

GLOBAL ACTIVISM AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

GLOBAL ACTIVISM AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THEIR EVOLUTION
IN THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES, THE SAAMI COUNCIL AND
MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES-CANADA, 1990-2005

By

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines the evolution of global activism and collective identities for three small non-governmental organizations: the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council, and Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada. The three organizations are considered over a period of fifteen years, from 1990 to 2005. Global activism is an aspect of globalization that can take many different forms, as the three cases show. The study looks at the objectives pursued through global activism and the arguments used by the organizations, the alliances they create and the publics they target to achieve their objectives. From well-organized campaigns to sporadic interventions in global forums, the diversity in the forms of global activism demonstrates the creativity of the organizations and the different issues for which global activism is considered useful. Small groups can participate in the debates surrounding globalization, and sometimes create the spaces in which these debates can take place.

The identity at the core of each organization has changed over the period studied. By looking at the self-definition of the organization, its actual roles and power, its leadership, and its relationships with its membership or the people it represents, one can understand better this evolution and how it is related to the global activism carried out by each organization. There are connections between these changes in identities and activism, and the comparative analysis presented in the dissertation illustrates how taking part in globalization can change an organization and allow it to reach its objectives.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

*Speaking is the first political act.
It is the first act of liberty, and it always implicitly
involves another. In speaking, one recognizes,
'I am and I am not alone.'
James Orbinski (2008, 9)*

Interactions between human beings shape and change our world. This dissertation focuses on how different groups, institutionalized as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), exercise their influence to try to change decisions taken by other, more powerful organizations. In many cases, they are opposing or challenging nation-states or international organizations. The efforts we examine are ones undertaken at the global level; they can be characterized as global activism carried out by the organizations. In addition to global activism, the following chapters look at collective identities, the ones at the core of the organizations studied. One of the views defended here is that while doing global activism, the identity at the core of each organization changes: the way the organization sees itself, and how others perceive it, evolves.

A) What the dissertation is about

To better understand globalization, one can look at different phenomena that have been associated with this wider process. Here are a few examples of these phenomena: how economic policies in one country affect a whole region, as is the case with subsidies in the United States for cotton growers and their impact on African countries; how cultural expression is modified by the extension of the

Internet and the spread of audio-visual technologies; or how international organizations influence nation-states in their policies and attitude towards problems. I chose to look at global activism and how it is carried out by non-governmental organizations. It seemed appropriate, however, to also look at how being involved in globalization through global activism affects the organization concerned. The identity of this organization could be modified by what it does at the global level. And as the identity of the organization changes, I wondered whether the forms of global activism it chose might also change.

The task at hand thus became to trace the evolution in forms of global activism and in the collective identities of three small organizations. While doing so, I was also looking for similarities and differences between the three organizations, and how they responded to challenges or opportunities coming from globalizing processes. In the process, I learned that while engaging in global activism, and thus participating in globalization, the groups are also touched by the other aspects of globalization, like the extension and increased speed of communication, the growing influence of global forums or intergovernmental organizations, and the construction of a global civil society.

The three organizations studied are: the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council, and Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada. The two first organizations represent Indigenous peoples, while the last one is an ideational organization, i.e. an organization built around an idea: medical assistance to vulnerable population in conflict zones and in areas touched by natural disasters.

If the two Indigenous peoples' political organizations have a relatively clear and predetermined identity at their centre (the Cree and the Saami identity), the identity of MSF Canada is at first more difficult to determine, although based on its name, the organization seems to place medical professions and medical help anywhere in the world at the forefront of its identity. The reality is of course more complex, in all cases.

To appreciate the evolutionary changes in forms of activism and in collective identities that occurred in the three organizations, a time period of fifteen years was chosen for the purposes of this study. The actual period chosen varies slightly for each organization, but the general period about which information was gathered is from 1990 to 2005. Documents and interviews were the main sources of information, although two research trips also provided an opportunity to observe the Indigenous peoples' organizations in action.

The dissertation is guided by four questions:

- How has the global activism of the organizations evolved over those chosen time period?
- How has the collective identity at the core of each organization evolved over the same period?
- What are the connections or relationships between the two sets of changes?
- What role has globalization played in shaping these changes?

I give more importance to the two first questions. The comparative approach of the study assists me in understanding better the changes in forms of activism and in the character of collective identities.

B) Importance of the research

The patterns of relationships between forms of global activism and the characteristics of collective identities observed in the three case studies provide some insights that may apply more broadly to our knowledge of non-governmental organizations active on the global stage. In addition, the case studies help us understand better the specific importance of a more globally extensive concept of “indigeneity” for those NGOs founded and run by aboriginal peoples in the current globalizing period. Admittedly, one can not generalize too far based on three case studies. Nonetheless, the insights gained from this study help us understand better how taking advantage of globalizing processes might shape forms of global activism and how those organizations engaged in such activism identify themselves. As such, the study also contributes to the ongoing concern in globalization studies with changing form of identity emerging from engagement in globalizing processes.

Identity is not a very well-researched field of study in International Relations (IR).¹ More often than not, it is the identity of the state that is

¹ Officially, this dissertation is part of a program of study in International Relations, as a subfield of Political Science. To clarify matters, I think it would fit better under the label “Globalization Studies,” which has evolved as an interdisciplinary field in which IR scholars participate but so do

questioned or explored by scholars in the field. Although the field has developed conceptual tools to talk about national and ethnic identities, IR scholars have neglected other aspects of identities. The present research looks at different kinds of identities: collective identities, organizational identities, non-governmental organizations' identities, Indigenous peoples' identities, ideational identities, and civil society identities. There is little research in the field of political science about all these types of identities. Yet, the different entities to which these identities are attributed have a growing role in our world. The multiplication of civil society organizations in the last decades is remarkable, as is the attention gathered by Indigenous peoples' organizations. The recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the different cases in front of Canadian justice courts involving indigenous communities and companies wanting to exploit natural resources located on traditional territories illustrate growing global activism and changing forms of identity among Indigenous peoples. The different case studies highlight elements contributing to the understanding of these organizations in this changing socio-political context.

What non-state actors do is also not traditionally an important subject of study in International Relations either. This situation, however, needs to change as NGOs become a more important component of global networks interacting with sites of political authority beyond the state at regional and global levels. When they engage in global activism, non-state actors defend different kinds of interests,

scholars from other disciplines such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, literary studies, political science, religious studies, and sociology among others.

and often use different strategies than state actors. One of the main incarnations of global activism, and a highly visible one, is world-wide protest demonstrations characterized by some (although not necessarily by those engaged in the protests) as “against globalization,” like the ones in Seattle in 1999, in Québec City in 2001, or in Miami in 2003. Other manifestations of global activism exist that involve a mixture of protest politics to be sure, but also lobbying, providing public information, and engaging directly with political actors at global sites of authority. The effectiveness of these types of activism may be higher because they are more sustained, more sophisticated in their strategies, and they occur over a longer period of time.

Understanding global activism better is also important because many, perhaps increasing numbers of, issues have the potential to be globalized, to be talked about in global forums, and thus to be addressed by global activist organizations. Some politicians say that they are losing their decision-making powers at the expense of supranational institutions. Many in the popular media suggest that citizens are deserting political parties in favour of non-governmental organisations in order to share and to promote their ideas. Understanding global activism better as it is practised today should help to discern the comparative advantages of this type of political activity in contrast to long-standing national or local political activism. For instance, it is often easier to draw the consideration of the media—local, regional or national—and thus the attention of the public, when an action is conducted at the global level.

The research I have done on the global activism of the three organizations is pragmatic and down to earth. It gives us an idea of how it is to “play” at the global level. The global environment, as a site of power, strategies and action, has its own particularities. When actors in this environment share their experiences and explain how they used these particularities, we come to understand better the exercise of influence and its impact on political power in global politics.

The choice of studying Indigenous peoples’ political organizations is not a random one. In addition to the fact that they are interesting actors for the research at hand, one could say it has an ethical aspect or justification. As Beier (2005, 15) says:

the simple fact of our neglect of Indigenous peoples reflects an enduring deference to one of the most fundamental notions of settler state colonialism: the idea that Indigenous peoples do not constitute authentic political communities. By way of their omissions as much as their claims, scholars of International Relations, like those working in other disciplines, unwittingly participate in the (re)production of the enabling narratives of advanced colonialism.

Although I do not use the vocabulary of colonialism in this dissertation, this is a view I share, and my small contribution is a way to recognize Indigenous peoples as genuine political communities engaged in international relations over a number of centuries. Moreover, I hope it puts into light how intelligent Indigenous peoples’ political organizations are when it comes to using the language of those who have imposed so many indignities on them. In the words of an Aboriginal scholar: “I believe that Aboriginal peoples must think more seriously about the constraints that are unilaterally imposed on the language we must use to articulate

our legal and political goals. The fact that our ways of understanding the world are not worthy of equal participation in a dialogue over the meaning and content of *our* rights is itself a form of inequality” (Turner 2006, 26). My hope is that, by showing how “normal” Indigenous peoples’ organizations function as political actors, I also show how exceptional they are in wanting to get the best for the persons they represent, through peaceful action and dialogue.

C) Vocabulary

A few clarifications about the vocabulary used in the dissertation are necessary. Two key words need to be specified: global activism and collective identities.

I use the term “activism” to describe the activities and actions engaged in by organizations when they want to convince others that what they think/want/argue is justified and necessary. My preference for this word comes from its proximity to the words “activities” and “actions.” There are other terms, more or less synonymous with activism, that I sometimes use or that I could have used. “Advocacy” is the first one. I use it when I describe what MSF does because it is the expression they often use too. In my mind, there is less space for creativity in the actions when the word “advocacy” is used because it seems to imply direct pressure on a specific political actor related to a particular interest or goal. Accordingly, the focus is on the use of language and dialogue, thereby excluding other forms of activism. In French, *militantisme* is the word that probably best translates the word “activism.” However, in English, the word

“militancy” often implies the use of force, if not violence, in given situations. Curiously, *activisme* in French invokes something more violent than *militantisme*, whereas the reverse is true in English. Another word that might sometimes be used is “diplomacy.” However, it is quite clear that the diplomatic practice is limited to formal dialogues and statements, usually between official representatives of states, and cannot apply to many other forms of action, including, for example, the mass sending of postcards to a Prime Minister. Interestingly, the Grand Council of the Crees has named its office in Ottawa “the Cree embassy” and its official at the United Nations “the Cree ambassador.” Most of what the GCC does is of a diplomatic nature, but many of its campaigns were not limited to diplomatic statements or negotiations. The verb “campaigning” is also synonymous with activism, and I use it in the dissertation when campaigns are run by the organizations. However, not all activism fits into specific campaigns².

The expression “collective identity” can be a confusing one. I use it to describe the identity of a collective, i.e. a group or community. It can also be understood as how an individual identifies, or sees her or his identification, with a collective (“my collective identity”). I do not use the term in this sense because, to be clear, the object of my study is not individuals, but groups or organizations. I thus often use the expression “organizational identity,” which narrowly refers to the identity of the organization, and not the group it represents. The terms

² Chapter II includes a longer discussion about global activism, and how we can distinguish it from activism.

“organizational culture” or “organizational structure” are more common, but “organizational identity” captures another reality. Admittedly, sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish between the identity of the organization and the identity of the group it represents. For example, it is not always easy to distinguish between the organizational identity of the Saami Council and the collective identity of the Saami people. Accordingly, I have preferred the term “collective identity” as a more general term.

D) Overview of the study

The dissertation is primarily about the evolution of global activism and collective identities during a period of fifteen years, a period in which we came to “name” and to talk about the growing influence of globalization.³ Even today, few studies have looked at globalization from the perspective of those using it in their activism (not necessarily denouncing it). In addition, there was a need to understand concretely how small organizations incorporate the reality of the “global” into their activities. When looking at an organization for a certain length of time, we see it evolve and the forms of changes that occur. The idea was not to look for anecdotal evidence of global activism in each organization, but to find how forms of activism changed, little by little, over time, and to ask why the forms took the shape that are observed.

³ I use the term “name” here to suggest that globalizing processes are not unique to the contemporary period. What differs about them now would seem to be their extensiveness, their intensity and the velocity at which connections across the world between individuals and communities are made.

For the Grand Council of the Crees, global activism has usually been organized in the form of campaigns: against the Great Whale and Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert hydroelectric projects, against Québec becoming an independent, sovereign state, against forestry rules or the prohibition of wild fur, and to promote the *Paix des Braves*. The GCC was also active at the global level in United Nations institutions where it sought to promote Indigenous peoples' rights, but I find this activism different from that found in specific "campaign". The campaigns led by the GCC had quite specific objectives and were triggered by relatively clearly identified and circumscribed "problems" although they all were related to the principal objective incarnated by the GCC of advancing and defending Cree rights. Global campaigning was adopted because it demonstrated that the Crees considered their problems to be relevant to a global community and not just the Canadian or Québec ones. The GCC also believed it was contributing to the advancement of the rights of Indigenous peoples in general by defending Cree rights. A few famous Cree leaders made outstanding contributions in international meetings, thereby advancing the progress of a global Indigenous peoples' movement.

The GCC employs a very insistent, direct form of language in its global activism one that deviates noticeably from conventional diplomatic norms. Cree representatives speak frankly about their problems and the reasons why they have brought them onto the global stage. When appropriate and useful, the GCC makes alliances with other groups. Against the hydro projects, it worked closely with

environmentalist movements; other Indigenous peoples' organizations have allied themselves at different times with the GCC. Over the years, the GCC has targeted different publics in its global activism. The public opinion is often important, and governments are generally the actors that need to be persuaded to respond and to take action.

The Saami Council represents all Saami living in Scandinavia and Russia. However, unlike the Cree situation, there are other institutions representing the Saami, at national, regional or local levels. Among them, the Saami Parliaments that exist in Norway, Sweden, and Finland have more influence. The SC does not really work around campaigns. Now greatly focused on global developments, the SC's roles changed as the Parliaments' influence grew. Very good at "intellectual global activism", the style of the SC's global activism is more discreet than that of the GCC. This carefulness does not diminish its reputation or its influence among other Indigenous peoples' organizations. The SC also favours longer-term collaboration with other Indigenous peoples' organizations, compared with the GCC. A good example of this type of collaboration is the high number of joint statements made with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in UN deliberations. Another way to see the importance it gives to collaboration is the cooperation programs it has put in place to help form or increase capacities in Indigenous peoples' organizations in Africa or Latin America. In short, the evolution in the global activism of the GCC and the SC is consistent with the following statement: "In the process of global changes indigenous peoples are socially interested

activists rather than passive bystanders. Perhaps it is this positioning that offers greater possibility for the survival of indigenous peoples.” (Smith 1999, 104)

Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada was not even an official chapter of the global MSF movement in 1990. Since then, its activities and importance have grown considerably. Focused on finding volunteers and money, the Canadian section integrated, like all the others, the diffusion of *témoignages* from returning volunteers. As the organization developed, its activities to raise awareness on different topics with a global nature, like refugees, HIV/AIDS or the militarisation of humanitarian action, also grew. Since 2000, the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines has been another way for the organization to mobilize its volunteers and advocate for its patients. Being more political, this Campaign was a bit different from the usual MSF style. Inspired by what they were witnessing in the field, as usual, the activists did not have to care about the security of any particular medical teams in the field by their actions. Except maybe offending governments or pharmaceutical companies, their activism could not have bad consequences or worsen any field situation. Another new thing that the Campaign brought is collaboration with like-minded groups to lobby the Canadian government on the proposed bill to allow the export of some drugs to countries without production capacities. Alliances had not been part of the culture of the organization, partly because of the concern for the security of volunteers and partly due to the neutrality and impartiality declared in its general Charter.

The other aspect of the research was to understand the evolution of the collective identity at the core of the organizations studied. The identity of an organization is influenced by the group it represents, but is not equal to it. All identities evolve with time. Over the fifteen year period, we find interesting variations in these changes among the three organizations studied.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the GCC was closer in its identity to a non-governmental organization than it is now. At the time, the organization was struggling to stop the Great Whale and NBR hydro projects. The evolution in its identity occurred in good part because of the *Paix des Braves* signed in 2002 which includes a strengthening of governmental powers over the Cree territory and the recognition of the Crees as a nation. A strong leadership, with few changes in the elites governing the organization also helped it build a stronger identity as the “government” of the Cree nation. Like a government, the GCC has to care for the needs of the Cree communities, and more and more, it has the tools to develop the region and share in the benefits and jobs when outsiders come to exploit natural resources where it is possible on the territory. Although this governmental identity had been present since the very beginning of the GCC, it has grown in importance because of the actions of the organization, and because it negotiated to obtain these kinds of powers. In addition, the organization’s structure of decision-making and the fact that the GCC reports back to the communities and has them endorse important changes in orientation keeps the identity of the organization in synchrony with the Cree identity.

The Saami Council went through the reverse process: it moved from an identity based on a governmental role to one of a NGO, with nuances of course. The organization seems to deal less with governments and more with ideas and projects including other Indigenous peoples. Although it maintained activities relative to the Saami culture and was involved in some actions related to local developments or laws, a good part of the work of the SC seems to have been transferred to the Saami Parliaments. The SC deals with international institutions, with global issues, and it puts considerable emphasis on building solidarity among Indigenous peoples. The organization is now more activist than it was before and its staff is also more professional. The SC reports back to Saami communities, but the relationships it has to maintain with them is not the same as that maintained by the elected representatives of the Saami Parliaments. Still, the SC remains a representative organization, but with more leeway to be active at the global level and to develop its expertise in various domains.

The identity of MSF Canada is partly shaped by the general MSF Charter which applies to the whole movement. Thus, independence from governments and other organizations is a principle that remained in the identity of MSF Canada. The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines challenged a little this independence towards the rest of civil society because the organization took part in a coalition of groups lobbying the government to adopt a specific law. The Campaign also troubled the non-political aspect of the identity of the organization more clearly than when the organization talked about conflicts abroad, although

clearly these conflicts had important political dimensions. MSF Canada was first strongly connected to MSF Holland and was in survival mode for a period of time. Subsequently, a period of stable leadership allowed the organization to develop and expand its activities. The organization felt strong enough to embark on more activism and dedicating more staff to these activities and it became more autonomous from MSF Holland. Still, the evolution of the identity in this more political direction has not diminished the importance it gives to emergency and humanitarian medical aid. An association formed of former volunteers guides the decisions of the organization and clarifies to whom it is responsible, in addition to the people it directly helps. At this point, the distinction between the Canadian chapter and the whole movement becomes more difficult to make. The identity of MSF Canada has become more complex as the organization grew and took on more activities other than recruitment or financing related to medical emergencies.

The connection between the evolution of global activism and collective identities is considered in the conclusion of the dissertation, but the attentive reader can probably understand how the two phenomena are related while reading the empirical chapters. The Grand Council of the Crees has not been very active globally since the signature of the *Paix des Braves*. One interpretation of this retreat can be that having obtained the powers and the recognition it was looking for, the need to “step outside” to pressure governments has greatly diminished.

Other factors, like a change in leadership, can also help explain why the global activism of the GCC has been more discreet in recent years.

The status of the Saami Council is different from the one of the GCC, and the evolution in its global activism has been influenced by the liveliness of the Saami political scene. The SC occupies a kind of umbrella position that is particularly useful to show a figure of Saami unity. Being well-educated and coming from developed countries with extended social protections (except for those coming from Russia), the Saami Council members have been able to help other Indigenous peoples' organizations and to deal with complicated subject matters needing close monitoring.

The evolution of MSF Canada as an organization has been admirable given the short period of time during which it took place (1990-2005). Supported by the MSF movement, and benefiting from an already defined mandate and identity, the Canadian chapter of the international organization has nonetheless been able to carve out for itself a significant place among civil society organizations by growing at a rapid rate. The biggest change in its activism was the introduction of the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, a decision taken at the international level. It is through the implementation of the Campaign in the organization and in engaging in the actions related to this Campaign that the identity of the organization in Canada evolved in recent years. The activism became more directly connected to Canadian politics, and the organization collaborated with other civil society NGOs, two forms of engagement to which it

was not accustomed. The Campaign fed many discussions internally, which have, in turn, strengthened the identity of the organization.

Globalization has increased the connectivity of the three organizations studied. As Smith writes, “To be connected is to be whole” (1999, 148). Collaborating with other organizations has helped the GCC, the SC, and MSF Canada to take the full measure of their potential impact. New communication technologies, like the Internet and cell phones, and their diminishing costs have been important for the NGOs to maintain these connections and to take advantage of “windows of opportunity” in the political environment more quickly. I think the evolution of the organizations studied can teach us about how we can find solutions to global problems in an era of globalization.

E) Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is organized in the following way. The next chapter presents the theoretical context which has guided my research. It summarizes the literature on globalization, global activism, and identity and globalization. In addition to the necessary definitions, the most important aspects of the theory are presented. Chapter III explains the methodology used for the research. The different sections cover why the comparative case study approach was chosen, the reasons behind the selection of the cases, and how the research was carried out. In Chapter IV, some background information is given on the three organizations studied: the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council and Médecins Sans Frontières-

Canada. The reader can refer to this chapter to clarify elements that are sometimes mentioned but not explained at length in other chapters. The comparison of the evolution of global activism in the three organizations is the subject of Chapter V. It is divided into four sections, each dedicated to an aspect of global activism, and the three organizations are analyzed with respect to each of these aspects. The first section is on the *objectives* pursued through global activism; the second on the *style* of activism and the *arguments* raised by global activism; the third surveys the *allies* mobilized by the organizations to support their global activism; and the fourth section is on the *publics* targeted by the global activism of each organization. Chapter VI adopts the same kind of structure for the comparison of the evolution of collective identities. Again, four aspects of identity are covered in separate sections: the *self-definition* or *self-description* of the organization in the first section; the actual *roles* and *power* of each organization in the second one; the third section is about *leadership*; and the fourth is on *the interactions* with the membership of the organization or the people it represents. The last chapter, Chapter VII, is the conclusion of the dissertation. It starts with a summary of the empirical findings. Then, the connections between the evolution of global activism and collective identity are considered for each organization. The third section of the conclusion describes how we can better understand globalization from the findings of the research. Finally, the conclusion looks back at the theory presented in the second chapter and suggests a few ideas for further research.

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The new power lies in the codes of information and in the images of representation around which societies organize their institutions, and people build their lives, and decide their behavior. The sites of this power are people's minds.
Manuel Castells (1997, 359)

In this chapter, I review essential notions to put this research on global activism and collective identities in context. The first part is about contemporary globalization, as the studied global activism took place during a period of intensification of this phenomenon. In the second part, global activism and its general evolution are considered. The last part details the various incarnations of identity and its relationship with globalization.

A) Contemporary globalization as a context

Although we sometimes hear that people in the United States believe that “globalization is us,” globalization is not Americanization. This opinion neglects some fundamental dynamics of globalization. For example, it denies the growing importance of South-South relationships, which have contributed to derailing the WTO ministerial in Cancún in 2003. To understand better how the world evolves and how this evolution influences individuals and communities in return, political science and International Relations (IR, as a field of study) continuously have to find analytical tools and concepts that offer explanatory light on the events of the moment. Globalization has been one of these concepts in the last few decades, and its exponential use seems to show that it does provide a glimpse of truth on

today's world. Yet, there are multiple uses of the term, and the variation between these is important. My first task in this section is to find a suitable definition of globalization to better understand global activism and its importance for political science and IR. Then, I put global activism in relation with global governance. Global governance poses research questions in IR of increasing importance and there are aspects of global activism leading to some questions in connection with global governance. To close this section, I examine the notion of global civil society to which global activism is often related.

1) Definition: what is globalization?

As Scholte demonstrates in the first chapter of his book, the literature on globalization has several debates on its very premises, on the assessments of social change caused by globalization, on normative evaluations about globalization, and on the appropriate policy response to globalization; the most extreme positions are defended and no consensus seems to emerge (Scholte 2005). Thus, adopting a firm position on what globalization is looks like a complex exercise. Yet, from the point of view of a social scientist, what seems to be the most important change brought about by globalization is reflected in Scholte's definition: "globalization as the spread of transplanetary—and in recent times more particularly supraterritorial—connections between people" (Scholte 2005, 59). This is how he characterizes the "shift in the nature of social space" (59).

It is an interesting definition because it encompasses several aspects of globalization that are essential for understanding global activists. The social space of global activists is not fully commensurate with the vocabulary of territorialisation. Their organizations and their sites of action are, of course, defined in a certain territory or territories (even if cyberactivism partly questions this assertion), but they do not stop there. They refuse to be determined by their territoriality. They open up and follow streams of action that cross borders and even are oblivious to them. Hence, talking about supraterritoriality has resonance: “‘supraterritorial’ relations are social connections that substantially transcend territorial geography. They are relatively delinked from territory” (Scholte 2005, 61). Those supraterritorial relations are taking place in a new space, the global space. Global activists want people from everywhere to pay attention to what they are saying and doing. It is that supraterritoriality in their transplanetary message that gives that message part of its power.

A second aspect that is present in Scholte’s definition, although not so clearly, is related to the word “connections”. It leads us to information and communication technologies, through which people often make and experience these connections. Frequently, these technologies allow people to prolong connections made during face-to-face meetings, something that was more complicated previously, although not impossible. But face-to-face meetings have also changed because of the diminishing costs of travel and its increased speed, and the possibility to bring people together from many different places even in

small meetings. The number of actual encounters has thus risen too, and connections between people have multiplied. Information and communication technologies sometimes give us the illusion that we maintain connections with people that we do not see anymore: with Google and email addresses, you can still feel close to them, because you know where they are and what they are doing, and you have that possibility to reach them if the fantasy takes you or if you need to join them.

John Tomlinson goes a step further when talking about connections. He writes about “complex connectivity,” a set of “connections that now bind our practices, our experiences and our political, economic and environmental fates together across the modern world” (Tomlinson 1999, 2). It is the multidimensionality that makes this connectivity complex. The sociologist envisions globalization as an important change because it “alters the context of meaning construction” (20) when it reaches us in our localities, and our culture is affected. “As connectivity reaches into localities, it transforms local lived experience but it also confronts people with a world in which their fates undeniably *are* bound together in a single global frame” (Tomlinson 1999, 12). Although it may be too soon to say that globalization has reached every locality, we can see that it has the potential to do so. For Tomlinson then, connectivity is transforming us all into actors whose actions will influence our common future.

The third aspect of Scholte’s definition that needs to be underlined is the importance it gives to “people”. In this definition, persons are more important

than the economy, or than networks and flows as Castells (1996) characterizes the defining element of globalization, which seems to give as much importance to networks between people as to networks between businesses. What make globalization unique as a phenomenon are those connections between people, for all sorts of people, not just business persons, scientists or politicians. These connections fundamentally affect how each person sees herself in the world, her consciousness of herself and of others. This observation can be linked with what Appadurai (2000, 6) emphasizes: in this era of globalization, the imagination has much larger possibilities than before. What an individual can imagine as her future is today broader than at any time before. The possibilities are numerous, for individuals and for societies.

To come back to Manuel Castells and his vision of globalization, it is not that far away from Scholte's. Castells mentions "three foundational realms of this new social structure [the network society]: space, time, and technology" (Castells 1997, 358). About space, Castells writes that it has "the placeless logic of the space of flows" (358); the Information Age, as he also calls contemporary globalization, shows "the dissolution of history in timeless time, and the celebration of the ephemeral in the culture of real virtuality" (358); finally, he notes "the primacy of technology for the sake of technology" (358).

Castells' view highlights how much the future is open, even if the construction of its meaning has little to base itself on. To compare it with Scholte's definition, it appears that both authors put space and technology in the

centre of their definitions, with some variation in their specificities. Castells does not seem to place people at the centre of this world of flows, but his definition of flows reintroduces the agency of human beings: flows are “purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society” (1996, 412). But for Castells, the flows, or connections, are among social actors. For Scholte, it appears that (the possibility of) connections between any two persons are what make globalization distinctive.

In contrast, it appears that Scholte is not giving as much importance to time as Castells does. Still, Scholte writes: “These global connections often also have qualities of *transworld simultaneity* (that is, they extend anywhere on the planet at the same time) and *transworld instantaneity* (that is, they move anywhere on the planet in no time)” (Scholte 2005, 61). These qualifications do not emphasize as much the change at the heart of time that Castells identifies (timeless time and virtuality). Overall, Castells seems a bit more “extreme” and elitist in his evaluation of globalization than Scholte, but the two authors have a similar analysis of the important elements defining globalization: supraterritoriality, simultaneity and instantaneity, technology, and connections between people.

All these characteristics modify substantively the nature of social space. New social spaces have appeared in the virtual universe that the Internet allows. Some social spaces are maintained through technology, while before they would

have been limited to the moments where a given group would meet or take actions together. People create social spaces that would not have been possible before because borders have lost a part of their restrictive power on individuals, and networks are created among groups or individuals living in different localities but having the same kind of problems or experiences. Moreover, the perception of time has changed, to the point where simultaneity and instantaneity bring up the need to develop new skills of time management and a higher sense of prioritization.

Even if there has been more written on contemporary globalization than I can possibly read, I am not sure we can come to a definitive statement about the nature of the phenomenon and, in particular, its consequences at this point in time. In order to continue the reflection though, and inspired mainly by Castells and Scholte, here is the working definition I propose: *Globalization is the process by which transplanetary connections among people are growing and are increasingly supraterritorial, simultaneous and instantaneous, and rely in good part on information and communication technologies. This process affects how people consider their future and the world's future, because transplanetary connections are changing their consciousness of themselves and of the world in which they live.*

2) *Global governance*

A focus on globalization leads us to question many practices that political scientists and researchers in International Relations have come to attribute to the state and intergovernmental organizations. Much of the literature on globalization is in fact focused on the impacts of globalization on the state and its policies. Although this field is obviously an important one to study, we cannot restrict our viewpoint to the state and intergovernmental organizations anymore. Many other actors have been empowered by globalization and are starting to play a significant role in global governance. The study of global governance must subsume more than states.

Globalization is of importance for IR because it brings into question contemporary modes of governance, nationally and internationally. Governance becomes a key issue for IR in an era of globalization, because we must ask how effective institutions and policy processes can help us make the world a better place for all people now that we have the power to do so. Keohane and Nye ask: “*how* will globalization be governed?” (2000, 1) They define governance as “the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group” (2000, 12). Global governance is thus a very important issue if we are to think about providing peace and security, and an extremely complex one given the diversity of existing policies and institutions and the number of collective activities touched by globalizing processes.

As governance beyond the state becomes more important, many people also want to see democratic values and principles at play in these processes and institutions. They ask: are states the only vectors of democracy at the global level? For example, David Held has put forward the idea of “cosmopolitan democratic law,” “a domain of law different in kind from the law of states and the law made between one state and another, that is, international law” (1995, 227). The notion dates back to Kant for whom universal hospitality was how cosmopolitan law could take shape. Held enlarges the notion and believes that “new organizational and binding mechanisms must be created if democracy is to develop in the decades ahead” (1995, 235). Some global activism pushed forward achieving better democratic global governance. IR researchers need to pay attention to this activism. The field of IR must be willing to try to envision better governance principles and mechanisms for the contemporary era. Globalizing processes need to be addressed by global institutions which should try to balance their negative effects. As Keohane writes: “Governance arrangements to promote cooperation and help resolve conflict must be developed if globalization is not to stall or go into reverse” (2002, 245).

Through the study of global activism, we can see how non-state actors are increasingly part of nation-state governance and of international/global governance. Non-state actors have not attracted much attention from IR specialists. Nation-states have played such an important role during the last two to three centuries that IR, as a field of study, was “naturally” attracted to these

actors. More and more though, non-state actors target the international/global arena, partly because state institutions do not act on issues that other actors judge important. This also has another effect: “since governments have in many ways failed to deliver on the hopes and expectations for the summit [the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in August 2002], the importance of civil society is emphasised: citizens’ groups can network and share ideas and experiences at these summits, and return home energised and inspired to drive forward grassroots action for sustainability, with or without the leadership of their policy makers” (Seyfang 2003, 227). When states do not act, the focus is directed onto those who try to make a difference and they use big meetings like summits to make their work known and give more profile to the issue they are defending.

“NGOs not only help increase the transparency of political decision-making processes, provide extra controls on national and international decision-making and implementation processes, and extend the public’s competence; they also help identify solutions to global problems” (Schmidt and Take 2000, 174). Transparency, control, information, and solutions: these functions are very central ones to pursue in the global field, and NGOs have participated in them. This pursuit does not mean that the involvement of non-state actors and NGOs in particular in the global arena goes without problem. Schmidt and Take underline, in the same chapter quoted above, six problems.

1. NGOs are not legitimated by universal public suffrage, unlike many (most?) governments. The question becomes: whose interests are they representing?
2. The internal structure can be a source of problems, because NGOs do not always have a democratic structure and democratic decision-making rules. This absence is defended for reasons of flexibility and speed.
3. The third problem is one that happens mainly at the UN. The authors fear that with time, the number of NGOs will be so great that a selection will have to take place, and this process might open the door to “political calculations of the government representatives” (177), or at least to the question: who will choose which NGOs have the right to be present and speak?
4. The lack of resources of NGOs in the South compared to those in the North is of preoccupation. The latter often subsidize the former, but that leads to the NGOs of the North deciding when NGOs of the South can take part in a conference or a meeting⁴.
5. Integration in the global arena can be problematic. The authors think that participation means “a responsibility to ensure that political decisions

⁴ An interesting article by Peter J. Taylor (2004) shows that when “the office networks of a large number of NGOs” (269) is analysed, the first city on the list is Nairobi. This tends to contradict the idea that most NGOs are in north-west Europe. At the same time, the author acknowledges that his study is quantitative and cannot determine if the cities in the Global South are simply “transmission centers for information to be processed elsewhere” (273), and if they are really dynamic in the network.

actually come about, and this would force the NGOs into compromises” and would force agreement on “the lowest common denominator” (177).

6. The last problem is the possible instrumentalization of NGOs by governments. It can happen if governments use NGOs to realize their own objectives. This instrumentalization could occur “under the cloak of participation and democratization” (178), and could be easier to do in a climate of deregulation and privatization. This possibility means that the operational logic of NGOs would be fundamentally changed. The confusion in governments’ and NGOs’ roles could lead to undesirable effects and to questions on the “neutrality” of NGOs (Schmidt and Take 2000, 176-178).

There are many possible answers to these criticisms. Here are a few of the counterarguments one could use in a discussion. It can be argued, against the first and second problems, that NGOs do not have the role to “represent political communities in the formal democratic manner”, because “their role is to provide political space for deliberation” (Taylor 2004, 273 referring to Kaldor 2003, 140-141). Thus their legitimacy and the way they are structured, democratically or not, do not matter much. About the last problem, it can be argued that what the authors fear is already taking place to a limited extent, and it does not seem to have discredited NGOs in the general public. It certainly is fair to ask if the financing of NGOs influences their advocacy. Many NGOs receive governmental funds to implement their programs of action. Are these talking as freely as other NGOs

who voluntarily restrict this kind of funding and prefer to rely on donations from the public or from private foundations?

The governance of global NGOs is thus of some importance when analyzing contemporary globalization. Global activism is directed by organizations with governance properties. It is not instantaneous or improvised—at least, not for the great majority of its actors' actions and positions. The process of decision-making by these global actors proves to be a very interesting part of globalization studies, a part that is not much developed.

Another aspect of global governance in which NGOs take part is the creation of new norms in the global space. “Convergence on knowledge, norms, and beliefs is a prelude to convergence on institutions and processes of governance” (Keohane and Nye 2000, 24). When norms are officially adopted by international institutions, the work of NGOs can be to transform ideas into “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors” (Finnemore 1996, 22). Admittedly, they are not the only actors in the global arena to push for such norms. “Norms do not operate automatically but through the activities of agents in networks” (Keohane and Nye 2000, 25), and quite often these agents can be non-state actors.

3) Global civil society

I review a few definitions of “global civil society” and present other expressions with their meaning to compare them to global civil society understandings. I also

summarize ideas about who belongs to global civil society. Then, I consider the differences and similarities between domestic civil society and global civil society. Finally, I evaluate the importance of the concept for scholars.

a) Definitions

Scholte links deterritorialization with global civil society by identifying global relations as “social connections in which territorial location, territorial distance and territorial borders do not have a determining influence” (Scholte 2000b, 179). Global civil society itself thus “encompasses civic activity that: (a) addresses transworld issues; (b) involves transborder communication; (c) has a global organization; (d) works on a premise of supraterritorial solidarity” (2000b, 180). This definition looks more like a checklist focusing on activities rather than a theorization about the meaning of the expression. For Scholte, global civil society is a very concrete reality. He elaborated this definition from an understanding of “civil society”, more domestic than global, existing “when people make concerted efforts through voluntary associations to mould rules: both official, formal, legal arrangements and informal social constructs” (Scholte 2000b, 175). The added element for “global civil society” is deterritorialization.

Keck and Sikkink have written about transnational advocacy networks. In their view, this notion “cannot be subsumed under notions of transnational social movements or global civil society” (1998, 33). They criticize the proponents of an inevitable global civil society because the authors think they ignore “the issues of

agency and political opportunity” that they consider central in the new international situation (33). A global civil society would be a unified one, coming from a world culture. They write that they are “more comfortable with a conception of transnational civil society as an arena of struggle, a fragmented and contested area” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 33).

O’Brien, Goetz, Scholte, and Williams agree with Keck and Sikkink on the fragmentation of the transnational civil society. But they use the term global civil society to do so: “Rather than viewing global civil society as a normative social structure to be achieved, it is more accurate to see it as an arena for conflict that interacts with both the interstate system and the global economy” (2000, 15). As students of global social movements, they distinguish them from global civil society, but they still consider social movements as “a subset of the numerous actors operating in the realm of civil society”, a relationship that is transposable to the global level (2000, 12). They explain well why some scholars may express resistance to the idea of a global civil society:

Civil society and social movements have always been defined in the context of a relationship with a national state. It is the sphere of public activity amongst a bounded community within the reach of a particular state. The logic seems to be that if there is no overreaching global state, there can be no global community and therefore no global civil society and no global social movements. (O’Brien, Goetz, Scholte, and Williams 2000, 13)

This point shows why we must allow for less cohesion in our conceptualization of global civil society than at the domestic level.

Beck uses the expression “world society” to describe “the totality of social relationships which are *not* integrated into or determined (or determinable) by

national-state politics” (Beck 2000, 10). He sees differences in the organization of societies. “Globality means that the unity of national state and national society comes unstuck; new relations of power and competition, conflict and intersection, take shape between, on the one hand, national states and actors, and on the other hand, transnational actors, identities, social spaces, situations and processes” (Beck 2000, 21). But world society is not politically organized because there is no world state, leaving transnational actors with no democratic legitimacy (26). This vision of world society shows that all political relationships are not fundamentally shaped by states anymore.

b) Membership

Who belongs to global civil society? Who are its members, its components? It is important to have a more precise image of the participants in this global civil society.

Scholte’s definition in four points, given above, puts the emphasis on activities rather than on groups or organizations. It is an interesting solution to distinguish between nationally-based and transworld actions that one organization may well be doing. However, it may hide the actors and lead to neglecting the issue of agency, as Keck and Sikkink suggest. However, the description of civil society by Scholte, mentioned above too, is more clearly focused on voluntary associations taking “initiatives to shape the social order” (Scholte 2000b, 177). Scholte specifies that these associations may be formal or informal, rich or poor,

conformist, reformist or radical, and use various tactics. As I have already commented, it is a quite down-to-earth vision of global civil society.

Appadurai is a firm believer in what he calls “grassroots globalization” or “globalization from below”. In his discussion of this concept, he is clear about its importance: “The idea of an international civil society will have no future outside the success of these efforts to globalize from below” (Appadurai 2000, 3). Doing this globalization from below are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) “concerned with mobilizing highly specific local, national, and regional groups on matters of equity, access, justice, and redistribution” (Appadurai 2000, 15). In the same paragraph, he underlines that some “NGOs are self-consciously global in their concerns and their strategies, and this subgroup has recently been labelled transnational advocacy networks”, or TANs (15). TANs are not only formed by NGOs, according to Keck and Sikkink, but they play an important role in them (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 6).

The most complete list is probably given by O’Brien *et al.* Starting from the idea of non-state actors working across borders, they list many different names given to this type of activity: global society, global civil society, international society, world civil politics, transnational relations, NGOs, transnational social movement organisations, global social change organisations, and transnational advocacy networks, to which they add global social movements (see O’Brien *et al.* 2000, 12 for authors corresponding to each term). They specify that each is a

“slightly different subject of study” but they are all part of the same effort to understand an action taking place in a space not limited by the state anymore.

Is there a common vision, a consensus on what is a global civil society? I think so. All the authors agree that it does not include state actors and market actors. They also agree that it is characterized by “multiplicity without unity” (Beck 2000, 10). The way they group the elements composing the global civil society varies, but this goes with the multiplicity of global civil society itself. The major point of disagreement seems to be caused by the idea that a kind of unity, a unified memory needs to exist to talk about a global civil society. This point seems to be in contradiction with the multiplicity accepted by all.

c) Global vs. Domestic Civil Society

This idea of a necessary unity to talk about a global civil society may be attributed to a comparison with domestic civil society. What can we better see by comparing global civil society to domestic civil society?

The “third sector” or the civil society in a state is easier to distinguish than at the global level, quite surely. Making an inventory of official voluntary associations is easier because they are governed by laws in most countries and registered somewhere in the governmental bureaucracy. All voluntary organizations are not coordinating their efforts to mould rules, to go back to Scholte’s definition of civil society, but it is easier for researchers to map the ones which are trying to do so. A problem remains with unofficial, informal

associations. Again though, the task of the researcher is eased by the fact that their action is exercised in a specific state, a specific location, where rules, formal or informal, are relatively simpler to recognize than at the global level.

The multiplicity that I have underlined in the previous section implies that actors in global civil society, like global social movements, “are more differentiated than their domestic counterparts” (O’Brien *et al.* 2000, 13). For example, what one group is doing in one country may well contradict what another one is doing in another on the same global issue. “Despite this, there are some transnational connections between the various parts of the movement and there is some sense of a common identity and the need for coordinated if not identical action” (O’Brien *et al.* 2000, 13). Moreover, it is in many cases exaggerated to talk about a unified domestic civil society. It is unified by the limited agencies on which its pressures are made, but a multiplicity exists at the domestic level too.

If domestic civil societies gather around proposed governmental actions or legal measures, global civil society has meeting points too: parallel summits or forums organized by NGOs besides United Nations Summits on specific issues; the Global Social Forum; sporadic events like the World Women March; demonstrations and popular education events during regional or international summits (e.g. Genoa, Québec City, Beijing and Durban) and World Trade Organization meetings (e.g. Seattle). The multiplicity of actors also means that their views may clash and that some of these groups promote violent action to

contest the “new global order”, something widely reflected in the media at the expense of many other activities with a more constructive approach.

The comparison between domestic and global civil society brings attention to the growth of these spheres in the last decades. The development of one affects the other. Scholte underlines that “in the 1990s many governments have rewritten laws in ways that facilitate civic organization” (2000b, 183). Some examples from Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia are given. In some cases, civic associations are also closer to the governance institutions because they are more often consulted by decision-makers, and because the implementation of some programs is sometimes partly or completely put under their responsibility. This is also happening at the global level. With their consultative status at the United Nations, many NGOs are allowed to be part of discussions and some are implementing global measures.

If global civil society is not as easy to study or to grasp as domestic civil societies, it still shares many characteristics with them. The comparison is useful because it shows that global civil society has its roots in domestic civil societies; the actions taken and pressures attempted are of the same nature even if they differ in scale. The objectives of the actors are qualitatively similar too.

d) Importance of the concept for scholars

More and more scholars are studying global civil society or one of its components. For Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink global civil society (or parts of it)

is transforming “global norms and practices.” They mention that many other scholars see it as a source “of resistance ‘from below’ to globalization”, challenging “the authority and practices of states and international institutions that shape the parameters for global governance”; others are talking about global citizenship. All speak about new forms of global governance: “All stress a similar phenomenon—the increase in new nonstate actors, new arenas for action, and the blurring of distinctions between domestic and global levels of politics” (Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002, 4).

Thus, global civil society is a new concept to talk about new forms of governance and new forms of resistance. Its usefulness is not yet completely established since many scholars prefer to concentrate on more specific actors, networks, or activities. However, it is an expression that transcends the multiplicity (of voices, of actions, of opinions) found in global civil society, to help trace a general outline of what is happening in the world.

Scholte attributes five general repercussions of global civil society for politics: “multilayered governance; some privatization of governance; and moves to reconstruct collective identities, citizenship and democracy” (2000b, 184). He even goes as far as affirming that “these five developments have contributed to the end of sovereign statehood” (185), because he sees other actors than states becoming important in world politics. For Scholte, at least, global civil society is a central concept in explaining the evolution of politics under globalization.

I also see its value for speaking about non-institutionalized movements that are often hard to define. It gives a context and words to characterize the common identity mentioned by O'Brien *et al.*, and to delineate the self-consciousness of the movement. It is useful to put in parallel its moments of visibility and of invisibility, facilitated by new means of communication. Another advantage (that would need confirmation though) is the possibility for researchers and “activists” to share an expression to talk about themselves. The idea of global civil society, because of a domestic reference, does not need many specifications and definitions to be understandable, unlike the expressions “transnational advocacy networks” or even “social movements”.

We still have to be cautious about the use of the expression and its automatic positive meaning. Scholte suggests that a global *uncivil* society is also possible, or already exists: civic associations turning into “oppressive hierarchical bureaucracies”, “involv[ing] violence”, “undermin[ing] social equity”, “reduc[ing] human security”, “impair[ing] democracy”, “damag[ing] policy” (Scholte 2000b, 190-191).

The notion of global civil society has been used increasingly in recent years with an appreciable consistency. There is a general consensus on how it participates in world politics and on the fact that a multiplicity of actors and opinions are composing it. It is an interesting expression to use because the existence and general understanding of domestic civil societies ease the transposition of the concept to the global level, even in the absence of a world

state. Scholars recognize that changes are occurring at the global level and the concept of global civil society is useful to contextualize new forms of governance and resistance, even if probably too broad and unspecific for precise events and changes.

B) Evolution of global activism

In this second part of the chapter, the notions of activism and global activism are considered in more detail. Some examples of global activism from the nineteenth and twentieth century are also given. These examples from the past should provide some historical perspective for the analysis of the evolution of global activism in recent years, even if the cases are not discussed at length.

1) Activism

Activism is, according to the dictionary, “the use of vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change” (Concise Oxford Dictionary 2001). Not all activism is organized in the form of campaigns, as the definition may lead us to think, because many organizations are practicing activism on a more continuous basis, pursuing more than one end at a time. The organizations engaging in activism sometimes enter into negotiations with other actors, such as governments. Activism can also take the form of appeals to the public, of diffusion of information through the media, and of rallies... Governments can be activists. It was the case when some governments opposed South Africa’s

apartheid, through the United Nations or by imposing economic sanctions to the regime. Individuals sometimes engage in activism too. Nonetheless, non-governmental organizations are the actors we usually consider when activism is mentioned.

In an article on the Ashéninka, a rain forest people living in Peru, Hanne Veber talks about their activism and its aims “directed toward the creation and defence of social and political space for the continued practice of indigenous values and existent forms of organization” (Veber 1998, 384). Although there are changes in these values and forms of organization, the goal of the activism by the Ashéninka is to build small schools and to keep control of their environment at a time when their territory is endangered by the settlement of newcomers from other parts of the country, the *colonos*. The Ashéninka registered as *comunidades nativas*, and were able to mobilize the support of government officials when it was needed. The article tries to think of the activism of the Ashéninka in other terms than the “dualistic thinking that categorizes groups as dominant or dominated and ascribes a capacity for agency primarily to the dominant while reducing actions of the dominated to what I would term *induced agency*, that is, actions determined by the discourse of the dominant ‘other’” (387). The Ashéninka are not victims and do not use activism to show victimization (although they could, given the underpayment and miscalculations done by the settlers in their exchanges with the Ashéninka).

Thus, activism is not necessarily a reaction to an external event or position. Activism is sometimes undertaken by a group to make things better, sometimes also without a particular trigger to answer to, as was the case for the Ashéninka when they decided to apply for their recognition as *comunidades nativas*, before the more direct threat of the *colonos*. Of course, contexts and environments change, and we can relate activism to those general changes even when there is no specific impetus. In other situations, the activism is a response to events or positions externally determined. It is important to keep in mind this distinction to avoid the positioning of activists in the role of victims at all times. This is especially true for Indigenous peoples' organizations, since putting them in the role of the victims somehow deprives them of an agency that they certainly have.

2) *Global activism*

This is the definition I propose for global activism: *a process by which a group, through actions and discourses directed at a global public, aims to achieve specific objectives*. The groups engaging in global activism do not include states or government representatives. Activism can be considered global when its objectives are of a global nature, and/or when it takes place in more than one country and is not of a regional nature. To a certain extent, a group expresses its collective identity when it engages itself into some activism. To borrow Olesen's words, there are "communicative relationships between senders and recipients, the

sender usually being one or more organizations and the recipients being the public at large or specifically targeted groups considered to be potential adherents and constituents” (Olesen 2005, 53). The direction of the communicative relationships can certainly be inverted, but it is much more difficult to study, and neither Olesen nor I give it much attention. I prefer to use the term global public than to use “public at large or specifically targeted groups”, because I consider that communicating with a global public can transform an issue into a global one.

My definition of a global public is the following: *A global public is a sizeable audience that is potentially transplanetary and is not defined or bounded by the territories of one or more nation-states nor is it composed of governments' officials only.* When aiming at a global public, a group will sometimes want to be heard or seen by every human being reachable through the mass media. The groups are seeking to attract attention from citizens in many parts of the world. In other occasions, a global public may be more limited, and the actions may be directed at people already sensitized to an issue. In general, the actions aimed at a global public are publicized largely, in the general media, or in more specialized media. By extension, action taking place in a global forum is directed at a global public, even if the forum is largely (or only) made of governments officials (the United Nations for example), except when it is *in camera* or secret.

There can be two distinctions between activism and global activism, and they can take place at the same time. The first is a question of scale: when the activism is extended to other countries, when people from more than one country

intervene (in one country or in many), or when the issue has the potential to affect many countries. The second distinction is a question of level: because of the nature of the issue, activism is done at the level of international / global institutions. The intentionality of the actor also has to be taken into account. When a local actor organizes a local campaign to change attitudes in relation with global warming, the activism would not enter into the category of global activism unless explicit ties are made with other organizations doing the same kind of action in other locales.

3) Examples of global activism in history

Doing the history of global activism certainly is of great interest. This section is to put my own modest contribution into a more general context.

Global activism is not a recent “invention”. For example, Deskaheh, a Six Nations (Haudenosaunee) Iroquois chief, went to the League of Nations to lobby governments in 1923-24, asking that his “nation” be admitted to the League (Woo 2003; Lepage 1994). Keck and Sikkink give a few examples of past transnational networks advocating for changes (1998, chapter 2). Their first example is the Anglo-American network for the abolition of slavery between 1833 and 1865. After their success at home and in the territories controlled by the British crown in 1833, British abolitionists turned toward the United States to have the practice stopped. Although several American groups resented this intrusion, existing

antislavery societies benefited from the intervention of British activists, and their activism was enriched by the exchanges with them:

Antislavery groups in the United States and Britain borrowed tactics, organizational forms, research, and language from each other. They used the tactics of petition, boycotts of slave-produced goods, and hired itinerant speakers very successfully on both sides of the Atlantic. Many of these tactics originated in Britain and the transnational network served as a vehicle for diffusing tactical recipes and collective action repertoires from one domestic social movement to another. In some cases, the antislavery network did more than transfer recipes, becoming a place for transnational political communication that mutually altered the tactics used on both sides of the Atlantic. (1998, 44-45).

The influence of British abolitionists decreased with the emergence of a new antislavery leadership in the U.S. Congress. Immigration into the North and the civil war continued the transformation of public opinion and slavery was abolished in 1865.

The second example given by Keck and Sikkink is the international movement for women's suffrage. They explain that even if organizations were active during the nineteenth century, some of them inspired by the activism against slavery, the international movement really took shape at the beginning of the twentieth century. "In fact there were three or four overlapping campaigns with different degrees of coordination. Suffrage groups were often divided by political and personal differences, and disagreed over the same kinds of strategic choices that modern networks would face: single-issue focus vs. broader demands; lobbying and political tactics vs. grassroots organizing; radical civil disobedience vs. legal forms of opposition" (1998, 53). The International Woman Suffrage Organization, one of the most important organizations advocating for

woman suffrage, was founded in 1904 by members of eleven countries. In 1926, at its 10th congress, forty-two countries were represented (1998, 56). There is no doubt that the activism was undertaken on a global scale.

The authors also remark that while the antislavery movement relied on information politics, circulating books and organizing speaking tours, the international women's suffrage campaign used symbolic and pressure politics, and also sometimes civil disobedience and provocation (1998, 53-54). Nonetheless, they used the same practical means to convince people and keep in touch among themselves: newspapers, letters, pamphlets, travel, visits and speaking tours. And these have not changed much during the last century.

Keck and Sikkink analyse the campaign against footbinding in China as their third example. The first antfootbinding society was created in 1874 by a missionary of the London Missionary Society. Twenty-one years later, ten women with different nationalities founded a nondenominational umbrella organization, the Natural Foot Society. Chinese reformers set up organizations during those years too, but they could not sustain the local opposition until the one formed in 1897, Pu'ch'an-tsu hui, that spread into many branches and gained a membership of 300,000 (1998, 62). The ban was proclaimed in 1911. "[T]his is a very rapid progress in the history of such campaigns" (1998, 64). The participation of different kinds of organizations, Christian and non-Christian, Chinese and foreign, was key to this quick change, because they were each focussing on a different part of Chinese society. "The campaign appeared to form

a pattern characteristic of modern networks,” Keck and Sikkink note, “where both foreign and domestic actors were crucial to the success of the campaign, with foreign actors instrumental in ‘first rolling the stone’ and domestic actors framing the issue to resonate with domestic audiences and generating the broad-based support necessary for success” (1998, 65). International networking was not as central in this campaign as in the previous examples, but newspapers, petitions, meetings, tracts, and pamphlets were. Essay competitions were also held.

The last example detailed by Keck and Sikkink is the campaign against female genital mutilation, or cutting, in Kenya, from 1923 to 1931. Female circumcision was the name given at the time. This battle was not successful, in contrast to the others. Again in this case, the first to mobilize against this practice were missionaries, from the Church of Scotland Missionary Society, who forbade the tradition among their converts and campaigned against it. Even if female circumcision was common in other groups such as the Maasai, the efforts of the Protestant church missions focused on the Kikuyu, “because they were more receptive to missionary teachings and had more converts to Christianity” (1998, 68). It seems that Kikuyu women were not involved in internal Kikuyu debates, and that no organization was formed outside of missions. Efforts against female circumcision were then associated with colonization and the imposition of values and rules from the outside, and Kikuyu nationalist elites were in favour of maintaining the practice because it was from the traditional culture. A counter campaign was led by one of the leaders of this nationalist elite, Jomo Kenyatta,

and he succeeded in reframing the debate, by lobbying, among others, committees of the House of Commons and church officials in London. Yet, in the long term, the campaign may have had some effect: Kenya was mutilating less in the 1990s (50 percent of girls and women) than Sudan (80 percent), Ethiopia (90 percent) or Somalia (98 percent) (1998, 72).

Jackie Smith (2004, 4) summarizes the shifts in global activism in a table reproduced below:

Period	Key Themes	Central Emphases/ Developments
Pre-1945-1950s	Socialism & Liberal Internationalism	*Anti-capitalist/ Socialist *Pacifist *World Federalist/ Multilateralist
1960s-1970s	Altruism→ Interdependence	*National Independence Movements *Third World Solidarity *Rise of Amnesty Int'l, Greenpeace
1980s-1990s	Exploring Interdependence & Seeking Solutions	*Peace Movements *IMF/World Bank Protests *UN Global Conference Organizing *Emphasis on Alliances/ Networking
2000s	Global Justice	*Greater militancy (esp. in North) *More explicit opposition to capitalism/ corporate globalization *Reduced focus on/ confidence in United Nations *World Social Forums & pro-active organizing

It is interesting to note how the objectives of global activism evolved; at the top of the table, activists tried to change states, and gradually the focus also included intergovernmental organizations and changing the values or ideas of citizens or corporations. As this section shows, the basic techniques of global activism have not changed a lot since the beginning. They have adapted to the new technologies and the increased speed in communication. Yet, it is difficult to say that global activism as a political activity remained essentially identical throughout time. The objectives and the context have changed considerably and the activists too. The norms that global activists want to change are often guarded by international institutions. More reflections on this evolution will come in the conclusions of this dissertation.

C) Identity and globalization

In this third and last part of the chapter, I clarify the concepts of identity, collective identities, and organizational identities. Then I summarize Manuel Castells' differentiation between three types of identities. I also clarify the distinction between an organization's identity and the organization itself. Afterwards, I link the concept of identity with globalization and try to highlight what is the benefit of studying them together.

1) *Identity, collective identities, organizational identities*⁵

Identity is a complex concept. Although we all have an intuitive understanding of identity, it is difficult to go beyond the general idea of identity as being who and what one is. When surveying the literature, no consensus on a definition is apparent, but key constitutive elements recur across disciplines and authors. An identity is composed of multiple elements, some coming from the external context and others from the internal perceptions that the person or the group has. These elements become significant, in turn, in the presence and the gaze of an external ‘Other’. Identities are not fixed. They *change* over time, because the context or/and the perception change, and they change as the identity and the gaze of the Other change. As Jenkins specifies, “[i]dentity is about boundary *processes*... rather than boundaries. As interactional episodes, those processes are temporary check-points rather than concrete walls... Boundary processes may be routinised or institutionalised in particular settings and occasions” (Jenkins 1996, 98-99). Identities form and are transformed in dynamic processes of fragmentation, integration, and cohabitation. There is cohabitation when elements that are apparently contradictory are present concurrently in an identity. These dynamic processes are not easily mapped or followed, nor necessarily expressed or understood by the entity studied. They show that identity is a process, and also a project in continual movement. In the words of Goff and Dunn (2004), there are four dimensions to identity: alterity, fluidity, constructedness, and multiplicity.

⁵ This discussion is drawn from Bergeron (under review).

This view of identity precludes an essentialist approach. An essentialist view rejects the importance of change and does not consider the Other, or the external eyes, as a fundamental, if also changing, reference in the construction or at least the enunciation of identity. Some religious beliefs lead to essentialism, because of a particular emphasis on destiny for instance. Physical features can also be treated as “essences”: for example that having black skin will be “interpreted” and lived by the person in a specific and predetermined way. Essentialist approaches therefore downplay the influence of the environment on the formation of individual identities. In my view, this aspect of an essentialist perspective drastically diminishes the meanings and possibilities of identities.

Collective identities share the characteristics mentioned above (multiple elements whose meaning vary in function of the “Other”, and are changing because they are submitted to boundary processes and fragmentation, integration, and cohabitation), but are more complex. Usually, a collective identity is the product of a *conscious reflection*, unlike many individual identities. If you are short sighted and you find yourself, by chance, with a group of other short sighted persons, your identity will not be changed (unless you did not know there were other short sighted people in the world!). But if you decide to form a group with these people that will champion medical research for the vision impaired, then your identity will probably change in the process and a new collective identity will have appeared.

Collective identities change too, since group membership is dynamic. Moreover what particular collective identities represent to their individual members is not constant over time: “[E]very collective identity is open to both internal subdivision and calls for its incorporation into some larger category of primary identity” (Calhoun 1994, 27). A collective identity is as strong as the meaning that it embodies, a meaning that can be diminished, divided, or incorporated into other meanings over time.

Perhaps most surprising, many collective identities are capable of helping constitute a coherent group despite the *multiple interpretations* of group members of what the meaning is of the group’s identity. There are good chances that two individuals will not describe in the same way what their belonging to a given group means to them. Still, this asymmetry in individual interpretations does not necessarily damage the collective identity: the bond between the members may continue to persist, even though these members may differ in what they believe they have in common as a group.

In fact, it can be asked if the asymmetry—the differences among group members of the various possible interpretations and meanings of their collective identity—is not beneficial to the group identity by pushing definitional disagreements into a collective space. Having to find proper answers to such disagreements consistent with the demands of the context in which the group is operating may well help the group to reorient itself on a regular basis, and renew the validation of individual membership in the process.

To summarize, a collective identity is the product of a conscious reflection from the people relating to it, whose meaning can vary because of changes in the group membership and multiple interpretations given to it by group members. It is not always easy to say whether an identity is a collective or an individual one, because all collective identities become a part of individual identities of the members of the group. Generally, I suggest that a collective identity is one that has a clearer and stronger character because it is shared with other people. Language is a good example: being able to publicly interact in one's mother tongue, because there is a community speaking that language, has more social significance than the use of that language in individuals' homes. Speaking a language has an important meaning for the individual, but the existence of a community speaking that language has a stronger meaning from the point of view of the society. As another example, being part of an association means something because of the collective action of this association. As Barcham (2000, 151) suggests, being Māori takes on a new dimension when we consider its collective level: "The spirit of Māori society lies not in its organisational structures, but in the ongoing, dynamic relationships between its members." Being Māori has a personal and individual meaning for sure, but being together with other Māoris brings new dimensions to the identity. As Goff and Dunn summarize in their concluding chapter: "identity provides a set of parameters within which certain practices and actions are possible, while others are not. Several contributors to [Goff and Dunn's] volume confirm this view, however, several also suggest that

the arrow should flow in both directions. In other words, not only does identity dictate practice; practice determines whether identity shall congeal around certain ideas or evolve” (2004, 244). I would suggest that practice is in this sense more important for collective identities than for identities lived at an individual level.

The identities of organizations, whether non-governmental, corporate, or government, are a particular form of collective identity. They are also more tangible than other forms. However, the “intensity” of organizational identities varies considerably. For example, the identity of an accounting firm does not have to be as well established as that of a charitable foundation or a political organization. The need to reach out and win the attention of a more general public explains the more intense identities of organizations based on values and ideas. Naturally, the elements contained in organizational identities are also very different from one organization to the other, depending on its role and objectives. Although we should avoid conflating public image and identity, corporate firms and other businesses develop an identity essentially as a function of their public image. Representative or non-governmental organizations stress this linkage less, though even these bodies must take care of their public image and reputation to a certain extent. The case of charitable organizations is more complex, depending on their actions and objectives, because such organizations place values and principles at the centre of both their identity and their public image.

Like all identities, organizational ones change consciously and/or unconsciously. The identity of a representative organization is influenced by its

leadership, its finance, its activities, and its public image. When the organization defines the people it represents differently, because it has changed or because the point of view of its leaders has changed, we can say that its identity has changed too. Change is hard to predict and is difficult to observe when one is in constant contact with the organization. It is like aging; differences only appear after some time when we compare the person or organization observed with a previous, less recent, image. Of course, for organizations as for individuals, deliberate decisions can be taken to change an identity. But the results are not always those expected.

2) Three types of identities according to Castells

Manuel Castells differentiates between three types of collective identities: legitimizing identities, resistance identities, and project identities. Legitimizing identities were constructed around the democratic state, the civil society coming from the industrial era, and “around the social contract between capital and labor” (Castells 1997, 355), but the institutions and organizations incarnating these identities are now losing ground because of globalization. Castells is not very explicit about legitimizing identities, which are identities of another age for him, and the second book of his trilogy focuses on resistance identities. They are built around values that are not part of mainstream society by groups “which retrench in communal heavens” (356). He gives examples of resistance identities by talking, among others, about fundamentalism in Christianity and Islam, ethnic nationalism, and also the women’s movement and the environmental movement.

In this sense, much of global activism is related to resistance identities, and this seems to me as partly contradicting the retrenchment into communities. Of course, there are extremists, but most global activists seem to be able to navigate between their “ideal world” and the “real world”, so ordinary sympathizers to a cause are certainly not totally disconnected from democratic institutions. “They do not communicate with the state, except to struggle and negotiate on behalf of their specific interests/values” (Castells 1997, 356). This is already something, I would argue, that transforms the state and governance.

About project identities, Castells writes that they are new identities redefining the social position of its bearers, and push them to transform the social structure. For him, project identities are likely to emerge from resistance identities. But Castells is saying that “as of 1996, I have not detected their signals” (357). Over a decade later, we can ask if some resistance identities have become project identities (or if Castells was blind to some already existing project identities). Is it the case of Islam fundamentalism? The terrorist attacks at the beginning of the millennium may lead us to think so, but we can ask which society fundamentalists are trying to transform?

The three types of identities identified by Castells lay out an interesting vision of the complex phenomenon of collective identities, but the typology is a bit rigid and lacks explanatory potential when studying activism. The three names keep their appeal though, and I would argue that they can be used when we forget some criteria set by Castells, the ones I have questioned above. “Progressive”

resistance identities certainly need to be a project soon after the resistance has started, to sustain the activism and ideas about new ways of doing things. “Regressive” resistance identities are probably more retrenched, but again can hardly sustain their action without a project that goes further than the community of already convinced people.

3) Distinguishing between an organization’s identity and the organization itself?

How can we differentiate an organization from its identity? Where do we draw the line between an organization and its identity? How do we define an organization if not by its identity? An organization’s identity is influenced by what it does, by the structure of the organization, its financing and its leadership, so is there a difference when one talks about an organization and about an organization’s identity? There is no evident answer to this question. It may be a waste of energy to try to come to a firm barrier between our conceptualisation of what an organization is, and what its identity is.

It may be useful to just find other words to talk about the identity of an organization, or what we generally understand as its identity. I think what we really mean by the “identity” of the organization is generally its mission statement, its overall objectives, which ideas it seeks to “realize.” However, that is only one part of the identity of the organization. In fact, it does not tell us much about the personality of the organization. Listing intentions may be enough to explain why an organization exists; it is not enough to say what an organization *is*.

Unlike personal identities, collective identities cannot be appreciated through the enunciation of a list of qualities and shortcomings, interests and favourite music/books/films/food/...⁶. In the case of collective identities, of organizations, what they do is a good part of what they are.

To fully analyse the identity of an organization, however, one must look at what it does; what it wants to do; what it has accomplished; how it is structured, financed, led; if it has partners, allies, enemies; in which context it evolves; how it describes itself; and which image it projects. Add to this the inevitable evolution and transformations that any organization will go through over time, and the task of mapping a full organizational identity can be overwhelming. The researcher must thus select the elements that will transmit the most interesting information and the more fundamental features of the organization. These will vary depending on the organization, the time period selected and the context in which it evolves.

4) Identity, globalization, and their relations⁷

In a globalizing world, the study of collective identities has become more important than before if we are to understand how and why individuals create links between themselves. Such ties are taking on new forms now that

⁶ When I was young, I was taught by my parents that a person is not what s/he does, in terms of acts and profession. I guess this is a general explanation that justifies something that is almost inexplicable, unconditional parental love. "You may have done something wrong, but I still love you." Even for a child, it may be difficult to understand, and the general explanation is of great comfort even if there is some necessary guilt about the wrong act. As we age, I think most people understand that the occupation one has to make money, or realize one's professional aspirations, is a very variable fraction of what an individual *is*. There is always much more to discover and to share. There is a fundamental difference between being and doing for individuals, not so much for organizations.

⁷ Taken from Bergeron (under review).

geographical distances can be covered quickly or are made irrelevant by the instantaneity of new communication technologies. Alain Touraine observes that societies, as we have known them, have disintegrated and that individuals are now creating new connections:

The unity of analysis in classical sociology originated in the unity of the social system of society. This unity has disappeared but it is replaced by the unity of the subject itself with its reference to self and no longer to an external or transcendental principle of order. This is why, after a long period of silence, we are once again discussing fundamental human rights; these now go beyond the sphere of political, and even of social, rights and extend to the vast domain of cultural rights, that is the right of all individuals and groups to combine, each in their own specific way, their participation in a globalized economy with the specificity of cultural projects which are in part, but only in part, controlled by a cultural heritage. (Touraine 2003, 127)

Touraine's emphasis on cultural projects and human rights resonates with indigenous peoples' demands.

Researching collective identities in the context of globalization leads us to think about the new means taken by these groups to reach out and transmit their message. Is political action taking new forms? Is it targeting new forums? Does it have different meanings than before? All these questions are fundamental for understanding the dynamics of globalization and its effects. Anthony F. Lang, Jr. has analyzed Hannah Arendt's work to cast a new light on global political protest.

But political action, according to Arendt, cannot be confined within the walls of the *polis*. Political action is similar to a miracle—something one cannot expect and cannot contain. Action tends to go beyond the boundaries within which we attempt to contain it: “Action, moreover, no matter what its specific content, always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitations and cut across all boundaries. Limitations and boundaries exist within human

affairs, but they never offer a framework that can reliably withstand the onslaught with which each new generation must assert itself” [(Arendt 1958, 190-191)]. While the *polis* is an attempt to create a physical space for political action, action forces itself beyond those boundaries. (Lang 2005, 183)

Can we say that globalization has enlarged the *polis* to a global scale? Is such a scale only evident for a few issues? Are collective identities, or the political groups that emerge from them, the instruments of the “new generation” which is pushing “limitations and boundaries”? There are many questions to be asked along these lines.

Jacques Beauchemin argues that (collective) identity claims have greatly contributed to the disintegration of societies that Touraine notes: “The question is not to know if particularistic political claims are or are not legitimate. What is important to note is that the opening granted to them has the effect of contesting the monopoly on legitimacy held up to that point by the central political subject crystallized in the idea of nation” (Beauchemin 2004, 171-2). The problems of the nation-state form a well-known axis of research in globalization studies. The author suggests that the disintegration of the nation, or the society, will go even further if identity claims are not coupled with a form of solidarity: “the power of identity, following the expression of Manuel Castells, and the emancipating wills that it carries need to associate these wills with an ethical project through which these identities would be affirmed as a political and ethical issue... a project capable of opposing an idea of solidarity to the rise of individualism”

(Beauchemin 2004, 177⁸). Many Indigenous peoples' political projects are bearers of solidarity and have an ethical component, and are thus very interesting to look at in the context of globalization and of an alleged weakening of nation-states identities. Studying another group where solidarity is chosen, where people become members and sometimes act directly to put this solidarity in practice, without really affecting the state, is an interesting contrast that partly explains the choice of my third case study, MSF Canada.

Conclusion

The theoretical notions reviewed in this chapter cover a wide field of knowledge. From the phenomenon of globalization, to which global governance and global civil society are connected, to a look at global activism and definitional notions related to the various forms of identities, these are ideas that greatly benefit from the test of case studies. To make progress in theory, one can look for different points of view. The next chapter is about how the case studies, which embody these different points of view, were planned and carried out.

⁸ Translation by the author.

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY APPROACH

*Mais ici, le lecteur pourra suivre trois histoires en parallèle,
dont on montrera les parcours, parfois convergents, le plus souvent différents.
Car la comparaison ne revient évidemment pas à affirmer
que les cas sont équivalents, mais bien plutôt en quoi,
à partir de questions communes, ils possèdent une histoire singulière.
Comparer, c'est différencier.
Jacques Sémelin (2005, 18-19)*

Looking at the connections between global activism and collective identities to better understand globalization was the general idea behind the research project leading to the present dissertation. The actual project took the form of comparing three organizations over a period of fifteen years (roughly 1990-2005) to better understand how their global activism changed over the period, how the identity of the organizations evolved, how these changes in identities and degree of global activism were connected, and what role(s) globalization had in these processes. These different steps, or research questions, necessitated different empirical tasks and levels of analysis. This chapter on the methodology of the study clarifies why the comparative case study approach was chosen, why the three organizations studied were selected, and how the research was carried out. This last part includes a section on the various difficulties that appeared throughout the research process.

A) Why this approach was chosen

The comparative case study approach was chosen because it seemed the most appropriate design to study the type of change I was interested in. Examining

change in, or looking at the evolution of, a given entity is not a straightforward exercise. Boundaries have to be determined, especially because the research is not done as the evolution occurs, but afterward. Considering multiple cases and putting them in comparison is a good way to set some of these boundaries and allows the researcher to think about the elements that may be generalized, or at least extended to other entities—in this research project, to other organizations doing global activism.

Investigating change implies searching for ruptures, discontinuities, new elements, but also continuity. If at first a clear classification of these elements appeared like the logical technique to come to a systematic understanding of change, the reality of change in a cohesive organization is more complex and usually incorporates newness and continuity at the same time. Accordingly, evolution seems a better word to describe what I was looking for.

The comparative aspect of the design became more important when this understanding of “change” became clearer. To try to put different elements into comparison, the dissertation does not present chronological case studies, although the research work documented a chronology of the evolution in each organization. Instead, the focus is on various aspects of global activism, in one chapter, and of collective identities in the other. Dissecting the two evolutions in each organization into multiple components is hopefully more fruitful to appreciate the complexities at play. The comparisons for each element help to determine how likely the same kind of process could have been in another organization.

The alternative designs that could have been adopted are simply variations on the multiple case study design. Only two organizations could have been selected, or a larger number, instead of the three chosen. A shorter time period or a longer one could have been envisioned, instead of the fifteen years retained here. The next section discusses the choice of the cases.

B) Selection of the cases

At the beginning of this research project, the intention was to carry out four case studies: two on Indigenous peoples' political organizations and two on organizations with something other than a given and already defined identity, like indigeneity, as their basis. The selection criterion for the latter organizations related to having been created around an idea or a concept and thus having a chosen identity at the core of the organization. I call this type of identity an ideational identity. As the research progressed, one of the organizations was left out, for varying reasons. The organization was Initiatives of Change, previously known as the Moral Rearmament. It is an international organization, with a Canadian chapter, and a presence in many cities in Canada and elsewhere. One of the difficulties was to circumscribe what I wanted to study in the organization, since it has different programs. Another problem was to access the archives. Some of them are in Switzerland, and it would have meant another research trip. Moreover, the perception of the participants on what they were doing—dialogue, meetings, education—was not one of activism, which could have complicated

interviews. Since this was an organization with an ideational identity, I was preoccupied by the possible imbalance that leaving it aside could cause in the results of the research. Because of the nature of the three organizations remaining and the findings about the evolutions of their global activism and of their identity, this concern did not last long. This section gives more details about why the three organizations were selected and how different enough they are so that the three cases present a diversity of organizational models doing global activism.

The first Indigenous peoples' organization is the **Grand Council of the Crees** (Eeyou Istchee). Cree representatives have been at the forefront of the international indigenous movement since the beginning of the 1980s. They have been very active at the United Nations (at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, various summits) and have developed expertise on many questions of concern for many Indigenous peoples, such as resource exploitation, self-determination, and cultural vitality. The Grand Council is the political arm of the (James Bay) Cree nation. I have chosen the GCC because Canadians know well its global activism. Also, it works in English and many statements made by the organization were easily accessible on the web. The choice of this organization was furthermore justified by the fact that the Crees are living in a relatively small territory, in one Canadian province, and have a strong political organization, respected by other Indigenous peoples' organizations.

The other Indigenous peoples' organization is the **Saami Council**. The Saami live in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. The SC has been active on the international scene for the last 20 to 25 years, in the UN system particularly. As an organization linking the Saami from four different countries, the Council is already a transnational entity. The positions of the Saami Council are often very well-balanced and incorporate thoughtful analysis, which is one justification for choosing it. Another reason is that its style, as I could judge even before starting the more detailed research, is quite different from the one of the Grand Council of the Crees. In addition, the Saami are more numerous than the Crees, but geography and borders divide them. As I would learn a little later, the Saami are also more diverse culturally than the Crees, and they have set up many other political structures.

Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada (MSF Canada) was chosen as an organization with an ideational identity at its core. It is part of a global movement, MSF, which was founded in 1971 and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999. The members of the organization are providing medical help to people caught in wars or natural catastrophes and to marginalized people. They also include doing awareness-raising in their mandate. MSF is thus an NGO that has a medical assistance identity at its centre, even though its volunteers and employees are not uniquely from the medical professions. They include logistics experts and administrators as well. I chose MSF Canada because it is a civil society organization that has been less studied than others working in the human rights,

women's rights, or environmental field. I was intrigued by the organization because of previous work on patents and global health during which I had the occasion to consult some documents produced by MSF. Moreover, limiting the study to the Canadian chapter gave me the chance to study an organization from its very beginning since MSF Canada was formed in 1990. Looking at the Canadian chapter of a wider international organization also provided a different organizational pattern to study than the two other cases chosen.

With these three cases, I cover different kinds of identity and organizational models. The three organizations are occidental, which simplifies the comparison to a certain extent. The two Indigenous peoples' political organizations have different characteristics that could have influenced the evolutions studied, while keeping some commonality in the events both attended and in which they participated. MSF Canada is a humanitarian organization, yet it is involved in policy discussions here in Canada, and is part of a larger and complex organization. Lastly, two of the organizations are Canadian, and I hope my contribution will help understand them better as well as the Canadian context in which they work, participate, and evolve.

C) How the research was carried out

This section explains how the data were collected, what kind of analysis was done, and the difficulties encountered during the research process.

1) Data collection

The case studies are based on documents and interviews. It should be mentioned that although it was possible to keep the interviews confidential, all interviewees accepted that their name be used for this research. Also, they all accepted the recording of the interview.

The interviews were semi-structured. I had prepared a relatively long list of questions, and asked only those that I thought were relevant for each interviewee, depending on what their involvement with the organization was, the information they were giving me, or their vision of globalization. Here are some of the questions frequently asked:

- When planning the local actions of your organization, do you also keep in mind what impact it might have in other places in the world or do you concentrate only on its local aspects?
- When you are planning an action that you intend to have an impact well beyond the particular place in which it occurs, would the mass media be important in your planning?
- When you think about the actions of your organization over the past 10-15 years, would you say that you are trying to reach a larger set of people or individuals than you used to consider?
- When you look back over the past 15 years, would you say that you are cooperating today with different organizations and persons than you were 15 years ago?

- What does the term “globalization” mean for you?
- Would you say that the identity of your group changed over the last 15 years?

With some interviewees, I also asked a few questions to clarify elements that I had encountered in the documentary research.

The following paragraphs explain how the contact was made with the groups, how documents were collected, and how the interviews were realized.

a) Grand Council of the Crees

After being introduced by a formal letter from my supervisor, I interviewed Mr. Brian Craik, a staff member of the Grand Council of the Crees recommended by Dr. Harvey Feit, a McMaster University anthropology professor who has been working on the Crees for a long time. In this interview, I had a general conversation with Mr. Craik. This discussion situated the context of the research. After this meeting, I was given unlimited access to the archives of the GCC located in their Ottawa embassy. I was able to consult and photocopy all the documents that I considered related to the global activism of the GCC over the period 1989-2004. This field work occurred in the spring of 2004, which is the time limit for this case study. I was privileged to get this free access. During my time there, I noticed that some documents were shredded by staff members, so it goes without saying that not all documents produced by the GCC are archived. The archives were chronological and well-organized, and it leads me to think that,

unless I neglected to select a document that was in fact related to the GCC global activism, I have a very comprehensive first hand documentation for the GCC's global activism. Two large binders containing mostly press releases, speeches, statements, and reports are the result of this part of the research. I also collected a few articles and book chapters as second hand documents, many of which are from anthropologists, including Professor Feit.

Interviews with people from the Grand Council of the Crees were more difficult to obtain. Mr. Craik agreed to one without problem. I also succeeded in interviewing the executive director of the organization. Another interview was made with someone who was associated with the Council mostly before the period of my study. Other attempts to interview Cree political figures were not fruitful, even after repeated communications. I should mention that, being a Québécoise, I have some memory of media reports on the Cree situation and actions, and these recollections may have affected my perceptions, although reports from the press and media are not part of my study.

b) Saami Council

Since it was more complicated to initiate a contact with the Saami Council, and after a few consultations with researchers having been in touch with the SC, it was decided that it would be a good idea to observe a week of a session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York where the SC is represented. I went to the United Nations in May 2004, and managed to meet most of the

people from the Saami Council present at the same time, in the Forum and outside, since we were at the same hotel. During a conversation one night, I tested the idea of attending the Saami Conference that was to be held in October of that year, to pursue the research and do interviews. It was considered a good opportunity for me to meet potential interviewees and observe Saami politics, and so I then arranged this trip to Northern Norway. In the meantime, I did observe the Saami Council as well as the Grand Council of the Crees “in action” at the Permanent Forum, an important occasion to observe their global activism from which my research benefited.

Before going to the Saami Conference, I collected some speeches and other first hand documents produced by the SC, mostly on the web. A letter was also sent to IWGIA (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs) on the recommendation of Professor Petra Rethmann, one of my supervisory committee members, a research organization based in Copenhagen, to see if it would be possible to consult their library and archives. Given the positive response, the trip to Honningsvåg, Norway, where the Saami Conference was held October 7-9 2004, was completed by a visit of one week to IWGIA (two weeks were planned but it was not possible for them to receive me during the first one). There, I had access to an extensive documentation on the Saami and the Saami Council and also to a few more first hand documents. The visit to IWGIA was also a chance to talk with experienced researchers who have followed the work of the SC for a long time and with whom I exchanged impressions and reflections. In

Copenhagen, I also visited the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat of the Arctic Council and a person who was at the Saami Conference and had been following the activities of the SC for many years. A few documents were gathered in these two settings and the discussions there were also helpful.

At the Saami Conference, I did observe most of the sessions where presentations were made. I interviewed three persons who had been involved with the SC. I knew before going that doing interviews during a conference is not easy to do, and was thus not too surprised by the short duration of the interviews and the difficulty in finding a good time to ask my questions. Yet, this trip to Northern Norway was very valuable because I learned more about the Saami and the Saami Council, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary. I did two other interviews afterwards, one on the phone with a person who was too busy during the conference, and one with Rauna Kuokkanen, a post-doctoral fellow at McMaster who was an elected member of the Council in the 1990s.

I did not visit the headquarters of the Saami Council for several reasons. One is language related: I was told that many of the documents produced by the SC are not available in English. If the current website of the SC is an accurate reflection of the documents kept in the headquarters, it is true that many important documents are not translated in English. However, most of the global activism done by the SC outside its region is in English. But, and this is a second reason for not going to Utsjoki, Finland, it is not clear that the SC is keeping good archives of its past activities. In effect, many statements made in global forums are written

during the meeting, and there are other organizations gathering them. For archives to be properly assembled, these statements should be communicated to the headquarters in a systematic way. I do not know if SC's staff members are doing this. It seems to me that the memory of the organization is people-based rather than document-based. A third reason was that visiting an organization just before or after an important event such as the Saami Conference is not ideal to get people's attention and help. However, if I were to research the SC further, I would make sure to visit the headquarters and to see for myself what is kept there. For all these reasons, my first hand documentation on the Saami Council is limited and much less complete than that on the GCC or MSF Canada. It is still substantial enough, combined with second hand documents, many of them collected at IWGIA, to accurately look at the evolution of the global activism and collective identity of the organization.

c) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

To initially contact with MSF Canada, a few emails were sent, but no reply was received. One day, I decided to just drop by the office of the organization in Ottawa, where I was living. The person there agreed to a meeting a few days later, and she then explained me further how the organization works and is structured. A formal letter was then sent to the executive director of the organization in Toronto, asking for a preliminary meeting to see how the documentary research and the interviews could be carried out with minimal impact on the organization's

activities. David Morley accepted to meet me, and asked me to provide him a letter explaining further my research so that he could present it to the management team. This meeting took place in May 2005. In July, I stayed a few days in Toronto to do the documentary research, based on the archives of the organization.

In September, I visited the Montréal office, where I met the person responsible for the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. We had a long discussion and I had access to all the documents she kept; she only asked me to not copy the ones that were not public.

The interviews were conducted in November 2005 with two people still active in the organization. An additional interview with David Morley, who had by then left MSF Canada, was conducted afterward on the phone. It should be mentioned that research on drug patents and global health that I have done previously may have added to my understanding of MSF Canada's work on the subject.

2) Analysis

Although I had the intention to “question” the documents gathered and analyse them using a series of questions or a grid, the large number of first hand documents, in particular in the case of the GCC, soon discouraged me. I thus read what I had assembled, took notes, and tried to make sense of what I had learned in the documents and the interviews.

The analysis can possibly be better understood as an interpretation. The research presented here has no pretention of understanding everything that the organizations do or are. It suggests a reading of past events and of how organizations change. The comparison between the three cases illuminates contrasts and similarities, common challenges and difficulties, and the variety of opportunities organizations are exposed to. For the chapter on the evolution of global activism, I relied mostly on documents. The interviews were more useful for the chapter on the evolution of collective identities.

In the course of the research project, I wrote two documents that led to the interpretations submitted in the following chapters. One is a chapter in an edited volume and its title is “Global activism and changing identities: Interconnecting the global and the local. Examples from the Grand Council of the Crees and the Saami Council.” MSF Canada was not included in that chapter because the focus of the book is Indigenous peoples. The other is a paper prepared for the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference of June 2006, “Global activism and changing identities: Examples from the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council, and Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada.” This paper was a first effort to summarize all my research findings. These two writing projects allowed me to develop further my thinking about the organizations studied.

3) *Difficulties*

The following paragraphs state the various difficulties I ran into during the research process. They are written in the view of helping other researchers and to think further about research itself; no one should feel accused or offended by these disclosures, some of which would not be mentioned in ordinary “social contact” situations.

The first difficulty is related to archives. It seems difficult for small NGOs to keep well-organized archives. For instance, at MSF Canada, there is no complete record (to my knowledge) in a paper form of the press releases diffused over the years. The electronic record covered just a few years. This observation brings two remarks. One is that small organizations rely heavily on oral exchanges and people’s memories. They have too much to do in a short time: making sure that all important documents are kept or copied is not a priority. The second is that the electronic age is complicating even more archival activities.⁹ When websites change, there is often no complete recuperation of documents that appeared on the previous version. Some compilations are kept for a certain time, and then disappear. Archives are not that useful for organizations which have a good oral transmission “system,” and shared electronic documents are often simply not printed. These aspects make the task of the researcher more complicated: the paper trail is not as reliable as before.

⁹ I am really curious about what historians of the future will do to recuperate the personal correspondence of the individuals they will want to understand. The letters of writers have been important to understand their personalities. How present day emails will be saved from cyberspace and computers memories, often erased without consideration for the future?! I guess the telephone was the beginning of the end for this kind of research based on personal communication.

Another difficulty was to make and maintain contact with an organization. Without a person dedicated to “contacts with researchers” (!), emails or phone calls are likely to be ignored in a small organization with scarce resources. However, this is not that unusual, as this encouraging quote makes clear:

When anthropologists and sociologists do field research, for instance, they typically have problems establishing and maintaining those relationships with people that will let them observe what they want over a long period of time. Delays and obstructions while you negotiate these arrangements can be discouraging. But experienced fieldworkers know that the difficulties provide valuable clues to the social organization they want to understand. How people respond to a stranger who wants to study them tells something about how they live and are organized. (Becker 1986, 64)

This remark sounds true from my experience. Establishing contact with people who have left the organization is even more complicated, especially when their departure was not under the best conditions. They may be abroad, or on their trap line, or no one can give you their contact information.

I had various problems with my interview requests. Some were left without answer, leaving me to wonder if the message (email or message left to an assistant) got relayed correctly. Someone agreed to an interview, but was impossible to contact during the arranged day, without apology or explanation (which is even more frustrating when you made special arrangements to come from afar). This kind of problems happened more frequently with Indigenous peoples' groups. Overall, it was not too difficult to arrange interviews when people let me present myself and understood what I was doing. When I was introduced by someone from the organization to his or her co-workers, interviews were generally gracefully accepted. Of course, there are often issues of time,

which can also be frustrating, but understandable when limitations are announced before the start of the interview. It is important for organizations, and in particular civil society NGOs, to be accessible. There are issues of transparency at stake, especially when a group claims that it talks for the “society” at large. If researchers have difficulties to make contacts with the organization, it is relevant to ask how willing it is to be in touch with its own “base.” It is necessary to give some importance to the interactions with citizens, even when they are not initiated by the organization. It is also a question of accountability.

Although I had experience with interviews for research projects, I was still a bit unsettled by how different this kind of interview is from interviews in the media, to which we are more regularly exposed. Because the interviewer already understands a lot of the background, has many more prepared questions, and, for reason of “equality” between interviewees, tends to stick with the questions written, my impression is that research interviews are much less dynamic, at least with the format I used and was used to. However, the interviewee is conscious of what s/he is saying, but less focused on how it is said than during a media (especially audio or video) interview, which is more interesting for the interviewer. The duration of the interview also makes an important difference. A form of fatigue can be felt, and sometimes the interviewee can be annoyed by some questions or the whole process. Looking back, I could have asked some questions in a more open-ended way, starting with “Can you talk to me about ...”

Maybe it would have made the interviews a bit more dynamic. I think it would have been useful to read a bit more about interviews before writing my questions.

Lastly, and maybe more personally, there is the question of my gender. This was particularly evident with the Saami Council, and amplified because I was in a different setting than the organization's offices, sometimes in pretty festive circumstances. Indigenous peoples' organizations are often considered more male-dominated than other types of organizations, and a kind of paternalistic/machismo attitude can sometimes be detected. In that regard, it is interesting to compare the GCC and the SC. The GCC is clearly male-dominated, while in the SC, and since its beginning, women are present, and are now well-represented in the staff too. I had more problems to obtain interviews with the GCC, and my gender may have something to do with this. With the SC, the trouble was more to maintain a distance and to leave seduction out of the relationship.

Conclusion

The organizations studied will receive a copy of the dissertation, in an effort to make the research made on them useful for them too. This is an ethical commitment particularly important when Indigenous peoples are involved in research (see Smith 1999, 15). Sharing the research findings can also be a way to learn from the other organizations studied here, although different circumstances and challenges were at the basis of the activism.

The next chapters present the empirical findings of my research. Chapter IV presents some background information on the three organizations studied. It also gives more information on some events or elements that are only briefly mentioned in the other chapters. In Chapter V, I describe and interpret the evolution of global activism for the GCC, the SC, and MSF Canada. The evolution of the collective identity at the core of each organization is studied in Chapter VI. The last chapter brings together the two evolutions and highlights other conclusions drawn from the research.

CHAPTER IV THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES, THE SAMI COUNCIL, AND MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES-CANADA: BACKGROUND

*Our ancestors long ago
Trouble makers did defeat.
Let us, brothers, also resist
Staunchly our oppressors,
Oh, tough kin of the sun's sons,
Never shall you be subdued
If you heed your golden Saami tongue,
Remember the ancestors' word.
Saamiland for Saami!*

Saami national anthem (Sámi soga lávlla), Isak Saba
trans. Ragnar Müller-Wille and Rauna Kuokkanen

This chapter provides background information on the three groups that form the case studies for this dissertation. I offer information on the histories of the groups studied and contextual details about some of the events, projects, and documents mentioned in the other parts of the dissertation. This material is selected to help make the analysis in subsequent chapters more understandable. It draws on books and articles written by specialists of other disciplines or that deal in some detail about specific aspects of the lives of the Crees, the Saami, or the MSF movement. Readers interested in pursuing this information further can turn to the references given in this chapter.

A) The Grand Council of the Crees

The Grand Council of the Crees represents the James Bay Crees who live in the province of Québec, in the boreal forest. The organization has another name, Eeyou Istchee, that is not widely used outside the community. Eeyou means Cree.

In the dissertation, I use mostly the name Grand Council of the Crees, and the abbreviation GCC. Also, if I refer to the Crees, I mean the James Bay Crees. There are other Cree nations in Canada, including some in the James Bay area in Ontario, but also the Woodland Cree in northern parts of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Plains Cree live further south in the Prairies provinces. Also, the Cree communities are sometimes referred to as the Cree-Naskapi bands. The Naskapi are another Indigenous people living in Northern Québec. Another agreement was concluded with them. The federal act replacing the Indian Act for the Crees and the Naskapis, altogether, is the Cree-Naskapi (of Québec) Act. This explains why the communities are sometimes designated as Cree-Naskapi in official documents. I will not use this terminology. The website of the organization appeared on the Internet in 1997 (GCC 2006, 11). In this section, I present information on the situation of Indigenous peoples in the province of Québec, Canada; on the Cree people; on the GCC as the political organization representing the Crees; on the various hydroelectric projects that have been built or proposed in the Cree territories in the period of this study and before; and on the *Paix des Braves*, a key agreement between the Crees and the Government of Québec signed in 2002, and the current situation of the Crees.

1) Indigenous peoples in Québec, Canada

To better understand the context in which the GCC has evolved, it is necessary to briefly look at the situation of Indigenous peoples living in the province of

Québec, in Canada. There are eleven Indigenous peoples recognized in the province of Québec. They were recognized as nations in 1985 by the Assemblée nationale, Québec's legislature. Thus, the government acknowledges that the Inuit, the Attikamek, the Mohawks or the Micmacs existed as autonomous entities before the colonization by the Europeans and have preserved over time some of the characteristics distinguishing them as peoples. Indigenous persons living in Québec form around 1% of the population. Most of them live on reserves: more than 65% of the Amerindians do so. The Inuit in the north of the province have their own communities. They were not covered historically by the Indian Act, and thus were not submitted to the process leading to the creation of reserves. More recently, they have been brought into the treaty process through land claims agreements (the Nunavik in Québec).

The jurisdiction over “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” was attributed to the federal level of government in the Canadian constitution in Section 91, subsection 24 of the Constitution Act 1867. The Indian Act, first passed in 1876, put in place a policy of assimilation. According to Frideres and Gadacz, the present version of the Act is still very close to the 1880 version, “indicating that Indian Affairs has not yet undergone any major ideological shifts in the past hundred years of dealing with the Aboriginal population” (2005, 15). Since 1973 though, starting with the Calder decision, the Supreme Court of Canada has interpreted the law in a manner that has generally been in favour of Indigenous peoples (see Elliott 2005 for an analysis of the different rulings). The

government has also modified its policies so that negotiations can be conducted for land claims and other concerns. It is important to realize how influential law and rulings are when it comes to the situation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The juridical complexity is further increased by the different levels of governments involved. When an Aboriginal nation living in Québec wants to change something in the organization of the life of its communities, it may have to deal with the Québec government, with the federal government, or with both, depending on the kind of issue.

Communities are generally governed by a band council, a structure first imposed by the Indian Act, 1876, and was designed to take control away from traditional governing institutions. Because many communities are very small, the band council plays a crucial role in the everyday life of those living on reserve. It provides jobs and controls the distribution of financial resources. It helps people but also has the means to bother those not sharing its opinions. Corruption and cronyism are part of some band council – community relations for some Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Social ills also afflict many communities. Violence, addictions, and suicides are common. Ill health, high dropout rates from school, lack of housing and sometimes even of clean water are also part of the difficulties. Much of these problems come from the decades of negligence on the part of the governments, from forced schooling in boarding institutions where sexual, physical and psychological violence were prevalent, and from the limited economic

development that most communities have endured. There are of course stories of success and encouraging cases, but most of what is presented in the media relates to these troubles and to difficult negotiating processes often communicating an incomplete picture of these communities to non-Aboriginal people.

During the colonization process, treaties were signed in most parts of Canada with Aboriginal peoples, thus acknowledging their existence and their authority over some lands. In exchange for those lands, Aboriginal peoples received very little, and it is generally thought today that the terms of the exchange were so unequal that the legality of the treaties is questionable. However, no historical treaty was signed on the Québec province territory. The first modern treaty in Canada is the one the Crees signed in 1975.

2) The Cree people

A few anthropological notes may be useful to better understand the communities represented by the Grand Council of the Crees. The James Bay Crees have been living in “the east and southeast of James Bay and southeast of Hudson Bay” (Feit 1995, 181). This part of the province of Québec is considered a subarctic area. The Crees have inhabited this region since the retreat of the glaciers, i.e. for at least 5,000 years. They were a nomadic people, fishing, trapping, hunting on a large territory. There are nine Cree communities: Chisasibi, Eastmain, Mistissini, Nemaska, Oujé-Bougoumou (built in 1992), Waskaganish, Waswanipi, Whapmagoostui, and Wemindji. The Cree population is approximately 14,000

and has been growing constantly for the past few decades, similar to the Aboriginal population in Canada more generally. In a speech given in 1990 by Matthew Coon Come, he said he “represent[s] the 10,000 Cree people of Northern Quebec” (Coon Come 1990a, 2).

Unlike many other Aboriginal peoples in Canada, “the Crees did not migrate to the cities. Perhaps the isolation and difficulty of travel is one explanation, perhaps because French was the language of work, perhaps because the Crees preferred remaining at home on the territory where life was reasonable and hopeful. Not having lost their land base to treaty-making or settlement, perhaps the Crees saw a future in their homeland” (Morantz 2002, 248-9). These factors have also helped to preserve the Cree language. Nonetheless, Cree communities were disturbed in their nomadic hunting and fishing life and had to settle in communities. If many children had to go to school away from their communities, Morantz explains that the young Crees were usually attending schools in other native communities and boarding with families there. They were voluntarily sent “by their parents who wished their children to be educated while they themselves wanted to continue hunting and trapping in the winter rather than take up residence in one of the villages. Additionally, the Cree leaders who graduated from these same schools today recognize that they did gain an education, probably due more to their motivation than any new pedagogical approaches” (Morantz 2002 248). Of course, this education has prepared them for the negotiations with governments that they had to pursue, and their other roles as

administrators or entrepreneurs. The traditional life is not completely something of the past, and some Crees remain trappers. 10% of all furs in Canada are wild furs, and one-fifth of the wild furs are harvested by aboriginal peoples (or 2% of the total). This small industry is worth \$23 million. Some Crees contribute to it.

The first major clash between Crees and non-Aboriginal Quebecers occurred in the 1970s. At that moment, the Québec government under Premier Robert Bourassa wanted to develop hydroelectricity as the spearhead of the province's economy, which was not in a very good position. Hydro-Québec, the monopoly electricity provider and crown corporation, drew up plans for gigantic dams, a whole set of river diversions, and the creation of reservoirs in Northern Québec. The Crees were not consulted since the Québec government took for granted that the lands were provincial and the idea of an Aboriginal title on the land was not affirmed in law, especially on the Québec territory where no land treaty was signed historically. Needless to say, the Crees were not happy to learn that a significant part of their traditional territory would be flooded and that no one had had the idea to consult them. Attempts to modify the Québec government and the crown corporation's projects were made, without result. A temporary injunction was thus sought, with the collaboration of the Inuit, since some of them were also touched by the project, to stop the work on the La Grande river. After long hearings, judge Malouf ruled in November 1973 in favour of the Crees and Inuit. "The ruling was a stronger affirmation of Cree rights than many people had thought would be possible at that time and forced the government to negotiate

with the Crees” (Feit 1995, 205). That ruling was reversed only a week later, allowing the work to continue. The Crees could have continued their battle at the judicial level but chose to negotiate. This negotiation led to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975.

The *Convention*, as it is called in French, is a very long document, and a complex one too. Against some change to the initial project on the La Grande river, a territorial regime was defined, powers over development were recognized, institutions of self-government were created, and compensation money was given (this is a very brief summary; see Feit 1995 for more details and the text of the Agreement, available online). The Agreement was approved by the Crees. Its application, however, became problematic and did not satisfy the Crees, who have continued to negotiate and go to courts over the years.

3) The Grand Council of the Crees as a political organization

To negotiate in a coordinated manner with the governments and the other parties who would become signatories of the JBNQA (the James Bay Energy Corporation, the James Bay Development Corporation, and Hydro-Québec), the eight Cree communities that existed at the time formed a political organization to represent them, the Grand Council of the Crees (of Québec). Previously, there was no formal structure that could have claimed to talk in the name of the Crees. The communities are not physically close to one another, and each was governed by its Band Council, the structure imposed by the Indian Act. Moreover, there are

some ethnological differences in between the communities, because some were located on the coast of James Bay and others were farther within the land. The new organization was necessary to facilitate communications and negotiations and to prevent the government from playing off one community against another. The Letters Patent creating the GCC were issued in 1974.

With the adoption of the JBNQA, another Cree organization was created, the Cree Regional Authority. In a way, it is the administrative organization that can administer Cree programs and institutions. In fact, it has the same governing structure, membership (“All Cree beneficiaries are members of the GCC(EI)-CRA,” states the GCC website), and board of directors than the GCC. There is no clear separation between the political branch and the “administrative” one. The JBNQA is specific on the roles of the CRA, which has a clear legal status and was created by an Act of the Assemblée nationale in 1978, something that was not possible to attribute to the political organization that the GCC has. The permanency of the institutions is vested in the CRA, not the GCC. For the present study, no distinction is made and everything is attributed to the GCC.

The structure of the GCC is fairly simple. As mentioned above, all Crees are members of the GCC. They vote for a Grand Chief and a Deputy Grand Chief every four years, in a general election with secret ballot. Each community also elects its Chief, and they are sitting on the Council-Board, along with another person from each community, chosen in an election, who has a three-year

mandate¹⁰. Since there are nine communities, the GCC Council-Board has 20 members. There is no clear indication on how the board functions, by consensus, majority vote, or if the vote of the Grand Chief is more important. Each community has a structure which allows for local decisions or actions to be undertaken without the consent of the GCC. During this study, the GCC maintained three offices: one in Nemaska, one in Montréal, and one in Ottawa, which is called the Cree embassy.

The Grand Council of the Crees obtained a consultative status as a non-governmental institution at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 1987. This status permits access to meetings of the UN, and gives status and some rights to the organization having it during meetings. The status the GCC has is the most limited one, and the organization cannot, for instance, circulate statements. This is not the case at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, where NGO rules are different and much more permissive, and at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, for evident reasons.

4) Hydroelectric projects related to the Crees

The creation of the Grand Council of the Crees is thus due in part to the planning and realization of a major hydroelectric project, usually called the James Bay project. In fact, the project concerned three major rivers and their watershed in the James Bay region: Grande Rivière, Great Whale, and Rupert. Initially, the Rupert

¹⁰ This is the current situation. I am unsure if it has always been the duration of the mandate and if these persons were always elected.

project also included the Nottaway, the Broadback and the Harricana rivers (NBR project). More explanations are necessary to understand the unfolding of events.

When the James Bay project was announced in 1971, the government was looking at two possible projects: La Grande (on the Grande Rivière) and NBR. It was decided a year later that the northernmost river should be first, La Grande. The construction of a road of 700 km to the river was started even before this choice. The La Grande project was divided into 2 phases. The first one included the construction of the La Grande-2 (now called Robert-Bourassa), LG-3, and LG-4 generating stations with an installed capacity of 10,800 MW; the diversion of the Eastmain and Caniapiscou rivers to increase the flow of the Grande Rivière; the creation of 5 reservoirs covering an area of around 10,000 km²; and the construction of a gigantic diversion channel, or spillway, of 10 steps on a length of 1,500 m, higher than the Niagara or the Montmorency falls (numbers vary between sources, see Hydro-Québec 2008 and Wikipedia's "James Bay Project"). Other works of infrastructure were carried out, like establishing airports and camps for the workers.

The second phase of the La Grande project, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, included the La Grande-1, La Grande-2-A, Laforge-1, Laforge-2 and Brisay developments, adding another 5,000 MW. "Three new reservoirs covering an area of 1,600 km² were created" (Wikipedia 2008). Altogether, phase 1 and 2 have created a real hydroelectric complex, the La Grande complex, one of the largest in the world.

The next project is the one most discussed in the present dissertation. The Great Whale project, or Grande Baleine in French, was suggested during the second phase of the La Grande project. The Great Whale river is north of La Grande river, and ends up in the Hudson Bay. Since the NBR project had not been realized yet but was still in the plans, the Crees decided to campaign against both projects. But the Great Whale project captured more attention, maybe because of the cuter name, maybe because that part of the territory had not been touched at all, maybe because the estimates on how much energy could be sold to the USA were more recent, maybe because the Crees already thought something smaller could be done with NBR, and have more positive economic effects for them. I am sure many other hypotheses could be listed. To explain these two unrealized projects, I will quote Matthew Coon Come at a Washington state conference:

The Great Whale Complex will consist of five dams and 133 dikes. It will have four diversion channels. 4,387 square kilometers of our territory will be covered with water.

The NBR complex will require 16 dams and 114 dikes which will place 6,498 square kilometers under water.

Great Whale will require three river diversions, and flow reversals and flood conditions on two other rivers. NBR will require that two of the major rivers flowing into James Bay be permanently cut off. The third river, the Broadback will have its flow increased sevenfold! God only knows what this will do (Coon Come 1990b, 10, underlined in the text)¹¹.

In 1994, the government of Québec officially announced that it was abandoning the Great Whale project. It was a victory for the Crees. As we will see, their activism, particularly in the United States, certainly had some impact on this

¹¹ The numbers for these two projects vary quite widely. I have not looked for Hydro-Québec description of the project.

decision. Moreover, the project was becoming less and less interesting economically because the financial conditions were changing, and more and more preliminary reviews were demanded. When potential buyers, cities and states, started to question the projects and said they were not ready to buy the power produced in these conditions, Hydro-Québec's ideas were not as viable as before. We have not heard of the Great Whale project since, but the NBR project returned in a revised way in the new millennium.

When the GCC signed the *Paix des Braves* (see below) in the name of the Crees in 2002, hydroelectric development returned in Cree territory. The first project, currently fully functional, is Eastmain 1. It generates 480 MW and the reservoir covers 603 km². The water from this reservoir passes through 3 generating stations, because it continues to LG-2-A or Robert-Bourassa (LG-2), and LG-1 after Eastmain 1.

In 2004, another project was agreed upon, Eastmain 1-A/Sarcelle/Rupert project. It was mentioned in the *Paix des Braves*, but was “subject to assessment and review under the environmental regime set forth in the original JBNQA” (Scott 2005, 147). A powerhouse will be built near Eastmain 1, generating 768 MW, and another, Sarcelle, will produce 125 MW. The Rupert river flow will be partly diverted into Eastmain river watershed. Again, the water will be turbinated through more than one powerhouse, increasing the capacity of the whole network, not just by the new powerhouses (Hydro-Québec 2008a). 346 km² will be flooded by the creation of the diversion bays. Completion of the project is projected for

early 2012¹². Since these two last projects incorporated consultations and negotiations, more steps were taken to minimize ecological negative impacts and other problems identified by the Crees. For instance, Hydro-Québec agreed to move camps and construct hydraulic works to maintain as much as possible the current level of affected rivers. Cree workers are employed on the project and traditional knowledge was taken into account.

The numbers presented here may seem abstract. There is no doubt though that all these projects are massive, if not gigantic, and have impacts on the environment, and on the Crees and their communities. Measuring these impacts is very complicated and I am not going to talk about studies made to understand them. *On ne fait pas d'omelette sans casser d'oeufs*, and it goes both ways. We cannot say that there were no important and positive impacts from these projects, and Hydro-Québec and the government have learned from their past errors. Yet, the full measure of the negative impacts is difficult to assess and their importance cannot be dismissed either.

5) The Paix des Braves and the current situation

In February 2002, the government of Québec and the Grand Council of the Crees signed a document called the *Agreement Concerning a New Relationship between Le Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec*. Commonly called the *Paix*

¹² A full explanation of the project is available on the Hydro-Québec website (2008a). Another interesting source, but not for recent projects, is the archives of the CBC, with radio and television clips: http://archives.cbc.ca/society/native_issues/topics/94/

des Braves in French, this Agreement is considered a nation-to-nation agreement, meaning that the Québec nation deals with the Cree nation as an equal. The Agreement was “approved by Eeyouch in February 2002 through a national Eeyou referendum that was conducted in each Eeyou community. A substantial majority of Eeyou electors voted in favour of approving the agreement” (Awashish 2005a, 176). Philip Awashish, who was a negotiator of the JBNQA, summarizes clearly the main objectives of the *Paix des Braves*:

1. establishment of a new nation-to-nation relationship;
2. assumption of greater responsibility by the Cree Nation for its economic and community development;
3. establishment of the means to allow the parties to work together with regard to the development of mining, forestry, and hydroelectric resources in the territory;
4. settlement, with discharges, of the provisions of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* pertaining to the economic and community development of Eeyouch;
5. settlement or the withdrawal of certain legal proceedings launched by the Crees;
6. consent of Eeyouch for the construction of the Eastmain 1-A/Rupert project;
7. facilitation of the construction of the EM-1 Project (Awashish 2005, 176-177).

Economic and community development, mentioned above, will be supported by money coming from the Québec government, and which amounts to \$70 million yearly, or an indexed value of this amount calculated with a formula taking into account the value of mining, forestry, and hydroelectric production in the territory. This should last until 2052.

The *Paix des Braves*, as the name indicates, pacified the relations between the government of Québec and the Crees. They now consider themselves partners

and associates. Moreover, the goal of self-determination and self-government, sought by most Indigenous peoples, is close to a full realization with the Agreement.

The Canadian government then started to negotiate with the Crees to arrive at a similar agreement. In February 2008, the *Agreement concerning a New Relationship between the Government of Canada and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee* was signed. It was approved in a referendum the previous fall. The 20-year term Agreement includes the withdrawal of certain legal procedures, \$1.4 billion over a number of years, and is a further step towards a Cree regional government.

An interesting development is that a 10th Cree community was recognized by the General Assembly of the GCC in 2003, Washaw Sibi Eeyou. A good part of the individuals forming that “nation,” as each community is recognized, are living in an Algonquian reserve in Abitibi, Pikogan. Because this reserve was not a signatory of the JBNQA, the Crees of Washaw Sibi did not receive the same services and help as other Crees living in communities falling under the JBNQA. In the *Eeyou Eenou Nation* of winter 2004 (26-27), the magazine published by the GCC as a mean of communication, the GCC reports that it is making efforts to include Washaw Sibi in its structures and programs and to help the new nation to organize its campaign to obtain formal recognition by governments. For now, two representatives of this nation “have a voice on the Council-Board” (GCC 2008).

The Crees have achieved much of what is wished by many other Indigenous peoples in Canada and abroad. If communities still have social

problems to solve, they seem to have better results than many other First Nations in Canada. The money that came with the JBNQA and now with the *Paix des Braves* and the Agreement with the Canadian government certainly has something to do with that: it helped fund companies, institutions, and very active representative organizations. Forming half the population of a large region with crucial natural resources for the development of the whole Québec province was also an “opportunity” that many other Indigenous nations do not have.

B) The Saami Council

The Saami Council was founded in 1956. It is one of the oldest political organizations of Indigenous people. The organization was called the Nordic Saami Council until 1992, when the Kola Saami Association from Russia was accepted in the Council, thus potentially reaching all Saami. The word “Saami” is also often spelled Sámi, with or without accent. I prefer to use the same spelling as the one used in the name of the organization studied. Previously known as Lapps, the term can now be considered derogatory, but to a lesser extent in Finland, where the Northern province is called Lapland. The entire Saami territory is designated by the word Sápmi.

1) One people living in four countries

The Saami are an Indigenous people living in Northern Europe. The traditional territory covers the Northern part of four countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland and

the Kola Peninsula in Russia. There are 80,000 to 100,000 Saami living in these countries. Most are in Norway, followed by Sweden. Finland and Russia have small Saami populations.

Reindeer herding is often viewed as the traditional way of living of Saami. However, reindeer herders were never a majority among Saami. Fishing and hunting were also traditional ways of living, depending on the geographical situation. Today, around 10% of Saami are reindeer herders, an activity that is reserved for them by legislation in some parts of Sápmi for cultural reasons. This occupational structure help explains why the Saami is not a unified people ethnologically. In addition to different livelihoods, there are also several Saami languages. I was told that if you look at the banana shape of the territory, and you take two sections far apart, the people from these sections will not understand each other. Only people who are geographically proximate have chances to understand each other even if they do not speak the exact same language.

The criterion of language is an important one in the definition of who is a Saami, and who is recognized as a Saami. Today, more than half of the Saami speak a Saami language (Lehtola 2008). If Saami were discriminated against before, like all Indigenous peoples, they are now generally recognized and respected in their difference. As mentioned, some laws in Scandinavian countries make it easier for them to preserve their livelihood, culture and language. Of course, this does not mean that no prejudice remains in the general population against the Saami.

Because they are living in four different countries, there is quite a bit of asymmetry in the laws and problems affecting the different groups of Saami. For instance, only Norway has ratified Convention No. 169 from the International Labour Organization relating to Indigenous and Tribal peoples. Borders have had an impact on the way Saami exercise their autonomy. Organizations and institutions are limited by those borders. Moreover, the recent change of regime in Russia has meant that Russian Saami of today have lived very different experiences in their lifetime from Scandinavian Saami, if only in terms of wealth and social security.

An important event has to be mentioned here, although it occurred a decade before the beginning of the period of study for this thesis. The Alta-Kautokeino hydroelectric project and the controversy it raised among Saami in the late 1970s and early 1980s has been well-chronicled (see Paine 1982; Lehtola 2002; Charta 79 1982; Brantenberg 1985). In 1978, the Norwegian Parliament endorsed a project that included damming the Alta river to generate hydroelectricity. The Saami living in that region were opposed to it and organized a campaign in all Norway to protest the project. Legal procedures were involved, but the most noticed moments of this campaign were the hunger strike in front of the Oslo Parliament, and the violent removal of demonstrators at the construction site. The use of civil disobedience and of violence by some Saami was not accepted by all Saami. It was a turning point in the relations between the

Norwegian government and the Saami, even if the dam was built and Courts refused Saami arguments.

2) The Saami Council as a political organization

The Nordic Saami Council was not the first Saami political organization taking roots in Scandinavia. Sillanpää (1994) describes in details Saami mobilization over the course of the XXth century, country by country. He notes that “[i]n February 1917, the Norwegian state provided a travel subsidy to organize the first general congress of Norwegian Sami at Trondheim to deal with the issues of reindeer pastures and education.” In Sweden, a general meeting organized a year later was to be the birth of a “Central Lappish Union”, but the authorities “refused to provide any kind of assistance or recognition and this initiative collapsed by 1923” (Sillanpää 1994, 54). The same attitude prevailed among Finnish authorities. Mobilization was more successful after the Second World War. Many Saami areas were affected, if not destroyed, by the War, and some individuals and groups were relocated, including the Skolt Saami, who were living in a Finnish district ceded to the USSR.

The first Nordic Saami Conference took place in Jokkmokk, Sweden, in 1953. A committee was established to pave the way for the creation of a permanent organization at the Nordic level (the term Nordic refers to Norway, Sweden, and Finland), to develop solidarity and add a Saami voice in debates. The organization was officially born in 1956, at the second Conference. A Nordic

Sami Cultural and Political Program was adopted in 1971 after consultations with member organizations. Since then, several other political programs on various subjects have been issued by the SC.

The number of member organizations has increased over the years and now eight organizations send delegates to the Saami Conferences, and participate in the work of the SC. The Conferences are now held every four years. Fifteen persons are elected to form the Saami Council, with each member organization having a designated number of representatives, and with the view that each country will be almost equally represented. The inclusion of the Russian Saami in 1992 modified the structure of the SC and the Russian language was added as a working language.

In addition to elections, Conferences are also held to share information, adopt statements and positions, and orient the work of the Council for the next years. Women are well represented in the Council, among representatives and staff members. The organization's headquarters are in Utsjoki (Ohcejohka in Saami), Finland.

The Saami Council obtained a consultative status at the United Nations in 1990 and also has one at the International Labour Organization. When the Arctic Council was formed in 1996, some Indigenous peoples' political organizations were recognized as "permanent participants" and the Saami Council is among them.

3) Other political organizations

The Saami Council is not the only political organization representing the Saami, but it is the only one doing so on a regional basis, instead of on a national one, and grouping all Saami. There are other levels at which political organizations are active. The most important to consider here are the ones participating in the Saami Council, representing people at a national or local level, and the Saami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

The participating organizations to the Saami Council are as follows:

- Saami Association of Kola Peninsula (from Russia);
- Saami Association of Murmansk Region (from Russia too);
- Saami Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway
- Norwegian Saami Association
- The National Association of Saamiland (of Sweden)
- People's Federation of the Saami (of Norway)
- Saami Association of Sweden
- Saami Association of Finland

As one can note, the only country with only one member organization of the SC is Finland. All three other countries have 2 or 3 member organizations, which means that, to a certain extent, Saami are divided within countries by political lines as well as by borders.

The development of Saami Parliaments is one that many other Indigenous peoples envy. Finland was the first to implement one, in 1973¹³. Its seat is in Inari. Norway inaugurated one in 1989, in Karasjok. Sweden formed one in Kiruna in 1993. As the website of the Finnish Saami Parliament explains, the Saami Parliament's powers relate to culture and other issues directly related to the life of the Saami: "The purpose of the Sámi Parliament is to manage the issues concerning the Sámi language and culture, and the Sámi position as an indigenous people. The Sámi Parliament can make initiatives, proposals, and statements to the authorities on the issues related to its assignments" (Saami Parliament [of Finland] 2008). It is said that Saami Parliaments have a consultative status, but their voice is respected when it comes to Saami issues.

Elected every four years in each country, the Parliaments have increased their power and influence over time, and they have become an unavoidable interlocutor for governments when issues may be of concern for Saami. Each country has its rules to determine who can vote and the number and extent of constituencies. Political parties also come into play in these elections.

4) International cooperation: the SC projects

International cooperation with other Indigenous peoples has been an important activity for the Saami Council. The SC attended the founding meeting of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1975 and was involved in the

¹³ The Saami political body operated under the term "Delegation" in the period 1973-1995. In 1996, a formal Parliament (Sámediggi) was created.

preparation of the first international political organization representing Indigenous peoples (Sanders 1977). The WCIP was active until 1996. It really advanced Indigenous peoples' rights and created a network among its participants.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Saami Council has initiated its own international cooperation projects. Sillanpää reports meetings with Australia's Aborigines and Namibia's San people in 1993 (1994, 61). I have also found a report for the first part of the project called *Indigenous Peoples: International Human Rights Standards and the Policy Process*. In this report, we find the description and evaluation of a 3-week course given in Arusha (Tanzania) to "29 indigenous and tribal representatives from seven African countries" (Saami Council n.d. [2000?], 4). This was a Pilot Project, and participants and the SC were very satisfied with its results. It is noted in the report that there was a great demand for such training programs, and that the SC applied to get an extension of the European Commission funding on which it relied. It is unclear if such a course was replicated.

The SC is really committed to capacity building within Saami community and at the international level. On its website, in the section on capacity building, the SC mentions a "Programme for capacity building and participation of Russian Indigenous Peoples in the sustainable development of the Arctic" (Saami Council 2008). In the section on international co-operation, we read the following: "In the last 20 years, Saami Council has been working on, and has accomplished, many collaborative projects with small indigenous communities in poor countries.

These projects have been financed by Nordic and European foundations. As a result, Saami Council has acquired experience in such collaboration. It is very important for the Saami Council that this collaboration has had an ‘indigenous to indigenous’ perspective.” On the same page, the SC states that it would like to continue to help other Indigenous peoples particularly in Africa, Asia and South America (Saami Council 2008a).

One other project that took place in Africa from 2002 to 2004 is a close relationship with two organizations, First People of Kalahari and OIPA, the indigenous organization of Africa, that was created after the training course mentioned above. Again according to the website (Saami Council 2008a), the objectives of this co-operation project is to strengthen the leadership of these organizations, and help them organize their administration.

This short summary of information on the Saami Council should be enough to situate the reader during the following chapters. Even if the English language is commonly used in the organization, not all documents are translated in English and it makes specific information more difficult to obtain for this organization.

C) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada is a section in a larger organization that is often just called by its French initials, MSF. Its workers are often known as MSFers. The organization is also known as Doctors Without Borders in North America.

The Canadian section is an independent entity, yet it is part of that movement, network, organization, in which the different national chapters share a part of their knowledge with the other chapters. Canadians are integrated in multinational teams when they go in the field, yet each project is under the responsibility of one particular section. This makes the Canadian “content” in MSF Canada a little difficult to distinguish from what is generated elsewhere. This is not unique to MSF: Amnesty International is working in a similar way, with much content translated from one language to another, but the origin of this content is often unclear, something that does not affect the trustworthiness of the content itself.

1) The MSF movement

Médecins Sans Frontières was founded by French doctors and journalists dissatisfied by the politics of humanitarian agencies. The first group felt they were accomplices of horrors committed in 1968 by the Nigerian government in the breakaway state of Biafra, because the Red Cross requires silence from its workers. Bernard Kouchner was part of this group and back in France he spoke about what he had seen. The second group included Raymond Borel, who “had worked with Secours Médical Français in Eastern Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in the aftermath of the 1970 Bhola cyclone that had killed half a million people” (Orbinski 2008, 68). They had to wait to get permission to get into the region and were frustrated by the delay and the respect shown by aid agencies for the notions

of non-interference and sovereignty.¹⁴ Eventually, the groups joined their forces and formed Médecins Sans Frontières on December 10, 1971. The question of neutrality was one of dissension in the first years of MSF. A schism took place in 1979 and Kouchner left, or was pushed out of the organization (there are multiple versions of the story... See chapter 2 in Bortolotti 2004). Yet, if silence was in the principles of the organization for a while, speaking out and *témoignage* (bearing witness) became part of the organization once it was more clearly established. As Philippe Biberson, then president of MSF France, said when the organization received the Nobel Peace Prize, “We are not sure that speaking out saves people but we are certain that silence kills” (quoted in Orbinski 2008, 334). MSF also became recognized for going where no other agency would go.

As such, speaking out is not listed in the organization’s Charter. The MSF Charter has changed a couple of times during its history. This is the current Charter:

Médecins Sans Frontières offers assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict, without discrimination and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation.

Médecins Sans Frontières observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and demands full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.

¹⁴ I am writing this as the military junta in Burma let international aid workers enter the country only after the emission of a visa while tens of thousands are in need of help after the devastation caused by cyclone Nargis. Kouchner, now France’s Foreign Affairs minister, has asked the Security Council to use the Responsibility to Protect to accelerate relief efforts but his demand was refused. History has a curious way to repeat itself. Will the frustration of aid workers bring the creation of a new NGO?

Médecins Sans Frontières' volunteers promise to honour their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic and religious powers.

As volunteers, members are aware of the risks and dangers of the missions they undertake and have no right to compensation for themselves or their beneficiaries other than that which Médecins Sans Frontières is able to afford them¹⁵.

This Charter was approved in 1991. Morley (2007, 13) lists the guiding principles of MSF, which are, it seems to me, closer to reality than the Charter. He mentions: independence (limit on government funding); impartiality (care based on need only); neutrality (“MSF never take sides with military forces or rebels. But when its volunteers witness serious abuses of fundamental human rights, MSF speaks out”); proximity (working closely with patients, serving people directly); and voluntarism. A document called the Chantilly principles was produced in 1995 and gives to *témoignage* an explicit role within MSF. The La Mancha Agreement, adopted in 2006 only, puts some limits to that role: it has to be based on MSFers eyewitness accounts, medical data and experience (DuBois 2007). As these two

¹⁵ Compare the current Charter with the one that existed when MSF Canada was formed, particularly par. 4:

1. MSF provides aid to all victims of natural disasters and civil wars, without any distinction of race, politics, religion or ideology.
2. MSF maintains strict neutrality and is completely independent. The organization avoids any form of political interference in the internal affairs of countries or regions where its work is being pursued. On the grounds of this charter, MSF requires complete freedom of operation in the implementation of its medical and humanitarian task.
3. MSF rejects every attempt to influence its activities by any form of political, religious or economic power whatsoever.
4. The members, volunteers and staff of MSF respect medical confidentiality. They refrain from public statements making judgements on the political situation in the countries and regions where MSF is active.
5. MSF performs its work in anonymity and on a voluntary basis. The volunteers expect no material return for their services. They themselves determine whether the risks and dangers entailed by their work are justified and require for themselves or their rightful claimants no return other than that which the organization is able to provide (in *Outskirts*, vol. 1, #1 Fall 1990).

documents show, there is an internal process of continuous discussion within the movement, something that is widely seen as a strength of MSF¹⁶.

MSF has grown since its birth in France. In the 1980s, four other national chapters were formed, and would become, along with France, operational sections: Belgium, Switzerland, Holland¹⁷, and Spain. The first support section, Luxembourg, appeared in 1986, but the other 13 appeared in the 1990s (Greece, USA, Canada, Japan, UK, Italy, Australia, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Hong Kong). The movement should continue to grow. Each support section was associated with one of the operational section. For instance, Operational Center Paris included Australia, France, Japan, and the United States. Canada was associated with MSF Holland. Today, this structure is not as solid as it was before. Some “support” sections have become operational for a small number of projects. It seems that the new term used in the movement to designate the section responsible for a given project is “desk.”

The organization also created support organizations. One is a foundation doing research on humanitarianism. Another is called Epicentre and does epidemiology. The Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) was also initiated by MSF, and now includes six other organizations, four of which are public sector institutions from developing countries (Brazil, India, Kenya and

¹⁶ The Chantilly Principles and the La Mancha Agreement (2006, i.e. it was in discussion during the present study) appear at the end of the job ad found at www.msf.dk/pdf/2006msfdkDirector.pdf (Accessed 13 May 2008).

¹⁷ The section is not called MSF The Netherlands, maybe for reasons of translation (the translation of the word Holland is closer to the original name than a translation of The Netherlands would be. In French, it would be “MSF Pays Bas”, which is quite far from the Dutch “MSF Nederland.” However, this is only a hypothesis since I have not found a reason for the choice of this name.

Malaysia). The initiative was born in 2003, in continuity with the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines (see below). Its mandate is to use an alternative model to develop drugs for diseases affecting developing countries, which have been neglected by the pharmaceutical industry.

MSF received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999. In selecting the organization, the Committee wanted to underline the humanitarian work of MSF and its work for human rights. It also emphasized the capacity of the organization to raise essential debates:

The organization remains pervaded by idealism and willingness to take great risks. It has kept its independence, and seeks systematically to draw attention to violations and distress.

Equally important is the fact that Médecins Sans Frontières have indicated, more clearly than any other organization, how burdened aid work is in our chaotic world with political and moral dilemmas. The organization has tried in various ways to adapt to this, and has, sometimes through provocative initiatives, set in motion an absolutely essential discussion of the problematic nature of humanitarian interventions, not only in their aims but also and chiefly in their consequences (Sejerstad 1999).

As we will see in the part after the one explaining the Canadian chapter, MSF was going to continue this habit of raising dilemmas.

2) The Canadian chapter

The idea of a Canadian section for MSF took shape in the mind of Richard Heinzl, a young man studying medicine at McMaster University, in 1988. He had seen MSFers in action in Uganda and was impressed by their work and their spirit (Minthorn 2006). In April 1989, he decided to go to Paris to meet one of the leaders of MSF France, Francis Charhon.

“I wanted to talk to the French about trying to get the movement over here,” Heinzl remembers. “When I arrived, Charhon was standing there with his white hair, smoking this Cuban cigar, and he didn’t even remember inviting me, and he was shocked that I was there. I said, ‘We’ve got to do it, Canada’s right for this, we’re French and English, we believe in it.’ And he basically just gave me a flat no. Then, puffing on his big cigar, he winked and said, ‘But if you have the will...’ That’s all I needed to hear” (Bortolotti 2004, 62).

With a few others, including Kevin and James Orbinski (also studying medicine at McMaster), Marilyn McHarg, Ben Chapman, Jim Lane, Ian Small, Joni Guptill, and later Jos Nolle from MSF Holland, the Canadian section was created in 1990¹⁸, under the name “Associates of MSF Holland in Canada.” The Canadian chapter was authorized to use “MSF” as of January 1st 1992. Already, there were at least a hundred members across Canada (Orbinski 2008, 71).

One person in particular has to be mentioned here. In 1998, the International Council could not decide on one section’s president, who are all sitting on the IC, to be its international president because it “was still reeling from the crisis it had confronted in Zaire and the African Great Lakes region and was mired in disagreements about the structure and organization of the international movement” (Orbinski 2008, 304). James Orbinski, vice-president of the Canadian section, past head of mission in Rwanda during the genocide, who was known in the movement but not familiar with “the high politics of MSF,” was solicited, accepted to run after some reflection, and was elected. One of his promises was to make MSF even more financially independent from governments’ funds, to

¹⁸ I have documents from 1990, showing that “the Associates of MSF Holland in Canada” existed then. The website of the organization gives 1991 as its founding year.

increase private donations so they would form more than 50 percent of its funding, their level at the time. He was the first full-time international president of MSF and the first non-European to hold the position.

More than 1800 field assignments have been fulfilled by Canadians in over 80 countries since the beginning of the section in Canada. Since 2006, MSF Canada manages projects in Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haïti, Nigeria, and Republic of the Congo (MSF Canada 2008). The possibility of operations managed by the section was in discussion and preparation during the period of the study. More than 80% of MSF Canada's funds go to its programmes and activities in Canada and abroad, in larger MSF projects in the field. Less than 20% of its funding comes from the Canadian government.

3) The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines and the Canadian bill on the issue of drug exports to countries without production capacity

In this last section, background information is provided on two distinct processes. However, in Canada, and at MSF Canada, timeframe and circumstances have blurred the distinction between the two, the proposed bill partly helping to realize the objectives set in the Campaign. This Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines (the Campaign hereafter) has to be explained first.

The Campaign is an ongoing event endorsed by the whole MSF movement. The first public conference in relation with the Campaign took place the same day that the Nobel Peace Prize for MSF was announced in 1999. The

president of the International Council, James Orbinski, announced in his Nobel lecture that something had to change so that treatable diseases would not mean a death sentence in poor countries.

Today, a growing injustice confronts us. More than 90% of all death and suffering from infectious diseases occurs in the developing world. Some of the reasons that people die from diseases like AIDS, TB, Sleeping Sickness and other tropical diseases is that life saving essential medicines are either too expensive, are not available because they are not seen as financially viable, or because there is virtually no new research and development for priority tropical diseases. This market failure is our next challenge. The challenge however, is not ours alone. It is also for governments, International Government Institutions, the Pharmaceutical Industry and other NGOs to confront this injustice. What we as a civil society movement demand is change, not charity ([Orbinski] 1999).

The Campaign was born out of the frustration of MSFers who could not appropriately treat their patients because the necessary drugs were too expensive, as for HIV/AIDS, inadequate, like for sleeping sickness, or inexistent, for some stages of Chagas disease for example. The pharmaceutical industry is not interested in doing research for neglected diseases because they think the drugs that could be produced would not be profitable. The rules of trade were not supporting needed research and were taking precedence over health and human existence.

Many actions were taken to change this state of affairs. The most noticeable one is certainly the global coalition formed to take on the drug companies in South Africa. The coalition supported South Africa against brand-name pharmaceutical companies which were suing the government because it wanted to issue compulsory licences to obtain generic drugs for HIV/AIDS. In

2001, MSF launched a “Drop the case” petition, organized demonstrations, lobbied governments, the European Union and other international institutions, and participated in the illegal importation of generic drugs that were given to treat HIV/AIDS patients in South Africa. The case was dropped, and the price of ARVs fell from US\$15,000 to less than \$200 for one year.

The Campaign includes participation from the public. For instance, 40,000 Canadians sent postcards to then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien saying “Medicines Shouldn’t Be a Luxury” (Morley 2007, 57). It also includes advocacy in specialized conferences and public events, and technical education for developing-world governments on how to use the rules of trade in their favour. The Campaign has a dedicated website: www.accessmed-msf.org.

The connection between the Canadian process and the international, Campaign-related one, is a declaration at the ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization in Doha in 2001. Partly because of what had happened in South Africa, the ministers agreed that the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) should not take precedence over public health. They reaffirmed in the Doha Declaration the right of countries to use the flexibilities of the TRIPs Agreement, such as compulsory licences or parallel importations, to promote access to medicines for all. This was an important statement. One paragraph in this agreement is important to understand the rest of the story: “We recognize that WTO members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector could face difficulties in

making effective use of compulsory licensing under the TRIPS Agreement. We instruct the Council for TRIPS to find an expeditious solution to this problem and to report to the General Council before the end of 2002.”

In August 30th, 2003, there was a decision on how to implement this paragraph. The decision sets out a complex process in which a country without production capacities has to notify the Council for TRIPs and find a country that will accept to export the medicines and will issue a compulsory licence so that the drugs can be manufactured by a generic company in this exporting country. To be able to do that, the potential exporting countries have to modify their legislation so that it will be legal to undergo such a process.

MSF Canada, with other organizations, a loose group internally known as the Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG), was able to convince the Canadian government to do the necessary changes in the legislation¹⁹. This was a long and difficult process too, and like the Campaign, it will only be briefly summarized here. About a month after the WTO Decision, Allan Rock and Pierre Pettigrew, respectively Industry Minister and International Trade Minister, said they wanted to amend the Patent Act to allow the export of generic drugs. Much lobbying then took place to get this statement into reality. Bill C-56 was introduced in the House of Commons on November 6, 2003. Civil society organizations had many reservations about this proposed bill. For example, it included a right of refusal for the brand-name companies and a list of medicines that could be exported.

¹⁹ Some of the information in this section comes from an internal timeline document obtained from MSF Canada.

Mid-November, 2003, Paul Martin became Prime Minister of Canada, when Mr. Chrétien decided to leave. Around that time, the proposed bill became known as The Jean Chrétien Pledge to Africa Act (JCPA). Public and private mobilization and lobbying continued.

The bill, now also known as C-9, was approved by Parliament on May 14, 2004. Canada's Access to Medicines Regime came into force one year later, with some supplementary parliamentary voting due to technical details forgotten somewhere in the process. MSF was not pleased because of the flaws in the bill, and thought it would not lead to an increased access to medicines (see Elliott 2008 for details on the flaws). Nonetheless, it started discussions with generic companies to see if the bill could be put in application. It had some success, because the first package of AIDS drugs for Rwanda should leave Canada on October 1st, 2008. However, Apotex, the exporting company, said they will not participate again in this pricey process in which they spent millions of dollars (Gandhi 2008).

Conclusion

The background information provided in this chapter situates the three organizations studied and contextualizes their global activism and their collective identity. Although much more information on each of them is available and of interest, I have limited myself to explaining the elements that are useful for the next chapters. Chapter V considers the evolution in the global activism of the

organization. In Chapter VI, it is the evolution of the collective identity at the core of the organizations that is analyzed. Both chapters adopt a comparative approach, and focus on different components of global activism and collective identities.

CHAPTER V COMPARISON OF THE EVOLUTION OF GLOBAL ACTIVISM

*“He was on the radio the other day. Said if the river doesn’t flood
like it does every year, the cottonwoods will die.”*
“Hadn’t heard that.”
“That’s what he said. When the river floods, it brings the cottonwoods... you know...”
“Nutrients?”
“That’s it. No flood. No nutrients. No cottonwoods.”
“Emmett ought to know.”
*“And if the cottonwoods die, where are we going to get the
Sun Dance tree? You see what I mean?”*
“Emmett write his member of Parliament?”
Harley turned his face away from the wind and began to laugh.
“What do you think? You figure the dam’s going to make us all millionaires?”
Eli looked at Harley and shook his head.
“Maybe we should give the Cree in Quebec a call.”
“Yeah,” said Harley. “That’s what I figure, too.”
Thomas King (1993, 37)

In this chapter, I analyze and compare the evolution of global activism engaged in by the three organizations studied. I trace this evolution by finding both new elements and continuity in the global activities of each organization over the fifteen years from 1989 or 1990, to 2004 or 2005. It is generally easier to observe new elements than to see that there is continuity in the global activism done by an organization. The fact that many global actions are not engaged in constantly over time but take place at various, disconnected moments contributes to this vision of global activism where new elements are highlighted. I also find sometimes patterns of activism which are difficult to qualify as continuity or newness because they include both dimensions. Moreover, the origin of this pattern is often traceable to the period before the one I studied. Still, in this chapter, I seek to decompose these patterns into what is continuous with the past and what is new, even if we may lose a part of their meaning in doing so.

To better assess the evolution of global activism, this chapter discusses four aspects of it: objectives, style and arguments, allies, and publics. Of course, the context influences global activism. As the previous chapter shows, decisions made by others, emergency situations, and the general evolution of society prompt organizations to react and engage in global activism. But these triggers do not determine which kind of activism the organization will choose to employ, do not establish how the organization will interpret the external situation and what can be made of it. The agency of the organizations is very important to keep in mind when analyzing global activism, as I argue in the second chapter, even if decision-makers in the organizations sometimes have the impression that very few choices were available to them. This is an argument that decision-makers at the nation-state level used often during the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium to explain how much globalization constrained their margin of action. The argument is heard less frequently now that more people realize that globalization is not this juggernaut nobody can direct or control. The creativity of non-governmental organizations to make a difference in a globalizing world is impressive. And thus the external context, at a global or local level, does not tell us all about the evolution of global activism. The chapter presents four aspects of global activism: the objectives pursued through global activism; the style of the activism and the arguments raised by global activism; the allies mobilized by the organizations to support their activism; and the publics that were targeted by the global activism.

A) Objectives pursued through global activism

No global action can be really effective if organizations do not define in the first instance the objectives they seek to realize. Some actions correspond to short-term objectives, others to long-term ones.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

From 1989 to 2004, the general objectives of the Grand Council of the Crees were fundamentally constant. They can be summarized as advancing Cree rights in Québec and, by defending these rights, trying to help Indigenous peoples' rights to progress. Defending Cree rights included planning for the socio-economic future of the Cree nation. With a booming population, where people under 30 years old now form the majority of the population (Awashish 2005), this objective is not necessarily leading to direct global actions but it remains in the mind of decision-makers.

Over the years, more specific objectives arose and motivated global activism. The first of these was to stop the Great Whale and Nottaway-Broadback-Rupert (NBR) hydroelectric projects, or at least to reduce their scale and their impact on the Crees. Pursuit of this objective involved a defence of the Cree territory and lifestyle, already altered by the La Grande hydro project started in the 1970s, and by "modernization." Not totally against any kind of development, the Grand Council of the Crees wanted this kind of natural resources-based development to occur in a more controlled and measured way. As

presented in the previous chapter, these two new projects were gigantic and the evaluation of their economic, environmental, and social impacts was sketchy; their massive size rendered the evaluations even more difficult to make. The GCC began a campaign against these projects, predominantly in the United States, where an important part of the power from the hydro projects would have been sold, but also in Europe, at the International Water Tribunal in Amsterdam for instance, and at UN forums. In these respects, it was considered a global campaign (Craik 2005).

The second objective was to affirm the self-determination of the Cree nation during the referendum episode in Québec in 1995. The Grand Council made its voice heard on international tribunes to argue against their (forced) inclusion into the Québec *nation*, which was seeking independence from Canada. The objective was not only to raise consciousness about Cree invisibility in Québec's discussions on sovereignty but also to show that double standards seemed to exist in acknowledging self-determination, in ways that discriminated against Indigenous peoples. This action went hand in hand with Indigenous peoples arguments in global forums that they are *peoples* and not only populations (Bergeron 2002). A strong critique of the Canadian government was also included in this campaign in an attempt to force it to clarify its position towards the Cree people. The Canadian constitution does not contain provisions explaining what to do with secessionist provinces, but it has provisions protecting Aboriginal citizens and creating a particular link between them and the Crown. Moreover, the

Government of Canada is a party to the JBNQA and the treaty cannot be abrogated or altered without the consent of the Crees. The issue of Indigenous peoples living in the Québec territory was not an important one in the discourse of the federalist side during the campaign for Québec sovereignty. The GCC wanted this silence to be broken.

A third objective that needed global activism to be fulfilled was to counter a fur ban envisioned by the European Union. This objective was minor compared to the previous ones. Nonetheless, the GCC went repeatedly to Brussels and Strasburg in 1995. The European Parliament wanted to ban the import of furs from trapped wild animals in Canada because of the, albeit diminishing, use of the leg-hold trap. The GCC opposed the prohibition because it would have caused an important loss of income for trappers. Although it seems to be a sensitive subject in the European Union that has caused repeated debates in its institutions from 1991 to 2005, the involvement of the GCC has not been continuous. The organization was vocal when a ban was proposed, but did not maintain its global activism when the proposed measures emerged to be less stringent than feared. This “backing off” does not mean that private talks have not taken place, but only that the activism was not pursued in the public eye.

A fourth objective pursued through global activism was to denounce the forestry regime in force in Québec. Again it is important to note that the Crees are not against development. Rather, when it came to harvesting the forests, the GCC maintained that the rules of the forestry regime were not being enforced and the

resulting cutting was dangerous considering the type of environment existing in the North. The forestry regime had important consequences on the lives of the Crees and the objective of this campaign was to have the rules respected and changed by raising the awareness of the buyers and governments, in Canada and abroad, particularly in the United States.

Finally, the GCC also used global activism to have the Paix des Braves, signed with the Québec government in 2002, recognized as a good agreement, a model for other Canadian and foreign Indigenous peoples. After much criticism from the GCC on Québec, a round of explanations was certainly necessary for other Indigenous peoples to understand what had happened, and probably demanded of the Crees by the Québec government to brighten its image. The Grand Council explained the spirit and the content of the agreement, and widely expressed its satisfaction with its renewed relationship with the Québec government.

It is interesting to consider that when Ted Moses was Grand Chief of the Grand Council (1999-2005), and before that point, when his title was Ambassador of the GCC to the UN, he was frequently solicited to talk about self-determination and Indigenous peoples' rights. This speechmaking cannot really be considered a "campaign" led by the GCC but these speeches constitute a sizeable part of the global activism of the organization at the time. The international reputation of Dr. Moses (who was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, by the University of Saskatchewan in 1996) because of his work at the UN and for

Indigenous peoples certainly elevated the profile of the GCC on the global scene. Contributing significantly to the advancement of Indigenous peoples' rights was certainly an objective of the GCC, although maybe not totally separated from "local" issues in their own minds:

People are always asking the Crees why we bother with the United Nations. Why do we have a Cree Ambassador to the United Nations? What good does it do? This is the answer. We have rights as peoples which rest in the laws of the United Nations. We may not enjoy these rights. But they are there, and we intend to dig them out and force Canada to respect them. We are also working to improve and extend our international rights. We believe that if the international community were to better understand our history and culture, our relationship with States, our treaties, and our way of life, that our rights would be better protected. (Coon Come 1993, 5)

As given problems are solved, the GCC changes the focus of its global activism. Although it is not continuously active globally, it participates in almost all events with a global dimension in the indigenous world, events that are more and more institutionalized, and it is represented at many global summits. The organization also takes advantage of the various international committees and conferences where it can expose the problems it has with governments and how governments are not fulfilling their obligations towards the Crees and other (Canadian) Indigenous peoples. It is quite clear though that when the objectives pursued become time-related in the sense that deadlines loom, the GCC knows it must create events and find ways to get its message into global arenas with a global campaign. Although it has been pursuing specific goals during the fifteen year period of my study, the GCC has found a way to put them in the contexts of the larger picture of Cree rights and Indigenous peoples' rights.

2) Saami Council

The Saami Council is similar to the Grand Council of the Crees when it comes to the evolution of their objectives from 1990 to 2004. The SC has been using global activism to have Saami and Indigenous peoples' rights recognized and applied. The SC has put more emphasis on Indigenous peoples' rights as a whole than the GCC has done, however. The institutional context has also been more eventful in the Saami case than in the Cree one. There was the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the inclusion of Russian Saami in the SC in 1992 (which led what was then known as the Nordic Saami Council to change its name simply to the Saami Council), the creation of the Saami parliament in Sweden in 1993, the entry of Sweden and Finland into the European Union, and the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996.

The SC has not adopted the large “campaign” mode of the GCC. Although they were involved in the Alta-Kautokeino battle against a hydro-electric dam from 1979 to 1982 which involved demonstrations, hunger strikes, and court battles. In the last fifteen years however, the SC may have led “mini-campaigns” including one recently against logging in Inari (see Saami Council website), or presenting a “briefing paper on the recently proposed Norwegian Finnmark county Land Management Act” at the 2nd session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Saami Council 2003). Most of its global activism, however, has been focused on self-determination, land rights, education, language and

culture. When talking about their problems in global settings such as the United Nations, the SC has very frequently asked for changes for all Indigenous peoples. They have been at the forefront of the “S” battle, asking global forums (the UN and the Arctic Council) to designate them as “Indigenous peoples” and not as “indigenous people” or “indigenous populations”. Ole Henrik Magga, the first president of the Norwegian Saami Parliament and then the first chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, wrote in 1985 (22): “We hope of course, that if we succeed in strengthening our rights, this might also have a significance for others at an international level.” The Saami Council has also been an active member of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples since its beginning in 1975, an organization that has now disappeared.

Land rights have been and still are the most important issue for the Saami people. It has also been the most contentious with state governments. As Sillanpää (1994, 224) writes: “land title is a fundamental issue for Sami rights activists and represents the penultimate step in their political mobilization as an aboriginal people within the northern regions of Fennoscandia. The Sami claim to title over the lands and water they have historically occupied and used to carry out a traditional lifestyle is a much more all-embracing issue than reindeer husbandry...” Sillanpää mentions reindeer husbandry because it has often been a contentious issue with governments when they try to modify laws and rules governing that economic activity which has a profound cultural significance for the Saami.

In more recent years, the SC has developed what I would call “intellectual global activism”. Although present in the past, the organization puts forward more systematically and frequently arguments drawing on international law by referring to treaties and covenants. It is more apparent recently because new issues have been the object of their interest, like the recognition and protection of traditional knowledge, or like free, prior and informed consent. As an example of this intellectual global activism, in 2004, the Saami Council was solicited by Yozo Yokota, member of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, to prepare a working paper, in collaboration, on guidelines on the heritage of indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2004/5). Another objective of the Saami Council that is pursued through intellectual global activism has been to help other Indigenous peoples to better prepare themselves and form organizations. A training program in international human rights standards was initiated in 1999, for instance, and projects with the San of Namibia have been carried out. There is now a unit in the Saami Council called the Indigenous Co-operation Unit which undertakes these kinds of projects, an activity quite unique in the indigenous world.

As Saami parliaments obtain more (administrative) responsibilities and assume a more institutionalized position in Nordic countries’ political systems, even if they remain consultative assemblies, the Saami Council has become more and more focused on regional and international issues. There are now “easier”

channels through which Saami communities can protest and oppose Scandinavian governmental decisions.

It is interesting to note that, in a way, the SC has been less successful, even if more “moderate,” in its global activism than the GCC. Their objectives are more difficult to meet than the ones of the GCC: international and national laws are more difficult to change than stopping or altering detrimental projects or regimes.

3) *Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada*

The whole MSF movement respects the charter adopted by the organization. The current version of the charter emphasizes four points, none of which relates to raising awareness, bearing witness (*témoignage*), or activism other than offering “assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or manmade disasters and to victims of armed conflict, without discrimination and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation” and demanding “full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions”. Looking at the charter, one can even question the possibility of activism by the organization, since it promises “neutrality and impartiality” and states that volunteers “maintain complete independence from all political, economic and religious powers.” Hence, the primary objective of MSF as a movement is to directly intervene in medical and humanitarian emergencies, and not to promote ideas and raise awareness. Since its beginning in 1990, the objectives of the Canadian section are to recruit volunteers

to go on missions and to raise money for the organization, which essentially goes to supporting these missions. In the last months, the role of the Canadian section has been enlarged so that it can plan operations in the field on its own; previously it had to leave this task to the five European operational sections.

Nevertheless, advocacy is an important part of MSF's work. It is what prompted its birth, by French doctors working for the Red Cross who could not talk about the horrors they were seeing in Biafra, and could not speak out against the government causing them. *Témoignage*, (perhaps translated best as “bearing witness”) as it is known in the movement—a word not as strong as advocacy but better at conveying the idea that you fight and talk because of what you have seen—is a small part of MSF activities (“5 to 6 percent of its operating costs”²⁰) but “it’s an important part of its identity” (Bortolotti 2004, 242).

At MSF Canada, global activism has taken many forms. Among others, I note: *témoignage* from volunteers coming back from the field; conferences; workshops; exhibitions; a newsletter sent to members and donors; support for an international treaty on banning land mines; a refugee camp tour; a special section on the website in relation with international issues; and the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. Many of these actions are not global in scope and they were conducted in Canada. I see them as global activism because of their subject and because of their potential spill-over effects.

²⁰ Between 3 and 5 percent in Canada according to author's calculations, based on “public education” figures published in the 2004 Annual Report. It seems that there is no strict bookkeeping for advocacy (except for the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines) since 15 percent of “common expenses” is allocated to “public education”, while it was 25 percent in the previous years.

MSF Canada has thus had many objectives over the last fifteen years, and it is difficult to keep track of them. Over time though, their main goals have been constant: to recruit volunteers and raise money. The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines is a particular effort in MSF and in MSF Canada. More structured and formal than any other *témoignage* or advocacy done by MSF in previous years, the Campaign started in 1999 in response to accumulated frustration on the part of volunteers who could not adequately take care of patients because of a lack of medicines or inappropriate drugs (Morley 2005). The HIV/AIDS pandemic played a major role in triggering this Campaign. In MSF, the Campaign is said to now have a life of its own and is still a controversial matter.

In Canada, the Campaign took a particular turn when the Canadian government decided to put into practice an agreement of the WTO on the production of drugs for countries without production capacities. The bill, initially discussed in 2003, was adopted after much discussion in 2005. MSF Canada played an active role in the process, denouncing the flaws of the proposed bill and repeating the importance of “getting it right” as Canada was the first country to try to put in practice the WTO decision. Because this activism was part of the international Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, and because the effects of the new law were to benefit developing countries, I consider this advocacy work as global activism carried out in Canada by MSF.

B) Activism style and arguments raised by global activism

In this section, I present some of the arguments used by the three organizations in support of their global activism. It would be very fastidious to go through all these arguments, but I hope to show by the examples given the type of arguments they use and the general “style” and attitude they adopt in their global activism. Of course, this analysis is the result of a personal interpretation of the documents gathered and of the events where I have been a witness.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

During the **campaign against the Great Whale and NBR hydro projects**, Cree leaders often talked about their first hydro campaign against the La Grande project in the 1970s. The speeches describe how they won an injunction to stop the construction in court, then how it was reversed because of the interest of the majority, or so said the Superior Court of Québec. The main story line continues by explaining that instead of going further in the justice system and still seeing the construction of the project being done in the meantime, the Grand Council of the Crees decided to negotiate an agreement with governments, the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA). The GCC used this story to show how little things have changed in governmental disrespect towards the Crees.

The GCC emphasized that no environmental evaluation was carried out before the completion of the La Grande dam, and that the Crees had been lied to about environmental consequences of that project, consequences that are much

more important than what was discussed with them. In their campaign against the Great Whale and NBR projects, they argued that no comprehensive study had been carried out to evaluate the environmental impact of these new projects. Moreover, the GCC showed that there were even calculations on the part of the Québec government to weaken the existing law on environmental reviews, and not enough people were being hired to do them.

The environmental argument had many aspects. The GCC was saying that environmental impacts in relation with Cree life are not always easy to see or evaluate. What is the psychological impact of flooding ancestors' graves? How do you measure the significance of the disappearance of a territory? How well can you predict the reactions of animals and waterfowl, some of them critical for Cree physical and cultural survival?

The GCC also maintained that governments were already not respecting the regime of environmental protection from the JBNQA. They criticized the Québec government saying that there had been no environmental review for aluminium smelters established in other regions, and this omission was a supplementary proof of the general disrespect for the environment that this government had.

The Cree organization explained that it was better economically and ecologically to preserve energy than to build gigantic dams that would become monuments to the abuses of the twentieth century, especially with the development of renewable energies. In addition, the GCC argued that dam

construction and flooding generated carbon dioxide and methane and that hydroelectricity should not be considered a clean energy or a real alternative to fuel energy. Moreover, it suggested, some uncertainty remained about the reliability of hydroelectricity in a context of climate change.

The environmental message was certainly the main one in the Great Whale and NBR campaign. It emphasized that degradation of the environment affects not just Crees but everyone, as the destruction of the Amazon forest in Brazil was proving, an example often used in the campaign. It also underlined how much the “Western” lifestyle translates into over-development and over-consumption.

Another provocative expression used in that campaign was “environmental racism”. Here is a statement by Matthew Coon Come, the Grand Chief of the GCC, where he explained this concept and how it applied to the Cree situation in Washington in 1990:

We have one message: WE ARE THE VICTIMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM. You, the larger society, do not respect the same rules for native people that you do for yourselves. ... Our forests are clear-cut, but yours are preserved for parks and recreation areas. Who would consider the total diversion and elimination of the Hudson River? Yet much larger rivers have been completely destroyed where my people live.
Is this not racism? Why should it be easier to destroy our environment? Should not the same rule and principles apply for everyone? (Coon Come 1990, 5)

The concept of environmental racism was a fairly new idea at the time. Weintraub (1994) identifies a 1987 study as the landmark one. It concerned the location of hazardous waste sites where racial and ethnic minorities are an important part of the population. The GCC applied the idea to a new kind of situation, and they

contributed to the diffusion of the concept of environmental racism, although they were not really aware that the concept previously existed (Namagoose 2005). After that time, the idea of environmental racism became part of numerous Cree speeches and of the *World Conference Against Racism NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action* (World Conference Against Racism – NGO Forum 2001, art. 28, 117-118, 124, 146, 311-314, 375).

The GCC has been engaged in less traditional activism too during this campaign. White water rafting was organized in August 1993 on the rivers that would have been affected by the project. Earlier, an odeyak, a combination of canoe and kayak, was built by the two communities located at the mouth of the Great Whale River, one Cree and one Inuit, and traveled in the odeyak “from James Bay through Vermont to New York City for Earth Day 1990” (Feit 2000, 52). A film, “The land of our children”, was also commissioned during the campaign and was broadcast in English Canada and North-eastern United States, but not in Québec.

Finally, the GCC also showed that it was protecting its “morality” and the lifestyle of the Crees by refusing a deal with the governments: “Money cannot buy a way of life” (GCC 1994, 7). Too much was at stake in this campaign to simply accept money, and the organization had gained experience from the previous agreement. The ground was not yet prepared anyway to talk about rights and program implementation with the governments.

During the **campaign against Québec secession**, the Grand Council of the Crees used arguments relating to international law. They put into evidence the right of the Cree people to self-determination, which, they emphasized, is not synonymous with the right to declare independence, a right for which international criteria were not met in the Québec case according to the GCC. The GCC drew on developments of international law that Indigenous peoples (and the GCC) helped to concretize at the UN. The Crees played their right to self-determination against the similar right that Québec was claiming. The GCC explained in its speeches that “in international law, no part of a State has the right to secede, except, exceptionally, in circumstances where that State has violated the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of inhabitants within its jurisdiction. If any people could justifiably claim such violations, it would be the Aboriginal peoples in Canada” (Coon Come 1994, 8) and not the Québécois.

The leaders of the GCC reminded their publics that no one asked for their consent in previous administrative and constitutional change in Québec or Canada. To avoid the same thing, they organized their own referendum a few days before the official one, and the result was a resounding “no”, against Québec secession, at 96.3%.

Another argument used by the GCC was that the Crees were the only inhabitants using the land on a permanent basis. The Cree way of life is based on the land occupied by the Crees, even though the traditional way of life is not lived on a continuous basis by the majority of the Crees.

While campaigning against their forced inclusion in the prospective Québec nation-state, the GCC maintained that it had no position on the aspirations of groups or individuals in Québec claiming a right to self-determination. The point the organization was making is that fundamental rights of the Crees should be respected in the process toward secession. It is not clear from the speeches which fundamental rights should be respected, but the public must have understood that these rights were not respected in the unfolding process in the GCC opinion. One of the problems mentioned is the postulate of territorial integrity defended by Québec's secessionist government. Given that the historic borders of Québec as a province have changed over time, and that the independence would change Canadian borders, this postulate was not very convincing in the eyes of many, including the Crees, and the ensuing debate on partition showed the problems of that argument. The Cree right to self-determination would have been respected only if they had given their assent to the secession, and in particular to the secession of their territory, and their inclusion in any newly independent Québec. A referendum is an expression of self-determination, as the Québécois would have agreed, although the Crees' own referendum was not well-perceived at the time by the Québécois.

During that campaign against the secession of Québec, the GCC also argued that the federal government was not responding adequately to the government of Québec and was not doing enough to maintain the "perpetual federalist relationship" entrenched in the JBNQA. Moreover, the Cree interpreted

a declaration of a federal official as acknowledging the right to Québec to secede but denying it to Aboriginal peoples of Québec. “Speaking for the government of Canada, External Affairs official Denis Marantz stated at the World Conference on Human Rights that ‘... any endorsement of the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination could encourage groups like the Cree of Quebec to seek independence if Quebec were to leave the Canadian federation’” (GCC 1993; “remarks quoted in a front page story of 19 June 1993 in the independent newspaper *Terra Viva*”). The GCC argued that the federal government was more preoccupied by the integrity of an independent Québec than by aboriginal rights and Canadian unity. This oversight was also seen as a double standard: Québec has the right to secede, but not Indigenous peoples in Québec (or Canada). Later, the Minister of Indian Affairs confirmed the Cree right to choose to remain in Canada, which is not necessarily recognition of their right to self-determination. The Canadian government was accused, by the Crees, of relegating Indigenous peoples to the status of minorities. There was no clear recognition that they were peoples with the rights given in international law to peoples. But the GCC argued, like the legitimate representative of a people would do, that if Québec was to secede, the Crees would decide to which state they want to be associated, and would insist on the territorial integrity of their ancestral lands.

Another argument made by the GCC was that the Crees could face violence if Québec was to secede from Canada. The following quote shows how this was included in their discourse: “Mr. Jacques Brassard, now a prominent

member of the new government in Quebec City, stated in May that an independent Quebec would ensure that its laws are respected by those who may resist separation from Canada. He was referring primarily to the Crees. Mr. Brassard warned, and I quote: ‘We would have to maintain order with the means of a modern state; that means laws, courts, *and police forces*, which are also institutions and instruments of a state’” (Coon Come 1994a, 13). Although such a statement can hardly be said to be contrary to a democratic state, its association with the Cree refusal to be associated with an independent Québec without their consent can raise some concerns in the mind of an international public. And the GCC certainly used that fear of violence to give to their message seriousness on another level.

The GCC also mentioned in its speeches that the government of Québec wanted to rearrange history. An erroneous interpretation of the past was made by then Premier Jacques Parizeau, according to the GCC, when he asserted that Cree rights had been extinguished. This vision was considered a discriminatory and colonialist approach, more and more condemned by the international community. To counter these arguments, the GCC commissioned *Sovereign injustice: forcible inclusion of the James Bay Crees and Cree territory into a sovereign Quebec*, an in-depth legal examination of nearly 500 pages distributed to governments, academics, and decision-makers.

Although well based in legal arguments, there seems to be an inconsistency between the discourse at the UN and the discourse against Québec

secession. At the UN, Indigenous peoples generally maintain that international law ignores them, or that it is not applied and States suffer no consequences for not respecting their rights (except maybe a few bad comments from Committees, but this is hardly a consequence). Then, against the Québec government, they urge it to respect international law, and even warn them that their arguments to justify the secession are not valid in international law. Is international law sufficiently developed to protect Indigenous peoples? If not, why refer to it when trying to stop the secession of Québec? More specifically, is the right to self-determination so clear that it can be attributed to Indigenous peoples, but not to Québec? (And who should decide?) Indigenous peoples claim this right to self-determination, but governments in Canada, Québec and elsewhere have often only recognized an *internal* right to self-determination for Indigenous peoples, thus excluding the right to secede. Was it strategic to deny Québec's right to self-determination while claiming one for the Crees?

In the **campaign against wild furs prohibition** by the European Union, the Grand Council of the Crees proposed “a positive approach” (GCC 1995). The organization made several suggestions to the European Parliament so that trapping practices would become more respectful of animal lives. “They proposed that the Parliament support the improvement of trap standards through trap-exchange programs, trapper training programs, positive marketing strategies, including a label for furs harvested by aboriginals using non-leg-hold traps” (GCC 1995). This indigenous fur label proposal was carefully detailed in a submission

made to the European Parliament. It was seen as an initiative that could be beneficial to the Crees and other Canadian Indigenous peoples by developing a niche market, while meeting European objectives of ensuring humane trapping standards (GCC 1995a).

Underlining the impossibility of implementing a ban on the leg-hold trap and the great difficulty for governments to monitor trapping standards, the GCC argued that education was a better way to insure the humane treatment of trapped animals. The Cree organization also explained that a fur ban would cause personal hardship for trappers, and may well contribute to losing traditional ways in the Cree communities: “Approximately 30% of the Cree families depend on full time hunting and trapping as their primary means of subsistence. All Cree families depend upon wild food which is harvested and distributed through sharing networks in our communities” (GCC 1995b, 1). Revenues from trapping form a substantial part of the income of trappers’ families (2 to \$3,000 in the mid-90s) who tend to be among the poorest aboriginal families.

To reassure Europeans, the GCC explained the context in which Cree hunters kill animals. An emphasis was put on their spiritual relation with them: “The Cree use of the animal resources has always been accompanied by deep religious feelings concerning those animals. The relationship between the animals and man was always conceptualized by the Crees as one of reciprocity” (GCC 1995b, 1). The GCC also showed its understanding of the need to create international pressures to maintain high trapping standards, pressures that help

maintain a sustainable relationship between animals and humans (Blacksmith and the Cree Trappers Association 1995, 4).

When **campaigning against the forestry regime** in Québec, a lot of importance was also given to environmental arguments. The GCC underlined that 350 square kilometres was clear-cut each year, that natural regeneration was not occurring, and that animal habitats were being destroyed (Coon 1996).

[T]he trees are harvested on the Cree land at a rate which exceeds the long term possible sustainable yield. The reason for this is that Quebec has allowed forest cutters to move onto the Cree lands and to do reduced amounts of silvi-culture (*sic*) on the condition that they plant more trees to the south of the Cree territory where the climate is slightly warmer and the trees mature five years or so earlier than they do on the Cree territory. This is discrimination by impact, if not by design” (Gull 1995, 8).

Not unlike the discourse during the campaign against the Great Whale and NBR hydro projects, these environmental arguments were linked to major social impacts in the Cree communities: cultural displacement, loss of traditional values, alcoholism, and family breakdown were cited as consequences of bad forestry policies and deforestation.

The critiques toward forestry policies were numerous. The GCC mentioned that the current policies were not respected and that the regime was not enforced because of a lack of capacity. The organization also explained that new territories had been open to forestry for fear of wood supply shortage; the government extended the area open to forestry, up to the 52nd parallel instead of the 49th, even though these trees were previously not considered economically viable. Sawmills had to be expanded and computerized to use trees with a smaller

diameter, and new forestry roads had to be built. These new investments made by the companies were compensated by long-term agreements and subsidization. Moreover, companies tried to avoid environmental assessments, by building roads 25 km at a time, for instance, because longer roads are subject to an assessment (Blacksmith 1996). The GCC argued that there was no environmental assessment carried out for forestry in the North.

Economic arguments were also used during that campaign. The GCC emphasized that the Crees were not against development or forestry, and that they were operating two saw-mills themselves. However, few Crees got jobs with other saw-mills or forestry companies. The GCC placed a full-page ad in the Washington D.C.'s newspaper *Roll Call* in November 1999 (around the 16th). The arguments here also appeal to a sense of justice: “Low environmental and social standards give the province of Quebec a competitive edge over American companies. These low standards are hidden subsidies and create an artificial pricing environment. This violates the North American Free Trade Agreement. American forestry jobs are lost at the expense of the Crees’ and Quebecers’ joint wilderness heritage. **The Cree way of life on the land is being illegally sacrificed for cheap forest exports.**” Another ad appeared in the same newspaper on March 19, 2001. It highlighted three issues, subsidies, overexploitation, and forest mismanagement. These ads were published in the context of a trade dispute between Canada and the United States about softwood lumber, and it is more than likely that not only the Québec government was

angered by the Cree position. But it was a logical step. As Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the GCC, explained following the meeting of the GCC with some U.S. trade representatives in March 2000, “We are contemplating a multi-faceted approach targeting trade and the corporate and consumer markets in the U.S. and Europe.” This public campaign was also presented as similar to the one used to stop the Great Whale project (GCC 2001). The GCC wanted a separate forestry regime for their traditional territories.

The “global campaign” surrounding the **Paix des Braves** started with the presentation of the Agreement in Principle at the UN Working Group on the Draft Declaration in January 2002, a few days before the signing of the final agreement on February 7th. Romeo Saganash stated at this occasion: “This Agreement with Quebec represents the only instance in Canada of a governmental authority recognizing and implementing the operating principles of self-determination called for by the Human Rights Committee under ICCPR” [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights] (GCC 2002, 2).

The next international event to which the GCC participated was the World Eco-Tourism Summit in Québec City in May 2002. In his short speech, Ted Moses mentioned the agreement. He said that although the Crees had agreed to the partial diversion of the Rupert river for a new hydroelectric project, Québec and the Crees also agreed to end the planned NBR project from the 70s, a much bigger project, thus protecting “a vast and beautiful area” (Moses 2002, 2). This was a way of presenting the kind of necessary compromise the Crees are willing

to accept to an audience that was probably not too enchanted by the idea of another hydro project in the North of Québec, on a river that is often presented as one of the most gorgeous of the region.

The following July, at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Romeo Saganash recalled his statement of January and explained that a final agreement had been signed in February. He lauded it as “one of the most important developments in the world in recent years, in regards to the protection of human rights and protection of fundamental freedoms of Indigenous Peoples” (Saganash 2002a, 3).

Because some people were surprised that the Paix des Braves included the development of some hydroelectric projects, Grand Chief Moses specified to his audience in Sweden during the conference of the Nordic Association of Canadian Studies in August 2002 that: “Having fought for years at the United Nations to have the right to benefit from our own resources, it is difficult now to hear people say we should not exercise our right to participate in the resource economy” (Moses 2002a, 14). The entrenchment of new hydroelectric projects in the Paix des Braves appears to be the most contentious point of the Agreement, not only among the Crees, but also globally.

The Paix des Braves travelled with the Cree leaders during that period. In Johannesburg, Veneto, Vienna, at Oxford University, in London, among other places, the Agreement was detailed and explained.

The Grand Council of the Crees has not been afraid of provocation when it entered into campaigns against specific projects. They used strong words and those were needed to get the attention of the press and of foreign audiences in contexts of (relative) emergencies. Their global activism reflected their pride and the deception they felt in being the victims of governments not fulfilling their promises (which, I think, eventually led to the nation to nation agreement that is the Paix des Braves, when the Québec government was tired and ashamed of being portrayed this way on the international scene). Although there may have been a few arguments with questionable implications, most of them were convincing, based on scientific evidence, experience, or accepted interpretations of international law. Many arguments appealed to common sense, compassion, and emotions relating to the will of living a good life according to a people's beliefs. The organization was very good at mixing emotions and rationality. A few of the speeches during the campaign against Québec secession reminded me of law journal articles, with long footnotes²¹.

²¹ Other notable events occurred during this period but are not mentioned in this chapter because they were not part of campaigns. Among them, three important documents were presented at global meetings: "Toward a new housing crisis in Canada—An unofficial Canadian report for Habitat II" (GCC 1996); "Reciting the symptoms, ignoring the cause: the systematic dispossession of aboriginal peoples in Canada" (GCC 1998) for the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and "Pushed to the Edge of Extinction," "a 24 page Brief depicting systemic racism affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada" released at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001 (GCC 2001c) of which 12,000 copies were printed. There was also a meeting of the GCC with the Pope, John Paul II, in March 1999.

2) *Saami Council*

My access to documents has been limited in the case of the Saami Council, partly because of language barriers. There has been no big campaign generating a lot of speeches and declarations in the Saami case during the last fifteen years, from what I know. Moreover, I have been told by a Saami Council staff member that the SC tries to share its ideas when in global forums, and that they will talk only when these ideas have not been publicly conveyed by other organizations. “If you need to talk, you haven’t done your job.” The exception is that new people from the organization will be “introduced” to a global forum by taking the floor and speaking on behalf of the SC. I have also noted that the Saami Council frequently teams up with other organization in collective statements, which reflects SC’s idea that sharing ideas is very important in such forums. The style of the Saami Council has thus been very different from the one of the Grand Council of the Crees, although in recent years the GCC has been less confrontational, provocative, and less prompt to put itself on the speakers’ list at official forums (this also has to do with the charisma and personality of the GCC representatives in global forums).

The Saami Council has often talked about Russian Saami in the first place in global forums because they are the least privileged and the ones suffering the most compared to other Saami. In addition, the SC has been particularly active in climate change and environmental degradation discussions. Most of the activities

of the Arctic Council are related to the environment, and this forum has been one where the SC has been voicing its concerns.

Much of the global activism of the SC is focused on international law. When it came to self-determination, land rights, and protection of the environment, the SC often appealed to international law and put forward interpretations with potential positive consequences for Saami and Indigenous peoples.

The Saami generally believe in a step by step approach. For example, Saami are conscious that Saami Parliaments do not have the attributes of a Parliament and have limited, consultative powers. But they prefer something to nothing, and are confident that with time and negotiation, these powers can be broadened and made more significant. The SC works with that kind of mindset too.

In their activism style, the SC insists on some symbols. The representatives of the SC generally wear traditional clothes when attending official international meetings (even if wool and leather may not be too appropriate for the weather!). It makes Saami very easy to spot in a multicoloured crowd—something that was useful for me to first meet them. Also, many Saami representatives prefer to speak English with Nordic countries officials, even if they speak the language of the official (Baer 2004). This language “barrier” creates a distance, and forces everyone to talk into his or her second or third language. These details may seem natural, but they are really thought about.

Over time, as the Saami Parliaments have become more recognized, the Saami Council has redistributed its functions to them and other institutions, and has become “more activist” (Åhrén 2005), more oriented toward global action and cooperation.

3) *Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada*

Since the first issue, the newsletter of MSF Canada has featured the work of its volunteers and the action of MSF in its projects amid war, medical crisis, or humanitarian emergencies. Some of these articles were informative and traced back, for example, the history of a conflict. Many others are more personal, when a volunteer makes a *témoignage* and explains how she got into the field, what is the situation, what she has been doing, what problems and frustrations she met, and how successful the project has been. There is often in these articles a not-so-hidden criticism of the country and its lack of medical services to its population, a criticism that also touches international institutions and the international community.

An excerpt from an article (no author given) in the *Dispatches Newsletter* of June and July 1996 about the Chechnya situation explains the dilemma MSF faces when it comes to speaking out or not:

When should we quietly carry on our work, when is it time for quiet diplomacy and behind the scenes pressure, and when has it finally reached a point of public denunciation of human rights violations? This is always a crucial question for Doctors Without Borders, weighed in each individual situation. In each case, the impact on our field presence is paramount: will we be forced to leave, and be unable to aid the population, and will it put

our teams in danger themselves? The final decision must rest with the field team.

Sometimes, if it is publicized, even a volunteer *témoignage* can put teams in the field in danger. Security for the volunteers is a criterion always present in the minds of decision-makers when it comes to speaking publicly about a country. Coordination becomes necessary for that very reason, even if the “free spirit” of the movement allows for much questioning and debates inside it, and provoking them in other people’s minds.

Even if the particular situation may change, MSF work builds awareness about forgotten crises and populations in danger and creates a link between “us” here in the West and “them” away in poor countries. This is a bit too sketchy as a vision, as projects in Europe exist to help refugees and disadvantaged or marginalized people. Creating a link is nonetheless one of the goals of these projects.

MSF Canada, like the whole movement, is very focused in its publications and interventions. At the beginning of 2005, when MSF stopped taking money after the Indian Ocean tsunami, many people were surprised and some other NGOs criticized the announcement. But this was a typical MSF reaction: we have the money to do what we can do and what we need to do. Donors for the tsunami crisis were confident that their money was being used for the people touched by the tsunami; when the financial target was met, donors were asked if they wanted to cancel their donation or if they accepted to redirect it to an emergency fund. Transparency is not always easy to achieve in an NGO; this was a very

transparent announcement. At the same time, it said: “we can’t change the world.” This response is similar to when MSF denounced the genocide in Rwanda, saying: “you can’t stop a genocide with doctors.” The NGO is conscious that political powers need to be involved to realize profound changes.

MSF decided to directly question politicians and decision-makers with its Campaign for access to essential medicines. When the NGO received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999, its president, the Canadian James Orbinski, seized the occasion to mention that “[m]ore than 90% of all death and suffering from infectious diseases occurs in the developing world. ... [L]ife saving essential medicines are either too expensive, are not available because they are not seen as financially viable, or because there is virtually no new research and development for priority tropical diseases. This market failure is our next challenge.” This was in a way the announcement of the beginning of the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. But it was also a call to political institutions, the industry, and civil society, because, as Orbinski continued: “The challenge however, is not ours alone. It is also for governments, International Government Institutions, the Pharmaceutical Industry and other NGOs to confront this injustice. What we as a civil society movement demand is change, not charity.”

This Nobel lecture referred to another contentious issue, “military humanitarian operations”. A part of the activism of MSF Canada was also directed against these operations which sustain confusion and deny the apolitical character of humanitarian assistance: “if food is allowed to be used as a weapon

of war, then it also legitimates that populations can be starved as a weapon of war” ([Orbinski] 1999).

MSF Canada is not so distinct in its activism style from the rest of the movement—although it seems that each MSF section has its own identity. The organization uses its experience in the field to present issues to the public. Raising awareness is a way to gather voices to ask for change.

C) Allies mobilized to support organizations’ global activism

The organizations I studied do not work alone all the times. Often, they work with similar organizations. With time, alliances are built. It is important to get a more specific portrait of these alliances because ideas and strategies circulate within them. The influence of other organizations on the ones I have studied, and vice versa, is difficult to determine with accuracy. Nonetheless, knowing who are the allies of an organization helps us recognize which type of global activism the organization feels comfortable with, and may emulate or imitate. In this section, I will try to identify which organizations can be identified as “new” allies, when relationships have been built in the fifteen years studied, and which are those that have been in place for a longer time with the three organizations studied.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The campaign against the hydroelectric projects naturally led to alliances with environmental groups. In particular, the GCC developed strategic relationships

with environmental groups active outside Québec. In the previous campaign against the La Grande dam, activities were focused on the Québec government, and the mobilization of allies mostly involved groups inside Québec, with an environmental sensitivity.

Listing the groups that have participated in the campaign against the Great Whale and NBR project is not easy because many have contributed. This task is alleviated by the fact that the GCC recognized the participation of the following groups during a hearing in New Jersey in 1995 (Gull 1995, 15-16): Protect; Sierra Club; The Audubon Society; The Natural Resources Defense Council; Solidarity N.Y.; AFLCIO Solidarity; Greenpeace; Northview Friends of Clearwater; Orange Environment; NYPIRG; Hudson River Sloop-Clearwater; SEAC—Save James Bay; The New England Coalition for Energy Efficiency and the Environment; Cape; Beacon Sloop Club; Ferry Sloop; New York State League of Conservation Voters; Scenic Hudson; New York City Learning; American Indian Community House NY; Wittenburg Center; The Center for Environmental and Legal Studies Pace University; Hudson Valley Grassroots Energy and Environmental Network; The Environmental Planning Lobby –Albany; James Bay Action Team.

These 25 groups are quite diverse. We recognize the names of well-known environmental organizations (Sierra Club, The Audubon Society, Greenpeace). Many are conservation organizations that were already existing in New England and took a stand for the Crees (Hudson Valley Grassroots Energy and Environmental Network for instance). Others can be related to an academic

institution (The Center for Environmental and Legal Studies Pace University), a union central (AFLCIO Solidarity), or an American Indian organization (American Indian Community House NY). Lastly, some organizations were specifically created to lobby governments and the public in favor of the Crees (SEAC – Save James Bay; James Bay Action Team).

Other organizations have been associated with the GCC during this campaign. Probe International was the organization that went to the International Water Tribunal to defend the Cree cause. When white water rafting was organized in 1993, other organizations were part of that activity: Investor's Responsibility Research Center, Santee Sioux Tribe, Flying Doctors of America, Mni Sose Inter-Tribal Water Rights Coalition (20 tribes living in Missouri Basin, struggling for their water rights) (Whapmagoostui Council 1993). Here again, there is a diversity in the type of organizations mobilized, with less emphasis on the environment. Another group present in Maine was No Thank Q Hydro Quebec.

Other organizations backed bills that were in favour of the Crees, but, even if they were *de facto* allies, it is difficult to know whether there was an interaction with the GCC. Another example of support coming from the public was that some American universities got rid of their Hydro-Quebec bonds because of students' pressures.

For this campaign, the GCC mobilized other interested groups on an ad hoc basis. These allies were not long time friends and they did not become a formal coalition after this campaign or during it. Even if they could have been

useful for the Crees at other times after the Great Whale and NBR campaign, there are no resources to maintain these kinds of relationships in small organizations like the GCC or the SC (Brian Craik 2005 and Henriksen 2004).

The Grand Council of the Crees is twinned with the Veneto region in Italy. At different times, some Crees went to Italy and were welcomed in people's homes. This exchange is an occasion to discuss with municipal and regional government officials and create friendships. Italian guests have been going to the Cree territory, visiting communities, fishing and sharing stories. In a way, this twinning has created a support organization for the GCC, but its existence is mostly for cultural activities and tourism.

During the campaign against the idea of an independent Québec, most indigenous peoples present on the Québec territory were opposed to this political idea, like the Crees were. However, not many other First Nations communities from Québec had the means to do global activism on this issue, while the GCC put a lot of resources into this campaign. A small coalition made a submission to the House of Lords Committee on Human Rights in the United Kingdom; the GCC worked with the Inuit of Québec and the Mohawk Nation in December 1996 on this matter. More than a year after the referendum, these three major aboriginal peoples went to the United Kingdom because of their "historic relationships with the British Crown". They underlined to the Committee the human rights violations they thought would arise if Québec were to unilaterally declare its independence (James Bay Cree People (Eenouch), Inuit of Québec, and Mohawk

nation 1996, 2). It is interesting to note that, on the document, it is the name of the nations that are mentioned, not the name of the political organizations of these nations²². This strategic representation certainly makes it look like a less partisan (or even political) document, and the alliance between these three peoples makes it more powerful.

During the campaign to change forestry policies, I have noted two allied organizations. The first is the B.C. Interior Alliance, a very active indigenous organization in British Columbia in the field of forestry. Both organizations went together in 2000 to Washington, D.C. to present to the House of Representatives Human Rights Caucus. According to the press release issued, “They emphasized the failure of the Canadian government to respect existing treaty and aboriginal title and rights which threatens their cultural and economic livelihoods” (GCC and BC Interior Alliance, 2000). They also met with other US institutions and organizations, including some aboriginal and environmental ones. Both organizations agreed on a strategy of “naming and shaming” even in a time of commercial tension between Canada and the United States on the subject of forestry, because they wanted to present a fuller picture of the Canadian situation. On the one hand, this position could also have had negative economic consequences on some Canadian aboriginal communities that have forestry-

²² It is reasonable to assume that this submission was in fact prepared by the political organizations, although it could have been written by a special joint committee with members from the three nations. It may have been submitted for approval to the communities by the political organizations, but I have no document confirming this possibility.

related companies. On the other hand, it could have slowed or stopped cutting on lands under treaty or claimed by First Nations.

The second organization is the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). The AFN is a country-wide organization in Canada, engaging in political action and lobbying on behalf of First Nations peoples on issues particularly involving the federal government. A few months later, in November 2000, the GCC issued a press release to point out that the National Chief of the AFN had sent a letter to the Office of the United States Trade Representative. This letter was to invite the U.S. softwood lumber trade negotiator to come to Canada and see by himself the consequences that Canadian forestry policies and practices had on First Nation communities. Matthew Coon Come wrote: “An open market with the United States will encourage further clear-cutting on aboriginal peoples’ traditional lands and further violations of aboriginal rights... A market that keeps prices low at the expense of human rights is neither fair nor free” (GCC 2000). At that point, the issue was not only one defended by the Crees, but one that was of national importance for Aboriginal peoples. And their opinion strongly contrasted with the one the Canadian government was defending in front of the U.S. government. In a way, the Cree campaign was integrated into another forestry political issue, but focusing on trade issues, not good and sustainable practices. The intervention of the Crees, the BC Interior Alliance, and the AFN linked the two problems together and doing it in concert gave more weight to their opinion.

Some members of the European Parliament intervened on the forestry issue in March 1997. They asked questions in relation to the Canada-EU Action Plan to the European Commission, wanting to know how it was going to encourage the shift from clear-cutting to an ecosystem based forestry, in particular in Cree territories.²³ The European MPs also mentioned the obligations of the Canadian government towards the Cree and Indigenous peoples, and ask the Commission if and how it was going to urge its partner to respect its obligations (GCC 1997). It is difficult to know if this European intervention was the result of direct lobbying from Canadian First Nations or the GCC in particular, or if it was the product of research by MPs' staff, or a subject of great interest for those MPs? In any case, by raising this question in the institution that is the European Union, they became de facto allies for the GCC.

As we have seen above, when the GCC is looking for allies, other Indigenous peoples are often solicited. For example, in February 2001, Romeo Saganash of the GCC went to Europe with Armand McKenzie, lawyer for the Innu of Nitassinan. Because they met the vice-president of the European Parliament, a Québec minister accused them of espionage. According to the press release issued by the GCC, the trip was organized because "Quebec refused our request to attend a seminar in Brussels on aboriginal issues organized by the Quebec government" (GCC 2001a). To make sure that their side of the story was told, the GCC and the Innu of Nitassinan organized meetings with officials of the

²³ Other questions were underlining the particular situation of other Canadian Indigenous peoples: the Lubicon Cree in Alberta, the Algonquin in Québec, and the Nuxalk of British Columbia.

European Parliament. Only a few months later, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Rigoberta Menchu Tum visited the Cree territory with 35 indigenous representatives of the Indigenous Initiative for Peace. A “Declaration concerning destruction of the boreal forest in the traditional territory of the Cree people of Eeyou Istchee (James Bay, Canada),” using strong words, was written as a consequence of this visit (GCC 2001b).

From this compilation, we can see that the GCC was quite skilful in creating useful and influential alliances with well-positioned organizations. Because there are no resources to continue to cultivate these relationships when the campaign is finished, though, it seems that the GCC has to start anew to find new allies for every new activist campaign. The good side of this state of affairs is that the new allied organizations are directly related to the new campaign. Of course, some relationships are maintained with the Assembly of First Nations, as well as some personal working relationships with individuals, the journalist Boyce Richardson for instance.

2) Saami Council

The Saami Council has also developed alliances with other non-governmental organizations over the years, like consumers’ organizations or environmental ones (Henriksen 2004). Most recently, Greenpeace protested against a lumber company cutting old-growth forests in Saami territory (Saami Council 2005), a campaign the SC had initiated earlier in 2005. Because of the limited literature I was able to

collect on the SC in the 1990s (as explained in the chapter on methodology), I am not able to make a list of these alliances. However, the SC has formed other types of interesting alliances with other Indigenous peoples' organizations; these include the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Parliaments, and research organizations, such as the Nordic Saami Institute and the Research Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (GÁLDU). It may also be important to underline that some of these "friends" are also financiers of the SC, along with the Foreign Affairs Departments of the Scandinavian countries.

As mentioned before, the SC developed a program of cooperation with other Indigenous peoples' organizations from the global South. This cooperation is envisioned as a medium or long term relationship between the organizations. One proof of this development is the visit of some Indigenous activists from Africa during the 18th Saami Conference. They had things to learn from the SC, but the Saami attending the conference also had a lot to learn from the experience of some African Indigenous peoples. It is difficult to assess if those relationships are really making a difference when it comes to international issues, in particular for the SC, but it may have an impact in negotiations at the UN or in other global forums because the organizations already know each other well.

Because they are also part of the circumpolar region, it may seem evident that the Saami Council would create an alliance with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), the international organization representing Inuit from Canada, Alaska, Russia and Greenland. However, sharing a geographic area is not a

sufficient condition to create a political alliance, even if the two organizations are almost the only ones representing the Arctic region. The SC and the ICC have frequently written statements together in global forums (e.g. Watt-Cloutier 2004). Since these statements are often quickly prepared in the corridors of official meetings, it is important that the staff from the two organizations know each other well and work together well. This familiarity seems to be present for the ICC and the SC. Personalities play a central role in these kinds of relationships, something that may be undervalued by researchers. If the ICC and the SC work together in international meetings (not for every statement, it has to be noted), it is because it gives more weight to their joint statements, and because they get along well.

The Saami Council is not the only representative organization of the Saami people. In fact, since its members are chosen by other organizations, they are not directly elected by the Saami. In the three Nordic countries, Saami Parliaments have been put in place; their members are submitted to democratic elections. These parliaments are allies of the SC. When an issue touches one country in particular, the Saami parliament of that country is often more likely to be in charge of it than the SC. However, when some global activism seems to be necessary, the SC will collaborate with the parliament. In global forums, the Saami Parliaments are often represented too, along with the SC, which amplifies the impact of Saami activism.

Research organizations are also part of the network of allies the Saami Council has constituted over the years. It is debatable if these organizations

should be considered like other allies because the relationship they have with the SC is not a traditional alliance. These research organizations nourish the work of the SC and may provide scientific or intellectual material for the work of the SC, but they are independent and have their own research agendas. The first organization to note is the Nordic Sámi Institute. Now affiliated with the Sámi University College, the NSI was established in 1973 and employs approximately twenty research scientists, working mainly in the fields of linguistics, law, and social research, which includes studying reindeer. Its mission is “through research to strengthen and develop Sami language, culture and social life” (Nordic Sámi Institute 2007).

Another organization that collaborates with the SC is the Research Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (GÁLDU). Although they are currently located at the same place as the NSI, GÁLDU has a mandate less well-defined than the NSI, even if Saami rights form an important part of its activities. The Centre also monitors international activities and circulates information about Indigenous peoples from around the world. At least one member of the SC was employed by GÁLDU in recent years. The director of the Centre was present at the Permanent Forum in 2004 and seems to follow many of the global actions carried out by the SC. The Centre is thus a supporter of the SC, and of other Indigenous groups.

The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) is a research organization based in Copenhagen, and as the name suggests, they gather

information on Indigenous peoples from around the world and diffuse it. They have maintained a good relationship with the Saami Council. Members of the SC have written books and chapters in volumes edited by IWGIA. These written contributions can be very useful for the SC, because it gives the writer an occasion to synthesise her or his thoughts and share them with others. It may be because they are relatively close geographically, but it seems that the IWGIA's relationship with the SC is more developed than with other Indigenous peoples' organizations.

In comparison with the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council seems to have created more long-term relationships with other organizations that can be considered like formal alliances. As I mentioned before, however, some short-term alliances were also formed with different organizations to pursue specific goals, and these alliances were not sustained over time. However, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of these alliances, and many of them appear almost natural in the political environment of the Saami Council.

3) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

Médecins Sans Frontières is a ferociously independent organization, and alliances are not part of the culture of the organization at the decision-making level. In the field though, there are other humanitarian organizations working alongside MSF, and they have to collaborate together to a certain extent. Among these "colleagues," we can note Save the Children, the Red Cross, UNICEF, UNHCR,

CARE, OXFAM, Action contre la faim, and the World Food Program (Morley 2007, 62).

In Canada, MSF²⁴ was part of the GTAG (Global Treatment Access Group), a coalition of organizations that lobbied the government on the issue of access to drugs and their exportation to poor countries. The involvement of MSF Canada in the GTAG was a significant part of the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. The Canadian GTAG came into existence when an international agreement on the subject of drug exportation was reached at the General Council of the TRIPS Agreement on 30 August 2003. GTAG was a fairly loose group—each member organization was free to sign or not each document prepared by the GTAG. The core members of the GTAG, in addition to MSF Canada, were: the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, World Vision, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the United Church of Canada. Oxfam and the Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development were also probably part of this core group. Many other associations were associated to the GTAG.

Other NGOs joined the movement to pressure the Canadian government so that this decision of the General Council would be put into effect. To achieve this goal, legislative changes had to be adopted by the government. Some of these other active civil society groups were: Rights and Democracy, Care, the North-

²⁴ For various reasons that I am not always able to decipher, MSF and its Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines are sometimes distinguished as moral persons, i.e. it is not MSF speaking, it is the Campaign. Here, I will not make any distinction between the two, given that the people running the campaign were working for MSF.

South Institute, and the McGill International Health Initiative. Other collaborators in this lobbying effort that signed letters or participated in activities at various times were: CUPE, the Council of Canadians, United Steelworkers, the Canadian Auto Workers, the Canada Africa Partnership on AIDS, and Alternatives. It is important to also note the presence throughout this campaign of Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa at that time. His reputation and conviction certainly contributed to the success of the group. The GTAG maintained its existence over time, and continued to be active so that the new law on the exportation of drugs to countries without production capacities would be used and that some drugs were actually exported.

It is important to specify that the work with the GTAG was not the only action MSF Canada took to continue its Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. Alongside, the advocacy work continued with the participation of the general public, with actions organized by MSF only, like the postcards sent to the government showing a pill on a ring and saying “Medicines shouldn’t be a luxury”.

To summarize, it is possible to say that formal coalitions are not part of the MSF style, but the organization’s pragmatism led it to participate and collaborate with other organizations when a concerted effort seemed necessary. Otherwise, MSF Canada prefers to act alone, and control all its own actions, so that the security of its volunteers in the field is not jeopardized by declarations or actions

of other organizations that may not have such a direct contact with sensitive regions in the world.

The three organizations studied are thus quite independent and look for allies in situations where they think they can be useful to reach a larger public or to have a stronger impact on governments. Sustained relationships with allies are difficult to maintain, except when a long-term commitment was envisioned at the start of the alliance, which means that resources will be allocated to the continuation of the relation.

D) Publics targeted by global activism

In basic communication theory, the act of communication necessitates a sender, a message, and a receiver. In this section of the chapter, I am interested to know who the organizations thought should be the receivers of their message through their global activism. To designate the receiver, instead of “audience”, I use the word “public”. If an organization is a bit strategic, and I do not think there is a doubt now that the three I have studied were, the message will be minimally formatted to better suit and reach the targeted public. This formatting influences our perception of the activism of the organization and of the organization itself. For instance, to catch the attention of mass media, an organization will often toughen its message, make it more aggressive, confrontational, or surprising, so that it will catch the eyes or the ears of the public, without much explanation needed from journalists.

However, the organizations are not always very systematic in thinking about the public(s) they are targeting. It is a bit as if it was a “second nature”, something guided by intuition and experience. What already worked should work again. In a way, it is the political sense of the organization that is used in formulating its messages. Thus, the answers gathered in interviews on the specific public of the organization for this or that campaign, or in general, were never really specific. My efforts here at clarifying what they said are not necessarily verbalized in this same way by the representatives of the organizations themselves.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The target publics of the GCC have been diverse. In many cases, other Indigenous peoples form a part of the targeted public. Environmentalists, or people with sensitivity for ecology, were certainly important during some of the campaigns of the GCC, not only as allies but also as public. And not only were those in Quebec or Canada targeted, but environmentalists from around the world.

The human rights community was also an important group that was touched by the messages of the GCC. “Rights talk” is a good indicator of that intended public in the speeches of the GCC. This is also a resourceful group, with their own lawyers and well-recognized NGOs, very much present at the global level already, with a global language too. Many people are also very sensitive to human rights, even if they do not master all the technicalities of the field. Canada

is recognized as a country where human rights are respected and important, and being criticized in global forums because of violations of human rights is not something that goes unnoticed by the general Canadian public. So, the general public can be said to have been an intended public too. Having declarations relayed in the mass media helped the GCC to reach that public.

Of course, governments can also be considered as one of the publics of the GCC. Support from the general population was never important enough to force the government to change its mind. Thus, some of the global activism was meant to directly influence the Canadian and Québec governments. The public shaming of the country in international conferences was aimed at the governments, but the general Canadian public was not pleased to hear that they were living in a racist country, for instance, and it is reasonable to think that the GCC knew that this kind of remark could backfire and lose them some sympathy in the general public.

2) *Saami Council*

The publics that the SC tried to reach are not really different from the ones targeted by the GCC. Depending on the situation, it may want to talk to other Indigenous peoples, to environmentalists, to human rights defenders, to the general Scandinavian public, and/or to governments.

The SC is less prone to “shaming” than the GCC. It is more diplomatic in its relationships with governments, and these relationships are often even collaborative in global settings. This difference leads me to think that the general

Scandinavian public may have been less exposed to harsh comments from the SC in comparison with the Canadian one and the GCC. Admittedly, given the language barrier and the documents gathered, it is not easy to figure out what is the general feeling in the Scandinavian population towards the recent global activism of the SC. Given that the SC is often a leader in Indigenous peoples quest for internationally recognized rights, and that Saami Council staff members or members of the Council are regularly consulted as experts in seminars or training sessions for other Indigenous peoples, and given that the SC has no problem in accepting that the Saami are privileged compared to other Indigenous peoples because they live in progressive industrialized countries (notwithstanding Russian Saami), I think the Scandinavian public should be proud of the global activism of the SC, to the extent that it is informed about it. The good words are maybe a way to gather its support.

3) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

The first public targeted by MSF in Canada was the medical community (Chapman 2005). It was the community the founders of the Canadian chapter came from and the one to turn to in order to find volunteers and money. The medical community is not limited to physicians or surgeons, but also comprises nurses, nutritionists, and people working in the administration of hospitals or care centers. It remains the main target of the organization. As the number of

sympathisers grew, MSF Canada had more means to solicit other people outside of its first natural community.

Some of these people were those tempted by an international humanitarian experience, which filled the roles of administrators, water and sanitation specialists or those responsible for logistics in the field operations. The awareness of the general public was raised too, and MSF tried to inform the general public of problems in foreign countries and of crises where its help was needed. The various *témoignages* contributed to this goal.

The Government of Canada is less a public for MSF Canada than for the Canadian Indigenous people's organization. Because governments sometimes finance a part of its operations, however, the organization cannot act as if they did not exist. For sure, the government as a public became very important during the Campaign for Access to Medicines and the discussion on the export of drugs to poor countries. The lobbying clearly tried to raise general awareness in the public, but it was the government who had the power to change things.

That campaign also reached out to the HIV/AIDS community, although it is difficult to say that messages were especially framed to include it in the movement. Finding drugs for HIV/AIDS was such an important and already visible issue that the rallying of this public to MSF objectives was almost natural.

Conclusion

Comparing systematically the global activism of the three organizations studied is not easy. The objectives pursued by the three NGOs in their global activism, their style and arguments, their allies, and their publics are heavily influenced by the context in which this activism is carried out. Nonetheless, we can see a general distinction between instrumental or locality-focused global activism, and international norms centred activism. In general, for the fifteen years studied, the Grand Council of the Crees can be associated with the first type, while the Saami Council is closer to the second type. It is more difficult to attribute MSF Canada to one or the other, but we can say that the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines relates to international norms centred activism, while regular activities of MSF are generally more locally-focused.

In that sense, the introduction of the Campaign in MSF Canada's work can be seen as a discontinuous event in its global activism. There were a few other events of this type before, focused on longer-term objectives of norm change, but the Campaign brought major changes in the activities and in the allocation of resources of the group. Another campaign with similar norm-changing objectives would provoke a similar discontinuity. After a little time, though, it takes its own place in the organization and cannot be considered discontinuous in the global activism of group. It is interesting to note that this specific discontinuity is really coming from the globalized nature of the movement, the Canadian context—

which was also a response to a global decision—, and that it found in MSFers the necessary personal commitment to the betterment of the global.

A new campaign in an organization can be qualified as a discontinuous event. Each time, the organization has to imagine new ways to reach the same or a different public. Discontinuity is necessary to bring attention to the new campaign and avoid “activism fatigue” from militants and sympathisers. From this perspective, the Grand Council of the Crees seems to have gone from one discontinuity to the other, from one campaign to the other, from the campaign against the Great Whale hydro project to the campaign promoting the *Paix des Braves*. Although there must be periods of “business as usual” in the GCC, it is more in its habits to integrate new locality-focused objectives giving birth to a new campaign that can extend to the global level.

The Saami Council has experienced more continuity in its global activism in good part because it has pursued difficult objectives discussed with great details in global forums. There is still enough flexibility in the organization to organize a response to particular events, but these responses rarely call for an extensive mobilization outside Scandinavian countries, if at all. The integration of research and analysis in the organization is so successful that the results of these efforts can morph into the basis for a global discussion. In that sense, the Saami Council is pursuing intellectual global activism, trying to change other people’s perceptions about norms and policies. Even if these are long-term goals, the SC

has often been quite influential and able to renew its arguments and alliances to keep attention on the debates.

The next chapter presents an interpretation of how the identity of the organizations studied have changed over the fifteen years period of the research. Since what an organization does contributes to what it is, there are interesting connections between the evolution of the global activism of the organization and the evolution in its identity. Thus, the patterns of continuity and discontinuity that were briefly sketched out in this chapter are going to find some more resonance in the analysis of the evolution of the identity of each organization.

CHAPTER VI COMPARISON OF THE EVOLUTION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

It has to be said that MSF is one of the most impressive NGOs anywhere: principled, effective, radical. They not only do an excellent humanitarian job, saving lives wherever they intervene, but they also brook no nonsense from either national or external governments. On many issues, they are more outspoken than any other leading member of civil society.
Stephen Lewis (2005, 67-68)

This chapter is about the evolution of the collective identity at the centre of each of the three groups studied during the fifteen year period. I thought it was important to look not only at what these organizations were doing through their global activism, but also to examine the way they defined themselves and the roles they thought were theirs to fulfill. How these organizations justified their existence certainly had an impact on the activism they did over the years, and the reverse is also true: what you do influences how you come to see yourself as a community. In this sense, global activism and collective identities are interconnected. So this chapter will cover the trajectory of the identity of the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council and Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada over the given time period. I will look more closely at the parallel evolutions of the global activism and the collective identity of each organization in the next and concluding chapter.

Studying identity in the context of globalization leads us to think about the new—or not so new—“magnets” that are capturing people’s hearts and imaginations outside of the traditional (and often inherited) understandings of the self, including the communal “self,” that everyone carries. Apart from your sex,

your age, your nationality, your language, your religion, what would you say defines you? With whom do you feel you belong and do you wish to live? What are the motives that are making you act the way you do? Why do you attribute meaning to aspects of life and the world in the way you do? Under globalization, as Castells argues, there is more and more space for choice in our identity as long-standing sources of identity like church, trade union, and nation-state become less relevant under globalization. New causes seem to appear every day and often quickly build a following, a group, which can have very little structure. The groups I have studied all express choice and conscious direction in the identity they “embody,” with varying degrees. This chapter looks at four components of collective identities: self-definition, actual roles and power, leadership, and interactions with the membership of the organization or the people it represents. Through these four elements, I assess how and why the identity of the organization has changed. As much as possible, I cover external and internal factors contributing to these variations.

Here is my general interpretation of the evolution of the organization.

- The GCC has become a more “governmental” organization over the years, in good measure because of the Paix des Braves. The identity of the organization was never like the one of an ideational NGO; already at the end of the 1980s, there was a part of the identity of the organization that was governmental in nature, mixed with a more NGO-style identity because of their international involvement. This involvement has

decreased over the years, permitting the government aspect of the GCC identity to become more prominent and more developed. In the process, its public image too has changed, and this change can be perceived from the “inside,” i.e. from the Cree perspective, and from the “outside,” i.e. the general public perspective.

- The SC has gone in the opposite direction: it has become more like a “regular” NGO, while moving away from governmental roles. The first major identity change in the 15 years study is the formal inclusion of the Russian Saami organizations in the SC. This step forced the organization to reallocate some of its resources and change its name: the adjective “Nordic” was dropped because all Saami were now represented. The other major evolution for the SC was the solidification of the Saami Parliaments in Nordic countries, creating serious interlocutors for the respective governments. The SC was thus free to put more resources on other issues, and it chose to emphasize its presence in the global sphere and in international cooperation.
- MSF Canada was at an embryonic stage at the beginning of the 1990s. It has evolved into a full-fledged NGO, widely known in Canada, and not only in medical or specialized circles. From a branch of MSF Holland operations office that was doing recruiting and fund-raising (and a little *témoignage*), it has become a politically respected organization, making public statements on medical-humanitarian issues where the involvement

of the Canadian government can have an impact. Part of a larger movement, the identity of MSF Canada is influenced by the evolution of this whole network, which has held formal processes to think about itself (Chantilly and La Mancha). The identity of the Canadian chapter has remained close to its roots, while experiencing the changes coming with the expansion of an organization and its greater involvement in current political debates—those relating to medical and humanitarian issues. It has become more clearly “activist” in its identity than at its beginning in Canada.

As I trace the evolution of the identity of these organizations, I try to clarify the connections we can make with globalization. Limiting the explanation of this evolution to globalization would be more than simplistic. Moreover, the interviewees themselves could not make that very general linkage. However, globalizing processes have played a role in these transformations, and I attempt to point them out. How those effects play themselves out in a given organization will depend, however, on the collective identity and the understanding of the role of the organization. Globalizing processes do not just wash over a group, but are engaged by the group. The encounter or engagement may vary from one group to another. If these processes have influenced these three organizations, it is more than likely that they will have affected other organizations and collective identities.

A) Self-definition, self-description

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, collective identities are generally formed after a conscious reflection. The groups studied have thought about what or who they represent, and how they want to do it. Self-definitions or self-descriptions are thus important to look at. They may be an idealized version of the organization, but they communicate the values and the reasons behind the organization.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The Grand Council of the Crees is the political organization representing Crees living in Québec. As a representative organization, the GCC generally expresses its opinions in the name of the Crees. The organization does not have a justification outside of the existence of the Cree people. When the GCC says “we at the Grand Council of the Crees”, it means, “we, the Crees.” The line between what the GCC is and what the Crees as a people are can be quite thin because the organization is supposed to embody the Cree culture in its politics. Moreover, the GCC has the legitimacy to speak in the name of the Crees, and does so. Trying to capture the evolution of the GCC’s identity thus often leads Cree representatives to talk about the evolution of the Cree people—more so, it seems to me, than Saami Council representatives do. It is common to see sentences like “The Crees are a hunting, fishing and trapping people” or “The poorest Cree families are the trapping families” in official speeches by the organization (sections titles, document presented when a fur label proposal was submitted to the European

Parliament on 19 September 1995) (GCC 1995c, 1). The GCC clearly is a representative organization; its identity is one of representation. The self-description of the organization has been very stable over the years, often limited to a sentence saying that the organization politically represents the Crees.

We should go further than this sentence to understand better if there has been an evolution in the identity of the organization, even in its self-definition. When Cree leaders talk about the GCC, they clearly see it as an organization that protects Cree rights and interests (Awashish 2005). One can also appreciate the kind of pressures (global and local) and socio-political environment which the Crees are experiencing when a leader mentions that the GCC must balance Cree interests and Québec interests (Awashish 2005). (Is it not saying that the GCC must be the reasonable one in negotiations?)

In addition to Cree rights and interests, the GCC is also preoccupied by Cree needs. Even if they have other institutions managing these different spheres, the political arm of the Crees has to care for housing, education, health, planning and employment (Awashish 2005). The land alone could not sustain every one and the Cree society is a very young one. These needs cannot be separated from how the future is envisioned by the GCC, as expressed through its negotiations and projects. More than representation, the GCC has to look for answers for the question: How can Crees continue to be Crees today and tomorrow?

One of the answers the GCC has found is to really focus on the Cree situation, even if there are a lot of common issues with other Indigenous peoples

(Namagoose 2005). The energy devoted to international affairs has been less important in the work of the GCC than for the Saami Council. The participation of the GCC in the preparation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has helped the GCC to feel closer to other Indigenous peoples (Craik 2005), but the focus has remained the Crees, thus more local than global.

Another aspect of their identity is that the GCC has chosen not to oppose the development of natural resources. What they are against is irrational development. Legal, environmental, social, and moral impacts must all be taken into account (Awashish 2005). The GCC is there, in a way, to foresee these impacts and evaluate how they will affect, negatively and positively, the people it represents. It is a difficult role, but this positioning as a mediator seems to be firmly entrenched in the ethos of the GCC. This position is also a way to envision the future of the Crees.

The Grand Council of the Crees used to be seen as a hunting, fishing and trapping group of people; it now sees itself as a mature political group (Namagoose 2005). This is the message the organization spread after the signature of the Paix des Braves; “we made our place” (Craik 2005). I think this statement defines well the evolution of the GCC and how it thinks it should be perceived.

2) *Saami Council*

Like the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council is a representative organization. Unlike the GCC, though, it is not the only institution representing

the Saami people. In fact, the SC itself is representing smaller Saami organizations from the four countries where Saami are present. Still, the SC is like the GCC in its desire to talk about the people it represents and not to put the organization as a “middleman” or an intermediary between the objective and the people pursuing this objective. However, this observation may be truer of the GCC than of the SC; since the SC is not the only organization speaking for the Saami, it may sometimes be necessary to specify how it is representative for its interlocutors.

Like the GCC, the Saami Council promotes and defends Saami rights and interests. Because there are now Saami Parliaments in the Nordic countries, the SC mostly takes care of issues not limited to one country. The creation of these parliaments transformed the SC; it made it “more activist” than before (Åhrén 2005). This change is important in the evolution of the organization, and in its self-definition. It says that the SC tends to perceive itself as an agent of change for the Saami and for other Indigenous peoples.

The global activism of the SC has become an increasingly important part of its identity. The global actions of the SC are how Saami hear about the SC today (Åhrén 2005). Since its participation in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the SC has wanted to position the Saami as part of the Indigenous peoples’ family, and the SC has endorsed this position of solidarity (Henriksen 2004). So not only does the SC have an impact on Saami rights (Henriksen 2004), but also it participates in movements for the recognition of other Indigenous

peoples' rights. A good example of this activity is the Saami Convention. Mattias Åhrén mentioned to me that when he was negotiating the Saami Convention, there were a few provisions that were probably included not because of their impact in Sápmi but because the convention would be looked at as an example for other Indigenous peoples (Åhrén 2005). The SC is aware of the privileges it has as an organization representing an Indigenous people based in the developed world. Even if the statistics show that Saami are in a less enviable situation in general than other citizens in Norway, Sweden, and Finland (let me set Russia aside here), their situation is much better than that of most other Indigenous peoples. The solidarity the organization feels toward other Indigenous peoples is maybe enhanced by this difference in socio-economic conditions; the fact that their "admission" in the Indigenous peoples' family was more difficult because of their white skin and European location may also have led the organization to particularly value this membership. In any case, the participation of the SC in global activism related to the Indigenous peoples' movement is much more important in the self-definition of the organization than it is for the Grand Council of the Crees.

3) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

Each chapter in the MSF movement has its own identity, but since the activities of the organization often involve many chapters, it is not so easy to distinguish these "sub-identities." Because of their more central role in the

organization and because they are older, the identity of the five operational chapters based in Europe are more clearly developed; it is common to hear about how the Dutch vision differs from the French point of view, for instance. Yet, these subtle differences are not evident to the outside observer. Accordingly, before trying to trace the evolution of the identity of MSF Canada, I will attempt to understand better the identity of MSF as a whole.

Médecins Sans Frontières is the “world’s largest independent medical-humanitarian organization” (Morley 2007, 4). This independence distinguishes it from many other NGOs, who have more ties with governments. In the case of MSF, its independence is both from other organizations and from governments. Although the movement accepts some money from governments, it limits its quantity, and will not accept it under all circumstances. As for its independence from other organizations, it means that “going to meetings is not something we like to do” (Morley 2007, 62). MSFers prefer to act, but they understand the need to coordinate actions in situations where many actors are involved, such as after a natural disaster, for example, where other humanitarian NGOs are present. “Our independence is crucial [...] Our donors support us because we’re independent” (Devine 2005). Because government money forms only a small part of the budget, the organization feels free to speak against any government and to help any and all parties in conflicts. It goes where the need is, not where it is told to go. “This independence also makes us sometimes more credible. People know that we will speak when we need to speak and only when we’re seeing it” (Chapman 2005).

This “speaking out” aspect is an important one in the identity of the MSF movement. “As an independent volunteer association, we are committed to bringing direct medical aid to people in need. But we act not in a vacuum, and we speak not into the wind, but with a clear intent to assist, to provoke change, or to reveal injustice. Our action and our voice is an act of indignation, a refusal to accept an active or passive assault on the other,” as James Orbinski said in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech (1999).

“I think we’ve always seen ourselves as people who want to work in places that other agencies don’t want to, and people who want to speak out when they see abuses; that stayed the same” (Morley 2005). The core identity of MSF is very strong and has been pretty stable over the years. The Charter of the movement has changed a few times, and the movement organized formal discussions to agree upon these changes—the Chantilly process and the La Mancha process. Yet, what MSF thinks it is as an organization has not changed much over time. In a way, it is the organization’s Charter that has been adapted to what was really going on, to the lived identity of the organization rather than the opposite. Words may change, but the movement is the same... or so MSFers generally think.

If the core of the activities has not changed that much, the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines modified partly the identity of the movement. Although MSF was already speaking out, it had not previously taken such a strong position on a political, economical, and medical issue touching a wide

variety of actors. These included politicians from the North and the South, officials in the international trade regime, public officials in various departments, pharmaceutical industries, and the general public. I discuss in more detail shortly the influence of this Campaign on MSF Canada.

It is important to know that although it may present itself as a united organization, MSF is not monolithic. In fact, it often prefers the term “movement” to that of organization (a usage I have also adopted). As I have previously mentioned, each chapter has its identity; and it should be noted that the MSF is accustomed to having heated internal discussions over many issues. “It means that really, by the time we go public with a position, [...] we are not going to get anything worse from any governments or pharmaceutical companies or other agencies, [...] because we’re so tough on each other! It makes a stronger organization” (Morley 2005). Since common statements are difficult to arrive at (Chapman 2005), they must address issues that are seen as important by everyone. These issues must relate to the core beliefs and ideas of the organization and thus its identity.

Having a general idea of MSF’s identity, we can now look at the Canadian chapter of MSF and try to specify more its identity and its evolution. Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada was simply a “child” of the section based in Holland at its inception in 1990-1991. This connection certainly had an influence on the structure and the “mentality” of the Canadian chapter, although this is difficult to recognize without a more complete knowledge of the movement and the Holland

section and without contact with the first people involved in the Canadian section. The identity of the section at its beginning was certainly very modest and built on the growing recognition of the MSF movement. The initial activism of the section was focused on making the movement better known in Canada and on raising awareness with *témoignages* from returning volunteers. The core identity of the section was, at the beginning, defined by the MSF movement as a whole and a clear vision of the future was not possible.

There were also some constraints on the organization.

We were quite conservative in our definition of advocacy and lobbying in the earlier years because we were afraid of losing our charitable status... So we would sort of stay away from some of that it seems to me. We would speak out if we heard some stuff happening that we felt morally we must speak out about... But the idea of a more concerted political effort, Access Campaign or Darfur, or ... military humanitarian stuff [...] those first years, no, I don't think so. I think people would have liked it to have them, but we were in survival mode. Just getting the money, get the volunteers out. (Morley 2005)

Charitable organizations can only have limited political activities, in relation with their mandate and charitable status. Losing this status means donors cannot deduct the amount donated from their taxable revenues.

Lobbying and advocacy are now much more part of MSF Canada, although these activities are considered a “consequence” of their primary, humanitarian action. People want to talk about what they have seen once they come back, so that eventually longer lasting changes can happen. As the former executive director told me, “we’re not asking for behavioural change, we’re not asking for people to give us more money or save energy, or that kind of thing,

right?, which people can do with or without government; ... because it's in the international sphere, we're saying: make this an issue for the government to do something about [...] We want to change government behaviour on specific issues" (Morley 2005).

These specific issues must be directly linked to the mandate of the organization. MSF Canada has talked about the dangers of military humanitarianism because it is a problem for them and can put the security of their workers at risk. The main issue, however, over the last five years of my study, is clearly the one of access to essential medicines, a subject not chosen lightly but because people in the field were experiencing deep frustration.

I remember feeling in 1999-2000, thinking: [...] MSF, we should be talking about more things, we should be talking about economic issues because they're so important. And people were saying to me: no no, because we talk for medical issues. And suddenly the Access Campaign was on both at once. It was an example of the world economic system not functioning, but it was very clever that we had that as our campaign because it was also a medical issue, and it was a way to tie together medical issues and global economic justice, because we're not a justice organization. (Morley 2005)

Even if the Campaign has been a central activity recently, it is difficult to see MSF Canada describing itself as an advocacy organization. "The way that we think of ourselves may not have changed; I think what we do may have changed; we still have the same Charter" (Morley 2005). This Charter may change in the coming years as a result of the La Mancha process, which, in part, questions the Campaign and its effects on the organization.

For MSF Canada, this Campaign helped “focus and crystallize” (Morley 2005) the energy of returning volunteers wanting to stay involved in the organization. It gave them something to talk about in addition to their experience in the field. There were many steps, many stages in the Campaign, so they could keep contributing for a long period of time. Some returning volunteers were saying: “I’m not gonna talk about patents, and [the proposed bill on the exportation of drugs] C-9...” but anyone can talk about the principle “Medicines shouldn’t be a luxury” (Devine 2005).

The Campaign in Canada, and the efforts put around the bill for the export of medicines to countries without the capacity to produce their own drugs, also changed how the organization worked. As mentioned before, “MSF, we’re not very good at cooperating with others; this is not part of our ethos, and I think MSF Canada was doing more [collaborative work] than many of the other sections, but I think that’s part of the way things work here, that we have more collaboration in Canada” (Morley 2005). The network in which MSF Canada works has grown as a result of this Campaign (Devine 2005).

The identity of MSF Canada in the MSF movement is thus one that is more collaborative when compared with other sections. Since there were no field operations managed from Canada at the time (there are now Canadian projects abroad), the section was also more focused on advocacy than others, partially because there was willingness from some politicians and the Prime Minister to do something for Africa and make this WTO possibility a reality. This willingness

did not come out of nowhere, and some MSFers were involved in raising the awareness of these politicians. Even if Canadian sections are all small players in the global NGO world, MSF Canada made an important contribution in this Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. In the process, the way the organization describes itself changed a little. We see in the next section that the modification in its actual role is very significant for the identity of the organization.

B) Actual roles and power of the organization

If an organization is in good part what it does, as I argue in Chapter II, looking at the actual roles and power of an organization is thus primordial to understand its identity. These elements are also more susceptible to change with time, as the organization evolves. By looking at its roles and power, one can perceive the image others may have of the organization too.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The Grand Council of the Crees was created to negotiate with governments and not just to “abstractly” represent the Crees. Right from the start, there was an objective for the organization: a negotiation to conduct and to bring to an acceptable conclusion. The idea that negotiating is a necessity to protect Cree rights is at the core of the identity of the organization, and one of its primary

roles. It helps to explain the combativeness of the GCC in negotiations and in legal battles.

The GCC was never afraid to sue other parties when they did not fulfill their obligations. Still, it seems that it is always a strategic choice to make, between negotiation and litigation, and the GCC takes the most efficient path to get what it wants—concrete measures taken, public exposure of the problems, or attacks on the reputation of the other party. We have to keep in mind that the organization is able to make these choices because it has some money at its disposal and is in a country where the rule of law exists. What the GCC can do in its activism is conditioned by the fact that it is in a Northern country and it has not adopted a traditional Cree approach as an organization, except maybe in its internal processes. It is a Western-style organization acting in the Canadian environment.

The GCC is also a nation-building organization. My understanding is that this role has become increasingly significant as time has gone on. If the GCC negotiating and litigating help create an idea of who the Cree are, putting in place programs and institutions in the communities is a more tangible experience. While governments could do as it wanted, assuming that no one of importance inhabited that part of the territory at the beginning of the 1970s, it is clear that today no one can ignore the presence of the Crees. Not only has their population grown, but also they now exist as a strong political force. This is true for the whole period of my study. Social ills still undermine the strength of the Cree nation, but the action

of the GCC has helped it to flourish in difficult conditions. Winning the battle of the Great Whale River certainly increased the self-confidence of the GCC but also of the Crees as a nation. This victory is important in understanding the identity of the GCC.

The Grand Council of the Crees was quite central in the global activism of the Indigenous peoples' movement. Ted Moses was much respected and had this more global role of the GCC close to his to heart. However, considering the rather more discrete and low key global activism of the GCC in recent years, and especially after the official period of this study, it may be legitimate to ask if this role was so central for the GCC or whether it had more to do with Moses' personal leadership. Of course, the personality and reputation of the person in charge of the international work for an organization like the GCC will influence its resulting "visibility" in global arenas. The question does occur, however, whether the international work was mostly done to get results at home, or whether there was a real commitment of the organization for the global movement.

The fact that the GCC represents only one Indigenous nation may also influence this variable commitment at the organizational level. Often, Indigenous peoples' organizations represent a few peoples from one geographical area. Examples of this are the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the American Indian Law Alliance, or the Native Women's Association of Canada. Similarly to the Saami Council, other organizations may exist "underneath" the umbrella organization, but it is often this overarching one that will keep up the international work. The

GCC does not really have an umbrella organization above it (the Assembly of First Nations is not particularly active at the global level, probably because it is representing too many peoples). Hence, local affairs always take precedence. Unlike the Saami where there are other political organizations in the form of parliaments at more local levels, the GCC has both local and global roles. Another hypothesis to explain the significant decrease in the GCC global activism is that the communities have asked it to reduce it and to put its resources in other kinds of problems, closer to home. In any case, global activism was important at the GCC for some period of time, mostly during their global campaigns, but ordinarily it was not more than maybe 15% of its activity (Namagoose 2005).

For the Crees themselves, however, the GCC has increased its importance over time and in the process its identity has changed. It has gained power through negotiation, litigation, and activism. With the signing of the *Paix des Braves*, it has been confirmed as the legitimate representative organization for the Crees, and the actual governing power—in conjunction with the Cree Regional Authority—on Cree territory. The impact of the global activism of the organization has become less important in recent years, even if the organization has maintained a presence in the most important global forums.

2) *Saami Council*

The roles of the Saami Council have evolved over the fifteen years studied. The people working for the organization are more specialized, more professional, and

the division of labour among the staff is more complex. These changes reflect changes in society and in the environment, at a local level and at the broader level too (Åhrén 2005). For instance, the Russian language is now included in the organization as a result of the adhesion of Russian Saami to the SC (Henriksen 2004). There also seem to be more issues of concern for the SC now than fifteen years ago, and more forums to discuss these issues have emerged. For instance, the Arctic Council did not exist in 1990. Its birth signals the growing awareness of the Arctic as a region (Kuokkanen 2005) and the salient need for a discussion of environmental issues in this region. Also, questions relating to intellectual property rights have taken a larger place at the international level and some policy issues related to these rights are of great importance for Indigenous peoples. The Saami Council actively participates in these various forums. We can also note that the SC is involved in discussions at the Council of Nordic Countries, on health and human rights issues (Henriksen 2004).

The Saami Council is known to be a diplomatic organization, not confrontational like Native American organizations (Kuokkanen 2005). This character has helped it gain the trust of Nordic governments; some Saami, however, criticize the backdoor politics it practices, because they think that it is less transparent than it should be and can lack effectiveness (Kuokkanen 2005). Nonetheless, we can say the SC has built its power and reputation over the years in the eyes of governments, both in Scandinavia and more broadly.

At the global level, it is its pragmatic style (Baer 2004) that has contributed to its success and respectability. The SC had various options for defining a future direction when the status of Saami changed at the national level; in good part, it has chosen to focus on global activism and cooperation. Diplomacy and pragmatism helped the organization to create strong relationships with other organizations. These alliances are very important at the global level and were particularly useful in the negotiations leading to the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The global activism of the organization has influence, in turn, on the Saami themselves. As John B. Henriksen, former legal advisor and director of the human rights unit at the Saami Council told me: the Saami Council “has always been trying to present positive developments in our countries at the international stage... and at the same time trying to use new international developments at the national stage” (Henriksen 2004). This process brings changes to the identity of the Saami Council, because it implies modifications in its objectives and in the way it works. These changes are progressive, however, and not observable on short periods of time. To understand changes in identities, we now must take into account the influence of the global on local entities, although this influence is not always clear and specific. Like identity, the influence of the global is fluid and multiple.

3) *Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada*

Now a well-developed organization in Canada, MSF has managed to keep several offices open across the country. “MSF’s Toronto office is responsible for the overall coordination of MSF Canada’s activities at national and international levels. MSF’s Ottawa office has specific responsibilities related to advocacy and program management, as well as liaison with CIDA and the Canadian government. The MSF offices in Montreal and Vancouver provide support to the National Office in the area of volunteer recruitment, coast-to-coast, for MSF overseas field placements” (MSF Canada 2004). It is my understanding that, in the middle of the 1990s, there was also an Atlantic office, doing recruitment too. If most of the activities are in Toronto, the office in Montreal is quite busy too from what I have seen. When I visited, a group of volunteers was soon coming to get some training before leaving for the field, and the person in charge was in Montréal. As well, the resource person for the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines was based there. Even inside Canada, it seems that the organization is used to working as a network. This ability is characteristic of MSF: “MSF has national offices, called sections, in 19 countries. Many people think one strong, global office would make it easier to co-ordinate our activities, but we do not. We think that an organization that is too centralized leads to too many rules and too much bureaucracy, which can stifle an individual’s ability to react when faced with a crisis in the field” (Morley 2007, 16). Obviously, having three offices in

Canada in contact with trained volunteers is an advantage when a natural catastrophe occurs and time is precious.

As mentioned before, the idea that MSF must speak out when necessary is an important part of the movement's identity. I am returning to this point in this section because *témoignage* is a powerful tool; it is a role the organization sees for itself, a role it plays, and that gives it power in different kinds of interactions (with other organizations, politicians, the media). "Sometimes we speak out to prod political leaders to end violence against our patients and innocent civilians. Sometimes we speak out to encourage other aid agencies to come and help us in a humanitarian crisis. Sometimes we speak out when we are concerned that the United Nations is not doing its job. But always we speak out because it is our responsibility as global citizens trying to save lives. We see things that many others do not, and so we must speak out" (Morley 2007, 59). The person in charge of recruitment even told me that, "Every person that we recruit, we make it their job, their mandate, to do this *témoignage*. And if a person isn't interested in speaking out about what they see, we ask them to choose another organization" (Chapman 2005).

Speaking out becomes an even more important role when analyzed in comparison with the humanitarian action of the organization. By this statement, I do not want to diminish the real impact and difference volunteers make on the field for the people they care for. The presence of MSFers saves lives, without a doubt. Yet, the needs are overwhelming and working for such an organization is

frustrating (Chapman 2005), so speaking out is essential to reach other people and to try to move things at the political level to make the world a bit better in a longer lasting way.

We can take all of that [people, money] and put it into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and still not meet the needs. So our goal isn't so much to try to meet the needs in all these different countries, it's as much as anything to be *témoin*, and to try and keep a window on the world, or to the rest of the world, about what's going on in South Sudan, and in places that can easily be forgotten, or Chechnya, and through that actually get others to act, the ones that have responsibility to act, the political actors, the humanitarian and United Nations actors. The classic example was the very small project that we had in Kigali in 1994 in Rwanda, as we said: "Doctors can't stop a genocide!" [...] But we were able to tell people what we saw, and I think as a result, we had a very big impact on the world understanding or caring about what happened in Rwanda." (Chapman 2005)

I am not sure everyone in the movement would agree with this interpretation of the work of MSF. However, this statement coincides with the idea that MSF is not a peace or justice organization, and that politics is not its first domain, although it tries to catalyze change. To quote one of the concluding paragraphs written by Bortolotti: "Médecins Sans Frontières cannot save the world, and it long ago stopped pretending it could. 'Many of us would like to do more,' says David Morley. 'We would like to see a more just world, but we have to focus on what we can do. And what we can do is something simple, small and profound'" (Bortolotti 2004, 274).

In addition to *témoignage*, MSF also does what can be called awareness-raising. The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines is a big part of that action, but it is a type of activity that was already going on before the launch of

that Campaign. This awareness-raising comprises activities such as a speaker series at the University of Toronto, building “A refugee camp in the city,” or organizing special activities on World Refugee Day and World AIDS Day, as well as maintaining for them a dedicated space in the webpage. These activities are not as focused on MSF activities overseas, but they often incorporate a bit of *témoignage* too. These activities are somewhat downplayed by MSFers themselves, reflecting their idea that it is not what the organization is really about, but they can have an interesting impact on the publics they reach through them. Awareness-raising activities also include soliciting the collaboration of volunteers, which can be associated with the movement in other ways before or after. These activities were developed when the capacities of the organization in Canada were sufficient to support them: “And perhaps as we grew a bit bigger too, increased our capacity, so we were able to take on some of these other things like military humanitarianism and the Access Campaign” (Morley 2005). As a (relatively) small organization, MSF is quite the hyperactive type.

One of the roles played by the organization in Canada is to reach the media. Since the media are an effective transmission belt between individuals, politicians and the general public, getting MSF messages relayed by the media contributes to *témoignage*, awareness-raising and trying to act for change, and it can help with the fundraising too. It can be difficult to have a story taken up by the media, and MSF Canada had this problem when MSF people were kidnapped; it was difficult to make a local media story with Arjan Arkel who was a Dutch

doctor kidnapped in Russia, or Paul Forman, a British citizen arrested by the government of Sudan (Morley 2005). Mass media are not always privileged in the communication strategy, as volunteers can sometimes generate a lot of interest at a local level. MSF can also direct journalists to people they can talk to in the countries where it is working; it can also provide solid information from a different point of view to the media.

I have not investigated in detail the relations between MSF and the Canadian government because my focus was on its global action. It is important to note, though, that there are frequent exchanges with government officials, including those at the Canadian International Development Agency. These interactions are essential to secure some money and inform officials of the problems and situations faced by Canadian volunteers abroad. In addition, there were talks with Canadian government officials to put pressure on them so they would speak with their affected corresponding officials in Russia and Sudan in the previously mentioned kidnapping of MSFers from other countries (Morley 2005). Finally, this work of government relations was very important during the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines and particularly as they related to the bill for the export of medicines.

At first an organization in survival mode, focussing on recruitment and fundraising, the actual roles played by MSF Canada have expanded over the years. If *témoignage* naturally carved out its space in the activities of the section, resources attributed to awareness-raising, media and government relations came

later, preparing the field for larger-scale enterprises such as the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. To the previously mentioned roles, it could be appropriate to include lobbying, as demonstrated by this Campaign. However, lobbying for impoverished people to get access to necessary drugs is a lobbying of a different nature than what we generally see on Parliament Hill. Yet, the success of that Campaign in Canada is a proof of the growing power of MSF in Canada. The opinion of the organization is difficult to ignore or dismiss because its credibility is very high in the public—a power in itself.

C) Leadership

The leadership of an organization certainly influences its identity. We often hear from the business world that a company changed its CEO to implement important modifications, to vary the management style, or to bring in some “freshness.” It seems to be true for NGOs too. The personality of the leader influences the collective identity of the organization s/he runs. Sometimes, it is worthwhile considering more than the official leader, and to take a look at the whole management team. Because the organizations studied have elected leaders as well as a managing team with real decision power, we will take a relatively broad look at the leadership of these organizations.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The Grand Council of the Crees is led by an elected board composed of twenty persons. The nine communities are represented by their elected chief and another representative. The Grand Chief and the Deputy-Grand Chief are elected by the Crees in a general election. Looking at the documents, it is difficult to know exactly the extent of the involvement of the whole Council in decision-making. Consensus is certainly not always reached among members of the Council or the Cree people, as changes in leadership suggest, but the GCC has been good at hiding possible divisions to present a united front to their opponents.

The figure of the Grand Chief is quite similar to the one of a Premier of a province. He is the face of the Cree government, the person responsible for success and problems. During the period studied, there were two charismatic Grand Chiefs at the head of the GCC: Matthew Coon Come (1987-1999) and Ted Moses (1999-2005). Matthew Coon Come then became National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 2000 until 2003. Ted Moses was the GCC ambassador to the United Nations before his election as Grand Chief and was Grand Chief of the GCC for a part of the 1980s (1984-1987). The two men are natural leaders, both determined and visionary.

Both men have been supported by the same executive director, Bill Namagoose. It is difficult to assess the importance of Mr. Namagoose in the organization, but his continuous presence since 1988 is a good indication of his competence. Even if the GCC staff changed over the years, many people have

been involved in the organization for a long time too. Romeo Saganash is a well-known figure in Québec; because he speaks French, he is often the resource person the GCC sends to the media. He has been at the GCC for the whole period of this study. Brian Craik, an anthropologist, has also been an important staff member in the organization for the period of this study. The continuity in the team is appreciable (Craik 2005). Some of these people are criticized for having lost touch with the “real” Crees, living on the land and up North in the communities, because they have lived for long periods of time in Ottawa or Montréal.

This critique and the fact that Mr. Craik is not Cree himself brings me to mention that the GCC was never afraid to hire the best people to help it succeed, be they Cree or not—and in many cases, lawyers and consultants were not Cree. This is not seen as a problem in the organization. One of the most important persons in the GCC for global activism was Robert Epstein. Born in California of Jewish parents having fled persecution in Europe, “Bob” Epstein was behind many public relations strategies used by the GCC, at the local and global level. The GCC is a Western style organization and it works to function well in the Québec and Canadian political, economic, and legal environments. The GCC does not advocate for a transformation of the ways of life of the Crees, rather the contrary, but it is pragmatic and understands that it must use the system in which the Crees have been integrated. And to do that, they need experts in that system. I think this is an important point to understand the type of general leadership the

organization provides. It takes what it can get, and the GCC is there to recruit the best people to do what is necessary to achieve its goals, the Crees' goals.

2) Saami Council

The fifteen members of the Saami Council are elected by the delegates to the Saami Conference, held every four years. There are ratios to respect in terms of the number of elected members for each of the four countries and each of the member organizations. The president is then internally chosen among the members of the Council. In the last mandate of the Council, the president changed at the middle of the mandate. This change may reflect the fact that the Saami leadership is based on consensus.

Similarly to what we can observe at the Grand Council of the Crees and at MSF Canada, people involved in the SC are there for the middle and long term. At the Saami conference in 2004, there were many people that were formally involved with the Council in the past who made the trip to the conference. For example, Leif Dunfjeld, member of the SC in the 70s and an expert for it in the 80s, attended all the Saami Conferences since 1968 except a few (Dunfjeld 2004). Lars-Anders Baer, three times past president of the Saami Council in the 80s and 90s (Baer 2004), and president of the Swedish Saami Parliament when I met him, shortened our interview because he acted as translator (!) for part of the proceedings. There is a high degree of commitment to Saami politics from these people.

A good part of the leadership in the Saami Council comes from the staff members. Their number and specialization have grown over the years of the study. The staff of the Saami Council is a little less stable than those working for the Grand Council of the Crees it seems to me, but are still usually employed for significant periods of time. The human rights unit of the SC has been of particular interest for me because the person in charge of this section is very involved in global negotiations in representing the SC. John B. Henriksen and Mattias Åhrén have filled this position over the years of the study and a good deal of the international presence of the SC has to be attributed to their hard work and clever leadership in global forums.

Something has to be said here about the fact that the first chairperson of the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues at the United Nations was Ole Henrik Magga. He was the first president of the Norwegian Saami Parliament and has been involved in Saami and Indigenous peoples' politics for several decades. When he was nominated as the head of the Permanent Forum, it put the Saami in the spotlight. Mr. Magga's work at the very beginning of the Permanent Forum means that a bit of the Saami way in politics has been implemented in the PF. His mandate as chairperson of the PF for its three first sessions was a source of pride for the Saami Council. Mr. Magga was also present at the Saami conference.

The international leadership of the Saami Council is an essential element to consider in the examination of the collective identity at the core of the SC. This global presence on many issues (human rights, the environment, intellectual

property...), backed by a real intellectual competency, combined with the cooperation programs put in place by the organization, have modified the identity of the SC. It has become a resource for other Indigenous peoples. Its participation is requested more often than it can afford. Of course, a big part of this recognition has to do with the personalities of the leaders. But good leaders know how to forge significant interpersonal relationships, and it seems it has been the case for many Saami leaders.

In the small society formed by the Saami—not as small as the Cree one, we must remember—the Saami Council has become the “stellar” organization, not really the one close to the people and their problems. It is the organization representing them globally, with a lot of success and admiration from observers, and its leadership in the Indigenous world is recognized more broadly.

3) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

When we consider how the leadership of MSF Canada influenced the identity of the organization over the years, we need to remember two things: 1- MSF is a network of chapters in different countries; 2- the Canadian section was not an operational section during the years of my study and was affiliated with MSF Holland. Being in a network makes the leadership of each section a bit less important than if it were a centralized and CEO-directed organization. As we have seen in the previous sections and chapters, the nature of an MSF chapter, such as the Canadian one, was predetermined. The Charter and the International Council

provide strong guidelines for their functioning. Moreover, debates about the organization often take place at the global level.

The influence of MSF Holland on the identity of the section was probably easier to feel at the beginning of the 1990s; in 2005, it was difficult to see how much of the “character” of that section remained in MSF Canada. MSF Holland is recognized for its carefulness, meetings, and for not totally embracing advocacy—this caricature does not really correspond with what I perceived of MSF Canada. The presence of Jos Nolle from MSF Holland at the beginning of the section and the closer ties built over the years with Holland instead of Spain, Belgium, France or Switzerland certainly left traces in the organization, but other influences may well have replaced them over time.

Looking at the leadership of the Canadian chapter over the years, it can be said that the general director frequently changed at the beginning of the section’s existence and then was stable for a long time under David Morley. Mr. Morley also had a team around him for communication and fundraising that was quite stable over time. Since his departure, many staff members have changed.

The current general director, Marilyn McHarg, wrote something for the (probably) first newsletter of the organization, when it was still called Associates of MSF Holland in Canada, in the fall of 1990, and was working in the Toronto office at the time. In the following “Outskirts”, the newsletter of June 1991, Dr. Joni Guptill wrote a piece on her experience in Turkey; she is the current vice-president of the board of directors. Ben Chapman was the first full-time employee

of the organization in Canada and worked at the recruitment of volunteers; over the years, he has held different positions in the movement outside of Canada, and worked for another organization, but he is now back in Canada and holds the position of Director of Human Resources in Toronto, overseeing the work of ten other people.

As these examples show, for many individuals, involvement in the MSF movement is a long-term choice, almost a life-choice. The field experience profoundly affects volunteers, it changes their individual identity. “I’m an activist,” Carol Devine told me, which explained why she was working at MSF and, in a way, how her work at MSF helped her build and live this identity. Such a commitment from MSF members implies some stability in the leadership of the organization. Even if the people at the head of the organization change, if the objectives and the way to reach them are clear, a certain stability is guaranteed.

Moreover, there is an association formed of former (and current) volunteers that help the staff in the offices through its discussions and debates. One of the challenges in a humanitarian organization is to not get *blasé*. MSF has a way to avoid this problem, and it has an impact in the field but also on the leadership of the organization: “The fact that we have one third of our volunteers new every year means that our emotion and our outrage is legitimately fuelled by a lot of people who go to Africa, or wherever, for the first time, and they’re outraged at what they see. They say: This is not good enough!” (Morley 2005). The general director and other people in the executive staff regularly go visit field

missions or participate in some of them. This contact with the field and with new volunteers keeps them energized and conscious of their role. The identity of the section is also reinforced by these trips.

D) Interactions with membership/ people represented

Keeping in touch with the people from whom comes the legitimacy of an organization is key to maintain this legitimacy, to preserve some cohesiveness, and, in some instances, to secure funding. Representatives need to stay in sync with the ones they represent or risk being criticized or identified as the “elite” (in a bad sense), disconnected from the reality of “ordinary” citizens. Organizations representing an idea have to show that they maintain their efforts to make this idea progress. The identity of the organization is a reflection of the people it represents and is influencing the identity of these people at the same time.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The Grand Council of the Crees has adopted various approaches to staying in touch with “the ordinary Cree” and communicating information on its activities. The GCC publishes its own magazine: *Eeyou Eenou Nation*. The most recent issues are available on the website of the GCC. The publication of this informative magazine is irregular but there seems to be at least one issue per year. The GCC can present its views on current projects and negotiations, and provide

or relay information on other topics of interest for the Crees. Part of the magazine is written in Cree, but most of it is in English.

The GCC also uses the radio. Radio stations are a well-developed communication tool in many Indigenous communities in Québec, as it is elsewhere in the world. It is thus easy to broadcast information and make regular reports on the radio (Namagoose 2005, Craik 2005).

There is also a Cree newspaper, the *Nation*. Publication started in 1993 and there are 26 issues in a year. It is also available on the web (www.beesum-communications.com/nation/). The executive director of the GCC told me that to some extent, Cree media are still immature, and they have a tendency to sensationalize (Namagoose 2005). I am not sure this is unique to Cree media, but it may reflect the fact that the information the GCC tries to transmit can be questioned or deformed by the Cree media. Again, this is probably a feeling many politicians get. Yet, because the Cree population is small and education statistics are not too encouraging, experienced professional Cree journalists are probably not too numerous. The staff of the GCC probably observes a difference between Cree and non-Cree media.

Maintaining significant links with the population is always a challenge for a representative organization. Since the GCC represents a quite small society, the differences between the politicians and the rest of the population are more easily felt, and the critiques can take a very personal turn since the public sphere is not so far from the private one. The communities are villages, and it seems from the

outside that everyone must know everyone. With time, it seems that people feel more secure, and have a sense of confidence in the leadership (Namagoose 2005). The fact that representatives are elected also insures that decisions will not be taken lightly (Craik 2005). To be re-elected, a member of the Council must be sure to clearly communicate the reasons behind decisions.

The Grand Council of the Crees holds a general assembly once a year to reaffirm its strategy (Craik 2005). This is the time to explain, for instance, why the GCC needs money to go to Europe when the people need houses (Craik 2005). A great sense of politics and a view of the future are qualities a GCC member must use in those occasions. At the same time, politicians need to be attentive to the demands of their people. Finding a balance is certainly not the easiest task. Doing so helps to forge the identity of the organization, because it will have to reflect Cree priorities.

For those who have not experienced the moments of intense negotiation around the La Grande and the Great Whale projects, it may be more difficult to understand how going to Europe could be more rewarding than allocating money for houses. Young Crees under 30 years old were often against the more recent hydro project, a counterpart of the *Paix des Braves*. They are more idealistic, and may have a tendency to take their rights for granted (Craik 2005). The problem is not that resistance should not be permitted, but leaders of a small population in particular must find a way to deal with this idealism and to tap into it. During the period of the study, it did not seem like a real problem. The fact that the new

Grand Chief²⁵, an opponent to (a part of) the hydro project and the derivation of the Rupert River, kept the same executive director, and many other staff of the GCC, is a good indication of the strength of the identity of the GCC in addition to an acknowledgement of the competence of these persons.

2) Saami Council

Although the Saami are not ethnologically unified, there is a feeling of unity that has been cultivated by institutions and political leaders in the last decades. Moreover, the Saami all face the same kind of problems with the same opponent: there is a tension with “White” people for land and resources, while trying to keep the language, the culture, and the way of life, in a modern way, in a modern environment. This common situation reinforces the unity, and this is a phenomenon we have seen in the Indigenous movement too, with a broader understanding of what the common situation is.

The Saami Council remains in touch with the Saami through the media. “It’s through the Saami media that most members of the Saami society get to know what we are doing” (Åhrén 2005). Like for the Crees, there are Saami radios in Sápmi. There are also newspapers. Often, the SC will also try to interest non-Saami media to report their actions because they can be key to get the politicians to act (Åhrén 2005).

²⁵ This election was held in September 2005, after the designated period for this study.

In addition to the media, the Saami conference is a central event at which not only are elections held, but also where a lot of information is transmitted to the delegates on the work of the Saami Council. For example, during the conference of October 2004 in Honningsvåg, Norway, the director of the human rights unit of the SC explained how the negotiations around the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples were evolving; the director of the arctic and environmental unit of the SC summarized the results of an important study on climate change made by the Arctic Council; and the president of the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs discussed the progress made during the International Decade.

We should not forget to mention that there are other Saami institutions, such as the Parliaments and the Saami College, and information circulates between them. This is also a way to remain connected with the people.

Even if there are some efforts done to inform the population about the work of the Saami Council, some are more critical and think these efforts are not sufficient. Journalists often have to take the initiative to “report back”, and critiques are questioning the (missionary) collaboration of the SC with other Indigenous peoples while many Saami remain uneducated about their rights (Kuokkanen 2005). Even some people at the SC admit this, although to a lesser degree: “I think a substantial part of the Saami people are aware of and also like to think of themselves as a part of a bigger indigenous movement, but I would still think that a minority of the Saami people have little awareness of what’s going on

internationally and the work for indigenous rights in general. Their issues of concern are more down to earth and [have] more to do with the reality they are living in, looking for improvements of their own situation” (Åhrén 2005).

The identity of the Saami Council is thus less crucially relying on its close relationship with the Saami people than the one of the Grand Council of the Crees with the Crees. The partial separation from its base may have helped the SC to develop its research side and alliances with other Indigenous peoples. Since other institutions are caring for most issues of immediate concern, the SC can focus on bigger or more abstract issues, or mobilize at another level for certain issues.

3) Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada

Looking at the membership of MSF Canada to understand better the identity of the organization can be a confusing exercise. An important ambiguity, part of the identity of the organization, needs to be explained here. Officially, the organization’s members are the members of the association MSF Canada. Formed of past and current volunteers, the association elects the board of directors of MSF Canada. It is also the “discussing core” of the organization, where some important decisions are taken. However, if you were to ask persons at MSF Canada the question “Who do you work for?” like I have done for the two other organizations to find their membership, you would not get as an answer “the members of the association of MSF Canada.” You would not get “our donors” as an answer either, which could have been conceived as an extension of the formal associative

membership. No, what you get as an answer is “the people we care for in our medical projects and for whom we do advocacy.” We should also add all those whom MSF would like to help but cannot because of the cost of necessary drugs or because they are in regions that are not safe for MSFers. That would be the unofficial membership of MSF Canada, a much bigger number of people, and much more diverse and imprecise than the official members of the association.

This is not a unique situation. I think most advocacy organizations live with this ambiguity. It is a necessity to have formalized support for the mission they pursue (and here, the word “mission” really seems appropriate because of the moral aspects involved in many of these organizations). Yet, these supporters are not the *raison d’être* of the organization. In the case of MSF, James Orbinski even made that point in his Nobel lecture: “MSF is not a formal institution, and with any luck at all, it never will be. It is a civil society organization, and today civil society has a new global role, a new informal legitimacy that is rooted in its action and in its support from public opinion” ([Orbinski] 1999).

Can we still ask how the relationship with the membership of MSF defines the organization? As mentioned before, a connection is kept with the broader “membership” by field visits by some staff members. Those visits also allow MSF officials to connect with “national staff,” the people from the country where the team work that is hired by MSF locally. These MSFers are much less recognized, and they stay behind, whatever the situation and the safety of the personnel are. The movement has discussed giving them a stronger recognition during the La

Mancha process. This recognition would help the movement to become less a “Northern” one, maybe a more truly global one. With sections mostly based in Europe, even people in the organization feel MSF is still quite Eurocentric. In contrast with sections based in Europe though, MSF Canada has not reached the point of donor fatigue, or overexposure. The number of donors has increased over the years, as the organization has grown. The organization mostly reaches medical professions, and people slightly more educated, with a global outlook—which is a relatively small number of people.

MSF Canada is very conscious of the security of its volunteers. This consideration is valid also when they talk to any media here in Canada. “The thing about Canada is that almost every group where we work is represented here, and so the news gets back quickly” (Chapman 2005). This is a very interesting remark on how globalization affects the work of the organization. International migration/diasporas and new information technologies can relay information and opinion at great speed. In a sense, because of their “extended” membership, MSF Canada has to be prudent in its declarations. But when it has solid evidence, it can engage itself in difficult advocacy, such as the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. Every member of MSF underlined to me that this Campaign was set up because of the frustration of volunteers who could not provide quality care to their patients, the “extended” membership. This membership is thus at the centre, even if it is physically absent, of discussions in MSF.

Conclusion

In his book *This is not a peace pipe*, Dale Turner explains why he would like to see the emergence of “word warriors” within indigenous communities. Given what he calls “Kymlicka’s constraint,” the inescapable reality that Canadian Indigenous peoples are living in a world where rules are made and interpreted by non-Indigenous judges and politicians, he thinks “word warriors” could be mediators.

[The word warrior] is an indigenous person who has been educated in the legal and political discourses of the dominant culture. The primary responsibility of word warriors is to be intimately familiar with the legal and political discourses of the state *while remaining citizens of indigenous nations*. Because their actions in the world have repercussions in their communities, they need to be accountable to their people. Word warriors function in the secular world of global politics and ideas, yet their actions are guided by both indigenous and non-indigenous ways of understanding the world.

Word warriors occupy a strange and often hostile place. They need to secure intellectual allies, participate in the larger intellectual marketplace of human ideas, and influence the legal and political practices that are used to define indigenous rights, sovereignty, and nationhood. Their connections with their communities make them unique as intellectuals. (Turner 2006, 119-120)

I think we can understand the three organizations studied as word warriors. Even if Turner envisioned that individuals would be word warriors, the identity at the core of the GCC, the SC and MSF Canada is very well captured by the expression “word warriors,” even if the word “warrior” may seem to carry too much aggressiveness. I think we have to remember the particular understanding of the word warrior in Aboriginal thinking, which is not necessarily associated with

warfare.²⁶ The organizations really have to find allies, participate in debates and influence decision-makers, as the previous chapter on their global activism has shown. They have to live in between two worlds.

Turner maintains that another kind of intellectual, the indigenous philosopher, must exist within indigenous communities. The role of the philosopher is to keep the culture living through language, ceremonies, and perpetuating a unique understanding of the world. Turner admits there is a kind of “indigenous essentialism” in this role. Yet, because the re-isolation of Indigenous peoples is unlikely, mediators are the ones who could make possible the expression of “indigenous rights, sovereignty, and nationhood” in the contemporary world. This is the solution he proposes to the constant dilemma faced by Indigenous peoples and other minority cultures, between assimilation, isolation, and adaptation.

Transposing this idea of word warriors to a collective entity does not seem problematic. Since two of the organizations studied are indigenous, it is even likely that they would not reject this label. Even if it does not capture all of what they do and their whole identity, as we have seen with the growing or diminishing importance of governance in the GCC and the SC, I think the idea of being

²⁶ “If there is an Onkwehonwe [“the original people,” referring to the First Peoples of North America] warrior creed, it is that he or she is motivated in action by an instinctual sense of responsibility to alleviate suffering and to recreate the conditions of peace and happiness. The warrior’s first battle is with himself or herself; having fought that battle his or her responsibilities are extended to immediate family and other human beings. The warrior takes action to change the conditions that cause suffering for the people in both the immediate (self-defence) and long-term (self-determination) sense. The warrior does not focus on abstract or historical injustices and believes wholeheartedly that the ability to generate change is within the power of the people.” (Alfred 2005, 86-87)

mediators, word warriors for their communities is at the core of the identity of the two Indigenous peoples' political organization.

The application of the expression “word warrior” to MSF Canada is probably more surprising and “unnatural” since MSF is not part of the indigenous world. My interpretation of the advocacy work of MSF Canada shows, I think, that the appellation is nonetheless appropriate. A lot of their actions are in fact speeches, publications, and lobbying. Two aspects of the identity of MSF Canada are also underlined by this label. First, as mentioned in this chapter, MSF works for people that have very little voice in global affairs. When volunteers deliver their *témoignage*, they use words to convey a reality that is very different from the one the public lives in. When they lobby the Canadian government to facilitate the export of medicines to countries without production facilities, again they use words to fight a battle that will make the world a better place. In these roles, they are mediators. They are mediators for their “unofficial” membership, people in difficult situations, medical and humanitarian, in other parts of the world.

The other aspect the expression “word warrior” conveys is a sense of passion that is embodied in MSF Canada. The sense of urgency that the organization bathes in most of the time because of its constant attention to precarious situations and the slow pace of the global system for peace and security are probably illuminating this passion one can feel in the volunteers and staff members. The dedication they have is obvious. Thus, I think the expression “word

warriors” captures a good part of the identity of MSF Canada, the part of its identity that has grown the most since its beginning.

I will continue to explore this notion of “word warriors” in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER VII CONCLUSIONS

In this concluding chapter of the dissertation, I expose how the evolution of the global activism and the identity of each organization are interconnected. This analysis offers another way to compare the three organizations studied. These “broad” evolutions provide some indication of the impacts of global activism on the identity of an organization and on the conditions (from the identity of the organization and the context) leading to sustained global activism. The next step is to “reintroduce” globalization into this reflection and find out how it was an important phenomenon influencing the evolution of activism and identities. The chapter concludes with a look back at the theory, particularly on the linkages between globalization and identity, and suggestions for further research.

A) Summary of findings

What are the main empirical findings of this study of the Grand Council of the Crees, the Saami Council, and Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada for the period 1989/90-2004/05? What have we learned about the evolution of their global activism and their collective identities? I proceed here by underlining the most important elements for each organization, which pave the way for the next section where the connections between the evolutions of activism and identity are analysed.

1) Grand Council of the Crees

The GCC is the organization that has adopted the campaigning mode the most among the three organizations. Of course, it maintained more “regular,” continuous activities during these global campaigns and between them, but most of the media and public attention on the GCC in the 1990s has come through its global campaigns. The first one for the period studied is probably the most famous and effective one, from 1989 to 1994: the campaign against the Great Whale and NBR hydro projects. Mainly led in the United States, particularly in New England where the electricity was supposed to be bought, but also in Europe and in global forums, this campaign had a big impact on the government of Québec and Hydro-Québec which stopped the project a few years after the program was introduced.

The campaigns led by the GCC had quite specific objectives and were triggered by relatively easily circumscribed “problems” although they all were related to the principal objective incarnated by the GCC of advancing and defending Cree rights. Global campaigning was adopted because it demonstrated that the Crees considered their problems to be relevant to a global community and not just the Canadian or Québec ones. The GCC also believed it was contributing to the advancement of the rights of Indigenous peoples in general by defending Cree rights. During campaigns, public shaming of governments in global forums was frequently used by Indigenous peoples’ political organizations, and the GCC

has been an active promoter of this tactic. It fit well with its generally frank, provocative campaigning style.

The GCC took advantage of existing forums, local, national, or global, but did not hesitate to create other occasions where the attention of a potentially larger public would be caught or the ear of influential people would be reached. The organization looked for allies during campaigns. For example, environmental groups often voiced concerns going in the same direction as Cree concerns during many campaigns. Accordingly, they coordinated many of their interventions in collaboration with the GCC. Because a few Cree leaders have held prominent positions at the national level (Matthew Coon Come at the AFN) and the international level (Ted Moses as a rapporteur in the UN system), the GCC was able to rally other Indigenous peoples' groups to its campaigns too. At the same time, their global activism, even if very focused on local objectives, contributed to raising awareness for indigenous issues and rights more generally. We should not undervalue the impact of GCC's representatives in global processes for indigenous issues, such as the debates around the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but the impression is that their organizational commitment to these processes was never as high as those expressed in global campaigns. Of course, some individuals within the GCC may have given them as much or even more importance, and these international processes may have been the priority for the organization in between major campaigns.

While campaigning against hydro projects, the prohibition of wild furs, the inclusion in a future independent Québec, or current forestry management rules, the GCC often used arguments that reminded people of the difficult socioeconomic conditions the Crees were experiencing. These arguments, and others, including some about the environment and some accusing the governments of environmental racism, had an emotional component that personally involved the members of the audience. Strong words (“racism”, “discriminatory”, “destroy”) suggesting that the Cree way of life is threatened because of carelessness (or worse) from the government taking decisions affecting the Cree territory also touched the general public. These words are also needed to draw the attention of the media and of foreign audiences, essential in the mechanism of public shaming. The GCC was able to construct these emotional arguments and use them alongside others based on rights, scientific evidence and experience. We can see then that publics from human rights law circles, environmentalism, and Indigenous peoples’ rights are targeted by the GCC through the use of these arguments, in addition to the Quebec or Canadian publics reached by the mass media. Of course, some campaigns did not appeal to all these publics, like the one against the prohibition of wild fur. We can see also that the campaign to promote the *Paix des Braves*, which includes a hydroelectric project with large ecological impacts, even contradicts the previous discourse of its environmentalist allies.

The GCC is a representative organization. It represents the Cree people living in Québec. There is no other political organization representing the Crees as

a whole. The other Cree political organizations are at the local level, specifically at the community level. In that sense, the self-description of the organization is close to its central objective of promoting and defending Cree rights. “Representing” someone or something is a code to say that the representative will operate with the goal of protecting and advancing the rights and interests of that entity, as we can see in the language of justice (a lawyer represents his/her client).

A difference one can find in the self-definition of the GCC when compared with other organizations is its concern with Cree needs. The needs of a small society that is also an Indigenous people are important to take into account when negotiating. In addition to acts of representing, the GCC must in fact do some planning for the nation it represents. Because some of these needs are, or were, pressing, the negotiations and the nature of representation were affected. Finding a balance between Cree interests and Québec interests can become an overall better option than a prolongation of the negotiations with a “closer to the ideal” starting point in this negotiation. This element is present in how the GCC sees itself. Preparing the Cree future starts with fulfilling as much as possible the needs of the communities today in terms of jobs, houses, health services, and education. “Rational” development, taking into account Cree needs and the various impacts of projects, is thus the preferred position of the GCC, even if the Crees remain a hunting, fishing and trapping people somewhere at the core. The GCC works so that this part of their identity can live on in prosperous communities benefiting from rational development.

While negotiations are often better, the GCC has never had problems to use the judicial system and sue governments or other parties not respecting their engagements. This attitude may have helped the GCC to establish a stronger governing image. In effect, the organization has grown in its role as the government of the Cree nation. The *Paix des Braves* has improved its capacity to govern Cree matters. In terms of leadership, the Crees can also count on stability at the administrative level with an executive director that started to work at the GCC in 1988. Many other staff members have been present for a long time too. And we should remember that the GCC is not reluctant to hire the best professionals, even if they are not indigenous. This is part of the pragmatism that guides decisions in the organization.

To stay in touch with their communities, or “the real Crees” as some say, the GCC uses the media and meetings. The elected chiefs composing the Grand Council are also in direct contact with the community they represent. There must be support for the actions of the GCC in the communities, especially when global activism is under way. Because resources are limited, there is always a trade off between the various projects, objectives, and actions in which the GCC is involved. The allocation of resources must generally correspond to the priorities of the communities.

2) *Saami Council*

The Saami Council is a political organization representing all Saami. It coexists with other representative organizations in Scandinavia that work at the national level in these three countries (mainly the Saami Parliaments) and a number of more local organizations all over the region (including Russia) that sometimes also work at the national level. The Saami are thus very well organised politically. The role of the Saami Council has evolved over the period studied because of the development of these other political organizations. If its role is still to defend and promote Saami rights, the importance of its work at the international level has increased in the fifteen years studied.

The style of the activism at the Saami Council is different from that of the Grand Council of the Crees. Although very direct in their personal communications, the official declarations written by SC staff members are generally diplomatic and nuanced. The step by step approach may explain why the SC does not develop campaigns one after the other like the GCC does. The organization is very committed when involved in a discussion, but for the external observer these commitments do not look like campaigns. A few mini-campaigns around local issues have been organized over the period studied, on the Finnmark Act or on logging for instance, but they did not have much global resonance. The work of the SC on international law has had much more impact at the global level. One aspect of this work is what we can call “intellectual global activism”, which highlights the efforts made to alter international law for the benefit of Indigenous

peoples, in domains like intellectual property rights, and to educate and help other Indigenous peoples.

In addition to its diplomatic tone, the Saami Council often works in collaboration with other Indigenous peoples' groups in global forums. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference has been a partner in discussions and for joint statements. It is a good way to share ideas and to limit the number of similar statements on the same issues. It also helps to build alliances. Moreover, it goes well with the philosophy of global activism put in practice by the SC: you should not have to talk in global forums if you have done your job. They believe that most of the action is in the corridors and collaboration is more important than taking the floor to expose your opinions to everyone.

Another important element to note in the way the SC conducts global activism is its belief in a well-informed opinion. With time, other institutions doing research have been established in Sápmi, like the Nordic Saami Institute, and the work they do is very useful for the SC. Overall, the SC believes in education and in scholarship. So before taking a stance in a debate, especially in a global forum, staff members will gather information and stay informed of the state of knowledge in domains such as the environment or the protection of traditional knowledge. This attitude has also led to alliances with other Indigenous peoples' groups coming from very different backgrounds but accepting of the fact that ideas need to be sustained by current knowledge. At the same time, the SC sometimes plays the role of a knowledge resource, in their cooperation programs

but also in global forums. Wearing traditional clothes in official gatherings is a symbolic posture but also helps Saami to be recognized by other peoples.

The Saami Council is a representative organization that defends and promotes Saami rights. However, there are other representative organizations for the Saami, and the “global” activist side of the organization has been particularly developed in recent years. The organization seems to deal less with governments and more with ideas and projects including other Indigenous peoples. The SC is very conscious of its privileged position among Indigenous peoples, in the sense that Saami live in developed countries, with important social programs and access to education, health care and telecommunications, and are recognized by the countries where they live (these programs and recognition are less true for the Russian Saami). The solidarity the organization expresses towards other Indigenous peoples has an impact on its own self-definition, which really values its membership in the extended Indigenous peoples’ family. With its global activism, it tries to share the accumulated knowledge and give back to the Indigenous peoples having more difficulties to survive and to have their rights respected.

To make this work effective, there has been a professionalization and specialisation in the staff of the SC. At the same time, this evolution reflects changes in the Saami society as a whole. One good example is the creation of the Arctic Council to discuss environmental issues related to the region, and where the SC has a seat. Other aspects of international law have been developed in the

last decade and a half, and where the presence of Indigenous peoples is relevant, the SC participates.

The pragmatic style of the SC, combined with its diplomatic tone, has helped it build non-confrontational relations with Scandinavian governments (most of the times) and other Indigenous peoples' organizations. Some personalities in the indigenous world have also emerged from the organization or other Saami organizations, like the first chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which have helped the SC to achieve a certain degree of respectability among other indigenous organizations. Yet the first element having led to this state of affairs is the competency and commitment of the SC members having worked at the global level.

We can observe this commitment even in people no longer directly involved in the SC. They remain interested in Saami affairs, and often occupy positions in other Saami institutions. There is a degree of consensus in the choice and election of SC representatives. It probably reflects the Saami vision of leadership, even though the Saami are not ethnologically unified as a people. It may be a strategy of unification, precisely, to avoid debates on leadership for the umbrella organization (there are political parties for the Saami parliaments' elections, which suppose a degree of dissension at that level in their politics). The Saami conference, held every four years, is a high moment in the maintenance of this unity, where Saami from different parts of the territory meet and share

information. The media are also used by the SC to diffuse information about its work, and journalists are there to ask questions too.

3) *Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada*

Including MSF Canada in this research project may have appeared curious because it is not an Indigenous people's organization. It is a "classical" NGO, a civil society organization, a group promoting ideas but mainly preoccupied by both medical and humanitarian field projects. But its value to this study is that this group presents another type of organization: it is part of an international network, with many sections based in Europe, and the time period of the study allowed me to study the Canadian section from its beginning. The importance of global activism in MSF Canada has clearly increased since the beginning of the 1990s. The evolution in the identity of the organization is also interesting to follow since it is in great part linked to the increased role of global activism.

To recruit volunteers and raise money, its fundamental objectives in Canada, it is important that MSF as an organization makes itself known and visible. One way to achieve this visibility is for former volunteers to talk to various audiences and deliver their *témoignages* (what they have seen as witnesses). Other activities can be classified as global activism within MSF Canada: conferences, workshops, exhibitions, newsletters, refugee camp tours, and the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, including advocacy for the

application of the WTO agreement on generic medicines in Canada and discussions surrounding the corresponding bill in Ottawa.

MSF's activism style is tempered by the potentially serious impact some declarations could have for the security of its volunteers in the field. If all organizations have to foresee the consequences of what they intend to say, this is particularly true for humanitarian organizations. Information now circulates so quickly that a *témoignage* criticizing too directly some government can lead to the expulsion of MSF teams or to other problems in getting access to the people needing help.

In a way, then, the activism deployed during the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines was different from most of the previous activism done by MSF Canada. Inspired by what they were witnessing in the field, as usual, the activists did not have to care about the security of any medical teams. Except maybe offending governments or pharmaceutical companies, their activism could not have bad consequences or worsen any field situation. Another new thing that the Campaign brought is collaboration with like-minded groups to lobby the Canadian government on the proposed bill to allow the export of some drugs to countries without production capacities. Alliances are not part of the culture of the organization, partly because of the concern for the security of volunteers and the neutrality and impartiality declared in its general Charter. If collaboration with other humanitarian organizations is common in the field of global activism, it was new for MSF Canada, as an organization, to consult with other NGOs in the

Global Treatment Access Group (GTAG) and emit joint statements and press releases. For an organization accustomed to exercise a lot of control over its external communications, this collaboration with the GTAG was a significant change in its activism, although some control over its own participation was still maintained.

The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines also modified the composition of the public targeted by the organization. Governments were clearly a focus in this Campaign while, previously, governments were not so important as a public in the activities of the organization. MSF Canada first sought support from various groups of health care professionals to fulfill its goals of finding personnel and money. As the organization grew, other publics were solicited, to the point that their efforts became addressed to civil society members in general. Of course, people with an already developed interest for international affairs are more easily reachable and likely to listen. The presence of MSF Canada in the media and on the street has been growing as it has aimed at educating people and leading them to act to change things.

Since MSF Canada is part of the larger MSF movement, its identity was based on the principles guiding the movement in general. Among these principles, we can note independence from governments, and, as shown above, other organizations. When MSF sections ask for and accept money from governments, it is generally for a specific activity, and the total amount of government money asked for is limited. There is thus a desire and a necessity to reach out and find

money from individuals, and a real freedom of speech that allows the organization to speak against governments if it judges it is necessary. These two aspects, independence and freedom of speech, are very important in the self-definition of the whole organization. In Canada, they are clearly articulated by the organization as well.

The Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines gave rise to some debates in the movement. Some sections were less ready to be so politically involved. In Canada, the feeling was more that many former volunteers wanted to do something once they were no longer in the field, and channelling this energy into the Campaign was possibly fruitful. Accustomed to internal discussions, the movement and the Canadian section nonetheless had to make sure that everything was clear and connected to who MSF really was before (or at the beginning of) the public campaign.

MSF Canada was first strongly connected to MSF Holland and was in survival mode for a period of time. Moreover, maintaining a charitable status meant limiting political activities under Canadian law. Over the years, its advocacy and activism increased. Still, even today, the organization is not yet ready to see itself firstly as an advocacy organization. The core identity of the organization has to do with helping people medically in difficult situations. *Témoignages* and other activities are a way to publicize the organization, even if it engages in more standard public education too. Passing to the next level and urging people to intervene themselves is not yet fully absorbed as a practice in the

organization, although there are now dedicated staff members for these activities. Keeping the focus on the work in the field is also important for the public image of the organization and in keeping its credibility. One of the guidelines used in MSF is to talk about what you live, what you see: that is what being a witness is.

Compared with other sections, MSF Canada has been more collaborative, at least in recent years, because of the Campaign, and in particular the work in the GTAG for the Canadian law on the export of generic drugs. Because of this law and all the advocacy it triggered, MSF Canada has been seen as making a significant contribution in the international Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. This success, in turn, may have helped the section to get the direction of some field operations in the last months.

To go with the independence and the very limited inclination to collaborate with other groups, MSF Canada is also trying to stay away from developing a bureaucratic culture. This goal may not be all that evident given that there are now offices in Ottawa, Montréal, and Vancouver in addition to the headquarters in Toronto. Efforts to work in a decentralized way, however, are characteristic of the Canadian section. It is a reflection of the nature of the movement, with its 19 sections around the world and no central *maître d'oeuvre*. In Canada like in the movement more generally, this decentralization and wariness of bureaucracy makes the organization more flexible and adaptable to circumstances. It has some downsides as well including a thin “paper culture”; the organization relies on oral transmission a lot (Devine 2005), which reflects the

habit of working in emergency situations, and maybe shows how the practice of *témoignage* within the organization has shaped its worries about bureaucratization as well.

The identity of the organization is quite strong. In a world where medical needs exceed greatly the capacity of any organization, MSF has to decide where it will intervene. To be able to make these choices, having a strong identity as an organization in addition to its objectives, its capacities, and some security factors is crucial. Even if the identity of the organization has evolved to give more place to political issues and advocacy, and to awareness-raising activities, the place given to emergency medical missions remains central.

At MSF Canada, this evolution of the identity of the organization took place in the context of a stable leadership under David Morley and his team. Balance between medical missions and advocacy efforts were maintained during the period, as both types of activity grew in importance (more people recruited, more money obtained, more contact with the media, more activities of awareness-raising and advocacy). The reputation of the organization grew and, in virtuous circle logic, contributed to the increase in its activities. Moreover, there have been many returning volunteers, even if the organization is careful to always include about one third of newcomers in its missions; volunteers often want to commit themselves on a long term basis with MSF. These missions affect people profoundly, and even if they do not necessarily go back into the field, they want to

remain involved by giving, lobbying, and participating in awareness-raising activities.

To help with the direction of MSF Canada, an association was formed in the mid-1990s, whose members are the past and current volunteers of the organization. Officially, they form the membership of MSF Canada. However, unlike the two other organizations studied, this membership does not reflect for whom the organization really works. MSFers work for a much larger number of people, people needing humanitarian medical help around the globe, even in some developed countries (refugees without official status, street people...). MSF and other humanitarian organizations have these people as their constituency. The moral force behind their “mission” comes from the problem that no one else cares for these persons, and employing a long-term approach where necessary. Taking this responsibility means being sure that the activities at issue are sustainable over the longer term. This concern for sustainability is partly why the organization got involved in pharmaceutical issues; it felt compelled to get AIDS drugs at a price that permitted MSF and others to engage in long term care for those whom they were helping.

Staff members go on field missions too, often to evaluate the possibility of setting up a new operation, or to observe and evaluate the work of a current operation. This is important to keep them connected with the broader “membership” of the organization, its *raison d'être*, and keep alive the identity of the organization.

B) Connections between the evolution of activism and identity

In this section of the conclusion, I return to the evolution of the two phenomena studied for the dissertation and attempt to identify the connections between them. How has the evolution of global activism engaged in by the organization influenced its identity? How has the evolution in the identity of the organization influenced its global activism? Given what I stated in Chapter II, that an organization is in good part what it does, there should be a strong relation between the evolutionary developments of the two organizational components.

If we look at the Grand Council of the Crees, it is quickly evident how much its representational identity has led the organization to try to find avenues for the development of Cree communities. Reacting to external “threats” through global campaigns, negotiations and juridical manoeuvres was an essential part of its work to protect Cree rights and interests, but does not capture its efforts to find solutions for the future. Thus, the evolution of the GCC’s identity toward a more governance role is partly explained by its past success in global campaigns, which has diminished the necessity of responding to external intrusions and improved its negotiation capacities. It is also left with more space to focus on the needs of the Crees. Global activism thus influenced the evolution of the identity of the GCC in the direction of taking on governance roles.

Considering that the *Paix des Braves* acknowledges the Crees as a nation, and that it helps define the relationships between the Québec nation and the Cree

nation, we can consider that the external recognition of this nationhood would be very important for the GCC, the governing body of this nation. In fact, it was sufficiently important that the GCC announced and explained the agreement internationally. In a way, this global activism around the *Paix des Braves* was a likely outcome given the evolution of the identity of the Crees and the GCC over the period of study.

The decreased global activism of the GCC in recent years, in turn, may be explained in part by its better established status as the Cree government. Governments have other means to expose their point of view and influence people than activism, especially global activism. Possessing such powers may give them increased access to other actors. Their credibility becomes enhanced when compared to that of a NGO. Persuasion occurs because they gained the right to be listened to within political institutions as legitimate representatives. There are also clearer negative consequences that might occur if the negotiations with a governmental organization were to fail than if they were to fail with a NGO. If Ted Moses was saying in 1998 that “[i]t is easier to gain a hearing in Canada by stepping outside of Canada and speaking to the rest of the world” (Moses 1998, 1), the situation after the signature of the *Paix des Braves* seems to have changed. The need to “step outside” appears to have diminished considerably.

As for the Saami Council, the evolution of its identity towards a more NGO-style organization seems in direct relation with its choice of engaging in global activism in pursuit of changes in international law. With the means that the

SC has, its objectives can be less Saami-specific, and contribute more to the improvement of Indigenous peoples' lives more generally. Participating in the education of other Indigenous peoples' organizations is also a way to do global activism, but this kind of collaboration is more frequent in civil society NGOs, which create coalitions more easily, than in representative organizations, like the SC. It helps to explain why the SC is not that easy to "classify" and the tensions that can take place within the organization. It is difficult to determine here if it is the evolution of the identity that influenced the evolution in global activism or the reverse. Since evolutions in identities and activism occur, in fact, in slow incremental processes, I believe there have been decisions at some points to privilege certain aspects in the work of the organization, and that these decisions were influenced by past activism successes of the organization which led to changes in its view of itself.

The situation is again a bit different in the case of MSF Canada. The biggest change in its activism was the introduction of the Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, a decision taken at the international level. It is through the implementation of the Campaign in the organization and in engaging in the actions related to this Campaign that the identity of the organization in Canada evolved in the last years. Alongside its work to recruit volunteers, raise money, and talk about what was going on in the countries where MSF operates, the organization was including more and more activism at the political level, on a political issue, with the help of its volunteers and the general population. Adding

this new form of global activism changed the identity of the organization, both in Canada and elsewhere.

With an identity that is more clearly “activist,” can we say that the form of global activism of the organization has itself changed? It may be too early to observe these changes. Will there be other global campaigns like the one on access to medicines? Finding an appropriate subject could be difficult. Yet, the Campaign has helped build capacities in MSF Canada, has exposed the organization more widely in the media, and has put it in touch with other NGOs. These are all interesting elements when the time comes to mobilize and get a message out to the public. At the same time, the Canadian section is now in charge of some operations, rather than the operational sections in Europe, which may mean that its energies will be more focused on these activities in the future rather than on creating or participating in campaigns. Still, activism is now part of the organization and it is difficult to imagine it will just fade into the background.

Another way to look at the connections between the evolution in the global activism and the identity of the organizations studied is to try to identify the conditions leading to sustained global activism. By sustained, I mean that global activism will be done on a regular basis by the organization over a few years. It no longer would be considered an exceptional activity for the organization.

If we look at the SC and MSF Canada, it seems that wanting to change a norm, to modify the way people think about a subject, is a good way to enter into a period of prolonged global activism. Many actors become involved in the cause,

coordination is an issue, and it takes time and repetition to demonstrate how serious the organization is about this important change. In contrast, stopping a project (a law or some kind of construction) can be relatively quick or can take a few years, depending on the complexity of the issue. Other factors are at play too (economic, ecological, international) which can speed up the process or slow it down. Changes in activism like these are “mappable”, which is not the case for norm changing.

In all three organizations, we can observe that some staff members are in charge of the global activism. Since some coordination is involved with other organizations in most cases, a few people have to concentrate the information and be in touch with these allies. Other activities have to be carried out alongside the campaigns or the global activism, but it is also important that the people not as directly involved in the global activism feel that they know what is happening. Small organizations have limited resources, and there must be a kind of acceptance of their distribution within the organization, and ideally among the people represented by this organization too.

To commit the organization to sustained global activism, there must be an impulse coming from the identity of the organization. Otherwise, this impulse has to come from the leadership of the organization, although this route is more fragile. For instance, it is clear that MSF is an organization with a global reach. MSFers have a kind of global citizenship that they express through their participation in MSF activities. Hence, taking part in global activism is something

that volunteers can identify themselves with. I have exposed how the identity of the Saami Council has given more and more place to its identification with the Indigenous peoples' family globally and how there has been an evolution in the identity of the organization leaving more space to global activism. However, the activism is done differently, mainly by staff members, at an intellectual level, not a popular one. Yet, there is a commitment from the people represented by the SC to this kind of activism.

Something different again is emerging from the case of the GCC. The activism has been global because of the context or because it was more effective than keeping it at a local level. Some important Cree leaders also saw global activism in international forums as an important role for the GCC because they had the means to do it and ideas to share. Hence, there is much less in the identity of the organization that explains why it chose to go the global activism route. It may explain why there were separate waves of global activism at the GCC, followed by lulls, and why there have been more limited activities on that side in recent years.

Further research would be necessary to validate these observations and find other conditions leading to global activism in non-governmental organizations. For instance, a closer examination of financial and human resources would certainly be interesting.

C) Globalization

If the major contribution of this research to a better understanding of globalization resides in an in depth study of a few organizations' global activism, more insights on globalization as a general phenomenon have been gathered during the study. In this section of the conclusion, I would like to share, without much order, some of these observations collected from global activists or coming from my own interpretation.

It has been written many times before: the increased circulation of information, the multiplication of the means of communication, and the exponential amount of data available to those having access to these means of communication are major characteristics of globalization. They participate in the “space of flows” mentioned by Castells (1997, 358) and the “complex connectivity” described by Tomlinson (1999, 2) that I briefly summarized in Chapter II. There is an aspect to this increased connectivity that has not been fully researched: the rapidity and easiness of transferring money. If speculation is not exactly a new phenomenon, being able to transfer money from one country to the other in the same day and without much complexity is a fairly recent possibility²⁷. This change with globalization has had impacts on the way small businesses operate, and also on NGOs, and on families receiving remittances. I think it would be interesting to understand better these impacts and how they modify the way

²⁷ According to an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, cell phone air time is now used as an intermediate means to transfer small amount of money from one person to another in two different, and often remote, places in developing countries (Corbett 2008).

people envision their social space, in addition to all the possibilities technology creates for functioning better in a capitalist world.

If Castells sees “the primacy of technology for the sake of technology” as a “foundational realm” of the network society (1997, 358), I believe he may have forgotten that people use technologies to forge or maintain connections and relationships, sometimes in unpredictable ways. Networks like Facebook or LinkedIn were certainly not developed when Castells wrote his book, and cell phones were not that frequent in Third World countries. The appropriation of technologies has been quite surprising in such a short period of time. This dissemination of information and communication technologies also has impacts on NGOs: “I think MSF is still an example of an extremely Eurocentric organization which really keeps a lot of power and control in the North and in Europe, but I think the day to day discourse is changed because people, if they’re volunteering, they go home, they can keep up pretty closely with the people with whom they were working in those other countries. That has changed the nature of the relationships that happen...” (Morley 2005). Having people from different countries and very different lives staying in touch over time is helping to build this global village some have predicted; it is also putting faces and life stories on foreign crises we would not have known about only a little while ago. However, to spread a message, low technology (like a few words on a t-shirt) can be as effective as electronic newsletters that are so easily discarded. Technology has

also increased the number of messages the general public is receiving, and many have developed the faculty to ignore them.

For some organizations, the question of borders has been sublimated since their origins. Médecins Sans Frontières is an obvious example: “This idea of ‘without borders’/ ‘sans frontières’, is very much part of our identity since 1971; so we’ve been at the leading edge of this idea of globalization, borders don’t matter as much” (Chapman 2005). There are now many other organizations that have included the words “without borders” in their names: reporters, teachers, engineers, lawyers, even sociologists! Including this avant-garde idea in the name of the organization helped MSF shape its mandate and operating mode. Many other groups followed, perhaps in response to the increased opportunities for transplanetary connections made possible by globalization.

For Indigenous peoples, borders have created many problems. At the same time, because of their connection with the land, they were among the first ones to warn us about—and experience—the consequences of our carelessness towards the environment. And they keep reminding us that pollution is not stopped by borders: “The ‘frontier’ as a concept here on earth does not exist any longer. Every corner of our earth is known and touched by its human inhabitants. No longer can we carve another piece of forest or land out of mother nature and be satisfied that there is some as yet unknown vast wilderness that will provide for the future and forgive our errors” (Moses 2002, 1). Will we see this discourse

about the desuetude of borders and frontiers find its way into the political order in this age of the war on terror?

The environmental emergency may in fact become the right button to push to reshape the debate on globalization. Indigenous peoples, and the Grand Council of the Crees particularly, have already stressed the importance of this link between globalization and the environment: “Our basic human rights are violated when the environment upon which we depend for our subsistence is compromised. These issues must become part of this debate [on globalization]. Avoiding these issues undermines the lofty goals of trade liberalization, and contributes to the argument that globalization can not, and does not respect the cultures and values of indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, our experience in Eeyou Istchee confirms this view.” (Saganash 2001)

As this example shows, there is space for small groups to shape the debates surrounding globalization. It is now easier to create spaces, forums, and other opportunities for discussion, thereby networking with other groups in similar situations in different parts of the world. The proliferation of blogs is just one other example. As I was told at the GCC, “you globalize it” [the issue, the fight] (Craik 2005). Global activism is a counterbalancing force made available through globalization for individuals, but mostly organized groups, against states—when states accept the formation of these groups, i.e. where the rights of association and freedom of expression are mostly respected. And for those not enjoying their fundamental rights, more and more people are mobilizing to

confront these non-liberal states. Chances of success for this type of global campaign are multiplied when different kinds of publics are solicited and when different subsets of people feel concerned. This is not so different from marketing rules.

D) Looking back and forward

To conclude this dissertation, it is important to look back at some theoretical notions exposed in Chapter II and determine if new elements can be added given what was learned from the empirical results of the research. Because this research project does not fully explore global activism, collective identities, and their connections, and generate new questions, options for further research are also suggested in this last section.

To refresh the reader's memory, here is the definition of global activism that I proposed in Chapter II: *a process by which a group, through actions and discourses directed at a global public, aims to achieve specific objectives*. Global activism can be a way for the group to express its collective identity. We have observed in the research that the things that need to be changed, that trigger global activism, are almost always specific and defined. However, the expected result is often much less clear, especially when it comes to changing norms. When the Saami Council intervened on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it often suggested new wording or ideas, but in a complex negotiation like that, the organization knew it was just a suggestion and that the final result

could be quite different. This means that groups engaging in global activism must be ready to accept that their actions will not necessarily achieve their objectives, but that they will nonetheless have consequences. Planning a global campaign from A to Z seems an impossible task because the context in which it is inserted will change, and some actions will call for other actions, while the planned ones will become unnecessary. There is a degree of unpredictability in global activism that needs to be appreciated.

In the theoretical chapter, I mentioned that activism is generally a reaction to an external event or position, but that it can also be just trying to make things “better,” not responding to a specific trigger but to a context or environment. After the analysis presented in the previous pages, I think it is important to keep in mind this idea that instead of reacting, many activists are creating new public goods. The characterization of activism is too limited when considering only reactions. Again, norm changing activism, such as MSF Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines, demands creativity to construct possible solutions and solicit wide public attention through intelligent activities. The reaction part is minimal compared with the proactive solutions offered.

Another element that might be worth our attention is that much of global activism occurs at the local level. For instance, global activism by MSF Canada takes place... in Canada; a good part of the campaign against the Great Whale hydro project was to talk to legislative assemblies in New England. The distinction between activism and global activism can be difficult to make. I

mentioned previously that there was a difference of scale (when the activism extends to more than one country, when people from other countries intervene or when the issue affect many countries) and one of level (when the activism is carried out in global institutions such as the UN). It may be useful to add that when the activities are part of a global campaign, we can consider it global activism even if the action takes place locally. After all, actions must take place somewhere, and except when they are on the web (by nature a global medium, even though it has physical embodiments with geographic locations) or in a global forum, we must make a judgement on whether the action can be considered as global activism. As mentioned in Chapter II, the intention of the actors has to be taken into account in that judgement, when we have access to it.

Given that it was stated in the comments on the definition that a group often expresses its identity through activism, coming back here on the thin line between being and doing for organizations seems appropriate. Collective identities are more abstract than individual identities. In Chapter VI, I analysed four aspects of the identity of the organizations studied: self-definition, actual roles and power, leadership, and relationships with the membership. The roles of the organizations and the relationships they maintain with their memberships are in fact things that they do. This is of course my interpretation of the notion of identity when applied to organizations, but these aspects of the analysis show that what an organization does is a good part of what it is. The other aspects of identity, analysed or not in the present study, are also important to understand the

“personality” of the organization. The section on activism style and arguments raised by global activism in Chapter V helps us to understand better the uniqueness of each organization, proving again that the line between being and doing is easily crossed. It is my impression, from looking at the three organizations studied, that engaging in global activism forces the organization to better define its identity while at the same time influencing its evolution because of the strength and magnitude of the actions carried out while doing global activism. It would be interesting to look at other organizations to probe this effect of global activism on collective identities.

This point brings us back to the notion of “word warriors” that I used to conclude Chapter VI. Word warriors, according to Dale Turner who created the expression (2006), are indigenous intellectuals with a deep understanding of the indigenous and the non-indigenous world, thus able to act as mediators “to secure intellectual allies, participate in the larger intellectual marketplace of human ideas, and influence the legal and political practices that are used to define indigenous rights, sovereignty, and nationhood” (Turner 2006, 119-120). Unless we look at organizations using violence, civil disobedience or other “direct action” disruptive kind of activism as their primary means to express their point of view, the expression “word warrior” appears to describe well the core identity of most globally active organizations, if the transposition to the non-indigenous world does not disqualify the notion itself. Of course, this idea would need another study to be fully explored, including submitting the term to activists themselves, but I

feel it captures the identity of the organizations studied and also the way they approach global activism. The idea that they live in between two worlds, keeping in touch with their original community while communicating in the language of the world at large seems a good description of the juggling civil society organizations have to do, and *a fortiori*, what Indigenous peoples' organizations do.

The linkages between collective identities and globalization can be explored further in many domains. An interesting one would be how globalization facilitates the creation of new solidarities between collective identities and organizations, which are then incorporated in the self-description of these identities. The organizations I have studied have experienced this to a limited extent: the Grand Council of the Crees and the Saami Council have created alliances with other Indigenous peoples and their organizations, and now consider themselves as part of the Indigenous peoples' family; MSF Canada is jealous of its independence, but it is part of the MSF movement, and participated to the GTAG to make more effective lobbying on the issue of the export of drugs, an effort that MSFers were encouraged to join. Organizations learn from each other, feel connected and supported, and have means to communicate easily across the globe. These solidarities can change the perspective a group has on its problems and increase its ability to resolve them with ideas sometimes suggested from faraway.

More and more, we will see the feeling of “global citizenship” of “ordinary” people used by civil society organizations like MSF. This is globalization and one of its effects. The general public, or a growing part of it, is more informed about issues that may have seemed very distant a few years past. Coalitions form around individuals and ideas because people feel concerned and the problems are “closer”. Does it mean that the state and political parties are disappearing? No, but it would be interesting to know more about how the general public sees its influence in a globalizing world. The field of International Relations should keep looking at non-state actors because they have gathered power from globalization and found ways to inject innovative ideas and practices in debates of global importance.

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