

Tact or Friction? An examination of the military-NGO nexus in humanitarian contexts

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I hereby declare that, except where it is otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis represents my own original work.
All versions of the submitted thesis are identical.

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Abstract

There has been an observable trend of militaries and NGOs operating in closer proximity in both: armed conflict and natural disaster relief operations. Such operations, bring with them; a plethora of conceptual, ethical and practical challenges that have the potential to be points of friction between the two types of organisations. Previous research into this relationship has rarely investigated such points of friction as well as their underlying causes. This paper will use existing research, two case studies and key-informant interviews to investigate these aspects and examine their underlying causes to determine whether they are likely to be resolved through increasing familiarity between the two types of organisations or; be enduring, and unsolvable, points of friction into the future. This research has identified that some points of friction are likely to be resolved through strategic-level coordination, whilst others are likely to be enduring due to fundamental incongruencies between militaries and NGOs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“The global demand for humanitarian assistance ... continues to rise. This is triggered and sustained by the increased severity of natural hazards, escalation of conflict and a dramatic increase in vulnerabilities” (UN 2009). How will the global community increase the humanitarian ‘supply’ to meet the growing ‘demand’ that the current global condition requires? One possibility would be to simply increase the amount and size of NGOs in an already over-crowded field (Cottle & Nolan 2007; Goodhand 2013, p. 291), rife with calls from peak bodies demanding consolidation and coordination (OCHA 2021a; ODI 2019). Whilst there are only a handful of International NGOs (INGOs) such as the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Oxfam International, that have significant global reach, there are also a plethora of national and local NGOs in most nations. As of 2020, there were an estimated 10 million individual NGOs throughout the world (Global Leadership Bulletin 2020): all with individual, and sometimes competing mandates, as well as individual views on the best employment of limited resources. One possible alternative is to better employ militaries in humanitarian crises— by no means, an unfamiliar proposal. Militaries offer a vast array of benefits in the humanitarian space through their access to resources and personnel (Lawry 2009; Marcos 2009; Canyon et.al 2020; Bell et.al 2019). However, one of the most significant barriers to better coordination between militaries and NGOs is the inability for militaries, by definition, to uphold the humanitarian principles outlined in UN Resolution 46/182 (Metcalf et.al 2012; Jessop 2009; Glasser [Interview] 2021; Prasopa-Plaizier [Interview] 2021). More practically, the organisational structure and

culture of militaries often run directly against that of NGOs, despite both types of organisations often wanting to achieve similar outcomes (Harris 2016; Rosén 2009), albeit with different methods. Each of these types of these organisations come with their own strengths and limitations that will be discussed in greater detail throughout this paper.

Despite their different approaches, some, such as Harris & Dombrowski (2002, p. 156), argue that greater collaboration between militaries and NGOs is, not only beneficial but, essential for the achievement of humanitarian outcomes. It remains unclear whether it was observations such as these, or organic necessity, that instigated the increasingly intimate relationship between militaries and NGOs. In any case, there is a body of evidence, which will later be explored, that demonstrates the increasing intimacy in which these types of organisations operate (Harris 2016; Byman 2001; Hall & Deinla 2021), both geographically and doctrinally. Further, Daniel & Witticová (2020) note that existing literature surrounding the civil-military relationship lacks the consideration and examination that such an important relationship requires. This research aims to contribute to the growing literature surrounding the military-NGO relationship and will do so by employing: a literary review, key informant interviews and case studies to demonstrate its findings.

This paper will explore the relationship between militaries and NGOs in the humanitarian space: within the contexts of natural disaster relief and armed conflict. It will critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of each type of

organisation, as well as certain points of friction in the military-NGO relationship. This paper will then assess whether such points of friction are likely to be smoothed over through increased interaction, or if such tension should be resolved through conscious separation. First, this paper will briefly explore the historical military-NGO interface, before providing evidence of the increasing intimacy in operations of the two types of organisations. Following which, this paper will investigate the cultural differences and similarities of militaries and NGOs before evaluating how these differences and similarities are likely to affect the relationship of the two types of organisations.

Key Definitions

Prior to delving into a more rigorous exploration of the nexus between militaries and NGOs, it is prudent to develop definitions as to what constitutes either of these types of organisations.

The term ‘military’ may seem, on the surface, rather conspicuous, but nevertheless, it is important to define the term for purposes of this paper.

Within the bounds of this paper, the term *military*, will refer to those organisations that are commissioned by states to inflict lethal force in the pursuit of national objectives. It will only consider those military parties that are widely considered to be legitimate by the majority of the other nations.

Further, unless otherwise stipulated, this paper will use the term *military* to refer only to militaries of Western nations such as the US, Australia and European nations. As such, the focus of this research will be on the relationship between Western militaries and NGOs. This paper may consider interactions

with between Western militaries and Local NGOs (LNGOs), but such observations will play a peripheral role in this research and will be explicitly mentioned when doing so. This definition will preclude militaries associated with dictatorships in countries experiencing humanitarian crises. By way of example, the United State Military would satisfy the requirements for the term *military* within the confines of this paper; the Zimbabwean military under Mugabe would not. There are moral, ethical and physical challenges for organisations working with the both of these types of militaries, however only the former will be considered. The latter lies beyond the scope of this paper.

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are less easily defined (Martens 2002; Mitchell 2017, p. 1). NGOs can span a broad spectrum of causes, structures and sizes (Srinivas 2009). A succinct definition of NGOs is further complicated by the fact that, according to Turner et.al (2015, p. 235): “commonly, NGOs have been defined by what they are not (neither government, nor profit-driven organisations) than what they are”. In the interests of brevity, this paper will draw upon Turner et.al (2015, p. 235) and use the term NGO to refer to non-government, not-for-profit, principal focused organisations. Subsequent sections of this paper may further delineate between different types of NGOs, but will define such sub-categories when doing so. Unless otherwise stipulated, this paper will consider the term NGO to refer only to International NGOs (INGOs). The examination of the relationship between LNGOs and INGOs largely remains beyond the scope of this paper.

The third, and last, term that warrants discussion surrounding its definition is the term *humanitarian action*. This is an often-contested term, with ample debate surrounding it (Fassin 2007; Aly 2020), with some advocating for a strict, literal adherence to the humanitarian principles, while others advocating for a more conceptual approach to such principles. The debate also plays out in the political sphere, with different nations counting certain proportions of their military budget as part of their humanitarian budget, while others would disagree and assert that military spending is mutually exclusive with humanitarian spending (Mason 2016). China, for example, has recently deployed medical teams and donated medical equipment to over 150 countries as a response to combatting the global COVID-19 pandemic and considers the deployment of such assets as humanitarian assistance, despite it not falling within traditional definitions of humanitarianism (Kurtzer 2020). Kurtzer (2020) argues that this is indicative of the unique way in which China views humanitarian action. Nevertheless, it is paramount to define the term in order to stipulate the scope of this research. This paper will consider *humanitarian action* to refer to efforts made by governments, militaries, NGOs and UN and official organisations (eg. OIM, ICRC and OCHA) to reduce human suffering, address short-term natural and human-made disasters. It will exclude longer-term development efforts. Whilst the phrases ‘long-term’ and ‘short-term’ are relative, rather than absolute terms, they provide sufficient, yet necessary, margins for flexibility. The above definition draws on elements outlined by the 2003 meeting to decide upon the *23 Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship*, attended by 16 nations. One of which states: “the

objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made [sic] crises and natural disasters” (GHD 2016). It should also be noted that the four humanitarian principles of *humanity, neutrality, impartiality*, as stipulated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1991 (UN 1991), as well as *independence* (added in 2004 (UN 2004)) will be considered as abstract, guiding principles, rather than prescriptive dogma— a view congruent to that of OCHA (2012). Under this definition, efforts in Rwanda 1994 the 2004 South-Asian Tsunami would be included, whereas efforts focussed on the long-term reduction of global inequality would not. Further the terms *humanitarian action, humanitarian assistance* and *humanitarianism* will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Methodologies

Due to the limited timeframe available for this research it was determined that a literature review of academic and grey literature, as well as several key-informant interviews, would be the most appropriate methodologies to employ throughout this research. The primary strength of a literature review is that it allows researchers to gain an initial appreciation for the topic of their research (Hart 2018, p. 3). Within the context of this research, a literature review was used to identify the initial scoping of the research and aided in determining appropriate definitions of potentially ambiguous terms such as, ‘military’, ‘NGOs’ and ‘humanitarian action’. A review of existing academic, as well as grey, literature also revealed the relatively little extant, literature and the need for further academic commentary surrounding the military-NGO nexus (Harris

2016; Daniel & Wittichová 2020). The elements of the literature review are incorporated throughout the entirety of this research paper, rather than having a single, defined section within this research paper. This was decided as each individual section, including the two case studies, drew on existing literature. Whilst this has the potential to result in less concise reviews (Snyder 2019), it was deemed prudent to incorporate the literature review in this manner to best express the breadth of this research paper.

Key-informant interviews were chosen as a complementary methodology for this research in order to gain a more in-depth, personal account ongoing, as well as changing trends in the humanitarian space encompassing the military-NGO relationship. The people selected for this research were individuals from organisations that had relevant experience working in humanitarian contexts within the military-NGO. Further ethics approval was required in consultation with the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA) if key-informant interviews were to be conducted with serving members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Given the relatively short timeline of this research period, it was determined to exclude serving ADF members from this methodology. Further research should seek to obtain such approval and employ such a methodology. In total twelve requests were distributed to individuals within relevant organisations. Two successful key-informant interviews were conducted during the period of this research.

This research sought ethics approval from the Australian National University (ANU) Human Ethics Committee: protocol number 2021/592.

Chapter 2: The Evolution of the Military-NGO Interface

The majority of well-established, larger NGOs were born out of armed conflict. The Red Cross was born from the battle of Solferino in 1863 (IFRC 2021); Oxfam was founded in response to the allied Naval blockade of Greece in 1942 (Oxfam 2021a) and; Save the Children was created in the wake of World War I and the blockade of Germany (Save the Children 2021). These examples demonstrate that NGOs have a long history in working in the same space as militaries. The above NGOs were not originally created to cooperate with militaries, in fact, many of them were created to counter the effects of military action. As such, these examples also portend the ongoing conflicts between militaries and NGOs that continue in the present day. The military-NGO relationship can be traced back to the origin of NGOs. It is evident that NGOs have had an enduring, albeit precarious, relationship with militaries. However, this relationship has been subject to a constant process of evolution (Simms & Trim 2011; Engell 2013; Metcalfe et.al 2012).

The Red Cross, established in 1863, was one of, if not the, first civilian humanitarian organisation and evolved from Henry Durant's *A Memory of Solferino* (IFRC 2021). Durant's book proposed the establishment of an ongoing organisation that would provide assistance to injured soldiers and civilians alike (Rysaback-Smith 2015, p. 6). Given that The Red Cross was established as a response to armed conflict, it has always had an interaction with military organisations. The Red Cross also created the foundation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) through its establishment of the Geneva

Conventions between 1864 and 1949 that “obliged armies to care for wounded soldiers, whatever side they were on” (ICRC 2016). The Red Cross has not only been involved in the physical treatment of wounded soldiers and civilians, but also had significant influence in the development of IHL; laws that govern armed conflict— laws that all participants in war, including traditional militaries, are subject to. This provides evidence that the military-NGO interface is not one-dimensional, but rather a multifaceted relationship whereby each type of organisation relies upon the other in a multitude of aspects including, physical, ethical, legal and doctrinal challenges.

The United Nations (UN) was created in 1945 “committed to maintain international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights” (UN 2015a), thus; bearing linkages to the concerns of militaries from the outset. Whilst the UN is neither a military force, nor an NGO: its establishment, and subsequent involvement in humanitarianism, provides important context for understanding the relationship between militaries and NGOs. The first UN Peacekeeping operation, in 1948, was a small deployment of UN military observers to the Middle East to monitor the Armistice agreement between Israel and its neighbouring Arab states (UN 2018). Since this time, there have been more than 70 UN peacekeeping operations, involving more than 100,000 military, police, and civilian personnel, from 125 different nations, working in 14 different peacekeeping operations globally (UN 2018).

In the modern era, there have been calls from NGOs, and their peak bodies, for the role of militaries to be curtailed to that of pure support to NGOs, civil organisations and local authorities (Lischer 2007, p. 107; UN 2003, p. 9; OCHA 2014a, p. 41). For example, OCHA (2014a), writes: “military troops or assets engaged in combat will, as a general rule, not be used at all, except for infrastructure support where absolutely necessary” (p. 41). There are cultural and organisational tensions that arise from such a proposition, and will be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper. Regardless, the point remains that contention surrounds the involvement of militaries in disaster relief operations, despite there also existing concurrent calls by governing bodies, including the UN, that call for greater coordination and consolidation of effort from the various NGOs that operate in disaster relief humanitarian operations (OCHA 2021a). Can, or should, such governing bodies, have their humanitarian cake and eat it too? — a question that will also be explored in later sections of this paper.

Coordination

The role of both militaries and NGOs are becoming increasingly intertwined in the humanitarian space (Harris 2016; Rosén 2009; Byman 2001; Jessop 2009; Olson 2006). The state of modern armed conflict is rapidly evolving to encapsulate an ever-increasing range of actors (OCHA 2020a; Byman 2001; Harris 2016).

The increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disasters across the world (Rysaback-Smith 2015, p. 6) has progressively drawn the attention of militaries to assist (Rosén 2009). These two types of organisations, each with their own particularities, are operating in ever-closer proximity. What form will such a relationship take? Who will benefit and who will not?

Armed Conflict

The nature of armed conflict is undeniably in the midst of change. Armed conflicts have traditionally revolved around two or more warring parties, likely state militaries. However, the age of traditional state-on-state warfare is largely over (Bernard 2015; Cincotta 2018; De Lauri 2019; Duffield 2001; Rosén 2009). Harris (2016, p. 9) asserts, “the current era is characterised by a decline in inter-state conflicts, a sharp rise in intra-state conflict”. To this end, Stelzenmüller (2020) notes that the Western intervention in intra-state conflict is at an all-time high. This shift away from inter-state armed conflict has developed a trend towards a higher proportion of casualties in armed conflict being civilians, as opposed to uniformed soldiers (Watson Institute 2021). Increasingly they are involved in conflict with combatants that are not members of national militaries. Such combatants are less likely to abide by traditional IHL or LOAC (Clapham 2006), thereby forcing militaries to rethink their core mandates and how they are to operate in such situations. Such a trend has expectedly caused a shift in global responses; not only from traditional militaries who are now placing a greater emphasis on peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance (Harris 2016, p. 8), but also from NGOs who see an

increased need for their assistance (OCHA 2021a). Further, Dill (2019, p. 315) writes, “in the twenty-first century, states rarely go war for aims traditionally associated with the use of military force abroad, such as territorial expansion or permanent occupation”. To this end, Friis (2010) writes, “since the 1990’s (sic) the use of force has been increasingly legitimised on humanitarian grounds”. This is not to suggest that conflict will be more or less common in the future, but simply to demonstrate that the nature of conflict is evolving to become shrouded in more layers of social, political and diplomatic detail and that this increasingly complexity has drawn more actors into this space of armed conflict.

While the nature of warfare, for the most part, has evolved beyond traditional state-on-state conflict; there may be other causes of the expansion of the mandates of militaries, which will be discussed further shortly. Harris (2016) asserts that militaries are increasingly participating in what they term ‘complex’ operations. Harris (2016, p. 9) writes, “complexity is understood as combining a number of factors demanding a multi-faceted response, such as disaster or humanitarian crisis together with conflict or state capacity”. These ‘complex’ operations seem to be the result of the, relatively recent, framing of humanitarianism amongst other, broader, spheres of knowledge.

There is some literature that suggests that the realm of humanitarianism is becoming examined within the contexts of boarder fields if international relations, global security and political domains (Seybolt, 2007; Davey et.al 2013; De Lauri 2018). In comparison, the long history of the field of

humanitarianism which some, such as Rysaback- Smith (2015) and Davey et.al (2013) argue, date back to the nineteenth century: this incorporation into broader fields of society is a relatively contemporary phenomenon. Seybolt (2007, p. 1) writes “once considered an aberration in international affairs, humanitarian military intervention is now a compelling foreign policy issue; it presents a fundamental challenge to state sovereignty; it radically influences the way humanitarian aid organizations and military organizations work”. Some, such as Metcalfe et.al (2012), note an increasing number of interventions that have “become characterised by ‘comprehensive’ or ‘stabilisation’ strategies that have *explicitly* sought to combine humanitarian, military and other spheres of action under an over-arching political objective” (p. 5). Practical examples of the changing face of armed conflict can be seen in examples such as Afghanistan and Rwanda. The increasing politicisation of humanitarian action will be discussed further in subsequent sections.

Whatever the reason, it is evident that the expanding mandate of militaries is beginning to incorporate more elements of humanitarianism and that militaries are employing more of their resources on humanitarian efforts (Hofmann & Hudson 2009). Whilst humanitarian NGOs often advocate for greater resources in the humanitarian sector, the increasing military mandate has not been universally welcome by all in the NGO community. For example, the Overseas Development Institute accused militaries of ‘devouring’ the humanitarian space (Stoddard 2003). There are assumptions made by many INGOs that the involvement of militaries will threaten their neutrality, impartiality and

independence (Lischer 2007, p. 101). This hesitancy by NGOs will be further discussed in later sections.

As such, there seems to be two opposing forces at work regarding military involvement in the humanitarian space. First, the military sees its core role expanding to increasingly incorporate more elements of humanitarian action, even if it only to keep them occupied during peacetime. Second, many NGOs, and their peak bodies, such as OCHA, are calling for this expansion of military mandates to be restricted to that of its traditional role of war-fighting, and if they are to be involved, then their role should be one of support and only act when there is not civilian alternative available (OCHA 2014). Goodhand (2013, p. 297) writes, “generally, NGOs have tended to argue for sharp boundaries and a clear delimitation of tasks, whilst the default position of the military is to blur or demolish these boundaries through integration”. These opposing forces foreshadow some of the many points of friction between NGOs and militaries in the humanitarian space that will be discussed throughout the remainder of this paper.

Furthermore, there is much commentary that the roles of modern militaries are changing “with a focus on military contributions to humanitarian responses” (Harris 2016, p. 8). This is a trend acknowledged by both militaries and NGOs alike. Some NGOs have acknowledged this and are beginning to posture themselves to capitalise on this trend, whilst others object and resist such trends. InterAction, for example, was openly ambivalent about the

establishment of the US Command for Africa (AFRICOM) whose purpose was to support humanitarian assistance (Hoffman & Hudson 2009).

Civilian humanitarian organisations have long been involved in the peripheries of armed conflict. Since the establishment of The Red Cross in 1863, NGOs have always played a subtle, yet important, role in conflict zones. However, as the nature of modern armed conflict evolves, it is likely that the role of civilian humanitarian organisations operating in conflict zones will expand into this new era of armed conflict that will be increasingly justified on humanitarian grounds (Bernard 2015).

Natural Disasters

Both the regularity and severity of natural disasters has been increasing in the previous several decades. For example, the UN writes, “in 2019, 396 natural disasters were reported, above the annual average of the last 10 years (343 disasters per year), killing 11,755 people, affecting nearly 95 million others and causing approximately \$150 billion in losses” (OCHA 2021a, p. 35). An increase in the supply of humanitarian action for natural relief is required to match this contemporary demand. Militaries offer vast logistic and manpower resources that surpass that of most NGOs (Canyon et.al 2020; Marcos 2009; Bell et.al 2019). In addition, they offer official government endorsement that can be used as a tool of official diplomatic messaging (Ebitz 2019); an attribute that NGOs, by their very nature, cannot offer. This is under the assumption that host nations will allow foreign militaries to operate within their country, which

may not be the case in some nations. For example, in Aceh, Indonesia prior to the 2004 tsunami (Williams 2009, p. 404; Wiharta 2008, p. 88). However, such abundant resources, may be the only viable solution to such dramatic increases in the 'demand' for humanitarian action in the sphere of natural disasters.

Herein lies another enduring tension in the civil-military humanitarian debate: finding the balance between respecting sovereignty and providing assistance or resources to foreign nations.

The domain of natural disaster relief has traditionally been one occupied by NGOs (Harris 2016; Byman 2001). However, more recently, militaries have been called upon to deliver humanitarian assistance in these contexts where they have been permitted by host nations (Metcalf et.al 2012; Jessop 2009). Natural disaster relief has not traditionally been a central tenet of militaries, but is increasingly becoming so and has relatively recently been incorporated into the core doctrine of Western militaries (Harris 2016, p. 18; AFDP 2019).

The way that NGOs have operated in the context of natural disasters has remained largely unchanged, or rather its natural trajectory- relative to world events- has not been dramatically altered (Brown & Kalaegaonkar 2002). NGOs have adapted to changes in the nature of disasters and have continued to harness technological improvements to better their effect in natural disaster relief operations (Center for Disaster Philanthropy 2020). What is challenging the natural evolution of civilian humanitarian organisations however, is the increasing involvement of militaries in disaster relief operations (Rosèn 2009).

Whilst the involvement of militaries in natural disaster relief is not a new phenomenon, the early 1990s bore witness to growth in this interaction and examples include the cyclone in Bangladesh (1991) and Hurricane Mitch (1998) (Hoffman & Hudson 2009). In the twenty-first century, examples include: the Boxing Day Tsunami (2004), Hurricane Katrina (2005), as well as the Pakistan earthquake (2005). Each of these natural disasters had their own nuances regarding military involvement, yet one consistent element in each of these operations was the ambivalence by NGOs, as to how this increased military involvement would affect their efforts in disaster relief. Further, it is not only the participation in natural disaster that has been a point of contention amongst NGOs, but also the way in which they participate, and will be discussed further in following sections.

There have been many NGOs and peak bodies that call for military participation natural disaster to be only used as a last resort (UN 2003). This is also a point echoed by *The Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets* (OCHA 2007) that states: “foreign military and civil defence assets should only be requested when there is no comparable civilian alternative” (OCHA 2007, p. 8). Regardless of the reluctance of NGOs and their peak bodies, the closer operations of civilian and military organisations in the disaster relief space seems to be an inescapable trend. The focus of both types of organisations should be to identify how to manage such phenomenon.

The roles that define military operations are evolving. No longer are Western militaries *only* defined by their ability to fight traditional conflicts, their roles are expanding to encapsulate progressively more humanitarian roles (Fischer 2020). For many military organisations, such as the US Navy: humanitarian assistance has become a core role, alongside sea control and maritime security (AFDP 2019). The involvement of military personnel in some humanitarian crises are justified on the grounds that the humanitarian crisis was a corollary of the conflict that involved such militaries. Therefore, it would be prudent that the same organisations bear some of the moral burden of clean-up efforts. The recent evacuation of Afghan civilians from Kabul, following the rise of the Taliban in 2021, assisted by Western military forces is one such example that demonstrates this line of reasoning (De Luce 2021; Mahony 2021).

Others propose that military humanitarian intervention is now commonplace, and an integral part of modern warfighting (Henry in Lischer 2007, p. 100). Lischer (2007, p. 101) writes: “military planners no longer view humanitarian aid as a separate activity occurring after the conflict, but as essential to the success of the military intervention”. In other circumstances, it seems that militaries were involved simply because they are seen, by at least some, as largely resourceful and efficient organisations that can deliver outcomes where other smaller, less unified, organisations cannot (Collinson & Elhawary 2012). In these contexts, the involvement of militaries has little to association with their historically traditional role of fighting wars, and more to do with their logistic power and resources (Tatham 2011).

How will they come together?

On the front of conflict, it seems that civilian humanitarian organisations are becoming increasingly involved in a space previously occupied by militaries (Canyon et.al 2020; Poole 2013). On the front of natural disaster relief, it seems that militaries are becoming increasingly involved in a space previously occupied by civilian humanitarian organisations (Hofmann & Hudson 2009; Harris 2016). It is clear that there is a convergence between militaries and civilian humanitarian organisations in both conflict and disaster relief operations. What is not clear however, is how this cooperation will evolve and whether it will blossom through increasing coordination or wither under competing interests and a reluctance to cohabit the same spaces. Further, should this coordination be regulated? If so, who should regulate it? Or should this relationship be left to natural evolution, with the hope that the fittest, and most useful, organisation will survive? What are the risks in doing so? These are questions that will be explored throughout subsequent sections of this paper.

The remainder of this paper will compare and contrast the strengths and vulnerabilities of militaries and INGOs involved in humanitarian assistance operations in the context of both: armed conflict and natural disasters. This paper will then examine whether the convergence of militaries and INGOs, in the two aforementioned humanitarian contexts, is likely to be beneficial or detrimental to both parties, and what the likely effect will be for civilians caught in the middle of such circumstances. Lastly, this paper will consider

how this relationship should be managed so that all stakeholders have the greatest probability to benefit.

Military Humanitarianism: Oxymoron or Modern Necessity?

Established in 1935, the four principles of humanitarianism are: *humanity*, *neutrality*, *impartiality* and independence (OCHA 2012). One of the most often recalled criticisms of military involvement in humanitarian crises is that they are unable to maintain, or often even establish, the aforementioned principles of humanitarianism (Jessop 2009; De Lauri 2019). Falling under the jurisdiction of national governments, militaries are required by their mandate to do the bidding of such parties (Scheltinga et.al 2005, p. 57). Such bidding, inherently carries the political aims and will of that nation; thereby precluding militaries from the ability to uphold the four humanitarian principles. Not only does OCHA (2012) consider these four principles to be the foundation for all humanitarian action, but also “essential elements of effective humanitarian coordination.” Despite this, OCHA also understands these principles to be more conceptual than prescriptive dogma (OCHA 2021a). As such, some institutions, such as *Humanity in Action*, have branded the term ‘military humanitarianism’ as an oxymoron of sorts (Humanity in Action 2012). One must question if militaries do, or should, have a legitimate place in contemporary humanitarian action. This section will investigate each of these four principles outlined by OCHA and assess whether they remain relevant in the modern era.

The principle of *Humanity*, according to OCHA (2012), is characterised by the following statement: “human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.” There are numerous examples whereby militaries have failed to address human suffering in humanitarian crises. One such example is the Rwandan Genocide whereby UN Peacekeepers were powerless to intervene in mass killings due to restrictive Rules of Engagement (ROE). Despite this, there are also many examples whereby military humanitarian intervention has reduced human suffering in both armed conflict and natural disasters. This is not to negate the positive effect that military humanitarian intervention has had in some humanitarian crises, but simply to highlight that military intervention cannot always uphold the humanitarian principle of *humanity*. However, a similar case could easily be made for civilian humanitarian organisations; and will be discussed further in subsequent sections.

As for the principles of *neutrality*, *impartiality* and *independence*: militaries are inextricably tied to the agendas of the governments they serve. As such, militaries are doctrinally unable to uphold these three humanitarian principles. Most militaries involved in humanitarian operations will have dedicated cells within their organisations that will plan and supervise such operations. Despite this, there are practical, as well as doctrinal, vulnerabilities within military organisations that make it impossible to maintain independence. Practically, the staff within these cells are often filled with personnel that are still serving

military members. Such members are unlikely to engage in, or pursue efforts that do not serve the broader military objectives. Doctrinally, military organisations are unlikely to pursue taskings that do not serve the interests of their organisation, unless they are tasked by governments. In either case, it is evident that militaries are inextricably tied to the political agendas of their own organisation, and that of the governments to which they answer. Whilst one may argue that NGOs are also influenced by governments; they are not subject to the same political restrictions as militaries; and are therefore, at least, able to uphold it to a greater extent.

In many of the above examples, it can be seen that militaries were often forced to choose between the four principles, and that they were put in situations whereby it was impossible to uphold all four principles simultaneously. For example, in the Rwandan genocide, UN Peacekeepers were ordered to prioritise neutrality above humanity, which led to significant loss of life (Lakin 2019; Kuperman 2001). The ramifications of this specific example will be investigated further in the following section of this paper. In certain situations, militaries were required to prioritise one principle over another. The same can be said of NGOs, or any organisation or individual operating in humanitarian crises. Many INGOs receive significant portions of their funding from Western government donors (Oxfam International 2021b; Folger 2020 ; Nunnenkamp et.al 2009), with the exception of MSF (MSF 2021). Implicit in the accepting of these funds by INGOs is the requirement to somewhat toe the party line of donating governments (Thomas 2015, p.22). At times this requirement is not so

implicit. In May 2003 USAID notified NGOs that received funding from USAID would have to remove criticism of US government policy in Iraq and “consistently publicise the US government’s funding of their efforts ... reflecting the Administration’s belief that recipients of federal grants are agents of the US government and its policies” (Sunga 2006, p.107). In the days that followed, many INGOs, including Save the Children (U.S) and Mercy Corps received US \$7 million each for signing a statement that required them to liaise with USAID for any contact with news media (Sunga 2006 p.7). This funding presumably allowed each of these NGOs to further their operations in Iraq and in doing so: relieve human suffering. In doing so, they simultaneously compromised their principles of *independence*, *impartiality* and *neutrality*.

An in-depth analysis of whether simultaneously maintaining all four humanitarian principles are a feasible option for any individual or organisation imbued in humanitarian crises is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to note that compromising between humanitarian principles is not a dilemma unique to militaries; but to all humanitarian actors. Byman (2001, p.104) notes that the doctrinal inability for militaries to uphold the humanitarian principles is key driver in the hesitancy for NGOs to cooperate with militaries. However, Jessop (2009, p. 99) asserts:” if humanitarian agencies cannot provide enough assistance to meet the needs of the affected population it is immoral for them to prevent other actors from doing so. It may be necessary to co-operate with the military and contravene some of the humanitarian principles to continue field operations”. Perhaps *humanity* is the

only principle that militaries have a hope of upholding, or perhaps the humanitarian principles are outdated and no longer fit for purpose.

The principles of humanitarianism were created in a time where humanitarian crises that arose from armed conflict and natural disasters were fundamentally different to the current paradigm. As previously noted, armed conflict is now less commonly between two well-defined parties. Natural disasters are increasing both in their frequency and in their magnitude. Further, the organisations that are at the centre of humanitarian assistance have also changed since the creation of the humanitarian principles. In 1965, in the role of militaries was primarily that of armed conflict against other militaries. Humanitarian assistance, was on the periphery of the organisational mandate of militaries. In the twenty-first century however, humanitarianism is increasingly moving towards the core of many Western military mandates (Canyon et.al 2020). Some, such as the US Navy, have even recognised it as a central tenet of their mandates (AFDP 2019). There has been an abundance of NGOs established since the creation of the humanitarian principles. The scope of NGOs has also broadened to encapsulate increasingly more humanitarian outcomes (Ryfman 2007). Perhaps the humanitarian outcomes have been rendered obsolete, and the inability for militaries to uphold such antiquated principles is no longer a consideration for humanitarian action.

Beyond the nature of humanitarian crises and the organisations involved; the world is a fundamentally different place. Since 1935, humanity has witnessed: several major wars; the advent of the internet and social media; global

awareness of climate change and; a multitude of political and diplomatic spats. As such, one must ask if such principles remain relevant in the modern era, or are an archaic reflection of a different time. This contemplation should be kept front of mind as this paper now turns to investigate the strengths, weaknesses and complexities in the military-NGO relationship.

Chapter 3: Structures and Cultures

Organisational Structure

There are significant differences in the ways that militaries and NGOs are structured (Bradford 2013; Duffey 2000). The structures of each of these types of organisations are a reflection of both: their purpose, as well as their operational experience (Bradford 2013). Broadly, militaries are vertical, rigid and highly structured organisations with a clear delineation of tasks and responsibilities (Ralston 2006; Morgan 2015). NGOs, on the other hand are relatively flat, flexible and collaborative organisations (when compared to most militaries) (Scheltinga et.al 2005; Baumann 2008, p. 72; Metcalfe 2012). Each of these organisational structures have their benefits as well as their shortcomings. This section will explore such differences, as well as areas of commonality, to demonstrate the ongoing need for both in humanitarian crises.

Militaries

Militaries have long been known for their hierarchical organisational structure, whereby each individual, or group of individuals, report to supervisors who have clearly defined leadership roles and associated authority (Kovács & Tatham 2009; Scheltinga et.al 2005, p. 57). Such clearly defined vertical organisational structures mean, at least conceptually, that all individuals within the hierarchy are working towards common overarching objectives, which may sometimes come at the cost of personal autonomy (Rishipal, 2014). Anecdotal evidence of this can be drawn from the countless examples of individual

sacrifice for the achievement of military objectives within the canon of military literature.

Well-defined hierarchical structures, such as that of most militaries, lend themselves to greater centrality (ADF, 2018). This centralised authority and leadership is at the heart of organisational doctrine of most militaries (ADF, 2018). Greater centrality within organisations, such as that of militaries, allows for swifter decision making, as strategic decisions are made with a relatively small group of individuals (ADF 2018, p. 11; Rishipal 2014, p. 62). In practice, this translates to swifter decision making. Whether such decisions are the most appropriate decisions, will be discussed further in subsequent sections.

However, it must be noted that decisions are generally made swifter in vertical organisational structures (Rishipal 2014) and rapid responsiveness has obvious benefits in humanitarian crises, particularly in response to natural disasters. A shortcoming of highly vertical organisational structures, is that they are relatively inflexible and have an innate resistance to creativity (Rishipal 2014, p. 61). Rigid organisational structures have less room for creativity or flexibility (Rishipal 2014; Levitt 2002). The case of military intervention, or lack thereof, in the Rwandan Genocide will be discussed below, and aptly demonstrates the inflexibility of hierarchical organisations, even in the face of genocide.

Beyond the bounds of individual national militaries, are instances that involve militaries of multiple nations. When militaries from differing nations work together, there may be points of vulnerability such as: discrepancies in standard

operating procedures; differences in mandates and; divergences in cultures. However, such vulnerabilities are often willingly addressed by all parties involved as they all stand to gain from better integration and coordination (Bensahel 1999). There are several overarching military alliances, such as NATO or the Five Eyes Alliance that encourage further cooperation and collaboration. NATO, for example, currently has thirty member states including the US, UK and France (NATO 2020a). These alliances also carry ramifications for foreign relations. As such, these alliances are often heavily supported by the national governments that are involved in their establishment and continuation. Such political risk and responsibility often mean that individual militaries, when working as an alliance, will sometimes sacrifice individual autonomy, as well as operational effectiveness, for the sake of maintaining harmonious foreign relations (McInnis 2013, p. 89). Bensahel (1999) terms this compromise: the ‘coalition paradox’, whereby militaries of different nations will work together, under the assumption that their cooperation will yield favourable operational results. However, such collaboration may actually yield poorer outcomes due to inefficiencies in working together. The ramifications of this, within the context of humanitarian action, can be seen in the example of UN peacekeeping in the Rwandan Genocide.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) from 1993-1996 was perhaps one of, if not the, most extreme examples whereby militaries, operating as a coalition force under UN command and control

structure, degraded operational effectiveness for the sake of maintaining coalition unity. The UN was resolutely concerned with becoming entangled in another civil war, as it did in Somalia less than a year prior (Drew & Beardsley 2018, p. 123; Brunk 2008; Martiz 2012). As such, the Rules of Engagement (ROE) were not fit for purpose— a criticism widely held amongst academic, political and military circles alike (Lakin 2019; Frewen 2018; Melvern 2015). The original intent of UNAMIR was to oversee the implementation of the Arusha Accords, but risk of compromising neutrality was of upmost concern for UNAMIR (Drew & Beardsley 2018; Brunk 2008). As such, the ROE for troops operating as part of UNAMIR was guided by a mandate of non-intervention, rather than to preventing genocidal acts (Drew & Beardsley 2018; HRW 1999a). Part of the reason for the lacking ROE was that it was not developed following normal protocols and procedures (Drew & Beardsley 2020). Another reason was a misunderstanding of the events that were unfolding in Rwanda at the time (Martiz 2012). Regardless, the ROE was not fit for purpose. Soldiers, from several individual nations, were told to abide by the UNAMIR ROE, rather than any nationally ratified ROE. The result of this rendered UNAMIR personnel to be little more than passive witnesses to the genocidal events that would unfold in Rwanda (HRW 1999b). So long as civilians did not directly threaten UNAMIR peacekeepers, they were powerless to intervene the mass killings of others. This inability to act, for the benefit of maintaining a coalition under the UNAMIR mandate, lead to disastrous operational outcomes and; provides evidence that militaries, particularly under

a coalition mandate, are not immune from sacrificing operational effectiveness for the sake of perception management.

Whether individual militaries work by themselves or as part of a coalition force, they always operate within a rigid, vertical hierarchical organisational structure that is generally better positioned to work towards a single set of objectives. The same cannot be true of militaries, or governments, who are in opposition of each other. For example, China and the US have been reluctant to cooperate as coalition partners in many humanitarian assistance operations, despite both nations having significant humanitarian assistance resources (Pearce 2014).

Whilst a thorough analysis of military organisational leadership is beyond the scope of this research; it is important to note the distinct advantages that such a vertical organisational structure offer: universally working towards the one set of objectives in any given situation as well as; swifter decision making and a clear division of labour (Rishipal 2014). It is also equally important to note the shortcomings of the hierarchical structure that militaries have. Individuals within the organisation are more prone to blind followership by virtue of a high level of trust and respect for higher ranks as well as for fear of insubordination (SAMHSA 2010). Individuals are less inclined to question the orders of senior ranking members (Milburn 2010). In sum, the rigid and hierarchical structure of military organisations have distinct, often contrasting, characteristics to those of NGOs and are reflective of each's relative strengths and weaknesses.

Further consideration as to how these distinctions materialise in the operational context will be discussed in the following section.

NGOs

It should be noted that there is a spectrum of organisational structures for NGOs, and that the organisational structure of individual NGOs may differ vastly when compared to one another. However, when compared to traditional military structures, they are relatively non-hierarchical (OCHA 2014a, p. 55; Scheltinga et.al 2005; Baumann 2008, p. 72); and it is this aspect that we now turn to for further analysis.

The comparatively horizontal organisational structure that NGOs have encourages greater flexibility, greater detail in decision making and greater organisational accountability (Rishipal 2014). The organisational structure is significantly less rigid when compared to militaries and lends itself to more input from individuals prior to reaching any given decision.

Some larger NGOs, such as MSF or Oxfam, have organisational structures that emulate large commercial organisations and have boards of directors and CEOs (Srinivas 2020). This allows for greater delineation of tasks and responsibilities (Srinivas 2020; Rishipal 2014). However, when compared to the highly vertical organisational structures of militaries, NGOs remain significantly less hierarchical than militaries (OCHA 2014a; Metcalfe et.al 2012). NGOs, due to their organisational mandate and structure, are significantly more collaborative

than their military counterparts. One of the limitations of such an organisation is the difficulty in delegating tasks and responsibilities (Rishipal et.al 2014). NGOs do not have the same clearly-defined individual roles and responsibilities as that of militaries.

The contrasting organisational structures of NGOs and militaries are essential elements to the contribution of each type of organisation (Baumann 2008). As such, the structure of each type of organisation should be preserved. Adopting a military hierarchy for all organisations involved in the humanitarian space is not a viable option. Nor is transforming militaries into large development agencies. Each type of organisational structure, brings its own strengths and vulnerabilities. As such, it is paramount to have both types of organisations present in humanitarian crises. Whether a hybrid organisation would be likely to succeed will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Differing Leadership

Hauser (undated) points to the type of people that are generally motivated to work in the non-profit sector. Hauser believes that individuals that lead NGOs typically start from the bottom of the organisation and slowly climb their way to the top, which is not dissimilar to the career of most military leaders. They are often high-performers, motivated and proactive individuals (Hauser undated). However, NGOs more so than militaries, pride themselves on collaboration and participation (Harris 2016, p. 21). As such NGO leaders must find a balance between collaboration and direct delegation. Hailey (2006, p.

11) notes: “one of the paradoxical issues that research has uncovered concerns the way in which successful NGO leaders manage the tensions inherent in being a strong individual lead while still appearing to be highly participative and collegial in they [sic] way they manage”. This is a view supported by Hausser (undated) who asserts that due to the organisational nature of NGOs, many leaders have difficulty in delegating tasks to more junior members for fear of appearing too autocratic and stifling creative input.

Militaries, on the other hand, have strict rules, and ramifications, for insubordination or not following lawful commands. Military members are often subject to their own military law, in addition to civil and criminal law. For example, all ADF members are subject to the Defence Force Discipline Act (DFDA) of 1982; the purpose of which is to “maintain and enforce military discipline (Department of Defence 2021). Punishments for contravening the DFDA can include the withholding of pay, termination of employment and even sentences in military gaol (McKenna 2019). No such legally binding regulation exists specifically in the NGO sector, with the exception of potential termination from the organisation or a restriction on promotion. Crack (2018) notes a hesitancy for NGOs to publicly disclose behavioural misdemeanours within their own organisation for fear of damaging their organisational reputation, leading to a loss of funding from donors, for example Oxfam allegations of abuse in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake (Millar 2018). This is not to propose that the conduct of military personnel is flawless, or that NGOs will sweep all behavioural issues under the rug, but simply that each

type of organisation has an associated cultures and structures that lend themselves to different forms of discipline.

Another complicating factor for increasing the strength of leadership in and amongst NGOs is the broad spectrum of societies that NGOs operate within. NGOs operate in almost every nation across the world; some NGOs are international, while others are focused on niche local issues. Hailey (2006) suggests that many of the leadership styles of NGO leaders are reflective of the broader society in which they work. For example, the leadership style of a local sub-Saharan African NGO will be vastly different to the leadership style of Oxfam International. Part of this is due to the size and structure of the organisations they lead, and other parts are due to reflect the society in which they originate from and operate within. As such, it would not be feasible to expect the leadership within NGOs to be homogenous to any measurable extent. Military leadership, on the other hand, is relatively homogenous with any specific military as well across that of different militaries (Wong et.al 2003), which bodes well for cohesion at times when different militaries work together, as expectations of discipline and order can translate relatively easily from one military to another.

If one of the main strengths of smaller, local NGOs is that they are nimble and possess invaluable local expertise, then it should follow that their specific leadership style should be respected and even embraced by larger NGOs and militaries that may work with them, which is often not the case and will be

evident in the first case study of this paper. It is difficult to ascertain whether the increasing intimacy of NGO and military operations in humanitarian crises will result in apprehension and abrasiveness between different leadership styles, or whether organisation leaders will learn from one other to acknowledge and embrace different forms of leadership and harness them to achieve optimal humanitarian outcomes. Subsequent sections of this paper will further analyse such contemplation before forming an assessment.

Whilst the above demonstrates the inefficiencies, from a horizontal organisational structure, that can derive within one particular NGO, one must also consider whether, and how, such organisational structure affects the broader NGO community as a whole when operating alongside each other in any particular humanitarian situation. Individual NGOs have their own views and objectives on how best to deliver humanitarian outcomes in crises (VanRooyen 2013). Further, NGOs rarely willingly operate in subordination to another (Contu & Girei 2014). Any particular NGO will rarely willingly allow another NGO to control or significant influence over their own operations. This may occur for several reasons including: differences in priorities for humanitarian relief efforts; a divergence in humanitarian views and; disparities in funding and resources. However, the most prominent seems to be the pursuit of autonomy that NGOs have stitched into their organisational cultures (Heath 2014; Contu & Girei 2014). Again, this will be aptly demonstrated in chapter 5. Relatively recently, there have been efforts from peak bodies such as the OCHA to develop systems to improve coordination between NGOs, however

NGOs are not legally compelled to obey orders or directions from such organisations (Heath 2014). However, it is important to note that the relatively horizontal structure between NGOs means that they are more likely to have inefficiencies in collaboration.

This horizontal structure of the broader humanitarian NGO community allows significantly more resources to enter responses to humanitarian crises, as more individuals and small organisations have to overcome relatively small, if any, barriers to entry to be able to operate in response to humanitarian crises. Once operational, NGOs are not legally compelled to achieve the most effective delivery of aid. They simply must continue to fund their operations; most likely through donors who are more likely to fund NGOs that they perceive to be meeting their own donor expectations— ill-founded as they may be. When discussing the lack of coordination amongst NGOs responding to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, VanRooyen (2013) writes: “the very nature of emergency assistance, with the rapid provision of life-saving aid by hundreds of relief agencies, creates a setting where the amount of aid becomes more important than the effect of the aid” (p. 13). To this end, NGOs that appear to be subordinate to another may risk having their funding reduced or terminated by donors (Contu & Girei 2014, p. 217). Whilst collaboration may be in the operational interests of all NGOs that do so; it may not be in the organisational interests of the individual NGOs, if it jeopardises their funding. It is not often in the organisational interests of NGOs to coordinate with each other, if it were to make them appear to donors, as subordinate to other organisations (Cottle &

Nolan 2007, p. 866). The operational effect that donor expectations can have on NGOs will be discussed in greater detail in the following section of this paper, as well as the 2004 south-Asian tsunami case study.

In summary, both militaries and NGOs have distinct differences in their organisational structures. Each of these distinctions carry benefits and limitations when they materialise in a practical sense. Further, these distinctions often run counter to each other: a particular strength of one structure is commonly a vulnerability of the other. Broadly, militaries are better postured to deliver expeditious humanitarian outputs, whereas NGOs are better postured at delivering effective outcomes. Perhaps it is these contrasting distinctions that are essential in the mosaic of rapid, yet effective, humanitarian assistance.

One of the most significant structural differences between militaries and NGOs is that humanitarian assistance is the central mandate of many NGOs. This is not the case for militaries whose mandate is first and foremost related to the defence of their respective nations, mainly through the sanctioned use of force. Practically translated, humanitarian assistance is the primary focus of relevant NGOs, whereas it has long-been considered a peripheral role for militaries, and is only recently finding its way to the core mandate of many militaries (Nanthini 2021; Leuprecht & Kasurak 2020). Whilst it is beneficial to examine the strengths and limitations of both militaries and NGOs in humanitarian

action, one must also question how these structures translate into organisational cultures; an aspect that this paper now turns to for further analysis.

Organisational Cultures

A corollary of these organisational structural differences, is the way in which they transpire to organisational culture, as well as to how militaries view NGOs and vice versa. These differences form a formidable barrier to better coordination amongst NGOs and militaries (Byman 2001, p. 98; Lischer 2007, p. 101; Baumann 2008).

Unit cohesion is an important contribution to military performance, particularly in situations of armed conflict whereby individuals are required to jeopardise their own safety for the sake of larger goals (MacCoun & Hix 2010). A significant part of unit cohesion is the establishment and maintenance of a collective identity. A collective identity links members within a particular unit, or organisation, to a collective higher purpose and can promote personal sacrifice for the greater good (Knez et.al 2020; Kyprianides et.al 2019).

Mutually implicit in the establishment of a collective identity, is the collective exclusion of individuals or organisations that are external to the group (Snow & Corrigall-Brown 2015). Increasing the strength of a particular group identity, often results in the need to distance the group from externalities: to include some, is to exclude others. Individuals or groups outside the collective identity may be deemed ‘unworthy’ of the unit’s trust or effort. As such, military personnel often view external agencies with a degree of dismissiveness, as they may deem input from such externalities as not conducive to the pursuit of their

military objectives, particularly from organisations that differ significantly to their own. Dworken (1995, p. 19) writes: “Officers simply did not see women in their late-twenties with Birkenstock sandals and “Save the Whales” t-shirts as experts worthy of consultation”. Scheltinga et.al (2005, p. 64) identified an example from the Dutch military, who felt that NGOS “valued the process more than the results”. In essence, many individuals within militaries view NGOs as a burden that interferes with the pursuit of military objectives. Whilst this view may be ill-informed, it is important to note this cultural difference as a barrier to better coordination amongst militaries and NGOs.

There are also cultural hesitations from the NGO perspective. Within the NGO community, there are widespread stereotypes of military members as “macho, machines-gun-toting cowboys” and regularly seen as a “ill-informed and controlling war machine” (Scheltinga et.al 2005 p. 57-58). Military personnel are also often viewed, by NGOs as action orientated, with a focus on short-term goals (Lischer 2007; Scheltinga et.al 2005). Beyond ill-informed stereotypes, many NGOs fear that their independence and autonomy will be challenged if they work closer with militaries, who are often perceived to be over-bearing organisations (Byman 2001; OCHA 2014a; Metcalfe et.al 2012). Further, by their very definition, militaries are required to be partisan organisations that serve their respective national governments. Another concern of NGOs working closer with militaries, is the fear that if militaries are able to demonstrate that they are able to complete increasingly difficult humanitarian operations, that government funding will be reduced to NGOs

(Harris 2016). Some NGOs hold unhelpful views of militaries (Lischer 2007; Duffey 2000; Scheltinga et.al 2005). Some stem from underlying resentment, while other stem from fear of losing power and funding (Winslow 2002). In any case, it is important to note that there are cultural hesitations from both types of organisations regarding better coordination between militaries and NGOs. It is evident that this point of friction is one that is likely to be resolved through increased interactions between military and NGO personnel.

Further, Prasopa-Plaizier ([Interview]2021) notes a steady inversion of the stereotypes and realities surrounding militaries and NGOs. In many NGOs, and organisations such as the UN, there is a much higher minimum education threshold; often requiring a post-graduate degree (Prasops-Plaizier [Interview] 2021). For example, the Young Professional Program, as well as the Junior Professional Officer Program for the UN requires a minimum of a post-graduate qualification (UN 2015b). This is just one example indicating the demand for a high-skilled, more professional workforce in the NGO sector. While there is still, and likely always will, be a need for positions within the NGO sector that do not require a high level of training; there has relatively recently been a shift towards greater professionalism within the NGO sector (Ran 2016; Clarke et.al 2019; Mitchell 2015). Perhaps it is likely that this trend to increasing professionalism within the NGO sector will go some way in bridging the organisational differences between militaries and NGOs. As such, this point of friction is likely to be resolved through increasing the frequency of interactions between the two types of organisations in the future (Harris 2016).

From the NGO perspective the reluctance seems to be one of doctrine. NGOs fear that their independence and impartiality will be challenged by increasing their intimacy with military organisations (Glasser [Interview] 2021; Lischer 2007, p.101). Compromising the humanitarian principles can jeopardise the continuation of their operations, as well as the safety of their staff (Jessop 2009; Metcalfe et.al 2012; Hall & Deinla 2021, p. 352). Despite this, NGOs often rely upon military resources to increase their operational effectiveness, as well as providing security for their own operations (Lischer 2007, p. 103; OCHA 2014a; Harris 2016, p. 14). From the perspective of militaries, the reluctance seems to stem from operational experience and misinformed stereotypes of NGOs by military personnel (Dworken 1995; Daniel & Wittichová 2020). However, doctrinally, militaries seem to promote their work with NGOs as a means to pursue military objectives, as well as their own legitimacy.

There is a fundamental lack of understanding of each other's priorities, procedures and policy. The fact that these elements are often contrasting between militaries and NGOs has caused, often unwarranted, resentment between the two types of organisations (Byman 2001, p. 104). Perhaps the cultures of militaries and NGOs are definitively incongruent and that this relationship is one that is likely to wither through constant undertones of frustration and resentment. However, the observed coming together of military and NGO operations in the humanitarian context stands testament against such

an argument (Harris 2016; Metcalfe et.al 2012, p. 1). Whether they like it or not, militaries and NGOs are beginning to realise that they will need to increasingly rely upon each other if they are to deliver more effective humanitarian outcomes. As such, this paper will argue not whether efforts should or shouldn't be made to foster this relationship but; *how* such efforts should be made in a mutually beneficial manner for both types of organisations.

It is evident that there are organisational structural, as well as cultural, differences between NGOs and militaries. This will also be evident in the case study surrounding the humanitarian response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. One must question what, if anything, can be done to mitigate these, sometimes unwarranted, stereotypes and views. Should it be actively pursued by both parties to engage and understand one another? Or should this relationship between militaries and NGOs be left to organically evolve in the hope that increased operational interaction leads to greater understanding of each other's organisations? This paper now investigates how these structural and cultural differences translates into how each type of organisation views their desired relationship with the other.

What's In a Name?

Harris (2016) notes a difference in phrasing by NGOs and militaries to describe the interactions between the two types of organisations. Military organisations refer to operations that involve civilian organisations, such as NGOs and local government officials, working alongside militaries as Civil-Military

Cooperation (CIMIC). NGOs refer to such operations as Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord). Harris (2016) argues that this difference in rhetoric is reflective of deeper underlying perceptions by militaries and NGOs of how their interactions should occur.

CIMIC

Military doctrine is relatively homogenous when it comes to detailing how militaries should interact with NGOs in humanitarian crises (Harris 2016, p. 18). Most militaries, and overarching organisations such as NATO, define such operations as CIMIC. They doctrinally acknowledge that NGOs hold significant advantages in the pursuit of humanitarian goals— goals that sometimes align with that of militaries in humanitarian crises (NATO 2018).

The NATO *Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation* outlines that the increasing complex nature of global power shifts, necessitates a comprehensive approach that cannot be achieved with military means alone (NATO 2018). NATO doctrine defines CIMIC as: “a joint function comprising a set of capabilities integral to supporting the achievement of mission objectives and enabling NATO commands to participate effectively in a broad spectrum of civil-military interaction with diverse non-military actors” (NATO 2020b). This definition is indicative of the fact that CIMIC is viewed as a means to achieve military goals, rather than to improving humanitarian outcomes in and of itself.

This perception of humanitarianism as a means to achieving military objectives is also reflected in the perception of mid-level officers— those that are in charged with leading such operations in a practical manner. In an interview conducted with an Italian UNIFIL Officer that had participated in several deployments, commented: “... we have experience in other theatres; we can say [from] Afghanistan [and] Kosovo that when you have good relations with the population ... you can fulfil your mission with success ... if you do not have the support of the population, you cannot do anything” (Daniel & Wittichová 2020, p. 606). Further, Daniel & Wittichová (2020, p. 608) add: CIMIC officers tended to understand their role primarily as that of facilitators of wider military goals”. Even in the practical operational context, it is clear that CIMIC is viewed as a means to better achieve military objectives. In any case, there is an observable willingness, at least doctrinally, for militaries to want to fortify their relationships with non-military organisations such as NGOs. Yet this does not always translate to the operational context in militaries.

While militaries are doctrinally content to work alongside, and improve relationships with, NGOs; this seldom translates into seamless cooperation in practical operations. A significant reason for this disconnect between doctrine and its practical application is due to the perceptions that individual military personnel hold about NGOs and vice versa. Humanitarianism has not traditionally been a part of core role of militaries. Only relatively recently has humanitarianism made its way into the core roles of some militaries (Daniel &

Wittichová 2020). The result of this is that there are many individuals, particularly those in lower ranks that are involved in the operational application of military CIMIC application that view these particular types of operations as superfluous. In an interview regarding civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) activities by NATO soldiers, one individual commented: “fighting the enemy is, for soldiers, like playing football. We enjoy playing football, and we like scoring goals. That is what we are trained for and that is why we have joined the Army. We don’t like that civilian stuff, but we follow the orders and do what we have to do” (Daniel & Wittichová 2020, p. 602). This is an attitude that has also been observed by Lischer (2007, p. 110) who states, “humanitarian soldiers will not cease their activities based on appeals to abstract humanitarian values or the institutional interests of the affected NGO”.

CIMIC operations are characterised by military doctrine that views humanitarian assistance as a means to better pursue military objectives. Yet there is a disconnect between military doctrine and its operational application, and militaries are slowly taking action to address them which will be discussed in the following section. Despite the doctrinal willingness of militaries to engage in their version of civil-military relations: CIMIC. This enthusiasm has not always been reciprocated by NGOs.

CMCoord

It is impossible to ascertain a unified policy that governs the majority of NGOs, due to their broad, as well as unique, mandates (Harris 2016, p. 20). As such,

this paper will use doctrine from peak bodies, such as OCHA, as a proxy for assessing the general doctrinal perceptions that NGOs have of militaries. It is key to note that, unlike military doctrine, the doctrine surrounding OCHA are not legally binding, nor are there consequences for individual NGOs that do not follow the doctrine of OCHA. However, it is the most reliable type of resource that can be used identify the general way in which NGOs doctrinally perceive combines operations with militaries.

OCHA defines CMCoord as: “the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency, and when appropriate, pursue common goals” (OCHA 2021b). CMCoord, when compared to CIMIC seems much more ambivalent about the civil-military relationship; viewing it as a necessary evil. As doctrinally reluctant NGOs may be to working with militaries in the humanitarian space, it seldom translates to practical limitations or compromises in effectiveness (Mitchell 2015). Metcalfe et.al (2012, p. 6) writes, “the humanitarian literature does not explain in practical terms why the direct provision of relief by the military is inappropriate, or how it has placed civilian populations or humanitarian staff at greater risk”. It seems as though the hesitancy of NGOs to work with militaries is justified on conceptual, or doctrinal, grounds, rather than any practical application. This ambivalence is likely due to the inability of militaries, by virtue of their organisation, to uphold the humanitarian principles (Harris 2016; Glasser [Interview] 2021; Rysaback-Smith 2015; Hammond

2008). Perhaps the hesitations of civilian organisations, and their less proactive CMCoord doctrine, are based on conceptual fears more so than any tangible experience. It would however, be remiss if one weren't to consider the practical cases whereby NGOs increasing their coordination with militaries led to endangering the staff of humanitarian NGOs, as well as negative outcomes.

One example of the practical dangers that increased military-NGO coordination may have on humanitarian NGO staff can be seen in the 2003 suicide bombing of the ICRC office in Baghdad. The ICRC had been operating in Iraq since for 23 years prior to the attack; since the Iraq-Iran War. The organisation had earned universal respect from the majority of actors imbued in the conflict; even earning the respect of the Saddam Hussein regime (Kapp 2003). The attack killed 2 ICRC staff members and several dozen other passersby (Kapp 2003). It led to the ICRC temporarily suspending its operations in Iraq (ABC News 2003), which also encouraged other NGOs, such as MSF, to significantly reduce their staff (Kapp 2003).

At no point, did the attacking organisation reveal that the attack was a response to an increasingly fortified relationships between the coalition force and western-led NGOs. In fact, ICRC prides itself on its principle of impartiality, and refused to accept military escorts to increase their safety. In a statement condemning the attack, the then ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger stated, "we will not operate from buildings secured by military personnel and we will not use military escorts. Either measure would be incompatible with

independent humanitarian work as we understand it” (Schniper 2003). While one could reasonably infer that the attacks were a response to the Western invasion of Iraq that commenced earlier in 2003; there was no indication that the attack was a direct consequence of the impartial ICRC colluding with Western militaries. Further, Hammond (2008) argues that attacks on civilian humanitarian workers are not a result of their perceived collusion with militaries, but rather: a conscious attempt by attackers to demonstrate their ability to strike whomever they please and display the inability of foreign militaries to protect the most vulnerable and innocent; thereby exposing weaknesses in foreign militaries. The singularity of time prevents one from exploring if the attack, or more attacks, would have occurred if the ICRC decided to accept military escorts or cooperate with Western militaries. In any case, it is evident that the attack had a direct negative impact on humanitarian outcomes by jeopardising the safety of NGO staff, and whilst it may be inferred that this was due to the presence of Western military in Iraq; they were not in direct cooperation with the ICRC. At most the cause of the attack could only be attributable to the mere presence of military personnel in Iraq and not to CIMIC or CMCoord operations themselves. Thus, providing further evidence that the hesitations of CMCoord doctrine may be based on conceptual fears, rather than direct attributable evidence. This is not to denigrate the fears of NGOs, but to simply highlight that the mere presence of militaries in a given theatre may be the biggest threat to the safety of NGOs and that enhanced CIMIC or CMCoord operations, in and of themselves, may be unlikely to resolve, or even significantly mitigate, such threats.

Key Differences

The intended beneficiaries of CIMIC are different to that of CMCoord. This difference as to who, or what, should be the main beneficiary of better interactions between militaries and NGOs reflect the previously discussed organisational structural and cultural differences between militaries and NGOs. Structurally, militaries are unlikely to expend efforts and resources in activities that are not in the direct, or at least attributable, pursuit of military objectives. NGOs are likely to distance themselves from organisations that threaten their autonomy and ability to uphold the humanitarian principles (Harris 2016, p. 19). Culturally, military personnel, on the ground, working alongside NGOs in humanitarian crises, are often dismissive of NGO operations (Dworken 1995; Daniel & Wittichová 2020), and Daniel & Wittichová (2020) assert that the qualities of compassion, open communication, negotiation and a restraint on the use of force are incongruent with much of the culture that surrounds the traditional military collective identity. Some NGO staff view militaries, and their personnel as big war machines, incapable of understanding human needs (Scheltinga et.al 2005p. 57-58).

In sum, the differences between the term CIMIC, developed by militaries, and CMCoord, developed by civilian organisations, reach far beyond the simple discrepancies in syntax. They are an indictment of the hesitations by both militaries and NGOs to achieve a better working relationship both doctrinally and on operations. They reflect the deep-seated cultural and structural differences between the two types of organisations despite the increased

intimacy of their operations in the humanitarian space. As such, it is likely that the differences in the way in which militaries and NGOs view their relationship with the other, is likely to be an enduring point of friction, and not a matter of changing tact.

At the mercy of whom?

This section will analyse the ways in which both militaries and NGOs derive their resources, as well as how these sources of financing influence the practical operations of both of these types of organisations. Further, this section will outline how these sources of funding differently shape aspects of legitimacy, accountability and competition for both NGOs and militaries.

Funding

Militaries derive their funding, and hence their resources, from national governments. They are not required to fundraise from individual or organisational donors, they are not required to plead their case, nor are they directly accountable to a plethora of donors. They are simply financially accountable to their single donor: their national government.

The tools through which warfare is conducted are becoming increasingly complex and therefore increasingly costly. Submarines, tanks and aircraft have developed significantly in their sophistication, as well as their cost (Ryan 2021; Thompson 2014)— an undeniable truth that is likely to hold true for the imaginable future. National governments, and the populations they govern, will

always have a keen interest in defending their sovereignty. As such, it is unlikely that military funding will evaporate at any point in the future. Militaries are considered a public necessity and are likely to always be considered so (Palet 2014; Dobos 2020).

Even the amount that a nation is willing to spend on their military can be a point of strategic messaging in and of itself. Nations are typically very public when announcing increased military budgets, in the hopes of deterring opposing nations and flexing their military might (Chen & Feffer 2009). For example, in 2015 China announced that it was increasing its military spending by an unprecedented 10.1% (Davis 2016). The announcement was met with a vast array of Western political commentators highlighting China's increased aggression. Practically, this increase in military spending has been reflected in China's expansionist ambitions in contentious areas such as the Korean Peninsula, the East and South China Seas and Taiwan: what Taylor (2018) describes as the four flash points. Changes in military spending as a proxy for strategic posturing is also a trend noted by the NATO (NATO 2018, p. 24). Further analysis into the diplomatic, and political, ramifications of increased military spending is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to note that military spending in and of itself is of particular strategic importance to its sole donor: national governments—therefore, providing further justification that military funding is unlikely to dissipate into the future, regardless of their effectiveness in the humanitarian space.

The fact that military funding is largely independent of their perceived effectiveness, in a rather perverse twist, means that they can openly work with other militaries of the same geo-political faction, to increase operational effectiveness. For example, the ADF can operate with the United States Military without fear that any of their funds will be redirected away from the ADF. This leads to less inhibited, and therefore better, coordination between differing militaries. The same cannot be said of NGOs, who, in many respects, are competing for the donor dollar (Cooley & Ron 2002). The obvious exception to this being that both coordinating militaries must be on the same side, not only in armed conflict, but also in response to natural disasters. This exception is rather self-evident within the context of armed conflict and therefore does not warrant further investigation within the confines of this research. Responding to natural disasters, however, is not as simple.

Although responding to natural disasters may seem, on the surface, a politically innocuous task, it is almost always shrouded in layers of political and strategic ambition (Cohen & Werker 2008). However, the case of Australia's assistance in relief efforts following natural disasters in the South-West Pacific is an example that highlights the ways in which disaster relief can be politicised.

In September 2016, the Australian Government announced the *Pacific Step-Up* program as one of its highest foreign policy priorities (DFAT 2021). This shift in priorities was also reflected in the release of the *2016 Defence White Paper* as well as the *2020 Defence Strategic Update*. While Australia has always had

rather amicable foreign relations with smaller island nations in the South-West Pacific, many academic and political commentators viewed this increased diplomacy with these nations, as a counter to China's expansive ambitions into the region (Jennings 2018). Despite this, those within the Australian government deny such political motivation. Wroe (2018) writes "asked whether the new focus was aimed at combating Chinese influence, Mr Pyne (the then Defence Minister) said: "we recognise that we have the largest economic heft in the region and that means we have a particular responsibility to work with the south-west Pacific family ... China has an interest in the south-west Pacific, as do other countries. This Pacific step-up is not directed at any one country"". Since the announcement of the *Pacific Step-Up* program, the Australian Government has increased disaster relief resources in the South-West Pacific. In 2018 the Australian government announced the plan to build a new Naval vessel, with the sole purpose of providing humanitarian support and disaster relief to nations in the South-West Pacific. Humanitarianism as a tool of soft diplomacy is not a new concept. However, it seems that in the modern era, it is becoming increasingly about countering the humanitarian narrative of competing nations, rather than building better relations between donor and recipient nations—a trend likely to continue into the future (Shoebridge 2020). As such, it seems that some governments, such as that of Australia, have an eager appetite for increasing humanitarian spending; not in the pursuit of better humanitarian outcomes, but rather as a tool of diplomacy. The above example demonstrates that this increased funding may be disproportionately skewed to the military rather than NGOs, if for nothing more than that strategic message

that using official military assets sends to counter the humanitarian narrative of adversary nations.

The above is a clear demonstration that such commitments by militaries, at the behest of their respective governments, runs in direct opposition to the humanitarian principles of *neutrality*, *impartiality* and *independence*, even in the context of natural disaster relief. Are NGOs better placed to meet these humanitarian principles? Are such principles even conducive to humanitarian outcomes? If not, what should take precedence: the delivery of tangible humanitarian outcomes; subject to diplomatic sway as they may be? Or, a strict obedience to the humanitarian principles? Subsequent sections of this paper will investigate such questions in greater detail.

NGOs, on the other hand, have not existed as long as nation states. Not every single NGO is, or should, be considered a public necessity. They are largely dependent on the generosity and altruistic nature of various donors including: governments, corporations and individual donors (Ali & Gull 2016; GPF 2021). As such NGOs are required to satisfy all of these different donors, rather than militaries that are only required to appease one. Failure to satisfy the deluge of donors, has the potential to stifle future funding, and therefore operations, of any given NGO (Islam 2016; Banks et.al 2015).

Legitimacy

Organisations require legitimacy in order to survive. Without it, they are likely to eventually fail. This rings true for any type of organisation; from small businesses to national governments: militaries and NGOs are no exception (Long 2016; Tallberg & Zürn 2019). However, the ways in which militaries and NGOs obtain and promote their legitimacy differs significantly. Militaries derive their legitimacy largely from the national governments that support and fund them. They are not required to appease a broad spectrum of current and potential donors. Practically they are only accountable to the governments that they serve. Although, one could reasonably argue that since they are accountable to the governments they serve, who are accountable to the populations they govern; that militaries are also accountable to the public at large. However, this type of accountability is conceptual in nature and has little tangible impact to military operations. If there were public outcry surrounding a particular military operation—humanitarian or otherwise—there is no circumstance whereby the military of a given nation (under the aforementioned definition in this paper) would be dismantled. One needn't look beyond cases such as the Vietnam War, Guantanamo Bay to see this ring true.

More recently, 2 Squadron from the Australian Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) was embroiled in widespread allegations of war crimes during their operations in Afghanistan with the release of the Brereton Report in 2020 (IG-ADF 2020).

Following the release of the report, there was surfeit of public outcry calling for the disbanding of the unit (Orr 2021; Knaus 2020). Whilst this did eventually materialise in 2021 (Masters & McKenzie 2021), it is unlikely that the whole ADF will be disbanded. In this sense, Western militaries at least more or less hold a sort of organisational immunity from social outcry and therefore do not need to, to the same extent as NGOs, maintain social legitimacy as they have a monopoly on their space in society and are unlikely to be forced to be disbanded in their entirety. NGOs, on the other hand are generally vulnerable to loss of funding from their donors, and as such must dedicate concerted effort in maintaining both social and legal legitimacy.

Most militaries are required to abide by legal requirements outlined in policy such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the national laws of their nation. However, the organisational ramifications of not strictly abiding by such laws are relatively muted when compared to that of NGOs. Militaries are generally considered to be an essential part of civil society and unlikely to be disbanded in entirety. However, Western militaries, when compared to NGOs, have a higher degree of accountability when it comes to maintaining IHL and maintaining national morals and mores. Whilst this may not always yield an unwavering adherence to such laws, as noted in the above 2SQN example: there are severe punishments for the individuals that do not. While their organisational survivability is rarely, if ever, jeopardised; they are generally more required to be just as, if not more, transparent than NGOs. However,

there are distinct differences in the motivations for accountability and transparency between militaries and NGOs.

The failure of militaries to uphold legal legitimacy can have grave consequences for the individuals involved. Yet the consequences for the organisation as a whole is relatively muted. Thus, the organisation is protected. The failure for militaries to maintain social legitimacy is unlikely to jeopardise their organisational survivability. Thus, again, the organisation is protected. The same is not true of NGOs, who are compelled to satisfy both social and legal legitimacy; or have their organisational survival threatened. In the legal sense, NGOs must adhere to strict legislation surrounding their operations both in the field and administratively. Further, NGOs must satisfy this aspect of legitimacy not only in their country of origin, but also in whichever country their humanitarian operations take them.

During the civil war in Syria, a number of new NGOs were created within Syria. However, they faced a multitude of challenges including an inability to register as an NGO in Syria. NGOs in Syria are required to register with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) (Bosman 2012, p. 4). MOSAL is required to balance two, often opposing tasks. MOSAL is charged with protecting Syria from undue foreign interference, as well as managing social development (Bosman 2012, p. 4). In a country where poverty continues to rise under an increasingly incredulous political regime, these competing interests are rarely satisfied concurrently. Therefore, these newly-formed

NGOs were forced to legally register in other nations such as the U.S. or Canada or other European nations and were forced to become rapidly acquainted with the surrounding legislation in their country of registration (Alzoubi 2015, p. 1). These newly founded NGOs experienced difficulty in receiving private donations from individuals. If the organisation that was collecting funds had the name 'Syria' in its title, the Banks of many Western nations would not process the transfer due to legal and administrative hurdles (Alzoubi 2015, p. 4). Registering with MOSAL in Syria proved to be ineffective, whilst registering in other Western nations also seemed to create significant barriers to receiving funding. As such, the case of NGO operations in the Syrian civil war, is a prudent example that demonstrates the ways in which NGOs are forced to comply with a plethora of rules dictated by their countries of origin as well as the nations in which they operate.

In essence, militaries and NGOs are influenced by different factors. Militaries, while maintaining a monopoly on their space in society, are also required to follow the political 'whims' of the governments that commission them. However, this also means that they are not at the mercy of a plethora of donors to sustain their funding. NGOs, on the other hand, are required to report to different types of donors which encourages them, at certain times, to prioritise donor expectations over operational imperatives (Cottle & Nolan 2007; Stirrat 2006).

Competition

Militaries have a monopoly on their authority. In any one nation, there is only ever one military authorised to conduct military operations (under the aforementioned definition of *militaries* in this paper). The benefit of this is that militaries do not have to compete with other militaries to be able to continue their operations. NGOs, on the other hand, are subject to securing financing from their donors, in order to financially sustain themselves and their operations. As such, NGOs must compete with other NGOs, to a certain extent, to ensure that they can maintain financing from donors (Cooley & Ron 2002). This has, in some instances, led to unhealthy competition between NGOs who have prioritised advertising or promotional opportunities above the delivery of goods and services to those that they are meant to be helping. This theme of competition will be further discussed in the following case study.

Further, while NGOs may claim to be working towards noble overarching goals such as relieving human suffering or increasing quality of life, it is unrealistic to believe that this translates to seamless cooperation and collaboration amongst the entire NGO community. As NGOs are effectively in competition with one another to secure donor financing, they must at times prioritise their own organisational interests and survival over delivering operational outcomes. In essence, the different ways by which militaries and NGOs are funded, translate to significant operational distinctions between the two types of organisations and is likely to be an ongoing point of friction in the military-NGO relationship.

Chapter 4: Case Study— 2004 South-Asian Tsunami in Aceh, Indonesia

The international humanitarian response to the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunamis highlights many of the aforementioned differences between militaries and NGOs in a practical sense, within the domain of natural disaster relief. While the Tsunami struck several countries in South Asia, this case study will limit its scope to the humanitarian response in Aceh, Indonesia, so that the effect of external factors such as national governance and significant geographic differences can be mitigated in this analysis. Whilst this natural disaster occurred over sixteen years ago, from time of writing, many of the aforementioned differences are inherent to the types of organizations that militaries and NGOs are; and not largely dependent on the time that the humanitarian assistance was provided. Further, the sheer scale of international response to the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami witnessed an unprecedented deployment of international militaries to the area (Harkin undated; Telford & Cosgrave 2007; Bradford 2013), as well as a vast number of NGOs that flocked to the area. Additionally, the humanitarian response represented the largest ever mobilisation of donor funds for an emergence and reconstruction effort (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2010). Pertaining specifically to the case of Indonesia, Harkin (undated, p. 4) writes: “exceptional circumstances in Indonesia almost dictated the need for military logistics and manpower— thus the value of that aspect of their contribution”. The global coverage of the Tsunami drew unprecedented financial donations from organisations and individuals to NGOs that were involved in responding to the disaster. As such, Telford & Cosgrave (2007, p. 2) argue that it provides an opportunity to

examine the ability of NGOs to coordinate with each other when the financial factors and constraints have been largely removed. In addition, the province of Aceh was in the midst of armed conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) separatists and the Indonesian national military (TNI) prior to the 2004 tsunami, since the 1970s (The New Humanitarian 2014). As such, this particular case study allows one to observe the humanitarian operations of militaries and NGOs in the context of natural disaster relief, with an element of armed conflict and its associated points of contention.

While this case study will compare and contrast the organisational structures and cultures of NGOs and militaries, that are significantly influenced by financial constraints; the case of the 2004 Tsunami also facilitates this research to compare the intricacies of each organisation in circumstances where financial constraints, and their associated ramifications, are removed. In sum, the selection of the response in Indonesia following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami provides a relevant opportunity to investigate the cultural differences between military organisations and NGOs in the contexts of both natural disasters and armed conflict.

The Military Response

The first respondents to the tsunami in Indonesia was the TNI as well as at least six other foreign militaries including the US, Japan and Australia, at the request of the Indonesian government (Wiharta et.al 2008). The TNI and these foreign militaries rendered much life-saving medical assistance and other

essential assistance such as providing food, water and shelter, despite having limited access to the tsunami-affected areas (Zoraster 2005, p. 14; Hall 2008; Wiharta et.al 2008). It was noted by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) (Harkin undated) that the military response, by both the TNI and international militaries was rapid, effective and well-coordinated. The TEC (Harkin undated, p. 5) specifically noted that this was likely due to the organisational structure of military organisations. The TEC references military characteristics such as: “the command and control procedures understood by all” that helped in the rapid and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami. Further, the report notes that: “unlike humanitarian agencies, they (militaries) do not have to enter into contractual negotiations for surge personnel and transportation” (p. 5). It is evident that the organisational structure of militaries was key in their ability to render rapid and critical humanitarian assistance following the 2004 tsunami (Sukma 2006; Larson 2005). Whilst the use of domestic and foreign military assets was rapid, as well as critical; subsequent section of this case study will demonstrate that they were not necessarily efficient. In any case, the role of militaries, by virtue of their organisational mandate, is short lived: thereby necessitating the need for NGOs.

The NGO Response

The arrival of large international NGOs shortly followed several days after the tsunami struck. With them, they brought further resources in sectors such as sanitation, hygiene and construction (Oxfam International 2009; Williams

2009). In the weeks that followed, many smaller INGOs as well as individual aid workers flocked the areas affected by the tsunami in Indonesia to assist wherever possible (Williams 2009; Brusset et.al 2009) . While the above groups and individuals were undoubtedly fuelled by altruistic motivations, it was evident that very little thought had gone into how they would most effectively coordinate and render assistance (Barber 2014; Brusset et.al 2009), leading to a distinct lack of coordination and duplication of effort in some cases (Zoraster 2005). Further, the influx of INGOs, fuelled by international donations allowed a surfeit of foreign funds to enter regions that were affected by the tsunami, which had unintended ramifications for the local economy (Zoraster 2005; Jayasuriya & McCawley 2008). It is this lack of coordination that resulted in wasted resources, and unintended consequences that this case study now turns to for further investigation.

The Political Nature of Humanitarianism

Further, the entry of foreign militaries to the Indonesian province of Aceh was highly politicised and faced significant scrutiny by the Indonesian government due to historical separatist tensions in the province (Laksamana 2004; Wiharta et.al 2008). The deployment of TNI troops to the Aceh region was controversial decision by the Indonesian government (The New Humanitarian 2014). However, the occurrence of the tsunami created a pool of compassion and solidarity amongst the population of Aceh that seemed to mitigate some of the building tensions between the GAM and TNI (Waizenegger 2007; Wiharta et.al 2008, p. 90). Following the tsunami, an immediate ceasefire between the

GAM and TNI was established and a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2005 that acknowledged the devastation caused by the tsunami and peaceful settlement of the conflict would enable the rebuilding of Aceh (Waizenegger 2007). It should also be noted that this case of improved diplomacy following a natural disaster is an isolated case. Typically, political relations degrade following a humanitarian crisis (Waizenegger 2007, p. 1). Regardless, this demonstrates, that even in times of intense and widespread human suffering there is always a political aspect to military intervention in humanitarian crises—for better or worse.

Further, prior to the 2004 tsunami, the TNI had imposed a ban on foreign visitors, including aid workers, to Aceh (Wiharta et.al 2008, p. 90). However, this ban was revoked the day after the tsunami occurred to allow aid workers and NGOs to provide relief efforts. Despite this, the ban was again reinstated three weeks later, on the 11th of January 2005, as the Indonesian government became increasingly wary of foreign influence in the region; and justified doing so by citing ongoing conflicts between the TNI and GAM (Margesson 2005, p. 23). Unsurprisingly, the GAM pleaded with INGOs to remain in the area for fear that the sudden departure of foreign organisations would leave Aceh at the mercy of the Indonesian government (Waizenegger 2007, p. 7). This is another demonstration that the humanitarian relief efforts are inextricably linked to the political climate of the time, and further proof that an unconditional adherence to the humanitarian principles, particularly *neutrality*, *impartiality* and *independence* may be a folly.

Donor Expectations

The global media coverage of the 2004 south-Asian tsunami was unprecedented (Brown & Minty 2008), as too were the donations that followed (Canny 2005; Wade 2014). Many international NGOs felt as though they had to spend the money rapidly and produce tangible results immediately to justify donations. This perceived pressure led to many ill-considered decisions regarding the use of donor funds (Kutty 2017, p. 9). One such example was the delivery of emergency food to local Muslim populations that contained pork (Telford & Cosgrave 2007, p. 10).

The overwhelming amount of donations did not only place perceived pressure on NGOs to use funds in the immediate aftermath, but over the course of medium- and long-term efforts. In reconstruction efforts, a multitude of NGOs built houses along the Aceh coastline, to varying degrees of quality. Much of this housing was built with little, or no, consideration for connections to essential utilities such as sewerage, electricity or running water (Casey 2006). Some of this housing, constructed by NGOs was so lacking, it prompted one Indonesian Fisherman, Hamdan Yunnus, to declare: “the quality is bad. I won’t even use this wood for a chicken coop” (Casey 2006). Providing highly visible, and equally ineffective, aid in a humanitarian crisis is a key portrayal of the tendency of some NGOs to prioritise the expectations of donors over the needs of recipients.

Eventually, many NGOs announced that they had reached capacity and asked for donations to be made elsewhere (Canny 2005). There were many organisations and overarching bodies that believed that the unprecedented funding discouraged coordination and encouraged competition as each individual organisation had a surfeit of financial resources to spend in whichever way their individual mandate demanded (Christoplos 2006, p. 3). It is this lack of coordination amongst NGOs that this case study now turns to for further investigation.

Lack of Coordination

One of the most significant criticisms of the disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami was the lack of coordination amongst and between militaries and NGOs (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2010, p. 19; Williams 2009, p. 403; Waizenegger 2007, p. 7). In some instances, local medical students in Aceh realised that they could earn more money by working as translators for large INGOs that were flush with donor cash, rather than using their specialised medical skills in rendering medical assistance in already established local hospitals (Zoraster 2005, p. 15). Had organisations better coordinated, they may have been able to provide more suitable economic or social incentives for highly skilled individuals so that their unique skills were put to best use. Larger NGOs could cap the financial incentives they provided to translators to encourage locals to pursue other avenues of rendering assistance.

Another demonstration of the economic cost this lack of coordination can be seen in the sharp price increases of construction material in the aftermath of the tsunami. Many NGOs and individual aid workers flocked to areas that were impacted by the tsunami and attempted to build housing relatively quickly following the tsunami (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2008). The quality, and location of buildings varied significantly and it was evident that little consideration had occurred as to how to best plan the development of these new buildings (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2008). Many buildings were built in locations that were not feasible to connect basic utilities such as water and electricity. As such, these buildings remained uninhabited for several years after they were constructed (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2008). The lack of coordination surrounding post-tsunami housing construction had a twofold effect. First, the obvious waste in materials and time in building untenable housing. Second, the sharp increase in demand for materials, by the numerous foreign individuals and organisations, meant that market prices for such materials increased significantly in relatively short period of time. In Aceh, in the 12 months that followed the tsunami, the cost of building a standard 36 square meter house rose from \$3000 USD to \$5000 USD (Jayasuriya & McCawley 2008). This meant that many local individuals and NGOs, who understood local planning and infrastructure requirements, were simply priced out of the market. As such, their expertise was not able to be directly employed due to the presence and lack of coordination by larger international organisations.

This trend of larger, INGOs overshadowing LNGOs was not only present in the economic aspect of the humanitarian response to the tsunami. It was evident across the spectrum of interaction between small and large NGOs. For example, in the limited attempts at coordination at meetings, English was the primary language used (Canny 2005, p. 5). English is understandably the language of choice for meetings that heavily involve international NGOs. However, it kept many of the local NGOs out of the picture. Larger, international NGOs typically have more expansive budgets and resources. Whereas smaller, local NGOs typically have a greater depth of understanding of the needs of local populations. As such, effectively sidelining them from the limited coordination meetings that did occur, meant that the weaknesses of international NGOs were not able to be effectively offset by the strengths of local NGOs, and vice versa (Canny 2005, p. 5)

LNGOs felt as though they had become pushed aside by larger, INGOs (Scheper et.al 2006, p. 28): so much so, that they felt as though they had become little more than ‘sub-contractors’ for these international NGOs (Canny 2005). This lack of empowerment for local NGOs meant that their knowledge and skills were not able to be leveraged to facilitate a more efficient use of humanitarian resources. This is not to suggest that attempts at coordination were not present, but that simply the majority of these efforts did not seem to materially translate into optimal humanitarian outcomes. It was clear that resources were sufficient, yet coordination was lacking, and it was this lack of

coordination that played a significant role in the inability to achieve optimal humanitarian outcomes following the 2004 South Asian Tsunami.

Lack of Consultation

Militaries were not the only organisations that were lacking participation of local communities. Jayasuriya & McCawley (2010, p. 8) identify that most of the donations for the tsunami relief efforts were supply driven as opposed to demand driven. Meaning that donations were driven by the sheer scale of the disaster, rather than the actual need of the affected local populations. One notable example was the donation of fishing boats to the fishermen whose boats were destroyed in the Tsunami. The hope of NGOs was that these fishing boats would allow these fishmen to resume their livelihoods so as to financially provide for themselves and their families. Whilst the ambitions of these NGOs were undoubtedly noble, what transpired was little more than a waste of resources, and could have been avoided through greater consideration by the NGOs and greater consultation with potential beneficiaries. There were significant differences in the quality of the donated boats. Some were seaworthy while others simply sank on their first launch from harbour (Henderson & Lee 2015, p. 644). Further, many of the aid organisations attempted to compel their own social views on the fishmen. Rather than allowing the villagers to decide their own economic structure, or donating the boats to those individuals that owned boats prior to the tsunami, many NGOs enforced a co-ownership economic structure (Henderson & Lee 2015), with the assumed intention of reducing economic disparity between boat owners and crew

members. Such attempts were not successful and further hindered the economic utility of the donated boats that did work (Henderson & Lee 2015, p. 644). The donations of the boats themselves may have appeared, to international donors, as an innovative and unique way to secure the long-term economic prosperity of affected Indonesian Fishermen. It is another delivery method of humanitarian relief that was highly visual and appealed to international donors that remained physically removed, yet emotionally attached to the victims of the tsunami. Donor expectations reflected as such. This is another example of the way in which poor consultation with local communities by NGOs led to sub-optimal outcomes for potential beneficiaries. It also hints of another instance where donor expectations were prioritised over actual need of recipient communities.

Lessons Learnt

There were significant academic, policy and practical analysis of the military-NGO nexus in the tsunami relief effort, resulting in a plethora of lessons learnt. From the perspective of militaries, post-tsunami relief effort analysis seems to have ushered in a new dawn for military humanitarian assistance/ disaster relief (HA/DR) operations (Bradford 2013). There was recognition by several militaries that whilst their resources and skills were valuable in the initial response; NGOs were more suited than militaries for more nimble tasks such as the delivery of food and water and medical attention to individuals (Wiharta et.al 2008). Whiarta et.al (2008, p. 97) notes, “it seems that the working culture of the foreign military assets was not flexible enough to take account of the

knowledge and experience of the civil community so that assets could be prioritised appropriately and channelled effectively”. There was also an acknowledgement, by the US Navy, that the relationship between militaries and NGOs was weaker than it should be (Bradford 2013, p. 26). As such, it is evident that the contrasting structures and cultures of militaries and NGOs presented as a challenge to coordination in the 2004 tsunami response.

The NGO community identified many areas for improvement after reflecting upon their efforts in the tsunami response. Overall, six broad areas were identified by NGOs to improve their performance in complex natural disasters: rationalization and management of communications; policy development; safety and security; accountability and transparency; logistic training and; greater empowerment of local NGOs (Canny 2005, p. 6). It can be seen that many of these focus areas for improvement derive from better coordination within, and amongst, NGOs, as well as between militaries and NGOs. Several of these focus areas, such as logistic support and training, also have elements that pertain to better coordination with militaries.

Overarching organisations such as OCHA noted the severe inefficiencies that resulted from the lack of coordination and understanding within, and amongst, individual organisations (OCHA 2014b). Of note, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (ISAC) called for a shift in the mindset of the use of military assets in humanitarian crises from “last resort” to one of “in exceptional circumstances”. This change in sentiment by overarching organisations appears

to be indicative of a recognition of the merging of militaries and NGOs and their operations. Perhaps, the most significant development from overarching organisations was the development of the Cluster System by OCHA in 2005 that formalised, with the aim of addressing, the need for greater coordination in humanitarian crises.

In essence, all parties involved in the civil-military nexus of the post-tsunami relief efforts called for greater coordination between the two types of organisations. There are differing views as to how best improve this coordination and will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections of this paper. Some of these views are centred on more frequent interaction between militaries and NGOs, whilst some advocate a complete redefining of the roles of each type of organisation in the humanitarian space.

The 2004 South-Asian Tsunami highlights many of the strengths and weaknesses in militaries and NGOs when working in natural disasters. Further, it provides ample testimony to the conceptual challenges present in the military-NGO nexus that were noted in previous sections. This paper has, thus far, discussed and demonstrated the various strengths and weaknesses of militaries and NGOs working alongside each other in humanitarian crises. Noting that there is a coming together of these two types of organisations: it is paramount to study how such points of friction will be resolved.

Chapter 5: Case Study— Afghanistan

This paper now turns to a second case study surrounding Western intervention in Afghanistan between the years 2001-2021. The Western intervention in Afghanistan provides an opportunity to critically examine a case of armed conflict that expanded from one of ‘defeating terrorism’ (Azizian 2021; Felbab-Brown 2021) to one of regional stability and development (Dudgeon 2014) that ultimately broadened so much so that it became impossible to achieve (SIGAR 2021). In an official White House statement, US President Biden remarked: “we no longer have a clear purpose in an open-ended mission in Afghanistan” (Biden 2021). Further, Daniel & Wittichová (2020, p. 604) note: “the NATO mission in Afghanistan became one of the important sites of experimentation and production of novel military knowledge and novel CIMIC practices”. Whilst the intervention began two decades ago, Western military intervention only formally ended in the latter half of 2021 (Stelzenmüller 2021; BBC News 2021). More importantly, the case of Afghanistan was, as Olson (2006, p. 1) put it: “a test case for how an international military peace enforcement operation and avowedly neutral humanitarian and development NGOs can work alongside each other”.

Historical Context

In the months following the attacks of 11 September 2001, the US and coalition partners swept through Afghanistan in search of Osama Bin Laden and members of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups (Bird & Marshall 2011, p. 1; Zucchini 2021). The Taliban swiftly offered an unconditional surrender,

which was rejected by the US (Zucchini 2021), and in 2003 the then US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced an end to major combat operations in Afghanistan (Zucchini 2021). However, this did not end the US and coalition efforts in Afghanistan. What in fact transpired was an evolution in the mandate of coalition forces that continued for the better part of two decades. The mandate evolved from defeating the Taliban to obtaining lasting peace in Afghanistan (SIGAR 2021). Western intervention officially only came to a conclusion at the time of writing of this paper in 2021 (Malkasian 2021; Stewart & Ali 2021).

The 1990s witnessed a flourishing of NGOs after the Afghan government passed a law that formally permitted NGOs to operate within the country (Moballegh 2021; Baitenmann 1990). A corollary of this was the introduction of several coordination bodies that aimed to streamline and improve efficiency in the growing NGO sector within Afghanistan (Mitchell 2017). The most notable of which was the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) which is still in operation (ACBAR 2021). However, in 1995, the relative freedoms that NGOs enjoyed swiftly evaporated as the Taliban seized control, imposing strict restrictions on NGO operations; outlawing female participation in NGOs and prohibiting political, religious or advocacy work (Mitchell 2017, p. 2). Many INGOs were expelled from Afghanistan under Taliban rule, whilst others withdrew of their own accord due to the oppressive restrictions placed on their operations by the Taliban (Oliker et.al 2004). This departure of INGOs from Afghanistan accelerated following

the US and coalition invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 (Mitchell 2017). The large absence of INGOs from in Afghanistan from 2001 pressed US and coalition militaries to play a significant role in the delivery of aid in the immediate period after invasion (Mitchell 2017; Oliker et.al 2004). Following the 2001 invasion, and the toppling of the Taliban, INGOs slowly began to return to Afghanistan to continue their humanitarian work (Mitchell 2017).

Once coalition forces formally departed Afghanistan on the 31st of August 2021, the Taliban quickly returned to power (Maizland 2021; ABC News 2021), prompting some to brand the entire campaign a waste of time and resources (Gohel 2021), while others such as Shanahan (2021) note the enduring benefits of Western intervention in Afghanistan. Regardless of the outcome, the case of Afghanistan provides an opportunity to critically evaluate a case of armed conflict that expanded to include an increasing amount of humanitarian goals.

NGOs as Force Multipliers

Following the US and coalition military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, described NGOs as “force multipliers” of US government policy (Powell 2001). This public statement angered many NGOs who felt as though their principles of impartiality, independence and neutrality has been compromised (Lischer 2007; Williams & Briggs 2019), with some even going so far as to assert they had been lost completely (Donini 2011). Further, Williams & Briggs (2019) argue that it was

reflective of deep-seated misunderstandings of the NGO sector by governments.

Whilst Powell's comments may have been well-intentioned, they had a damaging effect on the reputation of Western NGOs in Afghanistan, of which Goodhand (2013, p. 290) writes, "have often encountered a deep-seated ambivalence from the Afghan population, particularly in rural areas, because they are perceived to be agents of Westernization and modernization". Thus, the need for distinction was a critical requirement for the successful coordination of military and NGO operations in Afghanistan— an element to which this case study turns to for further exploration.

The Need for Distinction

The case of Western militaries in Afghanistan was an unprecedented display of militaries moving into the humanitarian space and having to coordinate their operations with alongside NGOs (Daniel & Wittichová 2020).

From the side of militaries, there was a push to 'win hearts and minds'. This effort was perhaps best embodied by NATO's Comprehensive Approach (CA) in Afghanistan. NATO adopted the CA in 2006, after recognising that military efforts alone would not cultivate lasting peace in Afghanistan (Steinsson 2015; Jakobsen 2010; Kobieracki 2007; Friis 2010). The intent behind CA was to enhance the coordination and cooperation between NATO forces and civilian agencies such as NGOs in Afghanistan (Jakobsen 2010; Friis 2010). There

was, at least conceptually, a concerted effort by NATO that: there should be a clear delineation between militaries and NGOs so as to maintain the independence of individual organisations (Jakobsen 2010). In a speech at the GLOBSEC Conference in 2008, then NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Bisogniero said, “it (the CA) must be done in a way that doesn’t compromise any organisation’s independence. Nor must it infringe on the humanitarian space to which Non-Governmental Organisations understandably attach great importance” (Bisogniero 2008). Whilst the rhetoric, by militaries, for distinction was present, this sparsely translated into distinction in the operational context (Goodhand 2013).

Jakobsen (2010, p. 79) identified three distinct components that NATO failed to achieve during their intervention that ultimately led to the failure of CA in Afghanistan: “(1) creation of NATO consensus on how the CA should be implemented (2) institutionalisation of CA doctrine, procedures and thinking within NATO facilitating the formulation of common operational objectives and strategies, as well as joint planning, implementation and evaluation with other actors in all operational phases, and (3) establishment of effective cooperation with the organizations and local actors that NATO has to cooperate with in Afghanistan”. Ultimately the CA was deemed, by military, civil and academic critics, to be a failure because it blurred the lines between military and civil forms of humanitarian support (Jakobsen 2010). Thus, providing further evidence of the need for civil and military humanitarian components to remain distinct from one another. This example is but another

that demonstrates that militaries, at least in principle, are beginning to understand, at least strategically, the importance of humanitarian principles. However, it is yet to coherently translate into the operational context.

On the tactical level, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) were a noticeable barrier to maintaining distinction between military personnel and NGO staff (Mitchell 2015). Whilst each nation had their own composition of PRTs: they were generally comprised of between 50 and 100 personnel from militaries, NGOs and various government agencies (ISW 2021). However, there was a noticeable lacking presence of non-military staff, which in some instances only accounted for 5-10% of staff within a given PRT (Save the Children 2004, p. 18) The structure, and culture, of individual PRTs differed vastly and was a reflection of the individual leaders of each PRT, as well as the security and humanitarian demands of the individual provinces in which they operated (Maley 2007; Bollen et.al 2006; Mitchell 2015). Of note, all PRTs were officially under the command of ISAF (Mitchell 2015, p. 2). PRTs were an attempt to integrate the overlapping fields of security and humanitarianism at the tactical level in the context of armed conflict (Olson 2006; Goodhand 2013; Save the Children 2004, p. 20). Such an attempt at integration has received widespread criticism from NGOs, as well as academics (Goodhand 2013; Jakobsen 2010; Mitchell 2015).

While NATO was advocating the CA, and ISAF commanders were mobilising PRTs; the majority of NGOs were calling for greater distinction between

themselves and military forces in Afghanistan (Bollen et.al 2006). Goodhand (2013, p. 297) writes, “NGOs have tended to argue for sharp boundaries and a clear delimitation of tasks, whilst the default position of the military is to blur or demolish these boundaries through integration”. Further, significant hesitations were noted by NGOs operating in Afghanistan at the time whose concerns of the inefficiencies and risks of PRTs fell on the deaf ears of military commanders (Cornish & Glad 2008; Save the Children 2004, p. 25). This is reflected in Powell’s description of NGOs as “force multipliers” (Lischer 2007), and supports the assertion that militaries are, at least in theory, more motivated to operate alongside NGOs. However, in reality, the failures of military commanders to listen to feedback from NGOs regarding PRTs is indicative of the organisational inflexibility of militaries. This paper does not assert that such cooperation is beneficial to the pursuit of humanitarian objectives, but to simply note a disconnect in the strategic motivations for better coordination between militaries and NGOs in the humanitarian space.

The failures of NATO’s CA demonstrates some of the issues associated with operational level integration, while the failure of the PRTs highlight the shortcomings of tactical level integration between militaries and NGOs. Many, including Engell (2013) argue that the latter has significantly worse consequences than the former. One material consequence of the lacking distinction between military and civilian organisations was the withdrawal of MSF in 2004 after successfully operating in Afghanistan for the previous 24 years (Jessop 2009; The New Humanitarian 2004).

The case of Afghanistan provides an opportunity to examine the points of friction in the military-NGO relationship in the context of armed conflict. First, it demonstrates the expanding military mandate. This is not unique to the case of Afghanistan but can be seen throughout other examples that are littered throughout this paper. Second, it demonstrated the need for distinction between military and NGO operations; in order to bolster the success of each. Overall, this case study is one example that has shown while militaries and NGOs are working more intimately in the humanitarian space; there are still enduring points of friction. Some will be smoothed-out though increasing interaction and training, while others will remain as they are matters of inherent differences between the two types of organisations.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research has drawn on existing literature and key-informant interviews to provide evidence of the ongoing trend for militaries and NGOs coming together and operating with ever-increasing intimacy in the contexts of both: natural disaster relief and armed conflict. This paper has also explored certain points of friction between militaries and NGOs, despite them often sharing congruent goals in the humanitarian space. Some of these derive from differences in their respective organisational structures and cultures; while others derive from much more principled nuances such as their organisational mandates. This paper asserts that the former is likely to be mitigated through closer proximity and increased frequency in their operations; while the latter is likely to be resolved from clear lines of distinction between militaries and NGOs.

For all their points of friction, this paper has demonstrated the need for both types of organisations in humanitarian contexts; as militaries and NGOs have been shown to have complementary attributes. The shortcomings in militaries are often ameliorated by the strengths of NGOs; and vice versa. As such, both types of organisations have proven to be key components in the mosaic that is humanitarian action.

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