

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

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#### **Outline**

- Study Background
  - Context
  - Rationale & Drivers
  - Study Objectives
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- Study Methodology
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  - Survey
  - Participants
  - Analysis
  - Limitations
- Findings
- Conclusions





#### **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 Commi





# **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.
- 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





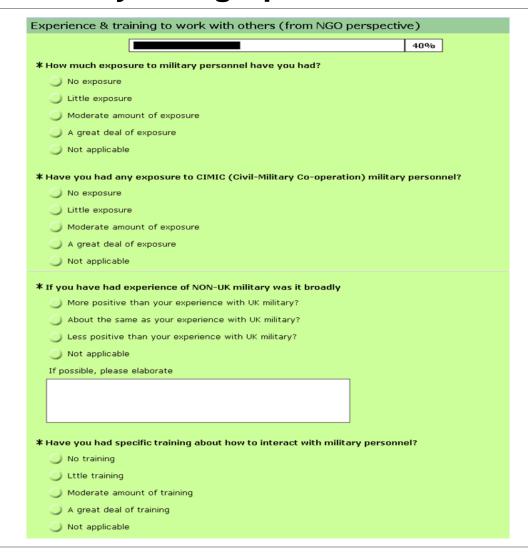
# **Survey Structure**

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





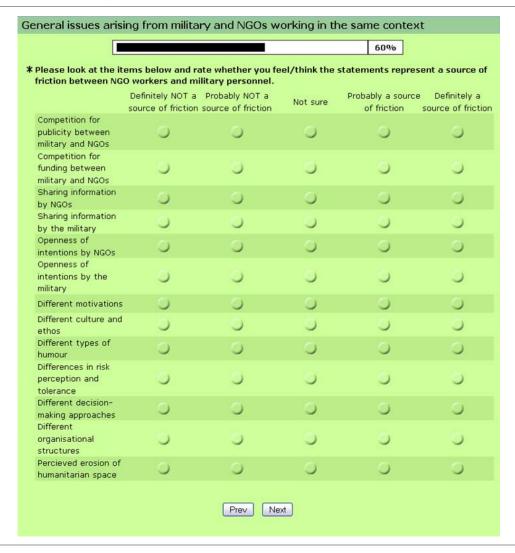
#### **Survey - Biographical**







### **Survey – Sources of Friction (Ratings)**







# Survey – Specific Issues (Ratings)







# **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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