The role of humanitarian NGOs in crisis management

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NGOs are important actors of humanitarian and emergency operations since they are able to deploy a wide range of materials and logistics as well as bring in capabilities important to tackle some of the problems that occur in humanitarian, peace building and reconstruction operations organized by states and intergovernmental organizations. However, NGOs have their own approach to aid, reconstruction and service delivering to people hurt by nature disasters and human conflicts. In principle, this approach is taken as complementary to the states and IGOs approach. In practice, it is very different from it. Consequently, NGO action often clashes with the states and IGOs action in humanitarian intervention. This paper deals with the participation of humanitarian NGOs in, and along with, IGOs and states action to respond to composite humanitarian emergencies. The main assumption of the paper is that, in the current phase of world politics, the context in which global emergency policies are demanded, formed and carried out is a context in change. An humanitarian system of actors, institutions, rules and practices is gradually materializing and strengthening. In this system, the existence of good NGO-IGO relations is esteemed to be important to the goal achievement of humanitarian missions. At the same time, the promotion of good NGO-IGO relations in humanitarian missions is underestimated and neglected in the practice. This is one of the findings of a survey analysis briefly summarized in this paper,

The present paper is divided into three parts. The first part presents the main roles NGOs play in humanitarian actions. The second part reports the main results of the HNGOsRep survey ¹, a survey of the opinions of the representatives of 28 humanitarian NGOs and networks of NGOs active in the field of humanitarian assistance, peace building, and conflict transformation and mediation (See

¹ The HNGOs survey was conducted in Geneva and Brussels between November 2009 and February 2011.
NGOs and humanitarian action

Impartiality, proportionality and neutrality are the fundamental principles of action of the agencies that undertake humanitarian actions. In addition, independence from the state governments is the standard behaviour of the humanitarian NGOs. Additional principles were added to define and shape the improvements which occurred in the relationship between civilians and military operations, through which States and IGOs operate. The term Civil-military co-operation (CIMIC) was coined to name the close cooperation between military troops and civil society actors (Rietjens, 2008). The reconstruction of Germany, on the aftermath of the Second World War, is cited as the first case of this co-operation. (Klose, 2006). All the military and civil, state and non-state personnel operate in the same environment, and decide to work either separately or together, in close or loose co-operation (Rietjens, 2008). Therefore, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) is the militaries’ preferred concept for the relation between the military Commander and civil actors, including the national population and local authorities as well as the international, national and non-governmental organisations and agencies. Another concept, protection activities, is used to mean the non-structural activities aimed at reducing the risk for and mitigating the impact on individuals or groups (not humanitarian personnel) of human-generated violence, coercion, deprivation and abuse in the context of humanitarian crises. The different nature and, above all, the different roles played on the ground continue to significantly affect humanitarian action and influence its final results.

The presence of NGOs in conflict areas became stronger during the Cold War time. NGOs were mainly involved in relief assistance, and in human rights and minorities protection. The origin of Amnesty International (AI) in 1961, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in 1971, and the organization that subsequently became Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 1978 are important steps on the road towards the formation of the new culture of humanitarian intervention. Indeed, a broad array of actions of intervention was started by such organizations, and continues to be so at the present time. Actually, the number of NGOs in and near armed conflict zones has been increasing during the years. Their action priority is on human and civil rights, peace promotion, and environment and social issues.

According to mainstream literature, NGOs participate in humanitarian intervention as moderate actors and specialized groups of experts (Rucht, 2006). However, it is worth reminding that they have their own position which is separate from those of the military and officers that represent IGOs. Some groups, like War Resisters International, stand on a radical campaigning position. They
believe that the system must be reformed from the roots; accuse capitalism and globalization for fomenting civil conflicts; do not accept co-operating to intergovernmental organization actions and programs; and blame on peace missions for spreading *interventionism* throughout the world (Rucht, 2006).

Operational and campaigning NGOs exercise actions in peace operations through different methods. Operational NGOs participate directly to peace operations by mobilizing human, financial and material resources; carrying out projects and programs; and offering expertise and advise. Campaigning NGOs participate indirectly by seeking for the wider public support to operations, and also by fund-raising on a smaller scale (Willetts, 2001). A better typology of NGOs, however, is needed to aptly analyze the NGOs approach to conflict management and humanitarian intervention. To this end, a typology has been created (Irrera, 2010) by merging two NGO attributes. These are (a) the NGO’s identity and principles of action, and (b) the NGO’s concept of conflict management and humanitarian intervention.

According to Stoddard (2003), three types of NGOs are distinguished according to identity attributes. The Wilsonian type organization, so named after the American President Woodrow Wilson’s ideas, accepts the principles of cooperation and multilateralism as practiced by governments and international institutions. CARE international is example of this type. The Dunantist type organization, so named after the social activist Henry Dunant, adheres to the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. MSF and AI are example of this type. The faith-based type organization acts in harmony with religious principles. Christian Aid, and Islamic Relief are example of this type.

By distinguishing NGOs along with the second attribute, the conflict resolution approach, including willingness to work with local partners and/or international institutions, the following typology is created and applied here below to the analysis of NGOs roles in peace and humanitarian operations:

1. the pragmatist Wilsonian NGOs. These organizations who may support even in highly-politicized missions;
2. the principle-centred Dunantist NGOs. At the basis of these organizations there is the assumption that any conflict management should respect the basic principles of humanitarianism;
3. the solidarist NGOs. Focused on the root causes of conflict as the main problem to solve, these organizations affirm that the root causes of conflict should be a preliminary condition;
4. the faith-based NGOs. These organizations participate in responding to charity and compassion values.
The range of NGOs approaches to peace operations matches, to some extent, to the range of conflicts and different forms of intervention which is required to manage humanitarian problems. It is worth reminding here that, as Clark’s remarks, “The economic, informational and intellectual resources of NGOs have garnered them enough expertise and influence to assume authority in matters that, traditionally, have been solely within the purview of state administration and responsibility” (1995: 507-508). By all means, humanitarian intervention is one of these matters that concern NGOs but in a different way, i.e. in accordance with the identity and approach preferences of the NGO’s type here above listed. For this reason, scholars (see, for example, Donini, 2006) put on the table the issue of setting out a body of shared rules on the participation and conduct of NGOs in peace operations.

As far as the empirical evidences are concerned, two main remarks must be made here. First, the label humanitarian seems to be extremely broad and controversial. It includes (or excludes) different identities and tasks. Second, the diversification of security levels is producing a wider range of new tasks and roles which have several important implications, especially on the ground. These are some basic results provided by the HNGOs survey research which consists of semi-structured interviews to the representatives of 28 NGOs and networks of NGOs based in Geneva and Brussels. All organisations have official relations with the UN and/or the EU, are officially registered as humanitarian NGO, active in the field of humanitarian assistance, peace building, and conflict transformation and mediation.

**The NGOs representatives’ opinions**

Through the answers of the interviewed NGOs representatives, it is clear that a wide range of actions - which includes peace mediation (as exerted by the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, based in Geneva, and Crisis Management Initiative, founded by Finnish Prime Minister Martti Ahtisaari in Helsinki) and the dispatch of international volunteers to areas of conflict to promote a different kind of humanitarian interventions (as Non Violent Peace Force, based in Brussels, and Pope John XXIII, based in Geneva) are regularly practiced. NGOs are active in conflict areas, playing several roles and covering a large slot of time, since the beginning to the rebuilding phase, independently from peace missions deployed on the same territory.

The survey questionnaire is divided into four parts. Section 1, 2 and 3 are aimed at clarifying how NGOs match the above mentioned attributes, as well as the quality of the relationship they have with IOs in humanitarian issues, while Section 4 was focused on the experiences they have collected on the ground. This chapter analyzes the main questions which are considered useful for clarifying the roles played in the humanitarian action and the relations with military peace missions.
As far as the first attribute (the NGOs identity and principles of action) is concerned, focus is on two basic questions, namely the size and geographical dimension and the use of the controversial term *humanitarian*. The first one seems to be essential for describing NGOs strength and resources. It is clear that having an headquarter in Geneva or Brussels reveals the existence of some considerable financial basis. The question was not, however, ineffective. It aimed at investigating, firstly, the NGOs internal structure (relations with local partners, being members of other networks, etc.), and, secondly, their ability to achieving goals.

According to the replies, the majority of NGOs acts on a global basis; some of them focus their actions on a regional scale; only one, MSF, prefer to be defined as an international NGO (see Tab. 1). The largest number of NGOs presents a complex internal structure, made of local agencies and/or regional branches, while all organizations have enough resources and tools for realizing their projects in an efficient way.

The word *humanitarian* is used as a very broad concept to qualify the specific issue of helping people in any troubled context. However, as the literature has enlightened, being humanitarian refers not only to the NGOs identity or activity, but also to a peculiar approach in defending human dignity and needs. The majority of NGO representatives declared that they identify with this standard use of the label humanitarian, even though some of them want to attach some added values to the concept. At the same time, a significant number of NGO representatives prefer to defend a peculiar identity and define themselves in a different way (Tab. 2).

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**Tab. 1**

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2 S1 - Q1: Are you global, regional or local?
The ones which prefer not to be called humanitarian refer to the particular tasks dealing with the rebuilding phase, namely emergency management, the containment of the effects produced by civil conflicts and/or natural disasters, the development projects and initiatives, and the State building measures. While MSF recalls its own specific medical and surgery missions, others - like CMI and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue - stress the role of mediation and dialogue promotion (Tab. 3). While Save the Children and WarChild underline their focused aim on child protection:

“We are a development, humanitarian and child rights organization as we undertake programming and advocacy in all three areas”. (Save the Children UK, Interview on 3 March 2011).

“To prevent and mitigate the effects of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect on children who suffer from conflict related insecurity, exclusion and poverty”. (WarChild, Interview on 20 October 2010).

Therefore, the concept of humanitarian action is strongly changing and reshaping, moving from the traditional actions towards human beings (Catholic NGOs stressed this aspect) to different roles which do not underestimate individual needs but are focused prevalently on the technical aspects of conflict management and resolution.

Rapid reaction to emergencies and development projects are increasing as well as all issues related to the peace building phase (Table 3). Interestingly, new and alternative roles, like mediation and conflict transformation as well as demining (excellently played by the Geneva-based Centre for

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3 S1 – Q3: Will you define your organization as a “humanitarian NGO”?
International Demining) are increasingly important, marking NGOs identity and – above all – reshaping their roles and their relations with IGOs.

Table 3

In the analysis of the NGOs identity, it is important to take into consideration which kind of financial donor they accept for promoting their projects and activities. According to the literature, civil society is traditionally associated to a non-state entity and, therefore, it can represents interests and promote activities by safeguarding its own independence and neutrality (Galtung, 1987; Willetts, 2001). In other words, it would be not acceptable to suffer governments’ pressure through economic conditionality. This is what all NGO we have interv
derd underlined. However, all of them declare that governments are ordinary donors. They are from established democracies (mainly US, Australia, Canada, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries). The donations they make cannot, in any way, change the NGOs’ behaviour. However, as Table 4 demonstrates, governments are the most important donors. The UN continues to play an important role, through its Agencies, and the EU plays an acceptable role, through the Commission and ECHO. A minor role is played by the Council of Europe.

It is true that private foundations and fees waged by partners pay a huge contributions to the civilian humanitarian activities. However, the somewhat ambiguos relation NGOs have with governments (and the consequent still too weak contribution offered by IOs) should be taken into account.

Table 4 – Donors

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4 S1 – Q5: Which is the main purpose of your activity?
5 S1 – Q6: Which are your main donors/sources?
The question on the geographical areas in which NGOs are installed is important to conclude the analysis of the first attribute. The NGOs representative answers were important, in particular, to understand whether civil actors prefer to act in countries and regions in which an IGO-led peace mission is deployed. All NGOs are active in areas affected by civil conflicts, state failure and natural disasters. All representatives believe that it is their duty to immediately react to troubles, according with their expertise, means, and possibilities. There is neither official nor unofficial coordination with IGOs and peace missions deployment which is usually decided after NGOs are already on the ground.

Since the African continent seems to be the most affected by conflicts, the Balkans remain important regarding long-term peacebuilding initiatives. The SouthEastern Asia seems to be one of the areas in which international intervention will grow in number in the near future (Tab. 5). Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the Gaza Strip are still at the core of humanitarian action and the countries in which the majority of NGOs are deployed. Interestingly, in all these troubled areas NGOs and military personnel are situated, even for long periods, without any preliminary coordination.

Table 5

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S4 – Q1: Were you acting in the same place in which a peace mission was deployed? Which one(s)?
As far as the second attribute, the NGOs ideas on conflict management and humanitarian intervention, is concerned, a common and established approach to humanitarian action is observed. Even though NGOs have been given the right to be consulted also in humanitarian issues on all the matters they are able to provide functional resources, they usually prefer to safeguard their own position which is separate from those of the military and officers that represent IGOs. This assumption is sustained by the major literature and has been confirmed by the replies to the HNGOs questionnaire. Some additional observations, however, are to mention here.

In principle, all NGOs consider this right as a useful one and tend to exercise it. This does not mean that the consultation is an efficient and problem-solving one. Even though some of them almost regularly participate to fora and meetings and provide expertise, all organizations complain the lack of involvement in the planning phase and, more important, a significant lack of coordination (Table 6). Some replies given by NGOs representatives, listed below, can better explain this assumption.

“More flexible organizations and vertical would be better” (Care International, Interview on Nov 9, 2009)

“Better targeting of beneficiaries real needs, instead of their status” (Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion, Interview on Feb 28, 2011).

“MSF stresses the importance of implementation of practices” (Medecins Sans Frontieres, Interview on Nov 49, 2009).

Answers to specific question on their satisfaction levels reveals how the gap between state actors and non state actors is very controversial. Cooperative relations with military personnel is expected in order to be more effective in relief operations, and facilitate the peace mission success. This is acknowledged by the UN Department for Peacekeeping, as well. NGOs have been given the right to be consulted by the UN Peacebuilding Commission on all the matters they are able to provide
functional resources. A good number of representatives (17) are quite satisfied of the relations established with IOs, some others exercise their right to be consulted with strong misconception, a minority prefer not to have a set of relations in which they don’t believe at all (Table 7). In addition, some NGOs (like Oxfam and Terres des Hommes) prefer to be peace mission watchdog and control the operation actions and mission transparency. To sum these findings up, we say that the tools used by IGOs to manage challenges and threats, especially civil conflicts, are in principle considered as an useful instrument but weak or inefficient in practice.

Table 6

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<tr>
<th>Regular consultation</th>
<th>Non regular consultation</th>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
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Table 7

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<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Weak and based on critics</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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7 S3 – Q3: Are you consulted by IOs in humanitarian affairs?
8 S2 – Q5: Are you satisfied with the present level of consultation?
Working on the same areas and problems, however, produces effects which, in some cases, intersect one another. The survey specific and direct questions obtained equivalent clear answers. All NGOs played their roles on the ground on their own (being embedded is categorically refused). No formal or structured coordination with IGOs, neither in the planning phase nor on the ground, is programmed but sometimes requested. However, several channels which can be considered as a form of cooperation or – more frequently – consultation, are observed (Table 8). Two different terms to mark two different levels of relations with militaries have been used in the survey, consultation to deal with the traditional role ascribed to NGOs and cooperation to refer to a more structured exchange of practices and mutual help. This is what some NGOs declared. CESVI practices an exchange of information on security to facilitate the protection of its staff. The Centre for international demining provides technical information and services. Non Violent Peace Force used to coordinate with peacekeepers in some missions. As declared by some representatives:

“exchange of information on security to facilitate the protection of our staff” (CESVI, Interview on April 28, 2010).

“some forms of cooperation with military staff, for strategic purposes” (NVPF, Interview on Nov 26, 2009)

“Oxfam had to maintain independence, to meet officials, to monitor the mission” (Oxfam, Interview on Nov 27, 2009).

Table 8

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<th>Relations with military peace missions</th>
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<td>Cooperation</td>
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S4 – Q5: Did you have any relationship with military troops? Cooperation? Consultation? Friction?
It is common understanding that there is a kind of ideological refusal to enter into contact with military missions. In principle, NGOs do not like having contact with military personnel and frequently prefer to work on different projects. At the same time, the interview data demonstrate how much segmented and diversified is the humanitarian action of the NGOs and how much controversial is the relation they have with institutionalized interventions. The practical implications of the NGOs attitudes revealed by the survey are further analyzed in the following part.

**NGOs role(s) in humanitarian and peacebuilding activities**

NGOs play multidimensional and long-term roles, which cover the different phases of a crisis. On this regard, by taking stock of the existing knowledge on NGOs as peace operations and humanitarian intervention actors, three specific roles are singled out. The knowledge-provider role pertains to the NGOs contribution to diffusing information and common practices on humanitarian actions. The peace-facilitator role refers to the NGOs support of UN and international organization peace missions but also to the increasing task of mediation. The voice-articulator role applies to NGOs commitment to amplify the local actors’ expectations on social, political, and practical needs.

**NGOs as knowledge-provider**

The first role is the concern of all NGOs types. In performing this role, NGOs profit from both the scientific community study of security, and their own practical experience in dealing with new tools of management of security challenges. The traditional concept of security, as known, is associated to the nature of the state, the image of the enemy, and the use of military violence. Change in armament technology, the rising importance of non-state actors, and political innovations, namely the adoption – initially by the European countries - of the concept of cooperative and comprehensive security, contributed to change this view of security. Buzan has pointed to three levels of analysis (the individual, the state, and the international system), and different dimensions (the political, economic, and social one) in managing security issues in addition to the military one (Buzan, 1991). The Copenhagen School worked at the concept of comprehensive security because a wide range of factors (military, environmental, economic, societal, and political) bring in different actors and forms of action as determining security matters. Lastly, it drew the attention of the specialists to the importance of the securitization of any social issue, that political actors change into a threat by means of speech acts, to respond to by means of emergency measures. In subsequent years, the scientific debate continued, and tried to merge the new concepts in order to develop a perspective useful also to practitioners. As Knight (2001: 14) rightly remarks, terms like comprehensive security, common security, and human security “are being utilized to embrace the
range of issues that are being placed on a revised security agenda of an emerging global polity”. And consequently, security “must change from an exclusive stress on national security to a much greater focus on people’s security, from security through armaments to security through human development, from territorial security to food, employment and environmental security”.

NGOs – especially the Wilsonian ones - have been particularly responsive to the suggestions of the scientific debate, and have developed their own security management language as well as processes and best practices connected to those scientific concepts. At the same time, a wide range of tools has been institutionalized by the pragmatist and solidarist NGOs in their practice of security management. The institutionalization process include different actions and sectors like information; analysis of threats, risks and vulnerabilities; and the organization of practical and logistic aspects (Avant, 2007). On their turn, Dunantist NGOs have underlined the importance of non-partisan, fast, non-bureaucratic, and risk-taking nature of humanitarian intervention. The Wilsonian and Dunanist organizations have been able also to supply knowledge useful to regulating conflict solving and peace management like rule-making procedures, and methods of interpretation and application of norms and standards (Beck, 2008). It is worth mentioning also that, in recent years, the NGO community has been particularly keen in diffusing the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle. Especially the faith-based NGOs worked adamantly to sustain the movement aimed at advancing the responsibility to protect in order to confront the global community’s inadequate response to morally indefensible mass atrocities.

**NGOs as peace-facilitator**

NGOs are commonly considered as independent agencies in peace operations because they are not part of the military structure and they strongly desire to protect their independence. However, the NGO personnel have usually to work alongside the official, military and civilian, personnel of the peace missions but to assist local parties in fields like promoting human security, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development. Peacekeeping was initially conceived of as a mechanism to help countries torn by conflict create conditions of peace. During the years, it has been changing in aims, methods, and participating actors. The enlargement of the mandate, in particular to humanitarian and political assistance, brought in a massive increase in the number of civilian personnel and non military activities, and the organization of complex, multifunctional operations with both military and civilian tasks. On this condition, NGOs were accepted as participants supporting the execution of civilian tasks.

NGOs can contribute directly also to the political success of humanitarian missions. The Sant’Egidio Community, for example, has been an important actor in mediation and diplomatic
negotiation. It promoted, and sometime bring to positive results, peace process in conflict zones like in Burundi, Mozambique, and Palestine. The Center for Humanitarian Dialogue and CMI facilitated peace talks in Aceh before the military arrival. CMI had been “called” by the Georgian Government to assist stabilisation procedures. The Dunantist NGOs, like Amnesty International, and Oxfam have been successful in creating humanitarian civil pressure. In other cases, they help to informally improve the mission performance. Their disapproval of misconduct (or their evaluation, as Oxfam regularly does) contributes to reshape the operation mandate on as different aspects as the legal basis of the operation, the definition of practical effects, and the behavior of military personnel. This criticism has effects on the co-operation with the personnel of the official mission, and may hinder the NGOs role as peace-facilitator. In general, the independent and neutral status of many humanitarian NGOs – namely the Dunantist and Solidarist ones - is a problem for good civil-military co-operation. Co-ordination and the sharing of aims and tools is essential to good co-operation. However, even though experts advise NGOs to change their ideological stand, and take part in coordinated actions (Klose, 2006), choosing a compromise on their principles is always hard for NGOs working on field and is considered as an option they rarely can accept.

Though quite controversial, the NGOs role as peace-facilitator remains essential concerning logistics. Generally, NGOs manage facilities like site selection and access procedures for offices, residences, warehouses; personnel matters like hiring local personnel and making them accept professional norms; transportation, like providing vehicles, drivers, and tracking; communication systems, like broadcasting daily news and extreme emergency information; and incident reporting such as what gets to report, and to whom. Briefly, they show a good ability to maintain procedures for keeping on, updating, and monitoring the whole security planning process. All these tasks contribute to good relations with the local population, and are linked to the third peace and humanitarian role of NGOs.

**NGOs as voice-articulator**

Although the military put large effort in mission preparation, often they remain unaware of the actors in the area in which they are deployed. Normally, the military do not participate in coordination meetings, refuse to make information accessible, and are not interested in civil programs. Consequently, peace missions are frequently blamed for neglecting local demand-driven co-operation. Furthermore, in some cases, co-operation programs are selected and prioritized based on the capacity of the military and civil personnel of the mission rather than the needs of the local beneficiaries. As experts remark, little attention is paid to the involvement of the local population in many partnership actions (see, for example, Rietjens, 2008). On the contrary, the relations NGOs
are able to establish with the local actors (individuals and associations) are much stronger than those created by the peace operation personnel.

Wilsonian, Dunantist and faith-based NGOs give great importance to providing voice to local civil society. For this reason, they involve local associations and groups in different phases of the intervention. NGOs like MSF and Oxfam are quite successful in this respect, probably because of their identity and approach attributes. In many cases, there are established and structured relationships between NGOs active on a global level and local counterparts or affiliated. This is the way in which Interpeace, Non Violent Peace Force, Pax Christi International, and Terres des Hommes act. The majority of NGOs, however, are very much committed to exercise the role of voice-articulator. They are keen to stay in dialogue with local actors and obtain their confidence because on this condition depends the successful outcome of the mission. Normally, this objective is achieved by providing help and basic goods to the local population. The help NGOs supplied to countries in conflict and victims of disasters and emergencies was impressive also throughout the 1980s. In 1989, European-based NGOs delivered about 180,000 tons of food aid to Africa, and 450,000 ones in 1991. In 1994 NGOs accounted for over 10 per cent of the total public development aid, amounting around to $8 billion. It is estimated that some 400 to 500 international NGOs are currently involved in humanitarian actions worldwide, and that NGOs collectively spend an estimated $9-10 billion annually, reaching out some 250 million people in absolute poverty (Abiew, 1998)

The good performance of NGOs emergency relief work has the positive consequence of obtaining the confidence of the local population. This is an advantage to the NGOs voice-articulator role especially in complex civil conflicts. In other terms, the practical assistance NGOs provide makes them more effective in the objective of humanitarian intervention, facilitates the building of mutual confidence relations, and increases the likelihood that the local population will embrace the reconstruction process. This is neither a simple nor automatic outcome. Also, the scope and mandate of a single peace mission, as well as its political meaning, can be essential for producing more cooperation and, therefore, more practical results.

Conclusions

The growing participation of NGOs to conflict management and humanitarian interventions is part of the NGOs struggle for effective international actoriness in world politics and a significant political innovation. NGOs began acting in parallel to UN peace missions in the 1990s, and adapted to the change peace missions encountered in their aims and methods in the following time. They have developed a wide range of approaches but preserved their independence and neutrality. The survey data demonstrated that, sometimes, NGOs approaches fit easily to the governments and
international organizations practice. Sometimes, they differ considerably from it. These approaches are tightly connected to two attributes of the NGOs, their individual identity and their specific approach to conflict management and humanitarian intervention. These attributes influence and mark their presence into the whole humanitarian process: a preventive action and mediation; a traditional relief and assistance role; an increasing long-term peace builder capacity.

This confirms, on one side, how military missions and institutional interventions still need to update their efficacy, and on the other that humanitarian and peace building NGOs are increasing their “unofficial” and “uninstitutionalized” roles on the ground. As resulting by the survey, ‘good’ NGO-IGO relations to goal-achievement by humanitarian missions is undoubtedly affirmed in principle but underestimated and denied in the practice. Therefore, the humanitarian system fails to be effectively productive and rapid. It is true that IOs and NGOs are different actors, and even though they work in the same place and time, they use different approaches. However, the universal principles they claim and defend in acting as humanitarian actors are the same ones and the resources they hold are not incompatible to, and can integrate, one another. Probably, more integration with those NGOs ready to cooperate and more coordination with those ones which are more reluctant could help the system to improve its responsiveness.

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APPENDIX

Humanitarian Non Governmental Organizations Representatives (in alphabetical order).
All interviews took place between November 2009 and February 2011.

1. Action d’Urgence Internationale (AUI)
2. Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA)
3. Business Humanitarian Forum
4. Care International
5. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
6. Centre for International Demining
7. Comrades
8. Concern Worldwide
9. Cooperazione e sviluppo (CESVI)
10. Crisis Management Initiative (CMI)
11. European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)
12. Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion
13. International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
15. Interpeace
16. Medecins Sans Frontieres
17. MissionEast
18. Non Violent Peace Force
19. Oxfam
20. Papa Giovanni XXIII (PG23)
21. Pax Christi International
22. Save the Children
23. Search for Common Ground
24. Shelter for Life International
25. Solidar
26. Terres des Hommes
27. Voice
28. WarChild