

MSc (Development Management) Programme

TU874 Project

## **The necessity of being moved in development management**

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## Executive Summary

This is the final report on a study which aimed at investigating development managers' necessity of being moved by the lives, stories and experiences of those "for whom development is sought" (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143). It has expected benefits for the stakeholders with whom the author collaborated, for the wider development management (DM) discipline and for the author herself.

The context from which the problem definition emerged is defined within the debate between reformists and "contemporary radicals" (Copestake and Williams, 2014, p. 140). The author takes a clear position with the latter; she then specifies her decision of writing the report in the first singular person as a matter of personal responsibility.

Moving especially from Gulrajani's (2010) conception of romantic DM and Abbott's (2007) account of her Ph.D research, an analysis of three key issues emerged from the context, is made. The significance of political knowledge as a form of intervention, the relevance of personal identities, and of role of empathy, are presented as key arguments in relation to *the necessity of being moved*.

A series of research questions are introduced to frame the overall investigation. The methodology used to investigate the defined problem was of qualitative type, a challenging outcome of difficult ethical questioning in finding a balance between personal integrity and effectiveness (Chataway and Thomas, 2007). Semi-structured interviews were carried out with practitioners working for an Italian NGO; the answers emerged during the interviews were then connected with secondary sources addressing each research question.

The findings showed that development managers recognised the relevance of *being moved* by the lives of *others*, and such movement had an impact on their epistemology and ontology. The limitations of this study are then underlined together with a series of implications and recommendations rising from this research.

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

This project, in which development management (DM) is considered as a “field of relationship(s)” (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253), **aims** at investigating development managers’ necessity of being moved by the lives, stories and experiences “of those for whom development is sought” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143). It seeks to challenge, within the possibilities of its small scale, dominant manageriaistic approaches applied to DM (Gulrajani, 2010; Mowles, 2010a) and to show what might rise by creating relationships based on “interpersonal understanding” (Dadds, 2008, p. 280) among significant human beings (Yamamoto, 1988).

The **objectives of this project** are to:

- Look at ways through which might be possible to establish a subjective engagement (Abbott, 2007) among practitioners and beneficiaries.
- Establish links between practice and theory, bringing light on alternative DM theories (Gulrajani 2010; Mowles, 2010a).
- Look at what *being moved* might lead to.

This project has **expected outcomes** at different levels:

- On a **personal level**, I hope to satisfy “the human being in me” (Laidlaw, 2004, p. 3) by researching something I deeply care about. This project might also help me to develop a sharper focus for future studies.
- At **stakeholder level**, this project might be useful to those people/organisations with an interest in empathy, values and subjective relationships in DM. The organisation with whom I have collaborated has requested a copy of this work for the above reasons. The Living Theory Research Support Group, of which I am part, has asked to share my findings as some of the subjects investigated are linked to their researched areas.
- The **DM discipline** might benefit from this project as it tries to bridge together theory and practice, trying to make the case for a deeper appreciation of the role played by subjective relationships and empathy in DM (OU, 2009), fields which are still scarcely investigated (Jones and Ficklin, 2012).

## 2. Introduction and Background

This section aims at clarifying the theoretical DM context from which this project arose, the decision of writing the report in the first singular person, and the issues emerged from the context which led to the problem definition. In the last part of this section, I introduce the NGO with whom I collaborated.

### 2.1 Development management context

Keeping in mind that the issue to be investigated is the *necessity of being moved in DM*, this section should be read not only as the theoretical context in which this project is positioned, but also as the source from which the concept of *necessity* arose. *Necessity* is used here acknowledging its strong meaning: it implies something urgent, indispensable (Collins English Dictionary, 2000). This urgency, informed heavily by my personal experiences and values (love, respect and equality), was originated by a feeling of outrage (Pinder, 2017) towards managerialistic approaches applied to DM, in which efficiency and impartiality replace “civic virtues, moral purposes and public service sentiment” (Gularajani, 2011, p. 205). In [Section 3](#) the concept of *necessity* is linked with the one of *movement*.

The academic literature on DM has witnessed a “longstanding tendency” towards a “schism between reformists and ‘contemporary radicals’” (Copestake and Williams, 2014, p. 140). The first promote a vision of change managed through “planned, rational, technical and controlled processes” (Copestake and Williams, 2012, p. 140). The second call for alternative theories of management (Mowles, 2010a) criticising how reformists borrow extensively from system theories and apply managerialistic approaches to the field of development (Mowles, 2010a). By *managerialism* they intend an “ideology inspired by Enlightenment rational science and a practice that believes in the ability to achieve organisational success by borrowing from the corporate sector” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 139).

Contemporary radicals distance themselves from rational science, focusing on the relevance of the contextual, the local and the particular (Mowles, 2010a). They stress the importance of

“imagination, sentiment and creativity” (Gulrajani, 2010, p.140) over “rationality, effectiveness” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 152), and the “calculus of utility” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 140).

Two different visions of the development manager’s role and epistemology emerge from such a debate. Reformist managers “stand separately from the phenomena; they analyse and identify leavers, ‘drivers of change’, which they can then pull to affect change as a whole” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153). The epistemology framing these approaches sees the primacy of “rationality, validity, truth and objectivity” (Townley, 2008, in Gulrajani, 2010, p. 140). An objective, rational, neutral practitioner places himself/herself on a “unique advantage point” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153) from where he/she makes “adjustment to the system” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153), trying to “overcome the messy and imperfect present” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153).

Contemporary radicals aim at being reflective practitioners, interrogating the “meaning of all the doing” (Mowles, 2010a, p.157), embracing the complexities of DM as made by individuals constantly interacting; from such, often unpredictable interaction, change emerges (Mowles, 2010a). Instead of objectively measuring an oversimplified reality (Mowles, 2010a), considering possible to find “the truth of practice” (Everitt, 1996, p. 176), contemporary radicals see facts as products of social processes in which values and personal beliefs are central in constructing subjective realities (Everitt, 1996). Imagination, sentiment, creativity (Gulrajani, 2010), self-reflection, attention to the contextual, the local and the particular (Mowles, 2010a) inform a DM practice which is an act of “political steering rather than planned social engineering” (Gulrajani, 2010, p.143). Development managers take explicit sides (Becker, 1967), “managing an intervention on behalf of the poor and powerless against other powerful interests” (Thomas, 1996, p. 108).

## 2.2 Taking side, personal responsibilities and the use of “I”

Following Pinder’s advice on recognising which personal values, perspectives and world views shape the understanding of *good DM* (Pinder, 2015a), I have engaged in a “small personal exploration” (Chambers, 2014, p. 130) in which “imagination, commitment, critical awareness, courage, creativity and above all vision” (Chambers, 2014, p. 130) led the way to find my personal side within the above debate.

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Given my personal values, having been immensely enriched by been “intertwined in the lives of others” (Abbott, in OU, 2015), I do take side in the above debate. I place myself in favour of a development practice that celebrates the role of “imagination, creativity and emotion” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 141), in which “the physical and psychological space between developers and those for whom development is sought is reduced” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143).

Within my research, I have used throughout the first singular person. In this, I was influenced by DM authors that make explicit use of their “Is”: Chambers (2017), Pinder (2015b) and Abbott (2007).

Within this project, I’ve recognised the importance and the centrality of my “relational I”, engaged in “infinite conversation” (Whitehead, 2015, p. 248) with myself, others and literature, in shaping and developing my enquiry as a way of giving meaning and purpose to my research and more broadly to my learning (Whitehead, 2015). Through its use, I wish to underline my “personal sense of responsibility within development as an opportunity for learning, self-development and self-transformation” (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 254), aiming towards a romantic DM conception (Gulrajani, 2010).

In the process of researching and writing, developing my “personal knowledge” (Polanyi, 1962, p. 344), I’m “claiming originality with a universal intent” (Polanyi, 1962, p. 344), as an individual committed to learning in the name of “a shared human possibility” (Quarles Van Offord and Giri, 2003, p. 254). This process is informed and shaped by my “values, principles and passions” (Chambers, 2017, p. 162); the latter three are a “powerful combination and a potent force for driving revolutionary change” (Chambers, 2017, p. 162). By making explicit use of my “I”, I’m trying to embrace a desire to fulfil my personal responsibilities (Quarles Van Offord and Giri, 2003) towards *good change* (Chambers, 2005).

### 2.3 Issues rising from the context

Having clarified my positionality within the “the schism” (Copestake and Williams, 2014, p. 140), a series of reflections led me towards the problem definition. The following points aim at making explicit the process that guided me towards the researched issue.

- For Thomas DM “implies managing an intervention on behalf of the poor and powerless against other powerful interests” (1996, p. 108). Thomas (1996) focuses on the rights that development managers might have or not to intervene on the behalf of the poor and powerless, however he doesn’t bring light on *how* it might be possible to intervene *on their behalf*.
- Mowles (2010a) criticises practitioners who do not leave their “advantage point” (p. 153). What might the consequences be of leaving it?
- Gularajani, in her definition of romantic DM, calls for a reduction of the “physical and psychological space between developers and those for whom development is sought” (2010, p. 143). In which ways such space might be reduced? What might the implication of this “reduction” be?

## 2.4 Introducing the NGO

Through the past six months I’ve collaborated with practitioners working for an NGO based in North-West Italy: its anonymity is ensured (Woodhouse, 2007). The NGO works with street people and migrants: it was established as a centre to contrast the “distress and marginalisation, in its diverse forms, afflicting the social reality of the local area” (protected source<sup>1</sup>). I decided to collaborate with NGO X mainly because I was interested in the organisation’s field of work which, given the NGO’s aims, I thought could bring light on the researched issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Source protected to ensure the NGO’s anonymity as requested.

### 3. Problem definition

This section aims at clarifying how and why *the necessity of being moved in DM* was identified as the main problem definition. The three issues emerged from the analysis of the DM context ([Section 2.3](#)) have guided the formulation of the problem definition. In the last part of this section, I present the research questions that led the investigation of the chosen problem.

#### 3.1 The problem definition

*The necessity of being moved* within DM is the problem definition around which this project was constructed. Not leaving the “advantage point” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153) means that development managers are not prepared to expose themselves (their “Is”) to the life of *others*, therefore not recognising that the beginning of *good change* (Chambers, 2005) is the relation among at least two significant individuals (Buber, in Yaron, 1993). As illustrated below, it is possible to carry out a practice in which development managers might make use of their own inherently human resources rather than resorting to principles borrowed from business logic (Gulrajani, 2011). Being moved towards *the other* and *by the other* is stressed here to be of fundamental, urgent and necessary importance to affirm a development practice as a “shared responsibility” towards better “human possibilities”, in which “the self and the *other* are brought together” (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253-4). In that *movement* the potentials of practitioners’ humanity are enclosed; this might lead to “knowing better for doing better” (Chambers, 2017, p. 150).

#### 3.2 Intervening on the behalf of others: political knowledge through intertwinement

[Section 2](#) underlined how alternative theories of management (Gulrajani, 2010; Mowles, 2010), recognise the importance of seeing DM as a political process and how Thomas (1996), despite defining what he intends as political DM, doesn’t clarify in which ways/how might be possible to act on *the behalf* of somebody else. Abbott talking about her experience as a Ph.D researcher, conducting a fieldwork in the slums of Mumbai, specifies her vision of a political DM practice:

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*Development practitioners are constantly involved in generating development knowledge and that knowledge is political as it reflects the interest of a particular group.*

(Abbott, in OU, 2015)

The *political knowledge* of which Abbott talks about (in OU, 2015) emerged from a process of “interaction and discovery” (Copestake and Williams, 2014, p. 149) with the female meal-makers, central topic of her research. Investigation and research, knowledge production broadly, can be considered forms of intervention in themselves (Thomas, 2007). On the one hand, *knowing better* informs *better actions* (Chambers, 2017) and, on the other, the production of political knowledge (Abbott in OU, 2015), through the research/investigation process, might affect directly the situation (Thomas, 2007).

In either case, intervening “on the behalf of the poor and powerless” (Thomas, 1996, p. 108), creating a political knowledge and therefore intervening, is for Abbott possible if practitioners are “entwined” (in OU, 2015) in the life of the people they work with and for, through engaging subjectively and personally with them, not treating them as distant objects (Abbott, 2007). Far from being an “individual mechanical atom” (Gulrajani, 2010, p.140) who “stands separately from the phenomena” analysed (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153), Abbott engaged in a research that for Pinder was “sensed as well as thought” (in OU, 2015). She (Abbott, 2007) felt intertwined in the lives of those she researched. Such intertwinement, source of a political knowledge production, is possible if a relationship, based on shared identities, is created among practitioners and “those for whom development is sought” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143).

If development managers, as in Abbott’s case (2007), acknowledge their identities and work with those, then “a distant, impersonal auditing and controlling” (Chambers, 2017, p. 169) rapport can be abandoned in the name of a “trusting, personal and empowering” relationship (Chambers, 2017, p. 169). The *I* (the self) of the development manager can be made explicit, together with the values, passions and experiences forming it (Chambers, 2017). An enriched, expanded *I*, who knows better because s/he has subjectively engaged with the *other*, that has experienced human feelings and ethical questioning (Abbott in OU, 2015), is then the *I* resulting from a practice based on establishing subjective relationships.

### 3.3. Leaving the advantage point: reciprocities based on shared identities

Development managers have multiple identities as gender, race, economic position, political sympathies (Chouinard, 2014): these shape how the development practice is framed and carried out. Abbott worked consciously with these multiple identities (Chouinard, 2014). She privileged one over her many others, the one of being a mother (Abbott, 2007). Establishing a relationship with the female meal-makers was possible for Abbott (2007) because she engaged personally and subjectively with them, sharing experiences as a woman, as a carer of a child. In deciding to work with one of her many identities, she consciously took sides (Becker, 1967): she stood with the meal-makers (Abbott, 2007).

Abbott, however, throughout her field research, remained fully aware of her other identities: a wealthy-educated woman (Abbott, 2007). She didn't pretend to describe objectively the meal-makers' poverty, but she made explicit that her research was a personal interpretation of it as an outsider (Abbott, 2007). Abbott (2007) gave a personal account of those women's conditions, having come to the conclusion that development managers should never leave aside their human feelings and that engaging subjectively is a way to open up development.

Abbott's experience (2007) is an enlightening example of considering development as a "field of relationships" (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253). Leaving "the advantage point" (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153) means creating and establishing "interconnected reciprocities" (Chambers, 2017, p. 152) in which "top-town separations *us- them* are abandoned" (Chambers, 2017, p.152). This is possible if development managers are prepared to "relate to others and be human, not robotic" (Chambers, 2017, p. 155), acknowledging that "we can all gain from interconnected reciprocities" (Chambers, 2017 p. 152) based on shared identities.

### 3.4 Reducing the physical and psychological space: empathy

For Chambers "change starts with individual people" (Chambers, 2017, p. 165) and through a dialogical relationship "individual people" can be "acknowledged and addressed as particular beings" (Buber in Yaron, 1993, p.2). "Interconnected reciprocities" (Chambers, 2017, p. 152), therefore, can occupy a central position in the process leading to change: "in the beginning is

relation” (Buber in Yaron, 1993, p. 1). Central in this dialogical relationship is for Yamamoto the fact that a person throughout his/her life “remains in need of recognition and appreciation by a significant other (or others), so as to affirm oneself as a human being” (1988, p. 184). At the heart of creating reciprocities between significant human beings for Segal is the recognition that “we may eat different types of food, but we all eat” (2011, p. 274). “We all eat” becomes for Segal (2011, p. 274) the prerequisite for establishing an understanding of a significant other based on empathy.

Empathy might be a way through which practitioners can access those “experiential realities” of which writes Gulrajani (2010, p. 143) advocating for a romantic, “human development” practice (Copestake and Williams, 2014, p. 133), in which development managers become “connected knowers” (Belenkey, in Dadds, 2008, p. 280). “Opening our heart and mind to absorbing their (other’s) reality in to our own understanding” (Dadds, 2007, p. 280) can then be a way to reduce the “physical and psychological space among practitioners and those for whom development is sought” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143). Empathy “allows an understanding of each other’s subjective world” (Jordan, 1997, p. 144), “through perceiving and experiencing others’ life situation” (Segal, 2011, p. 266). Resulting from this, it’s “an insight into structural inequalities and disparities” (Segal, 2011, p. 267). In this “insight” a subject-subject rapport is formed based on the vision that a “human community” (Jordan, 1997, p. 143) is possible if the boundaries between the self and *the other* are dropped (Jordan, 1997).

For Thomas “DM is about **using resources** for influencing social processes” (1996, p. 102). Given the above analysis<sup>2</sup>, I wondered if empathy could be considered as a human resource for enabling alternative DM practices (Mowels, 2010; Gurajani, 2010). This consideration led me into researching to what extent empathy is recognised as playing a role in DM theory and practice. Overall not a lot of material was found relating directly to the use of empathy within the development sector (Jones and Ficklin, 2012). However, different visions emerged through engaging with the relevant, available, literature on the subject (O’Laughlin, 2007).

Pedwell (2016) looks at the hidden risks of empathy becoming another dominant discourse within international development. A privileged subject can impose, through his/her powerful position, an

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that the in the above paragraph the authors (Segal, 2011; Dadds, 2008; Jordan, 1997) write on empathy in journals dedicated to psychology and education.

interpretation of the life of the less privileged one, creating a sharp division top-down relation subject-object (Pedwell, 2016). This risk is avoidable if an intimacy among equals is created through time- space “intertwinement” (Pedwell, 2016, p. 24), recognising that making room for such intimacy might require conflict and negotiation (Pedwell, 2016).

Given the risks that Pedwell (2016) recognises in the uses of empathy within development, especially the one of power-over (Lukes, 2005), it seems that she mainly had in mind practitioners who might use empathy without living their “advantage point” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153), using it as another managerialistic tool (Mowles, 2010a). She prefers in her paper the term “intertwinement” (Pedwell, 2016, p. 25) which resonate more closely with what in this chapter, so far, was defined as “empathy”. Empathy in fact, if used within a relationship where trust occupies a central position, can lead towards empowerment and not attitudes of power-over (Jordan, 1997); it enables joint intentions towards change (Jordan, 1997).

Abbott (2007) showed the potentials for Pedwell’s (2016) time-space “intertwinement”. In the field research, Abbott (2007) realised that she slowly created a relationship with the meal-makers, through participating to their activities, exposing herself to their questions. Having empathised with the meal-makers as a mother and as a woman, she experienced feelings of wonder, anger and distress for these women’s conditions (Abbott, 2007): by being moved in her feelings she produced a political knowledge with potentials for *change*.

Of the potentials of empathy within the development arena writes Griffiths (in CEIA, n.d.): “empathy is connecting with the core of the humanity... the defining common ingredient which unites all of us, way beyond culture, colour and ideology”. Looking at this definition, it could be inferred that empathy might be one of the fundamental resources (Thomas, 1996) to establish “interconnected reciprocities” (Chambers, 2017, p. 152), where “top-town separations *us- them*” are abandoned in the name of a movement towards “all of us equally together” (Chambers, 2017, p. 152).

However, a communication analyst working for the World Bank, warns practitioners from the use of empathy:

*It can lead to emotional fatigue and might leads us to seek revenge or justice in the name of the victims. (...) Empathy is also biased; it connects us to particular individuals but is insensitive to statistical data. (...) We will be fairer and more moral if we surrender empathy. Without empathy*

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*we can rethink humanitarian aid choosing a rational analysis of moral duty and likely consequences.*

(Bauer, 2016)

Empathy is for Bauer (2016), a far too political resource to be used within a vision of DM that has to be an objective, standardised, statistics-friendly practice that overcomes complexities. It's a resource that might make development managers leave their objective "advantage points" (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153) and become connected, biased, knowers through the use of their particular *Is*.

### 3.5 Research questions

- In which ways/how is it possible to create a subjective engagement among practitioners and beneficiaries?
- What might be the "drivers" of development managers' actions?
- How might these drivers shape development managers' rapport with the *other*?
- What might the risks and advantages be in creating a subjective engagement among practitioners and beneficiaries?
- What might be the role of empathy in establishing "reciprocities" (Chambers, 2017, p. 152)?
- What are the ethical implications in establishing reciprocities through empathy?
- To what extent development managers' knowledge can be shaped and shifted by the encounter with another "significant human being" (Yamamoto, 1988)?

## 4. Methodology and Research Design

In this section I'll outline the methodology used to investigate the problem presented above. I'll describe the research design linked to the chosen methodology, briefly introducing the tools used for the investigation. In the final part of this section, the ethical considerations encountered in designing the methodology are discussed.

### 4.1 Methodology

The methodology used to investigate the identified problem has been of qualitative type, given that of key interests were “values, meanings and relationships” (OU, 2009, p. 101) framing DM. In order to fulfil especially the second objective of this research ([Section 1](#)) I have opted for mixing primary data with secondary data. The first aimed at finding out development managers' *hows* and *whys* (Woodhouse, 2007). The latter aimed at establishing links between theory and described practices (Mukherjee and Wuyts, 2007), trying to develop an appreciation of the role played by subjective relationships in DM, hence “for a new academic understanding of a problem” (OU, 2009, p. 125). My investigation, by bringing together and cross referencing primary and secondary data, tried to show interconnections between theory and practice around the problem definition (OU, 2009).

The NGO's director, with whom I first shared the ideas underpinning my research, suggested to work with three people (him included) that could provide useful insights for my research (OU, 2009). I considered these people as “key informants” (Woodhouse, 2007, p. 165): those “who are not necessarily representative of a population in any sense, but are chosen simply for their knowledge” (Woodhouse, 2007, p. 165) and wide experience. The selection of secondary literature was developed through a tool illustrated in the following part of this section.

### 4.2 Research design and tools

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main tool to interrogate the “key informants” (Woodhouse, 2007, p. 165). The research questions framing the overall project guided the

creation of the questionnaire used in primary data collection ([Appendix 1](#)). Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a tool able to provide a focus on the opportunistic stance of gathering data from my “informants” (OU, 2009) and a space for the interviewees to express their *hows* and *whys* (Woodhouse, 2007). Even if some of the development managers and volunteers spoke English, I have translated the questions in Italian so that they could be sure about the questions asked, wouldn’t waste time translating and I wouldn’t have to present myself with a linguistic power over them (Lukes, 2005).

Secondary data was collected only after the semi-structured interviews were undertaken. Through a careful study of the answers provided by the informants, key words and key concepts were selected (Barrientos, 2007) to develop the final selection of secondary sources.

A grid of the secondary sources is reproduced in [Appendix 2](#). It is divided by author, discipline and area of interest (related to the findings emerged in primary data collection), to demonstrate the variety of fields (DM, international relations, social science, education, psychology and theology) from which it was derived and, hence, to show its validity in terms of triangulation (OU, 2009; Carter et al., 2014).

#### 4.3 Data collection

I met my informants prior to undertaking semi-structured interviews, carrying out informal conversations regarding the nature of my project and hoping to create a collaborative rapport (Woodhouse, 2007). I have then run semi-structured interviews on the 13<sup>th</sup> and on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August. All interviews lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. Dates, time and location of the meetings were chosen by my informants (OU, 2009). Before undertaking the interviews all informants sign a confidentiality form having asked for their names and the identity of their organisation to be protected. I have recorded, prior to asking permission, all interviews. I then transcribed the material collected, including the notes taken during the interviews, and translated it in to English. Two informants asked to undertake the interview together, while one decided to attend it by himself.

I made a final selection of the secondary data (representing theory) that could be linked with primary data (representing practice), using documents I had already collected and accessing new

ones. I then selected those resources that could bring further light on to issues emerged in the semi-structured interviews with the aim of creating bridges between theory and practice (Mukherjee and Wuyts, 2007).

#### 4.4 Ethical considerations

The above methodology was the outcome of some deep “ethical questioning” (Abbott in OU, 2015), which embraced mainly my role as investigator and the concept of validity (OU, 2009). In the creation of the methodology, I have used an action-research process (McNiff, n.d.) as a way to find a balance between effectiveness and personal integrity (Chataway and Thomas, 2007).

##### **My living contradictions**

Of key importance in this process was the concept of “living contradiction”, borrowed from Living Theory discipline. It was the guiding principle in defining the terms of my investigation:

*Individuals often experience themselves as living contradictions in the sense that the ‘I’ in the question (...) holds together the experience of wanting to live certain values with the experience that the values are being denied in practice. The tensions in experiencing oneself as a living contradiction can stimulate the imagination to create possible ways forward into actions that can help to realize the values more fully.*

(Whitehead, 2012, p. 2)

In designing the methodology and carrying out the investigation my theoretical *I*, the one that through propositional forms of understanding formulated the problem definition, had to become a “relational *I*” (Whitehead, 2015, p. 248) engaged with *others*, researching *the necessity of being moved* in practice. My personal values “affected what was possible to achieve” (Mowles, 2010b, p. 758). Exploring how to resolve and overcome my living contradictions (Cunningham and Laidlaw, 2009), enhanced my creativity and imagination (Whitehead, 2012). I had to challenge my starting assumptions on how to carry out my research, I had to negotiate the need for efficiency with a feeling of integrity (Chataway and Thomas, 2007).

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I originally planned to interview both practitioners working for NGO X and the people assisted by the organisation. After having talked with an NGO X's volunteer, I soon came to the conclusion that this wasn't a viable solution: "the only precious thing they (street people and migrants) truly have are their personal stories and their feelings, hence those are holy to them" (Giulia Carozzi, 2018).

For the sake of gathering data, by asking about their lives, I would have invaded their "holy territories" (Carozzi, 2018). I wouldn't have respected "the sacredness of life in the other" (Satir, 2013, p. 25); I would have been investigating led "by the calculus of utility" (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 140).

I then considered using documents from the people assisted by the organisation, as data. Those documents (cards), that an NGO's practitioner offered me for scrutiny, could have been an opportunity to bring in my research unfiltered words and gestures to illuminate the power of subjective engagement (Abbott, 2007) in DM. However, in order to justify the presence of these cards, I would have needed ample space to frame them as "revealing pictures" (Pinder, 2015c); the word limit available for the final report would have severely constrained this. Presenting the cards without giving space to the context in which they were exchanged, without considering the feelings that accompanied them, would have been, I felt, disrespectful to the sacredness of the *others'* lives (Satir, 2013). Bringing in the final report these "decontextualized" documents, would have compromised my personal integrity (Thomas and Chataway, 2007). I realised that I was running the risk of wishing to bring an objective proof of subjective engagement among human beings in my research. But such proof, without contextual, highly subjective, information, would have proven totally meaningless, hence, ineffective (Thomas and Chataway, 2007) and moreover an ethically difficult decision to justify to myself. Neither the cards, therefore, were included.

### **Principled investigation and validity**

By having considered central what Quarles Van Ufford and Giri (2003) define as the *moral dimension* of the enquiry, represented here by my personal responsibility through the acknowledgement of my own *I*, the three other dimensions of a principled investigation were covered too (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003). I considered *relationships* (Quarles Van Ufford

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and Giri, 2003) as the core theme of this research and I have tried to find out of what the relationships at the base of the NGO X's practice were made of.

By reflecting on the issues emerging within the design of the methodology I have engaged in a personal exploration (Chambers, 2014, p. 130), *learning about myself* (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003) especially through the use of living-contradictions (Whitehead, 2012; Cunningham and Laidlaw, 2009; Whitehead 1989). Finally, even if this investigation is small in scale, I have tried to consider it as contributing to the idea of seeing development as a matter of *shared responsibility* (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003). I hope that by having defined clearly my *I*, as a “relational *I*” (Whitehead, 2015, p. 248), the readers might feel comfortable enough to become the *you* in a dialogue (Buber in Yaron, 1993), extending beyond this report, towards “shared human possibilities” (Van Offord and Giri, 2003, p. 254).

Overall by having clarified my personal lens, my *I*, as the parameter for an ethical and moral investigation, I've also tried to use my *I* as the maker of this research contextual validity. In order to avoid living contradictions (Whitehead, 2012), the values of respect, love and equality led my research.

I had to consider how my biases were strongly influencing my desire to give more space to one interviewee over the others (Woodhouse, 2007). Having acknowledged that, I decided to mitigate my personal inclinations (Woodhouse, 2007) in favour of perhaps a more fragmented, but broader, data analysis. My values shaped my biases but I tried not to let my biases contaminating the values over which this research was built on: above all the one of acknowledging the other as significant (Yamamoto, 1988). The words, documents, pictures which haven't been taken in consideration were left out as a way of deeply respecting the “holy territories of others” (Carozzi, 2018): a proof of being moved by the *others'* stories. My *I* was the contextual validity of this research and as Gadamer (1975, p. 272) writes: “the important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings”.

The explicit and “responsible” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 145) use of my *I*, has given me an opportunity to ethically question and feel the problem investigated. I cannot tell if the use of the generic third person would have contributed to a greater “effectiveness” in this project, but I can say that it would have severely challenged my personal integrity (Chataway and Thomas, 2007).

## 5. Analysis and findings

In this section I will first briefly introduce my key informants (Woodhouse, 2007) and then consider the reliability of the data. The main part of this section is dedicated to answer the research questions, analysing primary and secondary data merged together.

### 5.1 Key informants

A code was used to represent each informant in order to protect their anonymity (Woodhouse, 2007): I1, I2, I3. I'm here briefly introducing these three practitioners so that the readers can follow the comments made by each informant and relate those to each practitioner's identity.

I1 is a practitioner that has been volunteering for the NGO for over ten years working at the listening centre and at the canteen.

I2 is the head of the NGO; he started volunteering in the organisation fifteen years ago.

I3 started volunteering fifteen years ago for the NGO; she now works in the listening centre and she has a coordinating role.

### 5.2 Reliability

Having used qualitative data emerged from semi-structured interviews, and then merged with secondary sources, the issue of reliability is ought to be discussed (OU, 2009). A possible issue concerning the unreliability of the findings regarded potential misunderstanding of the questions and answers given (OU, 2009). This aspect was mitigated by the fact that the questions asked during semi-structured interviews were interlinked and "a similar or related question occur after a suitable amount of time" (OU, 2009, p. 110).

The issue of bias in semi-structured interviews (OU, 2009) has been discussed in the previous section, however, it still remains to be addressed how such a small sample could be considered reliable (OU, 2009). Given the amount of time available for this project a bigger sample (to be

merged with secondary sources) would have been extremely difficult to manage (OU, 2009). What I intended to gain from the interviews was “not a study of what development managers do, but of their own reflections on what they do (Abbot, et al., 2007, p. 191). This has been possible because a rapport with my informants was established prior to the interviews (Mayoux and Johnson, 2007). Meeting with the informants, talking in different occasions about their visions, interviewing them, and finally merging primary “reflections” with secondary sources in a coherent manner, was possible because the size of the sampling was of a manageable dimension (Chenail et al., 2011).

### 5.3 Analysis of the findings

- **In which ways/how is it possible to create a subjective engagement among practitioners and beneficiaries?**

All the informants recognised that the provision of a welcoming space for interaction was fundamental in the establishment of a rapport with the people they worked for (Carozzi, 2018). Such interaction, as underlined in all interviews, can genuinely happen if the *other* is recognised as significant, therefore valued (Yamamoto, 1988). This recognition, according to I1, “can be created by looking straight into the *other’s* eyes” (Carozzi, 2018), building a bridge among two human beings (Laidlaw, 2018) recognising that “in the beginning is relation” (Buber, in Yaron, 1993, p. 1). In that shared gaze (Carozzi, 2018), there is an opportunity to “reduce the physical and psychological space between developers and those for whom development is sought” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143), to originate a relationship that opens up possibilities (Buber in Yaron, 1993) towards the generation of shared reciprocities (Chambers, 2017).

For I3 the listening centre was the best place to create an opportunity for the establishment of a reciprocity based on and understanding of people’s “whys”:

*They tell us whatever they feel/want. (...) They explain their whys... We must guarantee them a warm reception, we must welcome them. We must listen to them because none listen to them. They do not talk with anyone.*

(Carozzi, 2018)

Here it's represented a willingness to consider DM as a field of relationships (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253) aimed at satisfying the *others'* desire "to be known, understood and respected" (Yamamoto, 1988, p. 184). Root of such a vision is a moral *must*: the *must* of personal responsibility that "brings the self and the other together" (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253) through a relationship based on a welcoming listening.

I2 (Carozzi, 2018) said: "we believe in listening because through it you walk hand in hand with these people, trying to develop new goals together". The rapport created is built on an appreciation of *the other* in the contextual present but is also orientated towards the future (Yamamoto, 1988). Giving to those in need a chocolate bar, a safe place to meet, offering them a gentle gaze, listening to their *whys* (Carozzi, 2018), might be the first loving steps towards cure (Laidlaw, 2018), towards *good change* (Chambers, 2005).

- **What might be the "drivers" of development managers' actions?**

All the informants recognised the importance of their personal "drivers" as guiding the creation of rapports with the people assisted (Carozzi, 2018). It seemed that their practice was shaped by these drivers, whether related to personal upbringing or to religious beliefs (Carozzi, 2018). In either case, their answers demonstrated how values and personal experiences influence the way in which development managers approach their work and see the world (Chambers, 2017) and how their understanding of development issues relates to such drivers (Abbott, 2007).

I1, underlined how his drivers were intrinsically part of his being: "you need to see how I am made, who I am: what is my education, my style of life, believing or not believing" (Carozzi, 2018). Personal experiences, upbringing and religious beliefs, were defined as crucial in giving a meaning to the interviewees' practice and were connected to their identities. All the respondents seemed fully aware of what Chambers defines as "the blind spot of ourselves" (2017, p. 49); they acknowledged that "cultures, upbringing, education, professional training and life experiences" (Chambers, 2017, p. 49) shaped their practices. They saw their personal drivers as enablers of their practice in the first instance (Cunningham and Laidlaw, 2009): all the respondents affirmed that whoever was in need, was going to be assisted by them. However, they also acknowledged that they often "took sides" (Becker, 1967).

- **How might these drivers shape development managers' rapport with the *other*?**

Overall the three interviewees recognised the political nature of their actions originated by their personal drivers.

*The fragility of a person is what makes me approaching him/her. He (an homeless) was sitting at the canteen in total isolation from the others... The others were making fun of him. This is why I came closer to him, because he was experiencing a marginalisation within emarginated...*

(I1, in Carozzi, 2018)

I1's actions were based on a political desire (Becker, 1967) to establish relationships with the "least powerful ones" (Thomas, 1996) within a context of general powerlessness. This political desire, this bias, was rooted in I1's personal experiences and values (Carozzi, 2018). Fully acknowledged biases, here, led to action (Abbott, 2007): the establishment of a rapport with the most marginalised.

I2 affirmed that "empathising more with one than with another" (Carozzi, 2018) was part of his human characteristic: in establishing relationship he recognised the "inevitability" of taking sides (Becker, 1967).

- **What might be the role of empathy in establishing "reciprocities" (Chambers, 2017, p. 152)?**

All the respondents affirmed that empathy was highly important in their work: a way of "connecting with the core of the humanity" (Griffiths in CEIA, n.d.). It emerged, however, that the three interviewees had different visions and "uses" of empathy in their practices.

I1 stressed how empathy enabled him to feel the thirst of the person to whom he was handing over a bottle of water (Carozzi, 2018). I1 felt that through empathy he could appreciate more the problems troubling the *other*, often feeling that the *other's* worries were very similar to his own (Carozzi, 2018). He married a vision of empathy as a travel towards a "human community" (Jordan, 1997, p. 143), a way through which he established a "connection and an emotional joining" (Jordan, 1997, p. 141). He posed a strong emphasis on the epistemological potentials of empathy

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as a way of becoming a “connected knower” (Belenky et al. in Dadds, 2008, p. 280) of *others*’ thirst. He used empathy to seek emotional-contextual understanding (Segal, 2011, p. 268).

I2 (Carozzi, 2018) saw empathy as a way to fight dominant and rhetoric discourses regarding the *other* (Waldman, 2017). However, he stressed that limits should be posed to the level of emotional connection towards the *other*, recognising that, in DM, the mind needs to be listened to more than the heart (Carozzi, 2018). He saw empathy as a way of understanding the *other*, but not necessarily as a way of sharing fully the *other’s* feelings (Waldman, 2017).

For I3 (Carozzi, 2018) empathy was a vehicle through which, as a woman and as a mother, she could establish reciprocities, based on shared identities, with the people she assisted (Abbott, 2007). Her conscious partiality towards the stories of young women and mothers led her actions (Abbott, 2007):

*As a mother, as a woman I must imagine what would be like for me, for my son. It is impossible not to help if you try to be that woman crossing the Mediterranean with her son...*

(I3, in Carozzi, 2018)

- **What are the ethical implications in establishing reciprocities through empathy?**

The ethical implications regarding empathy emerged especially in the answers given by I1 and I2: different visions regarding power came out (Pedwell, 2016).

*There are gestures that are forms of violence. (...) Power-over is when you make that person feel that you might give him/her the plate with the food or not... If you work with empathy, then you can’t experience that kind of power-over... being empathic means that you are on the same personal level.*

(I1, in Carozzi, 2018)

I1 recognised the risks relating to *power over* in his practice: “where mutual empathy is absent, shaming others become a means of control” (Jordan, 1997, p. 148). I1 saw in empathy a way of breaking down power imbalances among human beings; however he acknowledged fully that he occupied a privileged position: “in my life I can chose, they can’t” (I1, in Carozzi, 2018). For I1 the

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“privilege gap” among him and the *other* could be reduced through experiential realities (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 143) that he lived by empathising with the *other*.

A different vision was the one put forward by I2:

*I mustn't abuse of my powers, but I must be authoritative... there are rules, there are ways...Of course you suffer for their stories... you must be moved by their stories but at the same time you must be lucid.*

(Carozzi, 2018)

Even if I2 (Carozzi, 2018) defined empathy as fundamental in his work, he strongly reminded the importance of being authoritative. This might have been due to his specific role within the organisation. He seemed to be wanting to strike a balance between using empathy as a source of understanding (Waldman, 2017) and at the same time avoiding to be carried away by an “emotional joining” (Jordan, 1997, p. 141).

- **What might the risks and advantages be in creating a subjective engagement among practitioners and beneficiaries?**

All the respondents strongly affirmed that creating subjective engagements with the people they assisted had great potentials (Carozzi, 2018). This emerged in the words of I1 and I2 (I3 fully agreed with I2).

*The advantages are on both sides... Meeting another person, establishing a relationship, establishing a rapport is a benefit for both people involved.*

(I2, in Carozzi, 2018)

*First of all...everyone has got a history, a story, a culture, a belief... I am thirsty of knowledge. It is not the curiosity for a different colour skin...that would be a “racist” curiosity! I am “curious” about those who live on the streets. It is incredibly enriching knowing more about others.*

(I1, in Carozzi, 2018)

Informants firmly recognised that the advantages of establishing a relationships with those they assisted were of benefit not only to the people helped but to themselves in the first instance (Abbott, 2007). The curiosity mentioned by I1, was a vehicle towards valuing the life and the story of *the other*. He became a traveller of a journey towards cultural humility (Gallardo, 2014), towards an appreciation of a sensed DM practice (Abbott, in OU, 2015), seen as an exchange of experiential realities in a field of relationships (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003). I1's curiosity was the spring towards "opening our mind and heart to absorbing their reality in to our own understanding" (Dadds, 2007 p. 280).

- **To what extent development managers' knowledge can be shaped and shifted by the encounter with another "significant human being" (Yamamoto, 1988)?**

The three interviewees recognised that their engagement with the people assisted had a major impact on the way they saw the world (Carozzi, 2018). Establishing relationships through empathy was for the respondents a way to reach a deeper knowledge not only of the *others* but of themselves too (Jones and Ficklin, 2012).

*The Nigerian guy offers me his world, I grow, my life grows in knowing about his village, his father, his brother... It is more than a knowledge...it is an enriching process... I feel an emotion in that exchange (...) My life is not my life with capital letter, it is the merging of many lives. By being in contact with the stories of these people I live in my life different experiences. My life expands when I imagine another life.*

For I1 the exchanges happening between him and the *other* expanded his own *I* (Satir, 2013) that, thanks to empathy, reached a deeper knowledge of the *other* through the power of imagination (Gulrajani, 2010). The relationship is seen as a point where lives merge together: "there is Len, me and the relationship. In real dialogue, both speaker and listener create a liveliness together and come to a truth together" (Jordan, 1997, p. 139).

That knowledge created through such an exchange for I2 and I3 had profound impact in their way of being. Empathy "encroached the neutrality of the practitioners" (Jones and Ficklin, 2012, p. 104). It becomes a valuable source to extend knowledge towards greater human possibilities

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(Chambers, 2017): change is driven by imagination, sentiment and self-reflectivity inspired by a “global moral ethic” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 145).

*Their stories have helped me making clear comparisons... You see them on the side of the road and you wonder “what they are thinking about?”*

(I3, in Carozzi, 2018)

*Their stories have changed me...I get so easily board of certain environments; I can't face any more certain nonsenses. I wish to show these people that they there are not lonely... they often live in a desert of relationships. You have to fight the barrier imposed by dominant discourses. “You live on the street?”, “you are a dangerous person”... We have to fight those conceptions. We have to go back to be a welcoming society.*

(I2, in Carozzi, 2018)

## 6. Conclusions, implications, recommendations

In this final section I will draw together the conclusions related to the problem definition and then identify the limitations of this study. I'll comment on the main implications related to the findings and finally outline possible recommendations.

### 6.1 Conclusions

The findings, relating to the three main objectives of this project ([Section1](#)), demonstrated how *being moved* was perceived as a necessity by the three interviewees and how their visions found solid grounding in secondary sources. An analysis of the findings regarding reciprocities, values and empathy here introduces the conclusions relating to the problem definition.

The three interviewees recognised that establishing a personal rapport with the beneficiaries was the first fundamental step to bring change (Buber, in Yaron, 1993). This recognition was rooted in the visions they had of DM, which was connected to their personal belief and values, therefore underlying how values and ideas underpinning a theory are “the enabling frame for decisions and actions” (Chambers, 201, p. 161).

The idea of a practice made by objective, “individual mechanical atoms” (Gurajani, 2010, p. 140) who “stand separately from the phenomena” analysed (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153), was overcome in the name of a practice based on shared identities (Abbott, 2007), understanding and listening. Practitioners, far from being on their “advantage point” managing change (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153) were “fully present with the other” (Satir, 2013, p. 25) through embracing the *other's whys* and life stories. Empathy was the movement towards the *other*.

Empathy was the vehicle through which practitioners' values were brought alive, the central element to understand the *other* through the power of imagination (Gurajani, 2010). It emerged that empathy was the channel towards “shared human possibilities” (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253) through which the practitioner “grows, becoming a more integrated self, more congruent and more ‘whole’” (Satir, 2013, p. 25): “my life expands when I imagine another life. (...) I feel an emotion in that exchange: I'm becoming richer” (I1, in Carozzi, 2018).

By joining together these dots, it emerges that *being moved* was perceived as an ontological need and as an epistemological route by development managers. It was recognised by the informants that DM is made by people –“all of us equally together” (Chambers, 2017, p. 152) - that “act rationally and irrationally, fantasise, dream and are prone to anxiety and rebellion” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153). When such a vision is hold then, we, as human beings, “cannot and should not, remain objective to these life stories” (Abbott in OU, 2015). Being moved, is an ontological necessity, a necessity to affirm and live the potentials of a “human development” based on explicit values as “loyalty, trust, democracy and morality” (Gulrajani, 2010, p. 141). “To act on the behalf of the poor and powerless” (Thomas, 1996, p. 108), means leaving our “advantage point” (Mowles, 2010a, p. 153), exposing our *Is*, moving towards a significant other (Yamamoto, 1988), and being moved by his/her story, feeling it, reaching those depths (Satir, 2013; Abbott, 2007) that enable a *knowing better for acting better* (Chambers, 2017).

*Being moved* in DM, then may be considered not only as an ontological necessity but also as an epistemological route for practitioners. This last aspect came up strongly in semi-structured interviews. Being moved, thanks to the use of empathy, by the life-stories of *others* contained potentials in the “establishment of a personal theory of knowledge” (Whitehead, 2018, p.153). *Being moved* was the source of a *better knowing* (Chambers, 2017), the result of deepening in to the *others’* lives, in which empathy was the source of contextual understanding (Segal, 2011).

Primary data showed that practitioners using empathy “evolve from a metaphor of a bounded self whose task is to ‘master’ reality, to a relational self, ‘meeting’ reality and growing with others” (Jordan, 1997, p. 138-9). From this *meeting*, in this experiential knowledge (Gulrajani, 2010), the relational *I* was enriched and expanded. My informants were not aware of alternative theories of management (Mowles, 2010a; Gulrajani, 2010) but they seemed to carry out alternative practices rooted (unconsciously) in contemporary radicals’ discourses.

The “emotional fatigue” (Bauer, 2016) of *being moved* through empathy was outset by an enrichment brought by an imaginary immersion in to the *others’* life happening through the establishment of a reciprocity. *Being moved* meant that development managers became political, biased actors (Bauer, 2016): personal values and histories drawn them more towards certain people. Practitioners, however, were fully aware of their own biases, showing a high degree of reflexivity: a fundamental ingredient, for Chambers (2017), to take forward DM: “a conscious partiality, leads to active participation in actions” (Abbott, 2007, p. 216).

The dangers identified by Pedwell (2016) didn't seem to be present in the experiences/reflections of my informants: a vision of DM as made by "all of us equally together" (Chambers, 2017, p. 152) didn't allow it. *Being moved* means becoming emotionally connected knowers (Dadds, 2008), existing on equal terms with the *other* in the relationship created through reciprocities in which our human resources might enable the "flourishing of humanity" as "actualisation of our human potentials" (Wolbert et al., 2017, p.1).

## 6.2 Limitations

The above conclusions are the product of a work carried out over a short period of time; the relative small number of interviews collected tried to be outset by the intensity of responses and by the literature review supporting primary data. I am fully aware that some aspects in the interviews haven't been fully addressed: I2 especially, commented on his authoritative role and need to follow rules (Carozzi, 2018). I've only marginally touched these aspects in [Section 5.3](#). I would have needed more time to investigate further what he meant by "authoritative", but my time was running out and he was on leave so this issue was left unexplored.

There have been interesting aspects regarding the importance of practitioners' training emerging in semi-structured interviews (Carozzi, 2018). These points have been left un-analysed as they went beyond the scope of this research.

I am conscious that the concepts of *ontology* and *epistemology* haven't been fully addressed within wider debates regarding their meanings (Bracken, 2010; SEP, 2015). However, having been those concepts a point of arrival in this research and not starting assumptions in my enquiry, they might be clarified in my future studies.

Overall, I am fully aware that this report is a convenient narrative (Pinder, 2015d), heavily shaped by my desire, rooted in my values, to call for the *necessity of being moved*. Biases, ultimately as much as they've been tried to be mitigated, have come out (Woodhouse, 2007): the selection of the quotes extrapolated from the semi-structured interviews is a telling examples of this "personal convenience" (Pinder, 2015d) that is called being biased.

### 6.3 Implications

A series of implications, given the findings of this project, might be found at a personal level, stakeholder level, and for the DM discipline.

On a **personal level**, the findings have triggered in me a desire to carry on my enquiry on values, empathy and reciprocities in DM. Overall it was difficult ending my investigation: the problem definition was built to “satisfy the human being in me” (Laidlaw, 2004, p. 3) and I run the risk of undertaking a never-ending research process (Selvi, 2009); a thirst of knowledge as a form of self-actualization (Selvi, 2009) was the driving force in this six months. Although I am satisfied with the problem definition, I believe that the time I had for investigating it was far too little to appreciate its growing complexities.

Overall this research process has led me to think of applying for a Ph.D in Living Theories where I would have more time available to carry out an enquiry starting from the findings of this final report. I might then be able to reflect more openly about the personal circumstances that shaped the problem definition using personal past experiences as data.

On a **stakeholder level** I hope that NGO X might benefit from reading this report. Different visions emerged during semi-structured interviews and those have been linked with relevant theory. I hope that the findings represented and joint in this report might offer an opportunity for discussing together the various points emerged, enabling further reflexivity on the role played by empathy in their daily practice. From this discussion, a more defined, perhaps even formalised, use of empathy within the organisation’s policy and practice might come out.

This work might also enable further discussions within the Living Theory Research Support Group. One of the main aim of the group is to “contribute to the flourishing of the humanity” (Living Posters, n.d.) which in this report has been translated in DM terms as “shared human possibilities” (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253). Recurring themes of the Sunday sessions are the roles of values in shaping practice, the space occupied in research by subjectivity and the use of a *relational I* in research, the role played by biases (Whitehead, 2015). These aspects came out in different parts of this report and might provide a good point for enabling further discussions and potentially further research linking DM with Living Theories (Briganti, 2015; Laidlaw, 2015).

The implications for the **DM discipline** might be of two types. This report, even in its small scale, has tried to demonstrate the role that empathy, reciprocities and values might play in contemporary radicals' DM practice (Copestake and Willimas, 2003) and how those might be linked with the *necessity of being moved*. However, empathy, especially, remains either a peripheral subject (Jones and Ficklin, 2012), or an aspect worth to be mitigated (Bauer, 2016) in DM literature. I hope that by having highlighted the potentials of empathy, values and reciprocities, a new appreciation for these aspects might rise and might lead to further in depth researches.

This report has borrowed extensively from Living Theories discipline: of particular importance were the use of "living contradictions" (Whitehead 2012; Cunningham and Laidlaw, 2009) and of the "relational I" (Whitehead, 2015). These aspects were fundamental enablers in exploring DM as a matter of "personal responsibility towards shared human possibilities" (Quarles Van Ufford and Giri, 2003, p. 253). Applying Living Theories to DM might be an interesting field to explore: so far, however, little research has been carried out merging the two disciplines together (Briganti, 2015; Laidlaw, 2015).

#### 6.4 Recommendations

Following the findings of this project, the key recommendations for DM practitioners and DM academics are:

- Values and biases, if fully acknowledged, might be enablers of action; however, a reflective and critical analysis of such values and biases has to be always undertaken.
- Consider the role of empathy in establishing connections with others as a way to enable change following the principles outlined by Gulrajani (2010).
- Even if empathy is scarcely investigated in the DM sector, precious resources on its benefits and potentials can be found in other areas like psychology and education.
- Through a self-reflective analysis and dialogue with colleagues, always consider the power implications that might be hiding in the use of empathy.
- Do not be afraid by the emotional fatigue that being moved might cause, from that fatigue, shared possibilities might rise.

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- Using the first singular person in DM, can be a way to affirm and recognise personal responsibilities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Questionnaire for semi-structured interviews

- How do you “choose”, approach and then engage with the people you intend to help?
- What guides your actions?
- What are the advantages and limitations of building a relationship with the people you assist?
- Do you ever let emotions lead your actions?
- Do you think there is room for empathy in your approach
- Have stories of people you assisted, changed your knowledge, understanding of the other and perhaps challenged some of your assumptions
- In what ways do you think that establishing a rapport with the people you help, considering them as significant others (Yamamoto, 1988), might have helped you to affirm and “satisfy yourself as a human being” (Laidlaw, 2004, p.3)?

### Appendix 2 Grid of the key authors for secondary data

<b>Author</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Area of interest</b>
Gulrajani (2010)	DM	Romantic development management
Mowles (2010)	DM	Alternative theories of management
Thomas (1996)	DM	Political DM
Quarles Van Ufford and Giri (2003)	DM	Personal responsibility in DM, DM as field of relationships
Abbott (in OU 2015; 2007)	DM	Subjective in DM
Chambers (2017, 2015, 2005)	DM	Reciprocities, change, individuals' values

Pedwell (2016)	DM	Power imbalances in empathy
Jones and Ficklin (2012)	DM	Empathy as a way towards knowledge
Becker (1967)	Social science	Taking sides
Griffiths (n.d.)	International relation	Empathy as core of humanity
Waldman (2016)	International relation	Empathy as understanding
Laidlaw (2015)	Education	Love as cure
Cunningham and Laidlaw (2009)	Education	Values as enablers of practice
Yamamoto (1988)	Education	Significant other; towards the future
Dadds (2008)	Education	Empathy: connected knowers
Jordan (1997)	Psychology	Human community
Segal (2011)	Psychology	Empathy as “we all eat”
Rogers in Mc Gregor (2016)	Psychology	Empathy as mutual growth
Buber in Yaron (1993)	Theology/Philosophy	In the beginning is relation
Gallardo (2014)	Psychology	Cultural humility
Satir (2013)	Psychology	Expansion of the I