledgements

Doctoral studies and writing a dissertation is often called a journey. I have also referred to it as such while blogging about the experience for the past three (plus) years. However, I feel that this has been so much more than a journey! A journey is, in my view, somewhat predictable with a beginning, progression, and an arrival at the destination. Since I am not sure whether I have reached the destination yet, and what the destination is for that matter, I would rather talk about an exploration, an experiment, and an adventure.

It was an exploration since I travelled to previously unknown ground and the fascinating world of academia opened up to me in many ways: conferences, paper presentations, discussions, and rigor of research and academic writing. I consider it an experiment because I do not think anyone, least of all myself, thought I would obey (almost) all the rules, receive both positive and negative feedback with curiosity and self-reliance, and have the willingness to learn from all of it. The fortuitous nature of it made it an adventure; going around one corner brought about something altogether unexpected, which in turn led to something else that made me feel like Alice in the infamous wonderland. Somewhere along the way, this Alice (that would be me) found herself happy in the world of research, where she might want to reside at least partly from now on. Who would have thought?

Ever since the very beginning of this process at the end of 2013, I have naturally felt all the traditional roller coaster emotions. Eagerness, curiosity (the most important of them all), exhilaration, frustration, disappointment, sense of achievement, and the satisfaction of the "eureka-moments". One feeling however was decidedly absent: regret. I would do it all over again, changing some ways of working, skipping some unnecessary phases etc. but definitely do it again.

There would be no DBA for me without one person. Let him be the starting point for the thank yous. Dr. Pekka Mattila came to me one day and politely asked me to send my research plan to Professor Henrikki Tikkanen. This completely took me by surprise (this having been at the top of the list of my dreams, just never thought that the dream would come true) and I doubted my ability to get anything in writing. Pekka Mattila never did. Instead he printed out 15 academic articles on Talent Management and told me to read

them and get my act together. Both Pekka Mattila and Henrikki Tikkanen, who was also my academic supervisor, always had my back despite some moments of doubt and (my) dire despair. These two believed in me even when I had totally lost all faith in my ability to produce anything academic or anything remotely resembling research. Henrikki's comments and corrections were vital for the final product, and the speed with which he replied to every question and commented on a new version never ceased to amaze me.

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Growth team, my own dear gang then. Thank you for being such sports. Giving me possibilities to concentrate on my research whenever I needed to, even if you needed me for important issues during my what became known as library days. Kati Kiviniemi deserves a golden star for everything she has done to make sure that the final "book" really is there.

Kristiina Kumpula and Lotta Vallaskangas of the Finnish Red Cross have been pivotal to the final product: they helped me get access to my research organization and introduced me to people whose contributions were vital to my research. I always knew that the Red Cross Movement had to play a role if ever was to write a doctoral dissertation. Thank you for making this

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the term 'war for talent' was first coined by McKinsey and Co. in 1997 (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001), "the topic of talent management has received a remarkable degree of practitioner and academic interest" (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p. 304). Over the course of the past decade, academics have produced "a considerable amount of publications on talent management" (Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013, p. 326). Thunnissen et al. (2013) mention that the Google Scholar search engine showed over 170,000 articles published on Talent Management between 2001 and 2012. The author of this research report did a similar search for the years 2001 to 2014, which revealed a staggering number of 264,000 published articles.

According to Michie, Sparrow, Hird, & Cooper (2015), the intellectual roots of talent management can be traced back to the 1980s and early 1990s, when what the authors call 'the human resource planning movement' prevailed; forecasting of employee needs to meet business goals, and planning and managing staffing needs, succession planning, and short-term management development were emphasized. Talent management (TM) was used as a term of its own by the late 1990s and early 2000s. The focus of the TM debate during that era was on: how organizations could develop, sustain, and manage talent pools; etch a talent mindset into the organizational culture; align HR processes with the needs of talent; and pursue talent-related strategies that balance the recruitment and development of talent. Also, a central argument that HR's role should be that of a strategic business partner emerged at the time, coinciding with the discussion of talent as both a strategic resource and source of competitive advantage (Michie et al., 2015).

Talent management is currently seen as a high-priority issue in organizations worldwide and a critical determinant of organizational success (e.g. Beechler & Woodward, 2009). According to a survey by The Boston Consulting Group from 2014, leadership in general and talent management in particular were among topics that required the most urgent

action (The Boston Consulting Group, 2014). In PWC's 20th CEO Survey (Moritz, 2016), a chairman of a Spanish multinational corporation states that, in his opinion, the most important people in the 21st century are those who are able to manage talent, and talent is actually "the driver for the 21st century" (Moritz, 2016, p.19). Organizations spend a great deal of resources on identifying and developing talent necessary for strategy implementation and to achieve strategic targets. 'Talent' is almost as important for financial resources as for status in terms of critical factors for business success. (Silzer & Church, 2009).

On the other hand, some researchers question the ability of talent management to add value over traditional Human Resource Management activities and approaches, and call talent management only another management trend or 'fad' (Chuai & Preece, 2008). Cappelli (2008) in turn points out that some talent management practices, such as 360-degree assessments and succession planning, were developed in the 1950s, thus implicating that there is nothing fundamentally new in talent management *per se*. Talent management has also been labeled simply as a new package around old ideas with a fresh name (Adamsky, 2003). Others, like Duttagupta (2005), disagree; in his opinion, talent management is much more than a HR process and the related mindset. Furthermore, TM is simply not another HR 'fad', but strategic management of the flow of talent through an organization. Furthermore, Lepak and Snell (1999) argue that talent management responds to the urgent need for a more strategic diversification of HRM systems based on how different employee groups generate performance on strategically interesting measures. Finally, referring to Silzer & Dowell's (2010) argument, Cascio & Boudreau (2016) state that talent should be seen as a strategic resource and source of competitive advantage in organizations; this point emphasizes the need for strategic thinking and alignment within talent management research and, more importantly, within HR and top management.

Despite the growing number of academic articles in the field of talent management – it is to be pointed out that the majority of literature in the field is still practitioner or consultancy-based (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & González-Cruz, 2013) – academics still remain unclear about its definition and scope. Gallardo-Gallardo and colleagues even argue that the whole construct lacks clarity and "suffers from conceptual confusion". (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p. 1.) This 'confusion' leads to at least two shortcomings in talent management literature. Firstly, a great deal of research does not include a definition of talent. Secondly, and somewhat paradoxically, the number of alternative definitions is relatively high. For example, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) contribute to the talent definition discussion by going through a vast amount of research, and come up with 17 different definitions in the 'world of work'. The definitions collected from academic literature by Gallardo-Gallardo (2013) and her colleagues are presented in Appendix 1 with some additions by the author. Different approaches to talent, e.g. those of positive psychology and education in

addition to human resource management and talent management, are presented in Table 2 (p. 42). While many aspects of talent shed light on this multi-layered concept and contribute to both academic discussions and the practice of talent management, I personally deem the definition by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) the most comprehensive and applicable to different contexts of practicing talent management either as a systematic process or more sporadically. Their definition will be discussed further in several chapters of this dissertation, and modified by the author as a contribution or managerial implication of this research. In a nutshell, the definition is a formula of three components: competence, commitment, and contribution. Rather than added, the components multiply one another. Consequently, the value of each of the components needs to be more than zero, either concretely (if there is a numeric value in use in the organization to describe the components) or figuratively speaking (if there is a letter or word to describe different levels of e.g. commitment, and one of these is used for 'non-existent', 'not manifested' or 'low') – otherwise the result is zero, as is the case in mathematical multiplication.

As far as context is concerned, there seems to be a strong research and practitioner focus on multinational companies and the private sector in current talent management literature and research (Powell et al., 2012). Furthermore, Collings et al. (2011) reported a rather clear dominance of a US context in talent management literature and related debate, which according to the researchers is a consequence of the adoption of research by US-based scholars and Northern American thinking. Therefore, Collings et al. (2011) call for research from other traditions and different perspectives for 'counterbalance' (p. 455). Thunnissen et al. (2013) raise a question related to the above: are the assumptions, which are strongly focused on multinational, private, and US-based organizations, appropriate for research and descriptions of talent management in e.g. small enterprises, firms located outside the US, and public organizations (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). What is noteworthy and one of the reasons behind the topic for my research, and discussed further in the following chapter, is that not-for-profit organizations seem to have been ignored in academic research on talent management to some extent.

1.2 Research Gap

As stated above, talent management research seems to have a strong focus on the private sector. What about other sectors? One can question the applicability of current assumptions and concepts in talent management literature to other contexts, such as public organizations, non-profit organizations, and organizations outside of the US.

Further, as Thunnissen and colleagues point out, current literature in the field can also be characterized as highly managerialist (Thunnissen et al., 2013a). The focus of talent management literature, namely, seems

to be on instruments and tools that help HR professionals and managers involved in talent development and retention solve various talent-related challenges, e.g. recruitment and retention, and streamline processes and talent management activities.

To accentuate some of the 'narrow terms' of talent management research further – 'narrow' is how Collings (2014) refers to the research terms of this field – Cappelli's (2008) argument should be noted; in his view, talent management exists to support the overall objective of the organization, which 'in business amounts to making money' (Cappelli, 2008, p. 3). Cappelli (2008) continues by stating that the performance of any firm can be narrowed down to meeting shareholder needs and financial targets.

Moreover, Collings (2014) points out that talent management research has mainly evolved on the premise that the ultimate objective of a firm is to maximize shareholder value, in the context of improving organizational performance in narrow terms. Along the same lines, Cascio and Boudreau (2016) posit that one of the key limitations of extant work on talent management is "a narrow conceptualization of performance, namely, its focus on shareholder returns" (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016, p. 111).

Some researchers, including Boudreau and Ramstad (2005), emphasize the paradigm shift in organizations from 'maximizing shareholder value' towards defining organizational effectiveness so that it encompasses 'sustainability', which in their terms is defined as current success without ignoring the needs of the future. Furthermore, Cascio and Boudreau (2011) discuss so-called triple-bottom line sustainability, which is the combination of people, planet, and profit. Part of triple-bottom line sustainability has a direct focus on social sustainability, which includes the way an organization treats its employees in general and, one could add, attracts, deploys, develops, and retains talent.

Also Downs & Swailes (2013, p. 268) discuss the terms of talent management research when confronting "the mainstream view" in the field. From this point of view, TM focuses on managing high performers and high potentials, and has its roots in the organizations' ways of responding to "the growth of the neo-liberal knowledge economy". The authors also argue that the philosophy of workforce differentiation can easily be comprehended and is widely adopted in the Anglo-American profit-seeking context, but "the approach of identifying and managing employee talent is applicable to a much wider range of organizations and national cultures where differentiation may be far more problematic" (Downs & Swailes, 2013, p. 268). Talent is also seen as a socially constructed phenomenon that has different meanings in different contexts; this is argued to make talent identification difficult, subject to bias, and "hardly neutral" (Downs & Swailes, 2013, p. 269).

Furthermore, both management researchers and practitioners have found the identification and development of high potential employees to be one of the major challenges of the current human resource function (e.g. Buckingham and Vosburgh, 2001, Férnandez –Aráoz, 2014). Still there has been relatively little theoretical development related to the

definition, identification, and measurement of potential, and the few published conceptual papers on the topic have borrowed from literature on strategic HRM, the resource-based view (RBV), and differentiated HR architecture. (Dries, Vantilborgh, & Pepermans, 2012). However, Silzer and Church (2009) have vastly contributed to the discussion around identifying potential. The authors argue that there is a 'performance-potential' paradox at play; managers linking past performance to predictions of future success. Building on Silzer and Church (2009), Robinson, Fetters, Riester, & Bracco (2009) argue that current performance is an insufficient indicator of potential and that the interdependency of performance and potential should be taken into account.

The notion and concept of potential is essential from the point of view of my own research and the case chosen for this study; a pool of highly experienced humanitarian aid leaders at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) entitled Heads of Emergency Operations (HEOps). One of my arguments to the above-mentioned 'performance-potential paradox' by Silzer and Church (2009) and Robinson et al. (2009) is that it is evident in the identification of 'talent' in the pool of HEOps, and can eventually have an impact on who is eligible to apply to a certain position in the first place.

It is to be noted, however, that the ALNAP[1] study of 2011 (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011) makes a clear point about experience; it is invaluable. In this context, experience denotes an individual having had similar types of jobs in the past, e.g. in emergency operations for one or more humanitarian aid organizations. 'Experience' can be argued to be more or less as important as performance, as both refer to something that has taken place in the past. Furthermore, performance can also be argued to be mainly based on experience. Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011) also state in their study that the international humanitarian sector seems to be neglecting to "capitalize on the wide range of potential leaders" (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011, p. 7). The need to identify potential in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and particularly in the humanitarian aid sector is also pointed out by Parry, Dickman, Emmens, & Williamson (2010) in their research report. The authors recognize a need to identify 'potential' within the humanitarian aid organizations and to develop that potential accordingly. They also recognize the need for skills and competencies in the following areas in the coming years; adaptability and agility, resilience, networking, collaboration and managing partnerships, together with managing complexity (Parry et al., 2010, p. 14). One could argue that in order to ensure well-functioning and effective leadership in the future in the field, the leaders and managers of today should have the ability to detect potential for the above-mentioned skills, and enable and encourage the manifestation of this potential.

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1   ALNAP, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance is a network that includes INGOs, donors, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and academics.

Sparrow et al. (2015) make a very valid point, albeit rarely discussed in both academic and practitioner literature; according to the view of the authors, excessive attention is paid to general management potential, consequently ignoring the value of expert knowledge. The authors advocate the idea of competitive advantage being "rooted in [..] the stock of experts they can access" (Michie, Sparrow, Hird, & Cooper, 2015, loc. 4920). This argument supports the thinking of Huselid, Beatty & Becker (2005), who claim that what they call 'A positions' can be found at all levels and functions of an organization. These are positions that can be defined by their direct impact on the organization's strategy and by high performance variability amongst the incumbents of the position, representing "upside potential" (Huselid et al., 2005, p. 3). In humanitarian aid organizations, expertise and experience are highly valued. It could be argued that when looking for potential and talent among humanitarian aid workers, expertise bypasses management and leadership skills. This will be discussed further in Chapters 7 and 8.

This study thus attempts to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of talent management in varied contexts; the particular context examined in my research is that of an international non-governmental organization (INGO), more specifically a humanitarian aid organization: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). My study involves depicting and analyzing the case of a relatively novel concept at IFRC, namely Head of Emergency Operations (HEOps). HEOps encompass a core 'pool' of three full-time employees available for immediate deployment to lead major emergency operations anywhere in the world. My research explores the identification, recruitment, and particularly development activities related to HEOps, and looks into the requirements set for the incumbents by the organization by applying a qualitative single case research strategy.[2]

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

In an effort to contribute to existing literature and to challenge some of the current approaches in talent management research, I would like to pose the following question: *Do the managerial or business approaches to talent management and the principal assumption of organizations as money-making entities make talent management frameworks and theories non-applicable in the context of e.g. non-profit organizations?*

The motive for choosing a non-profit organization as a case for my research is based firstly on the above-mentioned issue of a lack of academic research on talent management in the context of non-profit organizations. The type of non-profit organizations, namely non-governmental organizations

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2   E.g. Piekkari, Welch and Paavilainen use the term research "strategy", as according to them a case study "is not limited to, and involves more than, the choice of method for data collection or analysis". (Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2009, p. 570).

(NGOs) and more precisely those working in the field of humanitarian assistance, is of particular personal interest as a result of my own career in the sector and my extensive knowledge of its specific characteristics. I hope the study will contribute to academic discussion and research in the field of talent management both in terms of theoretical frameworks and managerial implications in NGOs and corporations alike.

In the case study chosen for my research, I examine a group of individuals recruited to work in leadership positions in the humanitarian aid sector, which forms a specific context also for leadership in general. While many aspects of leadership are the same whatever the sector – e.g. combining strategic vision with the planning of everyday work and influencing people and communication – this particular context is marked by leaders' decisions affecting people's lives and survival under challenging, often hazardous circumstances. Furthermore, in the relatively non-hierarchical system of humanitarian assistance, it is critical to be able to build consensus among different actors in the field, while following all the rules and regulations of humanitarian assistance. Decisions need to made quickly, the speed of action being of essence (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011). In emergency situations, the speed of action is high, and decisions need to made rapidly. Nevertheless, leaders in the sector need to build and maintain long-term relationships with various stakeholders, ensure livelihoods of survivors, and build resilience in communities in the long run. All this, as Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011, p. 60) state, gives a "particular edge to (operational) humanitarian leadership". Buchanan-Smith and Scriven (2011) also posit that values lie at the heart of humanitarian leadership – a point that is vital and at the core of my interest in the case, which is pinpointed further in the following theory chapter.

The role of values for instance in joining a humanitarian aid organization in the first place and remaining with the organization seems to be relatively evident from the study of Parry and her colleagues (2010). Namely, the vast majority of the 81 survey respondents considered values to be an important (or very important) factor for joining the organization and even more so for staying with the organization. (Parry et al., 2010).

Moreover, competency models, i.e. collections of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics needed for effective performance in the job (Campion & Odman, 2011), which are widely in use within the humanitarian aid sector, UN heading this practice (Hochschild, 2010), are increasingly challenged by both practitioners and academics. E.g. Bolden & Gosling (2006) strongly dispute the frameworks by stating that "…the competency approach to leadership could be conceived of as a repeating refrain that continues to offer an illusory promise to rationalize and simplify the processes of selecting, measuring and developing leaders yet only reflects a fragment of the complexity that is leadership" (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, p. 2). One can question the usefulness of competency frameworks in practice, since they do not necessarily measure or reveal any indication of alignment with the values of the organization and the commitment to the

cause. (Parry et al., 2010). I tend to agree with the points above. In addition, Parry and her colleagues (2010) reported as learnings from their study that "core humanitarian leadership behaviors" (Parry et al., 2010, p. 13) can be viewed from three dimensions, namely: self-awareness, including commitment to self-development; motivating and influencing others; and critical judgment. These dimensions are arguably ignored at least to some extent in current, relatively detailed competency frameworks that mostly emphasize technical skills. Frameworks of this type are in use in many humanitarian aid organizations, including the research organization of my study. One could state that the current frameworks aim to do exactly what Hochschild (2010) argues; reflect only a fraction of the complexity of leadership.

Hence, in line with the research gap and the motive for this study described above, my intention is to address the following main question:

Do the managerial or business approaches to talent management and the principal assumption of organizations as money-making entities make talent management frameworks and theories non-applicable in the context of e.g. non-profit organizations?

The sub-questions of my study are as follows:

1. Does the humanitarian aid context impact the way 'talent' is defined, identified, recruited, developed, deployed, and retained?
2. Are competency frameworks a sufficient tool for managing talent in this context?

The last sub-question, related to the expected managerial implications of this study, can be formulated in the following manner:

3. Are there processes and mechanisms in use in managing talent in the humanitarian aid context that could be beneficial for for-profit organizations?

The main research question seeks to increase understanding on the possibilities of talent management mechanisms, processes, and tools together with the underlying definitions to enhance people and talent management alongside talent development in the humanitarian aid context in general, and particularly in the case organization.

The sub-questions are intended to support both the structuring of the conclusions and the managerial implications of the study and to support the formation of the contributions to talent management research in various contexts.

1.4   Key Concepts

Talent

The concept and definition of talent is central to this study. Agreeing with e.g. Dries (2013), in my view, the definition of talent depends significantly on the adopted theoretical framework and research context, among other things, and can thus vary a great deal in different studies. As presented in the introduction, this adheres to the definition of Ulrich and Smallwood (2012):

> *"Talent = competence [knowledge, skills and values required for todays' and tomorrows' job; right skills, right place, right job, right time] × commitment [willing to do the job] × contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their job]" (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012, p. 60).*

The components of the definition – competence, commitment, and contribution – are scrutinized and defined later on in this study (chapter 2.2). Furthermore, the definition presented above is advanced in the conclusions section in the context of discussing the contributions of this study to existing talent management literature and research by introducing the time perspective, i.e. the present and the future, to the definition.

Talent Management

Following the descriptions of Stahl et al. (2012) and Uren (2007), I define talent management *as an organization's strategic and deliberate efforts to attract, identify, develop, deploy and engage employees to and in organizations.* The afore-mentioned elements are depicted in Table 1 (p. 26). In line with Collings & Mellahi (2009), I posit that talent management includes activities and processes related to 1) the systematic identification of key positions[3] 2) the development of a pool of high potential incumbents to fill these roles, and 3) the establishment of a human resource architecture and/or procedures to enable recruitment of talent to the key positions and to ensure the retention of the talent through continued commitment and engagement of the talent to the organization. A pivotal aspect of the definition of talent management described above and used in my study is that 'key positions' are not restricted to the top management team nor merely to leadership and management positions, but may well vary between different operating units, departments, and levels of the organization, and over time. The definition by Collings and Mellahi (2009) thus emphasizes the strategic importance of talent

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3   Key positions are those positions that in different ways contribute to the organization's 'sustainable competitive advantage' (Collings & Mellahi, 2009, p.304).

management. It also recognizes talent management's potential to contribute to improving the organization's competitive position and rests on a differentiation philosophy, i.e. the need to differentiate between strategic and non-strategic positions, which in turn works as a starting point for building a high-impact, strategically focused talent pool. High-impact talent management is likely to relate to the so-called exclusive approach to talent management that Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) depict in their framework for conceptualizing talent. In the exclusive approach, talent management targets only a selected group of employees. In this framework, the so-called inclusive approach entails all employees of the organization and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Table 1. Talent management elements (modified from Uren, 2007)

Attract	The right Employee Value Proposition and brand to attract talent from both the external marketplace and internally.
Identify	Having a clear understanding of the organization's definition of talent; what kind of people and competence are needed to create value and/or deliver a competitive advantage to the organization now and in the future
Develop	Building the competencies and skills of the employees to meet the current and future demands.
Deploy	Placing the right people in the right positions and jobs in the right time.
Engage	Ensuring the right environment for individuals to deliver their best, exceed expectations, and remain engaged and committed to the organization, its values, the job itself, and the management and team where she/he works.[4]

Table 1, the components of which are depicted in more detail later on in Chapter 2, introduces the different elements of talent management included in the majority of extant attempts to define it. There are, namely, numerous views on what talent management comprises. However, as stated above, a consensus seems to prevail in talent management literature that it fundamentally focuses on afore-mentioned elements of: attraction, identification, recruitment, development, deployment, and engagement, related to a somewhat unique group of people who are of particular value to their organizations.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

The United Nations' definition suggests that the NGO sector is comprised of "self-governing organizations that are not-for-profit and nonprofit distributing, institutionally separate from government, and non-compulsory" (Cornforth & Brown, 2014, p.4). A specific term has

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4   Engagement is the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard they work, and how long they stay as a result of this commitment. (Corporate Leadership Council, 2000).

been coined for the type of NGO that acts in the field of humanitarian assistance; Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies, NGHAs. NGHAs encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – The International Committee of the Red Cross, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member National Societies – and the NGOs as defined above. The term refers specifically to those NGHAs involved in disaster response. For clarity, I will only use the term 'NGO' even when referring to the specific context of this study, the humanitarian assistance or humanitarian aid sector. Furthermore, in this particular context, I mostly focus on a single organization. Hence, defining and understanding the concept of humanitarian assistance is pivotal, and is discussed in the following chapter.

Humanitarian Assistance/Aid

ReliefWeb Glossary (2008) describes humanitarian assistance as *"aid that seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis affected population"* (Reliefweb & Reliefweb, 2008, p. 31).

What is more, humanitarian assistance needs to be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. In this context, impartiality is depicted as "acting solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations", and neutrality as "acting without favoring any side in an armed conflict or other dispute". Independence is defined as "the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented".[5] The above-listed factors related to humanitarian principles distinguish humanitarian assistance from other aid and foreign assistance in general. It is also essential to understand the concepts of disaster management and disaster response, which have an impact on an array of competencies, skills, and characteristics vital to individuals working in the field.

Following the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) definition, I define *disaster management as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies*, referring to preparedness, response, and recovery in order to lessen the impact of disasters. Thus, disaster response is a collection, or sum, of all decisions and actions taken during and after disaster. This includes immediate relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (Reliefweb & Reliefweb, 2008, p. 22). These actions commence with a warning of an ensuing threatening event or the event itself if it occurs without warning. All disaster response and relief

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5   http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/data-guides/defining-humanitarian-aid

operations seek to protect the life, health, and livelihood of the individual, and to ensure respect for the individual through providing assistance in a dignified form and manner[6]. Figure 1 on the following page presents the entire process of Disaster Management with its different components in order of implementation or occurrence. However, several aspects of the process are continuous. Disaster preparedness is an example of a continuous element, which by definition is "an integrated process resulting from a wide range of activities and resources rather than a [...] sectoral activity by itself." The 'wide range of activities' refers to the involvement of many different areas, such as health care, logistics, and institutional development. Risk reduction activities include disaster mitigation, i.e. measures to limit the negative consequences of natural disasters, and early warning systems, which in turn enable people to take the necessary steps to minimize or at least reduce the impact of hazards. It is noteworthy that many of the mitigation measures taken are not directly related to natural disasters as such, but are health-related and require solid knowledge about e.g. clean drinking water supply for the community (IFRC & Danish Red Cross, 2003). Hence, recovery activities embrace all decisions and actions during and after a disaster with the intention to restore or improve the living conditions of the disaster-stricken community.[7]

It is to be noted that while the HEOps, i.e. the individuals in the case pool of my research, are mainly involved in the 'responding to disasters' phase of disaster management, the other aspects of disaster management are most likely to have an impact on the activities and processes during the actual disaster response. For instance, how well the community survives the emergency itself ostensibly depends on how thoroughly and consistently risk reduction and risk preparedness are carried out. Furthermore, decisions during disaster response affect the recovery phase, which begins as soon as disaster strikes. Subsequently, the need for skills and competencies related not only to the emergency phase itself but also to other aspects of disaster management seems to be evident for anyone working in leadership positions in the field during emergencies. Examples of these competencies and particular skills could include risk mapping, data-analyzing, community development, disaster mitigation, and an ability to negotiate with a plethora of stakeholders, including government officials, who are not necessarily involved in the disaster phase.

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6   http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/

7   http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/preparing-for-disaster/risk-reduction/reducing-disaster-risk/
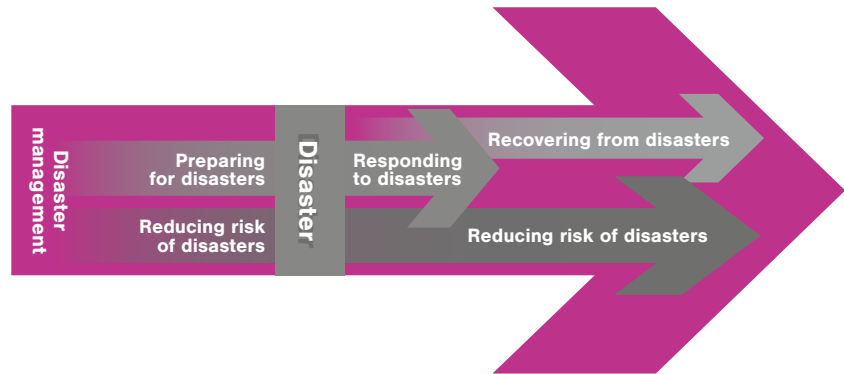
Figure 1 Diagram on disaster management
(Source: http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/40699/dm-diagram-b.gif)

The Principles of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief are presented in Appendix 2. The Code of Conduct was signed in agreement by several of the world's largest disaster response agencies in 1994.

1.5 Research Process

As described by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), a qualitative research process is rarely straightforward and linear, which also applies to the process of this research report. What is more, the settings of qualitative research operate on "constant circularity and linking empirical analysis to a flexible literature review and theories." (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 32). Even though methods and theories in qualitative research vary, reflexivity is a common nominator in all qualitative research, playing an important role. It means that the researcher is an integral part of the research process and should not exclude herself from it – quite the contrary. Furthermore, reflexivity is also related to the way fieldwork is done; researchers must reflect their own biases and positions vis à vis the research object. (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2008).

As stated by Lu (2014), the role of the researcher with the related background and conditioning is crucial, and it is the researcher's duty to be aware of this, making sure the reader is informed, too. The researcher's background and prior knowledge can be argued to act as a starting point to qualitative research. Lu (2014) further argues that describing the researcher's background is particularly important when the research is conducted in a cross-cultural context in which the researcher can be considered to play a key role in the transmission of the culture he or she is familiar with, and, as stated above, eventual biases. This information should be documented in research diaries and protocols.

Based on the above and understanding that the background of the researcher should be the starting point for qualitative research and thus the first stepping stone for the whole research process, my background and relationship with the research organization and the research case needs to be documented. This will be done in Section 3.2.2.

The followed research process and schedule of the process are illustrated in Figure 2. It is to be noted that the relevance of empirical material to the research question in a qualitative (circular) research process is crucial; qualitative research does not operate on causal relationships between preset variables, but rather on circularity and linking empirical material to theories. (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). The process has indeed been circular, and when going through empirical material, I have taken into consideration not only the focus of the study but also its context.

All the elements of the process have involved support from my academic supervisors and close cooperation with the research organization where I have done research or worked with the case group of IFRC employees. I spent time with the case groups on four separate occasions. The first period was in December 2015, when I observed a selection process related to the case group. The second period in March 2016 involved an induction workshop, when I observed the process, interviewed the participants, i.e. the case pool members, and served as a facilitator during a segment on developing self-awareness. The third period took place in June 2016, when I worked at the case organization for two weeks, collecting documentation, specific literature and reports, and interviewing several employees and members of the management team. Material and interviews on the research organization are listed in Table 8 (p. 101) later in this research report. Formulation of the research field began early on through discussions with Finnish Red Cross managers, which, combined with my own experience depicted above, formed a solid understanding of the context. The focus became clear relatively quickly after receiving information on the research case group pool from one of the FRC managers. I gained access to the research organization itself as a result of my personal background and experience and support from the FRC.
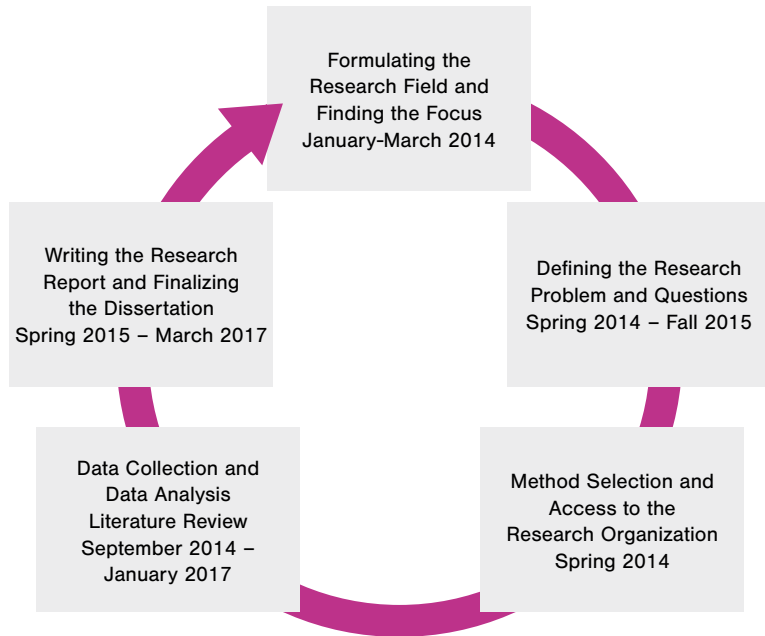
Figure 2 The circular research process
(Source: Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

Data sources, collection and analysis are described in more detail in Section 3.3.

1.6 Structure of the Research Report

The first chapter of this research report serves as the Introduction, which presents the background to the topic, talent management, and particularly the related research. Additionally, the research gap is discussed, focusing especially on the gap in talent management research in various contexts. The Introduction chapter also includes the research questions: one main question and three sub-questions. It concludes with key concepts and the research process.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theory related to talent management. It begins with a literature review on talent management in general, once again taking a closer look at the aspect of context in the research. The chapter proceeds by discussing talent management components; the section begins with a definition of talent, which in my view is crucial in talent management theory and practice, and is followed by an overview of talent management literature and research on some of the elements of talent definition – competence, commitment/engagement, performance, and potential. Specific emphasis is on competency frameworks, or models, due to the prevailing situation in non-governmental

organizations, which use competency frameworks extensively, often forming a backbone of talent management in NGOs. The benefits and perils of competency frameworks are discussed both in this chapter and later in chapters 7 and 8. Literature on other components of talent management, i.e. identification, development, and retention together with different aspects of succession planning, are also introduced in this chapter. The chapter also introduces theoretical frameworks I have developed for both talent management and talent definition as well as a framework for talent management maturity.

Chapter 3 outlines the design of the research, comprising methodology; that for qualitative, interpretative case study research. Additionally, data collection and sources, and challenges of data analysis are presented. The chapter also covers reliability and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 4 describes the context of my study: The characteristics of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), then the more precise context – , the humanitarian aid industry. The descriptions are followed by an overview on people management and leadership issues in the humanitarian aid context.

Chapter 5 introduces the Red Cross Movement and its history, structure, and statutory bodies. The fundamental principles and emblems, which have a unique role in humanitarian aid, are also described.

Chapter 6 describes the research organization: a section of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, namely the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The chapter also describes IFRC's history, governance, strategy, funding, stakeholders, and management structures. The structure of the Secretariat, i.e. the headquarters of IFRC is presented, as well as the role, processes, and tools of the department, which oversees the case group of experienced leaders.

Chapter 7 discusses the research case, the Heads of Emergency Operations (HEOps) as well as the related Developing Heads of Emergency Operations (D-HEOps), who can be argued to be the equivalent of high potentials in the corporate world. The chapter covers their identification and recruitment process. Background to the HEOps pool is introduced together with requirements, identification, development, and standard operating procedures, mission reports and other guidelines applicable in emergency situations. Empirical findings with their analysis and key findings from the case are introduced at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 8 concludes this research report by presenting contributions to existing talent management literature and research. It also highlights the managerial implications for talent management in organizations. The chapter ends with a discussion on future avenues for talent management research particularly in the NGO or non-profit context. It is worth noting that the managerial implications do not only apply to the focus of this study, but can hopefully benefit corporations as well.

2. Research on Talent Management

2.1 Overview of the Talent Management Literature

It can be argued that talent management has become a critical competitive tool for organizations globally (e.g. Beechler & Woodward, 2009). However, even if talent management is considered to be strategically important for organizations, research on the topic has been growing at a slow pace (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). A lack of clarity and consensus concerning the definition and practices of talent management seems to still prevail in academic discussion and debate (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Mellahi & Collings, 2010) even if the research area as such is considered to have moved from infancy to adolescence (Collings, Scullion, & Vaiman, 2011). The aforementioned transformation from infancy to adolescence can be attributed to many U.S. based researchers, which in turn, as presented in the Introduction chapter, raises the question of applicability and adequacy of current concepts and approaches in talent management literature related to US-based, private and multinational organizations in examining talent management in organizations in other contexts, such as European organizations, public or non-profit organizations and small and medium enterprises (Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013b). There are, as e.g. Collings and colleagues (2011) acknowledge, some significant exceptions to the "North American thinking and research" (Collings et al., 2011, p. 455), such as Collings and Mellahi (2009); Farndale, Scullion, & Sparrow, (2010); Mäkelä, Björkman, & Ehrnrooth (2010); and McDonnell, Lamare, Gunnigle, & Lavelle (2010), which cover the topic of talent management or strategic talent management from a global perspective. In these studies, the viewpoint is not limited to one continent or approach only; the perspective is either that of global talent management or Multinational Companies (MNCs) (Collings et al., 2011).

The article by Collings, Scullion and Vaiman (2011) mentioned above discusses a European perspective on talent management, highlighting differences between the U.S. and European context and their likely impact on talent management. I will proceed by mentioning some of the

differences that are likely to be relevant from the viewpoint of my study. Collings et al. (2011) refer to differences in organization and structure between North American and European MNCs; the former seem to place more emphasis on the formalization of structures and processes, while the European counterparts emphasize socialization, which in turn can be argued to require different approaches to talent management. With regards to demographics, certain important factors have an impact on European organizations. Firstly, the retirement of the so-called baby boom generation[8] and the consequent loss of capacity and knowledge and talent gaps around the globe. Another demographic trend mentioned by Collings et al. (2011) is the generation referred to as 'millennials', born after 1980. The importance they place on corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as training and development are seen as significant work-related attitudes among millennials. From the standpoint of talent management and HRM in general, this means that organizations need to understand the importance of employer branding (or corporate branding more broadly) if they want to attract and retain representatives of this generation. How these people are engaged and motivated is equally important to understand (Collings et al., 2011). Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings (2012) also discuss this particular generational issue; the authors posit that the millennial generation makes CSR-related demands on their employer. What is more, this generation is argued to prefer to work for employers with a reputation for socially responsible operations. As regards CSR on a more general level, Vaiman et al. (2012) refer to creating and sustaining a reputation as a socially responsible company as "an important lever in talent management and retention" (Vaiman et al., 2012, p. 927). The authors continue by stating that CSR can be used as a way to enhance employees' perception of 'intrinsic rewards' instead of being extensively dependent on increasing financial compensation. Furthermore, CSR can help organizations develop an employee value proposition (EVP) that is more difficult for competition to copy compared to offering higher financial compensation (Vaiman et al., 2012).

In my view, the above-mentioned points related to CSR represent an opportunity for organizations especially in the humanitarian sector. This argument seems to be at least partly supported by the findings of e.g. McGinnis, Johnson & Ng (2015); millennials are, namely, claimed to be looking for meaningful and fulfilling work more than other generations, and the public and nonprofit sectors, including NGOs and organizations in the humanitarian aid industry, are arguably positioned to offer interesting work through their missions. Furthermore, the relevance

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8   Baby boom generation in the U.S. is considered to be born between 1946 and 1964, whereas in e.g. Finland the boom was much shorter, from 1945 to 1950. (PEW Research center http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/ and http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_structure_and_ageing)

of millennials for talent management is rooted in the claim by Meyers and van Woerkom (2014) that this generation is often targeted by talent management activities and initiatives presumably due to the ongoing retirement of baby boomers, referred to earlier in this chapter, and the current influx of millennials into the workforce. Millennials are also argued to emphasize different values and attitudes and make different career decisions than previous generations. In other words, the younger generations – millennials – "display a strong protean career orientation, that is, a desire for interesting and meaningful work, personal growth, and developing new skills" (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2015, p. 285). In addition to looking for meaningful work in terms of values, a point presented above, compared to previous generations, millennials have been found to be more prone to "job-hopping" and sector switching if they are dissatisfied with aspects of the work, including pay. (McGinnis Johnson & Ng, 2015). The latter point about pay is highly relevant in the humanitarian aid sector, as discussed below in this chapter.

Despite the findings presented above, e.g. Tarique & Schuler (2010) and Festing & Schäfer (2014) argue that systematic research on generation-related issues in talent management is limited. Festing and Schäfer (2014) address this research gap by examining generational challenges in talent management from a social-exchange theory perspective in an effort to explain the impact of talent management on the psychological contract and its outcomes. The researchers argue that this particular relationship, i.e. the relationship between the psychological contract and the outcomes thereof, is "moderated by generational effects and associated differences in work-related values and preferences" (Festing & Schäfer, 2014, p 262). The researchers argue that the millennials together with Generation X, i.e. the generation born after the Baby Boomers, are strongly interested in training and development and that consequently extensive talent management interventions and activities are crucial for talent retention within these cohorts (Festing & Schäfer, 2014).

On the other hand, e.g. Tansley, (2011), Thunnissen et al. (2013a) point out a lack of individual perspective, i.e. needs, expectations, and preferences of individuals defined as 'talent' in organizations, in talent management research. Festing and Schäfer (2014) follow on the same lines, addressing the research gap in their study by including individual-level variables, such as work-related preferences of individuals of different generational cohorts. Additionally, the individual aspect of talent management is included in the research of e.g. Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler & Staffelbach (2011), who found that all talent strategies have a positive impact on motivation of talents, and in the studies of Björkman, Ehrnrooth, Mäkelä, Smale, & Sumelius (2013), according to whom informing individuals of their talent status has positive effects on their performance outcomes and motivation.

The intrinsic rewards are a case in point in the context of the humanitarian aid sector, and consequently in talent attraction and talent management

in the field in general. Intrinsic rewards[9] are discussed in literature by e.g. McGinnis Johnson & Ng (2015); Parry et al. (2010); Lyons & Kuron (2014); and Tymon, Stumpf, & Doh (2010). According to Tymon et al. (2010), intrinsic rewards "involve a positive psychological state within individuals generally accompanied by feelings of passion, energy, and enthusiasm" (Tymon et al., 2010, p. 111). Furthermore, intrinsic rewards are based on positively valued experiences that a person receives from work and tasks, found to make work fulfilling. The researchers also suggest "an upward spiral of positive feelings and experiences" (Tymon et al., 2010, p. 111).

Since pay cannot, at least not in all cases, be considered a lever in talent retention in the humanitarian aid field, intrinsic rewards can be argued to play a significant role in talent attraction and retention. Tymon et al. (2010) suggest that employers should examine non-financial reward mechanisms more closely in order to retain employees and encourage employee satisfaction. Stahl et al. (2012) posit that in recruiting, motivating, and retaining talent, top managers and HR executives have a tendency to overestimate how much employees care about extrinsic job features including pay, and to underestimate the motivation provided by intrinsic types of rewards. The researchers refer to studies corroborating that talent in corporations value e.g. 'being appreciated' and 'interesting assignments' over financial rewards (Stahl et al., 2012).

High-powered vs. low-powered incentive discussion in strategy and economic research is related to the afore-mentioned points. The difference between the two types of incentives lies in their ability to elicit effort in an employee. High-powered incentives are based on output, whereas low-powered incentives, such as salary or hourly pay, focus on effort[10]. I have, however decided not to participate in this discussion in the focal study.

Furthermore, quoting Dewhurst and Willmott (2014), Cascio and Boudreau (2016) mention the 'softer side' of talent management and leadership by reminding of the importance of talent, "including all the human and organizational elements that are pivotal to enterprise success" (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016, p. 103), and the importance of leadership that acknowledges the importance and crucial role of the 'human touch'. "Executives will be able to make the biggest difference by asking the right questions of the right people at the right times, inspiring the troops, ... [and] developing talent . . . tolerating ambiguity, synthesizing information, and focusing on the 'softer' side of management to engage the organization and build its capacity for self-renewal. ...We are convinced that simultaneous growth in the importance of softer management skills and technology

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9   Some researchers, such as Collings (2014), Schepers et al. (2005), talk about 'intrinsic motivation', which in my opinion can apply to talent or employee retention and job satisfaction. Also Tymon et al. (2010) suggest similarities with the concept of engagement, which is discussed later in chapter 2.2.1.4.

10   "Unresolved Issues in Personnel Economics, The Power of Incentives" (Lazear, American Economic Review, 2000 Vol. 90 (2).)

savvy will boost the complexity and richness of the senior-executive role. (Dewhurst & Willmott, 2014, p. 2, 7, 8). This, in my opinion, is to be once again borne in mind when considering (leadership) talent of the future and the potential required by organizations regardless of the type of industry or form of organization.

As for the prominent, reasonably frequently cited literature review by Thunnissen et al. (2013), several researchers and practitioners consider the purpose of talent management to be to 'attract, develop, motivate, and retain talent'. Some, however, adhere to the view that talent management's purpose is to create value for the organization through contributions to improved organizational performance and competitive advantage. Regardless of the chosen perspective, there seems to be a general consensus that talent management is an 'input, process, output' transformation process with the purpose to attract, develop, motivate, and retain talent in order to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). In practice, differing interpretations of talent management are considered to be the result inconsistent definitions of the concept (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016a). Interpretations are influenced by: new terms for commonly used HR practices; practices in succession planning; focusing on strategic or critical positions that contribute to competitive advantage of the organization; and, on a more general level, management of talented employees. (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016a). In my opinion, the afore-mentioned is very much in line with the 'input, process, output' process referred to by Kontoghiorghes (2016).

Different perspectives to talent management can also be viewed along the lines of Devine & Powell (2010), who outline five different perspectives that "help align formal processes that support talent management, spanning how organizations recruit, retain, develop, performance manage, reward and promote their talented people" (2010, p. 4). Different perspectives and their underpinning beliefs are presented below alongside references to other researchers and studies discussing the same theme.

1) *Competitive perspective*, underpinned by the belief that talent management should identify talent and do the utmost to retain it – in other words talent management is used as a 'retention strategy'. According to research (Devine & Powell, 2010), this perspective is upheld by professional service firms and organizations in highly competitive sectors. Other researchers who discuss the perspective include Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson (2008); Ashton & Morton (2005); Meyers & van Woerkom (2014); Stahl et al. (2012); and Cappelli (2008).

2) *Process and HR planning perspective*, which focuses on processes that enhance performance with the underpinning belief that future organizational success is based on having the right talent onboard and that talent management is an everyday process. The planning perspective focuses on having the right people in the right positions at the right time, and is typical to companies with rapid growth (Devine & Powell, 2010). Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels (2013); Buckingham & Vosburgh (2001),

Garrow & Hirsh (2008); Collings & Mellahi (2009); Lepak & Snell (1999); and Sonnenberg, van Zijderveld, & Brinks (2014) are among researchers with a focus on the process and HR planning perspective in their research.

3) *Developmental perspective* emphasizes the importance of developing talent and high potentials along an accelerated development plan or path. E.g. Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler & Bruno Staffelbach (2011); Dries et al. (2012); Meyers & van Woerkom (2014); Stahl (2013); and Guthridge, Komm, & Lawson (2006) discuss talent development in their studies. Guthridge et al. (2006) take a particularly strong stand; in their view, talent management processes have no possibility to succeed if managers do not understand the importance of developing people.

4) *Cultural perspective. A*ccording to Devine and Powell (2010), this perspective "entails viewing talent management as a mindset and the strong belief that talent is critical to an organization's success. *The War for Talent* by Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod (2001) is probably the most striking example of applying a talent mindset. Lewis & Heckman (2006) refer to 'talent mindset' as a term used in "practitioner-oriented literature" (2006, p. 140), and are critical about it due to what they call a lack of methodological rigor in an example depicted in *The War for Talent* (Michaels et al., 2001). A recent study by Kontoghiorghes (2016) examines the impact of organizational culture on talent management. The study suggests that organizations might be better off in terms of talent management by building a culture that will make the organization an attractive place for talent to work in. Moreover, "this type of culture will have a compounding effect on firm performance since not only will it allow the organization to optimize its operational sub-system, it will also allow it to create a highly talented, motivated, and committed workforce, which in turn will constitute a source of hard to replicate competitive advantage" (Kontoghiorghes, 2016, p. 1850). Also Groysberg (2004, 2008) refers to culture, as he argues that it is not only people who improve an organization's performance, but that the contrary is even more true: organizations (and the culture together with company-specific competencies) have a positive impact on individuals' performance. (Groysberg, Nanda, & Nohria, 2004). I consider these findings extremely important and agree with Kontoghiorghes' (2016) call for further research around the topic of organizational culture and talent management.

5) The underpinning belief in the *Change management perspective* is using talent management to activate change in the organization. It also guides organizations to recruit change agents in the organizations, even "mavericks" (Blass, 2007, p.5). Lawler (2004) discusses HR and talent management as drivers of organizational change.

My literature review indicates a lack of common understanding of talent management among researchers and practitioners alike. However, there is some agreement on talent management as a transformation process that seeks to attract, develop, motivate, and retain talent with the purpose of enhancing organizational performance and competitiveness. While I agree with this general view, I want to take a closer look at the different

components of talent management and related definitions, which I consider important in light of the perspectives discussed above and in designing and implementing talent management processes in organizations.

2.2 A Review of Talent Management Components in Academic Literature

2.2.1 Definition of Talent

As a term and the definition of 'talent' are pivotal parts of the talent management concept. In the following, I will concentrate on what has been stated in academic, and to some extent practitioner, literature and research about defining the term 'talent' in the context of talent management.

An interesting contradiction can be observed when going through relevant talent management literature: on the one hand, a great deal of research does not explicitly define talent, while on the other hand, the number of definitions and differing conceptualizations is relatively high. For example, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) contribute to the talent definition discussion by going through a vast amount of research, coming up with 17 different definitions of talent in the 'world of work'. For instance, talent has been conceptualized alternatively as: "the sum of a person's abilities" (Michaels et al. 2001: xii); "a complex amalgam of employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential" (Tansley, Harris, Stewart, and Turner 2006, p. 2); and "the current capability or future potential of an employee to deliver exceptional performance" (Downs & Swailes, 2013, p. 269).

The term "talent" has its origins in the ancient Greek word "talanton" and "talenta" in Latin, which used the word for unit of weight or money (Tansley, 2011). Later, the word adopted other meanings, and in the 14th century, it began to stand for a special natural ability or aptitude. (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Dries, 2013). Meyers et al. (2013) point out that the meanings of the word can be viewed metaphorically; whether talent is used to describe monetary units or natural abilities, the subtext is value; talent should not be wasted.

Some researchers and practitioners take a strategic view to talent definition, pointing out that the definition should depend on the organization's business strategy, type of firm and competitive environment (see e.g. Ingham et al., 2008). Furthermore, Collings and Mellahi (2009) argue that the strategy of the organization (and the related competitive advantage) should be the starting point for the definition of talent by stating that the persons filling the roles which contribute to an organization's sustainable competitive advantage should be the ones defined as talents or as high potentials. They also argue that if the above is applied, organizations should differentiate between employees who are strategic performers and those who are not (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). This, I would argue, is one way to define (strategic) talent as such. It begins from the organization's strategy

and determines the strategic positions that have a differential impact on the organization's performance and the related talent implications.

One way to define talent is to look at an organization's strategy and begin defining talent from there, as stated above. The organization should work forward from its strategy, first identifying 'talent positions' – positions that make "direct strategic impact and exhibit high performance variability among those in the position, representing upside potential", (Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005, p. 4) – and only then identify (matching) talent to fill in the positions. As the authors claim, very few organizations engage in this yet, and even fewer organizations actually manage 'A-players' in a way that enables talent to perform well in a specific position.

Huselid (2005) refers to 'working backwards from organization charts', i.e. identifying the jobs/positions that the organization is currently treating as important, as opposed to working 'forward from strategy', i.e. looking at which jobs are actually contributing to strategy implementation (Huselid et al., 2005), which is also demonstrated in the following quotation from Schiemann (2014, p. 282): " [..] some use the term 'talent' to refer to key employees such as executives or managers." Schiemann (2014, p. 282) continues by defining talent as "the collective knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, values, habits and behaviors of all labor that is brought to bear on the organization's mission". These approaches could be looked at as a continuum, where at one end only few individuals are regarded as talent, i.e. those contributing to strategy implementations as per Huselid et al.'s (2005) approach presented above. At the other end would be the collective of knowledge of the organization as a whole, e.g. skills of all labor, along the lines of 'everyone being a talent'.

Ross (2013) states that while discussing the definition of talent is a logical place to start talent management discussions as it defines the 'target audience' for talent management strategies, the actual definitions are often unclear and "become entangled with references to what makes a great leader, leadership success, high potential, high performance or, the author's own terminology as a differentiator of talent." (Ross, 2013, p. 1). Tansley (2012) also points to this direction in saying that "people are rarely precise about what they mean by the term 'talent' and the implications of defining talent for talent management practice" (Tansley, 2012, p. 2).

Defining talent (the "who") before even beginning to tackle talent management (the "how") is imperative, since defining talent management processes and related activities – talent management in general in both organizations and in academic research – is dependent on the definition. Viewed from a pragmatic angle, we can say that if an organization defines 'talent' as a 'future leader', the recruitment process needs to include elements that ensure the qualities deemed important in leaders are detected. Also development activities need to strengthen e.g. leadership qualities and skills. Furthermore, if 'talent' is defined as an expert in digital technologies, development and deployment activities should focus on strengthening those skills. In reference to Reilly (2008, p. 2):

"...It is obvious that the selection of who is included under any definition of talent profoundly affects the 'how' – the activities of a talent management program." Serving in this context as an example of definition having an impact on the 'how', Reilly (2008) continues by pointing out that if talent in an organization is considered to be those who hold senior positions, the organization still needs to decide the contents of a talent development program together with other crucial issues, including how to define what is meant by 'potential' in that particular organization and whether potential is a part of the requirements of present and future leaders.

Meyers, van Woerkom, & Dries (2013) discuss the innate-acquired continuum; "We argue that the position of talent on the innate-acquired continuum has important implications for talent management in practice and can solve some of the ambiguities that still characterize the field." (Meyers et al., 2013, p. 306). According to the authors, while the continuum ranges from the completely innate to completely acquired, most scholars agree that talent comprises both innate and acquired components. Hence, if it is assumed that talent is innate, talent management should consequently focus much more on the identification and recruitment of talented employees than on their development. When assuming that talent can be developed, in contrast, talent management should have a strong focus on the training and development of employees, and selection decisions might be based on applicants' prior learning experiences. (Meyers et al., 2013).

One of the definitions in the literature that seems to encompass many of the aspects of talent discussed in both practitioner literature and in academic research, is that by Michaels, Handfileds-Jones, and Axelrod (2001, p. xii): "In the most general sense, talent is the sum of a person's abilities – his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow." The authors continue: "Each company must understand the specific talent profile that is right for it." (2001, p. xiii). I tend to concur with this definition.

The afore-mentioned also emphasizes the role of potential and career aspirations in the definition of talent. In addition, it makes reference to learning agility, along similar lines to several researchers in their respective articles, including: Dries, Vantilborgh, & Pepermans (2012); Tansley, Kirk, & Tietze (2013); Ross (2013); M. Christina Meyers et al. (2013); and Beechler & Woodward (2009).

As discussed earlier in the Section presenting the key concepts of this study, Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) have simplified talent definition into a formula:

Talent = Competence x Contribution x Commitment

The complementary nature of Ulrich and Smallwood's (2012) formula is pivotal; in this equation, the three terms are multiplicative, not additive. According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), this means that if any of the three components is missing, the others will not replace it. A low score

in competence will not turn into talent no matter how committed and contributing the employee is. The terms of competence and commitment are defined in more detail in subsequent chapters of this research report.

According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), competence refers to knowledge, skills and values required today and tomorrow, while commitment is the will to do the work and contribution and "...occurs when employees feel that their personal needs are being met through their active participation in their organization". (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012, p. 60). Relating to the complementary nature of e.g. commitment, they continue that the formula is an equation rather than an addition. As stated above, this in turn means that if one component is missing, the others will not replace it. "A low score in competence will not turn into talent even when the employee is engaged and contributing. Talented employees must have skills, wills, and purposes; they must be capable, committed, and contributing." (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2012, p. 60).

Table 2 summarizes different approaches to 'talent'. The last three approaches used in HR and talent management practice and literature are referred to in my study and discussed in detail throughout this research report. The different approaches are evident in both academic research and literature on talent management, and particularly in practice. Language concerning 'talent' and 'talent management' in organizations is mixed, and 'talent' can either refer to a person, set of competencies or an individual with high-potential. The twofold approach to talent of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) is discussed below.

Table 2 Different approaches to 'talent'

Giftedness	Strengths	(Meta) Competencies	Potential	Performance
Education	Positive Psychology	HR, TM	HR, TM	HR, TM
Considered to be rare, prodigies	Potentials for exellence	Knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal and other characteristics. **Meta Competencies** are e.g. IQ and EQ	The possibility that individuals can become something more than what they currently are	A construct that becomes manifest in present actions and behaviors = performance

HR = human resource, TM = talent management
(Modified from: *Talent – innate or acquired?*, Meyers et al., 2013).

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) use a twofold concept in their introduction as the framework for conceptualizing talent; talent as object versus talent as subject. The so-called 'object approach' conceptualizes talent as exceptional abilities and attitudes demonstrated by an individual. The approach can be further subdivided (e.g. talent as fit and talent as commitment). According to Gallardo-Gallardo (2013), it is vital to understand sub-approaches as complementary, rather than supplementary. The 'subject approach' defines

talent as people, and is subdivided in terms of the focus of talent management activities; whether inclusive, targeting all employees of the organization, or exclusive, targeting only the "elite subset of the organization's population" (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p. 297).

The formula for talent presented by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) seems to be aligned with the views of Boyatzis (1982) on the relationship between talent and performance. At least to a degree, 'performance' corresponds to 'contribution' in the Ulrich and Smallwood (2013) formula. Boyatzis states that: "Maximum performance is believed to occur when the person's capability or talent is consistent with the needs of the job demands and the organizational environment" (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 6). According to Boyatzis (1982), talent is described first by the individual's values, vision, and personal philosophy, second by knowledge and competencies, and third by life and career stage. He also mentions interests and style as components of the description of talent. What he means by 'style' is not evident from the depiction but could possibly relate to 'commitment', which is defined later in this Chapter. Other components of 'commitment' in the Ulrich and Smallwood (2013) definition can be considered to include values, vision, and personal philosophy, similarly to Boyatzis' definition of talent.

Ross (2013) argues that searching for the right definition of talent – which she calls an 'obsession' – prevents organizations from asking questions that could actually promote talent management, and finally contribute to the strategic success of the organization. She points out that "talent is the input" (2013, p. 167). According to Ross (2013), it is crucial to separate success and talent, as success means different things to individuals and organizations. While organizations usually link success to improved business results, performance, and profits, individuals may view it as personal achievement, confronting new challenges, security, learning new skills, personal growth, and a good, financially stable life for oneself and one's family. Organizations need to ask intelligent questions not only about talent as such, but also to be clear about who is successful and why, and what successful people are doing. Is success and the way it is achieved aligned with the values and culture of the organization? According to Ross (2013), a subtle shift has taken place in the focus relating to success from input, i.e. defining 'talent', to output, i.e. understanding how an individual can leverage talent in order to be successful in a manner that is aligned with the organization and its values. Hence, organizations should enable every individual to understand their personal strengths and create an environment for each individual to leverage the talent into an output, which, according to Ross (2013), constitutes personal and professional success.

Thunnissen et al. (2013a, 2013b) discuss the importance of context in talent definition, raising a crucial point also for my own study: "Despite different interpretations of talent, scholars agree on the impact of the context on the exact and precise description of talent. Talent is not absolute, it is relative and subjective" (Thunnissen et al., 2013b). The contextual nature of the notion of talent is emphasized also by Tansley et al. (2013),

who appear to agree with Thunnissen et al. (2013a) on the challenge of there being a universal definition of talent. Tansley et al. (2013) present a valid question regarding context-driven, rather than universal definition of 'talent': "How much does it *really* matter that there is no universal definition of either 'talent' or 'talent management'?" (Tansley et al., 2013, p. 338). I argue that the universality of talent definition is not important, and not even possible due to the context-specific nature of the concept, but understanding what components should be included in the definition is of utmost importance. In this sense, the components and their elements are dependent on the environment, organization, and changes over time. In agreement with Thunnissen et al. (2013a), I want to emphasize the need for managers and practitioners of talent management to comprehend what 'talent' means for their respective organizations, and, based at least partly on the definition, what talent management activities can do for individuals and their careers.

Appendix 1 provides a (non-exhaustive) list of talent definitions found in talent management literature and academic research.

2.2.1.1 Defining Competence

Usage of the term competence (or competency) causes plenty of confusion. Understandably, the similarity between the terms 'competence' and 'competency' in e.g. two dictionaries with an almost identical definition (Teodorescu, 2006) just adds to the confusion.[11] As presented subsequently in this Chapter, the definition of *competency* often applies to behavioral aspects, such as skills and attitudes, while *competence* "equals worthy performance that leads directly to the most efficient accomplishment of organizational goals" (Teodorescu, 2006, p. 28). I will use the term competency only in the context of competency frameworks or competency models, as is a common practice in HR and HRD literature and research. However, in this Section, usage of the terms may differ from my own personal practice in accordance with the authors I am citing.

Le Deist and Winterton (2005) argue that finding a definition that would coherently incorporate all the different ways the term competence is used would be impossible. The authors refer to the usage and underpinnings of the term firstly in both different geographical and cultural contexts (e.g. the US vs. the UK as well as German-speaking countries and France), and in distinct approaches, such as strategy and HRD (human resource development) and related literature. As terms, competence and competency dominated the management strategy literature in the 1990s, emphasizing 'core competence' as a key organizational resource (Le Deist and

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11   Competence (noun). a. The state or quality of being adequately or well qualified; ability. See synonyms at ability. b. A specific range of skill, knowledge, or ability (American Heritage Dictionary, 2006). Competency (noun). The quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually (WordNet, 2006). (Source: Teodorescu, 2006, p. 27).

Winterton, 2005). Hamel and Prahalad (1994) defined core competence as "the collective learning in the organization, especially how to co-ordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies" (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990, p. 81). Hamel and Prahalad (1990) also point out that core competence is both communication and deep commitment to cross-boundary work in organizations. Moreover, according to the authors, core competence unites the versatile skills of those individuals who are able to seize opportunities to blend their functional expertise to the expertise of others in interesting and novel ways (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Somewhat surprisingly, while strategy literature emphasizes competences unique for each firm, HRD literature approaches competences and competence development far more generically, regarding them as highly transferable. To clarify, I have adhered to HRD literature as the main source for my research, considering the viewpoints of strategy literature only if referred to in applicable HRD and talent management literature and research. In this context of HRD literature, generic means the competences are required in most organizational tasks or roles. According to Le Deist and Winterton (2005), this causes tension between the two approaches. Along similar lines of some definitions of competence being generic in the management context, Boon and van der Klink (2002) mention another paradox in using the concept particularly in HRD/HRM practice: Even though competency management aims at the optimal performance of employees, it seems to be hard to find the right level of precision when describing competencies; the competencies are either very broadly defined or very detailed lists and descriptions are used (Boon, van der Klink, 2002). I will return to this aspect when discussing competency frameworks in general as well as those of the case organization in particular.

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) define competency as follows: "... a 'cluster' of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development" (1999, p. 5). Hence, according to Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), competency is more than a skill, includes knowledge, and connects to performance. It can also be improved.

As to the differences in the usage of the term in distinct geographical and cultural contexts, Boon and Van der Klink (2002) posit that in the UK, competencies are seen as standards for functions and professions. In the US, competencies are considered to be fundamentally behavioral and the approach is based on observation of successful and effective performers in different positions and jobs to determine how these successful individuals differ from their averagely performing or less successful peers. This process of observation produces lists with relevant competencies. In other words, competence portrays skills and dispositions, which are beyond cognitive ability. Examples of these are self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills; McClelland (1998) points out that these can, unlike personality and intelligence, be learned and enhanced by training and other development

activities, which in the researcher's view also shows that competencies are fundamentally behavioral (Mirabile, 1998).

Moreover, in regards to the different approaches in different geographical and cultural contexts to the concept of competence, the German perspective separates qualification and competence. Qualification refers to the acknowledgment in diplomas and professional degrees. It also seems, according to Boon and van der Klink (2002), that France, Germany and Austria are using a more holistic framework, where knowledge, skills and behaviors are considered as distinct dimensions of competence.

Competences are commonly assessed in the context of leadership development, promotion decisions, and succession planning (Campion et al., 2011). Competency modeling is used to identify the critical success factors driving performance in organizations while competency assessment is used to determine the extent to which individuals have these critical competencies. Assessment of competences is discussed later in this Section.

It is worth mentioning that McClelland (1973) was the first researcher to propose competencies as a critical indicator of performance (Boyatzis, 2008). According to Boyatzis (2008) supreme performance is believed to occur when "the person's capability or talent is consistent with the needs of the job demands and the organizational environment" (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 6). The underlying theory of above-mentioned research is the basic contingency theory[12]. Also Briscoe and Hall (1999) discuss the causal relationship between competency and 'superior or effective performance' in their article "Grooming and Picking Leaders Using Competency Frameworks: Do They Work ?" They define competency as 'an underlying characteristic of an individual' (1999, p. 37).

According to Boyatzis (2008), citing e.g. Boyatzis, (1982), the three 'clusters' of competencies that differentiate outstanding performers from average performers are as follows:

1. E.g. systems thinking and pattern recognition; i.e. **cognitive competencies;**
2. E.g. emotional self-awareness and self-management competencies, such as emotional self-awareness and emotional self-control; i.e. **emotional intelligence competencies;**
3. E.g. social awareness and relationship management competencies, such as empathy and teamwork; i.e. **social intelligence competencies.**

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12 'Contingency theories dominate scholarly studies of organization behavior, design, performance, planning and management strategy. While they vary widely in subject matter, they have the common proposition that an organizational outcome is the consequence of a fit or match between two or more factors. Fit is the key concept in this proposition, and the core problem common to contingency theories is not defining this term clearly.' http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA152603 [accessed 18.7.2016].

Furthermore, competencies are generally defined as a behavioral approach to emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence. (Boyatzis, 2008).

Le Deist & Winterton (2005) point to the same direction in their article "What is competence?" when regarding a holistic typology as a useful way to understand the combination necessary for specific job roles, namely knowledge, skills and social competences. The relationship between these four dimensions of competence is demonstrated in Figure 3 below.

The authors continue by positing that competencies required in an occupation include both conceptual (cognitive, knowledge, and understanding) – what Boyatzis (2008) calls cognitive competences – and operational (functional, psycho-motoric, and applied skill) competences.

Competencies closely linked to individual effectiveness are both conceptual (meta-competence, including learning to learn) and operational (social competence, including behaviors and attitudes) (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Meta-competences as a concept are discussed in more detail later in this Section.

	Occupational	Personal
Conceptual	Cognitive Competence	Meta-competence
Operational	Functional Competence	Social Competence
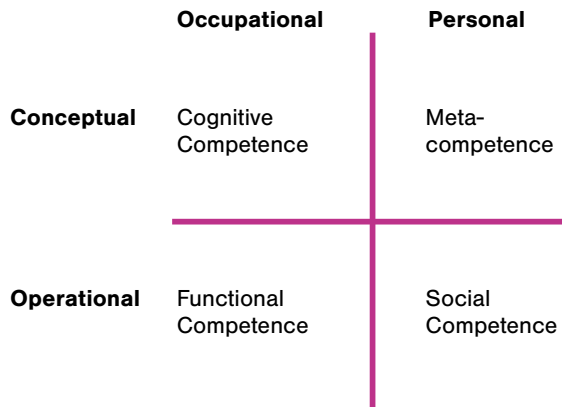
Figure 3 A typology of competence (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005)

The researchers call Figure 3 "an over-arching framework for developing a typology of competence" (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005, p. 39), where the first three dimensions are more or less universal and consistent with the KSA (knowledge, skills and attitudes), a definition of competence used in the training profession (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). Hence knowledge (together with understanding) is summarized by 'cognitive competence', skills by 'functional competence' and competencies (behavioral and attitudinal) by 'social competence'. The researchers emphasize that in this definition and in Figure 3, meta-competence is rather different from the first three dimensions since it is concerned with facilitating the acquisition of the other substantive competences.

It should be emphasized that in practice in various occupations and especially in managerial positions, a person must possess underlying knowledge and functional skills and demonstrate appropriate social

behavior in order to be effective, which is why different competences required for an occupation are often described in multi-dimensional terms. Thus the competence model presented in Figure 3 (p. 47) is, according to Le Deist and Winterton (2005), possibly better presented as a tetrahedron, which would reflect the holistic nature of competence and show the challenge in trying to separate cognitive, functional and social dimensions in practice. In a "plan view", tetrahedron meta-competence forms the base of the figure: meta-competence is an all-embracing input that facilitates the acquisition of output competence. Practical competencies, in turn, are situated on the faces of the tetrahedron, this combines elements of the dimensions of competence in varying proportions. Notwithstanding the representation, the multi-dimensional holistic competence approach is becoming more widespread in practice. (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

Meta-competencies are discussed in research also by Hall & Briscoe (1999), and Brown & McCartney (1995). Meta-competencies are defined as an abstract level building on the definition of competencies, and as constructs that facilitate individual learning, adaptability, and development. Meta-competencies are also argued to maintain their value even when drastic environmental changes occur (Hall & Briscoe, 1999). Furthermore, Brown and McCartney define meta-competencies as "higher-order skills and abilities upon which competences are based and which have to do with being able to learn, adapt, anticipate and create, rather than with being able to demonstrate that one has the ability to do" (Brown & McCartney, 1995, p. 47). Brown further discusses meta-competencies as playing an important role in measuring management performance. The researcher posits that the "narrowly defined competences" (Brown, 1993, p. 34) –here reference is made particularly to the Management Charter Initiative's definition[13] of (management) competence – are not "sufficiently sensitive or sophisticated to enable the accurate assessment of managerial performance" (1993, p. 35). Thus, competence-based assessments only give a partial view to the many-layered and complex activity of management effectivity and success. Softer skills and qualities like creativity and sensitivity are not taken into account. Thus, instead of using rigid competence-based assessments, management dealing with the complexities of management and the current business environment should be aware and assess meta-competencies. These represent the range of perceptions about a manager's performance and focus on the "irrationality and unpredictability of personal feelings" (Brown, 1993, p.35).

As to learning, Brown and McCartney (1995) make a difference between competence and meta-competence as follows: the first is related to the level where information is received, retained and reproduced the way required, and the latter is in turn involved in "the transformation of information by

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13   The Management Charter Initiative (MCI) defines competence as the ability to perform effectively, and suggests that competence is the outcome of using knowledge and skills appropriately.

means of the development of understanding, judgement and creativity" (Brown & McCartney, 1995, p. 52). This is closely related to 'learning agility', a meta-competence discussed by several researchers particularly in the context of high potential identification (e.g. Dries et al., 2012; Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000; Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004; Dries & Pepermans, 2007). As a result of a factor analysis, Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) introduce four factors that describe the different aspects of learning agility. These are: people agility, results agility, mental agility, and change agility. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Factors of learning agility

Type of Agility	Description
1. People Agility	- people who know themselves well, learn from experience, treat others constructively, and are cool and resilient under the pressures of change
2. Results Agility	- people who get results under tough conditions, inspire others to perform beyond normal, and exhibit the sort of presence that builds confidence in others
3. Mental Agility	- people who think through problems from a fresh point of view and are comfortable with complexity, ambiguity, and explaining their thinking to others
4. Change Agility	- people who are curious, have a passion for ideas, like to experiment with test cases, and engage in skill-building activities

(Source: Lombardo&Eichinger, 2000, p. 324)

All of the factors listed above in Table 3 were significantly associated with "consideration as a high potential, having good-to-high performance, and staying out of trouble" (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000, p. 14). The authors continue to describe people who are high in learning agility (and likely to be regarded as high potentials) as individuals who seek experiences to learn from and enjoy complex, unfamiliar problems and challenges that contribute to getting new types of experiences. They also have an interest in making sense of experiences, and consequently get more out of them. What is more, they perform better because they actively incorporate new skills into their gamut (Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004).

In the same manner, Brown and McCartney (1995) make a distinction between competence and meta-competence giving several examples and using Kanungo and Misra's (1992) categorization into skills, which Kanungo and Misra (1992) define as overt behavior sequences specific to a particular task, and to competencies, which in turn are depicted as "mediational cognitive self-regulation" (Kanungo & Misra, 1992, p. 1314). Furthermore, Brown and McCartney (1995) argue that the aforementioned categorization into skills and competencies can be redefined according to what they define as competence (Kanungo and Misra's skill) and meta-competence (Kanungo and Misra's competence). They justify this by referring to Kanungo and Misra's (1992) argument that competencies are not enough. According to Brown and McCartney (1995), what is required

is meta-competence, which is a competence one can learn, but cannot be taught (Brown & McCartney, 1995). The latter citation can be argued to have commonalities with Kanungo and Misra's (1992) 'personality traits, motives and self-images'; these cannot be taught. According to Brown and McCartney (1995), competencies cannot thrive without meta-competencies that are a prerequisite for the development of capacities like judgement, intuition and acumen. Some examples are presented in the following. If competence is the 'ability to engage in an overt behavioral system or sequence', the overarching ability, i.e. the associated meta-competence, is the ability to engage in activities using what the researchers call functional intelligence. Where a certain competence is needed to handle routine and programmed tasks with procedures known to the person, the meta-competence can be seen in the person's ability to engage in non-routine and previously unfamiliar tasks. Further, a competence can be considered to show when an individual is able to operate in a stable environment that managers face on a daily basis in an organization.

Boon and van der Klink (2002) posit that the concept, i.e. competence or competency, is a fuzzy one. They concur however that there is certain attractiveness about it, as it bridges "the gap between education and job requirements" (2002, p. 6). Furthermore, the researchers indicate that part of the attractiveness of the concept is in its ability to recognize the importance of the 'ecological validity' [14] of individual attributes, which only become significant when they are used in the actual professional context. Another factor that makes this concept attractive is that it focuses on output while simultaneously offering clues to how to organize development activities in order to reach the desired output (Boon & van der Klink, 2002).

As has been discussed earlier in this study, in the view of Groysberg et al. (2004, 2008), a 'star' in one organization is not automatically a 'star' in another based on context or organization -related components of star-performance that cannot be transferred from one organizational context to another. Particularly the knowledge embedded in relationships with colleagues seems to contribute to the success of individuals in one company and prevent it if the individual changes organizations (Groysberg, 2007). Groysberg (2010) has also conducted studies on GE executives moving from GE to pursue their careers elsewhere in similar or totally different industries. As per Groysberg's (2010) findings, the executives who moved to industries they knew well, or did not move solo but together with a team they brought from GE, did well. Also, as to specific skills e.g. in cost-cutting or revenue growing, Groysberg (2010) found these too, were useful and contributed to the success of executives moving to companies that needed

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14　Ecological Validity is the degree to which the behaviors observed and recorded in a study reflect the behaviors that actually occur in natural settings. In addition, eco-logical validity is associated with "generalizability". Essentially this is the extent to which findings (from a study) can be generalized (or extended) to the "real world". http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition.php?term=Ecological%20Validity#ix-zz4Ef7pDrJj [accessed 17.6.2016]

those specific skills. The managers who transferred to companies that did not call for e.g. cost-cutting skills performed poorly. The findings suggest that even the skill sets that are widely considered general are actually much more context-specific than what is recognized by e.g. hiring firms. While research on the portability of performance in other professions, i.e. other than manager profession, is, according to Groysberg, (2010) scarce, he points to research on cardiac surgeons as a "compelling and well-designed study" (Groysberg, 2010, p. 332). The research on caridac surgeons (Huckman & Pisano, 2006) found that the performance of surgeons improved along with the increase in the volume of procedures, but only at the same hospital; no improvement was found if the additional procedures took place at a different hospital. Hence the authors concluded that the familiarity with the assets of a certain organization is crucial for performance. They also give a word of warning related to what they call "best-athlete hiring" (Huckman & Pisano, 2006, p. 486) in building firm capabilities; with this they refer to the limits in transferring knowledge across organizations. The limits are particularly valid "when a highly skilled worker must interact with a complex array of other assets — human and physical — within a given firm, when the performance of that worker may not be easily transferred across organizational settings" (Huckman & Pisano, 2006, p. 486). I find these points valid for my study on highly-skilled humanitarian aid workers in very complex settings of emergencies and with teams with differing compositions from one emergency operation to another. One could question whether the performance of these individuals is transferable, which would guarantee the best possible outcomes to the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. I am tempted to argue that the fundamental principles guiding actions and the strict rules and regulations in humanitarian aid can be considered the organization's assets – IRFC's in this case – with which the individuals are so familiar that the 'assets' are likely to contribute to the transfer of skills from one emergency to another. This would also probably justify the strict requirement of Red Cross experience for the HEOps, i.e. the highly-skilled experts at the core of my research. I will return to these points later on when discussing the case study. The importance of tacit knowledge in the context of transferability of skills, or rather in the context of what contributes to success, is discussed by e.g. Berman, Down, & Hill (2002). Tacit knowledge, too, is important from the point of view of the pool of highly experienced leaders in my study, and can be seen as yet another rationale behind the requirement of experience from the same organization and for emergency operations, not just any projects, even if high level of project management skills in general contribute to the success in the position of the emergency operation leaders in my study. Berman et al. (2002, p. 15) describe tacit knowledge as something that "forms the basis of valuable [..] skills" and that is most importantly composed of pattern recognition. It is also cumulative, i.e. builds on past experience, utterly difficult to articulate, and operates in the unconscious. In complex and rapidly emerging emergency operations, tacit knowledge can be the one component that literally makes a difference between life and death.

2.2.1.2 Competency Frameworks or Models

Competency frameworks are widely used in the humanitarian aid sector, the context of my study, and are pivotal tools in HR and eventual talent management in humanitarian aid organizations. I will follow with an overview of the frameworks and models and the related research and practice.

A competency framework or model is a tool that can be used for identification of the skills, knowledge, personal characteristics, and behaviors that are necessary in order to perform effectively in a role in the organization and through the effective performance help the business meet the set strategic objectives. Thus, a competency framework is often seen as a link between HRD and organizational strategy (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

Lucia and Lepsinger (1999) bring the outcome of quality to their definition of a competency model; according to them, it is an integrated set of competencies that are vital for excellent performance in a certain organizational context. They also look at competency models from different angles; a model for a role (e.g. a project manager), or for a real position. This means that the competencies are used to draw up a job description that describes each of the competencies needed in a particular position. A third way to use competency models is to focus on the person; what competencies are the strengths of this individual and what are the eventual development areas in terms of the required competencies related to the particular position this person wants to assume or is the incumbent of at the moment (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999).

Campion (2011) makes a distinction between 'competency framework' and 'competency model'. According to him, a framework is a "...Broad framework for integrating, organizing, and aligning various competency models reflective of the organization's strategy and vision" (2011, p. 241). Competency models are "collections of competencies that are relevant for performance in a particular job, job family or functional area." (Campion, 2011, p. 241). For instance, Le Deist and Winterton (2005) as well as Hall and Briscoe (1999) seem to use the term framework as a hybrid of Campion's framework and model definitions, i.e. not distinguishing between the two concepts.

According to Hall and Briscoe (1999), competency frameworks are used as a guide for making hiring and promotion decisions together with suggestions regarding development needs. They can also be used to pinpoint useful learning experiences for future leaders. The basis for developing the competence frameworks vary from a research-based approach to a value-based one. The different approaches to competency frameworks (Hall & Briscoe, 1999) are presented in Table 5 (page 54). While Hall and Briscoe (1999) present advantages (and disadvantages) to each approach, they also share some concerns about competency frameworks in general: "Our view of the competency models [..] is that they are too complex and can become

mired down in overly detailed competency definitions." (Hall & Briscoe, 1999, p. 48). They also point out that competency frameworks take far too long to develop[15] and do thus not reflect the rapid changes in the trends related to demographics and employee engagement trends.

Mirabile (1997) is on similar lines with his list of issues related to challenges organizations face when creating extensively detailed competency frameworks or models. According to him, the decision related to the level of detail is '…One of the most controversial and difficult issues to address in building a competency model'. (Mirabile, 1997, p. 76). He also reminds of the importance of asking the fundamental question: "What is it that you're trying to accomplish by building the model?" (Mirabile, 1997, p. 76). This question is, according to the author, often left unanswered and as a consequence the framework or model is either too detailed or too generic in nature. Among the rules of thumb are the following factors and their consequences, which are crucial in terms of competency frameworks or models. These are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4 Impact of high level of details in competency models

Factor/Component	Impact/Consequence
Results	Less abilities to generalize
Information	Less comparable across jobs or people
Range of acceptable performance	More restricted
Creativity	More inhibited creative and alternative ways to work and reach objectives
Timeframe	Information becomes obsolete faster

(Source: Mirabile, 1997, p. 76)

The competency models can be approached from different angles, which, according to Hall and Briscoe (1999) are research, strategy, or values-based or a combination of these three, i.e. a hybrid. These approaches are presented in Table 5 on the following page.

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15   For their study of 31 organizations engaged in talent management, Briscoe and Hall (1999) spent an average of 4.1 years to revise their competency frameworks.

Table 5 Major approaches to competency frameworks and related advantages and disadvantages

Approach	Research-based	Strategy-based	Values-Based	Hybrid
Description	Competencies based upon behavioral research on high-performance executives	Competencies forecasted to be strategically important based upon an anticipated future	Competencies based formally or informally on organizational norms or cultural values	Combines one or more of three previous approaches
Process used	Most rigorous approach validates competencies by capturing distinguishing behaviors from superior performing executives (Behavioral Event Interviewing, BEI[16]). Also simple interviews and focus groups are used as well as standard or 'off the shelf' solutions generated by consultancies or other companies.	This can be simply done by interviewing top executives as to the anticipated future challenges, opportunities and obstacles and the competencies assumed to grow in importance. Scenario planning and internal panels, external consultancies' competency databases are also used.	From very careful and structured dialogue processes with top executives to 'pronouncements' from the CEO and to lists from HR. N.B. An addition to this process description is described in the context of the research case of this study; a humanitarian aid organization built on founding principles.	Two or more processes are used to develop a competency framework.
Advantages	Grounded in actual behavior Involves top executives Air of legitimacy	Based on future, not past Focus on learning new skills Possibly supports organizational transformation	Competencies can have strong motivating power Values can provide strategic stability and direction even in the long term	
Disadvantages	Based on past, not future competencies May ignore intangible and non-measurable competencies Very resource consuming	Anticipated future is not accurate or is misguided Competencies based on "speculation", not actual behavior	Can be difficult to translate into behavior "Wrong" values can lead to misguided competencies The process can lack rigor	

(Source: Hall & Briscoe, 1999, p. 41, 44)

Some points made by Hall and Briscoe (1999) are discussed in more detail in the following. Firstly, as to the research-based competencies, lack of the future aspect is perhaps the strongest factor against using this approach at

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16   The Behavioral Event Interview (BEI) is an adaptation of the critical-incident interview originally developed by Flanagan (1954) and later elaborated by Dailey (1971). BEI was designed as the most flexible way to discover differences between two types of job incumbents: those who have been nominated by knowledgeable judges as outstanding (O) and those who have been nominated less often or not at all (referred to as typical, T). This approach is used because people agree more readily on who is outstanding than on what makes them outstanding, and because having judges rate characteristics supposedly related to success (rather than rating actually successful people) might result in a biased criterion. Generally, the O group is in the top 5% to 10% of the executives, and the T group includes the next 11% to 25% of the executives. (McClelland, 1998, p. 331).

least at the upper levels of the organization, while also ignorance towards "softer skills" may decrease the usefulness of this approach. The authors posit that an alternative to the research-based approach is the increasingly popular strategy-based approach. This approach is more capable in responding to the needs inherent in the question posted by Hall and Briscoe (1999, p. 42): "What can competencies be based on when past superior behaviors exhibited by executives are not predictive of future competency needs, or when executives who emulate desired competencies are not found within the organization?" The strategic direction of the firm drives the competencies either directly or influences them to some extent. (Hall & Briscoe, 1999). In one of the 31 organizations studied by Hall and Briscoe (1999), the strategy-based approach changed the focus of competency models from succession planning and developing standard skills typical for that particular industry towards looking at the drastic changes in the environment and the implications they had on the strategy, competencies needed and the development thereof.

The values-based approach will be discussed in more detail later in this study, since it is the approach most suitable for my case organization. This approach can be based on the formal values of the organization, but not necessarily only on them: it may also reflect cultural values or even 'feelings or attitudes of a top executive' (Briscoe & Hall, 1999, p. 42).

Generic competency models, as pointed out by Ross (2013), often remain static within the organization instead of ensuring that the competencies are dynamic and evolve with the changing business environment and the organization itself. In addition, in order to enable the effectiveness of talent management, the models or frameworks would need to really pin down precisely the competencies that are crucial to the success of the organization now and in the future. It seems, at least according to Clutterbuck (2012), that the reality in organizations shows that at least leadership competencies are far from being dynamic and are often based on the characteristics of successful male leaders from the past. An interviewee quoted by Clutterback (2012) formulated the matter in a somewhat cynical manner: "We need to focus more on what effective leaders will look like in the future, not what they look like now, or looked like then! In reality, leadership competencies are highly situational and constantly evolving. Trying to pin them down and make them generic is a great way to ensure that at least some of the people who get to the top are the wrong ones for the leadership situations they will face." (Clutterbuck, 2012, p. 2). I could personally not agree more.

If competency frameworks, which are designed to meet the need to know what qualities to look for in future leaders and experts, are designed for selection purposes only and originate from that perspective, it is also possible that they suffer from (predictive) validity issues. (Dries & Pepermans, 2007a). And as Buckingham & Vosburgh, (2001) point out, knowing what qualities to look for in future talent is a much needed competence and even a competitive advantage. Also competency frameworks are, at least to some

extent, suitable instruments for doing that, i.e. for helping to know what qualities to look for (Briscoe and Hall, 1999; Quinn et al., 1990). However, concurring with Clutterback (2012), Dries (2007) argues that in the 'selection view' employees either "have it or not" (Dries, 2007, p, 749). This implies that the competencies young talent ought to be able to demonstrate would be similar to the competencies of successful executives, albeit in a shaping form. Hence competencies indicating 'talent' would be based on past successes and not on future challenges, and the value of competency frameworks for early talent or potential identification can be argued to be rather limited (Briscoe and Hall, 1999; Spreitzer, McCall & Mahoney, 1997). The competencies that are paid attention to are not necessarily enough to ensure that a person will master vital competencies required in the future. This also means that the ability to learn from experience may prove to be more important than some of the highly-rated competencies of today. (Spreitzer et al., 1997).

Buckingham and Vosburg (2001) take a very strong position vis-á-vis competency frameworks and models – or lists of competencies in general - in their eminent article "It's the talent, stupid" (2001). They claim that the time and money spent on making competency lists is wasted, since the lists are built on assumptions that are not "borne in the real world" (2001, p. 20). There are three such assumptions that the authors present; 1. Those who excel in similar roles manifest the same (behavioral) competencies. 2. All of these (behavioral) competencies can be learned in a reasonable timeframe. 3. All of the aforementioned competencies should be learned since "improving weaknesses leads to success" (Buckingham & Vosburg, 2001, p. 18). According to the authors, the idea that there is a certain set of competencies that makes an excellent executive is alluring. However, as the authors point out, this simply is not the case. (Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001).

Potential

A practitioner-oriented presentation of the evolution of potential or talent definition presented on the following page in Figure 4 describes the approach to potential in the light of history. I tend to agree with the steps or eras presented, especially with the last point, which emphasizes the aspects of competency models and the obsolete nature thereof in today's organizational and business context. Fernández-Aráoz (2014) refers to these 'eras', describing that the first era of what he calls 'talent spotting' was about physical traits and lasted millennia. What came next was the emphasis on IQ and experience followed by the competency movement in the eighties (e.g. McClelland, 1973), According to Fernández-Aráoz (2014), we are now in the "dawn of a fourth era" (2014, p. 50) and the focus of managers and leaders of today needs to shift from competencies and experience to potential. The author claims this is the case due to the notion that the traits that contribute to success in a role today are not necessarily the ones that might do that tomorrow (Fernández-Aráoz 2014).

Physical Attributes	IQ, Experience, and Past Performance	Competency-based	Potential
Pre 20th Century: Choices were made based on **physical attributes**. The fittest, healthiest and strongest people were chosen.	20th Century: Work was getting standardized. Most roles were relatively similar across companies and industries. **Past experience was a good indicator.**	Post 1980s: Technological evolution and industry convergence made jobs more complex. **Jobs were decomposed into competencies.**	In the Current VUCA environment (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous), competency based models are becomming inadequate indicators.

Figure 4 Evolution of 'potential' or 'talent' definition (Source: Férnandez-Araóz, 2014).

The construct of potential or high-potential refers to the possibility that individuals can become something more than what they presently are. It points toward further growth and development to reach a desired outcome. (Silzer & Church, 2009). Hence, there is a strong aspect of both future and possibility or 'promise' present in the notion of potential.

Based on a conceptual analysis, Silzer and Church (2009) define three types of dimensions for potential identification and personal characteristics assigned to each dimension. The three dimensions are the foundational, growth and career dimensions.

Foundational dimensions are constant and stable. Cognitive style and personality are both foundational dimensions. Components of cognitive style are: conceptual and strategic thought; cognitive ability; and ability to handle complex situations. Similarly, sociability, interpersonal skills, dominance, emotional stability, and resilience are components of personality. Reference is made here to meta-competencies that were discussed in Section 2.2.1.1. In the opinion of the author of this research report, there are clear similarities between the foundational dimensions and meta-competencies; functional intelligence (Brown & McCartney, 1995) is comparable to cognitive style, as is the ability to handle complex situations discussed in the context of meta-competencies by Brown and McCartney (1995).

Growth dimensions facilitate or impede growth and development in other areas. They do not vary from one situation to the next but can improve when the environment is supportive and encouraging. Additionally, this dimension can improve when the individual has a strong interest in a particular area and has the opportunity to learn more about it. These dimensions include learning skills e.g. adaptability, learning orientation

and openness to feedback and motivation such as energy and career ambition (Silzer & Church, 2009). The resemblances between learning agility, a meta-competence discussed by e.g. Eichinger and Lombardo (2004); Dries et al. (2012); Meyers and van Woerkom (2014); and De Meuse et al. (2008), and learning skills are obvious. Learning agility is considered by some researchers to be a prime indicator for potential. (e.g. Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004).

The last dimensions mentioned by Silzer and Church (2009) are ones relating to career, which the authors see as the best indicators of future professional competencies. The components of career dimensions include: current performance; knowledge (e.g. technical and functional knowledge and competencies); values (e.g. alignment of personal and organizational values); together with managerial qualities, including the capacity for managing change, developing and managing people, and exercising a positive influence on others.

Moreover, Silzer and Church (2009) refer to a survey they conducted in twenty major corporations, which was published in 2010 in "Handbook of workplace assessment" [17]. In the survey, the researchers looked at common definitions for 'potential' and found out that 35% of the corporations in the survey defined potential by role, i.e. "the potential to effectively move into top or senior management roles". A quarter of the surveyed corporations defined 'potential' by level looking at the individual's "potential to move and effectively perform two [...] levels above the current role", and another quarter defined it by breadth; "the capability to take on broader scope and leadership roles, and to develop long-term leadership potential". The remaining 10% defined it by looking at records; a "consistent track record of exceptional performance", in other words focusing on the past (Silzer & Church, 2009, p. 382).

Additionally, based on the observations of Silzer and Church (2009), some organizations also define 'potential' by strategic positions which are, according to the researchers, key positions crucial to the organization's success, or by strategic areas, e.g. business units or geographic areas pivotal to the set strategic objectives. This is very much in line with what Huselid et al. (2005) posit and what was discussed in chapter 2.2.1.; the organization should work forward from its strategy and first identify the positions that make "direct strategic impact and exhibit high performance variability among those in the position, representing upside potential". (Huselid et al., 2005, p. 4).

There are several issues researchers and practitioners alike raise in terms of the definition and identification of potential. One of the essential questions is; potential for what? This question is very often answered by the types of 'clusters' described above, i.e. potential for a higher position, deeper leadership role, etc. However, this type of clustering is less about

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17   Handbook of Workplace Assessment, 2010. Edited by John C. Scott and Douglas H. Reynolds, Published by Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint

individual talent and more about placing the high-potential individuals into key roles (Silzer & Church, 2009a). Even if Silzer and Church (2009a) refer to 'critical skills' pools, I would argue that the notion of 'potential' or 'high potential' mostly focuses on leadership and management skills and qualities. Farndale et al. (2010) are in line with my argument by noting that individuals in talent pools or incumbents of strategic positions have a different type of a profile based on, for instance, age, point on their career paths and, as a case in point here, "more valued for specialist skills than management skills" (Farndale et al., 2010, p. 163).

Robinson et al. (2009) argue that the question about how to identify high-potential employees is one of the most misunderstood yet relevant questions within the field of talent management. For them, high-potentials are those individuals "who will, when called upon, step up and actually deliver in larger roles with more responsibility". (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 413). They continue by pointing out that identifying (high) potentials is a dilemma which almost every organization is faced with, yet organizations base the potential-related decisions on information that is according to the authors "terribly incomplete" (Robinson et al., 2009, p. 413), namely past performance. This leads to what Silzer and Church (2009) call the "performance – potential paradox" (Silzer & Church, 2009, p. 388). Furthermore, Silzer and Church (2009) and Robinson et al. (2009) warn about a link that is too close between these two components, i.e. potential and performance. Why then is this a paradox? Based on their research on 59 organizations in 29 countries and 15 industries, the Corporate Leadership Council (2005) report found that only 29% of current high performers were also seen as high potentials. Robinson et al. (2009) point out that if an individual is promoted to a new, possibly more demanding position based on solid performance in the current post, he or she may fail if what the new position requires is something totally different than what has been required in the current or past position. Silzer and Church (2009) also argue that if indeed the promotion is based on performance only, which is easier for managers to justify, the decision neglects to take potential indicators like learning orientation or insight into consideration and can at the end work against the success possibilities of the individual in that position (Silzer & Church, 2009; Bunker, Kram, & Ting, 2002; Fernández-Aráoz, 2014). The tendency to confuse performance with potential has also been referred to by Corporate Leadership Council (2005), Hewitt (2013), Sloan (2001), and Robinson et al. (2009). Also Dries and Pepermans (2007) point to empirical studies according to which the majority of organizations still rely heavily on mere performance data in their assessments of employee potential.

As mentioned above, Robinson et al. (2009) argue that past and current performance are important but insufficient indicators of potential. Instead of the widely used nine-box model (performance-potential matrix) which separates the two dimensions, i.e. performance and potential, (e.g. Clutterbuck, 2012; Uren, 2011), the authors propose another model for identifying potential, a pyramid. The pyramid contributes to treating

performance as one component of potential only, rather than plotting performance against potential, which is the case with the nine-box model that gives nine different combinations of levels of performance and potential ratings (Nijs, Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Sels, 2014). The pyramid is presented below in Figure 5.
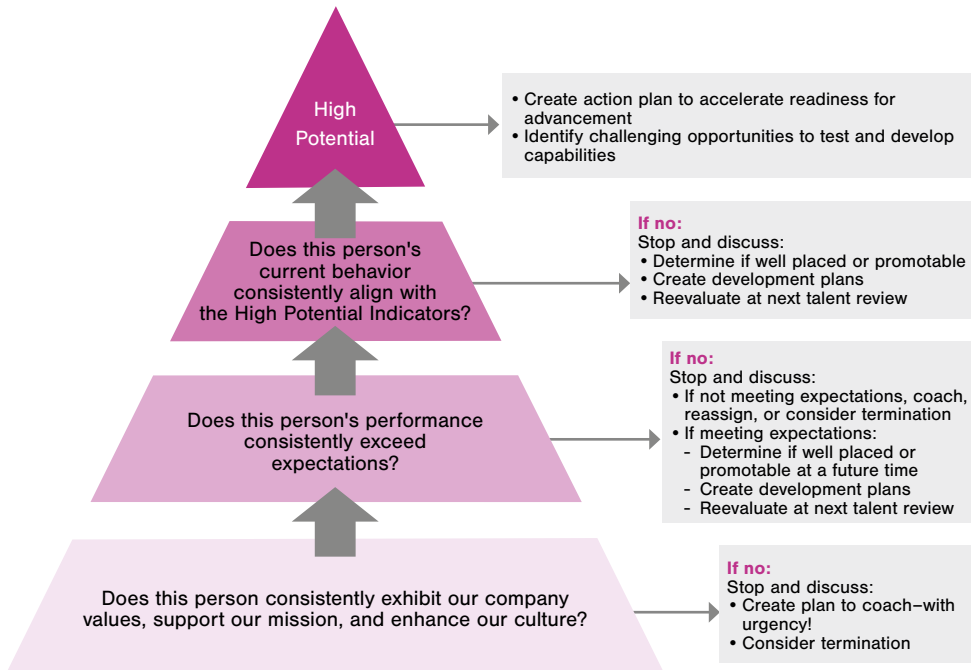
Figure 5 The potential pyramid (Source: Robinson et al., 2009, p. 414).

Agreeing with Silzer and Church (2009), I consider this model an interesting one with an eventually feasible solution to the issue of confusing performance with potential. However, an issue Silzer and Church (2009) point out raises my concern as well; a person whose performance does not exceed expectations in the current position but who would have potential to excel in another type of position e.g. in a different function is often deselected from the high-potential pool. Hence, while the pyramid model to a large extent emphasizes the interdependency of performance and potential, it still considers the current performance to be the actual decision point in the potential assessment process.

Coulson-Thomas (2007, 2012) argues that there is a wealth of untapped potential in organizations, since proper support is not given to people; he strongly recommends filling the gap between aspirations and achievement emulating the ways of high-performers and 'stars'. This is one of the components he calls 'performance support'. (Coulson-Thomas, 2007). Furthermore, agreeing with e.g. Groysberg (2010); Groysberg, Lee, & (Abrahams (2010), he points out that in order for organizations to capitalize

on potential of individuals, they need to be managed well and not to be left alone.

The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC, 2005) also posits that an individual's potential is determined by his/her aspiration, ability and engagement. "A high-potential employee is someone with the ability, engagement, and aspiration to rise to and succeed in more senior, critical positions." (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005, p. 8).

The Corporate Leadership Council (2005, p. 8) defines ability as "a combination of the innate characteristics and learned skills that employees use to carry out their day-to-day work.

- Innate characteristics
- Mental/cognitive agility
- Emotional intelligence
- Learned skills
- Technical/functional skills
- Interpersonal skills

Aspiration in turn is "the extent to which an employee wants or desires the following:

- Prestige and recognition in the organization
- Advancement and influence
- Financial rewards
- Work-life balance
- Overall job enjoyment" (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005, p. 8).

Engagement is discussed in the next Section in more detail, but according to CLC it consists of four elements: 1) emotional commitment, 2) rational commitment, 3) discretionary effort, and 4) intent to stay.

I consider the definition introduced above (CLC, 2005) to have value to the talent management discussion. It contributes, namely, to the potential-performance discussion; in the CLC' study (2005), high-potential individuals and individuals classified as high-performers were compared. According to the study, "performance does not (always) predict potential" (CLC, 2005, p. 9). The study also argues that current performance is a necessary condition for potential, but does not guarantee success at the next level". (2005, p. 9). The somewhat convincing numbers underpinning these findings were as follows: 71% of high-performers were not high-potential as per the CLC definition, and only 29% of the high-performers were also high-potential. This, in my opinion, supports the reasons behind the concern of e.g. Silzer and Church (2009) and Robinson et al. (2009) related to the paradox of performance-potential and outcomes of the confusion between these two factors, i.e. performance and potential.

The benefit of the definition introduced above is that CLC (2005) was able to look at the determinants of potential, i.e. ability, aspiration and engagement, and the impact of each of the determinants – or rather the lack of them – on the individuals' possibility to be considered as high-potentials.

The results are presented in Figure 6 below, where the three different reasons for high-performers not to be identified as high-potentials are introduced.

Type #1:
Engaged Dreamers

Aspiration

Engagement

Ability

Frequency: 5% of
High performers who are
not high potential

Characteristics
• Engaged Dreamers are employees wit a great deal of engagement and aspiration but only average ability.
• Unless the organisation can develop requisite skills, probability of success in the next level is virtually zero.

Probability of success
at the next level: 0%

Type #2:
Unengaged Stars

Aspiration

Engagement

Ability

Frequency: 48% of
High performers who are
not high potential

Characteristics
• Unengaged Stars are employees with a great deal of aspiration and ability.
• They hesitate to believe that working for the organisation is in their best interest and do not fully believe in their work or organisation.

Probability of success
at the next level: 13%

Type #3:
Misaligned stars

Aspiration

Engagement

Ability

Frequency: 47% of
High performers who are
not high potential

Characteristics
• Misaligned Stars lack the drive and ambition for success at the next level.
• Despite their outstanding ability and commitment to the organisation, they simply don't "want it" enough.

Probability of success
at the next level: 44%

Figure 6 High-performers and high-potentials – reasons for not being both (Source: Corporate Leadership Council, 2005, p. 10)

It is quite evident from the survey (CLC, 2005) that ability is the absolute prerequisite for success in any position, let alone success on the next organizational level. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) refer to this aspect by stating that "incompetence leads to poor decision making" (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012, p. 60). The case with the "unengaged stars" (CLC, 2005, p. 10) can be argued to demonstrate a case in point in terms of jobs in difficult conditions, e.g. humanitarian aid, instead of competencies and experience, the components behind engagement, which are discussed in Section 2.2.1.4.

The emphasis in the definition of high-potential vis-á-vis talent definitions can be argued to be on the perspective or the time aspect; in all of the potential definitions the focus is on the 'next level', while in talent definitions this aspect is not always presented. Also, potential is a 'possibility' and can be latent and stifled due to e.g. managers and the lack of managerial support together with the work context in general (Silzer & Church, 2009).

Learning agility has been discussed in the context of the (high-) potential definition extensively by e.g. Eichinger & Lombardo (2004), Lombardo & Eichinger (2000), Dries et al. (2012), Oliver, Church, Lewis, & Desrosiers (2009), and DeMeuse, Dai, Hallenbeck & Tang, (2008b). According to Lombardo and Eichinger (2000), learning agility is a "willingness and

ability to learn new competencies in order to perform under first-time, tough, or different conditions" (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000, p. 323). According to DeMeuse et al. (2008), the ability to learn from experience is a factor differentiating successful executives from unsuccessful ones.

Lombardo and Eichinger (2000) further describe learning agile persons as follows:

- seeking and having more experiences from which to learn;
- enjoying complex first-time problems and challenges associated with new experiences;
- getting more out of these experiences because they have an interest in making sense of them;
- and performing better because they incorporate new skills into their repertoires (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000, p. 326).

The author of this research report uses one particular definition of potential as the basis for talent definition for its future aspect, or more precisely, when describing the future or 'promise' aspect of talent. This is the one by Fernández-Aráoz (2014), and includes among other things the component of learning agility, which is, as presented above, deemed one of the most important factors of potential by academics and practitioners alike. Fernández-Aráoz (2014, p. 51) claims that the first component of potential is motivation; a determination to "excel in the pursuit of unselfish goals". The other four are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Components of potential

Quality	Meaning
Curiosity	A penchant for seeking out new experiences, knowledge, and candid feedback and an openness to learning and change
Insight	The ability to gather and make sense of information that suggests new possibilities
Engagement	A knack for using emotion and logic to communicate a persuasive vision and connect with people
Determination	The wherewithal to fight for difficult goals despite challenges and to bounce back from adversity

(Source: Fernández-Aráoz, 2014, p. 52)

2.2.1.3 Engagement and Commitment

Several researchers of the talent management field refer to engagement, including Beechler and Woodward (2009), Macey & Schneider (2008), Ross (2013), Campion (2011), Silzer & Church (2009), and Schiemann (2014). Shuck, Collins, Rocco, & Diaz (2016) point out that the field of engagement research has grown vastly during the past decades. Agreeing with e.g. Nimon, Shuck, & Zigarmi (2015); Parker & Griffin (2011), they define employee engagement as "a positive, active psychological state, operationalized as the intensity and direction of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral

energy". (2016, p. 209). According to Shuck et al. (2016), the concept and 'phenomenon' of engagement contributes to a better understanding of experiences related to e.g. intensity and direction, which have an impact on "how, when, and with whom people work" (Shuck et al., 2016, p. 209). Khoreva and van Zalk (2016) refer to empirical studies on what they call 'work engagement', stating that work engagement is "a crucial determinant of individual and organizational performance outcomes" (2016, p. 461). As to the differences or similarities between work engagement and other constructs, e.g. organizational commitment and job involvement, Khoreva and Zalk (2016) state that while all of the aforementioned constructs share similar features, work engagement has been "confirmed theoretically and empirically distinct from other positively denoted concepts concerning the relationship between the employee and the work" (2016, p. 461).

Macey and Schneider (2008) also refer to the high number of definitions of engagement both in academic and practitioner literature. They also argue that both academic researchers and practitioners have differing interpretations of the meaning of the concept and definitions that are competing and inconsistent. However, they find common attitudinal and behavioral components in these definitions. Namely, the literature seems to agree that employee engagement is 1) a desirable condition 2) it has an organizational purpose 3) it implies involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 4). Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) also refer to the confusing terminology and attribute the misperception to the interchangeability of the usage of 'engagement', 'involvement', and 'commitment' in literature. Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) further state that all of the above-mentioned concepts are distinct constructs that reflect different aspects of an individual's attachment to work. According to the authors (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006), work engagement can be described as follows: "A state of well-being, characterized by high levels of energy (invested in work), but the concept also makes reference to involvement (being dedicated, enthusiastic, and inspired by one's work), and commitment (being engrossed and attached to one's work)" (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006, p. 119). Work engagement stresses the assumption of "optimal functioning" at work regarding well-being. It is also proposed to develop as a function of the same job resources that feed motivation and contribute to positive feelings toward the employer organization; hence engaged employees are more than willing to stay in the organization. Commitment, in turn, seems to be more dependent on job characteristics than personal factors, suggesting that it has less to do with intrinsic motivation than circumstances surrounding the job – factors that are partly the basis for these two concepts being distinct.

Work involvement is yet another concept with positive connotations related to work. It is mentioned above in the context of research on high-potentials and antecedents of engagement thereof of Khoreva and van Zalk (2016) and the empirical research of Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006).

In the description of a job-involved employee, components such as a motivating and challenging job, commitment to both the work, the specific job, and to the organization, and being less prone to leave the position, are included. The differentiating factor between work engagement and work involvement appears to be that work involvement does not seem related to mental or physical ill-health. It is to be noted that work engagement has been researched quite extensively in health psychology and also described as "the opposite of burnout (feeling drained of energy and fed up with work)" (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006, p. 120).

The definition of engagement by Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) is presented in the white paper 'Driving Performance and Retention Through Employee Engagement, a Quantitative Analysis of Effective Engagement Strategies' (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). I find this definition a rather useful one from the point of view of my study, and it additionally stays within the scope of my research, business and management, without going into the field of psychology and health psychology as clearly as the above-mentioned definitions of Shuck et al. (2016) and Hallberg and Schaufeli (2016). The definition of CLC employee engagement is as follows: "Engagement is the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization and how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment" (2004, p. 3). The components of their definition are: the types of commitment (Rational and Discretional); focal points of commitment (Day-to-day work, Team, Direct Manager, and Organization); and the outputs of commitment (Discretionary Effort and Intent to stay). The final output of discretionary effort is (improved) performance, whereas the intent to stay results in retention. This definition is very close to what many researchers and practitioners alike simply call 'commitment'. Commitment to e.g. Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) is evident in some people; "Committed or engaged employees work hard, put in their time, and do what they are asked to do" (2012, p. 60). It is somewhat interesting that the researchers do not differentiate between commitment and engagement in this context.

Macey and Schneider (2008) claim that companies that get the conditions right, i.e. to be favorable for employee engagement, can possibly create competitive advantage for themselves. While there is no silver bullet for this either, the scholars argue that these conditions are hard to imitate for competitors and thus very much worth the effort; it is easy to make changes in price and product, it is harder to create an engaged workforce (Macey & Schneider, 2008). This relates to the general appeal of the construct to management that Macey and Schneider (2008) refer to, namely the claims that employee engagement drives bottom-line results. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), by 2005 at least one HR consultancy had already claimed had established a relationship between engagement and profitability by looking at customer satisfaction, higher sales numbers and productivity (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Kumar & Raghavendran (2013) take a historical view on work engagment, which I find interesting and very much in line with Fernandez-Aráos' (2014) overview on how the definition of 'talent' has changed in the course of centuries and decades along with the revolutions and evolutions of work itself. This was discussed in Section 2.2.1.3. and described in Figure 4 (p. 57), which presents an overview of the nature and composition of work and its impact on how 'talent' was defined from the days of e.g. pyramid construction and the emphasis on physical features and power to today's VUCA (Vulnerability, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) world. In the VUCA world, the competencies required in most jobs are far from evident and, as Bennett & Lemoine (2014) state, "core activities essential to driving organizational performance – like strategic planning — are viewed as mere exercises in futility. VUCA conditions render useless any efforts to understand the future and to plan responses" (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014, p. 311).

Kumar & Raghavendran (2013) state that technological advancements call for a very high level of specialization similarly to the industrial revolution, with little need for broad skills sets especially in the ICT field. However, significant disruptions in the way business is executed have taken place during the last few decades. The techonolgical advancements, i.e. the disruptions discussed above, allow more flexibility in terms of place and time of work and bring about a demand for highly-skilled employees "who value autonomy and meaningful engagement. This has brought employee engagement within the focus of managers – a topic that had less significance in earlier decades" (Kumar & Raghavendran, 2013, p. 16). Employee engagement for Kumar and Raghavendran (2013) is an "employee's emotional wallet" (p. 17) of which the organizations need to capture a share. This is possible through deep understanding of human behavior and of factors related to intrinsic motivation of individuals. Employees are intrinsically motivated when they feel their perception of the work is meaningful. Intrinsic motivations lead to people being emotionally and positively connected to their work, which in turn creates long-term positive performance in the organization (Kumar & Raghavendran, 2013). According to the authors (2013), engagement can be found in a "sweet spot" in the intersection of responses to three questions: 1) What do you like to do? 2) What do you do best? 3) What adds value to the organization? These questions form the basis of talent management and are the fundamental issues talent management should focus on.

Identifying the aforementioned sweet spot is, according to Kumar and Raghavendran (2013), a challenge for talent management and paves the way to building an engaging organizational culture and redesigning effective job roles. The sweet spot identification also assists in understanding what enablers and catalysts are able to unlock emplyees' intrinsic motivation, the related engagment, and finally performance. Furthermore, Kumar and Raghaverandan (2013) argue that talent management as a function has forgotten its role as a guardian and co-creator of engagement in focusing on

processes and metrics and forgetting to focus on what is really important, the people. The authors strongly imply a genuine collaboration between business and talent management in order to build organizations within which employees are valued and productive; in this collaboration the role of talent management is that of a business advisor with deep understanding of human nature, which in turn is crucial in securing trust within the organization. Kumar and Raghverandan (2013) continue by stating: "Capturing the emotional wallet of employees is the next big frontier for talent management in the decades to come" (2013, p. 22). I personally agree with the statement above and the view on talent management's role in ensuring positive and engaging employee experience as one of the main components of value creation in organizations.

2.2.2 Talent Identification

McDonnell et al. (2010) have observed that organizations identify and develop talent often using inconsistent and ad hoc methods instead of exercising systematic and consistent application of any policies or procedures. Iles, Preece, & Chuai (2010) argue that we know, at least in terms of academic research, very little about how organizations define and identify talent. However, in order to undertake talent identification, the HR function and top management need to be very clear on what constitutes talent. (Wiblen, Dery, & Grant, 2012) Talent definition has been discussed earlier in the context of talent definition (Section 2.2.1), which I consider a pivotal starting point for talent identification in an organization. One must be extremely clear on what constitutes talent in the organization in the first place, bearing in mind that it does not mean only having one definition for talent in each organization, but different definitions for different parts or functions before the right talent is identified for the right positions. Collings and Mellahi (2009) call for 'systematic identification' of key positions within an organization, and claim that this systematic identification is the only way in which organizations will be able to achieve the desired level of performance and sustained competitive advantage. Furthermore, research emphasizes the importance of consistent talent management practices and clear definitions and guidelines together with the importance of multiple owners of talent identification and management processes, and the ownership should not only lie within the HR function but with different levels of management as well (Wiblen et al., 2012). Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) posit that HR (and talent management) is like accounting; "a critical and important professional practice" (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005, p. 131) which, unlike accounting or finance, lacks clear metrics and a well-developed decision science. This adds to the ad hoc nature of talent identification discussed above and emphasizes the need for talent management practitioners to develop their talent analytics, metrics and

technology competencies in order to become strategic contributors in the organization (Wiblen et al., 2012). Mellahi and Collings (2010) refer to the strategic importance of talent and state that talent per se does not create strategic value unless it is effectively identified and managed.

Some researchers, such as Peter Cappelli (2008), have demonstrated that the inadequacy of talent management methods leads to failure in companies' ability to accurately identify talent. Cappelli argues: "Failure in talent management is a source of pain for executives in modern organizations. Over the past generation, talent management practices, especially in the United States, have by and large been dysfunctional, leading cooperation to lurch from surpluses of talent to shortfalls to surpluses and back again" (Cappelli, 2008, p. 1). Cappelli (2008) also sees talent management as a fundamentally similar process to supply chain management. Talent management is, according to Cappelli (2008), simply anticipating the needs of human capital and implementing the plan to meet the needs. Anticipation of needs is, in my view, similar to identification since it includes identification of the type of talent required in the organization. Cappelli (2008) applies generally accepted supply chain management principles to talent management and comes up with four of them: "1) Make and buy to manage risk, 2) Adapt to the uncertainty of talent demand, 3) Improve the return on investment on talent development, and 4) Preserve the investment by balancing employee-employer interests" (Capelli, 2008, p. 4). The first principle relates to talent identification; companies must decide what is needed, estimate the number of hires, and decide whether to hire from outside or develop from within. Cappelli (2008) considers this necessary in order to manage risk; having a deep bench of talent is expensive and companies should be careful in their estimations of talent needs. The principles highlight Cappelli's (2008) view on talent management as a support function that exists to ensure the achievement of the overall objective of any company, which is making money. As discussed earlier in the context of the research gap, this view can be argued to be narrow and limit the way talent is identified.

A different, more versatile perspective is presented by Beechler and Woodward (2009). In their view, what seems to be an issue in talent identification especially and in talent management in general, is the discussion around "the war for talent" that the authors discuss particularly citing Pfeffer and Sutton, (2006). What is detrimental in this view, i.e. in the view that the war still prevails and that it will last into the foreseeable future, is that it rests on at least three critical assumptions, all related also to how talent is identified in organizations. The first of these assumptions is that individual ability is a fixed factor offering very little if any variance in the course of one's career, which in other words implies to the existence of 'better' and 'worse' people. The second assumption is related to classification of individuals, i.e. the assumption that employees can be sorted into different groups based on their abilities and competences in

a reliable manner. The third assumption Beechler and Woodward (2009) refer to is that organizational performance can be simply aggregated to the performance of individuals. Furthermore, related to the performance of individuals, it is assumed that what matters is what people do instead of where and in what kind of system the work is done. In my opinion, especially the first two assumptions have implications on how talent is identified in organizations, i.e. what kind of people organizations employ and who is given a particular role based on competencies that are regarded to be more or less fixed. Fixed mindsets of this type can represent a danger and become self-fulfilling prophesies; Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) state that people who believe intelligence is impressionable actually become smarter and are willing to learn things they were not able to do before. Moreover, individuals who are classified as not that smart or believe that their abilities are inborn and unchangeable learn less over time.

From the point of view of talent identification, I argue that the mindset in the organization regarding talent and performance is crucial. If, as presented above, the mindset of management and HR is fixed on competencies and their non-malleability, intelligence, and forced distributions of people into categories, it will eventually lead to organizations ignoring the impact of the dynamic, complex, and uncertain business environment of today in which diversity is an important factor and learning agility more significant than past performance as a predictor of future performance. Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) refer to past performance as a poor indicator of future performance by combining it with general mental ability. While IQ is the most powerful predictor of performance of an individual, it correlates only .04 with job performance and merely represents 16% of the variation in performance. Putting too much emphasis on individual characteristics represents a danger; firstly, as Groysberg et al. (2004) point out, context and systems matter, and hiring an individual star can be detrimental to the organization's performance, as only 30% of the individual's performance is based on his or her own abilities and the rest stems from factors specific to the organization in question, e.g. reputation, development possibilities and leadership. Secondly, natural talent is overrated according to Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) "especially for sustaining organizational performance" (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006, p. 86). Thus, the fixed mindset on individual talent and its ability to enhance organizational, individual and team performance can backfire, and actually reduces the overall performance (Pfeffer and Sutton, 2006).

In the study of Stahl et al. (2012), cultural fit is deemed more important in selection and having more predictive power than past performance and formal qualifications. Applicants' values and personality are assessed in companies like IKEA in order to get information about how well the individual matches the company culture. The questionnaires and assessments in use ignore skills, academic credentials and experience, and focus on values and beliefs to determine the cultural fit (Stahl et al., 2012).

One of the factors impacting the quality and quantity of talent and consequently how organizations need to identify talent is the growing level of

workforce diversity (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). Diversity considerations have to be included in all talent and people management processes; research shows that managing diversity effectively has many payoffs, not limited to attracting and retaining talent and what is more has a positive impact on organizational success (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). Including diversity in talent identification requires that organizations look at sources of talent with a wide scope, e.g. including not only different nationalities in their diverse workforce but also taking generational and gender issues into consideration together with minorities. This can be enhanced by including diversity considerations into performance and compensation reviews, this is done by e.g. Ernst and Young and IBM, where managers are assessed among other things based on their success in advancing and retaining minorities and women (Beechler & Woodward, 2009).

Diversity considerations presented above underpin the dangers some researchers see in a systematic approach to talent or positions identification. These include Beechler and Woodward (2009); McDonnell et al. (2011); Mäkelä, Björkman and Ehrnrooth (2010) and Wiblen, Grant and Dery (2015). The notion of 'talent clones' is often connected with the systematic approach; when employees are assessed using pre-determined characteristics, it can possibly lead to the identification of employees with similar rather than diverse characteristics and consequently restrict the way we perceive and identify talent (Wiblen, Grant, & Dery, 2015). The talent management literature for most parts emphasizes the systematic approach to talent management. However, a volatile and uncertain environment, a call for diversity in talent pools, and limited possibilities to predict what competencies are needed in the future can be argued to pave the way to more fluid approaches to talent identification. This is discussed in a recent study by Wiblen et al. (2015), where the authors challenge the best practices of talent management and the consistency of talent identification and argue that "organizations should be encouraged to identify, and subsequently manage talent in ways that are fluid, flexible, customizable to the individual and informed by the organizations current and future strategic ambitions" (Wiblen et al., 2015, p. 31). Acknowledging the limitations of the afore-mentioned study, a single case study within the professional services section using qualitative methods, I find the discussion and conclusions very much aligned with my own findings and thinking. As important as I think a clear definition of talent as a basis for talent identification is, I also posit that having multiple definitions of talent in use in the organization, allowing diversity, subjectivity – and intuition – in the process, is of essence. Agreeing with Wiblen et. al. (2015) that even in the case of a fluid approach to talent identification, some elements of talent and talent management process should still be fixed. I will discuss this aspect of talent management in the conclusions and managerial implications chapters of this study.

When discussing talent identification, the concept of potential can be argued to be essential. Potential has been discussed in Section 2.2.1.3, but

particularly the points of Fernandez-Aráoz (2014) deserve to be mentioned again. Basing his views on long-term experience as a consultant in the field of executive search and a large amount of related research, Fernandez-Aráoz (2014) seems adamant that in today's unpredictable business environment, industries and jobs change so fast that it is impossible to predict which competencies prevail and contribute to the success of organizations in the future. It is thus imperative to identify and develop individuals with the highest potential. In potential identification, one should look for the individuals who are motivated by challenging goals and excel in their pursuit. This should be combined with the humility to prioritize the team over one's individual needs and an insatiable curiosity towards exploring new ideas and ways of working. Additionally, potential entails insight that allows the individual to see new types of connections and strong engagement towards the organization together with resilience and optimism. The author also points out that all of the above does not mean that such things as intelligence, experience or performance should be ignored in talent identification either (Fernández-Aráoz, 2014).

Furthermore, when looking at 'identification' in the context of talent management, the stream of literature that emphasizes identification of key positions that have the potential to make a difference, i.e. that represent a key source of competitive advantage in an organization, should not be ignored – on the contrary. Adherents of this approach (e.g. Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005, Collings & Mellahi, 2009, Huselid et al., 2005) are adamant that these types of positions should be the starting point for talent management systems and should be filled with individuals identified as talent or, as Huselid (2005) calls them, 'A-players', i.e. the persons with the greatest potential to contribute to the success of the organization in that strategically crucial position. Bouderau and Ramsted (2005) are clearly on similar lines in their statement that the core of talent management is essentially identifying and nurturing talent and placing them in positions that are crucial for the competitive advantage of the company. This aspect, i.e. working backwards from the strategy of the organization to identify the positions that contribute to the successful implementation of the strategy, was also discussed earlier in Section 2.2.1 of this study. I will revisit the importance of identification of pivotal positions when describing and analyzing my case study and in the managerial implications of my research; in the context of humanitarian aid, the positions of leaders in emergency situations can be argued to be strategically important and should be well analyzed and documented vis á vis the requirements placed on the incumbents, the so called 'A-players'.

Employee perceptions to talent management and individuals' reactions to being identified as talent are mentioned as a research gap by Björkman et al. (2013). This is alarming in view of advancing the field both academically and talent management in practice; employee attitudes and attributes they make about management's motivations in making decisions related to e.g. talent management are likely to influence the performance of the

organization including customer satisfaction (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008). Building on the social exchange theory[18] according to which an organization's investments in employees is reciprocated by the employees in a positive manner, Björkman et al. (2013) examined the impact of talent identification on individual employee attitudes. The authors argue that inclusion in the talent pool, which unequivocally suggests differentiated treatment of a select employee group, is likely to be seen by the individuals in the select group as a commitment from the employer. Consequently, the employee is expected to feel obliged to act in a manner that contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and even accept increasing performance demands (Björkman et al., 2013). The findings showed significant differences between different groups of individuals: 1) the individuals who perceive that they have been identified as 'talent', 3) the individuals who perceive they have not been identified as talent, and 3) the individuals who do not know whether they have been identified as talent. The attitudes examined related to the perception were as follows: "commitment to increasing performance demands, and to building competencies that are valuable for their employers, and to actively support its strategic priorities, identification with the focal unit, and lower turnover intent." (Björkman et al., 2013, p. 207). Firstly, no significant differences were found between all three groups, which the researchers found surprising, albeit admitting that they can only speculate with the reasons behind this. However, when comparing groups one and two above, the results showed that group one is more likely to be associated with all the afore-listed attitudes. Comparing groups one and three, there seemed to be no difference in terms of intention to leave the corporation[19]. Group one, i.e. those who perceive they have been identified as talent are, however, more likely to be associated with all the attitudes above than group three, i.e. those who do not know whether they have been identified or not. As a conclusion, the researchers suggest that talent should be informed about the talent status in view of motivating them, and it seems to have little negative affect. The motivational factor mentioned above is in line with both the social exchange theory's predictions and the general logic of talent management, in other words that talent needs to be identified, nurtured, and placed in pivotal roles that are crucial for the success of the organization now and in the future. Furthermore, included in the logic of talent management is the notion that talent management concentrates on a selected pool of individuals considered leaders or key professionals either currently or in the future (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

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18   "[...] theorists [...] converge on the central "essence" of SET: Social exchange comprises actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships." (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 890).

19   The research was carried out in 11 Nordic MNEs, which all had or intended to have corporate-wide talent management strategies in place. (Björkman et al. 2013).

It can be argued that the above is one of the crucial questions within talent management practice: i.e. once identified as talent, should the individual, i.e. the talent, and the rest of the organization be informed about talent management strategies and activities in general, and should the identified individuals be informed about their status as talents. Agreeing with Björkman et al. (2013), I am an advocate of transparency especially in informing the talent themselves. Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (2006) concurs: based on their findings, they strongly recommend communicating the rationale and objectives of talent management strategies or talent pools, not only in order to set expectations and manage them. but also to align the individual expectations with the expectations of the business and HR.

One of the reasons I refer to the communication aspect as a crucial question is due to the insight gained during interviews related to my research conducted in six large corporations in Finland, which were all multinational, one a subsidiary of a global conglomerate (semi-structured interviews by the author, October-December 2014). All interviewees considered the information or communication aspect an important issue, and some of them even admitted this was the main reason they consider everyone a talent and have thus adopted an inclusive talent management approach in the organization (e.g. Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Another reason for bringing the communication aspect to the forefront are the discussions during lectures or workshops on talent management; HR practitioners seem to be very concerned about the consequences or lack of communication together with the skills of both HR and line managers in communicating about talent management-related issues. Communication of talent decisions and the underlying practices are referred to as a key weakness in talent management and talent systems by Collings (2017); he points to Rousseau, Greenberg, & Ho (2005), who underline the need for organizations to be explicit about talent identification and communicate the talent decisions and the reasoning behind them in an open manner. According to Rousseau et al. (2005), this will result in less bias against the decisions and contribute to them being perceived as fair by those individuals who are not identified as talent. If, as Rousseau et al. (2005) point out in discussing i-deals, i.e. differentiated, individual employment deals that can be argued to resemble talent identification and related agreements, these deals are made behind closed doors, "this secretive process raises suspicions that there is something to hide" (2005, p. 23). Also, a secretive process can, as per Rousseau et al. (2005), be a source of dispute since it can be considered to contribute to injustice in the organization.

Moreover, as Björkman et al. (2013) indicate, talent reviews and communication about the inclusion in a talent pool ought to happen not only in a transparent process but also in a fair manner. In addition, research results seem to suggest that also those who are not selected as talent should be informed; if the process is transparent and fair as stated above,

communication would engender motivational effects for all employees, as they would arguably feel they have a genuine chance to be identified as talent next time around (Björkman et al., 2013). The so called 'B-players' i.e. those, who are steady performers, should also be kept in the communication loop in order to avoid perceptions within this group that their contribution is not appreciated and that less is required from them (Malik & Singh, 2014). The findings of Björkman et al. (2013) seem to support this. Communication about identification as talent, or rather the lack of communication, is discussed in the context of my case study later; the concept is still in its early days and a source of confusion.

2.2.2.1 Attracting Talent

"Talent management practices ensure that the right people want to join the company and effectively bring new, talented workers into the company." (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler & Staffelbach, 2011, p. 529). To attract talent, the organization needs to know what talent wants and needs, and align incentive and reward systems with these needs. Furthermore, focused development programs and meaningful work are important factors in both attraction and retention of talent (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011).

In my view the above statement related to individual talents' wishes – what talent wants – is a very important aspect in talent attraction and relates to the research and discussions on workforce differentiation. Collings (2016) defines workforce differentiation as follows: "formalized approaches to the segmentation of the workforce based on employees' competence or the nature of roles performed to reflect differential potential to generate value. Such workforce differentiation is generally accompanied by a differentiated HR system." (2016, p. 3). While this covers the concept well in the case of e.g. the role of HR and the requirements it may place on HR systems and architectures, I would like to add personality or type-based components to the definition. These are included by Uren (2011), who, when looking at talent segmentation, emphasizes the importance of understanding individual needs. Uren (2011) constructed six distinct talent types based on individual responses and findings about organizations' offerings applying a mathematical segmentation technique. The areas of interest and individual needs between the distinct types vary from a strong brand image of the employer, challenging tasks, and the employer as a provider of guidance and development activities, to career advancements and fast promotions. The descriptions of the different types are presented in Appendix 3.

What is more, Uren (2011) constructed a model for talent segmentation including two 'journeys'; that of the organization, i.e. to differentiate the types of talent the organization needs, and that of the individual talent, i.e. to vary offer to individuals based on individual needs. The organization's focus, according to Uren (2011), should be on competitive advantage and its sources, which in turn are derived from the strategic intentions of the firm.

In constructing the model, Uren (2011) looked at both what organizations considered important and what the individuals, the talent, described as important to them. The journey is presented in Appendix 4. Firstly, and I very much agree, she pointed out that the best practices in talent management are those that do not concentrate on leadership talent only, but extend their focus on different types of talent that will contribute to the organization's success. This is very much in line with what e.g. Collings (2016) says above in reference to different roles in the organization as value creators. Also Michie et al. (2015) touch upon this facet; they argue that organizations focus too much on general management or leadership potential and talent, ignoring the importance of expert knowledge, which in their view is increasingly the key to competitive advantage especially in what they call "high-talent" industries (Michie et al. 2015, location 4920, Kindle edition). According to Uren (2011) and the research she conducted with her colleagues[20], "organizations that understand what their most talented individuals want from their relationship with their employer, and then segment their talent population and differentiate the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) for them, deliver up to 66 percent higher total shareholder return (over a five-year period) than those organizations that do not" (Uren, 2011, p. 31). EVP will be discussed later in this Chapter. While I understand that the information and details about the afore-mentioned research has its limitations to say the least, I do argue that the findings and constructed 'journey' based on the findings have potential to at least show where an understanding of the needs of talent can take talent management in organizations, especially in terms of attracting and retaining the right talent. Casper, Holliday Wayne, & Manegold (2013, p.326) echo the importance of finding the answer to the question "What do our target recruits want?" when attracting and retaining talent. Values are also important in talent attraction; the other question employers should ask is related to employee values and their alignment with the organization's values. The organization should then emphasize HR policies that signal the values, and advertise them when attracting talent; this can enable the organization to attract talent with similar values (Casper et al. 2013).

Beechler and Woodward (2009) discuss diversity that organizations need to embrace in finding and attracting talent; in their view, organizations need to be more innovative and break out of old models of talent attraction together with finding new sources of talent. As an example, they mention SAP that traditionally favored German expatriates in global markets currently focusing on best local talent. Diversity is also related to different generations; attracting and retaining baby boomers requires different value

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20   "Jackson Samuel (the consultancy Leslie Uren is connected with) spoke to senior HR people from 44 companies based in the UK and internationally, and also to 110 talented individuals across the length of the talent pipeline – university students, graduate trainees, middle managers, and senior talented executives. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted and questionnaires were completed. Analysis involved a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods and market segmentation."

propositions than attracting the y-generation. This, once again, means that the needs of diverse talent and employee groups need to be understood. (Beechler & Woodward, 2009).

Employee value proposition (EVP) is an important component of talent attraction and goes hand in hand with employer branding, which according to Martin, Gollan, & Grigg (2011) "is becoming an increasingly important topic for research and practice [..] because it plays directly into [...] corporate reputation, talent management and employee engagement agendas." (Martin et al., 2011, p. 3618). EVP is discussed by e.g. Sparrow and Makram (2015); Guthridge et al. (2008); Sparrow (2007); Powell et al. 2012; Boudreau & Ziskin (2011); Thunnissen et al. (2013); Michaels et al. (2001); Stahl et al. (2007). The definition of McKinsey, the consultants who stressed the importance of EVP already in the seminal book on the war for talent in 2001 and in their research in 1997 (Michaels et al., 2001), outlines it as follows: "senior management's explanation of why a smart, energetic, and ambitious person might want to work for one company as opposed to another" (Guthridge et al., 2008). Also Guthridge (2008) emphasizes the importance of differentiation in employee branding and EVP creation by stating that having only one EVP for the whole organization is old-fashioned and ignores the different values and needs of different employee segments.

Stahl et al. (2012) state that both practitioners and academics alike agree that attraction of talent together with retention require a 'multifaceted approach'. Thus creating and delivering a compelling EVP is critical. While competitive compensation is essential in talent attraction and retention, the talent needs more; an exciting job, career planning, and acknowledgement from senior management together with development possibilities play a pivotal role. In other words, an EVP ought to include both tangible and intangible elements, "such as an inspiring mission, an appealing culture in which talent flourishes, exciting challenges, a high degree of freedom and autonomy, career advancement and growth opportunities, and a great boss or mentor" (Stahl et al., 2007, p. 17).

The importance of organizational culture in talent attraction and in terms of an EVP is emphasized by e.g. Tymon et al., (2010), who argue that in order to create an EVP that cannot be easily copied, organizations should first create an environment where a sense of pride in the organization is part of the culture. In addition, the researchers emphasize the role of intrinsic rewards in talent attraction. These were discussed earlier in Section 2.1.

Kontoghiorghes (2016) takes a closer look into the impact of organizational culture, stating that especially organizational culture that can be called high-performance culture plays a vital role in talent attraction and thus also has an effect on talent management efforts, especially attraction and retention. Konthoghiorghes' (2016) findings suggest that instead of investing in (costly) talent management systems in endeavors to increase talent attraction, organizations should focus on building an organizational culture that attracts talent. Organizations need to satisfy the need of talent to develop and perform at a high level if they want to attract them,

and create a high-performing culture that provides talent with the afore-described opportunities. (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Furthermore, according to Kontoghiorghes' (2016) study, talent attraction is largely associated with the perception of the culture as change-, quality-, and technology-driven, and additionally characterized by support for "creativity, open communications, effective knowledge management, and the core values of respect and integrity" (Kontoghiorghes, 2016, p. 1833). This is in line with the notion of compatibility between organization and individual, or more precisely his or her needs and values, which several researchers have argued to significantly influence employee attraction. (e.g. Cable & Judge, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

The mission-related aspects in talent attraction can naturally be seen in the humanitarian aid sector as well. When asked for reasons to join the humanitarian sector in a survey[21] by Parry et al., (2010), 'making a difference' was considered to be the most important one by almost all the respondents. 'Making a difference' can be argued to be a need that can be fulfilled by a compelling mission and complying to it, and can thus be taken into consideration when looking at the importance of 'mission' in talent attraction within this sector. According to Parry et al. (2010), leaders are generally attracted to join an organization in this sector by the mission of the organization in question, the job or the organization itself, and people management. The last-mentioned factor will be discussed in further detail in Section 4.3.

Finally, Seth Kahan provides an interesting point related to mission-driven organizations in the future in *The Rise of HR Wisdom from 73 Thought leaders* (edited by Ulrich, Schiemann, & Sartain, 2015). Listing disruptions "that every HR professional will need to understand, prepare for, and be ready to deliver against", Kahan (2015, p. 42) states that the "false distinction" (Kahan, 2015, p. 42) between the private and non-profit sectors will be dissolved in the next ten years for the most part, making the mission and its impact the final focus of organizations in both sectors. Time will tell, but I am tempted to argue that this is something that is happening already and, as will be seen in the managerial implications of my study, the private sector has some important issues to learn from the non-profit organizations.

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21 "The survey was designed to investigate employees' motivations for joining the sector and organization, the factors affecting their job satisfaction and engagement, experiences of human resource management and leadership and of collaboration between humanitarian organizations. A total number of 81 individuals completed the survey. Of these 41 (51%) were male and 40 (49%) were female. Most respondents were at fairly senior levels in the organisation, either at Board level or at Department head level." (Parry et al., 2010, p. 35,36).

2.2.3 Developing Talent

One of the central strategies for meeting current and future talent needs in organizations is employee development (Björkman et al., 2013). Furthermore, focused talent development is argued to be equal to investing systematically in human capital; as a result, the intellectual capital rises, which in turn has an impact on both current and future market value (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011). As to organizational outcomes, talent management with a development focus has arguably a positive effect on employer's attractiveness due to talented workers' interest in career paths, challenging tasks, and development opportunities (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011).

Related to the question whether organizations should be acquiring talent from the external market or pursuing internal developmental activities, Lepak and Snell (1999) claim that external acquisitions are highly unlikely to be successful and financially feasible in the long run, and that there are significant benefits in the internal development approach. This is based on the assumption that organizations gain competitive advantage through (talent) development activities aiming at industry and organization-specific skills and knowledge (Lepak & Snell, 1999). Thus, as Garavan, Carbery and Rock (2012) argue, organizations are likely to invest significantly in talent development activities in order to ensure the competencies needed in successful strategy implementation. Referring to e.g. Boudreau & Ramstad (2005), Cappelli (2008), and Tansley et al. (2006), Chami-Malaeb & Garavan (2013) state that talent development focuses on individuals who are identified as talent and are current or future incumbents of critical positions in the organization. Moreover, the task of talent development is to ensure that talent is developed with the purpose of meeting organizational needs. Development is also argued to be a pivotal component of talent management having a positive impact on the retention of talent. Chami-Malaeb (2013) investigated the relationship between talent (and leadership) development practices and the intention to stay, and found a significant positive relationship between the two elements.

Talent development has been referred to as a three-way relationship between the individual, manager, and organization. The individual seeks development opportunities, implement development plans and set career goals in the framework whose tools, values and resources are set by the organization. The manager's role is to assess needs, discuss and clarify roles, and support development (Kaye, 2002).

An interesting viewpoint to talent development is presented by Korotov (2007), as he discusses 'accelerated development initiatives'. These initiatives are, as the word 'accelerated' clearly indicates, pursued at a significantly higher pace than usual development activities, and the individual talent can also be seen to bypass more traditional steps in career development and age-related progression. These types of development activities are, according to Korotov (2007), a necessity for organizations

facing either rapid growth, lack of critical talent, or competition from other organizations, who are ready to offer more challenging tasks and higher levels of responsibility to talent and look for the external market to recruit. The accelerated approach is not without challenges to the talent participating in these initiatives. As Korotov (2007) points out, the participants need to be able to cope with the pressures of the current job and to simultaneously succeed in taking on new responsibilities and learning previously unknown tasks. For accelerated development projects to succeed, the projects ought to be tied very closely to the real needs of the organization and be visible for the whole organization. Korotov (2007) finally emphasizes the necessity of the relevant leaders, not only HR professionals, to be involved in identifying the projects. It is to be noted that Garavan et al. (2012) warn about the lack of knowledge related to the value of accelerated development models and their effectiveness. Despite the afore-mentioned paucity, I consider the accelerated approach to be valid for my study in the humanitarian aid context; I will include it in the discussions and managerial implications presented in later chapters.

Garavan et al. (2012) look at talent development activities through four categories or types of programs. These are: 1) formal programs, such as conceptual or skills-based development programs, 2) relationship-based developmental experiences, such as mentoring, coaching, and career advice, 3) job-based developmental experiences, and 4) informal/non-formal developmental activities.

I will take a closer look at type three since these are particularly important aspects of talent development in my case organization. Before taking a closer look at point three, some comments related to these four categories are in order, and the 70:20:10 framework deserves to be mentioned, as the framework or model is still rather commonly used in organizations as a guideline for developing talent, and managers and experts in general. It implies that development happens when engaging individuals in three types of experiences: "challenging assignments (70%), developmental relationships (20%), and coursework and training (10%)" (Wilson, Van Velsor, Chandrasekar, & Criswell, 2011, p. 4). This framework is contested by researchers e.g. Wilson & Yip (2010), Wilson et al. (2011), Garavan et al. (2012), because it does not offer guidance on which experiences actually contribute to development and learning and how, nor does it detail the lessons learned (Wilson et al., 2011). Furthermore, the relatively aged model developed in the 1980s [22] does not take into consideration the role of internet-based learning methods and the opportunity and requirement to access talent development resources 24/7. According to Garavan et al. (2012), organizations which claim to be using the 70-20-10 framework, i.e.

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22   The model was developed by three researchers who studied the key developmental experiences of successful managers; Morgan McCall, Michael M. Lombardo, and Robert A. Eichinger. (Source: https://www.trainingindustry.com/wiki/entries/the-702010-model-for-learning-and-development.aspx [Accessed 11.2.2017]

the 10%, continue to focus strongly on the classroom, and do not know how to tackle the challenge of blended learning, i.e. combining the informal and formal development activities in which focus is on flexibility, small chunks of learning just-in-time, and moving away from classrooms.

Job-based developmental activities, i.e. 70% according to the afore-introduced model, offer many developmental opportunities including superiors and bosses, increases in job scope, horizontal moves, and stretch tasks. The latter can include e.g. developing new practices or implementing change (Wilson et al., 2011). However, experiences on the job are often taken for granted and managers do not regard them as development opportunities; they are simply a way to get work done. Furthermore, they call for the talent or learner to have a relatively high level of self-confidence in an organizational climate in which tasks related to one's job are not considered development opportunities as stated above. The tasks or the job ought to be designed carefully to be successful in terms of offering a developmental experience; some form of cross-functional influence needs to be included, learners (talent) need to be forced out of their comfort zones, and the job ought to have a key strategic component, and involve dealing with different managers and leaders in the organization. (Garavan et al., 2012).

Furthermore, on a more general level than related only to job tasks as above, the concept of 'developmental pathways' is noteworthy as far as experiences are concerned. These are defined as "experiences, exposures and challenges that talent must work through in order to emerge as the talent of the future" (Garavan et al., 2012, p. 11). Different types of experiences and willingness to learn from them can lead to becoming a leader with personal balance (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1989). Moreover, Lombardo and Eichinger (1989) state that not simply any experience is effective and leads to learning, the authors listing eleven challenges that contribute to learning from experiences. In the following, I have selected the most relevant ones for developing managers in the humanitarian aid sector, which are in no order of priority as follows:

1. Working with either new people, a lot of people, or both,
2. Influencing people, activities, and factors that the individual have no control over,
3. Is closely watched by people, whose opinions count,
4. Building a team and starting things from scratch,
5. Has a major strategic component and is intellectually challenging,
6. Something important, like information or resources, is missing.

I find the above list highly relevant from the point of view of talent development in the humanitarian aid sector, which is also reflected in the notion of exposure mentioned above as a component in developmental pathways. This implies an opportunity to be exposed to different situations and contexts, which could include challenges of hardship such as emergency

situations, and contribute to the development of strategic thinking and technical expertise, to name a few areas.

Bunker, Kram and Ting (2002) warn about promoting talent too soon, emphasizing the need to follow development activities closely and acquire sufficient feedback along the way. What the authors emphasize is people skills that the "exceptionally smart and talented" (Bunker et al., 2002, p. 9) might lack. Tools for monitoring include initially deepening information from a 360-Degree Feedback by interviewing a variety of peers and managers and letting the individual read the verbatim responses to open-ended questions. The second tool for developing people skills is to hand out cross-functional assignments, which allow the individual to influence people without having the eventual assistance of rank or position. People skills, or emotional competence as coined by Bunker et al. (2002), are not an optional set of skills, and the talent needs to be held accountable for emotional competence even if it means denying a new position or promotion until the behaviors are up to the required level. Institutionalizing personal development is one way to promote emotional competence in an organization; this means facilitating self-awareness and reflection and arranging opportunities to practice them together with formal development programs focusing on leadership skills. Making emotional competence a performance measure is also mentioned as one way to promote these skills. (Bunker et. al., 2002).

Lombardo & Eichinger (2000) refer to learning agility related to experiences and their power to develop individuals; they state that people benefit differentially from experiences in different manners. They refer to a study[23] for the Center for Creative Leadership, CCL, which indicated that successful executives had a strong pattern of learning from key job assignments. For this reason, learning agility is considered an important factor in 'potential', which in turn is a pivotal component in 'talent' and discussed at length in Section 2.2.1.3.

2.2.4 Retention and Succession Planning in Talent Management

From the perspective of talent management, it is crucial for the organization to retain individuals who are identified as talent, i.e. considered to have valuable and rare competencies (Björkman et al., 2013). This Section does not handle retention extensively, as it has been discussed in earlier Sections in the context of e.g. attraction, engagement, and development, which can be argued to be pivotal factors in retention. Retention can also be considered an outcome of talent management activities, such as attraction and development, as these have arguably an impact on turnover intentions.

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23 McCall, M., Lombardo, M. & Morrison, A. (1988). The Lessons of Experience. Lexington, MS: Lexington Books.

Namely, Björkman et al. (2013) point to extensive evidence regarding perceptions of support received; employees who feel they receive support in the form of e.g. development opportunities and acknowledgement from the organization are likely to stay. Perception is emphasized: the intention to stay is influenced by the individual's subjective perceptions of both the value and the usefulness of the company's support available to the individual, "rather than by an objective evaluation of the existence or effectiveness of a certain practice." (Björkman et al., 2013, p. 200).

Retention focus in talent management has been discussed by Festing & Schäfer (2014), who cite Scullion, Festing, & Schafer (2013); their research uncovered three distinct types of talent management (TM) in medium-sized German companies, a discovery I would argue is applicable to other contexts as well. The three types are: 1) highly engaged TM, 2) retention-based TM, and 3) reactive TM. Highly engaged TM was found in organizations that intensively pursued TM measures that focused on extensive investment in training and other development measures. Key priorities of highly engaged talent management were employee retention together with talent attraction and recruitment. Reactive TM is characterized by very little proactive efforts to attract or retain talent, and only a minor emphasis on talent development activities or other means to retain talented individuals as stated above. This was found to be combined with moderate effort used on succession planning or human resource related activities in general. The third type identified in the study was retention-based TM. This type of talent management emphasized talent development and training, and neglected attraction activities. (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Based on the above, I argue that the role of retention in talent management is crucial, and other talent management activities impact retention to a high extent.

As to retention in non-profit organizations, Kim and Lee (2007) state that attachment to mission is the major cause for individuals, including talent, to stay within the organization. Based on qualitative data, the researchers posit that "employees' positive perceptions and strong correlations between nonprofit working conditions and mission attachment suggest that mission can still play a significant role in retaining nonprofit employees by reducing dissatisfaction with pay and career advancement." (Kim and Lee, 2007, p. 270).

Tymon et al. (2010) discuss intrinsic rewards as a possible factor in retention, arguing that they may promote retention through their impact on the individual's satisfaction with the organization and one's own career success. The researchers also argue that this shows the importance of the qualitative dimensions of talent management. Furthermore, Tymon et al. (2010) highlight critical employee perceptions for retention citing Cascio (2006), presenting the top five drivers of employee retention as follows: feelings of accomplishment; the amount of joy at work; opportunities for career development; a sense of confidence about the future of one's current employer; and employment security. Tymon et al. (2010) point out that the first two drivers can be classified as intrinsic rewards.

Succession planning in both academic literature and in practitioner vocabulary is a concept with many meanings. Academic literature sees it either as a component of talent management (e.g. Dries & Pepermans, 2007b; Cappelli, 2008) or one of the practices in the talent management philosophy with the practices approach (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). One way to relate to succession planning, which based on my interviews with several Finland-based corporations seems common, is to use the term interchangeably with 'talent management' (e.g. Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Meyers et al. (2013) agree, stating that the main aim of talent management practice seems often to be development of future leaders and thus guarantee succession to management positions. Dries & Pepermans (2007b) see succession planning as a means to prepare talent or high potential for "upward job moves", and as such a component in talent management (Dries & Pepermans, 2007b, p. 102). Moreover, succession planning seems often limited to the top of the organization, but should be regarded to cover all future staffing needs of the organization, the process which is also referred to as 'workforce planning' (Rothwell, 2005). I fully concur; neither talent management nor succession planning, whatever the form of the process, should merely concentrate on leadership talent and positions.

Cannon and Mcgee (2010), who consider succession planning to be a subset of talent management, state that talent management focuses on individual needs particularly in order to get out the potential in each individual, whereas succession planning focuses on organizational requirements and aims to determine the optimal balance between internal and external recruitment. In his seminal article, also Cappelli (2008) refers to a balance between internal and external recruitment, as he compares talent management to supply chain management: "Forecasting product demand is comparable to forecasting talent needs; estimating the cheapest and fastest ways to manufacture products is the equivalent of cost-effectively developing talent; outsourcing certain aspects of manufacturing processes is like hiring outside; ensuring timely delivery relates to planning for succession events." (Cappelli, 2008, p. 3).

What is more, Cappelli (2008) refers to long-term succession plans being obsolete in the current business environment; namely, the plans assume a development process covering several years during which strategies, management teams and even organizational charts most probably change, and some of the successor candidates will almost certainly leave. Likewise, the requirements may change so that they do not match with the ones the candidate has developed. This, according to Cappelli (2008), can be even worse than having no plan at all, firstly due to the fact that the candidate can feel betrayed, secondly development efforts and investments might be totally wasted, and additionally, succession plans need to be checked and revised every year due to rapid changes in the environment and resignations of individuals. The usefulness of and time and money investments in this process can be questioned for a good reason. Groves (2011) is on similar lines; he argues that succession planning should be a flexible

and fluid process, and the lists and pools of possible candidates should be frequently updated and diverse. He also warns about "heir apparent designations" (Groves, 2011, p. 248), and recommends, as stated above, focusing on multiple candidates and a variety of positions. Hills (2009) asks important questions related to the afore-mentioned flexibility and fluidity of succession planning; is the organization the same as it was some years ago? Does it have the same products with no changes in the environment? Are the job roles and employment practices the same? Most probably not. Even if most changes in the operating environment are hard to predict, the succession strategy needs to be built on the best possible vision of the future. This should not differ from e.g. the marketing and sales strategies. Also David Clutterbuck (2012) challenges long-term plans. He calls for adaptive systems that are emergent; instead of aiming to fit employees into a long-term plan, succession planning should channel their energies and ambitions in a meaningful way for the benefit of both the organization and the individual talent.

Cheloha & Swain (2005) call for a talent management system to feed to succession planning – or 'executive succession process', as the authors call it. What they mean by the concept is a system that allows: to identify talent early on; places the talent in a talent pool; and makes sure the talent is developed to ensure a strong talent pool. Tansley et al. (2006) also point to talent management being an effective 'feeder' process for succession planning. It is to be noted that the authors refer to talent management and succession planning as separate processes, which are both dynamic and occur over time. On the other hand, somewhat confusingly the same paper[24] subsequently refers to succession planning as one of the activities in talent management.

The above points are in line with Barlow's (2006) observations; many organizations are interested in succession planning and need talent management to plan for the succession of senior leaders. Hills (2009) seems to agree; "Succession planning is about more than filling the top spots . . . it is a smart talent management strategy that can drive retention of talent throughout the organization – and make sure that the organization has the skills it needs in place, or on hand, to respond to the rapidly shifting sands that make up today's business environment." (Hills, 2009, p. 8).

Cheloha & Swain (2005) discuss emotions, an important factor in succession planning. They state that while succession planning is certainly a rational process that comprises data analysis, understanding requirements, and assessing strengths and weaknesses, it is also, especially in connection with senior executive succession planning, a process "laden with emotion" (Cheloha & Swain, 2005, p. 8). Possibly leaders have strong personal relations with the individuals selected to carry on their legacy. Guilt and obligation can play a role when choosing one candidate over another.

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24   Talent Management: Understanding the Dimensions, CIPD, 2006.

An integral part of succession planning is a talent review process, which can be viewed on two different levels; the process level or individual level. The process level is discussed by Ready & Conger (2007); they refer to a global company that has established a talent review process whereby each country, business, and function is evaluated for their capacity in talent management, i.e. in attracting, deploying, developing and retaining talent. The evaluation happens in light of set objectives for the talent management process. These can be e.g. related to diversity indicators; the review is used to audit diversity in recruitment decisions. Tansley et al. (2006) also discuss reviewing talent management at the process level; they posit that from a governance point of view, talent management is a process that can become scrutinized in an organization's operating and financial review. In that case, leadership should have a clear story to tell about the effectiveness of all processes related to people management.

Talent reviews of individual talent are claimed to be one of the fastest growing talent management practices in recent years (Hanson, 2011). The purposes of the talent review process can be stated as follows: 1) get a broad view on the talent pool members' readiness to meet current and future business needs, 2) determine the quality of talent, 3) assess individual talent and identify gaps in performance and potential, 4) align career aspirations with development opportunities, 5) identify possibilities for career advancements, and 6) identify successor candidates for critical roles (Hanson, 2011).

According to Michaels et al. (2001), talent review is "the spine of excellent talent management" (Michaels et al., 2001, p. 144). They state, and I very much agree, that the talent review process is essential to a well-managed company and needs to be as robust as a budgeting process. Michaels et al. (2001) call for regular and candid debate about each individual currently in the talent pool or identified as a potential talent.

To conclude the Section on succession planning, a critical view by Bethke-Langenegger et al. (2011) deserves to be mentioned; based on their research, they argue that talent management strategy aimed at supporting succession planning has the weakest impact on organizational performance compared to talent strategies that focus on talent attraction and retention, which have the greatest effect on human resource outcomes. In my opinion, this is supported by some of the points related to the questionable usefulness of long-term succession planning presented above.

2.3   Research Framework of the Focal Study

In the following, I will present my research framework for talent management, which is based on the literature presented in the earlier sections and my own experience in several organizations. While the definition of 'talent' is essential in talent management and the basis and starting point for talent identification, I will, however, first present the talent management

framework, and then proceed to the framework for the definition of 'talent' developed for this study.

To present some of the underpinning dimensions for both frameworks, i.e. the talent management framework and the framework for defining 'talent', I will continue by describing the conceptualization of talent and talent management of Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), which I find useful especially regarding the object approach and its sub-division.

Firstly, I adhered to Gallardo-Gallardo and her colleagues' (2013) distinction between 'inclusive' and 'exclusive' approaches to talent management. An inclusive approach refers to talent management that includes all employees, while an exclusive approach targets only select employees.

Furthermore, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) propose that there are two important dimensions in defining talent (and talent management) in organizations. The first dimension related to talent definition looks at talent definition as a 'subject approach' on one hand and an 'object approach' on the other. The subject approach defines talent as people, while the object approach defines talent as characteristics of people. According to the scholars, "...the subject approach to talent management focuses on valuable, scarce, inimitable and difficult-to-replace individual employees." (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013, p. 327). The object approach, in turn, looks at talent as individual attributes including abilities, knowledge, and competencies. The object approach, consequently, is sub-divided into talent as natural ability or mastery, talent as commitment and talent as fit. Talent as commitment and talent as fit, i.e. being in the right organization and team as well as being committed to the values and mission of the particular organization, are essential factors of talent and pivotal components in the talent management framework presented on the following page. Furthermore, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) state that the object approach specifies the personal characteristics to look for when identifying talent. The subject approach limits the focus of talent management on merely a select group of people.

The framework presented in Figure 7 is based on the exclusive and subject approaches, the object approach feeding to the identification of talent as described in Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013). The researchers propose that the object approach to talent, i.e. talent as characteristics of people, indicates which characteristics to look for in identifications of talent, thus feeding to the identification (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013).
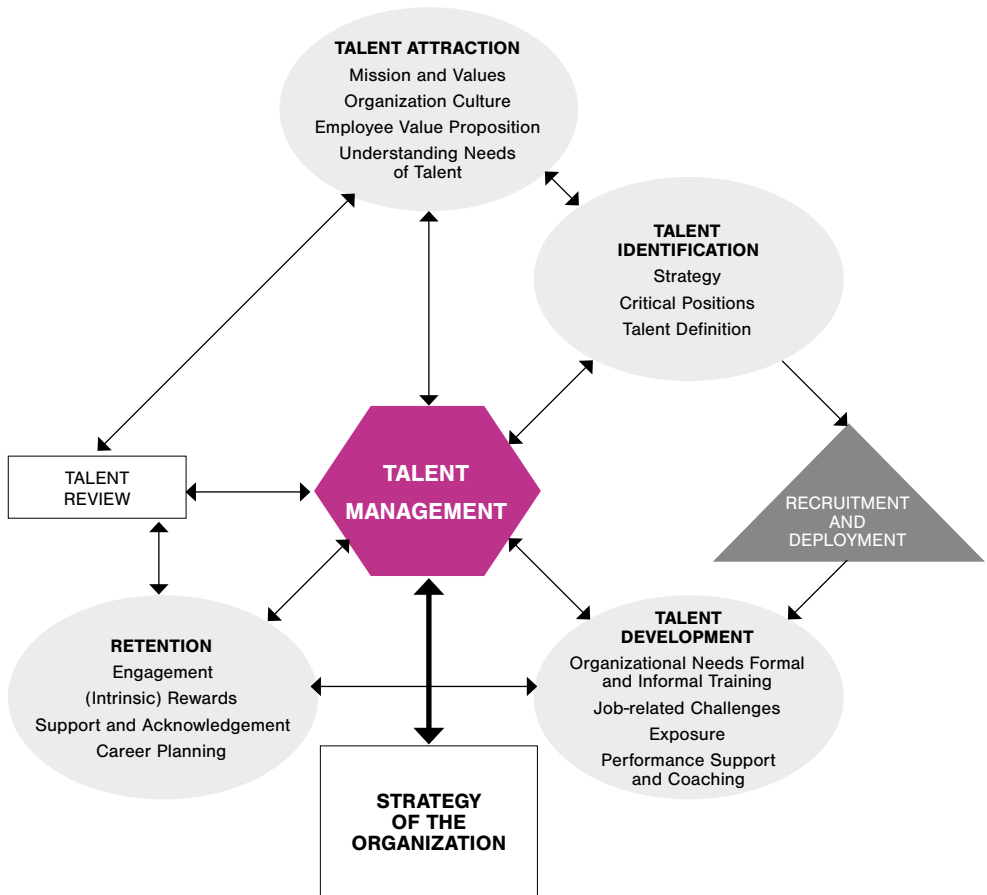
Figure 7 Talent management framework

Talent attraction, identification, development, and retention are all activities in which talents and their needs are in focus, all of the areas also taking the organization's view into consideration, especially its strategy and objectives. The above-presented activities, i.e. attraction, development, and retention, are also components of 'talent management', which, in turn, is a process. On the other hand, recruitment and deployment, i.e. the right person in the right position at the right time, can be considered an outcome. Finally, talent review is a decision, or rather a series of decisions. (Lewis & Heckman, 2006) Strategy is also illustrated as a decision in this framework. It forms the basis for all talent management actions and decisions, and should inform talent management and be informed by it, as presented in Figure 8 (p. 89).

Agreeing with Lewis & Heckman (2006) about the confusion in the usage of key terms[25] in talent management research and practice, I wanted to illustrate the differences between the process, outcomes, and decisions by using different shapes in the framework in Figure 7 (p. 87). Decisions, i.e. strategy and talent review, are illustrated by rectangles; recruitment and deployment, i.e. the outcome, by a triangle; and talent management activities by an oval shape. Finally, the only process, talent management, is illustrated in the middle by a hexagon. The interdependency of the components is illustrated by arrows, which also indicate how the process, decisions, and outcomes feed one another.

The components of the framework have been discussed at length in previous Sections.

Furthermore, the illustration of the talent management framework in Figure 7 is connected to what e.g. Tansley et al. (2006) present as different levels of maturity of organizational talent management. The depiction of the levels from the least mature to the most mature is introduced in Figure 8 on the following page. The levels differ particularly in terms of the strategy-talent management linkage. At the most mature level, strategy is, as presented in the proposed framework in Figure 7 (p. 87), informed by talent management, which in turn feeds information about talent trends, changes in demographics, value structures and macro trends that impact them to strategy. The framework for talent management in Figure 7 can be argued to include strategic objectives of the organization firmly in the talent management strategy and process, and vice versa. Also the second highest level includes the strategic linkage; talent management is linked to the strategy-making process, but does not feed information to the strategy itself as it is expected to do at the highest level.

The first two levels, which could be called immature levels, can arguably be found in organizations where talent is not necessarily recognized as a source of competitive advantage, which lack a segmentation of workforce, and talent strategy or talent management processes are not in use. The second level may involve some areas of the organization or some managers employing talent management activities, such as succession planning for their employees. This is then expanded to some segments of the organization more systematically in level three type organizations, which could involve appointing and developing successors for management team members. Level three type talent management activities can also be found in HQ subsidiary types of settings or HQ field operations in the humanitarian aid context, which is discussed in further detail in Chapters 7 and 8.

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25   "[...] the terms in the TM debate – which centers on the effective management of employee talent – are not clear and confuse outcomes with processes with decision alternatives. (Lewis & Heckman, 2006, p. 140).

Talent management strategy informs and is informed by corporate strategy. Individual and pooled talent understood and taken into consideration in the strategic process.

Talent management strategy designed to deliver corporate and HR management strategies. Formal talent management initiatives linked horizontally to HR management and vertically to corporate strategy-making processes.

Integrated and coordinated talent management activities for a particular segment of the organization.

Isolated/tactical/local "pockets" of talent management activities. No overall strategy or plans for talent management.

No talent management strategies, policies or formally developed practices. Where talent is managed, it is informal/incidental.

Talent Management Maturity Level

Figure 8 Levels of maturity of organizational talent management
(Source; Talent Management, Understanding the Dimensions, CIPD. Tansley, Stewart, Harris et al. (2006), p. 6).

Additionally, in the development of the definition of 'talent', I have used the simplified 'formula' by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012):

Talent = Competence x Contribution x Commitment

As has been discussed in earlier chapters, the complementary nature of this formula is pivotal; in this equation, the three terms are multiplicative, not additive. According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), this means that if any of the three components are missing, the others will not replace it. A low score in competence will not turn into talent no matter how committed and contributing the employee is. The terms 'competence' and 'commitment' were defined and discussed in the earlier Sections of this Chapter.

In the framework for defining talent presented in Figure 9 (p. 90), the formula has been expanded to include the time aspect; the present and the future. This is essentially based on my argument that the future always represents considerable challenges for current organizational competencies and often inflexible extant competency frameworks and models. As argued above, assessing potential is vital in the 21st century's Volatile Uncertain Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) environment (e.g. Férnandez-Aráoz, 2014).

Competence	X	Commitment	X	Contribution
Present: Job Descriptions		**Present:** Mission, Values, Job, Supervisor, and Team		**Present:** Performance & Productivity

Future:
Strategic
Competences
 	
Strategic competences:
• Based on Strategic
  Capabilities and future
  business needs
		Future:
		Initiative and
		External Orientation
		
		Initiative:
		• The ability to assess
		  and initiate things
		  independently
		• The attitude required to
		  start something
		External orientation:
		• Actively following the
		  external environment and
		  acting upon new ideas
				Future:
				Potentiality
				Components
				
				Potential:
				• Curiosity
				• Insight
				• Engagement
				• Determination

Figure 9 Talent definition with the time aspect (Modified from Ulrich and Smallwood, 2012 and Fernández-Aráoz, 2014).

As is also evident from Figure 9 above, all factors in the formula have been divided accordingly; present time in 'competence' is represented by the job description related to the current job of the individual in question. The future aspect comprises the competencies deemed important in the future. These should be derived from the strategy of the organization and/or the function in question.

Present time in 'commitment' is presented by organizational values – and commitment to them. The future aspect of 'commitment' involves describing what the individual is ready to do to exceed expectations and to show initiative. I argue that initiative and external orientation are possible valid indicators of commitment.

In this model, 'contribution' is represented by performance and productivity in the present time. The future component in based on the potentiality components of curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination. These were depicted in Table 6 (p. 63).

As discussed earlier in this research report, defining 'talent' in each organization is essential, as it underpins talent identification in each organization. I would argue that this framework contributes to the talent management practice since it does not limit talent definition and identification to pre-determined competencies or generic descriptions, but gives flexibility and possibilities for organizational context-specific modifications and design. This argument is based on the generic nature of the framework; all the components can be defined using exactly the competencies that are relevant for the organization, country of operation, or department in question, etc. The same applies to commitment; although the values of an organization can be expected to be the same regardless of the department or country of operations, different aspects to 'commitment' can be brought by the ways of working, team, and supervisor. The components

and indicators of performance and productivity can arguably also differ from one part of the organization to the next.

The definition presented above in Figure 9 is argued to enable each organization, function, or department to define talent in a flexible and dynamic manner to respond to specific needs. This definition is one of the contributions of this study to existing talent management discussion, and one of the key managerial implications I will discuss in Section 8.2 of this research report.

3. Research Design

3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Foundation of the Study

As has been stated in earlier chapters, this research project aims at providing a better understanding of talent management in the non-profit and particularly the non-governmental organization (NGO) context. Despite numerous academic and especially practitioner articles on talent management in various contexts, there is little empirical research on talent management in the specific context mentioned above, i.e. in the non-profit sector or NGOs. My focus is particularly on (non-governmental) organizations in the field of humanitarian aid. My purpose is thus to achieve a deeper insight on how talent management is practiced in the NGO context and specifically within the field of humanitarian aid. Through fieldwork, my aim is to attain new understanding on how talent management can eventually impact the research case of Heads of Emergency Operations (HEOps) – a pool of highly talented and experienced operational leaders in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In simple terms, ontology answers the question: "What is there in the world?". It is related to "ideas about the existence and the relationship between people, society and the world in general". (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011, p. 13). Several qualitative approaches, including case study research, narrative and ethnographic research, are based on the ontological assumption of reality being understood as subjective. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011, p. 13). In this research, I adhere to a constructivist view on ontology, i.e. reality being an output of social and cognitive processes.

Epistemology focuses on the question: 'what is knowledge and what are its sources and limits?'. As far as epistemology is concerned, this study has adopted the approach of interpretivism, also sometimes called hermeneutics, and constructionism. This position is concerned with subjective and shared meanings and is interested in how people interpret and understand social settings and events. Furthermore, interpretivism is a position associated with the epistemological view of subjectivism, in which

"the reality is being socially constructed and knowledge is only available through social actors" (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 20).

The philosophical position, or research philosophy, of the present study is social constructivism. Social constructivism is a form of research introduced by Berger and Luckmann in their seminal book published in 1967. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), social constructivism is perhaps the most used or even dominant form of current interpretive research. Vivien Burr (1995) states that there are four basic assumptions of the philosophical position - sometimes referred to as paradigms or research traditions – of social constructionism: 1) It is critical towards taken-for-granted knowledge and wants to open it up for discussion, 2) All ways of understanding are particular to certain cultures and eras and are products of them, depending on the prevailing social and economic arrangements, 3) The knowledge of the world and shared visions are constructed through the daily interactions between people. This is why language as a social action is of great interest to social constructivists, and 4) Social action and knowledge go together (Burr, pp. 3-4). Constructionist views on knowledge production are useful for qualitative research; they emphasize the close relationship between the research field and the researcher, interaction and understanding as the basic principles of research.

These ontological and epistemological foundations of this research cover the choice of topic, definition of core concepts, and formulation of the research questions together with the methods chosen for the empirical research.

3.2 Methodology

The focus of methodology is on describing how a problem or issue can be studied. Sometimes methodology is called the philosophy of methods and can be defined broadly and schematically, e.g. quantitative and qualitative methodologies, or narrowly and precisely, e.g. grounded theory, case study, ethnography (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 16).

Methods are the specific ways used in research when trying to better understand the world. They are often divided into two groups; methods of collecting data, e.g. interviews and observations, and analyzing data, e.g. thematic analysis, narrative analysis (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 16). Stake (2010) points out that "...Qualitative research methods are built around experiential understanding" (Stake, 2010, p. 20).

The empirical part of this qualitative research report draws from the approach of talent management to and processes of identification, recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of personnel in organizations. The social constructivist paradigm and the chosen research questions underlie the methodological choices made. To be more specific, the fieldwork was carried out by investigating and observing a leadership-related concept in an International Non-Governmental Organization

(INGO). This chapter reviews the chosen (methodological) approach, presents the research methods used, and provides an overview of the research process. It also details the process regarding the data collection and analysis.

The epistemological and ontological, i.e. paradigmatic assumptions, the research problem and questions, and the purpose of the study or research impact the methods and the design of the empirical design of any research. The aim of my research – to achieve a better understanding of Talent Management's role in the NGO context – calls for qualitative and interpretive methods. Thus the research uses a **qualitative single case study strategy**. It is worth clarifying that Piekkari, Welch and Paavilainen (2009) use the term research "strategy", as in their view case study "is not limited to, and involves more than, the choice of method for data collection or analysis". (Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2009, p. 570).

3.2.1 Qualitative (Business) Research

One of the major interests of many qualitative research approaches is understanding reality as socially constructed. In these approaches, reality is produced and interpreted through cultural meanings, which means that many qualitative approaches are concerned with interpretation and understanding, while quantitative approaches often deal with explanation, testing of hypothesis, and statistical analysis.

Several qualitative research approaches have a perceptive account of the context; the research aims at a holistic understanding of the issues studied. In their 2008 book *Qualitative methods in Business Research,* Eriksson and Kovalainen refer to an interesting point in terms of qualitative vs. quantitative research; in business research there seems to be an established dominance of quantitative research and methods. Many researchers are trained extensively in quantitative methods and remarkably less in qualitative methods. On many occasions, this results in introducing qualitative research as something to "complement" the rigorous results of quantitative research, which can be used when studying issues that are expressed in words and cannot be translated into numbers. (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 5).

Denzin & Lincoln (2011, p. 3) offer a generic definition of qualitative research:

> *"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world."*

Robert E. Stake describes the Special Characteristics of Qualitative study in his book *Qualitative Research – Studying How Things Work* (2010) in a way that is both interpretive and experiential, which is aligned with my approach.

In Table 7 below, I present some of Stake's main points related to the characteristics of a qualitative study.

Table 7 Special characteristics of qualitative study

Interpretive Focus on the meanings of human affairs, seen from different views	a. Researchers are comfortable with multiple meanings and respect intuition b. Observers keep some attention free for unexpected developments c. The fact that findings and reports are researcher – subject interaction is acknowledged
Experiential Empirical and field-oriented	a. Emphasizes observations by participants b. Strives to be naturalistic: not to intervene nor arrange in order to get data c. Reporting provides the reader with an indirect experience d. It views the reality as a human construction
Situational	a. Oriented to objects and activities, each in a unique set of contexts b. Holistic more than elementalistic, not reductively analytic c. Designs seldom emphasize direct comparisons d. Contexts are described in detail e. It makes a point that each time and place has uniqueness that works against generalization
Personalistic Emphatic, working to understand individual perceptions.	a. Seeks uniqueness more than commonality, honors diversity. b. Seeks people's points of views and frames of reference c. Researcher is often the main research instrument

(Source: Stake, 2010, p. 15).

3.2.2 Interpretive Research

Qualitative research, like all research, can be positivist, interpretive, or critical (Klein & Myers, 1999). In this research report, I have adopted an interpretive stance to qualitative research. In contrast to positivist research, interpretive researchers do not predefine dependent and independent variables (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Studies belonging to the category of interpretive research have found wide use (Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 2010).

The purpose of interpretive research is to understand a situation from the perspective of the participant. Its common forms are as follows (Locke et al., 2010, p. 183):

- Ethnographic
- **Constructivism**
- Phenomenological
- Grounded theory
- **Participant observation**
- Interpretive interactionism
- Hermeneutics
- **Case study**

In interpretive research, the researcher builds detailed records concerning context, people, actions, and perceptions of participants, i.e. aims at achieving a thick description. The research techniques of interpretive research include, but are not limited to, observation and the use of field notes together with examination of documents and interviews. It is typical that the collection and analysis of data take place simultaneously; preliminary insights and new questions are used to inform and guide later data collection. (Locke et al., 2010, p. 183). Observation and examination of documents together with interviews are the techniques I used most in my research.

In interpretive research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, which is also valid from the point of view of my research and case study. In addition to collecting the data using techniques mentioned above, I have extensive experience in the research organization, which has contributed to a vast amount of tacit knowledge about the context and the organization itself. My history in the research organization is briefly introduced below.

As a graduate from Helsinki School of Economics, in the 1980's, a coincidental chain of events led me to apply for a job in the Finnish Red Cross International Department. As a total stranger to humanitarian and voluntary organizations, the career move can be considered a bold one. However, as can be expected, I very soon found, quoting one of my Red Cross superiors years later, that a global humanitarian organization with a clear mission and fundamental principles was my 'natural habitat'. As is stated several times throughout this research report, understanding one's own role in achieving goals in a mission that more than increases shareholder returns played a major role in my job satisfaction and successful career within the Movement. Learning was quick and engagement strong. After ten years in the Finnish Red Cross, I was responsible for relief material procurement and dispatches to emergency areas, and I was appointed as a Regional Finance Officer for Africa at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Secretariat in Geneva[26]. By then, I was already a full-fledged expert in many areas of humanitarian assistance, and ready to take a more global role at the Headquarters, where my intended two-year tenure ended up being a four-year one. After fourteen years in the NGO world working in a truly global context in multinational and multicultural teams leading a team of my own, I am tempted to claim that my experience is relevant in transmitting context-related information and knowledge from a humanitarian aid organization to the corporate world, where I have now spent a longer time than with the Red Cross. However, I am still a member of one of the Committees of the Finnish Red Cross, and work on a regular basis with several employees of IFRC, mostly in the field of talent management and leadership development.

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26   The Red Cross Movement and IFRC are described in detail in chapters 5 and 6 of this
     research report.

As to descriptions of contexts and events, they are usually developed directly from field notes, and reports can often contain e.g. narratives originating from data extracted from transcriptions of interviews and recorded in the participants' own words. The thick description is then used as a basis for inductive generation of understanding of what is happening and how things work. (Locke et al., 2010, p. 184). The inductive model of research means that the researcher proceeds from empirical research and data to theoretical results. However, pure induction is not possible. (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 22).

3.2.3 Case Study Research

Case study research can be defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Woodside & Wilson, 2003, p. 493). The case study methodology has distinct advantage when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control and they can involve either single or multiple cases and numerous levels of analysis (Yin, 1994).

Furthermore, as stated above, Piekkari et al. (2009) consider the case study a research **strategy**. It examines a phenomenon in its natural, real-life context using a variety of data sources with a purpose of "confronting" theory with the empirical world. This confrontation can either identify constructs for later theory testing or search for a holistic explanation of how processes and causes "fit together" in each individual case. (Piekkari et al., 2009).

Case study research is a commonly used research approach and method that has a relatively long history within business research. (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008) Case study research belongs, as presented above, in the category of interpretive research. Furthermore, according to a distinction developed by Harré (1979), there are two types of case study research; intensive or classic, and extensive. Intensive case study research aims at understanding a single, unique case from the inside through a description, which is thick, holistic, and contextualized. Thick description refers to an articulated interpretation able to manifest the reasons for the rich and multidimensional details of the case; the purpose is to make the meaning clear through interpretation (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 119). On the other hand, extensive case study research aims at testing theoretical constructs by comparing or replicating several cases. It is to be noted that the intensive case study research is also informed by theory and capable of creating one. However, the key interest is on the case itself instead of pre-defined theoretical propositions. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 119).

Some researchers make a distinction between multiple and single case studies and prefer one over the other; Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008)

point out that Yin (2002) is in favor of multiple case studies, whereas others like Dyer and Wilkins (1991) are fiercely in favor of single-case studies.

Adopting the definitions above, my research can be defined as an intensive case study. It can also be described as a single-case study since it examines a single phenomenon/process, i.e. Talent Management, in a single case (Heads of Emergency Operations) in a single organization (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies). The aim of my research is to produce a deep understanding of the phenomenon (Talent Management) and a thick description of the context (INGO) in which this phenomenon occurred.

To conclude this section, some words about the suitability of case study that employs qualitative methods are perhaps in order. Firstly, as Maguire & Phillips (2008) point out, qualitative studies are appropriate for studying phenomena that are poorly understood, such as talent management. Case studies also offer, as Yin (2009) states, a good framework for explaining the 'what' and the 'how' of a phenomenon. In addition, as talent management processes and practices can be argued to be non-linear, flexible, and even fluid by nature, case studies are well suited to study them (Groves, 2007).

3.3   Data collection and Generation

As presented in section 1.5. and illustrated in Figure 2, the first phase of my qualitative study comprised formulating the research field and finding the focus. The first phase commenced by collecting data related to the studied phenomenon, talent management. The phase also involved conducting several interviews with HR Directors in large and medium-sized companies in Finland to gain an overview of talent management practice in corporations, which worked as a basis for the focus on the non-profit or NGO context.

With substantial professional experience in different HR roles and talent management strategies and processes, the formulation of the research field was relatively straightforward, especially from a practitioner view. As stated above, the practitioner view, i.e. the way talent management is pursued in Finnish companies, was further studied through narrative interviews and conversations with eight experienced HR Directors. The interviews are discussed in Section 3.3.2.

Practitioner views were supported by the substantial amount of practitioner-originated talent management literature available. Developing an understanding of the academic research and literature was the next stage. This was first carried out parallel with the interviews mentioned above, and continued throughout the research process in a circular manner typified by qualitative research.

Data collection for the case study began by seeking information about the eventual talent management related activities in the Finnish Red Cross (FRC). This took place through interviews with an experienced HR

Manager and two other FRC key employees. The interviewed HR Manager is engaged in recruiting personnel deployed to emergency operations and capacity and resilience development programs around the world. These individuals are called 'delegates' and are members of the FRC Delegate Roster. The professional backgrounds of delegates vary, and cover fields of expertise from communication and logistics to nursing and surgery. I myself am a member in this roster, which gives me unique access to the context of humanitarian aid. This aspect is discussed in more detail in section 1.5.

One of the outcomes of the interviews was learning about the concept of HEOps at the IFRC. It seemed obvious from the beginning that the HEOps concept was the closest equivalent to a 'talent pool' in the corporate world. Additionally, I looked for published papers and studies related to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs and NGOs) particularly in the humanitarian aid field. Various handbooks and guidelines of the IFRC were also collected together with information from the IFRC website, including Annual Reports and Press releases. I was granted access to the IFRC Extranet in December 2015. Several relevant websites were also used to acquire e.g. white papers on Humanitarian Aid and Emergency Operations, including the websites of ALNAP, CHS Alliance, Oxfam, British Red Cross, and UN, to name a few.

To collect the case data, i.e. data related to HEOps, I first carried out 14 semi-structured interviews, which are discussed more in Section 3.3.2 and listed in Table 8 (p. 101). Secondly, and more importantly, I received an extensive amount of material from the IFRC on the HEOps design, feasibility study, implementation phases and actual recruitment requirements as well as competency frameworks in use at the IFRC. The documents are listed in Table 8 in Section 3.3.1. Also videos about HEOps were important sources of information on the incumbents' experiences in emergency operations.

3.3.1   Case-Related Data Sources

In order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and to follow the case study research tradition and strategy, I used multiple sources of data. This is a point Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) also refer to, when discussing case studies and their accuracy and richness; case studies are, according to the authors, considered more accurate, convincing, and diverse if they are based on various sources of empirical data. Multiple sources of data gave me possibilities to crosscheck the data to receive a multi-dimensional view of the activities and the context. Especially the internal documents provided me with a better understanding of both the researched phenomenon and the organizational context. All the sources and types of data are listed in Table 8.

Table 8 IFRC-related material and information sources used

Narrative/ Semi-structured Interviews SO= Senior Officer USG= Under Secretary General DCM= Disaster and Crisis Management D-HEOp = Developing HEOp DREF= Disaster Relief Fund	Finnish Red Cross, Recruitment Officer September 2014, December 2014, June 2015 Finnish Red Cross, Secretary General December 2014, July 2015, January 2017 Finnish Red Cross, Delegate/Desk Officer + D-HEOp IFRC Secretariat, three officers at DCM, December 2014 IFRC, Senior Finance Officer, December, 2014 ICRC, SO, December 2014 HEOps, ex-incumbent January 2015 British Red Cross, Senior Officer, July 2015 IFRC, Senior Officer, Global Surge Capacity, December 2015 HEOps, Ex-incumbent, January 2016 D-HEOps, Incumbent, January 2016 Two HEOp Mentors, March 2016 D-HEOps, nine persons, March 2016 IFRC USG/Operations and Programs, IFRC, June 2016 IFRC USG/Management June 2016 IFRC, SO, Learning and Staff Development, June 2016 IFRC, SO, Surge Capacity, June 2016 D-HEOps, Incumbent, June 2016 IFRC, Manager, Knowledge and Policy, June 2016 IFRC, SO, DREF, June 2016 IFRC, HR Director, June 2016 IFRC, Senior HR Officer, June 2016 British Red Cross, HR Manager, July 2016
IFRC Documents Confidential marked with a C	World Disasters Report (2015) World Disasters Report (2016) Handbook for Delegates (2002) IFRC Annual Report (2013) IFRC Annual Report (2014) IFRC Annual Report (2015) Principles and Rules for RCRC Humanitarian Assistance IFRC Competency Framework (2013) C IFRC Job Classification Guide (2013) C IFRC The new Job Classification System, FAQ (2013) C IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework (2013) C HEOps Feasibility Study Final (2011) C D-HEOps Application form (2011) C Personal Development Plan/HEOps (2012) C HEOps Competency Matrix (2012) C HEOps Progress Report January to April to July 2012 C 360 Questionnaire Draft (2012) C Written communication and analytical skills exercise (2012) SOPs, HEOps C Toolkit for Managing HR in Emergency (2013) Focus Report, HEOps (2013) D-HEOps Developing HEOps Pilot Program (2014) C HEOps Report (2014) C Mid-Term Review (2014) C Program Description, D-HEOps, 12.4.2015 C Interview panel, Questions, December 2015 C End of Mission Reports 2012 – 2015 (Syria, Philippines, Bosnia-Hertzegovina, Ebola,) C E-mail to Selection Board from HEOps ex-incumbent, 9.12.2015 C HEOps Brochure (2016) Presentations, HEOps Mentors, March 2016 C D-HEOps Induction Agenda, March 2016 C D-HEOps, Lessons Learned, March 2016 C Personal Development Plan, D-HEOps incumbent, June 2016 C Secretariat structure, organigram (2016) IFRC HR-Department structure, organigram (2016) C IFRC Human Resources Strategic Framework (2016) C
Websites	http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/performance-and-accountability/ http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/working-with-us/current-vacancies/ job-description/?id=2196 Extranet, FedNet C
Videos	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piNPs0EnSkw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCFlI5CNUFs
Observation	D-HEOps Selection Process, 9.-10.12.2015 D-HEOps first Induction meeting, March 2016 D-HEOP debriefing session (Mission to Greece), June 2016

3.3.2   Interviews

Stake (2010, p. 95) states three main purposes of interviews for a qualitative researcher, which are as follows:

1. Obtaining unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed;
2. Collecting a numerical aggregation of information from many persons;
3. Finding out about "a thing" that the researchers were unable to observe themselves.

Points one and three are especially valid for my present research, as they are "tailored to the individual person and often should be conversational, with the interviewer asking probing questions to clarify and refine the information and interpretation." (Stake, 2010, p. 95).   This is exactly how my interviews were conducted.

During the first phase of my research process, I conducted eight interviews with HR Directors and Managers from large or middle-sized companies, all operating either globally or at least in five countries outside Finland. One of the HR Directors represented the Finnish subsidiary of a global corporation and one HR Manager a Finnish subsidiary of a large Swedish company. The data collected from the interviews assisted in formulating an understanding of the current status of talent management strategies, processes, and even philosophies in Finnish organizations. The interviews are not analyzed meticulously, but were used, as stated above, to assist in understanding talent management in Finnish for-profit organizations. The interview questions are presented in Appendix 5.

The case-related interviews were conducted with both Finnish Red Cross and the IFRC managers and employees, as detailed in Table 8. One interview was conducted with a Senior Officer of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) with a background in the IFRC, and two interviews with British Red Cross employees[27].

Unique information was particularly received form interviews with both former and current HEOp incumbents, which is used in depicting the concept and the related processes, and in conclusions and managerial implications of my study.

The management structures and systems were discussed in interviews with two members of the IFRC management team: Under Secretary General, Programs and Operations (with relatively short IFRC experience), and Under Secretary General, Management (with extensive professional experience at IFRC).

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27   This is particularly important, as British Red Cross has funded HEOps from the beginning. The funding covered the costs of composing the Feasibility Study and participation in the design of the concept as a whole.

These interviews were tailored individually and had a conversational nature. All interviews were either recorded or involved taking notes. The majority of the interviews with IFRC-related persons are confidential in nature and cannot thus be quoted using the interviewee's name or verbatim, nor can transcripts be published.

3.3.3 Observation and Related Field Notes

Observation data has been crucial in constructing a holistic view on the case phenomenon and in relating the data to the research questions. Stake (2010) posits that observation data, i.e. information that has been seen, felt or heard by the researcher, is the preferred kind of data to many researchers. I am definitely one of them. Stake (2010) continues by saying that while the eye naturally misses a lot, it also captures a great deal. The eye can note who, what, when, and where, and finally relate it all to the research question.

The four descriptions of observation dimensions listed by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) are the following: participant and non-participant observation; obtrusive and non-obtrusive; observation in natural or manufactured settings; and, finally, structured or non-structured observation.

A third of the observation during my research process was the participant type, i.e. actually joining in the activity and documenting a share of the participants' experience in writing. (Stake, 2010) The different observation events are listed in Table 8, and are discussed below in chronological order beginning with non-participant observation.

During the December 2015 D-HEOps assessment and selection workshop, most of the observation was non-participant; I observed the interviews and simulation exercises that the D-HEOp candidates (14 persons) participated in during the assessment process. Plenty of observation data was collected and discussed with the assessors and facilitators of the sessions. The assessment team comprised three HEOps incumbents, two ex-HEOps, one British Red Cross manager, and three Senior Officers from the Disasters and Crisis Management Department. The observation was non-disguised (and non-obtrusive); all the D-HEOps candidates consented to my presence and had the possibility to deny me from observing the interviews and simulation exercises, which none of the candidates did. I was introduced to the candidates at the beginning of the two-day event, and was unanimously given permission to be present in the common parts of the session. According to my understanding, which was confirmed by several of the assessment team members, my own background in the Movement and experience both in emergency situations and as an employee at the Secretariat contributed to the positive attitudes towards me. After the interviews and simulation exercises, I used the observation (field) notes to comment on the process, assist the assessors in constructing a holistic view on the situation, and understand the relevance of the interviews and answers of the interviewees to the questions. A neutral approach was used;

my opinion did not impact the actual decisions nor was it expressed. Most of the observation was structured, i.e. checklists were used. The checklists were equivalent to those used by the assessors/interviewers. The non-structured parts comprised answers by candidates to the interview questions and the way they expressed themselves as well as the candidates' backgrounds and experience especially outside the Movement.

Participant observation formed a prominent part of the March 2016 observation event, an induction workshop, where I facilitated a session on self-awareness this time for a selected group of D-HEOps and their mentors. Additionally, one of the tasks during the workshop was to draw up a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each D-HEOp, which was carried out by the D-HEOps themselves with their mentor. My assistance in drawing up a PDP for each D-HEOP can be considered participant observation. In other words, I participated in a share of the PDP session as a third person, together with the mentor and D-HEOp. Non-participant observation was also included in this workshop, as I followed presentations on different topics and observed group discussions. Examples of the afore-mentioned topics include: "Review of HEOps operational deployments; looking at challenges and discussing operational support structures"; and "Introduction to D-HEOps pilot program, SWOT Analysis & lessons learned from 1st batch".[28]

During my research period in Geneva at the IFRC Secretariat in June, 2016, in addition to the several interviews I conducted, I was permitted to participate in a (telephone conference) debriefing of one of the D-HEOps, who had been working in a large refugee reception operation. This was clearly non-participation observation, as I merely listened (with my microphone muted) to the person who was being debriefed and to those asking the questions.

Although all of the field notes and observations are documented at least in a non-structured way, their quality, scope, and accuracy vary. Documentation is either in writing (using the interview questionnaires, comment sheets for simulation exercises, or blank sheets for notes of a descriptive nature), or recorded (presentations during the Induction workshop in March, 2016). All field notes where expanded immediately after the observation event, some elaborated together with others involved in the event.

The words of Stake (2010) are reassuring: "The first responsibility of the observer is to know what is happening, to see it, to hear it, to try to make sense of it. That is more important than getting the perfect note or quote." (Stake, 2010, p. 94).

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[28]   Source: D-HEOps Induction Agenda, (IFRC, March 2016), Confidential.

3.3.4 Analysis of Documents

Document analysis in qualitative research requires that data is examined and interpreted in order to obtain meaning, increase understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. The documents come in various forms, including reports, agendas, minutes of meetings, manuals, background papers and studies, reports, books and articles; event agendas, contracts and guidelines (Bowen, 2009). Different documents serve different purposes and are used in various ways to do what is presented above; increase understanding of the phenomenon and context, and develop empirical knowledge. (Bowen, 2009). The first column of Table 9 below presents five different functions for documents in qualitative research. The second column outlines examples of different types of documents in the present study. It is to be noted that Table 9 only includes documents related to the case as examples.

Table 9 Different document types in qualitative research and examples of documents analyzed in this research

Type of Document and its Function	Examples of Document Types in this Research
Background information and context descriptions	World Disaster Report 2015, 2016 IFRC Annual Reports 2013-2015 Mission Reports of HEOps HEOps Feasibility Study (2011) HEOps Competency Matrix D-HEOps Developing HEOps Pilot Program (2014) IFRC Competency Framework (2013) IFRC Secretariat Strucutre (2016)
Suggestions for questions to be asked	IFRC HR Policy (2013) HEOps Feasibility Study (2011) IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework (2013) Interview Panel, Questions (2015) HEOps, Midterm Review (2014)
Provision of complementary research data	IFRC Annual Reports 2013 – 2015 Feasibility Study (2011) Mission Reports D-HEOps Program
Tracking of change and development	Feasibility Study (2011) HEOps Midterm Review (2014)
Verifying information from other sources	Mission reports Presentations in Induction Workshop (March, 2016) E-mail to Selection Board (December, 2015) Interview notes

(Source: Bowen, 2009).

In the document analysis, some documents have been skimmed, while others have been thoroughly examined with an iterative process, categorizing information and documents related to the research questions.

3.4   Data Analysis

There are two main strategies of data analysis in case study research: the first strategy is based on pre-formulated theoretical propositions, while the second, which is closer to my strategy, is based on the development of a description of the case. The description acts as the basis for emerging research questions and as a framework for organizing the case (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This strategy is more inductive and suggests that the researcher is interested in e.g. patterns, activities, and themes extracted from the empirical data, not in a theoretical framework given beforehand (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

One of the features of case study research is the overlap of data analysis with data collection; joint collection, coding, and analysis of data in case study research is referred to by e.g. Eisenhardt (1989). This applies particularly to within-case analysis, which is usually the starting point of case research. Eisenhardt (1989) also mentions one of the realities of case study research – an astounding volume of data – which can make it impossible for the audience to follow how the researcher digested a huge number of pages of field notes and other relevant material into a final conclusion. (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The above is very valid for my research; the amount of documentation, observation notes and other field notes together with the recordings and transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews amounted to hundreds of pages. The analysis of documents is described above in Section 3.3.4.

As usual in case study research, my research included drafting a description of the case, which was structured in a chronological order. The technique I used is closest to explanation building, which includes looking for causalities and patterns in the data. These are presented as empirical findings in a narrative form in Chapter 7.

3.4.1   Challenges of Data Analysis

An interpretative analysis always involves challenges. In interpretative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection. This can cause bias and ambiguity particularly as I had no co-writers with whom to triangulate the data. Furthermore, my own extensive experience in the research organization can lead to ignoring some data, over-emphasizing other data and issues, taking some aspects of the data for granted, and not searching for underpinning factors. At times, I also questioned whether the terminology and differences in its usage between corporations and the research organization prevented me from looking at the data in a neutral manner and understanding it completely.

To overcome these challenges, reflection was used throughout the data analysis process. I also went back and forth in the data, and discussed issues extensively with my supervisors and peers.

3.5   Quality and Trustworthiness of the Study

The purpose of my interpretative qualitative single case study research was to provide a description of a particular phenomenon and to understand this phenomenon in its context. My study has adopted the interpretivist approach and constructionism, which is also associated with subjectivism (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

My intention was not to generalize the findings nor replicate the study in other contexts. It was of utmost importance that the research data reflected the phenomenon itself, and that the purpose of the study was accomplished. Furthermore, I wanted to deliver new insights and provide value to theories related to talent management as well as present some managerial implications both to the humanitarian aid organizations and to corporations alike. To achieve this, the research process needed to be theoretically informed and transparent.

As reliability and validity are close to positivism, Guba & Lincoln (1982) suggest substituting these with trustworthiness in qualitative case studies and constructivism. Trustworthiness consists of four aspects; credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability (Cuba & Lincoln, 1982).

In terms of credibility, the research process proceeded from a study plan to a theory and literature review and to data collection and analysis. The results and findings were discussed with the interviewees, peers, and my academic supervisors.

Confirmability was approached by using multiple data sources. Furthermore, confirmability was ensured by using more than one method of data gathering (interviews, observation, document analysis). The number of interviewees was also quite high to enhance the confirmability of the study.

In terms of dependability, the interviews were recorded or detailed notes were taken. I conducted all of the interviews and took the notes and transcripts myself.

As to transferability, case studies are considered to be relatively weak in terms of directly transferable data (Stake, 2010). Thus the empirical results of the present study are not intended to be generalizable as such in other contexts, nor can they be transferred to other data directly. However, some findings are presented as managerial implications in Chapter 8, and found to apply also in other contexts, such as corporations.

The data analysis was an intriguing process that spanned a considerably longer time than the three years devoted to this research report. Ever since the beginning of my professional involvement with the Red Cross Red Crescent, I have been interested in issues related to commitment, contribution, and motivation; what are the eventual differences between NGOs and the corporations as to in these respects? It seems that throughout my career I have actually been consciously or subconsciously collecting data on the characteristics of people working in emergencies and the particularities of people leadership in the humanitarian aid organizations.

My lengthy career in different areas of the Movement, both in the field as a delegate and in administrative positions in the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) and in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), gave me plenty of experience and possibilities for 'data collection'. Talent management can be regarded as the lens for viewing and analyzing the myriad of data, as my work on this research report commenced. The document analysis is presented above in Section 3.3.4, but the analysis process related to other types of data is more challenging to describe. In addition to the interviews and their analysis, my conversations with the FRC, IFRC, and British Red Cross employees and volunteers were invaluable in constructing a view on leadership and talent management in the research context. These conversations are not cited nor are they listed as references. The analysis took place in my own reflections and in the course of extensive discussions with my supervisors and peers referred to in Section 3.4.

4. NGOs and Humanitarian Aid

4.1 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

A plethora of definitions and views exist in the sector, which nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, belong to (Lewis, 2010). Furthermore, in addition to the widely-used term "NGO", there are many other terms used in this context, such as "nonprofit," "voluntary," and "civil society" organizations. According to Lewis (2010), this is more a sign of cultural differences than a reflection of analytical rigor; "non- profit organization" is used in the market-dominated USA, while in the UK, "voluntary organization" or "charity" is used more often. The origin of the acronym "NGO" dates back to the formation of the United Nations in 1945. "Nongovernmental organization" was awarded to certain international non-state organizations that received a so-called consultative status in UN activities. (Lewis, 2010). According to Lewis (2010), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) today are recognized as key third-sector[29] actors in the areas of development, human rights, humanitarian action, and environment, to name a few areas of public action. NGOs are best-known for two different, but often interrelated, types of activity; the delivery of services to people in need, and the organization of policy advocacy, and public campaigns in pursuit of social transformation.

The diverse nature of this sector, also referred to as "the third sector" as stated above (Lewis, 2010), makes defining the sector on the whole and its organizations a challenge. Cornforth (2014) states in *Nonprofit governance, Innovative perspectives and approaches* (Cornforth & Brown, 2014) that the nature of the whole sector is contested by both researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers based on the fact that they have different aims. This in practice means that "how the sector is popularly labelled and defined tends to vary between different countries and contexts". (Cornforth & Brown, 2014, p. 3). However, for economic and comparative research, the definition

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29   The part of an economy or society comprising nongovernmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc. (Lewis, 2010).

needs to be such that it can be operationalized. Johns Hopkins Nonprofit Comparative Project (Salamon & Anheier, 1997, pp. 33-34) identifies five defining features of nonprofit organizations, or NGOs:

1. They are organized, meaning that they need to have institutional aspects, such as regular meetings, employees and procedures.
2. They are private, i.e. separate from government.
3. Self-governing: they have their own internal procedures for governance and are not controlled by external entities.
4. Nonprofit distributing so that any eventual profits or surpluses are annually kept within the organization to serve its mission and not shared with e.g. shareholders or members.
5. They are voluntary, including some voluntary participation at least. This does not mean that e.g. all contributions need to be from voluntary sources or that most of the staff needs to be volunteers; a voluntary board of directors is enough to qualify the organization as a voluntary one.

The United Nations definition introduced in the Section on key concepts has all the main components of the Johns Hopkins' definition presented above. The UN has simplified the definition as follows; the sector is comprised of "self-governing organizations that are not-for-profit and nonprofit distributing, institutionally separate from government, and non-compulsory". (Cornforth & Brown, 2014, p. 4).

It is to be noted that in various Red Cross/Red Crescent contexts, United Nations is referred to as "Inter-Governmental Organization", IGO (e.g. The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, 1994). The definition of an IGO according to the aforementioned document is as follows: "IGOs (Inter-Governmental Organizations) refers to organizations constituted by two or more governments. It thus includes all United Nations Agencies and regional organizations." (The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief, 1994, p. 2).

A specific term has been coined for the type of NGO which is the context of my study: NGHAs, Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies, which encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – The International Committee of the Red Cross, The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member National Societies – and NGOs as defined above.

4.2 Humanitarian Aid Globally

The context of my study, humanitarian aid, is a vast industry that has expanded in recent years, and the largest INGOs are important economic and political actors (IFRC, 2015, p. 20). In viewing the field of humanitarian

action[30] and humanitarian aid around the world, we notice that "global giants"[31] like the IFRC/ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and UN work alongside over 4,000 other NGOs of various sizes. Approximately a fourth of the NGOs are international (INGOs), while the rest are local organizations with operations in their home countries. The UN is active in the global field through its 11 different agencies, while the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement (RC/RC) is represented by 192 organizations. This number includes 190 National Societies around the world and the IFRC and ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross). This gives a rough idea of the context in which aid workers like HEOps, work, especially as in regards to the large number of stakeholders aid workers deal with on a daily basis.

In 2015, the level of international humanitarian response accumulated to a record amount of US$ 28 billion. The figure has been on the rise for three consecutive years; it was US$ 25.1 billion in 2014, and US$ 20.8 billion in 2013 (Global Humanitarian Assistance report, 2016, p. 5).

The number of people working in the field employed by the NGOs is a striking 450,000, compared to approximately 270,000 in 2012 (Taylor, Stoddard, Harmer, Haver, & Harvey, 2012; and Stoddard, Harmer, Haver, Taylor, & Harvey, 2015). Of the 450,000 field workers in 2015, 145,000 were RC/RC field staff, most of whom (131, 000) were employees of National Societies[32] of countries of low income, where humanitarian assistance and interventions are more common. The figure does not include Red Cross volunteers, who total over 17 million around the globe.

The above is very relevant form the point of view of my study; looking at how humanitarian aid workers are managed, developed and retained is important and concerns hundreds of thousands of people. The figures also indicate the enormous scale of humanitarian crises and the resources involved.

The nature and complexity of emergencies is also on the rise. More and more disasters are a result of several different hazards or a complex combination of both natural and man-made causes and different causes

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30   "Humanitarian action is designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies" (Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2014, p. 14).

31   Other "giants" are Oxfam, World Vision, Care, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Médecins sans Frontièrs (MSF), Caritas, and Islamic Relief. http://innovacionsocial. esadeblogs.com/2014/12/16/the-future-of-mega-ngos/ [Accessed 24.2.2017].

32   There are 190 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world, with more currently being formed. This unique network forms the backbone of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Each National Society is made up of volunteers and staff, who provide a wide variety of services, ranging from disaster relief and assistance for the victims of war, to first aid training and restoring family links. http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/the-movement/national-societies/ [Accessed 15.6.2016]. The total number of paid staff in the Red Cross/Red Crescent National Societies around the world is app. 420,000 (Stoddard et al., 2015).

of vulnerability. Food insecurity, epidemics, conflicts and displaced populations are examples.

IFRC discusses the changing patterns of hazards in the Plan and Budget 2016 – 2020 Document (IFRC, 2015b). Climate change is mentioned to cause an increase in disasters related to natural hazards both in terms of frequency and intensity, and it is also changing the patterns and locations of natural calamities; this creates new risks and exposes some countries to challenges they have never faced before. Armed conflicts are more common and protracted, and crises like the outbreak of Ebola have forced many countries to admit weaknesses in their capacity in handling communicable diseases. According to IFRC (IFRC, 2016a), a convergence of three trends may cause extremely complex crises: climate change, violence and pandemics. Each of the trends can be a huge risk on its own, but their convergence causes the most concern for humanitarian aid agencies and becoming more and more visible in the world. Climate change drives populations into urban areas, which in turn is apt to contribute to disease outbreaks, and potentially fuels conflicts. All this makes urban areas a priority of humanitarian action in the 21st century.

Despite increasing complexity of emergencies, the number of security incidents has been on the decline in the past few years. In 2015, 287 aid workers were victims of major attacks, including 109 fatalities. The number of attacks was 22% lower than in 2014, and there were 42 fewer casualties.[33]

Furthermore, the roles of humanitarian actors are changing; there is less need and willingness for assistance from international partners. According to IFRC (IFRC, 2015b), the situation requires new ways of working, based on equal partnerships and viewing international aid as complementary. Together with the trends mentioned above, these new developments can be argued to lead to requirements for leaders in emergency operations around the world. They also have a possible impact on the definition of 'talent' for identifying strategically important leaders in the organization, especially regarding the required competencies and ways to identify potential.

4.3 Leading and Managing People in NGOs and Humanitarian Aid

Having experience from both an NGO and for-profit organizations, I share many of the viewpoints of the authors and researchers who discuss the differences between the two worlds. A few of them are cited below, starting with a strong statement from Peter Drucker (1990) himself, and I humbly agree with the Master.

"In no area are the differences greater between businesses and nonprofit institutions than in managing people and relationships" (Drucker,

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33   https://aidworkersecurity.org/about [Accessed 20.2.2017]

1990, p. 181). Drucker (1990) continues by stating that staff in nonprofit organizations need achievement and satisfaction from the cause and service to become truly engaged and stay in the organization. Additionally, nonprofit leaders deal with something that business leaders have no experience of; volunteers. This is a very valid point in the humanitarian aid context. Volunteers add to the variety of stakeholders nonprofit leaders work with, the variety being, according to Drucker (1990), much greater than what business leaders encounter on average. Dealing with a high number of stakeholders is very relevant in the humanitarian aid context and has arguably an impact on skills and competencies required from people working in emergencies. The players in the humanitarian field discussed above in Section 4.2 are a case in point.

Agreeing with Drucker (1990), Kim & Lee (2007) state that nonprofit organizations are known as mission-driven, and individuals, including talent, are attracted by their passion for the mission. Their research findings support the mission's role in employee attraction and retention in non-profit organizations even to the extent that high commitment to the mission can lower the impact of dissatisfaction with a lower pay.

Claeyé (2014), in turn, posits that it is the scope of the activities of a NGO that makes their management – presumably including talent management – different from management in other sectors. With the scope he refers to: "meeting human needs as opposed to maximizing shareholder profit or providing public service [...], requires a different approach." (Claeyé, 2014, p. 22).

The growth of the humanitarian aid industry discussed above brings along heightened public expectations of their performance and impact. This forces NGOs to become sophisticated, well-managed professional organizations. The above points about mission-driven people working in NGOs are still valid, which according to Jayawickrama (2011) force the organizations to recruit highly professional managers and leaders while simultaneously granting them space to fulfill their sense of mission.

Parry and her colleagues (2010) refer to values in the humanitarian aid context. Their study also examined the importance of values in joining and staying with the current employer organization of the respondents (81). The organizational values were mentioned as 'important' or 'very important' by 79% of the respondents in the first case (joining the organizations), and 91% in the second case (staying with the current organization). In deciding to join the current organization in the sector only 'Cause itself' received a higher percentage of 'important' or 'very important' responses than the organizational values; 86% considered the cause to be either 'important' or 'very important'. In the set of reasons for staying in the current organization, 'making a difference' was considered equally important as organizational values, i.e. among 91% of respondents (Parry et al., 2010, p. 15-16).

The theory Chapter of this study discussed mission and values rather extensively due to the afore-mentioned factors about the nonprofit and NGO context and my own passion for the components in engaging and

motivating people and talent management. The difference mentioned by Drucker (1990) is what intrigued me regarding the topic of this study; whether the difference is visible when observing people – and talent management – and whether it is implemented in one of the leading NGOs in the world.

4.3.1 Leadership Aspects of Humanitarian Aid

Clarke & Ramalingam (2006) state that leadership is increasingly a topic of discussion within the humanitarian sector, mostly centering on coordination efforts, reform initiatives, and accountability efforts.

The way Buchanan-Smith & Scriven (2011) define leadership in humanitarian aid, particularly in the field, is valid, and contributes in my opinion to understanding the underpinning issues in talent management (and talent definition) in this context. The definition is as follows: "Leadership in-country, that provides a clear vision and objectives for the humanitarian response to a specific crisis [...] focused on the affected population, and building a consensus that brings aid workers [...] together around that vision and objectives. It also means finding ways of collectively realizing the vision for the benefit of the affected population, often in challenging and hostile environments" (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011, p. 10).

The authors point out (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011) that even if many of the qualities combined with effective leaders are not unique to the humanitarian sector, the context in which they are applied is unique; this is the 'challenging and hostile environment' in the above definition. The unique context refers to working with people in distress and making decisions that affect lives in complex and rapidly changing situations. Furthermore, decisions are often based on incomplete information, and the operating environment for leaders in the humanitarian aid sector can be dangerous, include a wide range of actors and stakeholders, and involve pressure to act rapidly.

The leadership context of an NGO is described as complex and multi-tiered in which people from varied communities address complex social and humanitarian issues (Bolt, Bracke, & Steed, 2015). The authors also emphasize the importance of the intangible personal and inter-personal qualities in NGO leadership. Citing e.g. Cornforth & Brown (2014), they state that these qualities include: "the ability to understand organizations as complex systems and dynamics in fast-changing environments, and the suitability of the person to represent and work in accordance with the values and the mission of the organization"(Bolt et al., 2015, p. 4).

The leadership context of humanitarian aid work is also discussed by Hochschild (2010), who has studied leadership in the United Nations (UN). According to him, work is carried out "in situations which by their nature demand strong leadership while at the same time making the exercise of

leadership trying and perilous: There are numerous stakeholders often with incompatible interests, many working under the surface and some duplicitously. [...] Moreover, often the means are inadequate and goals unclear. Much conspires towards failure." (Hochschild, 2010, p. 37).

The common understanding in the sector is that the 'heroic and macho'[34] leadership style of the past among humanitarian aid workers in the past has been replaced by the need for humanitarian aid leaders to demonstrate emotional intelligence, including self-awareness and self-regulation (Swords & Emmens, 2007). The term 'paternalistic' has also been used to describe leadership style in the NGO world, which is a matter of concern. According to Hailey (2006), anecdotal stories abound on the negative impacts of paternalistic leaders, who have often been the founders of NGOs. Leaders of this type may demonstrate drive and commitment, and an ability to mobilize people and resources. The downside is that they can also dominate organizations, be unaccountable, and fail to adapt their ways of working to the changes in the context. (Hailey, 2006). As a personal note, I am rather certain that anyone who has worked in this type of organization will recognize this kind of leader.

Buchanan-Smith & Scriven (2011) bring a word of warning against generalizing, stating that there is no evidence or clear patterns of commonly required leadership styles in certain types of humanitarian emergencies (e.g. rapid-onset, conflict, slow-onset). However, the context was found to be crucial; in order to understand the required balance of skills, the context needs to be carefully analyzed and understood. It seems that leaders who are sensitive to the context, listen and have high learning agility are most likely to succeed, as they are able to adapt their leadership style to different humanitarian crises (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011).

4.3.2 Competency Frameworks – the Basis for Talent Management in the Humanitarian Aid Sector

NGO managers typically spend their entire career in the organization, working their way up from technical roles to management. The growth of the NGO sector and humanitarian aid industry has resulted in an expansion of the workforce, meaning that managers and experts are increasingly recruited externally. There is also considerable mobility of employees among NGOs, and thus less loyalty to one NGO (Jayawickrama, 2011). This was emphasized also by one of the interviewees for this study; long tenures

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34   Heroic leadership, which was particularly popular in the 70's at least in leadership research, is said to rest on the illusion that someone can be in control. "Yet we live in a world of complex systems whose very existence means they are inherently uncontrollable... If we want to be able to get these complex systems to work better, we need to abandon our reliance on the leader-as-hero and invite in the leader-as-host. (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011, p. 22, quoting Wheatley & Frieze, 2011 in Leadership in the age of complexity: from hero to host).

are typical and trust in past experience as a sole indicator of potential is high.[35] Thus the role of career development, talent management and related communication become accentuated. Managers need to understand the components of talent, which positions are considered pivotal (e.g. Collings and Mellahi, 2009), and what kind of potential is needed.

The need to define skills and competencies to meet the requirements of successful work in emergencies has driven the usage of competency frameworks in this sector. The UN uses competency frameworks in recruitment and internal promotions (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011).

The competency frameworks that most NGOs use identify a range of technical and management competencies ranging from problem analysis to project management and budgeting to conflict management, team building, and communications (Jayawickrama, 2011). The Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework is rather widely used in the sector, although it does not replace the agencies' own frameworks, such as those of the UN. (Rutter, 2011).

An interesting point in the above-mentioned framework is the inclusion of limiting behaviors in each of the competencies. Each competence is also presented with two levels of behaviors; the core behaviors for all staff and "additional behaviors for 1st level line managers in humanitarian response" (Rutter, 2011, p. 36). Limiting behaviors in the competence of "operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response" is presented as an example in the following:

- Consistently presents ideas/opportunities that may be a risk to self or others;
- Actively disregards or lacks clear understanding of security protocols leading to personal/ organizational risk;
- Demonstrates a casual attitude to risk;
- Is over familiar with the context, leading to complacency

(Rutter, 2011, p. 36).

In my view, the presentation of competencies with limiting behaviors can facilitate the identification and evaluation of competence-related behaviors by explaining what these are not. This can also assist in identifying potential; if the limiting behavior is frequent and strong, chances of related potential can be weak.

Competency frameworks are also proposed by ELHRA (Enhancing Learning & Research for Humanitarian Assistance) for professionalizing the sector (Walker & Russ, 2010). This framework is further developed by The Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA). In their framework, leadership is captured in three categories: self-awareness, motivating and influencing others, and critical judgement.

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35   Interview, IFRC, December 2014

The review on competency frameworks and their relevance for NGOs (Swords & Emmens, 2007) concluded that while the usage of competency models in the humanitarian aid sector is widespread, particularly on the HQ level and by HR, their effectiveness varies, especially in an emergency context. This seems to support the viewpoint of Buchanan-Smith & Scriven (2011) presented above: context and related adaptation are very important factors, and finding the right balance of skills and competencies is more important than meeting the requirements of predetermined levels of individual competencies.

Despite the widely used frameworks such as the one introduced above, there seems to be no accord on what competencies are actually core and deemed necessary in a professional working in the humanitarian field, neither is there a standard system of professional development or certification (Walker & Russ, 2010).

Competency frameworks are also criticized and their composure questioned in the humanitarian aid context. They are considered to be imposed by HQ, without managers being equipped to use them. Furthermore, while a framework provides focus, it can be too narrowing. If the revision process is not integrated in the design and implementation process, it is unlikely that they are renewed systematically; this, in turn, is a prerequisite for well- functioning frameworks (Swords, 2006).

Supporting the above-mentioned view on the importance of dynamic renewal of competency frameworks, Richardson (2006) discusses more complex emergencies and change of focus. He states that the humanitarian sector has been seeking to increase the quality of humanitarian programs. This happens through improved program design, monitoring, and evaluation among other things, and needs to lead to more effective ways of responding to complex emergencies. This, in turn, can also be argued to lead to the need to look at the competencies, skills, and experience of staff and particularly leaders working in the operations and programs. One example of the change of focus of humanitarian action is found in IFRC literature and reports; e.g. World Disasters report 2015 (IFRC, 2015) states that the focus is now on "local actors, the key to humanitarian effectiveness." (World Disasters Report, IFRC, 2015). Thus competencies in working with local staff and the skills and competencies of local staff itself are essential.

In other words, competency frameworks can possibly provide an entry point, but the approach is mechanistic, and there is a danger that the frameworks oversimplify or ignore some of the human dimensions of effective leadership that cannot be measured. They have a tendency to reduce understanding of a complex role to the measurable aspects of it. Thus leadership behaviors that are hard or impossible to measure, like intuition, can be completely ignored (Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011).

A quotation in Hochschild's (2010) study of a UN Staff College lecturer supports the view on the narrowing impact of competency frameworks: "Competencies don't measure passion, dedication, commitment to the organization" (Hochschild, 2010, p. 58). I very much share this concern.

Hailey (2006) has a similar view; the competence-based typologies that generally depict leaders as multi-talented individuals can underestimate the eventual negative aspects of strong leadership. There is some concern that they under-play the negative aspects of strong leadership, which can be demonstrated as exploitation of power to promote the leader's own agenda and lead to disempowerment of staff, poor judgement, confusion between personal and organizational interests, and unethical behavior. This kind of behavior can naturally harm any organization, which in the context of NGOs highlights the importance of identifying leadership competencies that reflect the values of the sector and the needs of staff and volunteers. Over-reliance on mechanistic competency frameworks that do not incorporate intangible competencies, such as application of personal judgement or relationship skills with staff, is considered a risk (Hailey, 2006).

With the growth of the humanitarian sector, organizations involved have started to take a closer look at talent management processes, including development opportunities, such as experiential learning and coaching. Also more attention is paid to systematic succession planning and career management. (Jayawickrama, 2011).

As far as talent management in humanitarian aid organizations is concerned, a quote from a NGO workers in an aid agency is in order: "Events like Haiti[36] prove to us that the key to an operation's success is the ability to get the right people to the right place at the right time. Moving people efficiently has to be the core skill of our kind of business and we don't do it nearly as well as we should." (Johnson, 2010, p. 15). This seems in my view to be a call for talent management, since the right people to (in) the right place at the right time is in the core of what talent management actually is about (e.g. Thunnissen et al., 2013b; Powell et al., 2012; Hills, 2011). The preposition 'to' in the above quotation is to be mentioned, since it describes the actual situation in the humanitarian aid context quite accurately. Not only do the organizations have to understand who is the right person *in* the right place, they definitely need to know who can be deployed *to* a certain area. There can namely be limitations to who can be sent where; experience is pivotal (e.g. experience of earthquakes as opposed to refugee influx), but gender, origin, or language skills required in certain areas can set limitations. This in my view also emphasizes one aspect of being a humanitarian aid worker; you are doing your actual job using the skills and competencies required in that position, as you are sent to an emergency area – the field – where your professionalism is tested in situ. Desk work is important and has to be mastered, but real talent and potential is demonstrated in the field.

To conclude, Parry et al., (2010) posit that more structured talent management processes are needed within NGOs to attract future leadership capability. It is possible that NGOs continue to be unable to compete with the private sector on salaries and rewards, and thus need to

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36   Earthquake in 2010, 7.0 MMS (Moment Magnitude Scale)

focus on individuals with the right mind-set and motivation to work in the humanitarian sector at earlier stages of their careers, develop these talents, and provide them with career options. This can be seen to undermine the usage of rigid and mechanical competency frameworks and to support using talent management processes including attraction, identification, and development, which might give more space for e.g. potential. Reference is made to earlier sections, where potential and talent definition is discussed.

4.3.3 Learning and Development in the Humanitarian Aid Organizations

Not all organizations in the sector support management as a concept and can associate it with a 'corporate way of working' (Jayawickrama, 2011). However, especially the large players in the sector, such as the IFRC, naturally recognize management and leadership as important factors for the organization to function well, and use management concepts and terminology widely throughout the organization. Regardless of the approach to management as a concept, processes and efforts related to e.g. competence development seem to work best when they are contextualized and fit the specific needs and culture of each organization. If this is not done, and corporate management practices are imported directly to an NGO, the risk of cynicism and stifling of innovation exists (Jayawickrama, 2011).

In some NGOs, the terms leadership and management are used interchangeably, and leadership and management development implemented jointly. Some organizations acknowledge the difference; there is a clear recognition that a person does not need to have solid management skills to be a leader. (Jayawickrama, 2011). Organizations like the IFRC make a distinction between the two concepts , and develop leaders and managers separately. The emphasis of management at the IFRC is on production of order and consistency, while leadership according to the IFRC philosophy is about change and movement.[37]This will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

Most NGOs offer their staff and volunteers a variety of development opportunities and courses that range from in-house workshops to online learning platforms. The online learning catalogue of the IFRC is impressive and made available on its public website[38]. The catalogue comprises courses ranging from the essentials of the Movement to personal development (including leadership issues) and to courses offered by partner organizations like World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF. It is noteworthy that the catalogue also includes a wide variety of professional certification courses offered by academic institutions, most of them with a fee.

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37   IFRC Human Resources Strategic Framework, Confidential. Received 17.6.2016

38   http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/promoting-principles-and-values/learning-education-and-training/ [Accessed 15.2.2017]

Furthermore, humanitarian aid and development organizations have developed established networks that help to build management competencies and support good leadership practices across the sector, with CHS Alliance (Core Humanitarian Standards)[39], LINGO (Learning in NGOs)[40], and ALNAP (Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance)[41] as examples.

Leadership deficit is discussed by many researchers and practitioners in the humanitarian aid sector, (e.g. Hailey, 2006; Jayawickrama 2011; Parry et al., 2010; Richardson, 2006), mainly as a result of the growth of the sector. Consequently, there is an urgency to develop a new generation of leaders, and simultaneously to provide relevant support to existing and future leaders; this can partly be implemented through developmental efforts and programs which are designed for this particular sector (Hailey, 2006).

Gosling & Mintzberg (2003) refer to this specific context and its development aspect when describing the impact of what they feel is a certain kind of a culture on management development at the IFRC Headquarters (= the Secretariat) in Geneva, the research organization of my study. The culture is what the authors refer to as 'fast-action', which implies that specific competencies and skills are needed in fast-paced disaster response and management around the world in the context of e.g. earthquakes, floods, and typhoons. The authors continue by stating that the organization, "sees the need to engage in the slower, more delicate task of building a capacity for action that is careful, thoughtful, and tailored to local conditions and needs." (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003, p. 3). This statement implies the importance of understanding what types of combinations of competencies are needed in different types of relief operations on one hand, and in long-term development programs on the other, and additionally how to develop the particular competences. The combination of required competencies in different types of emergencies was discussed in Section 4.3.3.1.

Moreover, according to Richardson (2006), what he calls 'staff capacity' has two main components: the size of the pool of skilled and experienced people, and the level of their skills. Skills shortages have been observed by many NGOs as the main constraint on emergency response; they inhibit the speed, quality, and effectiveness of humanitarian action. (Richardson, 2006b) The importance of skilled staff and their development is also emphasized in the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, which was launched at the end of 2014 (IFRC, 2015a). Nine commitments characterize effective and responsible humanitarian action and describe the criteria for quality, as listed on the following page. While all of the nine commitments can be argued to have an impact on the competencies, skills, and experience required from humanitarian

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39   http://www.chsalliance.org/who-we-are [Accessed 15.2.2017]

40   https://lingos.org/sector-initiatives/ [Accessed 15.2.2017]

41   http://www.alnap.org/who-we-are [Accessed 15.2.2017]

aid workers/NGO staff, commitment 7 states the importance of and requirement for continuous learning and development.

1. Action is appropriate and relevant;
2. Action is effective and timely;
3. Action strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects;
4. Action is based on communication with, participation of and feedback from people affected by crisis;
5. Affected people's complaints are welcomed and addressed;
6. Action is coordinated and complementary;
7. Humanitarian actors continuously learn and improve;
8. Humanitarian staff are supported to do their job effectively and are treated fairly and equitably;
9. Resources for humanitarian action are used responsibly for their intended purpose (IFRC, 2015, p. 18-19).

Both Richardson (2006) and IFRC (2015) refer to staff turnover as a factor that results in "project disruption and loss of institutional memory" (IFRC, 2015, p. 48). This also, according to Richardson (2006), can be seen as an impediment for organizations or staff in terms of investments in learning. High turnover makes it difficult to increase skills levels related to e.g. working with local staff or in complex multi-stakeholder projects, as mentioned above.

In the following Chapters, I will first introduce the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. I will take a closer look at one of its components, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), more precisely the Secretariat in Geneva, which is the IFRC headquarters.

5. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

5.1 The Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network. The Movement is neutral and impartial, and provides protection and assistance to people affected by disasters and conflicts. It is made up of nearly 100 million members, volunteers, and supporters in 190 National Societies. Founded by Henry Dunant, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the National Societies.

5.1.1 History

The war between the Austrian and Franco-Sardinian troops, and particularly the war's bloodiest battle in Solferino, Italy, in June 1859 were crucial for the birth of the Red Cross. Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman, had been in the Italian village of Castiglione close to Solferino on the day of the battle, witnessing the agonies of thousands of wounded men brought to the town hospital and more than 40,000 men dying in the field. Dunant devoted himself to the care of the wounded regardless of their nationality or origins. This moment marked the beginning of the unique mission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: to provide neutral and impartial care, without thought of personal gain. According to Henry Dunant in his infamous book *A memory of Solferino* published in November 1862, the women in the village of Castiglione followed his suit helping all men despite their origins, repeating "tutti fratelli (all men are brothers)". This has been advocated for centuries, but it took a man like Dunant to shape it to conflict situations and to ensure its incorporation into international law through the first Geneva Convention (I Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864 for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field).

This also inspired the foundation of the International Committee of the Red Cross as "a guardian of these conventions." [42] (Reid, Gilbo, 1997, p. 13).

In the words of Henry Dunant himself:

> *The enemy, our true enemy, is not the neighboring nation. It is hunger, cold, misery, ignorance, routine, superstition and prejudice.*
> (Reid & Gilbo, 1997, p. 13)

The International Committee of the Red Cross held its first meeting on 17 February 1863. The founding members were Guillaume Henri Dufour, president, Gustave Moynier, vice-president, Henry Dunant, secretary, and Louis Appia, with Théodore Maunoir representing the medical corps. They set themselves up as the "Permanent International Committee for Relief to Wounded Soldiers in the time of war". The present name, International Committee of the Red Cross, was adopted in 1876. (Durand, 2011). Without Dunant, the National Societies or the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) would not exist, components of the Movement explained a little later in this Chapter. From the very beginning, the ultimate destination of the Movement has been, "a society where there is an enduring peace." (Reid & Gilbo, 1997, p. 13).

The first of the actual National Societies, the French Red Cross, was founded by Henry Dunant himself in May 1864. Soon afterwards, national organizations were formed in different parts of Europe, and shortly also in other continents. The task that was taken on since the foundation of most national societies was to help the victims of disasters and fight against diseases. The history of the Finnish Red Cross dates back to 1877 and the Russo-Turkish war (1877 – 1878), during which a society known as the Association for the Treatment of the Wounded and Sick Soldiers was founded to take care of wounded Finnish Guard members.[43] In December 1901, Henry Dunant received the first ever Nobel Peace Prize (shared with French economist and a pacifist Frédéric Passy). Dunant died in solitude in 1910. Henry Dunant is well known all over the world, and his birthday, the 8th of May, is celebrated every year as the Red Cross day.

The Movement is guided by seven Fundamental Principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality, which are described in detail in Section 5.1.3. All Red Cross and Red Crescent activities have one central purpose: to help those who suffer without discrimination, and thus contribute to peace in the world.

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42   The other conventions are as follows: II Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea of 12 August 1949, III Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. In addition to the actual Conventions, there are three additional protocols, signed in 1977 (I and II) and in 2005 (III). (Handbook of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, 2008).

43   https://www.redcross.fi/node/1556/history [Accessed 27.6. 2016].

This was the original philosophy of Henry Dunant, who published several books on peace, equal treatment of human beings, and the horrors of war during his lifetime. The Federation and the ICRC received the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1963 (Boissier, 1985).

5.1.2 Structure

As stated above, the Movement has three main components:

1. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
The ICRC is at the origin of Geneva Conventions and the Movement as a whole. As presented in the history overview above, it was the first part of the Movement to be established in 1863, and is an independent, neutral organization. In conflicts and other situations of violence, the ICRC directs and coordinates international activities conducted by the Movement, and provides humanitarian assistance and protection. As stipulated in the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC has a permanent mandate under international law to visit prisons, organize relief operations, reunite separated families, and undertake other humanitarian activities during armed conflicts.

At the beginning of 2017, 1,000 employees worked at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva and field staff totaled 15,000, with either Geneva-based (Mobile Field Staff) or local contracts (Resident Field Staff).[44]

2. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
An introduction to the IFRC is presented in Chapter 6.

3. Member Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
The current 190 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world form a unique network, providing the backbone of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Each National Society is made up of volunteers and staff, who provide a wide variety of services, including disaster relief, assistance for victims of war and conflicts, first aid training, and restoring family links. National Societies have an important role vis á vis the public authorities in their own countries; they are independent auxiliaries to the government in the humanitarian field.

It is to be noted that one of the strengths of the Movement lies in National Society volunteers, who have local knowledge and experience, are often the first on the scene when a disaster strikes, and remain active within affected

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44   https://www.icrc.org/en/who-we-are/jobs [Accessed 15.2.2017].

communities long after everyone else has come and gone. Cooperation with local volunteers and staff of the National Society in the country where disaster has struck is essential and cannot be ignored by any delegate working in disaster areas, no matter how high their position. [45]

Additionally, the International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent is the supreme deliberative body for the Movement. At the International Conference, representatives of the components of the Movement, i.e. the IFRC, the ICRC and the National Societies, meet with representatives of the States Party to the Geneva Conventions (194 states). The International Conference is held every four years, and it takes its decisions in the form of resolutions to ensure "Red Cross Red Crescent unity of effort and respect for the Fundamental Principles".[46]

5.1.3 The Fundamental Principles

The work of the entire Movement is guided by the seven **Fundamental Principles**, which are introduced below. The role of the principles in forming the organizational culture and guiding work both in emergency situations and in other endeavors cannot be emphasized enough.

Humanity

Born from a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement endeavors, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace among all peoples.

Impartiality

The Movement makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

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45 http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/the-movement/national-societies/ [Accessed 20.2.2017].

46 http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/meetings-and-events/international-conference1/ [Accessed 1.3.2017].

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide. (Strategy 2020, IFRC, p. 35).

5.1.4   The Emblems of the Movement

The red cross and red crescent emblems are among the most recognized symbols in the world, representing both the IFRC and the National Societies[47].

Article 44 of the First Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 makes the distinction between the protective use and the indicative use of the emblems, and outlines the general rules governing the two uses.

Protective use – The use of the emblem for protective purposes is a visible manifestation of the protection accorded by the Geneva Conventions to medical personnel, units and transports.

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47   https://fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/communications/communication-tools/emblem/ [Accessed 17.6.2016].

Indicative use – The use of the emblem for indicative purposes in wartime or in times of peace shows that a person or item of property has a link with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The red crystal is an addition to the two symbols, the cross and the crescent; the Third Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions, adopted in 2005, established the Red Crystal as an emblem that can be used by states that have difficulty with either the Red Cross or the Red Crescent due to perceptions that they may have religious associations, which they do not have. However, the Red Crystal offers an alternative for states that are unable to use the other two emblems. In 2006, the Red Crystal became an approved emblem that can be used by a National Society as a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. All three emblems are presented below in Figure 10.

Figure 10 The emblems of the movement
(Source: http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/the-movement/emblems/)

The importance of the distinction between the protective and indicative uses of the emblems cannot be overestimated. It is the responsibility of all members of the Movement to protect and respect the emblems and to guard against their misuse.

6. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

6.1 The Organization and Its History

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies was founded in 1919 in Paris. World War I had shown a need for close cooperation between Red Cross Societies; through their humanitarian activities on behalf of prisoners of war and combatants, they had attracted millions of volunteers. They had also acquired a great deal of expertise, which needed to be safeguarded. President of the American Red Cross War Committee, Henry Davison, proposed forming a federation of the National Societies. This expanded the international activities of the Red Cross movement beyond the strict mission of the ICRC, i.e. to safeguard the Geneva conventions and protect combatants and civilians in conflicts, to include relief assistance in response to emergency situations which were not caused by war but were man-made or natural disasters. As a result, the League of Red Cross Societies was born, renamed in October 1983 as the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and renamed once again in November 1991 as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. There were five founding member Societies: Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States. The foundation of the League caused some concerns within the ICRC about rivalry between the two parties of the Movement.

The first objective of the IFRC was to improve the health of people in countries that had suffered greatly during the four years of war. Its goals were: "to strengthen and unite, for health activities, already-existing Red Cross Societies and to promote the creation of new Societies".[48]

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[48]   http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/history/ [Accessed 27.6. 2016].

Mission

IFRC is a global humanitarian organization, which coordinates and directs international assistance following natural and man-made disasters in non-conflict situations. Its mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. "The IFRC works with National Societies in responding to catastrophes around the world. The relief operations are combined with development work, including disaster preparedness programs, health and care activities, and the promotion of humanitarian values." Furthermore, "the organization acts before, during and after disasters and health emergencies in order to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people."[49]

Vision

The vision of the International Federation is to: "inspire, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by national Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world." (IFRC, 2010). This vision guides the mission statements of both the Secretariat in Geneva and the National Societies around the globe.

Values

In addition to the seven fundamental principles, the IFRC has six values that are closely linked to the principles, which are: people, integrity (working in accordance with the fundamental principles), partnership (working in line with the principles without compromising the emblems and the independence, impartiality, and neutrality they represent), diversity, leadership, and innovation.

6.1.1 Governance and Strategy 2020

The three Statutory Bodies of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are: 1) The **General Assembly**, the highest decision-making body of the IFRC that convenes every two years, comprising representatives of all member National Societies. 2) The **Governing Board**, which operates between the General Assemblies and is headed by 3) The **President of the IFRC.** Furthermore, the IFRC has four constitutional committees or commissions; the Finance Commission, Youth Commission, Compliance and Mediation Committee, and Election Committee.

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49   http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/history/ [Accessed 27.6. 2016].

The Federation's previous strategy was drawn up for the new millennium's first decade between 2000–2010 with a focus "to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity" (IFRC, 2010, p. 7). Strategy 2020 built on the achievements of the previous decade. The organization has been modernized, especially applying to the Secretariat, which will be looked into in a subsequent Section. Also partnerships have been extended to totally new areas, now including major players like Nestlé[50].

The strategic aims of the IFRC are listed below (IFRC, 2010). The overarching theme or slogan of the strategy is: "Saving lives, changing minds".

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises
2. Enable healthy and safe living
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace"

The advantages of the current strategy are considered to be a substantial step to benefit all who "look to us to help to build a more humane, dignified and peaceful World". (IFRC, 2010, p. 12). According to Strategy 2020, this will happen through strengthened capacities of the National Societies who will be more efficient in their role as auxiliaries to their national authorities and "more reliable partners to other humanitarian and development actors". (IFRC 2010, p. 12). In this light, understanding local needs and vulnerabilities in diverse communities where the IFRC operates is accentuated. This in turn clearly has an impact on required competencies in operations, especially for individuals who lead operations – e.g. communication skills, relationship skills, and empathy are important in promoting this strategic aim.

6.1.2 Stakeholders

As discussed earlier, the structure of the Movement alone means that a certain number of stakeholders are incorporated into everyday work of the IFRC. Also the other parts of the Movement – ICRC and the National Societies – are important stakeholders.

The IFRC emphasizes accountability to their stakeholders, which, in addition to those mentioned above, include the people they serve, donors, people who work within the IFRC, governments, and external partners who collaborate with the IFRC. The IFRC has numerous partnerships in different areas: promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values (e.g. International Olympic Committee, UNAIDS, UNICEF); disaster response (e.g. European Union, World Health Organization, World Food

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50 http://www.nestle.com/media/news/nestle-partnership-international-federation-red-cross [Accessed 27.6.2016].

Programme); and disaster preparedness (e.g. UN Environment Program, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center). Additionally, the IFRC has formal agreements for cooperation with many other organizations, including OPEC Fund and the UN Office of Drugs and Crime. It is noteworthy that the IFRC has a permanent observer status with the UN General Assembly. [51] Furthermore, stakeholders include the 95 million Red Cross members and 17 million active volunteers of around the world. Accountability principles include: "commitments to explicit standard setting, openness in monitoring and reporting, transparent information-sharing, meaningful beneficiary participation, effective and efficient resource use, and systems for lesson learning and responding to concerns and complaints." (IFRC, 2010, p. 31).

6.1.3   Funding

The IFRC monitors its financial performance under two types of funding. The first type is restricted funding received as contributions for operations and programs, and recovered from services like fleet, logistics and other contracted services in the field. The contributions are voluntary and cover program costs and appeals, in 2015 amounting to CHF 331 million. The division between different donor types is illustrated below in Figure 11.

Contributions by donor type (in millions CHF)
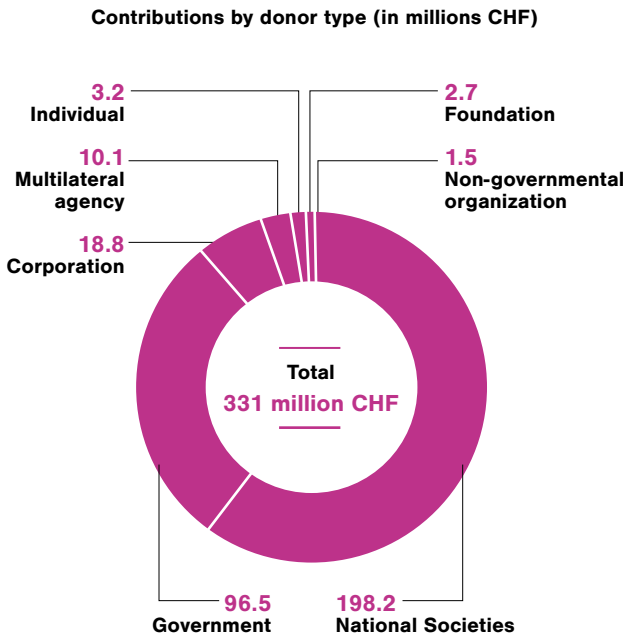
Figure 11 Contributions by donor type
(Source: IFRC Annual Report, 2015, p. 33)

The amount recovered from contracted services to other agencies in the field totaled CHF 57 million in 2015. This figure is not included in the illustrated total figure of CHF 331 above.

- Examples of different donor types in Figure 11 are presented below.
- Foundations: Bloomberg Family Foundation, Z Zurich Foundation
- Non-Governmental Organizations: The ICRC
- Multilateral Agency: United Nations, World Bank, World Health Organization
- Corporation: Zurich Insurance Group, Nestlé
- Government Donors: European Commission (the biggest donor in 2015 with CHF 32,3 million), US Government (the second biggest with CH 24 million)
- National Societies: British Red Cross (CHF 39.7 million, the biggest donor National Society in 2015), Swedish Red Cross (CHF 25.2 million), Finnish Red Cross (CHF 9.1 million).

The term 'restricted' means that funds can only be used for programs and operations, and usually come from donors 'earmarked', i.e. their usage is restricted to a certain operation or program, such as the Nepal earthquake, population movements in Greece, and South Pacific tropical cyclone PAM in 2015.

Unrestricted funds mainly include statutory contributions from member National Societies, totaling CHF 40 million in 2015. Some 6.5% of unrestricted funds are used to cover program-related costs like leadership and management, services rendered, and costs related to specific donor requirements in e.g. reporting of a specific program. Unrestricted operating costs amounted to CHF 64 million in 2015 (IFRC, 2015c).

Emergency Appeals are a core element of the funding structure: they are international marketing and positioning documents launched by the IFRC at the request of a National Society of the disaster stricken country to promote an operation to the external audience to generate funding. (IFRC Extranet, accessed 28.2.2017).

Every delegate, i.e. humanitarian aid worker of the IFRC, in the field is responsible for drawing up an Emergency Appeal and following the related activities together with fulfilling the reporting requirements. This particularly applies to HEOps, who are the ones leading the emergency operations in field. The appeal process is briefly introduced below.

When disaster strikes and initial information indicates that resources of the National Society in the disaster-stricken country are not sufficient, a Preliminary Appeal may be launched based on the initial assessment, disaster and response history of the stricken country, and overall knowledge on the type of disaster. It is evident that the expertise and experience of the IFRC and National Society staff is pivotal at this stage of the appeal process. The Preliminary Appeal allows partners, i.e. the Donor National Societies and the governments of their respective countries together with the Secretariat of the IFRC, to channel resources in a coordinated manner from the onset of

an operation. The resources can be in the form of cash, material, or human resources, i.e. delegates. A Preliminary Appeal also indicates that the IFRC, led by e.g. aHEOps, collects further information to establish a detailed plan of action together with a budget initially for the relief phase, and thereafter for the eventual rehabilitation phase. This detailed information and budget is collected together and eventually launched as a full-fledged Emergency Appeal by the IFRC Secretariat (IFRC, 2002).

In 2015, the IFRC launched 28 Emergency Appeals, and 29 Revised Emergency Appeals[52]. All active Appeals in 2015 (some date back to 2014) amounted to CHF 780 million. Donor funding covered approximately 69% of the required amount. An interesting point is that in 2014, Ebola-related operations represented 95% of the Emergency Appeals launched, and terminating these operations resulted in a 14% of reduction in requested funds between 2014 and 2015. (Devinit, 2016). This shows the magnitude of Ebola operations in which the role of HEOps, the case pool in my study, was pivotal[53].

6.1.4   Structure of the Secretariat

The IFRC has its headquarters in Geneva. In the IFRC structure, the headquarters are called the Secretariat, and consists of the main office in Geneva and field delegations[54] around the world. The structure of the Secretariat is presented in Figure 12 on the following page, consisting of the Secretariat office in Geneva and Regional Offices in: Africa, Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, Europe, and Americas. Each Regional office is led by a Regional Director. The Region is divided into Country Clusters, which include Country Cluster Support Teams and offices led by the Head of Office. Some Regions (sometimes called zones) also have Country Offices in pivotal countries of the Cluster. E.g. Africa Region covers 49 countries from its regional office in Nairobi. The five Country Clusters are: East, Central, West Coast, Sahel, and Southern Africa, enhancing the coordination and leadership of the Regional Office. Country offices come under some Clusters, such as the country office of Somalia under the East Africa Country Cluster. The country offices are led by the Head of a Country Team. The structure can seem complicated with many leaders and managers making decisions. It is noteworthy that HEOps are an addition to these leadership structures, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

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52   http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/appeals/ [Accessed 28.2.2017]

53   One of the HEOps was honored with the Member of the Order of the British Empire award. http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/international/britain-hon-ours-stephen-mcandrew-former-head-of-red-cross-ebola-operations-in-sierra-leo-ne-for-humanitarian-service-72543/ [Accessed 28.2.2017].

54   Delegation is the 'mission' or the field office for the aid-workers, i.e. delegates led by the Head of Delegation who normally reports to the Head of Office or Regional Director.
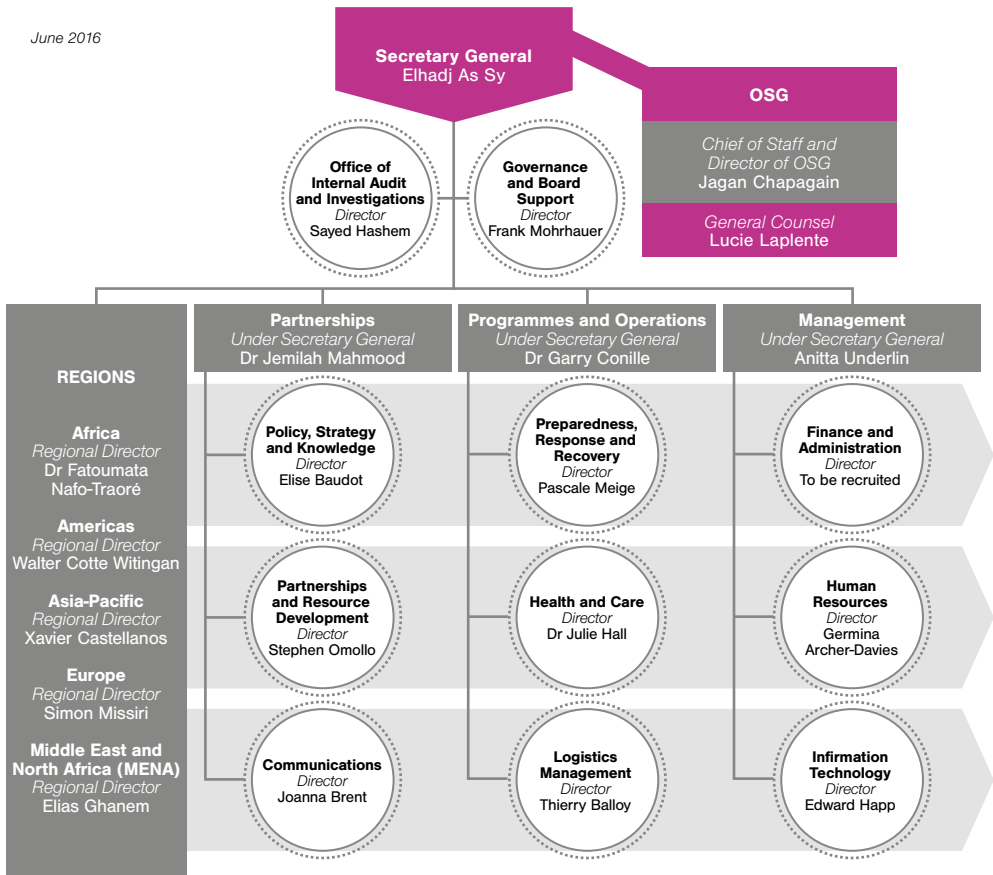
IFRC STRUCTURE

Figure 12 The structure of the secretariat
(Source: http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/governance/secretariat/ [Accessed 28.2.2017].

The previous structure of the Secretariat was multi-tiered with several (22) Director and Manager positions. The structure is presented in Appendix 6 and was in place when the first HEOps commenced as a pool of experienced emergency leaders in 2012.

The restructuring of the Secretariat was considered a necessary pursuit in light of Strategy 2020 (IFRC, 2010). Namely, the three strategic aims[55] and related enablers put pressure on the Secretariat structures and ways of working. The first strategic aim and third enabling action, which is "function effectively as the International Federation" (IFRC, 2015a, p. 268) were particularly important in this respect. Also certain lessons were

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55   Strategic aim 1 = Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery form disasters and crises, Aim 2 = Enable healthy and safe living, aim 3 = Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

learned from the previous strategy period, such as the need for a well-managed Secretariat of a suitable size.[56]

6.1.5 Leadership and Management Systems and Structures

The Global Leadership Team (GLT) comprises the Secretary General, USGs (Under Secretary General) for Management, Programs & Operations, and Partnerships together with all Regional Directors. Additionally, the Chief of Staff, who works in the Office for the Secretary General (OSG), and the Director of Internal Audit are members. In addition to the Chief of Staff, the General Counsel works in the OSG.

The current Secretary General (SG), Mr. Elhadj As Sy, began his term in the IFRC in August 2014. He previously worked within the United Nations for 25 years in various senior and leadership roles in several agencies, including UNAIDS, the Global Fund that fights AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. He is based in the Secretariat in Geneva.[57]

The leadership and management structure of the IFRC also includes a Senior Management Team (SMT), which consists of the SG, USGs, Chief of Staff, and Director of Audit. The SMT focuses on Geneva-related administration and management issues.

Additionally, the SG heads an Extended SMT, which comprises the members of the SMT and all nine department directors. This management team has a more operational nature than the two previously introduced management teams.

Held annually, the Global Management Meeting is an additional forum for the SG and Global Management Team to facilitate alignment with the IFRC vision and strategy.

Three divisions come under the three USGs, each sub-divided into three departments headed by a Director. Of the three divisions, Programs and Operations is most relevant for my research case. The three departments of the division are: Disaster & Crisis Prevention, Response & Recovery (DCPRR); Health and Care; and Logistics Management. The departments are divided into teams with operational area responsibilities, each with a team leader and at least one functional lead. Senior Officers work under the functional leads.[58]

DCPRR is introduced in the following Section in more detail, as it is plays a key role in my case as a 'home-base' for HEOps, the research case pool of my study.

Finance and Administration, Human Resources, and Information Technology are all departments in the Management Division, which is

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56   Strategy 2020 presentation, June 2016, Confidential

57   http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/governance/secretary-general/

58   IFRC Extranet, accessed 28.2.2017

headed by the USG, Management. Human Resources, a focal department from the point of view of my study, is divided into five units. For reasons of confidentiality, only the names and some individual tasks of the units are disclosed in the following.

HR leadership Unit, HR Business Partnering Unit (BPU), HR Shared Services Unit, HR Programmes and Policy Unit, and Regional HR Units are responsible for Field Support HR and managed by a regional manager in respective regions. The Programmes and Policy Unit is responsible for talent management and succession planning initiatives. All in all, 25 persons work in the HR Department, including two Senior Officers and the HR Director, who is a seasoned HR professional with a corporate background.

Some notions of the non-hierarchical nature of the humanitarian aid organizations can be found in the resource material (e.g. Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011; Parry et al., 2010). Based on my own experience and the interviews for this study, a non-hierarchical nature applies in the field operations, However, the structure of the IFRC Secretariat can be perceived as somewhat hierarchical.

There are many possible reasons behind the multi-layered, complex structure of the Secretariat, which fall outside of the scope of my study. However, it can be noted that policies, rules and regulations may dictate issues related to e.g. structure and decision-making perhaps more than in a corporate context. Existing policies that provide detailed direction for the actions of the IFRC, including the Secretariat, in specific areas serve as a point of reference to ensure consistency in decision-making. They "define the boundaries for the conduct of the Federation and the people working within it".[59] Policies are grouped in six categories, including Programs and Services, and Emergency Response, both of which are relevant in work carried out by HEOps. The first-mentioned category includes ten different policies, ranging from social welfare and malaria control to water and sanitation. The second category is pivotal in the work of HEOps, and comprises five different policies: Disaster Preparedness; Emergency Response; Food Security and Nutrition; Post-emergency Rehabilitation; and Integrating relief, rehabilitation and development.

Knowing these policies, or at least of their existence, their authority in decision-making and in setting boundaries to action, are prerequisites for anyone working in leadership roles in emergency operations. I would argue that they also define some of the leadership competencies required from HEOps, and explain to some extent the strong emphasis on experience from similar roles. These points will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 7.

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59   http://www.ifrc.org/who-we-are/governance/policies/?epslanguage=en [Accessed 1.3.2017].

6.2   Disaster & Crisis Prevention, Response & Recovery (DCPRR), Structure, Processes and Tools

DCPRR is one of the three departments of the Programs and Operations division, and divided into two teams: Global Networks and Operations Practice; and Emergency Operations and Information Management. The first is responsible for e.g. shelter, response and recovery, risk and vulnerability, and cash transfer programming[60], coordinating and leading these globally in cooperation with National Societies.   The current headcount of the DCPRR is 45.

The Emergency Networks and Information Management team is sub-divided into three functional teams: Surge Capacity; Information Management; and Disaster Relief Fund (DREF). DREF will be explained in Section 6.2.1 along with the other global tools. HEOps are positioned organizationally in the Surge Capacity functional team.

Surge capacity, is defined as follows: "In the humanitarian context, surge capacity can be defined as the 'ability of an organization to rapidly and effectively increase the sum of its available resources in a specific geographic location' in order to meet increased demand to stabilise or alleviate suffering in any given population." (Austin & O'Neil, 2015, p. 6). It can be noted that humanitarian aid organizations have increased their 'surge capacity' during recent years in order to scale up resources and staffing more effectively in response to urgent humanitarian needs. This has been deemed necessary since the number of both man-made and natural disasters has significantly increased, and the environment is increasingly unpredictable and challenging (Austin & O'Neil, 2015).

The above can be argued to be one of the reasons for adding HEOps to the global surge tools discussed in Section 6.2.1. The increasing number of complex emergencies around the world and requirements for highly experienced staff together with a need and pressure for more effective coordination of relief activities (e.g. IFRC, 2010) are some of the reasons behind the birth of new ways to respond.

The Surge Capacity functional team has six members: one Lead, two Senior Officers, and three HEOps. With the Team Leader for Emergency Operations and Information Management, the Surge Capacity team has been my main point of contact during my research.

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60   "Cash based or cash transfer programming utilizes cash transfers as a mechanism for providing resources for all sectors. Use of cash based programming recognizes the diverse needs of those affected, the flexibility of cash or vouchers to meet those needs, the importance of preserving people's dignity by transferring choice to them and the need to support local markets for a smoother self-recovery". IFRC [Accessed 28.2.2017].

6.2.1 Guidelines and Tools

According to the Statutes of the Movement as well as the Constitution of the Federation, disaster response has to be conducted in line with the Principles and Rules for RCRC Humanitarian Assistance (IFRC, 2015d). The document was endorsed by the International Conference in 2015.

The focus on local actors, proclaimed to be the key to humanitarian effectiveness (IFRC, 2015a), is to provide good guidance in Disaster Response. This entails that the IFRC always works through the National Society (NS) in the disaster-stricken country, boosting the NS's future capacity in disaster preparedness and response. In a global view, inclusion is one of the obligations of the IFRC when working in emergencies. As a result, operations of the IFRC are transferred from 'local to global', optimizing resources at each level as the scale or complexity of the disaster requires. This also requires engagement with all partners of the Movement; not only with the local NS, but also with donor societies and e.g. those who participate in the operation by sending delegates to the field. Coordination is vital with all other stakeholders in the field as well.[61] Once again I would argue that the points raised above emphasize a need for multiple skills and competencies, not necessarily only technical, but also softer skills, such as communication, influencing, and relationship skills.

The IFRC Global Disaster Response Tools are introduced briefly below. The tools utilize the resources of both the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies.[62] An interesting point is that HEOps are seen as one of the 'people-tools', introduced both as a team and pool. The introduction below is brief, with HEOps presented as one tool among others. Chapter 7 is dedicated to HEOps in connection to presenting and analyzing the research case.

People

National Disaster Response Teams – volunteers and staff of the National Society of the disaster-stricken country, who are often the first to respond.

Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRT) – An RDRT team is composed of National Society volunteers or staff, usually members of their own national response teams, trained to work as a team and bring assistance to National Societies in neighboring countries and deployed within 24 or 72 hours. The team members are familiar with the context of the region, cultural aspects as well as the language. Within defined geographical regions, members of National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies are

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61 "Orientation to Response and Operations". A presentation by Team Leader/DCPRR, June 2016.

62 "Orientation to Response and Operations". A presentation by Team Leader/DCPRR, June 2016. And http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/disaster-response-system/financial-instruments/disaster-relief-emergency-fund-dref/ [Accessed 1.3.2017].

trained together as a team, with extensive experience in providing disaster response in their own countries as well as regionally.

Head of Emergency Operations (Pool and Team) – Three full-time standby HEOps (=pool) deployed to major operations globally. In addition to the HEOps pool, a team of fourteen develop HEOps (D-HEOps) who can be deployed for smaller operations or support roles either as a team or individually.

Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) – a standby roster of over 500 experts from over 100 National Societies available to provide rapid support to National Societies in disaster-stricken areas. The teams can provide assistance with needs assessment, operational planning, early implementation, and coordination roles. They have expertise in relief, logistics, health, nutrition, public health and epidemiology, water and sanitation, finance, administration, information management, and psychological support, as well as language skills. All team members take part in a twelve-day training. The teams are ready to participate in FACT deployment with 12 - 24 hours' notice for 4 to 6 weeks anywhere in the world.

Equipment and people

Emergency Response Units (ERUs) form an important element of the IFRC's disaster response tools. An ERU is made up of specialized personnel and required equipment. The units can be deployed to both sudden and slow on-set disasters in the sectors of emergency health, water and sanitation, logistics, IT & Telecom, and relief. ERUs can provide specific preventive as well as life-saving services when local facilities are destroyed, overwhelmed or non-existent.

The teams can be deployed for up to four months and, depending on the type of event, are called in by a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT), or by a Head of Emergency Operations. The ERUs often work in close collaboration with a FACT, Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) and the affected National Society's staff and volunteers.

In addition to my research with HEOps, I have been trained as a member of a FACT-team and ERU-team, but have never been deployed in either role.

Funding

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a pool of un-earmarked money created to ensure that immediate funding is available in the event of an emergency, before an emergency appeal is being launched. Emergency appeal is depicted in Section 6.1.3. Based on an initial disaster assessment, a National Society may request assistance from the DREF in order to begin immediate response. DREF, which is managed by the DCPRR at the Secretariat, fills the gap between the onset of a disaster and donor response to an emergency appeal.

7. The Case: Heads of Emergency Operations

*"The Head of Emergency Operations
role is pivotal to the success of IFRC in
reaching its objectives in all of the disaster
operations in which it operates."*
(IFRC, 2016b, p. 3)

7.1 Background

The Head of Emergency Operations, HEOps, is "a cadre of well-prepared and experienced operational leaders that reflects the nature of the Movement, with increased and diverse local and regional knowledge, linguistic and cross-cultural skills, amongst others."[63]. The HEOps pool[64] was created in 2012 to meet a need for enhanced senior leadership for medium and large-scale emergency operations around the world.

The rationale for the creation of the (HEOps) pool was identified in the findings and recommendations of a number of operational reviews. These include a thorough feasibility study[65] conducted by a consultant funded by the British Red Cross. While the Feasibility Study (2011) as such is a confidential document and cannot be included in the reference material in its entirety, some points will used throughout the final sections of this research report in order to clarify the underpinning philosophy for creating the HEOps pool and its strategic and practical implications.

According to the study, during the past decade humanitarian aid organizations have aimed to distinguish operational humanitarian leadership from senior operational management. The difference between the two is evident in the way the IFRC separates leadership and management.

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63   Program Description, Developing Heads of Operations, 12.4.2015. Confidential

64   A 'pool' is used for the three HEOps who are contracted by the IFRC for rapid deployment.

65   HEOps Feasibility Study, Final. May-July 2011, Confidential. Referred to as Feasibility Study, 2011.

According to the depiction in the IFRC HR Strategic Framework Document (Confidential), leadership produces change and movement, whereas management generates order and consistency. Thus, leaders create vision and strategies for emergency operations, while managers are responsible for ensuring that operations runs smoothly and the vision and strategy are implemented as efficiently as possible.

Also, as outlined in the Feasibility Study (2011), the IFRC Secretariat had some challenges in identifying appropriate candidates for the positions, i.e. leadership positions in medium to large-scale disasters.

Benchmarking was carried out in other humanitarian aid organizations for the Feasibility Study (2011) to learn how they had built their respective pools. Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the ICRC, and UNDAC[66] (United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination) included in the benchmarking had succeeded in the creation and management of their pools, which also addressed similar needs and challenges.

The HEOps was determined in the Feasibility Study (2011) as a vehicle to recruit, develop, and deploy humanitarian *leaders,* whose background would be in management roles of large humanitarian operations. However, the HEOps role requires a more external, strategic focus than their previous management roles had possibly done. . The role also calls for an in-depth understanding of the context of operations as well as an ability to provide an overall vision and strategic framework for the operation. The strategic framework is discussed later in this section in connection to examining the responsibilities of HEOps in operations. Furthermore, at this point it is useful to clarify the usage of the terms 'strategy' and 'strategic' in the IFRC: in general, the IFRC uses the term 'strategic leadership' in situations that are more or less equivalent to 'operational' or 'action planning' in the corporate world. On the other hand, the term 'strategic' is linked to the IFRC's definition of 'Leadership' rather than 'Management': as stated above, leadership should produce change and movement, establish direction, and create a vision. In my view, 'leadership' in the IFRC context is strategic whether coupled with the term 'strategic' or not. This aspect was somewhat confusing to me when carrying out the research and analyzing the various documents, which I discussed several times with different people. The meanings of the terms 'strategy' and 'strategic' are so deeply rooted in the jargon and mindset of the organization that my comments were mostly ignored. In other words, the terms are established, and should be considered as issues that are simply viewed in different ways depending on the context. The issue is discussed in the confidential Feasibility Study (2011), which I take the liberty to quote in this area: "The HEOps role highlights important (but often confusing)

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66   UNDAC was created in 1993. It is designed to help the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency. UNDAC teams can deploy at short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world. They are provided free of charge to the disaster-affected country. http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/undac/overview [Accessed 20.2.2017].

distinctions between *leadership* and *management*, and between *strategic* and *operational – terms which continue to exercise academics the world over.* What matters for our purposes is that the HEOps' responsibility is to provide field-based leadership to emergency operations. The role is more externally-focused and strategic than that of an operations manager, whose focus is more internal." (Feasibility Study, 2011, p. 17). The eventual reasons and history behind the distinction fall outside the scope of this study.

Returning to the HEOps role and responsibilities after the brief explanation about terminology above, a key responsibility of the HEOps is to develop and articulate *a response strategy* as quickly as possible, and to ensure that the resulting operation is implemented in alignment with that strategy. In the Feasibility Study, a change in the response strategy compilation was pointed out; historically, response strategies have emerged from the operation 'on-the-go'. The response strategy articulated by the HEOps should, instead, determine a direction and define strategic objectives from the outset. The need for a change towards improved response strategies and the overall sharpened focus on results and impact can be stated as additional reasons for the creation of the HEOps pool (Feasibility Study, 2011).

In short, the HEOps pool was designed to meet the need for senior leadership in medium and large-scale operations. Additionally, the increasing frequency and complexity of major disasters required more sophisticated strategic leadership and coordination roles. The need for greater predictability and continuity in providing high-quality operational leadership support to National Societies was one of the factors behind the decision to establish the HEOps pool[67].

Certain issues in IFRC leadership in major emergencies were presented in a study conducted in 2011[68], which emphasized the need for an experienced pool of humanitarian aid leaders. The study (BRC, 2011) indicated a lack of experienced leaders, which led to unfilled positions on one hand, and to deployments of a small group of experienced people time and again on the other. The latter caused stress reactions, even burnouts, rapid turnover of staff in emergencies, and possibly poor program delivery. Also, a need for clear authority to make high-level decisions in the field was mentioned in the study (BRC, 2011), which raised some concerns especially in the case of lack of authority in decision-making situations. The HEOps pool has addressed the issue with clear job descriptions and standard operating procedures (SOPs). However, the position of the HEOps in the organizational structure was not clear from the onset of the pool, an issue that will be discussed further in Section 7.3.

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67 The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will actively offer assistance to disaster victims through the agency of the National Society in a spirit of cooperation with the public authorities www.ifrc.org. [Accessed 20.2.2017].

68 British Red Cross (BRC) Scoping Study, 2011. Confidential. Will be referred to as either Scoping Study, BRC, 2011 or BRC, 2011.

Moreover, as discussed earlier in Section 6.2., many humanitarian organizations have increased their surge capacity in view of the above-mentioned complexity, increased frequency of disasters, and the significant increase in the need of humanitarian aid globally. This has resulted in a growing gap between needs and resources, particularly human resources (Austin & O'Neil, 2015). The HEOps can be seen to respond to these common challenges.

7.1.1   Requirements

"The role is challenging and exciting,
one that demands excellent leadership, team building,
facilitation and negotiation skills.
It also requires the ability to develop workable strategies
that truly make a difference in an emergency context."
(IFRC, 2016b, p. 4)

For reasons of confidentiality, the job description of a HEOps cannot be presented here in detail, but some major issues will be pointed out in view of a better understanding of the case pool, the role, and related responsibilities and requirements.

The overall responsibilities of HEOps are described as follows: As a member of the DCPRR[69] Team, the HEOps develop and enhance the work of the IFRC in promoting a holistic and integrated approach to disaster management through a provision of timely and high-quality advice, and the development and maintenance of procedures and systems to support disaster operations. Additionally, the HEOps supports the development of appropriate tools and guidelines, and effectively represents and liaises with other humanitarian actors in the field[70] .

The subsequent list of responsibilities has as many as twelve points, some of which are presented below:

1.   Assume overall responsibility for leading the operation on behalf of the affected country region, ensuring appropriate links with the IFRC structure (= Regional Offices, Country Cluster Offices, Country Delegations, National Societies both host NS and NSs working in the emergency operation).
2.   Lead an analysis of the political, military, social, economic, and humanitarian context.
3.   Develop and communicate a clear vision and a strategy for the emergency response. This should have clear and measurable objectives and respond to humanitarian needs in an appropriate

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69   Disaster & Crisis Prevention, Response & Recovery

70   Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) Head or Emergency Operations (HEOps), August 2012. Confidential.

way. It should also be aligned with the strategies of other actors, including UN clusters.

4. Seek to secure the buy-in and compliance of all Movement actors by ensuring that they are assigned clear and appropriate roles and responsibilities wherever possible[71] and to ensure that adequate Movement coordination frameworks are in place as required by the operation.

The so-called 'peacetime' role and tasks are an important part of the job description, which arguably require different skills and competencies than the work during emergencies. Some of the peacetime activities are listed below (Feasibility Study, 2011):

1. Acquaint him/herself with the specific Disaster Management context and key contacts in each of the five Zones/Regions.
2. Provide coaching and on-the-job training to members of the roster of Developing HEOps. (This is a roster of future HEOps, described in more detail in Section 7.1.1.)

The Feasibility Study highlights the importance of peacetime activities due to their purpose rather than content: Their purpose is to enhance the competencies of the HEOps themselves in leading successful emergency operations, and to strengthen the overall capacity of the IFRC in Disaster Management. An additional purpose is to support the Developing HEOps (Feasibility Study, 2011).

The spheres of responsibilities seem vast, and challenges may occur in terms of e.g. division of leadership responsibilities and relationships vis à-vis other delegates in the field as well as leaders and managers in the Regional Offices and Country Clusters. This will also be discussed in Section 7.3.

The Feasibility Study (2011) presented specific requirements for HEOps by firstly listing the 'skills, experience and knowledge' and subsequently the 'competencies' required. The accuracy of the terms can be questioned: whether factors under 'skills, experience and knowledge' are genuinely equal and measurable in the same way, i.e. should they be introduced under the same title in the first place, and how factors under 'skills, experience, and knowledge' differ from listed 'competencies'. Also these issues are discussed in connection to empirical findings presented in Section 7.3.

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71 This is part of 'Movement Coordination' guided by the so-called Seville agreement adopted in 1997, introducing a 'Lead Agency' concept. The Seville Agreement defines the Lead Agency concept as 'an organizational tool for managing international operational activities', and allocated for one Movement component at a time. (Seville Agreement, Resolution 8, Council of Delegates, 2005). In conflict situations, this component is the ICRC, while in natural disasters and refugee operations the IFRC is the Lead.

Some of the 'skills, experiences, and knowledge' include:
1. Demonstrated experience of successfully leading large-scale humanitarian emergency response operations in a variety of contexts, preferably with the RC/RC Movement.
2. Excellent political, diplomatic, communication and negotiating skills, and experience of representing an organization at the highest level.
3. Proven analytical skills and the ability to think strategically and under pressure, without access to complete information.

Some of the 'competencies' required are presented below.
1. Exhibits natural authority and commands respect.
2. Models Red Cross principles, values and behaviors.
3. Good at inspiring, motivating and empowering others, and at delegating clearly.
4. Willing and able to take calculated risks and to act decisively and confidently in situations of ambiguity and uncertainty.
5. Self-aware and respectful of others.

The competencies that must be covered by Head of Operations can be divided in two different sets (Feasibility Study, 2011). Firstly, there is a need for those who can engage in and lead the immediate emergency phase (up to three months), and secondly those who can manage the longer-term aspects (from 3 months to at least a year). The required personalities, competencies, and modes of work in the two emergency phases are arguably different. Furthermore, based on the experience of solid experts in the field, a single person can rarely cover both areas of expertise. Confidence in leadership situations in a rapidly-changing international emergency and having the patience and interest to coach Developing HEOps form another combination of skills, competencies or personal characteristics that is difficult to find. (Feasibility Study, 2011). The personalities and competencies required for the two different phases is not explained, which makes an interesting point. During my research and career with the Movement, I have often come across 'self-evidences' of this type, accentuated by the notion of the Movement and in the IFRC in particular being 'inward looking' as far as resources, leadership, and even talent are concerned (BRC, 2011). In my view, the afore-mentioned reference to different personalities and competencies for different situations is a case in point.

After the initial phase[72] and based on the experience with the HEOps in the first batch, i.e. the first three incumbents of the HEOps roles, the required competencies are currently presented by areas (IFRC, 2016b), which seems to create more clarity. While foundational documents, such as the IFRC

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72   The initial phase is here restricted to cover the period starting from the publishing of the Feasibility Study (2011) to the second year of the assignment of the first HEOps batch that started in 2012.

Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework (Confidential), continue to be highly detailed and comprehensive, there is a clear motivation to group competencies and skills under areas that are easier to perceive and transfer to daily activities and e.g. the Personal Development Plan. Competencies are grouped under 'strategic leadership', 'managing complexity', 'negotiation and representation', and 'adapting and coping'. The competencies, or 'abilities' as they are introduced in the Brochure for Developing HEOps (IFRC, 2016b), will be discussed in more detail in Section 7.3.

7.1.2   Recruitment and Selection

"Potential candidates will have energy and enthusiasm,
as well as the stature to engage,
influence and encourage others to follow their lead."
(IFRC, 2016b, p. 8)

It was suggested that for the first three-year pilot period, only candidates from within the Movement would be considered. (Feasibility Study, 2011). Based on this background and due to the demanding requirements and emphasis on Red Cross knowledge and experience, the first 'batch' of three HEOps that commenced in 2012 had three extremely experienced operational leaders with a solid Red Cross background and impeccable reputation and track record within the Movement. The first batch came with the positive aspect of one of the three incumbents being a woman, although the subsequent batch was an all-male trio.

Gender balance in emergency operations is an issue referred to frequently in the humanitarian aid context (e.g. Buchanan-Smith and Scriven, (2010); Austin and O'Neil, (2015); IFRC, (2015a)). The IFRC is not an exception. During recent years, however, positive development has occurred. According to Austin and O'Neil (2015), women play a pivotal role in surge capacity of humanitarian aid organizations globally, and in 2014 already approximately 40% of all international deployments were women. The same development is displayed in the HEOps pool. This will be discussed in further detail in Section 7.2.

Although applicants were limited only to Red Cross Red Crescent staff, members of different rosters within National Societies, and volunteers, the recruitment process of HEOps was designed to be meticulous from the very beginning. A job description was drawn based on the Feasibility Study (2011) and on the work of an advisory board together with the IFRC HR department.

The positions were advertised on relevant IFRC websites at the beginning of 2012. 145 applications from 55 countries were received; 109 of the applicants were male and 36 female. A five-member interview panel was established, and detailed interview questions including two case studies used in the interview process were developed. A weighted score sheet system was used to grade and rank candidates.

The recruiters were also tasked to identify development areas in view of mapping the needs for specific support and to address them with the HR Department after the selection. Ensuring good HR practices, the recruiters were also asked to make sure that competencies *between* the three HEOps collectively meet as many of the requirements as possible and support each other in addressing the respective development needs.

After the recruitment process, four people were shortlisted and three finally selected. Their assignment began with a detailed two-week induction program, which involved meetings and briefings by all departments relevant to responsibilities. Additionally, meetings with e.g. the ICRC and selected UN agencies were organized. (HEOps Summary Progress Report, July 2012, Confidential).

Assuming the pilot would be successful, as was the case, the Feasibility Study (2011) proposed that suitably qualified candidates should be attracted also from outside the Movement. As mentioned above, the IFRC is not very outward-looking in this respect, and relevant experience from outside the Movement is not considered as valuable as Red Cross/Red Crescent experience. This issue was also pointed out by one of the interviewees for my study.[73] Despite the recommendation of the Feasibility Study (2011), also the second round of recruitment followed the same pattern. The issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 7.3.

7.1.3   Deployment

> *A warm thank you to all the IFRC colleagues*
> *in the countries of operation, who worked tirelessly in*
> *hardship conditions under the double pressure of operational*
> *needs and the family pressure and distress*
> *due to your work in this hazardous environment.*
> (Modified from End of Mission report, HEOps, 2014, Confidential)

A pool of three HEOps are contracted to the IFRC on a full-time basis available for rapid field deployment. 'Rapid' means that the three members of the pool need to be ready to deploy anywhere in the world within 48 hours. The task is to provide strategic leadership and coordination in major Federation-led field operations (HEOps Progress Report, 2012). The initial deployment period is a maximum of 90 days, with possible extension based on the decision of the Team Leader of DCPRR.

Pool members need to work in very close cooperation with one another. To guarantee 24/7/52 availability for deployment of at least one pool member despite ongoing missions and annual leaves, the schedules of all three members need to be closely coordinated.

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73   Interview, IFRC, December 2014

Also peer support inside the team is extremely important; the roles come with the risk of burnout, which, based on experiences of aid workers, is notoriously difficult to prevent. One way to reduce the risk is to openly acknowledge it and encourage a culture of awareness, transparency, and peer support (Feasibility Study, 2011). This entails a high level of self-awareness, which in my view should be regarded as one of the key competencies for the HEOps role.

Figure 13 below presents an illustration of the deployment process.
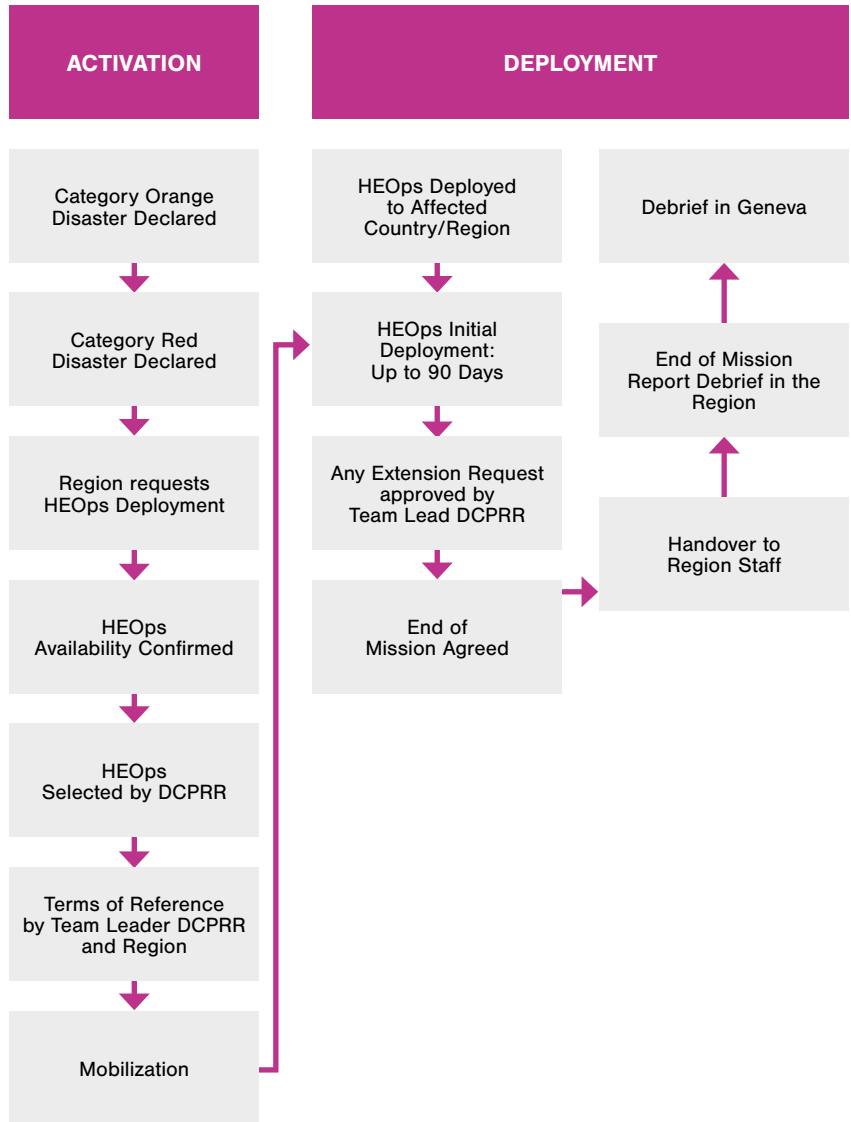
Figure 13 HEOps deployment process (Source: HEOps SOPs, IFRC, 2012).

All deployments, or 'field missions' as they are generally called in the IFRC, are regulated by Global Disaster Response Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), SOPs/HEOps, Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance (IFRC, 2015d), and the Terms of Reference for the deployment itself. According to the Global Disaster Response SOPs, the Secretariat categorizes disasters based on objective criteria. The appropriate level of support for each category is then decided.

End of Mission report (EOM) is one of the documents required in the HEOps SOPs, and an integral part of the handover process from one HEOps to another or from the HEOps to a regional delegate, etc. EOMs are an excellent source of information about the country and operation in question, and are used widely in briefing delegates preparing for a mission. EOMs follow a standard form, including background information, expected outcomes, activities, outcomes, and lessons learned. All terms of reference, job descriptions, and related reports are attached to the report.

Thorough, meticulously written EOMs of one of the HEOps were amongst the documents anlayzed for the focal study. The reports are strictly confidential and cannot thus be included in the list of references. However, they were invaluable in forming an idea of the work of the HEOps.

The Red and Orange categories are security phases. The IFRC uses a standard four-phase security classification system for all field missions. In the field, it is always the responsibility of a senior level manager or leader, e.g. HEOps or Director of the Regional Office, to establish the security phase and undertake security planning accordingly (IFRC, 2009).

The four security phases are classed as white, yellow, orange, and red, presented in Table 10 below.

Table 10 Security phases

White	Situation is normal	No major security concerns
Yellow	Situation of heightened tension	Some security concerns, heightened security awareness initiated
Orange	Emergency situation	Access to beneficiaries limited, risk to Red Cross Red Crescent personnel severe, and tight security management needed
Red	Relocation or hibernation	Conditions do not allow work, risk to Red Cross Red Crescent personnel extreme

(Source: Stay Safe, the International Federation's guide to a safer mission. IFRC, 2009, p. 209).

Although the HEOps is required to make a security-related decision rapidly, it needs to adhere to all guidelines and regulations. The "Stay Safe" manual (IFRC, 2009) is a sturdy document of over 200 pages. Familiarity with the contents of the manual and security-related procedures is one of the unconditional requirements for the HEOps already at the application stage. A certification program is provided online by the IFRC, which needs to be passed to be able to apply.

Examples of HEOps deployments include the Sahel food security operation in 2012, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, the Ebola crisis in 2014 in West Africa, and migrants crisis response in 2015 in Europe. A more comprehensive list of HEOps deployments is presented in Appendix 7.

While emergencies differ in nature, the role of the HEOps is always similar: to ensure coordination between all Movement partners, to assume the overall responsibility for leading the operation on behalf of the affected country and its National Society, and develop a clear vision and response strategy. These are just a few of the responsibilities the HEOps need to take on immediately upon arrival.

7.1.4   Development

Due to the vast array of responsibilities and the long list of competencies required from the HEOps, it was acknowledged that it is hard, if not impossible, to find a single person with all the required competencies, no matter how experienced. As one part of the process, the recruiters were asked to identify areas that needed further development and to ensure related support. Furthermore, the three HEOps were selected as a pool that would complement one another in their competencies and thus cover combined as many required attributes as possible (Feasibility Study, 2011). I find this approach to talent pools interesting and possibly applicable in other organizations.

A system was designed to provide the selected HEOps with lacking skills and competencies. In part, the incumbents themselves worked on this system as an element of their induction program, resulting in a work plan for the first year, 2012. 'Peacetime' work described in Section 7.1.1 has been used as a development tool from the onset, and still forms a pivotal part of the developmental activities of these experienced leaders.

Additionally, the first three HEOps drafted documents and guidelines related to their own work, e.g. HEOps SOPs as part of their peacetime duties. The incumbents also assist in training events both at the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies around the world.

The coaching or mentoring aspect of the HEOps role is crucial, and a great deal of effort has been targeted at developing related skills and designing the mentoring process. Coaching and mentoring is an effective development tool that can even teach the coach or mentor more than the mentee.

All of the above presented developmental efforts are referred to as parts of a 'nurturing process' in the Feasibility Study (2011). This process is intended to ensure that the HEOps are kept up to date with for instance latest policies and modes of operation, and exposed to situations of which they have no previous experience. Another essential aspect of the nurturing and development process is to keep the incumbents interested in staying in the pool and being available. This is a very valid point especially in view of the demanding, exposed, and psychologically isolated nature of the position.

Also competition from other organizations needs to be taken seriously; one way to keep the best people with the IFRC without losing them to other organizations is to make sure they are not left on their own and that their development needs are met (Feasibility Study, 2011).

The success and sustainability of the HEOps pool was considered to be to some extent dependent on the IFRC's commitment to leadership development. Thus, a great deal of effort went into ensuring the first incumbents received all the development support they needed.

In addition to the activities presented above, the Feasibility Study (2011) proposed training courses and modules outside the IFRC to be included as components in the development plan of each HEOps. Some of these were modules offered by universities[74]. However, very few actually brought any benefit, mainly due to the somewhat 'inward-looking' nature of the IFRC, as discussed below. Also secondments with other agencies, such as OCHA (United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid), were proposed, but not implemented. This is argued (BRC, 2011) to be an indicator of the IFRC being 'inward looking'; the organization is not willing to expose itself to the development and training opportunities offered externally and does not participate in the joint initiatives to develop industry-related competencies and skills (BRC, 2011). Examples of these initiatives are introduced in Section 4.3.3.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Learning and Knowledge Sharing network was set up to address the issues mentioned in the BRC (2011) study and strengthen learning and development within the IFRC. Its aim is to: "strengthen individual competencies among Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers, members, staff and other humanitarian actors, to stimulate new thinking in the humanitarian and development field, and to increase the magnitude, quality and impact of humanitarian service delivery" (IFRC Extranet, accessed 1.3.2017).

The Network offers training in four key areas, including disaster management, health, humanitarian diplomacy, and business management. The content derives from IFRC learning courses in the above-listed areas and academic institutions with which the IFRC has signed cooperation and research agreements, currently including The University of Manchester and University of Ottawa (IFRC Extranet, accessed 1.3.2017).

Additionally, the Knowledge and Learning Systems team in the Secretariat is responsible for the coordination, development and delivery of WORC (the world of Red Cross and Red Crescent) and IMPACT (the International Mobilization and Preparation for ACTion) courses, which are compulsory to all delegates working in the field. These are face-to-face courses organized regularly by both National Societies and the Secretariat.

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74   University of Ottawa and University of Manchester have signed Memoranda of Understanding with the IFRC for learning and research cooperation in 2011. These are just a few examples of the active role of universities and academic institutions in the humanitarian field. (Extranet, IFRC, accessed 1.2.2017).

The Knowledge and Learning Systems team also maintains and develops a learning platform, which offers hundreds of on-line courses for both National Society and Secretariat use. Although designed for volunteers and National Society staff, a vast array of the online courses would also benefit incumbents of positions such as HEOps.

Several of the interviewees in the Secretariat [75] had their doubts over whether learning opportunities were used effectively, and clearly an issue the Secretariat needs to address proactively.

7.2 High Potentials in the HEOps Context – D-HEOps

"Developing HEOps will learn how to lead and strategically position the IFRC support in complex and large scale disaster response operations in order to maximize the value that IFRC can bring to affected populations."
(IFRC, 2016b, p. 5)

7.2.1 Background and Definition

The need for a more extensive roster than three full-time contracted HEOps ready to be deployed[76] and to further strengthen the IFRC's capacity in middle and large-scaled emergencies has been clear from the onset of the HEOps pool. Thus, the HEOps pool is supported by a larger 'roster' of developing HEOps (D-HEOps), whose "leadership capabilities are systematically nurtured and developed through bespoke training, coaching and mentoring." (Feasibility Study, 2011, p.3).

A clarification about some of the terminology is probably in order. The words 'pool' and 'roster'[77] used in connection with HEOps have distinct meanings. The 'pool' comprises three HEOps contracted to the Secretariat on a full-time basis ready to be deployed within 48 hours. The 'roster' is wider and refers to the group of developing, future HEOps or D-HEOps. There is an interdependency between the core 'pool' and the wider 'roster'. Without the roster, the HEOps pool would soon become unsustainable

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75 Interviews, Secretariat, June 2016

76 From 2012 to the end of 2015, the HEOps pool had been used for deployment 15 times. These deployments include major emergencies, such as Philippines/Typhoon Haiyan, the Nepal earthquake, and the Ebola crisis in Guinea and Sierra Leone.

77 Rosters are proactively managed to ensure that there are always named people on duty at any time, whose availability for immediate deployment is guaranteed. Rosters are not to be confused with register: members of a register are under no obligation to be available when called upon. (Feasibility study, 2011). There are numerous registers in the IFRC as well, e.g. register of all persons who have gone through an ERU training, or a global register or FACT team members.

without getting new blood from the roster (Feasibility Study, 2011). The HEOps are contracted for three years, with a possibility to remain with the pool for another period of the same duration.

The D-HEOps roster also aims to address the growing demands of the increased number and complexity of crises. In addition, there is growing demand for internal and external coordination of activities in emergency operations. The expectations for the IFRC to provide operational support and guidance to National Societies as they respond to emergencies is also growing.

The D-HEOps roster, which in 2016 included 12 people, provides support to the three full-time HEOps – whether as Deputy HEOps in large operations or as occasional HEOps in small to medium-scale operations with support and advice from a senior HEOps (Feasibility Study, 2011). The D-HEOps are available at specified time periods and their employers (usually National Societies) release them from their everyday duties when required. The agreement between the employer and the D-HEOps is crucial; without prior consent from the employer, the potential candidate for a D-HEOps position is unable to begin the application process.

7.2.2   Identification and Recruitment

> *Our aim is to reflect the true diversity of the*
> *world in which we operate by selecting developing HEOps from as wide a*
> *cultural and experience pool as possible.*
> *This will involve searching for new developing HEOps across the whole*
> *network of our RC National Societies.*
> (IFRC, 2016b, p. 7)

The first Developing HEOps candidates in 2014 were selected based on "demonstrated competency; (experience, references and self-assessment), motivation and commitment to the Movement, as well as perceived potential to lead IFRC emergency operations." (HEOps Development Pilot Program, 2015, p. 2. Confidential).

The first D-HEOps batch[78] selected in 2014 was used to gather experience particularly on the development process, or the induction as it is also referred to, of the D-HEOps. This is discussed in Section 7.2.3.

The requirements for D-HEOps candidates are similar to those for HEOps, with a difference in the length of the experience and exposure to large-scale emergency operations in a leadership role, which is not required

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78   The term 'batch' is used when reference is made to the group of D-HEOps selected at the same time. The first batch comprised 7 D-HEOps and the second 12. Also the term 'D-HEOps program' is used to describe the one-year period when the selected candidates are trained and mentored in order to become a part of the D-HEOps roster. This can be considered another example of inconsistence in the use of terminology in the IFRC.

from the D-HEOps. Also, the HEOps need to have the willingness and ability to coach or mentor one or more D-HEOps, which is naturally not required from the D-HEOps. The requirements are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11 Requirements for D-HEOps

General requirements	The candidate must have	The candidate has preferably
The depth of applied RC knowledge	A University degree in a relevant subject or significant field experience, the World of the Red Cross (WORC) course or equivalent RC/RC knowledge, an advanced Disaster Management training and IFRC Security management.	Substantial experience of leading and supporting multi-disciplinary and geographically remote teams in unsecure and challenging situations.
Experience and charisma to take up this challenge	Proven experience of large scale emergency preparedness and response, and development issues with a relevant technical competence in emergency needs assessment, project design, development and implementation in a RC/RC context.	Acquaintance with and exposure to one or several of the IFRC Disaster Management tools such as FACT, ERU (as presented in Section 6.2.1.)
Understanding of effective team leadership	Experience with coordination mechanisms within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and external partners (Government, UN, INGOs and NGOs)	Excellent political, diplomatic, communication and negotiation skills and experience of representing an organization at the highest level.
Proven skills in analytical, strategic thinking and operational planning		Proven skills in strategic and operational planning, budgeting and reporting.

(Source: IFRC, 2016b, p. 9).

The requirements can be argued to reflect the desire to emphasize the important role of HEOps at the forefront of large emergency operations. As stated above, the candidates for the D-HEOps roster need to have most of the qualities and competencies of a 'full-fledged' HEOps to be able to meet the requirements of the eventual future HEOps position. However, a point to note is that not all of the D-HEOps will ever become HEOps, but can stay in the roster and work in supporting roles in operations to which a HEOps is deployed, or in a leadership role in small or medium-scale emergency operations. The process from application to the roster is described fully in Section 7.2.4.

As I wanted to make a point about differing levels of accuracy and measurability in the way requirements are presented, I omitted the following requirement from the table above: "An evident desire to maximize the value that IFRC presence brings to disaster affected communities" (IFRC, 2016b, p. 9). As stated above, this requirement can be argued to be somewhat vague: how can 'evidence' of the 'desire' be defined and identified? Furthermore, the meaning of 'maximize' can also be questioned. The afore-mentioned example is a case in point in terms of the language and terminology used in the IFRC associated to competencies, skills, and experiences. In my view,

and in the view of some of the interviewees, the way the competencies and requirements are presented leaves room for improvement in order for candidates and employees to understand what is expected from them.[79]

A call for applications to the D-HEOps roster is published regularly, and issued within the IFRC network of National Societies worldwide. So far, the process has adhered to the form of advertising the D-HEOps and carrying out the selection and screening process, as presented below, only once. The screening and selection processes are clearly rigorous, carried out by a panel of five to six individuals from both operational and HR backgrounds, and headed by the Team Leader of DCPRR. After shortlisting the candidates, the panel makes its final selection based on a round of competency and scenario-based interviews.

The "IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competencies" (IFRC, 2013) are used as a basis for the interviews, development plans of the D-HEOps, and related assessments and evaluations. The competencies are presented in Figure 14 on the following page and discussed in further detail in Section 7.3.

The 'core competencies' form the basis for the requirements presented above in Table 11. They are also assessed in the scenario exercises, which are part of the selection process. The interview questions are based on the competency groups surrounding the core competencies, i.e. operations management, relational competencies, and strategic competencies. Also the fourth group of competencies, Red Cross Red Crescent-specific systems and services, is included in the requirements, and specifically addressed in the scenario exercises. Moreover, the competencies are used for self-assessment purposes, which involves the selected candidates completing a self-assessment as part of the selection process. Not all of the competencies, or related indicative skills to be precise, are of equal importance, with some as priorities and targets of focus both during the selection process and in the personal development plan. 'Strategic competencies' could be mentioned as an example of prioritized skills, including problem-solving, strategic decision-making, goal and direction-setting, and understanding operational context.

In addition to the actual applications, interviews, and scenario exercises discussed above, the selection process includes negotiation roleplay and a written exercise for applicants to demonstrate their ability to express themselves clearly and analyze situations and scenarios in a consistent manner. Additionally, a 360-degree assessment was conducted for the two first batches, which however was not deemed particularly beneficial and is no longer used. The interviews, exercises, and roleplay are carried out during a two-day workshop. The interviews are conducted by a three-member panel, the scenario exercise is observed and commented by two people, and the negotiation exercise in form of roleplay is acted by the applicant and one mentor, who also evaluates the applicant's videoed performance.

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79   Interview of a Senior Officer, IFRC, June 2016.

Each successful candidate, i.e. selected D-HEOps, is paired with a mentor, who is a HEOps and provides one-on-one guidance and support throughout the D-HEOps program. This process is described in Section 7.2.3.

The IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competencies

INDICATIVE SKILLS

• Problem solving
• Assessment and analysis
• Strategic decision making
• Goal and direction setting
• Planning
• Understand operational context
• Coordination with partners and stakeholders
• Transition planning
• Application of humanitarian standards

Strategic

• Meet operational objectives
• Team skill diagnosis
• Team management (jobs, delegation, structure, performance)
• Resource management (human, financial, time, material)
• Security and safe operations
• Programmatic reporting
• Information management

Operations management

INDICATIVE SKILLS

CORE
• **Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and values**
• Personal traits and characteristics
• Humanitarian industry knowledge, context, mechanisms and application of standards
• Disaster Management framework
• Sector knowledge
• Project cycle management

INDICATIVE SKILLS

• Effective management of self and people
• Emotional intelligence
• Self-awareness
• Effective communications and listening
• Effective feedback
• Situational leadership
• Mentoring and coaching
• Critical judgment
• Conflict management
• Negotiation
• Team work and care
• Motivation and influence
• Effective in changing environments

Relational

Red Cross Red Crescent specific systems and services

• Red Cross Red Crescent Movement structure and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
• Global Emergency Response tools
• DREF, Emergency Appeals, Reporting
• Red Cross Red Crescent Relationship to other organizations
• Basics of support services (finance, human resources, legal)

INDICATIVE SKILLS

Figure 14 The IFRC emergency team leader competencies (Source: The IFRC Team Leader Competencies, IFRC, 2013, p. 4. Confidential).

After the second batch of D-HEOps[80], the process will be evaluated in the first half of 2017. Depending on the evaluation outcomes, the intention is to arrange the selection process on an ongoing basis, which in practice means initiating it least once a year. For this purpose, a brochure is available on the IFRC Extranet. (IFRC, 2016b).

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80   A call for applications for the second batch was issued in April 2015, and the selection interviews and assessments took place in December 2015. The selected candidates had their first induction workshop in March 2016.

7.2.3   Development

The D-HEOps is a one-year development or induction program that contributes to the growth of the enrolled individuals so they reach the next level, possibly becoming the HEOps of tomorrow.

The selected candidates[81] are paired with an experienced HEOps, who will act as their mentor for a period of twelve to eighteen months. The mentor supports and guides the D-HEOps' development during and between operational deployments. The support of the mentor is referred to as the 'mentoring program', so in essence it is a program within a program.

The assigned mentor works with the D-HEOps to elaborate a personal development plan, which includes a detailed plan for appropriate learning and development activities, focusing on the key development areas identified together with the mentor and in the self-assessment done by the D-HEOps. Based on the identified key development areas, opportunities for experiences enhancing competencies in these areas are sought. The experiences are of two types; core and enabling experiences.

Core experiences are essential in view of ensuring the D-HEOps' successful performance as a HEOps and include leading a team during an emergency response operation as a Team Leader of e.g. FACT[82]-team. Seen as the best possible scenario, in some cases the D-HEOps is deployed together with the mentor. Mentoring can also take place remotely, but is essential during the deployment, which can be up to three months long. The mentor needs to also ensure on-the-job training on identified development areas. A formal performance review is conducted at the end of deployment, discussed with the mentor and D-HEOps.

A brief work period at the Secretariat is also considered a core experience, which assists in mastering the IFRC disaster management systems, tools, and procedures. A formal performance review is carried out at the end the period.

Enabling experiences enhance general performance and potentially diversify the skills of the D-HEOps, including working in a support role or as a facilitator in training (e.g. FACT team training, or training for Emergency Response Units, ERUs). Online and in-class training in humanitarian aid are also considered enabling experiences, including courses arranged by the ICRC, IFRC and some of its partners listed in Section 7.1.4. Some of the courses and training events are compulsory and have thus been complemented by the D-HEOps prior to selection. Further development needs and enabling experiences are then determined by the mentor and D-HEOps.

One-on-one mentoring sessions are held at least once a month, which can be arranged remotely with face-to-face sessions at the beginning, mid-term,

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81   9 of the 14 applicants in 2015 were selected for the D-HEOps roster, three of them female.

82   Field Assessment and Coordination Team

and at the end of the twelve-month period. However, during deployment, a one-on-one mentoring session needs to take place twice a week.

The mentor provides a mid-term and final appraisal upon completion of the mentoring program.

After the twelve-month period, as part of the final appraisal, the progress of each D-HEOps is reviewed against the personal development plan. If necessary, a further development plan is then drawn up to ensure successful completion of the program. The final review includes a description of the experience, achievements, and faced challenges, which is used as a tool for further development of the D-HEOps program and roster as well as the HEOps pool.

Mentoring continues after the actual twelve-month development program, if seen as necessary to enhance the competencies and skills of the D-HEOps to ensure high standards in the future.

The D-HEOps development program has been designed according to a 10-20-70 division of activities. 10% comprises formal training arranged either online of in class. Mentoring represents 20%, forming the relational segment of development. Deployment, one's own work, and other core and enabling experiences form the remaining 70% (D-HEOps induction workshop, presentation 3 2016, IFRC 2016. Confidential).

After completing 80% of the personal development plan and deployed e.g. as a team leader under the supervision of a mentor, the D-HEOps is considered 'HEOps ready' and included in the HEOps-Ready roster. However, the final decision depends on the appraisal of a panel that comprises the mentor and three or four other members, and is validated by the DCPRR Team Leader.

To summarize, the 'certification' process involves three steps: 1) a mission to an emergency area with a minimum length of one month (orange or red security phase) 2) 80 % personal development plan completion 3) the final appraisal including an interview by a panel (Program Description, D-HEOps, Development Pilot Program, IFRC, April 2015).

In view of the presented development activities, or the D-HEOps program as a whole to be exact, the ability of the HEOps to act as a mentor for at least one of the D-HEOps during the twelve-month 'certification process' is essential, and in fact a pivotal success factor of the HEOps pool and its future.

All in all, the selection process is designed to be as rigorous as required (e.g. Feasibility Study, 2011). The same rigor is integrated into the D-HEOps development program as a whole. However, processes are not flawless and the list of lessons learned is rather long (D-HEOps induction workshop, presentation 3.3.2016, IFRC 2016. Confidential). Mentioned issues include a lack of opportunities to participate in training, and poor inclusion of the line manager in the respective National Society; most of the D-HEOps are employed by National Societies. Additional issues include the reported lack of deployment opportunities for the D-HEOps, and an inadequate level of monitoring the learning progress related to the personal development plan.

Issues in communication are discussed in further detail in Section 7.3. Action points have been presented for each issue, and a plan to implement corrective measures is in place and followed.

7.2.4   Process from Application to Deployment

The application process begins by candidates applying for support from their own National Society, which needs to commit to funding the D-HEOps. The National Societies screen applications and determine whether the candidate is eligible and funding exists. Only after a positive decision from the National Society, the application can be submitted together with a motivation letter and recommendations from at least three people. The process stages illustrated in Figure 15 below have been described in earlier Sections, while some terms are clarified below.

Figure 15 The D-HEOps process (IFRC, 2016b, p. 15).

'Interview and assignment' refers to the selection workshop, and 'Becoming part of the Roster' to the HEOps-Ready roster. As mentioned before in Section 7.2.2, not all HEOps-Ready in the roster will become incumbents of a HEOps position. The Secretariat does first take a look at the HEOps-Ready roster when a new HEOps pool is about to be formed, but applications for the three full-time positions at the Secretariat can come from outside of the roster as well, meaning it is no guarantee.

7.3   Empirical Findings and Analysis

In the following, I will be presenting main empirical findings related to talent management in the IFRC, and examining what I consider key factors underpinning the findings.

The term 'talent management' is used in the Secretariat and introduced as a component in the HR Strategic Framework (IFRC, 2016, Confidential). Talent management is considered one of the three key focus areas of HR, the other two being leadership and management development, and "enabling

environment conductive to Growth"[83]. Talent management is defined as processes designed to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees who are both engaged and productive, which seems aligned with the definition among the majority of practitioners and researchers. However, some differences can be identified; firstly, succession planning is presented both separately (talent management and succession planning as one of the three key focus areas) and as an integral part of talent management. Another confusing aspect is the notion of seeing succession planning as ensuring 'the right people in the right place at the right time', which is usually considered the very core of talent management. This would imply that in the IFRC, talent management equals succession planning.

Furthermore, the target group of talent management practices is not clearly defined, albeit it is indicated that talent management involves identifying key positions and matching them with 'potential talent', and ensuring that relevant skills and competencies are developed. Definitions of who is considered a talent or 'potential talent' are not presented, and talent management is viewed as a process implemented by HR managers. There is no indication of how field staff, i.e. personnel working in delegations or emergency operations, benefits from the talent management processes even if each region has a dedicated HR Regional Manager. Based on the information gathered from interviews (June, 2016) and other research material at my disposal (Table 8 lists IFRC-related material), talent management is not recognized as a process at the Secretariat, let alone in field delegations. It is, at the most, regarded as a development initiative. Development initiatives, in turn, seem to, at least to most of the interviewees, equal to the e-learning courses available for all IFRC employees and some obligatory trainings, like WORC (The world of Red Cross Red Crescent) or Humanitarian Diplomacy (IFRC, HR Strategic Framework, 2016, Confidential).

The scoping study (BRC, 2011) refers to talent management or rather its lack at the IFRC, and argues that a long-term talent management strategy is necessary if a high-quality pool of HEOps and D-HEOps is to be maintained. Furthermore, and I fully agree, the BRC study (2011) proposes that talent management related to the HEOps pool, D-HEOps and respective rosters should be handled not by the HR department but by the DCPRR itself. This would denote a 'talent scout' dedicated to looking for candidates to fulfill leadership and management positions in emergency operations, and cooperating to this end with the National Societies. The 'scouting'[84] would have a wider scope than merely the HEOps pool and its rosters, albeit with a focus on developing and maintaining them. The eventual benefits of talent

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83   Quotation from a document entitled IFRC; HRD and Talent Management. Received from the author in June 2016, Confidential. The publishing date is not indicated on the document.

84   E.g. OCHA has a talent scout who works in cooperation with some head hunting partners (BRC study, 2011).

management for HEOps and D-HEOps are further discussed in Section 7.4 and in Chapter 8.

The context of HEOps and D-HEOps involves a myriad of players and stakeholders; stakeholders and partners in an emergency operation in the field can include, in addition to the IFRC team and relevant Secretariat employees, the Operating National Society (ONS), e.g. the Philippines Red Cross during Typhoon Haiyan, the Participating National Societies (PNS) in the field, e.g. American Red Cross with several delegates in the typhoon operation, and donor societies, e.g. Finnish Red Cross. This requires a great deal of negotiation, communication and influencing skills from anyone working in the operations, particularly from HEOps, which should be emphasized in their identification and recruitment. Furthermore, as stated above, as the majority of leadership work takes place in emergencies, the position needs to grant sufficient authority to make timely decisions. In addition, in discussing the current shift of NGOs becoming more businesslike, Claeyé states (2014, p. 438) that managers and employees of NGOs cannot be passive recipients of orders, but are expected to be "capable of initiative, creativity and intelligence, and who are assumed to be self-motivated." (Claeyé, 2014, p. 444). This authority inherent in the HEOps position together with competencies and skills important in the role are elaborated on in the following.

The growing complexity of disasters coupled with an interest among the public and institutional donors towards humanitarian aid and its impact and effectiveness have raised the standards of reporting and raised the level of scrutiny and accountability. This development requires internal support from the organization, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and well-prepared leaders who display the afore-mentioned characteristics of initiative and creativity, to mention just a few. The IFRC does not traditionally support these characteristics, and risk aversion is relatively high (BRC, 2011). Additionally, a lack of competent emergency leaders still prevails despite HEOps and D-HEOps improving the situation.

The lack of competent leaders has led to the same individuals often close to retirement age being deployed to increasingly complex operations with a significantly higher amount of stakeholders than in the past, while requiring new ways of working and decision-making. An ability to react to a highly complex environment is often not among the strengths of extremely seasoned emergency leaders (BRC, 2011). This can first and foremost represent a reputational risk to the IFRC. It can also be argued to add to the reluctance to accept leaders coming to emergency operations from outside the more permanent field delegations; if no added value is accumulated, the leaders can be perceived as a threat to the leaders in the field and their decision-making, which in turn can nibble away some of the authority of the HEOps to make decisions and implement decisions (BRC, 2011, interviews December 2014, June 2016).

Challenges in accepting the HEOps' role by more established leaders in the Regions are reflected in the following statements and notions. The

first quote is linked to the importance of the Regional Offices as they act as recipients of the HEOps' services: "Since their recruitment in early April 2012, the three HEOps staff members have been deployed nine times into six different operations on behalf of three of the Federation's Regional offices, representing approximately 40 per cent of their working time on contract." (HEOps Progress Report, IFRC, 2014). However, the review points out that the three HEOps incumbents are not recognized and used by the Regions as 'strategic leaders', as the Regions seem to think 'we can handle it'. "The HEOps are a global Federation-wide resource, not a Geneva tool to be resisted" (Mid-Term Review, HEOps, IFRC, 2014, p. 3. Confidential). Furthermore, one of the interviewees[85] also expressed concerns over a lack of clarity in how leadership responsibilities are shared in emergency operations at the regional level.

The same challenges in accepting HEOps/D-HEOps by the Regional offices is still evident, despite the pool already existing for several years (D-HEOps induction workshop, presentation 3.3.2016. IFRC, 2016. Confidential). A lack of communication about D-HEOps (and HEOps) is considered one of the reasons, which has led to the low conspicuousness of the pool and rosters. The low awareness level was confirmed by the interviews and conversations conducted by the author of this research report at the Secretariat in June 2016. Including some of the interviewees, surprisingly many were unfamiliar with the HEOps pool and rosters. This issue can be serious and endanger the existence of the HEOps pool and related development and maintenance, especially if the lack of awareness hampers funding and support from the National Societies.

Regarding the competency frameworks in use in the IFRC for the HEOps and D-HEOps, a question arises whether the list of required competencies is too long and detailed. Detailed competency lists are discussed by Mirabile (1997), who claims that lists that are too detailed lead to restrictions in their effective usage, including 'information that is less comparable across jobs and people', and 'creativity that is more inhibited in terms of allowing alternative ways to work and reach the same objectives'. (1997, p. 76). Creativity in finding alternative ways of working is particularly valid in the complex and unpredictable context of global disasters of today as discussed above. Additionally, the range of acceptable performance is more limited (Mirabile, 1997). I posit that the aforementioned points are valid for the HEOps and relate to the very detailed competency framework used in their identification, selection and development.

The combination of competencies required from HEOps seems extremely broad and all-encompassing. The IFRC also seems to use terms without actually defining them or looking at their general meaning in the corporate world or research. Examples of ill-defined or vague terms are 'core competencies', 'skills', and 'strategic competencies'. The usage of the

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terms 'strategic' and 'strategy' in the IFRC was discussed earlier in Section 7.1. The other terms and their unclear meanings were also referred to in Section 7.1.1.

A problem can eventually arise when competencies and skills are used as a basis for e.g. development plans and should be understood in terms of development activities contributing to their enhancement.[86]

To prevent the afore-mentioned problem and foster an understanding of the competencies, a framework was introduced as a tool, which displays specific behaviors valued by the IFRC and the beneficiaries of assistance. The framework is also supposed to provide a common language and basis for objective performance standards. According to the document, competencies relate to knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and abilities that a person working for the IFRC should demonstrate. Competencies, then, are expressed through specific actions allowing them to be observed. Furthermore, when competencies are combined with skills, both professional and technical, they are expected to define the behaviors that drive the achievement of individual and team objectives.

The five domains of competencies within the IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework (2013) are as follows:

1. **Core Competencies:** Understanding of humanitarian contexts and application of humanitarian and Red Cross and Red Crescent principles.
2. **Strategic Competencies:** Seeing the overall goal within the changing context and taking responsibility to motivate others to work towards it, independent of one's role, function or seniority.
3. **Relationship Competencies:** Developing and maintaining collaborative, coordinated relationships at times of heightened complexity and risk.
4. **Operational Management Competencies:** Operating safely and securely in disaster response contexts.
5. **Red Cross and Red Crescent Specific Systems and Services:** Understanding of IFRC's mandate and objectives and correctly using tools and procedures for disaster response.

As presented above, each competence is expressed through specific actions and related skills, which in turn are supported by defining behaviors that can "be observed" (IFRC, 2013, p. 3). The last 'domain of competencies', Red Cross and Red Crescent Specific Systems and Services, can be used as an example. The related main competence is presented under the 'domain'; understanding the mandate and correctly using tools and procedures. Related indicative skills are presented in Figure 16, (p. 165), and the defining or observable behaviors in Figure 16 on the following page.

Indicative Skill Red Cross Red Crescent Relationship to Other Organizations	**Observable Behaviors**
	Advocates for the knowledge of and respect for RC/RC principles in existing structures and processes
	Fosters and facilitates transparent and accountable RC/RC with other humanitarian organizations
	Strategically engages in disaster coordination mechanisms and ensures a unified approach to stakeholders

Figure 16 An example of an indicative skill and related behaviors (Modified from IFRC Emergency Team Leader Competency Framework, 2013).

While the thinking behind the interaction between competencies, behaviors, and skills is certainly well-intended (see Figure 14 p. 157 , and Figure 16 above), it can fail in providing tools to assess and observe. Furthermore, it seems to confuse behaviors, skills, and mindsets, such as by presenting emotional (and cultural) intelligence as a skill. In contrast, I agree with e.g. Boyatzis (2008), who presents three clusters of competencies, claiming that they distinguish outstanding performers from average performers. The presented clusters are: cognitive competencies; emotional intelligence competencies (emotional self-awareness and self-management competencies, such as emotional self-awareness and emotional self-control); and social intelligence competencies, which are discussed in Section 2.2.1.1 of this research report. Specific behaviors linked to emotional (and cultural) intelligence in the IFRC framework (IFRC 2013) are e.g. as follows: "is aware of cultural differences and is sensitive to own prejudices"; and "avoids emotional displays that may exacerbate difficult situations or interfere with effective working relationships" (IFRC, 2013, p. 8). One can challenge the observability of 'avoiding' or 'being aware', and understand the difficulties in using the framework referred to by several interviewees[87].

Furthermore, the difference between 'core competencies' (1) and Red Cross and Red Crescent-specific systems and services (5) can argued to be artificial, which both include general humanitarian aid issues and refer to issues relating to the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. It is tempting to wonder whether the latter was added to the framework for its four sets of competencies around the core competencies in the middle, forming a flower with four petals as illustrated in Figure 14 (p. 157).

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87   Interviews with the Finnish Red Cross, January 2016, IFRC Secretariat, March 2016

In an interview in the largest business weekly in Finland[88], Andreas von Weissenberg, Head of International Aid at the Finnish Red Cross, describes the characteristics of a good emergency leader without even mentioning technical skills. According to him, these include: calmness, listening skills, flexibility, resilience, logical thinking, and a sense of humor. According to von Weissenberg, as stress levels rise, which is typical in emergency operations, it is paramount for the leader to remain calm in order to calm down others, and act rapidly but in a tranquil manner. They need to be able to work logically despite heightened stress levels. Asking the right questions and listening to answers is imperative; all relevant information needs to be gathered, as it can be scattered and scarce in emergency situations. Although von Weissenberg's description of the ideal emergency leader mixes up skills, competencies, and attitudes, it can be seen to contribute to an understanding of what to look for in recruiting leaders in a humanitarian aid context.

Challenges in identifying and recruiting HEOps on the basis of the Emergency Team Leader Competencies (IFRC, 2013) are also mentioned in the Feasibility Study (2011): "The HEOps job description and person specification are extremely demanding and cover a range of attributes rarely found in one individual" (2011, p. 31).

Furthermore, the list of competencies required from both HEOps and D-HEOps is detailed and takes no account of potential and 'meta-competencies' like learning agility and emotional intelligence (e.g. Boyatzis, 2008; Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Swords & Emmens, 2007). This is reflected in the comment of an ex-HEOps: "To me it is much more interesting to look at the candidate's potential to grow, rather than selecting the "know-it-all-already" candidates with the full package of skills. Candidates who are displaying an eagerness to learn, curiosity, humbleness, and ability to think out of the box is human material that can be formed in a mentoring and skills development process and could add a lot of value to the D-HEOps program." [89]

All in all, the difference between the requirements for HEOps and D-HEOps seems to apply to the years of experience in the Movement and exposure to leadership positions in emergency operations. Agreeing with the comments above, in my view D-HEOps would benefit from increasingly looking at the candidates' potential for leading complex disaster operations of today and tomorrow involving local people, and cooperating also with stakeholders from outside the Movement in a fruitful manner. This requires characteristics mentioned by von Weissenberg combined with strong communication skills, an ability to take calculated risks, and self-awareness, which were presented as requirements for HEOps in Section 7.1.1. In my opinion, the last three characteristics should be of prime importance for

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88   Talouselämä, issue 17, 2016. P.p. 59-61.

89   E-mail from HEOps ex-incumbent, December 2015

D-HEOps applicants along with the components of potential: curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination (Fernández-Aráoz, 2014).

The selection process for the D-HEOps is impressive in its thoroughness, this is highlighted in Section 7.2.2. Due to the confidentiality of the interview material, only some general comments based on my observation can be presented here. The interview questions are based on the Emergency Team Leader Competencies (IFRC, 2013) and related indicative skills. All of the questions relate to situations in emergency operations, and candidates are asked to give a detailed account on their conduct in a similar situation. The candidates receive some of the questions in advance, and are thus given a chance to reflect and rehearse some of the answers beforehand. While these 'war stories' were interesting and certainly gave insights into the candidate's experience, they shed very little light if any on the potential components presented above and how the candidates are perceived by others. During the selection workshop, I repeatedly asked what the questions sought to achieve. The only answer I received was that they wanted to know whether the candidate's competencies match the requirements. However, the Team Leader of DCPRR decided to make some changes to the development program to reflect some of the issues I raised in the selection workshop in December 2015. A self-awareness analysis tool was filled in and analyzed by the D-HEOps in the induction workshop in March 2016, and the results served as a basis for the personal development plan. I led the process of the analysis and planning session for analyzing and using the results.

Whether called a program or roster, D-HEOps is a necessity for the sustainability of the HEOps pool. However, as has been stated before e.g. in Section 7.2, it is not an automatic feeder to the pool. A great deal of effort has gone into the design, implementation and maintenance of the D-HEOps program, and work continues. Exposure to genuine emergency situations has a crucial role in the development process, and the division into 'core' and 'enabling' experiences is interesting and seems effective. These elements will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 8. Challenges related to the D-HEOps include the availability of funding and support from the National Societies, and awareness and acceptance of the D-HEOps to guarantee development opportunities, i.e. deployments to the D-HEOps. Deployments are, as presented in Section 7.2.3, an integral part of the development program and certification process. The D-HEOps, or their managerial implications to be precise, will be discussed in Chapter 8.

7.4 Summary of Key Findings of the Case

"I would like to use the opportunity to thank the
National Society for hosting the gigantic emergency operation.
A disaster of this scale is an overwhelming
experience, and not even the most
experienced National Society or other IFRC staff members
can imagine
beforehand what it entails."
 (Modified from End of Mission Report, 2014, HEOps Incumbent)

Research on leadership in NGOs (e.g. Hailey, 2006) indicates that leadership effectiveness in this particular context is based on intangible personal and interpersonal skills and qualities. These include the ability to understand complex systems and organization in fast-changing environments, emotional intelligence, and humility. Additionally, the person needs to be able to work in alignment with the mission and values of the organization, and represent the values and the mission (Bolt et al., 2015). However, competency models, leadership development, and selection criteria in the IFRC seem to be focus on e.g. mastering nuts and bolts of emergency tools, i.e. technical skills, and experience from the Movement in similar types of emergencies (BRC, 2011). Experience is vital due to the challenging environment and decisions that can even be fatal and need to made quickly based on incomplete and complex information. However, it seems that the IFRC emphasizes experience at the cost of other qualities, such as the ones mentioned above.

Competency frameworks and models are widespread in the humanitarian aid context (Swords & Emmens, 2007), and their effectiveness can be disputed. Similarly to the framework used by the IFRC, they seem to fail to acknowledge the importance of context and related adaptation as well as the right balance of competencies and skills, which is more important than meeting the requirements of predetermined levels of individual competencies and skills.

A call for more structured talent management in NGOs has been presented by Parry et al. (2010), and I agree with the researchers in their claim that increased attention e.g. on identification and attraction, including Employee Value Propositions, would assist in finding much-needed future leadership capability. This would mean focusing on the right mindsets and motivation to work in the area. Mechanical competency frameworks would give way to talent management processes, which are claimed to create more space for potential. The need for talent management processes in view of attracting potential is in my view evident in the IFRC as well. The Feasibility Study (2011) Scoping Survey (BRC, 2011) propose a talent management approach for the HEOps and D-HEOps pool and roster.

The IFRC[90] takes an inclusive approach to talent management, whereby everyone is a talent and eligible for the same development activities, for instance. To be frank, talent management seems to exist only on paper and is at best considered a succession planning process. The inclusive approach is visible in the Secretariat employees' understanding of talent management, which seems to entail all staff members being eligible for development activities.[91]

At present, the HEOps pool and D-HEOps roster resemble competency models within the larger Competency Framework (IFRC, 2013) rather than 'talent pools'. However, from a talent management perspective, they could be regarded as small, defined talent pools (exclusive-subject approach); they focus exclusively on a select group of employees identified as talent or high-potential, with 'talent' conceptualized as people, which is the definition of the subject approach by Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013).

According to a key person interviewed in the Secretariat[92], the HEOps pool was initiated and developed to "create a common language, clarify expectations and promote feedback and development culture". Unfortunately, these objectives have not been met, awareness of the HEOps and D-HEOps is rather low, and impact on the culture is not perceived in the organization. Also, incumbents have not been accepted as leaders in the Regions, as discussed in Section 7.3. Thus, the HEOps and D-HEOps seem to be stand-alone endeavors without sufficient support from top management and HR either in the Secretariat or in the Regions. Moreover, HEOps being an exclusive pool of carefully selected individuals is a factor hampering acceptance in the organization. In an organization where particular competencies and traits have been overvalued[93] (Gozling & Mintzberg, 2003), and where people expect to be treated equally based on the principles of the organization itself, this seems to be a challenge and even an eventual hindrance to the success of the HEOps.

One proposed way to decrease resistance and increase the level of awareness about HEOps and D-HEOps is to transfer HR processes and especially HEOps development activities from the HR department to a dedicated HR person in DCPRR, who would work in the same team as the HEOps members. Open communication about HEOps requirements and definitions, and for instance separating all related processes from general leadership and management development activities, could arguably assist in overcoming awareness and acceptance issues mentioned above.

To summarize, rather than using the current, somewhat complex competency framework (IFRC, 2013) in identification, selection and recruitment of the HEOps and particularly D-HEOps, the IFRC should

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90   Interview, IFRC Secretariat, HR, June 2016

91   Interviews with Senior Officers, IFRC Secretariat, June 2016.

92   Interview, December, 2014

93   Action and fast decision-making are emphasized over reflection and relationship-building.

perhaps perceive HEOps and D-HEOps as talent pools, and adopt talent management practices starting from talent definition, which reflects the demanding context of a humanitarian aid organization and more specifically leadership tasks in emergency operations. Furthermore, HEOps and D-HEOps should be seen as separate talent pools; the D-HEOps should be a 'high-potential pool' with more emphasis on 'potential' components and less on specific Red Cross Red Crescent experience. Thus, the distinctive pools would have different definitions of 'talent'.

The distinct approaches to talent definition and identification in different pools described above are in line with the proposed consistency in talent management approaches in companies by Wiblen et al. (2015), who argue that, rather than a single approach to talent management, organizations would benefit from identifying and managing talent in ways that are "fluid, flexible, and customizable" (Wiblen et al., 2015, p. 1). I consider flexible approaches to talent management essential, particularly applying to talent definition, which is illustrated in the framework for defining talent introduced in Chapter 2.

8. Conclusions and Summary

The research gap that prompted this study was expressed with the following main research question: *Do the managerial or business approaches to talent management and the principal assumption of organizations as money-making entities make talent management frameworks and theories non-applicable in the context of e.g. non-profit organizations?* While I will explore underlying issues raised by the question in more depth in this Section by for instance presenting managerial implications and contributions to talent management research and theory, the response to the above main question can already be stated as a simple 'no'.

The three sub-questions of my study are as follows:

1. Does the humanitarian aid context impact the way 'talent' is defined, identified, recruited, developed, deployed, and retained?
2. Are competency frameworks a sufficient tool for managing talent in this context?
3. Are there processes and mechanisms in use in managing talent in the humanitarian aid context that could be beneficial for for-profit organizations?

The first conclusion based on the case study findings and the conducted literature review is that talent management can be an effective tool in the humanitarian aid context. Leadership in this context can be described as demanding, stressful, complex, and hectic, clearly changing the focus of talent management activities, including talent definition and identification. Emphasis is placed on experience in similar operations and knowledge of the context, i.e. humanitarian aid and particularly emergency operations, including related processes and procedures. Alignment with the values and mission of the organization are equally essential. However, also increasingly complex emergencies of today require the right mindset and manifestations of 'potential': curiosity, learning agility, flexibility, insight, and determination. Additionally, intangible qualities of leaders, such as passion and commitment, need to be noted. This is poignantly illustrated by the following quote about a leader:

"She spoke with knowledge, passion and commitment,
and that commitment drew others who were committed"
(Buchanan-Smith & Scriven, 2011, p. 27).

Secondly, it can be concluded that competency frameworks widely used in the humanitarian aid context are not ideal tools for identifying, assessing, developing, and evaluating individuals. Competency frameworks especially in the humanitarian aid context are often highly detailed, listing dozens of competencies, skills, and requirements for experience. Furthermore, terms related to the frameworks are often unclear, which can further complicate their usage and diminish their effectivity in areas like individual development. The frameworks often focus on technical and professional issues, paying inadequate attention on social skills, self-awareness, and an ability to influence others, while leaving too little room for creativity and flexibility. These issues can also be identified in the above-mentioned challenges in talent definition, and are highlighted by a quote by an ex-HEOps[94]:

"Finally, we might want to value the social and
inter-personal skills of D-HEOps higher."

8.1 Contributions to Existing Talent Management Literature and Research

This study contributes to the literature on talent management in different contexts. The main contribution to the focal study is the introduction of the time aspect to talent definition by presenting a framework (Figure 9 in Chapter 2, p. 90) for talent definition. The framework is modified from Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), and the time aspect is represented by a present-future dimension in each component. I posit that 'potential' is not an element of the original model by Ulrich and Smallwood (2012), and in talent definition, 'potential' can be argued to be an essential component. 'Potential' is included in the framework through the inclusion of the future dimension. The components of the framework are competence, commitment, and contribution. The respective indicators of the 'present' dimension are job descriptions, value and mission, team and supervisor, and performance. The indicators of the 'future' dimension are strategic competencies, initiative and external orientation, and potential. The sub-components of 'potential' are, in turn, curiosity, insight, engagement, and determination (Fernández-Aráoz, 2014).

Another contribution of my research is the framework for talent management introduced in Figure 7 in Chapter 2. The framework aims to

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94   E-mail, December 2015

improve understanding of terms used in talent management by grouping the different components as follows: activities with a focus on talent with an organizational view (talent attraction, identification, development, and retention); process (talent management); and outcomes (recruitment and deployment). Finally, talent review is considered a decision rather than a series of decisions, as is the case of a strategy. The framework depicts strategy as the basis for all talent management actions and decisions. Strategy should not only inform talent management, but also be informed by it, in which case talent management of the organization is at its highest maturity level (Tasnley et al., 2010).

8.2 Contributions to Practice – Managerial Implications

Firstly, the main contribution to practice of my research is the framework for defining talent, which allows each organization, business unit/area, function, or department to define talent in a flexible and dynamic manner to respond to specific needs. It seems justified to suggest that potential is an important element of talent, which can be included in the way talent is defined.

Secondly, the present research contributes to management practice by providing a framework for talent management. My research suggests that it is important to look at different parts or components of talent management, and group them into categories that require different approaches and produce diverse outcomes. The role of strategy as a feeder to and recipient of information from talent management is essential in this framework, as it contributes to a higher level of maturity in talent management in general.

The contributions to practice can also be examined through the sub-questions of my research, the first two of them being as follows:

1. Does the humanitarian aid context impact the way 'talent' is defined, identified, recruited, developed, deployed, and retained?
2. Are competency frameworks a sufficient tool for managing talent in this context?

As stated above, the framework for defining talent can be argued to reflect different contexts, as it entails the organization's own strategy and related strategic competencies together with the job descriptions, values and mission included in the definition. Thus, I posit that like any other context, the humanitarian aid context impacts the way 'talent' is defined, identified, recruited, developed, deployed, and retained.

The introduced talent management framework is built around the strategy of the organization – in other words, the strategy feeds to talent management. The framework suggests that organizations should look at talent and employees in general with a wider focus than task-related competencies and competency frameworks seem to allow. In my view, the

competency frameworks used by the IFRC are not sufficient for managing talent: firstly, they pay almost no attention to potential; and secondly, they are not flexible or dynamic enough to reflect changes in the environment, such as the increasing complexity of emergencies.

The process of developing talent in a relatively systematic and concrete manner as carried out by the IFRC in regards to D-HEOps is also introduced as a managerial implication, which justifies answering 'yes' to the third research sub-question:

> *Are there processes and mechanisms in use in managing talent in the humanitarian aid context that could be beneficial for for-profit organizations?*

The D-HEOps application, selection, and development processes can be argued to be a combination of solid, carefully designed activities related to assessment, evaluation, and observation, hence laying a solid foundation for both feedback and mentoring sessions as well as personal development plans. Deployments to emergency operations are a key component in the development program, which require the D-HEOps to be exposed to real-life challenges. These are not simulations or experiments in 'safe' environments, such as a simulation in a training program, and can be argued to equip the talent with skills and competencies that are invaluable in view of his or her future career. Corporations can arguably benefit from a similar approach, although genuine experiences that require the same speed in decision-making and involve such crucial decisions (life or death) can be challenging to arrange.

One of the pivotal tasks of the HEOps is working as a mentor for the D-HEOps. This task is reflected in both the required competencies for the HEOps and in their job description. The mentoring skills of the HEOps are enhanced as a part of the development activities. The HEOps are also actively involved in the design and implementation of the development program for the D-HEOps. In addition, they serve as facilitators in workshops and participate in the assessment and selection process. Mentorship provided by the HEOps for one or more D-HEOps involves working together in real-life situations; deployments to operations are required from D-HEOps before they can be certified and accepted for the roster. From the point of view of the D-HEOps, this involves more than just 'shadowing'; the HEOps and D-HEOps work as a team in the operation, the D-HEOps taking a great deal of responsibility and needing to attain set targets.

Close involvement of the HEOps in the development of the 'high potential' pool, i.e. the D-HEOps, can be argued to be effective and to have an impact on the possibilities of the D-HEOps to succeed. The role of the HEOps as a mentor is also highly appreciated by the D-HEOps themselves. In my view, this is one of the aspects that corporations could benefit from. Managers should engage strongly in the development, assessment, and evaluation of talent in their teams. Mentoring (and coaching) skills should

be a prerequisite for all managers, and actual mentoring a regular part of their agenda. Furthermore, managers should be involved in planning development activities relating to talent, and they should regularly participate in providing the development possibilities to the talent of the whole organization, not only the selected talent of their own teams.

As stated above, even after the entire application, assessment and development process, a D-HEOps is not automatically approved as a HEOps. In addition to the requirement of fulfilling the development plan, i.e. implementing the development activities and initiatives in the plan, the D-HEOps needs to go through a certification process and be approved as 'HEOps ready' by a panel[95]. The D-HEOps certification process can been seen to be similar to a very robust talent review in corporations.

8.3 Limitations and Future Avenues for Talent Management Research in the Non-Profit/NGO Context

The present research involved a single case study. The empirical results are not intended to be generalizable as such to other contexts. My priority was to produce a rich description of the case, the HEOps pool, and the related D-HEOps roster. The intention was to elucidate how this particular case firstly came about, and secondly how the context of a humanitarian organization was reflected in the pool, the roster, and the related processes and activities. However, the theoretical contributions, such as the Talent Management Framework presented in Figure 7 (p. 87) and the framework for defining talent (Figure 9, p. 90), can hopefully be transferred to other contexts, such as corporations.

Talent management has in recent years received much attention in academia, but is still a concept lacking, at least in the opinion of many authors, empirically tested theoretical frameworks, and even solid practitioner approaches based on academic research. As stated on several occasions, a great deal of confusion exists around central definitions within the concept of talent management. Challenges in the definition and identification of 'talent' together with addressing the definition especially in the context of an NGO will remain pivotal topics of my own research. Central aspects in this research will be the 'talent as fit' approach together with the values-based approach to competency modeling.

Furthermore, to gain more insight on the case pool itself, particularly in view of its sustainability and success as one of the core emergency tools in the IFRC, I will look into all the relevant actions of the IFRC related to HEOps, including planning and implementing the D-HEOps. The impact of these activities on the incumbents and HEOps pool is to be studied further

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95   All D-HEOps have not been certified from the two 'batches' having gone through or in the process presently. (Interview in the Secretariat, September 2016.)

in order to suggest possible ways to eventually contribute to HEOps'wider acceptance in the IFRC and to the future success of this arguably powerful tool. This requires more extensive access than so far to related material, incumbents, and particularly the top leadership of IFRC together with Regional Directors and Regional Offices [96].

Issues related to increasing complexity of disasters and the changing environment of humanitarian aid would need to be included in future research in the humanitarian aid context, especially in light of competencies and skills required from leaders engaged in emergency operations. Understanding the complex causes of 'modern' disasters, e.g. climate change, is of utmost importance, which undoubtedly requires an ability to synthesize the situation and environment in order to construct a basis for corresponding response strategies.

One of the factors contributing to changes in the environment for humanitarian aid is the role of recipients, who can no longer be perceived as passive recipients of foreign resources. Ensuring autonomy in resource usage and allowing governments and local organizations, including the National Societies, to make decisions locally needs to be emphasized. This, in turn, requires cooperation and negotiation skills as well as an ability to support local stakeholders for instance through training and education. The role of local National Societies focuses on the strategy of the IFRC, which, as stated above, can have an impact on the requirements for leaders in emergency operations – an area that needs to be included in further research.

The humanitarian aid context is not widely researched in academia and thus offers a myriad of avenues for future research. My own future research will focus on afore-mentioned topics related to talent management components of competence, commitment, and contribution, with the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement as the focal organization.

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96   This has been agreed upon with several IFRC and FRC (Finnish Red Cross) managers and leaders

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Appendix 1 The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

Code of conduct

The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, was developed and agreed upon by eight of the word's largest disaster response agencies in the summer of 1994.

The Code of Conduct, like most professional codes, is a voluntary one. It lays down ten points of principle which all humanitarian actors should adhere to in their disaster response work, and goes on to describe the relationships that agencies working in disasters should seek with donor govenments, host governments and the UN system.

The code is self-policing. There is as yet no international association for disaster-response NGOs which possesses any authority to sanction its members. The Code of Conduct continues to be used by the International Federation to monitor its own standards of relief delivery and to encourage other agencies to set similar standards.

It is hoped that humanitarian actors around the world will commit themselves publicly to the code by becoming a signaroty and by abiding by its principles. Governments and donor organizations may want to use the code as a yardstick against which to measure the conduct of those agencies with which they work. Disaster-affected communities have a right to expect that those who assist them measure up to these standards.

Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreing policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

Appendix 2 Different Definitions of Talent

Different definitions of "talent"
(Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013) Modified with additions (Tansley 2012, and Dries 2013) by the author of the focal study.

Source (as presented by authors)	Definition
Gagné (2000)	"(...) superior mastery of systematically developed abilities or skills" (p. 67)
Williams (2000)	"describe those people who do one or other of the following: regularly demonstrate exceptional ability – and achievement – either over a range of activities and situations, or within a specialized and narrow field of expertise; consistently indicate high competence in areas of activity that strongly suggest transferable, comparable ability in situations where they have yet to be tested and proved to be highly effective, i.e. potential." (p. 35)
Buckingham and Vosburgh (2001)	"Talent should refer to a person's recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied." (p. 21)
Jericó (2001)	"The implemented capacity of a committed professional or group of professionals that achieve superior results in a particular environment and organization." (p. 428; translation ours)
Michaels et al. (2001)	"(...) the sum of a person's abilities—his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow." (p. xii)
Lewis and Heckman (2006)	"(...) is essentially a euphemism for 'people'" (p. 141)
Tansley, Harris, Stewart, and Turner (2006)	"Talent can be considered as a complex amalgam of employees' skills, knowledge, cognitive ability and potential. Employees' values and work preferences are also of major importance." (p. 2)
Stahl et al. (2007)	"a select group of employees – those that rank at the top in terms of capability and performance – rather than the entire workforce". (p. 4)

| Tansley et al. (2007)	"Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organizational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer-term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential." (p. 8)
Ulrich (2007)	"Talent equals competence [able to do the job] times commitment [willing to do the job] times contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their work]" (p. 3)
Cheese, Thomas, and Craig (2008)	"Essentially, talent means the total of all the experience, knowledge, skills, and behaviours that a person has and brings to work." (p. 46)
González-Cruz et al. (2009)	"A set of competencies that, being developed and applied, allow the person to perform a certain role in an excellent way." (p 22; translation ours) "
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	(...) in some cases, 'the talent' might refer to the entire employee population." (p. 14)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	"In groups talent can refer to a pool of employees who are exceptional in their skills and abilities either in a specific technical area (such as software graphics skills) or a competency (such a consumer marketing talent), or a more general area (such as general managers or high-potential talent). And in some cases, "the talent" might refer to the entire employee population." (pp. 13–14)
Silzer and Dowell (2010)	"An individual's skills and abilities (talents) and what the person is capable of doing or contributing to the organization." (p. 14)
Ulrich and Smallwood (2012)	"Talent = competence [knowledge, skills and values required for todays' and tomorrows' job; right skills, right place, right job, right time] × commitment [willing to do the job] × contribution [finding meaning and purpose in their job]" (p. 60)
Bethke-Langenegger (2012)	"we understand talent to be one of those workers who ensures the competitiveness and future of a company (as specialist or leader) through his organisational/job specific qualification and knowledge, his social and methodical competencies, and his characteristic attributes such as eager to learn or achievement oriented" (p. 3)
Tansley (2011)	There is no single or universal contemporary definition of ''talent'' in any one language; there are different organisational perspectives of talent. Current meanings of talent tend to be specific to an organisation and highly influenced by the nature of the work undertaken. A shared organisational language for talent is important. There is high level of influence of management consultants in the development of the term in managing people with unique knowledge and skills.
Dries (2013)	Talent can mean different things to different people (e.g., researchers, companies, HR practitioners, individual employees), and considering the immature state of the field it is difficult, at this point in time, to evaluate which meanings of talent are 'more valid' than others. Depending on the theoretical framework you use, the population you wish to study, and the academic discipline you aim to contribute to, your talent management project might look very different from other, pre-existing work.

Appendix 3 Different 'Talent Types'

Source : Uren 2011, p. 33.

1. **Brand enthusiasts** ("Impress me"). These will seek to work in a company that has a strong reputation or brand image. They seek opportunities to be stretched and challenged, and want the necessary support to make this happen.
2. **Career Ladderists** ("Promote me"). These want promotion and they want it fast. They are attracted to organizations with a more traditional corporate approach to upward development and progression, and value opportunities to develop. They believe their status should increase in line with their development.
3. **Connectors** ("Support me"). These appreciate a friendly working environment and enjoy the social aspect of work. Development is about having a range of opportunities and experiences, as well as having the right collaboration and support in place to make the most of them.
4. **The Nurtured** ("Guide me"). These want organizations to get to know them, respect them and take a large role in their development. They appreciate tailored development that meets their individual needs and are probably the least likely of all the segments to seek development opportunities themselves.
5. **Opportunity Seekers** ("Challenge me"). Like Career Ladderists, these also value upward progression. What makes Opportunity Seekers different is that they value the opportunities to be stretched and challenged a little more than the status of an upward move.
6. **Planners** ("Understand me"). These primarily see their career as a kind of anchor that gives them a sense of stability and a pathway through life. They seek a clear plan for their career, but this does not necessarily mean upward progression or promotion; more so a path with a sequence of developments over the long term.

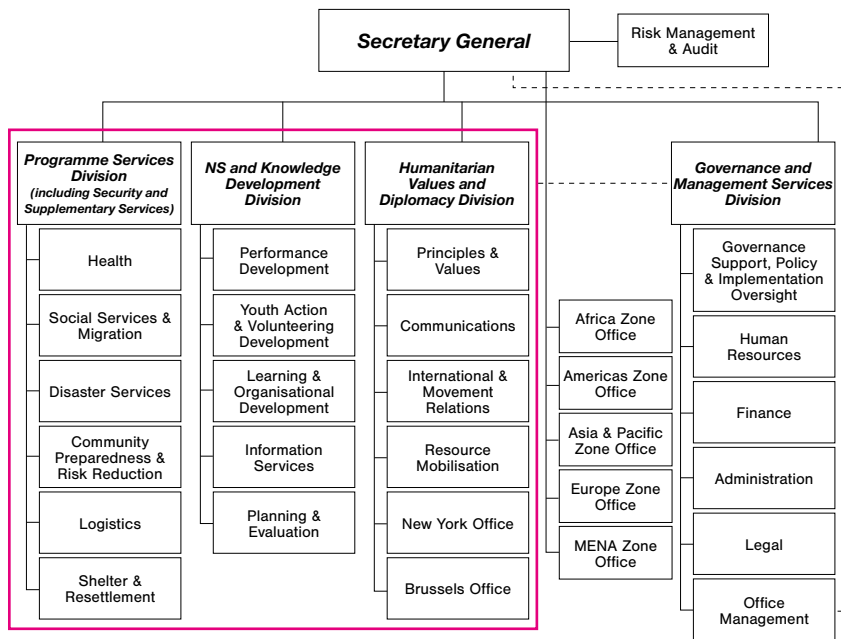# Appendix 4 Journey to Talent Segmentation

Source: Uren, 2011, p. 34 .
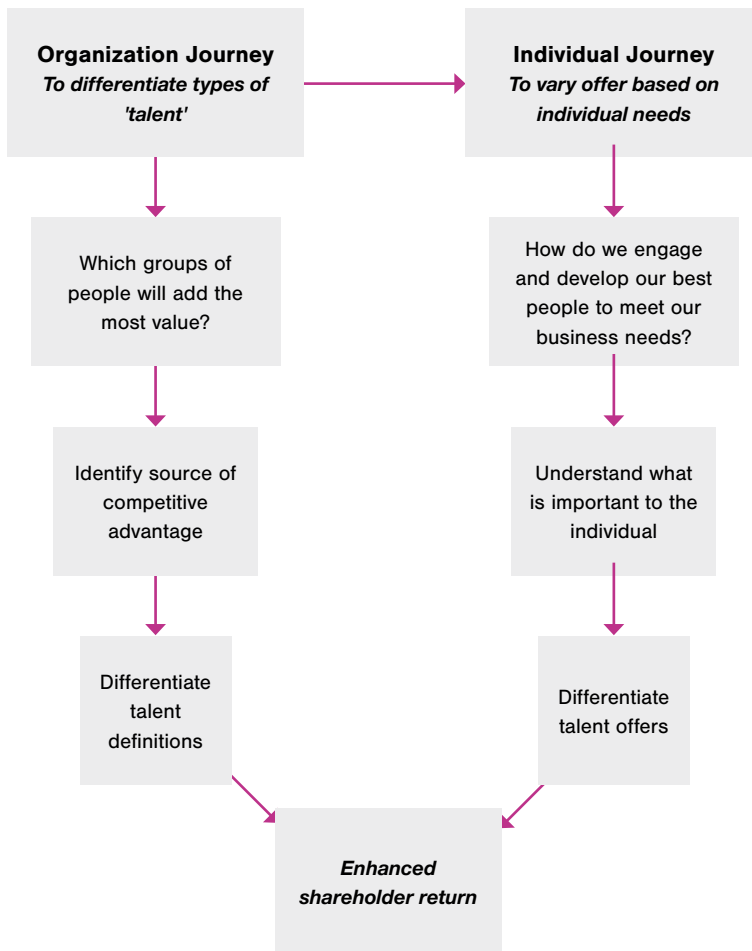
Appendix 5 Interview Questions (Corporations in Finland)

Interviews conducted December 2014 – March 2015.

1. Is there a talent management strategy and process in your organization?
2. Do you have a 'Talent Pipeline' or something equivalent in your organization?
3. Is 'talent' defined in your organization?
   a) If yes, is it a dynamic process?
   b) Who are the persons participating in the definition process?
   c) What is the definition in your organization?
   d) Do definitions differ between units or departments?
4. Would you say that how 'talent' is defined has an impact on talent management activities and/or on HR Architecture?
5. Do the definitions of 'High Potential' and 'Talent' differ?
   a) If yes, how?
6. Is your talent management inclusive (=everyone is a talent) or exclusive (= only a select group of people are identified as talent)?
7. Does the talent know he or she is a talent?
8. Are talent management issues regularly on top management's agenda?

Appendix 6 The Secretariat Structure until the End of 2015

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                    ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
                    │  Secretary General   │──────│ Risk Management  │
                    └──────────────────────┘      │     & Audit      │
                                                   └──────────────────┘
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Programme Services Division (including Security and Supplementary Services)	NS and Knowledge Development Division	Humanitarian Values and Diplomacy Division		Governance and Management Services Division
Health	Performance Development	Principles & Values		Governance Support, Policy & Implementation Oversight
Social Services & Migration	Youth Action & Volunteering Development	Communications	Africa Zone Office	Human Resources
Disaster Services	Learning & Organisational Development	International & Movement Relations	Americas Zone Office	Finance
Community Preparedness & Risk Reduction	Information Services	Resource Mobilisation	Asia & Pacific Zone Office	Administration
Logistics	Planning & Evaluation	New York Office	Europe Zone Office	Legal
Shelter & Resettlement		Brussels Office	MENA Zone Office	Office Management

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Appendix 7 Deployments of HEOps

Source: IFRC, Fednet, Accessed 15 June, 2016. Modified.

Between the initiation of the HEOps program/pool in 2012 and the end of 2015, the three HEOps undertook the following operational deployments:

2012
- Deployed to support the Sahel Food Security Operation in April 2012.
- Deployed from May and November to reinforce the MENA Zone in its support to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and NS in the surrounding countries.
- Deployment to Jordan to support the deployment of a field hospital to support the refugees from Syria in Jordan.
- Deployment to Nigeria in November in response to the floods

2013
- Deployments to Jordan and Lebanon to support the Syria Crisis operation
- Deployment to Philippines to coordinate the IFRC response to Typhoon Haiyan

2014
- Deployment to the Central African Republic following the late 2013 civil unrest
- Deployment to Bosnia-Herzegovina to coordinate the Floods operation
- Four Deployments to Guinea and Sierra Leone in response to the Ebola crisis

2015
- Deployment to Nepal following the April earthquake in the Katmandu Valley
- Deployment to Greece responding to the influx of migrants and refugees
- Deployment to Budapest in November/December 2015 to support the Disaster Management Team in coordination of the Migrants Crisis response in Europe

Even if talent management has in recent years received much attention in academia, research on different contexts, such as that of the non-profit organizations, is limited. This dissertation explores talent management in the context of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and more precisely in the humanitarian aid organizations. The focal organization of this study is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the talent pool chosen for the single case study is a group of highly experienced emergency leaders.

The results indicate that talent management frameworks and related activities of the for-profit organizations are applicable to humanitarian aid organizations. Traditionally in this context the determining factors in recruitment and retention have been experience in similar organizations and a significant number of required competencies. The results suggest that rather mechanical competency frameworks are not ideal in the current VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world, since they do not take e.g. potential into account. Thus, one of the conclusions in this dissertation is that managers should learn to detect potential components like learning agility and curiosity, since the competencies that guaranteed success in the past will most probably not be enough in the future.

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