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Surveying NGO–Military relations:
Empirical data to both confirm and reject popular beliefs

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14. ABSTRACT

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Surveying NGO–Military relations: Empirical data to both confirm and reject popular beliefs

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ABSTRACT

This study into NGO-Military relations examines how military personnel and civilians working for humanitarian organisations each perceive the barriers and enablers to their working together in the same context. Specifically, the intention was to inform the UK MOD about how different parties perceive the relationship and what can be done to minimise friction. Using snowball sampling, 84 participants were surveyed to explore the attitudes and experiences of both military and humanitarian actors. The original plan was to simply compare the two groups' views. However, it became apparent during analysis that a more refined categorisation based on previous experience provided more insight. This analysis identified that the sources of friction in NGO-military relations are indeed perceived differently by both NGOs and the Military, and that they appear to follow three main themes: (i) protection of humanitarian space; (ii) the issue of identity; and (iii) communication issues - the use of language and meaning. Moderating factors, which are perceived to reduce friction and enable cooperation, were identified as: background, experience of the NGO-military interface, affinity for NGOs, and to some extent training. There is also evidence which could potentially help to dispel some of the popular myths associated with NGO-military relations.

1 INTRODUCTION

> "*The battlespace is a complex environment with numerous actors. Understanding these actors is vital to military personnel undertaking their assigned tasks.*"
>
> Harland *et al.* (2004)

Operating in today's complex conflict zones are many organizations of different types, both military and non-military, whose aims and objectives, however legitimate, can be very different and sometimes difficult to reconcile. Parallel with this situation is the growing recognition by military leaders that kinetic actions alone by the Military are incapable of achieving all desired effects; "non-kinetic" actions, such as humanitarian actions or information campaigns, are considered by many to be equally essential. There is also a widespread recognition that no action or effect can be isolated from the complex web of relationships on the ground. Every action has second-order and higher-order effects which can ripple through all sides of the conflict, at a speed which is continually increased by modern communications technology and news media.

The upshot of all this is that, in the planning and execution of non-kinetic actions in particular, the Military must be prepared to cooperate and/or coordinate with the related efforts of civilian organizations in situ. Important civilian actors include, for example, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the United Nations (UN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

These new realities have stimulated calls for a more unified, multi-disciplinary approach to crisis prevention and management, involving not only military/security operations but also diplomatic, economic, political and humanitarian operations, all planned and executed as an integrated effort. In the UK, this is known as the Comprehensive Approach.

1.1 Aims and objectives

The UK MOD's (2006) official publication on the Comprehensive Approach (Joint Discussion Note 4/05) points out that the approach will become doctrine when sufficiently mature, but that in the meantime there is a requirement for greater clarity and mutual understanding to improve the Military's cooperation and coordination with other important actors such as NGOs, the UN and the ICRC. To this end, the study reported here was undertaken to provide the MOD[1] with psychological insight into sources of "friction" that can impair cooperation and coordination between military units and humanitarian NGOs during operations. Such insight should engender a better understanding between both parties which could potentially result in changed working practices leading to fewer difficulties during operations.

The focus of the study was on how both military personnel and aid agency staff on the ground *perceive* both barriers and enablers to their working together in the planning and execution of operations. The specific objectives of the study were defined as follows:

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. Summarise the enablers and barriers identified in objectives 1 and 2 in a survey and distribute the survey to a cross-section of military and civilian personnel to obtain an appreciation of the relative importance of different factors.
4. Use the data obtained in the survey to provide evidence to both the MOD and humanitarian community about how both sides perceive the same issues differently.

[1] In particular the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) and Joint Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC))

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Survey development

On the basis of cost, ease, location and availability of participants, it was decided that an online survey was the best route for collecting the necessary data from respondents. An iterative process was used to develop the online survey and determine appropriate questions:

1. **Literature review**. An initial review of recent literature was undertaken to identify key areas of interest or potential "friction issues".
2. **Interviews**. These were refined through 12 semi-structured interviews with NGO and military personnel which helped to identify barriers and enablers to working in the same context as each other.
3. **Pilot survey**. A total of 80 contributing factors were identified from the 12 interviews and the literature. To focus efforts, a pilot survey was undertaken using these factors as part of an item reduction exercise. In addition, to ensure that the survey would produce valid results, the pilot survey was exposed to stakeholders and amended on the basis of the feedback provided.
4. **Final survey**. Using an online survey tool, the final version of the survey was distributed to relevant individuals from humanitarian organisations and military backgrounds (see below).

Development of the survey was guided by the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1:
There will be sources of friction between NGOs and the Military.

Hypothesis 2:
NGOs and the Military will perceive some sources of friction differently.

Hypothesis 3:
There will be identifiable moderating factors which will be related to respondents' ratings.

Hypothesis 3 refers to the expectation that certain factors will affect the perception of barriers and enablers, such as the respondent's training and level of experience.

2.2 Survey structure

The survey was spilt into three parts:

Part 1 – **Biographical**

Part 2 – **Ratings** (closed questions about sources of friction)

Part 3 – **Free response** (open questions about NGO-military relations)

2.2.1 Part 1 – Biographical

The first part of the survey collected demographic data about respondents, including whether they currently worked for a civilian or a military organisation. An example is shown below (Figure 1). On the basis of their response, questions were presented and tailored to either the experiences of humanitarian actors working with the Military or vice versa.

2.2.2 Part 2 – Sources of friction ratings

The second part, the main body of the survey, contained 68 statements about NGO-military relations which were the same for all respondents. Respondents were asked to rate whether they felt/thought that the statements listed represented a source of friction. Ratings were made using a five-point Likert type scale where: 1 = "Definitely *not* a source of friction" and 5 = "Definitely a source of friction."

These items were broken down into three sections:

- ***A.*** The first 13 items explored general issues arising from the Military and humanitarian actors working in the same context (Figure 2).
- ***B.*** The next 8 items addressed one specific issue, namely the issue of *humanitarian space* (see below) (Figure 3).
- ***C.*** The next 47 items were detailed statements that also used the same five-point scale, but in addition allowed a "not true" response to be selected (Figure 4).

2.2.3 Humanitarian space

The term *humanitarian space* was coined in the mid-1990s to refer to "a space … in which [aid agencies] are free to evaluate needs, free to monitor the distribution and use of relief goods, and free to have a dialogue with the people."[2] Oxfam International (2008) adds that such space allows aid agencies "to work independently and impartially to assist populations in need, without fear of attack or obstruction by political or physical barriers to their work." In other words, it is a politically neutral geographical area that is dedicated and protected for humanitarian work.

In the past decade the "shrinking of humanitarian space" – that is, the erosion of aid agencies' independence and perceived neutrality due to military participation in humanitarian activities – has become a topic of particular concern to humanitarian organisations (OCHA, 2003; Holt, 2006; Stokes, 2007; UNHCR, 2009). Hence, the middle section of the survey consisted of 8 ratings addressing this one issue.

2.2.4 Part 3 – Free response

The final part of the survey contained 6 free response questions to gain further insight into the issues (Figure 5).

[2] R. Brauman, former Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) president, quoted by Wagner (2005)

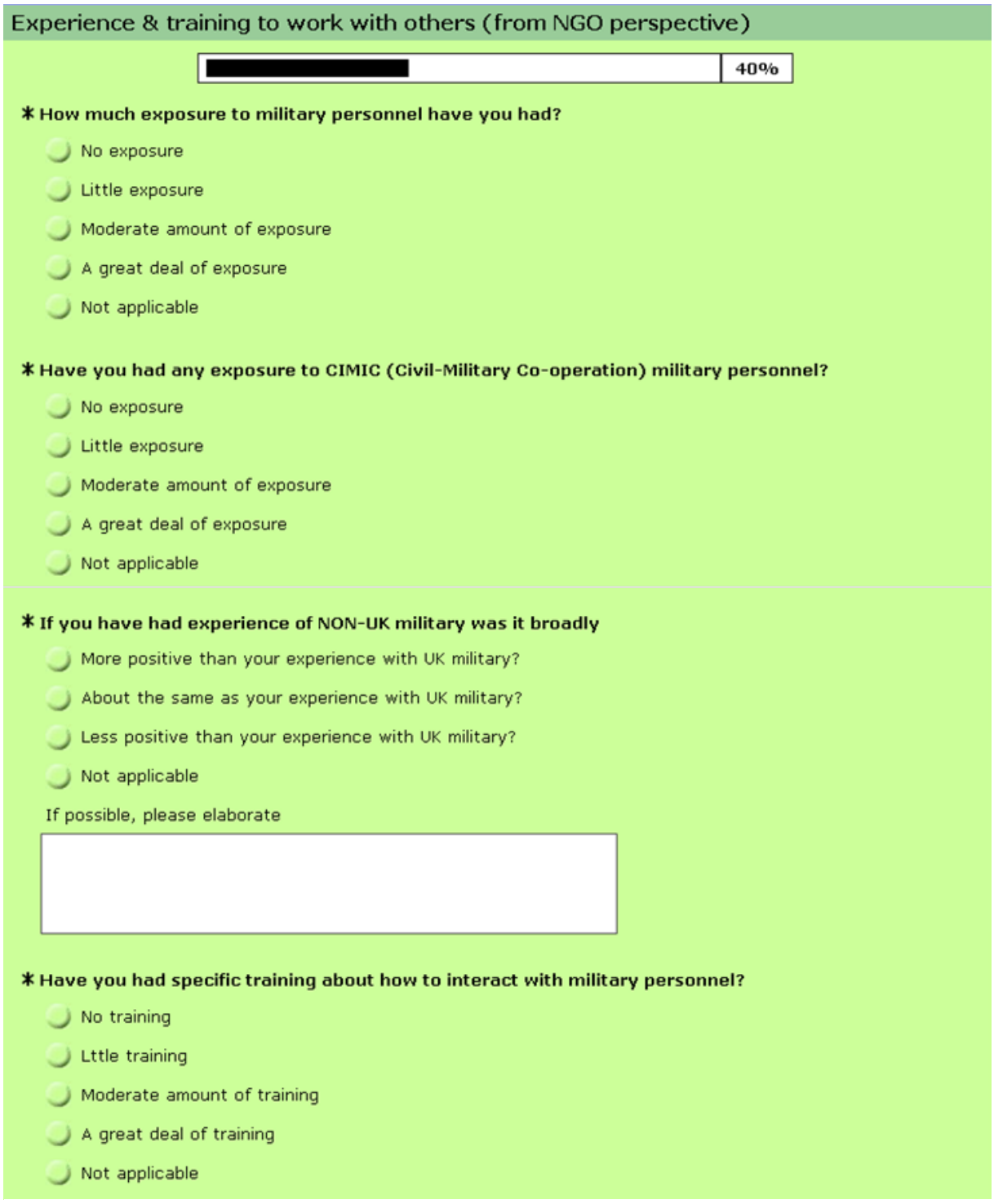
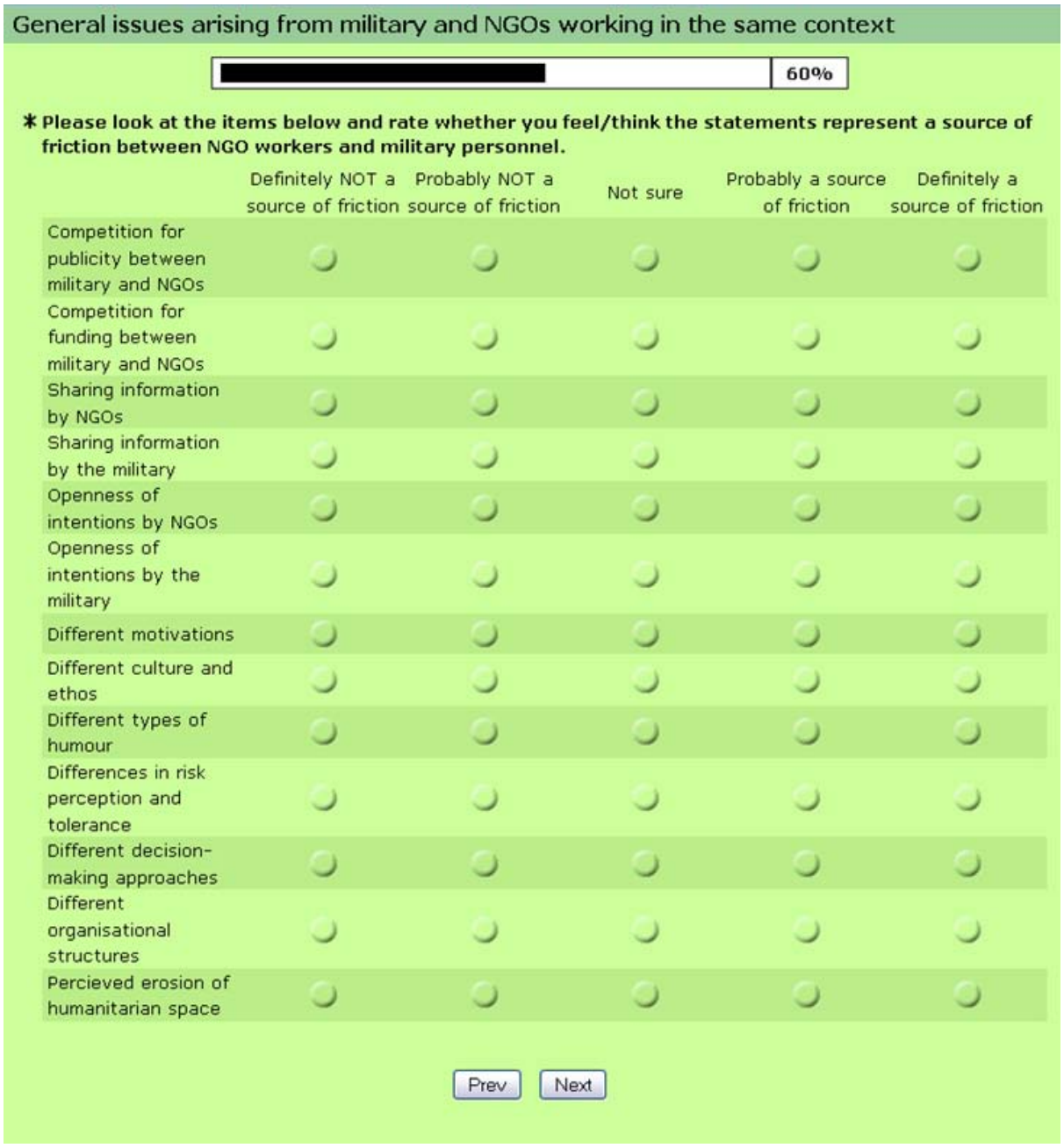


Figure 1: Example of biographical questions used in the survey



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	○	○	○	○	○
Competition for funding between military and NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing information by NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing information by the military	○	○	○	○	○
Openness of intentions by NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Openness of intentions by the military	○	○	○	○	○
Different motivations	○	○	○	○	○
Different culture and ethos	○	○	○	○	○
Different types of humour	○	○	○	○	○
Differences in risk perception and tolerance	○	○	○	○	○
Different decision-making approaches	○	○	○	○	○
Different organisational structures	○	○	○	○	○
Percieved erosion of humanitarian space	○	○	○	○	○

Prev Next

Figure 2: Survey items on general issues that represent sources of friction

Figure 3: Survey items on the specific issue of 'humanitarian space'

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

80%

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. If you believe the statement is not true, please select "NOT TRUE". Only one answer is required.

	NOT TRUE	Definitely NOT a source of friction	Probably NOT a source of friction	Not sure	Probably a source of friction	Definitely a source of friction
Poorly articulated aims by the military						
Poorly articulated aims by NGOs						
Poorly articulated intent by the military						
Poorly articulated intent by NGOs						
Negative stereotyping of each other						
Ineffectiveness of NGO Liaison Officers						
Ineffectiveness of military Liaison Officers						
Too few coordination meetings between NGOs and military						
No formal contact mechanism between military & NGOs						
Inflexible decision-making by NGOs						
Inflexible decision-making by the military						
Lack of trust by military of NGOs						
Lack of trust by NGOs of the military						
Lack of shared information						
Lack of openness about each other's intentions						
Lack of understanding of each other's jargon						
Lack of social interaction						
Lack of understanding of each other's working constraints						

Figure 4: Survey items on other specific issues (example)

Figure 5: Free response survey items

2.4 Participants

Access to participants was gained via a method of snowball sampling, an accepted approach for sampling difficult to find groups (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). This essentially means that participants were initially selected because they were known to the lead researcher, were available at the time of the study, and were associated with relevant organisations. These participants were also then invited to forward the survey on to their own contacts that were similarly relevant to the study. Combining the initial selection of 30 participants plus their own contacts, the total number of individuals approached was 84. Of these, 93% (N = 72) completed the survey – a high completion rate considering the length of the survey.

2.4.1 Division of participants into groups

The initial plan had been to allocate the participants to two groups: military vs. civilian (NGO). On the basis of their varied levels of experience, however, it was decided to partition them into four sets, "NGO Heavy", "NGO Lite", "Military Heavy" and "Military Lite", defined as follows:

NGO Heavy	Currently working for NGO and have never worked for a military organisation.	N = 23
NGO Lite	Currently working for NGO but have worked for the Military in the past.	N = 10
Military Heavy	Currently serving in the Military and have never worked for another organisation.	N = 28
Military Lite	Have a military background but have also had at least one civilian job, e.g. consultant.	N = 17

2.5 Data analysis methods

Data analysis was undertaken in two distinct phases: *quantitative* analysis on Part 2 ratings responses, and *qualitative* analysis on Part 3 free responses.

2.5.1 Quantitative analysis

The ordinal data obtained from the 68 responses of Part 2 (sources of friction ratings) were subjected to quantitative statistical analysis. As a reminder, these data were in three sections: (A) 13 high-level general issues; (B) 8 aspects of humanitarian space; (C) 47 detailed issues. Because sections (A) and (B) used one type of scale while section (C) used another type, they were examined separately.

- Factor analysis using the principal component method was undertaken on the 21 responses in sections (A) and (B) using Varimax factor rotation. This method was also applied to the remaining 47 items in section (C), although due to missing values the analysis was considered less robust.

- Regression analysis was used to determine whether it was possible to build a regression model of the moderating factors.

- Cronbach's Alpha test was used to identify items that were highly related to each other in order to develop a measure of the "perception of the erosion of humanitarian space".

- A standard regression analysis was then applied to this measure to identify significant components of the model.

- Finally, significant response items were identified by noting which deviated significantly from the centre point of the scale by drawing ±5% confidence intervals around the mid response, "Not Sure".

2.5.2 Qualitative analysis

The remaining 6 open questions of Part 3 (free response) were analysed using a qualitative analysis technique. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes arising from each of the open questions, and then to distil these into key concepts which were then considered within the wider context of the whole dataset and existing literature. Particular attention was given to comparing and contrasting the responses given by the different respondent groups.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Quantitative analysis of ratings

3.1.1 Factors identified as sources of friction

Table 1 shows which of the items addressed in Part 2 of the survey were judged to be sources of friction between NGOs and the Military. Average response scores are derived from individual response scores ranging between 1 ('definitely NOT a source of friction') and 5 ('definitely a source of friction').

A series of Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric tests was also performed to determine whether there were any significant differences in perception between NGO and military respondents. This identified a number of significant differences at the 5% level of significance on a two-tailed test:

- *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)*
- *Military involvement in emergency medical assistance*
- *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*

These differences are all sources of friction perceived by the NGOs but not by the Military. The Military's involvement in actions which appear to erode humanitarian space is perceived as the main issue.

3.1.2 Factors <u>not</u> identified as sources of friction

Although the aim of the survey was to identify significant sources of friction in NGO-military relations, it was also important to uncover what may be "popular myths" – issues which have been cited or alluded to in the literature as sources of friction but which were not actually perceived as such by the participants. Sense of humour, for example, is anecdotally noted to be very different between organisations; at the same time, the Military pride themselves in having a strong sense of humour. However, this was not seen, by the entire class of respondents, as a source of friction. The following items were uniformly *not* judged to be 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*

Table 1: Items rated as sources of friction (averaged across all respondents)

Item summary	Average response
Different culture	4.3
Lack of trust by NGOs of the Military	4.3
Different motivations	4.2
Different decision-making approaches	4.2
Negative stereotyping of each other	4.2
Lack of shared information	4.2
Lack of understanding of each other's working constraints	4.1
Sharing information by Military	4.0
Openness of intentions by the Military	4.0
Perceived erosion of humanitarian space	4.0
Lack of trust by Military of NGO	4.0
Lack of openness about each other's intentions	4.0
Lack of understanding of each other's jargon	4.0
Lack of NGO cohesion as a unified group	4.0
Military attempts to command/coordinate NGOs	4.0
Lack of a single point of contact for NGOs	4.0
Sharing information by NGOs	3.9
Differences in risk perception and tolerance	3.9
Military involvement in running camps	3.9
Military aims and objectives not respected by NGOs	3.9
Military tend to have short term focus	3.9
Lack of familiarity of each other's working practices	3.8
Lack of training for the Military about NGO operations	3.8
Military aims and objectives not understood by NGOs	3.8
NGO aims and objectives not understood by Military	3.8

3.1.4 Factor analysis of ratings

Factor analysis on the first 21 source-of-friction rating items (sections A and B) revealed four significant factors (Table 2).

(1) Factor 1, which explains 25% of the variance, is entirely composed of those elements highly associated with the **perceived erosion of humanitarian space**. These include such items as the Military provision of water and sanitation (WATSAN), running camps, both emergency and long term medical aid, reconstruction, and involvement in Quick Impact Projects (QIPS).

(2) Factor 2, which explains 12.5% of the variance, is related to information sharing by both NGOs and the Military, the intentions of the Military and the different motivations of NGOs and the Military. This factor seems to represent higher level differences in **organisational "purpose".**

(3) Factor 3, which explains 11.2% of the variance, is composed of different attitudes to risk, decision making, culture, organisation and humour. This factor could be described as characterising differences in **organisational approach**.

(4) Factor 4, which explains 7.6% of the variance, is composed of the two items related to **competition between NGOs and the Military** (i.e. funding and publicity), which incidentally were not rated as important issues by the majority of respondents.

For the following 47 survey items (section c), the solution is considered less robust due to a number of missing values regarding the strength of each potential source of friction. The missing values were partially caused by some respondents, selecting the response option, "Not True". Although this response could have been converted into "Definitely not a source of friction", the logic being that if it is not true then it cannot be a source of friction, this type of data manipulation was considered potentially misleading.

Table 2: Factor analysis of first 21 survey items

	Sorted Rotated Factor Loadings and Communalities				
Variable	**Factor1**	**Factor2**	**Factor3**	**Factor4**	**Communality**
• FDSHELT	0.903	0.086	0.058	-0.140	0.845
• WATSAN	0.868	0.043	0.014	0.030	0.756
• RUNCAMP	0.806	-0.164	0.034	-0.045	0.680
• EMERGENCY MEDICAL	0.783	0.076	0.202	-0.062	0.664
• QIPS	0.752	0.143	-0.032	0.151	0.610
• LONG RUN MEDICAL	0.717	0.146	0.145	-0.133	0.575
• RECONST	0.680	0.196	-0.059	0.234	0.559
• Perceived erosion of humanitarian space	0.617	0.062	0.209	0.044	0.430
• INFRAST	0.564	0.079	-0.081	0.468	0.550
• Military's intentions	0.192	0.732	0.040	0.082	0.581
• NGO info sharing	-0.008	0.703	-0.003	0.114	0.507
• Military info sharing	0.279	0.690	0.069	0.168	0.587
• NGO's intentions	-0.127	0.635	-0.099	-0.034	0.430
• Different motivations	0.333	0.545	0.347	0.030	0.529
• Different risk perception	0.174	0.118	0.740	0.140	0.611
• Different decision making styles	0.027	-0.207	0.711	0.192	0.587
• Different culture	0.153	0.318	0.655	-0.308	0.649
• Different organisations	0.072	-0.220	0.588	0.428	0.583
• Different humour	-0.017	0.055	0.499	-0.059	0.256
• Competition for funding	0.073	0.283	0.011	0.702	0.578
• Competition for publicity	-0.082	0.049	0.123	0.612	0.399
Variance	5.3854	2.6291	2.3516	1.5987	11.9648
%Var	0.256	0.125	0.112	0.076	0.570

Table 3: Logistic regression analysis

						Odds	95% CI
Predictor	**Coef**	**SE Coef**	**Z**	**P**	**Ratio**	**Lower**	**Upper**
Const(1)	-2.43125	1.14277	-2.13	0.033			
Const(2)	0.298764	1.04082	0.29	0.774			
Const(3)	2.29132	1.08234	2.12	0.034			
Count NGO-MIL interface	-0.718031	0.205693	-3.49	0.000	0.49	0.33	0.73
Respondent's background	-0.637588	0.227823	-2.80	0.005	0.53	0.34	0.83
Affinity for NGOs;	0.438861	0.198756	2.21	0.027	1.55	1.05	2.29

3.1.5 Regression analysis of "Perceived erosion of humanitarian space" as a source of friction

The output of this regression analysis is shown in Table 3. In sum, there is a significant fit to *perceived erosion of humanitarian space* ratings with three of the biographical variables:[3]

- The respondent's background (NGO Heavy, etc.).
- The number of contexts in which respondents have experienced the NGO-military interface.
- The respondent's self-rated "affinity" for NGOs.

In Part 1 of the survey, each respondent had been asked to indicate *where* they had experienced the NGO-military interface (e.g. Africa, America, Asia, Caribbean, Europe, Middle East, Far East, etc.). The implicit hypothesis here was that there may be some contexts where the NGO-military interface exposes the frictions to a greater extent than others. Analysis shows that none of the particular locations is significantly associated with identified sources of friction. However, the *number* of different places mentioned turned out to be a significant determinant of the rating of the *perceived erosion of humanitarian space*. A strong positive correlation (0.46; $p < 0.01$) was found.

Also in Part 1 of the survey, each respondent was asked to make an assessment of their affinity to a broad range of different organisations (NGO, Military, IOs, Government, Academia, etc.). The implicit hypothesis here was that some respondents, though they may have worked for much of their lives for a single organisation, could actually have a lot of respect for another organisation. Without such a rating it would not be possible to know where their opinions fell. Only the affinity for *NGOs* (but not Military, Government, Academia, etc.) had a significant positive relationship (0.55; $p < 0.01$) on the importance given to *perceived erosion of humanitarian space* as a source of friction. In other words, a greater affinity with NGOs by the respondent is associated with a higher rating of *perceived erosion of humanitarian space* as a determinant of a source of friction between NGOs and the military.

[3] The model fit is acceptable with a Somer's D measure of 0.61 and 80% concordant pairs and 20% discordant pairs.

3.2 Qualitative analysis of free-response questions

The findings from the thematic analysis are summarised below for each free-response question below. Due to confidentiality issues the raw data cannot be shown. However, some anonymous quotes are given in the Discussion which follows to illustrate various points made here.

---

1. Can you think of any other issues that might arise as a source of friction in the civil-military interface?

- *Lack of mutual familiarity and understanding*
- *Cultural differences*
- *Poor coordination on the ground*
- *Attitudes to political influence*

---

2. Can you make suggestions about how any frictions that arise between military personnel and NGO workers might be minimised?

- *Improvements in mutual understanding through training and education*
- *More effective coordination efforts through better communication*
- *Taking steps to cease military encroachment into humanitarian space.*

---

3. Do you believe there is enough or appropriate guidance for NGOs and Military working in the same context?

- *Existing guidance is very ineffective*
- *There is sufficient general guidance but not context-specific*

---

4. What would be the best way to distribute guidance concerning how Military and NGOs could work in the same context?

- *Incorporate the guidance as mandatory in joint education and/or pre deployment training*
- *Disseminate guidance through combined planning [military term] or coordination and cooperation meetings [NGO term]*

---

5. What are your thoughts on how NGOs and the Military should communicate or coordinate with each other?

- *Have regular (daily) meetings at a senior level, face-to-face, on neutral ground (e.g. local hotel), and coordinated by a joint group*
- *Have an 'open line' between senior leaders of both parties in theatre*
- *Military should un-classify information that can assist in relief activities*

---

6. What are your thoughts on how NGOs and the Military should communicate or coordinate with each other when undertaking disaster relief activities?

- *As above*
- *Maintain ongoing communication and coordination outside such activities, so that both parties have more familiarity and understanding of each other and have resolved their differences ahead of time*

---

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Conclusions

Consistent with the hypotheses defined at the outset of this study, the findings suggest that:

(1) There are identifiable sources of friction between NGOs and the Military;

(2) NGOs and the Military perceive some of these sources of friction differently; and

(3) There are identifiable factors which moderate such perceptions.

Overall, the survey found that some, but not all, of the potential sources of friction identified in our literature review are perceived as such by both military and humanitarian personnel.

Perhaps surprisingly, the differences in focus of the two agencies (people- vs. task-focused) were *not* perceived as sources of friction, nor is the possibility of competition between them for gaining publicity or funding. Likewise, sense of humour was not identified as a source of friction. It is possible that sense of humour is a national rather than organisational peculiarity; all respondents here were British, whereas in actual operations there are likely to be multiple nationalities within both parties.

Among the factors rated by the respondents as actual sources of friction, a number of clear themes emerge:

1. Both military and NGO respondents identify (apparent) differences in culture and ethos, approaches to decision-making and information sharing as the main source of friction between them. This includes understanding each other's intentions, aims and objectives.

2. There were certain issues which were perceived as sources of friction by the NGO respondents but not by the Military respondents. Chief among these by far is perceived erosion of humanitarian space, in particular that associated with the running of refugee camps.

Identifying both similarities and differences between groups in their perceptions is particularly important to assist both groups develop self-awareness and mutual understanding. If either group does not understand where the other group is "coming from" there are serious opportunities for misunderstandings to develop without the other group understanding how it has happened.

Unsurprisingly, the background of the respondent (NGO heavy, NGO lite, Military heavy, Military lite) helps predict ratings for *perceived erosion of humanitarian space* as a source of friction. This relationship is consistent with the hypothesis (H_3) that members of the different groups would perceive the issue of the erosion of humanitarian space in different ways and therefore their background would help determine their responses. However, the strength of the association, although significant, is not particularly strong.

Of particular note in the regression analysis was the lack of a significant relationship between ratings of *perceived erosion of humanitarian space* and the experience of having specific training in civil-military interaction. The implicit hypothesis was that this training would moderate respondents' perceptions of friction such that those respondents who had undergone training in how to interact with another group would appreciate the erosion of humanitarian space to a greater extent than those who had not. The current regression model does not reflect such a relationship. A potential explanation of this could be a lack of civil-military training provided to most individuals from a humanitarian NGO background.

4.2 Limitations

This study is not, of course, without its limitations.

First, the sampling method may have introduced bias into the results. Opportunity/snowball sampling does not guarantee a representative sample of the target groups, for example: the Military respondents tended to be very experienced and senior personnel (typically Lt Col and above), so the experiences of lower ranking personnel were absent from the study

There is also a tendency for respondents to be self-selecting, and an additional issue is that only those respondents who want to respond, will. Therefore no "refuseniks" were included in the sample, i.e. those civilians who insist on having no contact with the Military and on that basis refuse to participate in a study such as this.

There were a limited number of respondents (N = 84), and those items in section (C) responded to as "Not True" further reduced the sample size, as "Not True" responses were excluded and not addressed in the analysis.

4.3 Salience

On a final note, approximately half of those respondents who completed the survey indicated that they were interested in receiving a copy of the report. The lead researcher was surprised by the number of people who wanted to know more about the findings and it indicates a high level of interest. According to Sheehan (2001) the "salience of an issue to the sampled population has been found to have a strong positive correlation with response rate for.… internet-based surveys," where salience has been defined as "the association of importance and/or timeliness with a specific topic." A high response rate can be inferred from the fact that the survey was initially sent to 30 individuals, who between them identified and sent the survey on to their own contacts, leading to a further 54 responses. This lends weight to the suggestion that the study is addressing an important and timely issue.

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

Issued 10 June 2011 V1

Andrew Leggatt, Barry McGuinness and Freyja Lockwood

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Outline

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

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STUDY BACKGROUND

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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)

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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]

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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

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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.

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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.

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STUDY METHODOLOGY

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Approach

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

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Survey Structure

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

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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
- Lttle training
- Moderate amount of training
- A great deal of training
- Not applicable

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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	○	○	○	○	○
Competition for funding between military and NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing information by NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing information by the military	○	○	○	○	○
Openness of intentions by NGOs	○	○	○	○	○
Openness of intentions by the military	○	○	○	○	○
Different motivations	○	○	○	○	○
Different culture and ethos	○	○	○	○	○
Different types of humour	○	○	○	○	○
Differences in risk perception and tolerance	○	○	○	○	○
Different decision-making approaches	○	○	○	○	○
Different organisational structures	○	○	○	○	○
Percieved erosion of humanitarian space	○	○	○	○	○

Prev Next

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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)					
Military involvement in reconstruction schemes					
Military involvement in infrastructure schemes					
Military involvement in running camps					
Military involvement in provision of food and shelter					
Military involvement in the provision of water and sanitation					
Military involvement in emergency medical assistance					
Military involvement in providing long term medical assistance					

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Participants

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

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Proposed Analysis Plan

- Compare results from military and NGO workers…

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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

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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".

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Limitations

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

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FINDINGS

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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CONCLUSIONS

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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)

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Thank you

QUESTIONS?

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