Effectiveness of a Multi-Stage Networked Organisation for Early Integration of Multiple Perspectives on Emerging and Future Crises

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ABSTRACT

In the early phase of the crisis spectrum it is particularly challenging to apply a comprehensive approach. Complexities involve how to reach a shared context and conflict analysis, involve the local perspective, have an explicit Theory of Change and how to deal with political sensitivity. Military and civilian actors usually only start to share information with each other, once a political decision has been taken, and do this then in the very limited time before start of the mission. We investigated how future collaboration among multiple actors for emerging and ongoing international crises can be organized at an early stage –before political decision making- and how integration of their multiple perspectives can be facilitated. We performed a literature study, semi-structured interviews and a focus group session with 17 representatives from Dutch ministries, NGOs, IOs and academics. We designed an organisational framework and validated it in two case studies in the Netherlands: a two-day workshop with 15 experts on Somalia and the ongoing Mali Dialogue. We identified as theoretical framework a combination of the Comprehensive Approach Matrix that Compares Levels of Coherence and Types of Relationships with suitability mapping of network management regimes on the strategic orientations of the different actors making up the relationships. Our research concluded that in the Netherlands there is a clear lack of coherence mechanisms in the early phase. We propose, rather than an institutional organisation like the UK Stabilisation Unit, a networked organisation with three stages of collaboration: a learning and research network, a Crisis Identification Group and an Estimations and Options Group. The learning and research network consists of loosely connected people from different organisations who meet regularly to exchange ideas and define a common research agenda. The Crisis Identification Group and Estimations and Options Group could be taken together into one. This group consists of a small and carefully selected group of representatives from the research network, that come together in a focused workshop led by facilitators to create a shared situational awareness and to review policy options. The network management regime has to be flexibly adapted with each stage. As facilitation method we propose to combine flexible yet integrated conflict analysis approaches and to have dedicated Estimations and Options groups per theme such as Rule of Law. The multi-stage networked organisation seems promising but needs further validation through other case studies both from the Netherlands and internationally.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Experiences with military deployments over the last decade have shown that besides the traditional military component, political, civilian and economic components play an important role in contemporary peace and crisis management operations. And the same holds true the other way around: also with diplomatic or development interventions one has to look at the security and economic components. The roots of conflicts are almost always complex and require a multidisciplinary approach to create a sustainable peace. These insights have resulted in a growing consensus for more involvement and cooperation between the Defence, Diplomacy and Development spheres (3D) in post conflict and counterinsurgency operations [1]. This so-called "Comprehensive Approach" is based on the assumption that today's peacebuilding operations are more likely to be successful if the mission is embedded in the approaches of, and cooperates with, other stakeholders with different backgrounds. At the NATO internal comprehensive approach Stakeholder Meeting of the 22 / 23 September 2010, the comprehensive approach was defined as synergy amongst all actors and actions of the International Community through the coordination and de-confliction of its political, development and security capabilities to face today's challenges including complex emergencies.

Also the Dutch government has clearly embraced the concept of integrated comprehensive approaches to international crisis-management in their coalition agreement (Rutte II): "In international missions to conflict zones, safety, development and diplomacy must go hand in hand" [2]. The Netherlands builds on the lessons learned and track record in Afghanistan, South-Sudan (UNMISS) and Burundi (the bilateral safety and security program) [3], where development, defence and diplomacy were strongly integrated. The Netherlands aims at expanding this sometimes also called "Dutch Approach" further and has the opportunity to become recognized within the EU, NATO and UN with respect to their integrated approach [ibid].

Although a comprehensive approach has its opportunities and benefits, many problems with this approach exist in reality due to its complexity. For example, how to effectively combine the multitude of strategies, objectives and approaches of the different organisations? In practice, these different objectives sometimes even seem to be contradicting each other [4]. Critics of the approach argue that one should not pursue coherence beyond certain limits, because it will contribute to inefficiency [ibid]. In practice, each case will require careful analysis of the actual cost and benefits of the collaboration. The authors are not aware of scientific attempts at doing so for truly comprehensive approach settings. Smart defence (cooperation in developing, acquiring and maintaining military capabilities) is an example of attaining cost effectiveness among members of the NATO -given their current' financial constraints- by pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities and coordinating efforts better.

We spoke so far mainly of using a comprehensive approach during an intervention. Applying the comprehensive approach before a decision on an intervention is taken is equally important. As the 1 German Netherlands Corps states: "The concept of cooperation between civilian and military partners is the most promising approach to dealing with contemporary crises. We believe cooperation should start before we meet abroad in a crisis and should include all elements of mission preparation, including common exercises and training." In addition to training, jointly analysing the (roots of the) conflict at hand is essential. However, we have seen for the Dutch involvement in for example Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Afghanistan that pre-mission collaboration does not often occur.

One of the largest Dutch development NGOs, Cordaid, and the Dutch Research and Technology Organisation, TNO, jointly defined a research proposal on pre-mission collaboration during the Comprehensive Approach conference in The Hague on May 23, 2012. Both the expert jury and the audience chose this research proposal based on the relevance, topicality and applicability of the issue identified. This paper presents the results of this research.

2.0   PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the previous paragraph, we briefly stated that pre-mission collaboration is important, but does not often seem to occur. In this paragraph, we will more closely examine why it is important and why it is difficult. Based on this we formulate our problem statement that is the basis of this paper.

Experiences have shown that military and civilian actors mainly start to consult one another, during a mission and much less before or in the planning phase of a mission. Moreover, current collaboration mechanisms mainly seem to consist of governmental actors. As a result, only a certain amount of consultation and coordination happens among the different actors in the early phase preceding emerging and future crises, often through informal meetings or undocumented taskforces. This approach of rather isolated needs or conflict assessments, results in substantial loss of time and resources, during a critical stage of the design of the mission, and –most importantly- leads to a far from thorough context and conflict analysis. The "Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Beleidsevaluatie" (Inspectorate Development Aid and Policy Evaluation) recently evaluated the Dutch policy for fragile states in their report Investing in Stability [5] and emphasized exactly this point. In addition they pointed out the need for a proper "theory of change" that is made explicit and embraced by the different actors. So given that it is important, why does it not occur naturally?

One basic reason is that it is difficult to involve the local perspective in the design phase. Often the stakeholders do not have the relevant local context knowledge in advance and a mission plan designed without a proper context analysis will be out of touch with field reality. Stakeholders will feel less urgency for pre-mission collaboration, since there might be no political or media attention. Another reason is political sensitivity; when organisations start to consult and meet with another around a certain conflict, expectations could unintentionally be raised on a possible Dutch contribution. We will look more in-depth into this aspect by describing the current political decision-making procedure preceding a mission in the Netherlands. Article 100 of the Constitution obliges the government to inform the States General (i.e. Parliament and the Senate) in advance about the deployment of the armed forces to promote the international legal order or for humanitarian assistance in case of an armed conflict. The Article 100 procedure is for a large part the result of the military and political experiences in Srebrenica. The same holds for the "Toetsingskader" (Assessment Framework) [6], which is intended to structure the feasibility and desirability of military deployment. This framework is a flexible instrument and can be applied to different situations and circumstances. It consists of three parts: 1) The scope and purpose; 2) Information provision to the States General; and 3) A political, military, organizational and financial points of interest list. Thus, the nature and profile of the mission determine which elements of the Assessment Framework are applicable and to what extent these issues require attention in an Article 100 letter [7]. When the government is considering a possible decision via an Article 100 letter, a realistic and concrete picture of the cooperation and coherence must be presented [8]. Logically, the challenge here lies in collecting the right information from a wide variety of sources that feed into the article 100 letter. To tackle this issue, several initiatives have been developed over the last years. Moreover, to enable more flexibility, the Assessment Framework has been adjusted several times. For example in 2009 development cooperation and gender were incorporated as topics. If the Assessment Framework yields a positive assessment, then approval is asked from the States General for a mission. Subsequently, the political decision to start a mission can be taken. All in all, the process from the first political level discussions described above up to the actual start of a mission can, depending on the specific crisis at hand, vary in length, but takes usually place in a short time period and decisions are made under high time pressure. In this process, one runs the risk of not being able to integrate multiple perspectives in the Article 100 procedure.

Our problem statement is hence how can one -for emerging and future international crises- organize collaboration among multiple actors and come to an integration of their multiple perspectives. Perspectives from different relevant and qualified stakeholders, both from the international community and the fragile state at stake should be included. Actors range from the host nation, civil society organisations, the different Dutch ministries, Dutch NGOs, IOs (NATO, UN, EU), private sector up to knowledge partners.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To address the problem statement, we used four research methods: literature study, semi-structured interviews, a focus group session and a pilot. Desk and literature research was conducted to obtain background information by reviewing articles, policy documents and evaluations of think tanks. In the second stage, a number of respondents were interviewed to test the theoretical findings against practice. The interviews were conducted in a triangulation way with representatives working for different kind of organisations to avoid biases and verify arguments and options. We interviewed 17 representatives from the Dutch ministries of Defence, Security and Justice and Foreign Affairs, Steering Groups, NGOs, IOs, academics and other experts. Respondents were selected because of their particular knowledge and/or experience in this field. Questions were structured in three groups: (1) responsibilities in the area of the comprehensive approach, (2) the organisational structure for pre-mission collaboration (boundary conditions, incentives for participation, level of openness), (3) information sharing (which information, what is currently shared, incentives for sharing information). In order to have a sufficiently diverse view, the research team let the 'Afghan experiences' – which is obviously the most striking example of 3D interaction - not dominate the interviews by selecting interviewees with field experience in different countries or by asking about applicability in different contexts.

Based on the theories and the practical findings from the semi-structured interviews, a concept organisational structure was defined. To assess whether this organisational form would be a suitable solution to the problem defined, a focus group session was held. In this session, representatives of the above organisations discussed the initial findings of the project. Firstly, conceptual ideas of the organisational structure were presented to the experts. Secondly, a discussion was held concerning practical embedding, dilemmas and challenges. The results of this study were presented to the Working Group Comprehensive Approach to Human Security (WG CAHS).

Finally, we tested together with The Hague Institute of Global Justice, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence the organisational structure (with specific conflict analysis method) during a two-day pilot in May 2013. The WG CAHS chose the conflict in Somalia to become the specific pilot region, also in line with the preference of the Dutch ministry of Defence. Furthermore, The Hague Institute of Global Justice started hosting the so-called Mali dialogue late 2013 and we will see if and how this matches with the structure proposed.

4.0 THEORY

In this chapter we present a selection from literature of relevant theories for collaboration among multiple actors and give a brief explanation of existing conflict analysis methods. Furthermore, we describe one existing organisational structure, the UK Stabilisation Unit.

4.1 Network management, level of coherence and type of relationships

In the scientific and management literature many studies have been done on collaboration among multiple entities. It is clear also from this literature that this is not without challenges. Experiences from the corporate sector reveal that many partnerships (50 to 70%) fail prematurely. While the partners do have common goals, they also have individual objectives that need not necessarily complement one another. In addition, the partners may have a variety of differences that present an obstacle to effective collaboration. The differences between the actors in the comprehensive approach can be expressed in terms of their different strategic orientation value sets [9]: ideology (neutrality and impartiality versus choosing sides in a conflict, vision on the use of violence), goals (kinetic versus non-kinetic), power and control (centralized versus less centralized, task versus process oriented), implicit structure (hierarchical versus loosely coupled), decision process (procedural and top-down versus participatory and bottom-up), decisions (follow from routines and

standard operating procedures versus from socially negotiated solutions) and information requirements. This makes it essential for partners to build up their alliance carefully and systematically, in order to ultimately achieve both their own and their collective goals effectively and efficiently.

What organizational structure would fit to do so sustainably? A "networked organisation" is generally considered to be the most appropriate structure for coordination among multiple organisations [10]. The term "networked organisation" refers to organisations with a dominant focus on emergent dynamics in collaboration and less reliance on formal hierarchical structures. Herranz [9] uses the term strategic orientation to assess the differences between organisations described above. He distinguishes three archetypical strategic orientations of a (networked) organization: bureaucratic, entrepreneurial and community. Governmental networks and public agencies are examples of organizational networks which are predominantly bureaucratically oriented. Networks of private companies are primarily entrepreneurial in attitude. Volunteer organizations or neighbourhood associations are predominantly community-oriented. In addition to the strategic orientation, Herranz also sketches a passive to active continuum of four archetypical network management regimes building on a substantial body of literature:

- **Reactive facilitation** is the most passive form of regime wherein network coordination relies primarily on social interactions rather than procedural mechanisms or financial incentives. The overall behaviour of the network emerges from the inter-nodal interaction rather than being deliberately planned.

- **Contingent coordination** applies some opportunistic directive influence to guide network behaviour. Reliance on emergent behaviour is still quite high.

- **Active coordination** implies a more deliberate design of the network, including its constituent partners as well as the interaction and incentive mechanisms among the partners.

- **Hierarchical-based directive administration** implies coordination with authoritative procedural mechanisms rather than reliance on social or incentive mechanisms.

Based on empirical research, he makes a number of propositions as to which of the network management archetypes is appropriate for each type of strategic orientation; see Table 4-1. Recalling our observation that the actors in the comprehensive approach typically vary in their strategic orientation, this implies that none of the four archetypical network management regimes will fully meet the needs of a collaboration network for early integration of multiple perspectives.

Coning and Friis [4] distinguish networks of actors by their level of coherence and type of relationships. One can have intra-agency, whole-of-government, inter-agency (between the international community actors) and international-local (between the international community and the host nation actors) coherence. Between actors there can be different types of relationships. They can compete, coexist, coordinate or they are integrated or united. In a network of actors one can also distinguish structural and resource relations among the actors. A structural relation describes the relation between actors in terms of their position in the network: an actor can be the focal hub of the network, an operational partner (primary tie), strong-tie or weak-tie partner. Theoretically, also networks where organisations share information and collaborate without the direction or intervention of a hub might be feasible. Our expectation is however that some form of a focal hub will be essential for the sustainability of the network. In strong networks this hub can have only a very modest facilitating role. The resource relations describe the relation between the actors in terms of their role regarding resources: one can be the (co)funder, the receiver of funds or one who refers information.

We can now combine these two models to determine which network management regime is most appropriate for a certain coherence and type of relationship. For example a *Hierarchically-based directive administration* network regime might work best for intra-agency coherence where actors are competing. Similarly *Reactive*

facilitation might be sufficient if these actors are united. For a whole-of-government relationship it is most likely similar. If we go to the inter-agency and the international-local relationships, it becomes more complicated, since several strategic orientations will be present within the network and different type of relationships. In general, we expect that all actors are initially low on the scale of "type of relationship", sometimes just merely coexisting especially in the case of the international community versus the host nation.

This led us to the notion of introducing a multi-stage networked organisation. The first stage consists of building the relationships in order to share knowledge and expertise among a large group of stakeholders. In the second stage stakeholders can apply for smaller subgroups focused on a certain crisis area in order to create a shared situational awareness and to define different policy options for this area. This does not necessarily mean that everyone shares the same opinion or that a compromise is reached, but it does mean that at least all perspectives come to the table, are taken into account and integrated in different options amongst which politicians can choose. In this multi-stage network the focal hub can exercise different network management regimes: from reactive facilitation in the first stage up to active coordination.

Table 4-1. Suitability mapping of network management regimes on strategic orientations, as proposed by Herranz (2008, pp. 25, 26)

Strategic orientation	Network management regime			
	Reactive facilitation	Contingent coordination	Active coordination	Hierarchically-based directive administration
Bureaucratic			X	x
Entrepreneurial		x	X	
Community	X	x		

4.2 Conflict analysis methodologies

In order to design an intervention, it is essential to first properly understand the dynamics of the conflict. Many different methods have been developed to analyse conflicts. We were not able to find in literature an extensive overview. Some attempts in this direction have been made, yet remain incomplete and do not contain the required level of fine grained analysis and practical application to be useful to policymakers or to give relevant input in line with our research objectives. TNO made an exploratory inventory of methods themselves, by collecting information on methods from academia (such as the Political Instability Task Force), multilateral institutes (such as World Bank, UN), think tanks and governments. Methods vary from basic conflict tree models, statistical and qualitative analysis in retrospect, dynamic system diagrams up to facilitation processes such as TNO's Collaborative Decision Making (CDM). CDM is a process that seeks to create unity of effort between multiple parties and to cope with challenges in complex missions, programs or projects [11]. The process is designed to assist multiple stakeholders to overcome the differences in e.g. culture, values and backgrounds and to stimulate them to actually create unity of effort [Ibid]. We will not give the inventory in detail in this paper, but focus on our general observations.

We found a variety of "lenses" depending on the goal of the analysis and that conflict analysis is frequently used as a first step in setting policy priorities by policymakers and for designing interventions by stakeholders such as NGOs. However, policy makers find it hard to transform the more abstract insights from the tools into specific policies. Currently, most analysis tools are mainly qualitative, although the

combination of both qualitative and quantitative, such as the Political Instability Task Force does, would provide more relevant new insights for policy makers. Visualization techniques are helpful to structure complex situations. They enhance common understanding of a particular intervention context on multiple levels among the different organisations and can create consensus this way. Especially, for decision makers, a visualization of the complex situation may be more useful than a report. However, many visualizations are merely a picture and are not supported by electronic tools. In general, we found that in most cases it is best not to use just one conflict analysis framework, but to aim for flexible yet integrated conflict analysis approaches.

In the following paragraphs, we describe one existing organizational structure, i.e. the UK stabilisation unit, which has as one of its tasks early integration of multiple perspectives on emerging and future crises. We map their approach on the network management, coherence and coordination theory described in paragraph 4.1 and describes the conflict analysis methods used.

4.3   UK stabilization unit

An example of a "whole of government" organisation form is the Stabilisation Unit (SU) in the United Kingdom. The SU is an interdepartmental governmental organisation, jointly owned by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) (also known as the parent departments). The Unit is based at FCO. As result of the planning of the British engagement in Afghanistan the UK established a rather fixed forum in 2004 for the exchange of information and the discussion of appropriate cooperation and strategies, named the Post Conflict Resolution Unit (PCRU). In late 2007, it was renamed the Stabilisation Unit (SU) to reflect the nature of its role in supporting the management of the MoD's Stabilisation Aid fund [12].

The government has set up inter-departmental funds and bodies to facilitate coordination of the three key departments and to fill in the gaps in activities that none of them can fill independently. It has a rotating chairman with two deputies from the other departments. Tasks assigned by the departments are done by regular positions. All staff in the SU recruited for their functions are volunteers and seconded for two years. The unit has a core team of 75 people [12].

The organisational structure of the SU consists of three departments:

* The Stabilisation thematic and Regional Team (STAR) consists of Conflict and Stabilisation, Security and Justice, Regional Coordinator and Lessons Teams, supported by a Programme Hub

* The Operations Team included Deployment, Logistics and CIS and Capability expertise

* The Corporate Programme Team delivers HR, Finance, Corporate and Communications support

Next to the key departments, the SU is working in partnership with domestic and international organisations such as the Cabinet Office, Associate School of Government, National School of Government, Ministry of Justice, United Nations, European Union, NATO, Private Sector Organisations, and in some cases NGOs. The departments of the SU meet with international and non-governmental organisations in order that these organisations are aware of the UK's objectives in particular countries or regions. In these meetings NGOs are cooperating on the planning and coordination of efforts.

The SU has increased operational capacity and functions as a repository of expertise, in terms of both institutional memory and human resources. The main role of the SU is to enable the comprehensive approach. In general, it seems to facilitate cross-departmental assessment and planning; to develop and deploy civilian expertise; and to identify and learn lessons [12]. The SU is coordinating cross-Whitehall work for improving joint assessment and planning at the strategic and operational levels (Ibid). It has an

operational role across three mutually supporting pillars, which are: 1) early warning; 2) rapid crisis prevention and response; and 3) investing in upstream prevention [13]. It also has been the primary source of civilian deployment. The SU has been given approval to set up a cadre of civil servants (Civilian Stabilisation Group) for specialised, longer term or larger scale tasks [ibid]. This Civilian Stabilisation Group consist of over more than 1000 civilian experts from the public and private sector with critical stabilisation skills and experience.

The SU is not an executive organisation and cannot own plans. It provides experts on planning methodologies and processes in order to facilitate better cross Whitehall work. The resulting plans and strategies must be owned and led by FCO, DFID, MOD or Cabinet Office. Any department may initiate a request for joint planning. Such a decision may be precipitated by an unexpected crisis or for which an integrated plan is required. The lead department will need to identify a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO), secure the agreement of the other departments and agree membership of the Steering Group that will guide work under the SRO's leadership [13].The Steering Group will need to identify a Strategic Planning Team (SPT) Leader who will appoint and run the SPT and deliver the draft plan to the Steering Group for agreement (Ibid). The SPT will need to take account of the various tools and methodologies available for Strategic Assessments such as DFID Strategic Conflict Assessment, MoD Strategic Planning Group Assessment and the Cabinet Office Strategic Conflict Framework. One framework for this joint assessment is the Joint Stabilization Assessment (JSA). The process of setting the aim and assessment is iterative (Ibid, 4). Whilst a very broad strategic aim may be understood at the start of the process, it might evolve significantly to reflect new information uncovered in the assessment [13].The SU has different funding streams: the Stabilisation Fund, the Conflict Pool (a joint fund managed by DFID, the FCO and MoD) and the peacekeeping budget (House of Commons 2010, 29). The SU budget is around £7 million and 94% of that is proved by DFID. This budget is for staffing and capacity and is not their entire program. The specific program budget that the SU deploys is £7 million [13].

5.0   FINDINGS ON PRE-MISSION PROCESSES IN THE NETHERLANDS

In the paragraph below we describe the results we obtained from the desk study, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

5.1   Overview of Dutch situation

Table 4-2 gives a non-exhaustive overview of different collaboration networks for the levels of coherence that have been created in the Netherlands and indicates in which phase of an intervention the network is active and which type of relationship is predominant within the network. We did not focus on intra-agency coherences and did not find much truly international-local coherences, although in some cases the inter-agency relationships included also partners from the host nation, but usually only in a very limited amount and rather ad hoc. Therefore we decided not to classify them as international-local. Based on our interviews, we got the impression that the whole-of-government relationships were structural and continual, whereas the inter-agency relationships had more variations in frequency of meetings and attendance.

The table below shows that there is currently neither a collaboration network that addresses information sharing and analysis prior to nor after a deployment or intervention. This means that there is still a lack of a continual organization structure to ensure an early integration of perspectives in the pre-deployment and evaluation phase of a mission. The existing coordination mechanisms suffer not only from the general collaboration problems, they continue to face some very specific challenges as well. These will be elaborated upon below.

Table 4-2: Overview of levels of coherence and type of relationship for the different (pre)-intervention stages.

Level of Coherence		Pre-intervention	Intervention stages				
		Learning network	Crisis identification group	Estimation and options group	Response direction group	Current operations group	Crisis review group
Whole-of-government	Steering group military operations				Integrated	Integrated	
	Steering group civil missions				Integrated	Integrated	
	Top-level civil service consultation Afghanistan				Coordinate	Coordinate	
Inter-agency NGOs	Afghanistan platform NGOs					Coordinate	Coordinate
	Dutch Consortium Uruzgan					Coordinate	
	Dutch consortium for rehabilitation (six fragile states)					Coordinate	
Inter-agency Government, NGOs, academia, private sector	Working group CAHS (Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law MoFA)	Compete/ coexist/ coordinate					
	More than the sum of the parts (focus Burundi)	Coexist/ coordinate					
	Consortium Burundi	Coexist/ coordinate				Coexist/ coordinate	

Substantial resource inequality exists between different stakeholders. The military –for example- tend to have more people available in-between deployments than NGOs do. This leads to discrepancies between organisations to be able to attend coordination meetings and to collect and analyse information. Secondly, differences in organisational culture exist between government departments, the military and NGOs [14]. With regard to military personnel and NGOs, Scheltinga and Rietjens [15] describe their organisational culture as 'authoritarian, formalised and goal-oriented' while NGOs are 'flexible and independent, with decentralised authority structures and flat management structures'. Thirdly, rotation of (field and headquarter) staff among all actors, causes considerable fluctuations in the level of information exchange [ibid]. Fourthly, exchange of classified information and the preferred neutrality of NGOs in this regard,

continue to be a limitation as well [ibid]. Fifthly, political sensitivity can be considered a factor of influence as well. When organisations start to consult and meet each other for pre-mission meetings, expectations could unintentionally be raised on a possible Dutch contribution.

In sum, we found in The Netherlands no structural pre-mission collaboration networks for the crisis identification and estimation and options phases. Actors face in existing collaboration networks several obstacles for collaboration and do not receive the right incentives for example to share information. How can the various stakeholders be stimulated to collaborate throughout the complete pre-mission decision making and design procedure?

5.2   Multi-stage networked organisation

In this paragraph we describe an organisational structure that can help to practically overcome the issues mentioned above. It was clear from the interviews that in the Netherlands a whole-of-government type of organisation with hierarchically-based directive administration such as the Stabilisation Unit would not fit. The Stabilisation Unit focuses mostly on responses and operations, whereas the network wished for in The Netherlands should focus on the crisis identification and estimation and options phases. Furthermore, the interviewees expressed the wish for flexibility, scalability and agility, the need to be able to outreach to other actors outside the government and cost-effectiveness.

As explained already in paragraph 4.1, a multi-stage networked organisation can in principle meet these requirements. The network ideally consists of three stages of collaboration: 1) learning and research network, 2) crisis identification group and 3) estimation and options groups. These three groups together we will define as a multi-stage networked organisation for comprehensive assessment (see figure 4-1).
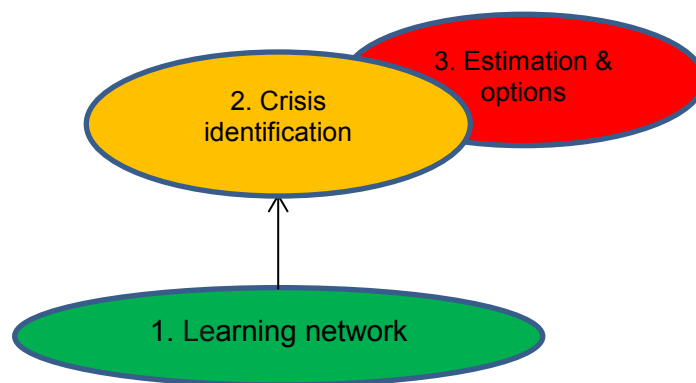

Figure 4-1: The Multi-Stage Networked Organisation proposed.

The first phase in this approach is a network, hosted by a focal hub, which consists of loosely connected people who meet regularly to exchange ideas and define a common research agenda. The working group should include as many different experts as possible and its stakeholders have different goals, motivations and ideas about why to get involved in the learning network. The working group members can propose a region for which they find that a comprehensive conflict assessment is necessary, using input from conflict early warning systems for example. The exchange of such information should take place in a generic way. All stakeholders within the network are invited to exchange information about the comprehensive approach in general; case studies, new research insights or a review of best practices for example. The first stage is a continuous process and continues during stage two and three.

During the second stage of collaboration, or the crisis identification group, a limited group of stakeholders with expertise or a particular information position is invited by the focal hub. This hub together with key

primary tie partners can actively select stakeholders through a central database from the learning network based on relevance and expertise for the mission at hand. During this stage, physical meetings take place. Also, gathering, reading and analysing information takes place so that a first draft context analysis and an overview of the given area becomes available. Pre-crisis information is particularly important as it helps recognise pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks that may be exacerbated as a result of the conflict [16]. Furthermore, clear and agreed roles and responsibilities of the involved stakeholders is pivotal to a successful and effective team, and help build broad ownership for it success [17].

The third and last stage, the estimation and options group, is an optional continuation and further specification of the findings from the second stage. During this stage, the group can specify different policy scenarios for the parties involved, allowing them to establish their own policy objectives and operational plans. Decision makers can for example call back the participants from the second stage, to critically reflect on planned interventions. The focal hub will compile the written input from the experts and their review comments into a short estimation and options white paper.

It is highly likely that in practice, the second and third stages are merged into a single workshop or set of workshops as urgency is high during such processes. As this will differ significantly per conflict/crisis context, it is up to the focal hub to decide whether it is appropriate for the selected group of participants from the second stage, to be used as pro-active advisors that reflect upon proposals for intervention.

The multi-stage networked organisation can be financially quite attractive in comparison to an institutional approach like the Stabilisation unit. The first phase can be done completely in-kind, except for the costs of the focal hub; as long as all organisations get as much out of the network as they put in. The second and third stage require budget for covering the expenses of key experts and practitioners, that most likely also have to be flown in. Per conflict-affected country case a different group of experts will be required for a limited number of sessions. Hence any overhead or redundancy in having experts on board all the time (as would be the case in an institutional setting) can be avoided.

6.0   APPLYING THE ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL

In this paragraph we describe one pilot and one dialogue in which the organizational model has been (partly) applied.

6.1   Pilot Somalia

The Netherlands Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs decided to test the proposed multi-stage networked organisation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had just recently -in May 2012- installed the knowledge platform Security & Rule of Law . The platform aims to build a bridge between global issues and Dutch expertise on security and rule of law, and to contribute to international knowledge, policy development and implementation, both in fragile and conflict-affected environments and in the Netherlands. The knowledge platform consists of five working groups, one of them being the working group Comprehensive approach to Human Security. This platform serves as the "learning network" in which the Ministry, as the focal hub of the network, applies "reactive facilitation" The operational partner of the focal hub is The Hague Institute for Global Justice. In order to move from the more general knowledge exchanges of this working group to more specific comprehensive conflict analysis, the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs applied an "active coordination" network regime to the working group. They appointed TNO and The Hague Institute for Global Justice as the organizers and facilitators of the second stage of crisis identification and third stage of estimation and options, and the Clingendael Institute of International Relations to evaluate this novel approach and to assess the outcome in terms of quality of the analysis and how this process could be methodologically improved. Following discussions in the working group and given the priorities of the Ministry of Defence Somalia was chosen as the pilot country. The goal for the

ministries was to get a better insight into the roots of conflict and an improved shared understanding regarding the conflict in Somalia by:

- An overview of which actors are active where in Somalia (or the direct surrounding areas) and with which (long term) purpose. Included is a grouping of the policy lines of these different actors.

- Insight in unaccounted subjects/topics or development themes; gaps identified in the overview of active actors.

- Different policy options for the different stakeholder groups. E.g. for the MoD (the force commander): to which policy lines can the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia contribute, where is this most likely the most effective, and to whom?

The pilot consisted of the following steps. First, a short paper of the context of the Somalia conflict was prepared. Three times five representatives were selected from the Dutch Ministries, think-tanks/academia and NGOs and IOs. The most important selection criteria for the experts were: presence in/near Somalia recently and being a recognized expert. The pilot consisted of a series of two days of workshops, followed by an online discussion on the outcome of the first two workshop days. The pilot was organized in a lean and mean manner and in a very short time frame in order to have the first results just before the policy debate on EUNAVFOR. TNO provided the process and structure for the workshop based on the Comprehensive Decision Making Model, this is a structured group facilitation method to enable a wide variety of participants to define a common (policy vision) by following a series of standardized steps. Therefore, TNO followed the model of Herranz of more 'active coordination' in which participants and stakeholders are actively engaged into a structured policy debate with a, more or less, pre-defined policy goal.

Participants were selected in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign affairs who had the best network in Somalia, to ensure that the most well-informed participants were taking part in the Somalia workshop. Participants consisted of various representatives of national and international academia, policy makers from different ministries, NGO field staff, UN staff from Somalia as well as Somali key experts that have been living in Somalia for many years. Before the first workshop took place, participants were informed with a number of documents on the current situation in Somalia from different sources.

The first workshop series was organised in The Hague. The focus of the first two days, was to perform an in-depth problem analysis based of the causes and effects of the Somali conflict and the resulting piracy. The second day focused on finding options for possible interventions by the Dutch government, that would lead to a more effective policy that was supported by opinions from a wide variety of stakeholders.

The outcome of this first part of the workshop consisted of both an extensive problem analysis plus possible options for interventions for the Dutch government towards the Somali conflict. These findings were summarized in a joint policy paper and sent digitally to all participants for review a few days after this workshop.

The week after, a third workshop day was organized in which international participants called in via a teleconference gateway, while the Dutch participants were meeting each other again physically. Goal of this final three hour discussion was to reflect on the initial outcome of the workshop that was sent around digitally and to further improve the quality of the joint policy paper . This step in the CDM process is in line with the model of Herranz [9] in which the workshop was organised in a structured manner which contains elements of the 'hierarchically-based directive administration.'

The pilot on Somalia has demonstrated that in order to refine existing analysis and identify concrete policy options, strong analytical and policy guidance is required. The quality of the starting point of the workshop could have been improved if an analysis of the current problems in Somalia, plus the position of the Dutch government on various thematic topics and geographical districts had been shared to participants at the start of the workshop. If workshop participants had been briefed more thoroughly beforehand, the quality of their

analysis would also have been better tailored towards the information needs of the Dutch policy makers. All participants, especially the ones from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defence, valued the unique opportunity for in-depth exchange on Somalia. One representative from UNOCHA for example called the workshop "a very worthy initiative, wished our Ministry of Foreign Affairs would do this as well". This will enable country experts to share their knowledge in a more targeted way and stimulate dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the relevant departments within these ministries about joint priorities for engagement in fragile and conflict affected states. Clingendael suggested to change the methodology from the rather straightforward conflict tree model used by the facilitators, towards a rolling political-economy analysis in order to bring the information exchange to a higher level. A rolling political economy analysis would help to deepen the understanding of the complex interrelations between all factions, tribes and their sociocultural relations that will sort a significant influence over the effectiveness of the policy interventions designed. In addition, stronger policy guidance and time investment prior to the workshop from the Ministries can potentially improve the policy options. Finally, a concise, open-source, high quality report on the workshop is key for follow-up within the ministries and a broader policy debate.

6.2   The Mali Dialogue

As a result of the Dutch government's decision in December 2013 to contribute to the integrated UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Dutch development NGOs with activities in Mali, rule of law knowledge institutes and representatives of the Dutch ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense started the so-called 'Mali dialogue'. The dialogue is hosted as well by The Hague Institute of Global Justice through their Knowledge Platform Security & Justice. Since the Mali dialogue has only recently started, it is too early to draw conclusions on the functioning or the results of the dialogue. But it is interesting to address the way the dialogue has been shaped so far, since it can be labelled as a model for comprehensive dialogue processes.

It has been agreed between the participants that the dialogue will focus on two issues that are central to the Dutch contribution to MINUSMA: decentralisation of the judicial system and community policing. Another focus of the dialogue is a geographic one: since the Dutch deployment is in four Malinese districts (Gao, Ségou, Timboektoe and Mopti), the dialogue will concentrate on these areas, obviously without losing sight of developments in the rest of the country and the wider region.

The Mali dialogue consists of two concentric circles. One circle is the core group of representatives of organizations, with a concrete program running in Mali or in-depth knowledge of the described topics and geographic areas. They will meet quite regularly, approximately every two months. The other concentric circle consists of a much wider group of organizations and individuals. They will meet twice a year at The Hague Institute for Global Justice. Apart from these physical meetings, regular e-mail contact and an online community are part of the toolbox of the Mali dialogue.

It remains to be seen what will be the concrete outcomes of the dialogue. Participants have different objectives and agendas, varying from getting and bringing information from the field, making joint context analyses, policy influencing to implementing joint projects. In the coming months it will become clearer what is a realistic ambition level for the dialogue.

Experiences of other country-specific platforms (like the Afghanistan platform, centring around the Dutch deployment in Uruzgan province) has shown that these kinds of platforms work best with a small group of committed individuals from different backgrounds, that have trust in each other and the willingness to share more than just open-source information. Another experience is that everybody likes coordination, but nobody likes to be coordinated. This implies that facilitating these kinds of dialogue processes is quite delicate and requires a good sense of the do's and don'ts of platform management. Finally, a form of institutionalisation is necessary, but too much bureaucracy often means the end of the dialogue.

Referring to the network models in 3.1, so far the Mali dialogue can be characterised as a form of reactive facilitation. However, once the goals and shared ambitions of the network become clearer and trust has been created amongst the participants, facilitation can potentially shift towards contingent or even active coordination. But it seems wise that in the early stages of a new platform where all stakeholders need to find a useful and value-adding role, a more passive form of facilitation is chosen.

The exact place of the Mali dialogue in the Knowledge Platform for Security and Rule of Law has not yet been chosen. It would make sense to make it a sub-group of the working group 'comprehensive approach for human security', where relevant discussions and research studies are taking place to feed into the Mali dialogue and vice versa. In this working group also a budget is available for activities, like networking meetings or inviting resource persons from the region. A questionnaire has been sent out recently to all participants in the Mali dialogue, which should shed light on the way forward and which will possible lead to a more formal structure of the dialogue.

In the multi-stage model, the Mali dialogue comes closest to an estimations and options group. Having said that, the dialogue only started *after* the political decision had been taken about the Dutch military participation in the MINUSMA mission. It remains to be seen what would have been the impact on the shaping of the Dutch contribution if the dialogue had started a few months earlier. Now the dialogue can potentially still have impact on shaping the existing or new development and diplomacy initiatives.

7.0   CONCLUSIONS

We distinguished additional complexities in applying the comprehensive approach in the early phases of the crisis spectrum as compared to the later phases, especially since there is often a short time period between political level discussions and actual start of an intervention. We identified a lack of coherence mechanisms for these early phases in the Netherlands. This paper aimed to find -for emerging and future international crises- an organizational structure for collaboration among multiple entities and to find a methodology for integration of their multiple perspectives.

Literature showed that it is essential for partners to build up their alliance carefully and systematically, in order to ultimately achieve both their own and their collective goals effectively and efficiently. Coning et al. [4] showed that several combinations of levels of coherence and type of relationships can be present among alliances. For each of these combinations a different network management regime is most effective as Herranz et al. [9] explained. We proposed a multi-stage networked organisation for early comprehensive conflict assessment, where one goes from a learning network up to an estimation and options group dedicated to a specific theme. Regarding the methodologies for integration, we found a large variety. We did not find a one size fits all methodology, but propose to use rather a tailor-made combination of integrated conflict analysis methodologies.

We tested our findings in a pilot for Somalia and learnt from the Mali dialogue. Figure 4-2 summarizes our findings.
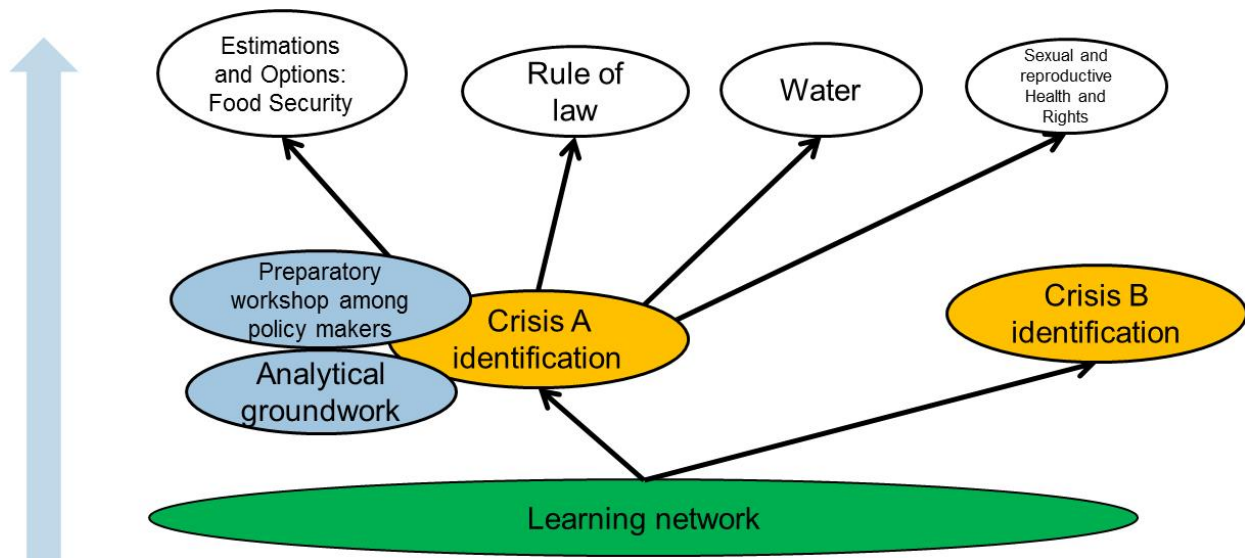
Figure 4-2: The adapted Multi-Stage Networked Organisation.

As concluded from the Somalia pilot in 6.1, the conflict tree model as used by the facilitators was not rich enough to address the complexities and several layers of the conflict. We expect that for each thematic focus a dedicated analytical model has to be selected. For rule of law a rolling political-economy analysis might be appropriate. We found that selecting participants from the international community was not that difficult, leveraging the several networks in place through the knowledge platform and ministries. However, selecting local representatives required a more substantial effort and timespan. Participants expressed the need for more policy guidance from the ministries, which basically means more time investment from the ministries. A multi-stage networked organisation as an independent organisational form seems to be sufficiently separate from the political process to avoid political sensitivities. At the same time, this distance also means that the network has to communicate about the outcome of the comprehensive conflict analysis very clearly and to-the-point, while at the same time not oversimplifying the many complexities behind a conflict.

In conclusion, it is important to realize that each of the steps mentioned above requires a different set of guidelines, experts and facilitators as each conflict situation is completely different. To give relevant input into recent policy debates then, a central chairman –part of a focal hub- needs to carefully assess each stage and each conflict area and to align this with a different set of experts and facilitators. This implies that the relevant Ministries and policy makers need to carefully consider how much resources (both of themselves (their own time) as of others) they are willing to put into the assessment, while balancing time pressure and quality requirements. The multi-stage approach still needs further work: ideally by including more extensive preparatory work with the different Ministries involved that require input in certain stage of the policy development cycle leading to thematic and functional prioritization. Secondly, each phase requires a carefully selected team of experts and facilitators, also to ensure that a local perspective is represented in the policy debates. Furthermore, the discussions during the workshop can have a higher quality/focus when Ministries indicate their thematic and functional prioritization beforehand. Lastly, the analytical method applied by the facilitators needs to be adjusted to the specific setting, expertise and background of the group.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to continue with using the Knowledge Platform for Security and Rule of Law as established by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and run by the Hague Institute for Global Justice for early stage integration of multiple perspectives on current and future international crises. We propose to further develop the multi-stage networked organisation approach in two ways:

- So far we have only applied the framework to a whole-of-government example, i.e. the UK Stabilisation Unit, and to two examples that are in between inter-agency and international-local coherence, i.e. the Somalia pilot and Mali dialogue case. It is essential to validate the framework with more case studies, such as the NATO SHAPE Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC), the UN cluster system and early warning and crisis room initiatives (such as in Europe) so that we can learn from these.

- To make together with the learning network a readily available toolkit of comprehensive conflict analysis tools from which rapidly a selection can be made depending on the characteristics of a certain crisis.

- To assess how the local perspective and local realities can be better integrated into the process. This remains a very difficult but essential task. A first important step is to define local knowledge and to develop a way to validate local knowledge (such as how to know how representative of the population in question is the viewpoint of an expert). Second step is then to see how it can be best integrated.

- To try out this fine-tuned methodology for other areas and evaluate them in an iterative feedback loop. An important evaluation question is what the decision makers (at the ministries and in politics) need in terms of information product coming from the multi-stage networked organisation. In addition, it is very important to find out –possibly through benchmarking or by comparing with actual mission costs- what is a reasonable budget for a high quality comprehensive conflict analysis.

9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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