

Non-state Conflict Management

Opportunities and Limits of NGOs Engaging Non-State Armed Groups

Geneva, 21 October 2008

Dr. Ulrich Schneckener

ulrich.schneckener@swp-berlin.org

Dr. Claudia Hofmann

claudia.hofmann@swp-berlin.org



Key Research Questions

- Under which circumstances may NGOs affect non-state armed groups in a way that leads to a change of behaviour and possibly a renunciation of violence?
- In how far do forms of non-state conflict management arise from the interaction between NGOs and non-state armed groups?

Starting Assumptions I

- We assume cooperation between NGOs and non-state armed groups, which goes beyond selective contacts or agreements, are established over a longer period of time, and result in a form of trusting cooperation.
- We assume that NGOs dispose of special access, instruments and methods, which are not at the disposal of state or intergovernmental actors, which is why NGOs have comparative advantages (for example through their long-term commitment in hot spots or through their cooperation with local NGOs).

Starting Assumptions II

- We assume that NGOs are also restricted in their possibilities and in need of implicit or explicit support by other actors because they may not have the capability to assure the implementation of agreements.
- We assume that the chances of success for NGOs is not least dependent on the type of non-state armed groups, meaning that NGOs are more successful in view of some actors than of others.
- We assume that NGO operations bear certain risks and dilemmas, which may affect others and influence the entire process.

Definition of Non-State Armed Groups

Non-state Armed Groups

- 1) are willing and capable to use violence for pursuing their objectives;
- 2) are not integrated into formalised state institutions such as regular armies, presidential guards, police or special forces;
- 3) possess a certain degree of autonomy with regard to politics, military operations, resources and infrastructure;
- 4) are shaped through an organisational relationship or structure that exists over a specific period of time.

Questions of Interest

- Which advantages do NGOs have in comparison to state actors or international organisations?
- What are the limitations of NGOs in the interaction with non-state armed groups? Which are the risks for NGOs as well as for other actors involved?
- What lessons can be drawn from the experiences of NGOs – first and foremost by governments and international organisations – about the interaction with non-state armed groups?

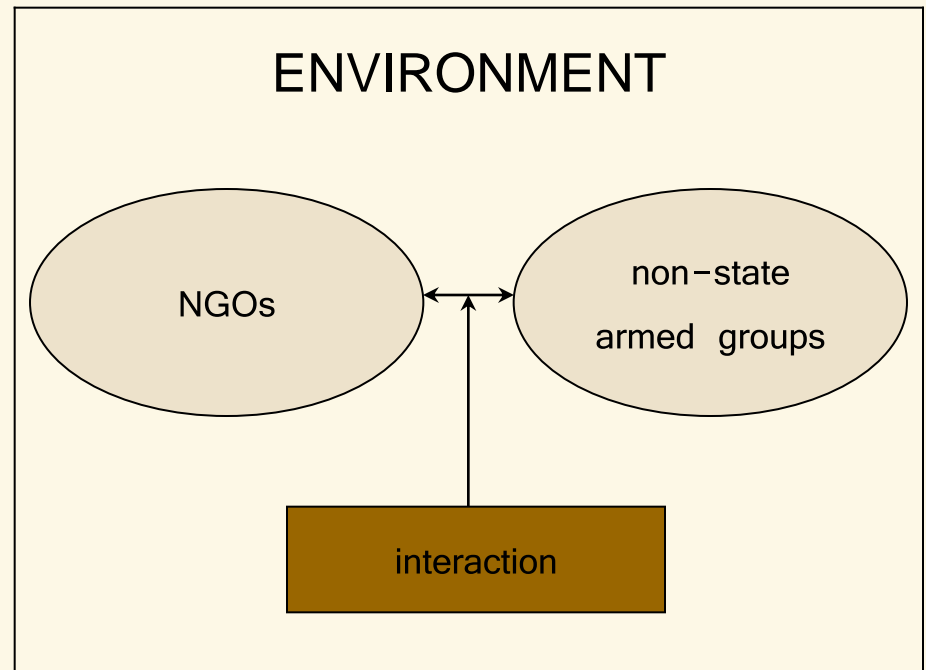
Comparing Cases

- Examining favourable conditions for successful engagement, therefore a comparison of
- Successful Cases:
 - activities of NGOs made a contribution to changing the behaviour of an armed group significantly and over a longer period of time at least
- Failed Cases:
 - activities that remained unsuccessful or without effect

Factors for Success/Non-Success

Bundles of Factors

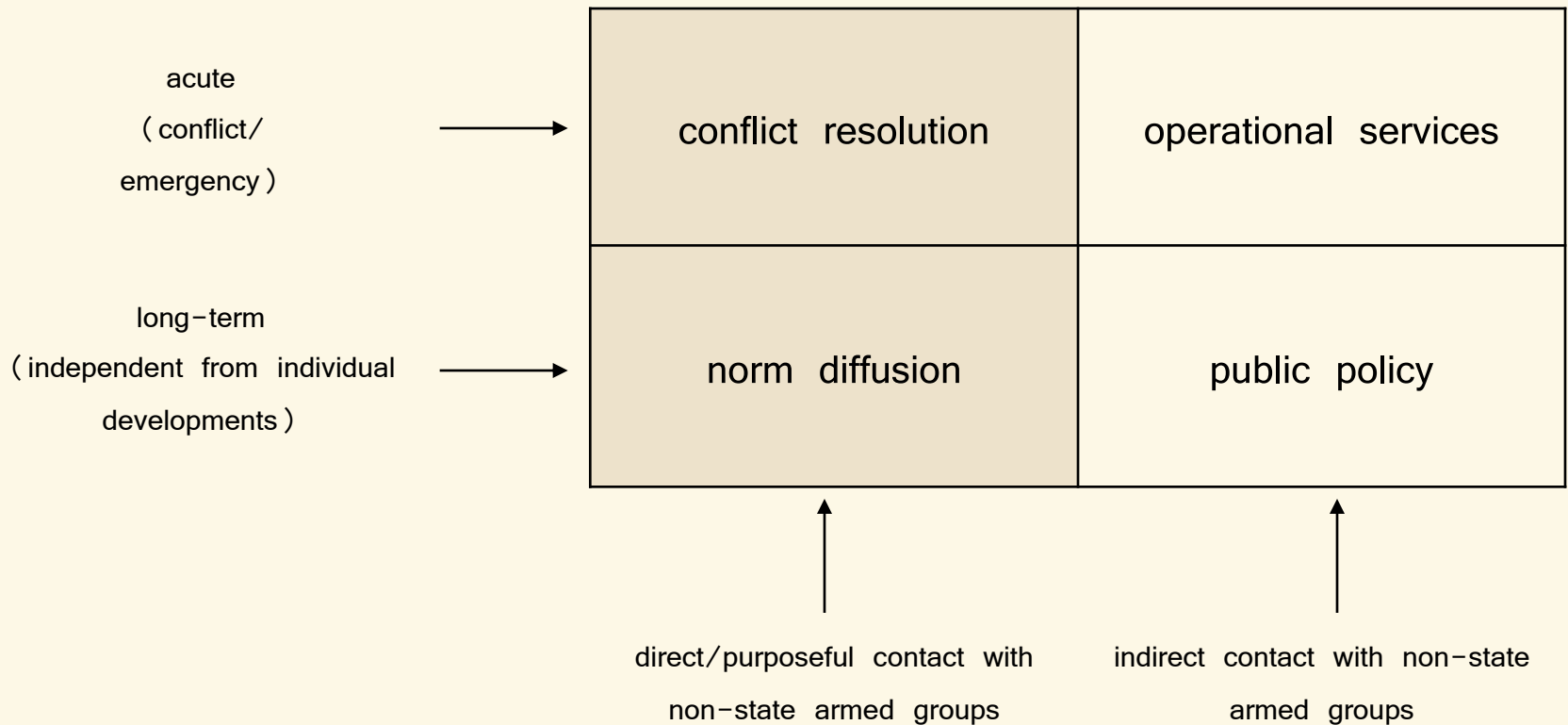
- general environment factors
- attributes of the non-state armed group
- attributes of the NGO
- quality of interaction



Attributes of the NGOs

- organisational structure
- relationship to state actors / IOs
- relationship to local actors
- availability of resources
- expertise / know-how / experience
- range of activities / services
- legitimacy / reputation / social capital
- personal skills
- methods / strategies

Typology of NGO Activities



Case Selection (preliminary)

Conflict Resolution NGOs

- Carter Center
- Center for Humanitarian Dialogue

Norm Diffusion NGOs

- International Committee of the Red Cross
- Geneva Call

NGOs between the two categories

- Quakers
- Conciliation Resources

Contribution

- 1) treatment of relationship between two non-state actors
 - non-state conflict management?
- 2) theoretical substantiation of NGOs' contribution in conflict management
- 3) new knowledge on non-state armed groups' behaviour during engagement
 - information on the extent and the manner non-state armed groups – or at least specific types – may be integrated into political governance structures
- 4) systematisation of knowledge, generalisable conclusions on
 - mechanisms
 - chances for success
 - transferability