

Surveying NGO-Military relations: Empirical Data to Both Confirm and Reject Popular Beliefs

Issued 10 June 2011 V1

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Acknowledgements

- Funding Body: UK MoD (Dstl)
- Contracted through: Human Factors Integration Defence Technology Centre (UK MOD).
- Key Stakeholder: Doctrine, Concepts and Development Centre, (UK MOD).
- NGO-Military Contact Group, London.
- All participants who responded to the survey request.



Outline

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STUDY BACKGROUND



Context

“The battle space is a complex environment with numerous actors. Understanding these actors is vital to military personnel undertaking their assigned tasks” (*Hartland et al., 2004*)

“There are tens of thousands of these small NGOs across the globe that are changing lives in phenomenal ways everyday”
(*Bill Clinton*)



Rationale and Drivers

- Hard realities have shown that conflicts can not be resolved by kinetic action alone
- **The Comprehensive Approach:** A unified military, diplomatic, economic, political, and social planning and implementation appears to be the favoured approach.
- The Comprehensive Approach requires operations to delve into domains which are often inhabited by existing organisations



Provincial Reconstruction Team gives kids School supplies, Afghanistan
[Source: Staff Sgt. Michael Bracken, U.S. Army, Wikimedia Commons – public domain]



Rationale and Drivers

- Other actors (NGOs, IOs) in these environments can experience issues or friction with military operations.
- My personal experience... Multi National Experimentation 5 (MNE5)
- Both sets of actors have good intentions but potentially have very different philosophy, doctrine, approaches, objectives, planning, preparation, and training and personnel ... **or do they?**



Aid worker gives medicine to Haitian child in Léogâne
[Source: Cpl. Bobbie A. Curtis, USMC, Wikimedia Comm]



Study Objectives

1. Identify both enablers and barriers to working with military organisations as perceived by humanitarian actors.
2. Identify both enablers and barriers to working with humanitarian actors as perceived by the military.
3. Use the data in the survey to provide evidence to both the military and humanitarian communities about how both sides perceive the same issues differently.



Hypotheses

1. There will be sources of friction between NGOs and the Military.
2. NGOs and the Military will perceive some sources of friction differently.
3. There will be identifiable moderating factors which will be related to respondents' ratings.



STUDY METHODOLOGY



Approach

- Literature review
- Open ended interviews
- Pilot survey
- Full survey
- Snowball/opportunistic sample



Survey Structure

- Biographical
- Sources of friction
 - General issues
 - Humanitarian space
 - Detailed friction issues
- Free response



Survey - Biographical

Experience & training to work with others (from NGO perspective)

██████████ 40%

* How much exposure to military personnel have you had?

- No exposure
- Little exposure
- Moderate amount of exposure
- A great deal of exposure
- Not applicable

* Have you had any exposure to CIMIC (Civil-Military Co-operation) military personnel?

- No exposure
- Little exposure
- Moderate amount of exposure
- A great deal of exposure
- Not applicable

* If you have had experience of NON-UK military was it broadly

- More positive than your experience with UK military?
- About the same as your experience with UK military?
- Less positive than your experience with UK military?
- Not applicable

If possible, please elaborate

* Have you had specific training about how to interact with military personnel?

- No training
- Little training
- Moderate amount of training
- A great deal of training
- Not applicable



Survey – Sources of Friction (Ratings)

General issues arising from military and NGOs working in the same context

60%

* Please look at the items below and rate whether you feel/think the statements represent a source of friction between NGO workers and military personnel.

| | Definitely NOT a source of friction | Probably NOT a source of friction | Not sure | Probably a source of friction | Definitely a source of friction |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Competition for publicity between military and NGOs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Competition for funding between military and NGOs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sharing information by NGOs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Sharing information by the military | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Openness of intentions by NGOs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Openness of intentions by the military | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Different motivations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Different culture and ethos | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Different types of humour | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Differences in risk perception and tolerance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Different decision-making approaches | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Different organisational structures | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Perceived erosion of humanitarian space | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Survey – Specific Issues (Ratings)

Specific issues arising from military and NGOs working in the same context

████████████████████ 70%

* Please rate whether the following items are a source of friction between NGO workers and military personnel.

| | Definitely NOT a source of friction | Probably NOT a source of friction | Not sure | Probably a source of friction | Definitely a source of friction |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Military involvement in Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in reconstruction schemes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in infrastructure schemes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in running camps | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in provision of food and shelter | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in the provision of water and sanitation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in emergency medical assistance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Military involvement in providing long term medical assistance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Prev Next



Participants

- 83 approached for survey
- 72 completed the survey
 - Completion rate of 93%



Proposed Analysis Plan

- Compare results from military and NGO workers...



Actual Analysis Plan

- More complicated...
 - Military with other experiences – “Military lite”
 - NGO workers with other experiences – “NGO lite”

 - Military with little other experience – “Military Heavy”
 - NGO workers with little other experiences – “NGO Heavy”

- “Military Heavy” N=28
- “Military lite” N=17
- “NGO lite” N=10
- “NGO Heavy” N=23



Analysis Undertaken

- Identify items judged as significant sources of friction for whole sample.
- Comparison of which items were judged as significant sources of friction between the different groups.
- Factor analysis to determine how many factors there were actually in the responses – i.e. exploratory data analysis to reveal factor structure.
- Regression analysis of moderating factors.
- Conbach's Alpha test applied to determine whether it was possible to derive a measure of "erosion of humanitarian space".



Limitations

- Opportunistic / snowball sample
- Limited survey size
- Will not include respondents who are not willing to talk to military (“refusniks”)



FINDINGS



Sources of Friction (Identified by all)

- Different culture
- Lack of trust by NGOs of the Military
- Different motivations
- Different decision-making approaches
- Negative stereotyping of each other
- Lack of shared information
- Lack of understanding of each other's working constraints
- Sharing information by Military
- Openness of intentions by the Military
- Perceived erosion of humanitarian space
- Lack of trust by Military of NGO
- Lack of openness about each other's intentions
- Lack of understanding of each other's jargon
- Lack of NGO cohesion as a unified group
- Military attempts to Command /coordinate NGOs
- Lack of a single point of contact for NGOs
- Sharing information by NGOs
- Differences in risk perception and tolerance
- Military involvement in running camps
- Military aims and objectives not respected by NGOs
- Military tend to have short term focus
- Lack of familiarity of each other's working practices
- Lack of training for the Military about NGO operations
- Military aims and objectives not understood by NGOs
- NGO aims and objectives not understood by Military



Sources of Friction (Identified by NGOs only)

- Perceived erosion of humanitarian space
- Military involvement in Quick Impact Projects
- Military involvement in running camps
- Military involvement in provision of food and shelter
- Military involvement in WATSAN (Water and Sanitation)
- Inflexible decision making by the Military
- The Military may not always understand mission context
- Lack of understanding of NGOs' need for independence and neutrality
- The Military given apparently “humanitarian” tasks



Items NOT identified as Sources of Friction

- Competition for publicity
- Competition for funding
- Different sense of humour
- Military involvement in infrastructure schemes
- Military involvement in emergency medical assistance
- Lack of leadership by the Military
- Lack of clear lines of command in the Military
- Lack of respect for CIMIC officers by the Military
- NGOs tend to have a long term focus
- Military are too task focused
- NGOs are too people focused



Factor Analysis of Sources of Friction

4 Factor varimax solution:

1. Perceived erosion of humanitarian space
2. Organisational purpose
3. Organisational approach
4. Competition between organisations



Logistic Regression Analysis

- Perceived erosion of humanitarian space as a source of friction
 - Significant fit variables
 - Number of locations where respondents had experienced NGO-Military interface
 - Respondent's background
 - Affinity for NGOs
 - Variables that didn't fit included:
 - Training



CONCLUSIONS



Conclusions

- There *are* identifiable sources of friction between NGOs and the Military
- The primary sources of friction aligned to 3 main themes:
 1. Protection of the humanitarian space
 2. The issue of identity
 3. Communication issues – related to the use of language and meaning
- Moderating factors, which are perceived to reduce friction and enable cooperation:
 1. Background
 2. Experience of the NGO-military interface
 3. Affinity for NGOs
 4. Training (to some extent)



Thank you

QUESTIONS?

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