



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The Pearson Global Forum

Part II. Understanding Conflict Through Data

Using Data to Address Conflict featuring:

Jeannie Anna, Senior Research Associate, the Pearson Institute,

Liam Collins, Colonel, U.S. Special Forces,

Rebecca J. Wolfe, Director of Evidence and Influence, Mercy Corps,

Austin L. Wright, Assistant Professor, Harris School of Public Policy,

Moderated by Hal Weitzman, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Behavior Science, University of Chicago Booth School of Business

MARIANA LAVERDE: Good morning everyone. My name is Mariana Laverde. I am a PhD candidate at the Harris School. I am also a recipient of the Pearson Fellowship, a wonderful scholarship that has not only supported my academic endeavors, but has also provided exceptional opportunities to listen to experts and be engaged with current discussions about the voice community's experience, and address conflict and post conflict scenarios.

My experiences as a student of the Harris School on the Pearson institute has been highly rewarding. For the past years, the school and Institute have catered to my intellectual interests while also keeping my head, and very often my heart in tune with one of the most important policy concerns of this time, preventing conflict and mitigating its consequences.

From my early years, I have always been very keen on Math, and have been amazed by the way Math help us formulate ideas and bring insight into real world problems, by appealing to a structured way of approaching questions. An insightful economic model rationalizes the set of facts, using the simplest set of assumptions, but of course theorizing how the ways individuals behave.

And the resulting impact on economic aggregates is only possible if one has the year to give support to it. The study of conflict is not an exception and on the contrary, it's complexity cost for the use of data and micro data whenever possible, understanding certain models, different strategies. The challenges faced by societies as they undergo post conflict situations, and the lasting psychological effects on big teams require more than models.

The paradox is that conflict is very frequently present in States that lack the power to set rules and make rule breakers accountable. In consequence, very often these places will not have the capacity to collect data that sheds light on these questions and other important questions. One challenge researchers undertake, is to search for alternative sources of information when administrative data is insufficient.

Moreover, the much needed research that aims to understand and mitigate the psychological consequences of conflict, and the ways in which society is revealed their social meeting, requires researchers to be onsite interacting with communities. These all makes this research agenda a highly challenging one.



With this thought in mind, I'd like to introduce the next panel to discuss the role data oriented research plays in the study of Global Conflict and the ways these research can inform policy decisions. The panel will reflect more deeply on the challenges and the opportunities available.

I want to thank very much the Pearson Institute for providing the opportunity to listen to these wonderful pool of speakers today.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay. Thank you very much Mariana. I'm Hal Weitzman. I work at the Chicago Booth, the Business School. I teach Persuasion over there, and I'm going to have the honor of asking questions to our panel this morning.

So I'm going to introduce them very briefly and then we'll get into it and hopefully at the end we'll have a chance for one or two audience questions. So immediately to my left we have Jeannie Annan. She's a senior research associate at the Pearson Institute, and also senior director of Research And Evaluation at the International Rescue Committee.

Next on we have Liam Collins. He's a colonel in the US Army, US Special Forces, director of the Modern War Institute at US Military Academy at West Point.

And next to Liam is Rebecca Wolfe. She's director of Evidence In Influence Of Mercy Corps, and finally but not leastly, we have Austin Wright, assistant professor at the Harris School of public policy here at University of Chicago and a faculty affiliate at the Pearson Institute.

So, as Mariana said, the point of this panel is the data, the analysis of data, is transforming how we think about conflict, conflict prevention, and helping populations affected by conflict. So maybe we can just start by asking you all of you, how have you seen over the course of your careers data, and I should say also that we have a wonderful mix here of practitioner, expertise and academic research. So how have you seen the use of data, over the course of your career changing our approach to conflict?

Jeannie ...

JEANNIE ANNAN: Thanks and again thanks to those who organize this and the panelists. So, I come very much from a response, humanitarian response, perspective. So both the research side and the practitioner side. And what I've seen change remarkably over the last 10, 15 years, is the use of experimental research, or the use of randomized control trials to try to test the effectiveness of interventions that we're doing from Community Driven Reconstruction Programs, to Mental Health Programs, to Reintegration of Ex-Combatants, trying to understand what works and using the most rigorous methods that we have.

10, 15 years ago the conversation was, "That's absurd. We can't do that in conflict settings, it's not feasible, it's not ethical to do that." And now we have approximately 200 such studies across that range, across these different interventions, helping to inform better response in these settings.

And that's both the growth of the studies themselves, but then also there's been a real transformation, and then the use of those studies, again, 15 years, 20 years ago being a humanitarian responder was really about taking one's own experience, and responding based on that experience. And now there's a much more evidence based, evidence informed part of that. So being a humanitarian professional is also about knowing the best evidence that exists, mix with one's experience and using that in response.

Now we've got a long way to go, both in the amount of evidence of course, in a high income country or a stable country, there're thousands, and thousands of studies rather than a couple of hundred. And is huge way to go in terms of building that evidence, and in transforming the sector on the use. But it's been really transformative I think over the last 10 years.

HAL WEITZMAN: So we'll come to the second part, the second point you mentioned, but obviously 200 trials is a lot. Is there one example of something that you could give our audience that you know, a story of how something used to be done and how it's done now, how it's done differently using data analysis?

JEANNIE ANNAN: Sure. I'll give two very quick ones instead of one whole. One positive, one negative.

Community driven reconstruction is a really good example. It was seen as going to be transformative for communities to build their social cohesion, to bring about good governance. Again, it really was seen as a great example of what we could do with communities in the reconstruction period in post conflict, or even protected conflict.

There're now at least three trials showing that those high and lofty aim that we had, did not come about from community driven reconstruction. It brought about, health clinics, bridges, things that communities really needed, but not those higher level outcomes. And so it brought down people's expectations in the right way for what that program could be.

On the other hand, Mental Health Programming which was seen as a very much a US driven interventions, Psychological intervention. Chris mentioned one this morning, in Liberia, but another one with survivors of sexual violence that I worked on using cognitive processing therapy, which is another form of cognitive behavioral therapy to dramatically reduce women's, traumatic symptoms, and was delivered by lay workers. Some of them didn't have high school education, and so that was something that, sort of transformed the way we think about the reduction of mental health symptoms and who can deliver those interventions.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay, wonderful.



Now Liam, you've got a huge amount of experience working in conflict zones. What have you seen over the course of your Korean intended use of data?

LIAM COLLINS: Yeah. First, let me start by saying the views I express are my own and don't necessarily represent the Army or West Point. So now the mandatory disclaimer's out of the way.

Yeah. Having conducted multiple combat deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq and multiple operational deployments elsewhere around the world. I'll talk a little bit about the utility of data from the war fighter's perspective. First off, let's discuss its utility during conflict, using some positive examples of where it's been used effectively in stuff where I've seen, I have personal experience.

So, when conducting man hunting operations, data is extremely useful. We tend to call it intelligence, but it's simply data. Data helped us capture Saddam, and many of his former battiest elites in 2003, famously depicted on a deck of playing cards. And when you think about it, we did this in about a six month time period, which is pretty amazing considering if you look at the FBI's most wanted list, most of those people are on there for, had been on the list, or had been on the list for seven to 10 years. So, pretty amazing.

Our data has helped us find Zarqawi, and dismantle Al Qaeda in Iraq in the latter part of the previous decade. Of course it's got its resurgent as ISIS. But that's more due to political but we had a big of impact on the network.

And data help us find Osama bin Laden in Pakistan as well. Other times the military doesn't really do a good job, or use data effectively, or maybe it's got the wrong data. I mean, everybody obviously kind of turns to Vietnam as the bad example using body counts to measure success.

In Afghanistan, We probably didn't do that much better. In this case, it was oftentimes too much data, just confusing commanders with dozens of different metrics not knowing where to turn for help, or you know the most commonly used data was called the SIGEX, which stands for Significant Activity. And really the only thing on that list were attacks.

So if we're calling something, the naming of data matters and calling something significant activity then everything that's not on there is something that's less significant, but in those kinds of environments, there's a lot of other significant activities that's not being captured.

Then I'll turn a little bit, as far as provide a cautionary note that I think oftentimes we focus on quantitative methods, but it's not the only approach as utility. The qualitative methods also has its place as well. I'll provide a quick example to illustrate my point.



In 2009, I sent a few of researchers when I was a director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, over to Afghanistan to support the task force over there. And while there, it became clear that the task force really didn't have a good understanding about the Haqqani network. Sure it was great at building a link diagram they could map out where everybody was in the network, and what their role was, but really didn't understand what the goals and the ideology of the organization were.

So this spurred us to do a report on the group and really what we did was, we were just trying to look at, three Jihadist magazines that they had published in Pashto, Urdu and Arabic. Digital videos they produced, as well as various memoirs from Afghan fighters. And ultimately that gave us a good understanding of the group, published the report and Juan Zarate when he was a Deputy National Security Advisor, attributed that we get the Haqqani network placed on the Foreign Terrorist Organization, designation.

So I'd wrap up by saying, really this report spurred out of a research, spurred out of a trip overseas. So oftentimes the researcher really needs to go with the War fighter, with the PeaceKeeper, with the Non-Government Organization, to really get a field, to identify the gaps and figure out where data can help, and then more importantly translate that to the group.

HAL WEITZMAN: Just for clarification, how do you think about the distinction between intelligence, old school or new school, and data?

I guess intelligence is just a matter, right how it's been collected, the sources and methods. But once you have it, it's data, it's classified for obvious reasons. But I think turning to the future, what you're going to see more of, right you see here-

Reasons but I think turning to the future what you're going to see more of, right, you hear about large data machine learning and think that might be some of the way of the future that will be helpful, and a lot of stuff exists ... More and more exists on the non classified side that can be useful.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay thank you very much. We'll come to that. Rebecca.

REBECCA WOLFE: So I'll say when I came to [inaudible 02:20:22] twelve and half years ago, Nancy hired me there, I thought I would never do another research study, and now I only do research for [inaudible 02:20:32], and that shows the evolution of how in the development space and in conflict prevention, we've wanted more evidence based interventions. And so, what I've seen though is when I first started looking into particular around why young people participate in violence looking at the macro data that both Jim, and Grant mentioned this morning, we saw these huge correlations between youth bulges, unemployment, and civil wars. However, that didn't help me design programs.



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And I'm going to tell a story Chris doesn't know. I saw him give a talk in 2009 at NYU on some of his Uganda work, and at that point I had written about 20 proposals with the theory of change or the hypothesis that employment will increase stability. And I saw Chris give this talk and as a psychologist as well, I was like, oh of course. Engaging in violence is not a rational behavior. And so ... And if we're ... Our interventions at least in the development space, are really about changing individual behaviors, it's not about changing these macro systems, and so we had to understand why young people were participating in violence. And so, that's started a stream of research in [inaudible 02:21:47], since about 2010 on first why young people were participating in violence and well I'm not saying it's never about economics, it's probably an over-weighting of it in the response. And so in most ...

We did a study in Sub-Saharan Africa only in one country did we find a correlation. We also have looked at Afghanistan, and Jordan, and also haven't seen correlations. And so what we have found would be that it is really about much more of a social motivation. Often I now would characterize as a protection of ones family or ones group, or getting something because of that marginalization. I think the other piece where the data has told us and where we have to be really careful about data is who are we asking? And so much of the data that looked at why young people were participating in violence was asking key informants about how they thought other people behaved, and what that really tells us is their theories about the world. When we asked young people themselves about why they engaged in violence we got many different answers, and so I think we also have to be careful about our data about where it's coming from.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay well, I also want to talk a little bit more about that but Austin going back to this original question about how data ... the analysis of data of is transforming our approach to conflict. Talk to us about your work.

AUSTIN WRIGHT: Yeah so, I think I ... most of my work is in Afghanistan and if we think back to when the US and coalition partners invaded Afghanistan initially, what was the state of the academic art in study of civil conflict? It was a bunch of cross national regressions that were telling in a annual basis what were the factors that may or may not increase the risk of conflict in the next year or the next 10 years, right. And zoom all the way to the end of operation enduring freedom, right the very beginning of 2015, myself and a colleague were in the notable position of having contacts at US Central Command and being there when they were ready to de-classify the entirety of [inaudible 02:23:53] that Liam was talking about earlier. And not just the combat activity, but also the intelligence records that had been collected from civilians on the ground, information about things ranging from combat operations all the way to the Taliban spy network.

AUSTIN WRIGHT: It was data that they were ready to hand over and the key thing they talked about in the overview description of the panel is what were the soldiers in places like Iraq and Afghanistan doing when they were compiling this data? They were walking around with incredibly precise geo-referencing tools, and they were able to carefully time stamp all of that data. So, back at the beginning of the war, we were thinking about civil wars as happening in countries, and years, and by the end of the war we

were thinking about the context of whether or not the IED is being planted at 8:00 am or 9:00 am, and is it on the right side of the road, or the left side of the road. And I think that opens a wealth of opportunities to think about much more carefully the mechanisms that link various sort of economic and political shocks to the rise of insurgent groups or insurgent recruitment, or the changes in the political beliefs among the general population that these governments really want to maintain, and build that trust, and enhance the legitimacy of states in those contexts. And I think that really has become transformative.

So much of my work relies on these very critical resources that militaries have collected in the context of an ongoing war, but of course that's complimented with what some of us have talked about so far, which is standard data collection techniques like gathering survey data, except in the contexts the US military with coalition partners are doing this on an untold level with nationwide surveys being conducted every three months, right. And so, from the beginning of those surveys in 2008 to present we have more than a million survey respondents.

HAL WEITZMAN: Wonderful. So I'm interested in if we're collecting more and more data and more and more precise data, how good ... Are we getting better at turning those data into policies that work, and not only work in the specific environment in which they're collected, but work across other environments, either in other war zones or maybe even on the streets of Chicago or somewhere else where people are effected by violence. Rebecca do you have a thought on that?

REBECCA WOLFE: So what I would say is that, I mean want to go to that point of what is the data, and what is level is targeting, and are you asking the right people. So I think that's one of the problems with all this data today is that what's the quality of the data and are we seeing spurious correlations between things that actually may distract us from what's going on. I think in terms of can we learn from one place to another, I would say there are general trends. So for example, we ... identity is really important, whether it's in Afghanistan, or in Chicago, or in Kenya, but how that plays out in a context is going to differ. And so, look ... matching that individual with that macro context is really important.

HAL WEITZMAN: So I mean and you talked to Liam, you also talked about this, about the it's all in the interpretation. You talked about almost maybe having too much data, not precise enough, but what about this question of the data informing policy? Is that getting better where you're doing that translation a bit better? Ginny?

JEANNIE ANNAN: I certainly think it's gotten better. I think we all know that the production of research, just doing a research study, even if it's a great high quality research study does not mean that anyone is going to use that. There is a lot of research that sits on the virtual shelf and is not used, and there have been actually a lot of studies about why that's the case, and a big factors stand out that a lot of the data's not accessible. That doesn't just mean it's behind ... it's gated and you have to pay for it, but also even if people get it, it's not written in accessible language. It's not ... And then even if it's able to be

read and somewhat clearly written the findings are there, but how one translate findings into actual actions and decisions is a big leap in most studies.

And so we've found and part of certainly what I've worked on at IRC is knowledge brokers are people who can bridge or translate between the researchers and the practitioners. And it really is a lot of people, like Rebecca, myself, others like us, and there are more and more of these positions in NGOs who are researchers or know the research really well, but have done field work and can really act as translators and say, here are the findings. Here's what we think this would look like and we're doing that more and more systematically and so I think that bridging role is really critical. Some researchers are really great at doing that translation. Some practitioners good at figuring out research, but a lot aren't and I think we need a lot of people in that knowledge brokering space.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay well I mean that's great obviously from University of Chicago. Do you think the policy makers are hearing what you're saying enough? Probably not enough, but you know what I mean. Are they hearing what you're saying, are they using information? They searching for the right kinds of data from your perspective?

JEANNIE ANNAN: So I think just one of the ... I think if ... And this has come out I think in other studies on this question of translation, I think people, practitioners, policy makers hear it if it's in the right language at the right time from the right person. So there's a lot of behavioral science around this. So I think we work on who, whether it's internally and 12, 000 humanitarian responders at IRC who are doing this work, we have technical advisors who they trust who are doing the translation of this evidence when we're talking to the Minister of Education about refugee education, who do they ... It's building a relationship from our side overtime that then we use those findings to inform actually this would be a better way to ... within the political sphere, to potential increase children's learning. So it's really about relationship building about the translation of that information. So I think they're listening but I don't think ... But when we're saying it and building relationships in the right way.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay. Liam you gave us that disclaimer at the beginning. So since it's your opinion and not the Pentagon's, what do you ... what is your perspective on whether the Pentagon is asking the right kinds of questions, or NATO or whatever? Are they asking the right questions, are they looking for the right kinds of data, and are they analyzing it correctly?

LIAM COLLINS: I think generally there's a ... I mean, definitely respect in the community for data, maybe too much respect. Sometimes you want to have the silver bullet, some data report that will give you the answer, and that's almost never going to be the case, right. It's just a piece the helps you understand the puzzle and there's so many variables out there, so each little one is helpful, but rarely is it a silver bullet answer and I think sometimes that's what people want. And so when they get a report and it's probabilistic or it's more kind of squishy than sometimes it's maybe ... I don't know if it'd be discounted but it's harder for them to interpret or to figure out how to apply that.



HAL WEITZMAN: Okay do that come down to this translation question than?

LIAM COLLINS: I think part of it is the translation, and then part of it is each piece is only useful to some, right. We had the UN Peace Keeping office come to us asked us to give them help of, help them evaluate where should they go to insert peace keepers. Is it conditions ... Right, there's so many variables and ... So they want the data. But then when if you put it together, trying to get value out of it.

HAL WEITZMAN: : All right, I was going to say, you can't help wonder if there were more subtly to the approach than it wouldn't just be binary, then we might've had some better outcomes in recent years, military interventions.

LIAM COLLINS: Yeah I mean like I said, if you look from Vietnam to Iraq, it was the opposite extreme. They had dozens and dozens of metrics that they were using. So they were trying to go at it and do that, you know bring in academics think tank people over to help them do it. So it wasn't for a lack of trying. So I remember when I ... I think they're legitimately trying to use the data as much as possible.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay, Austin, what's been your experience in trying to translate research into policy?

AUSTIN WRIGHT: Yeah so I think, yeah it's of course ... This at the end of the day is where the rubber meets the road and I think that's exactly why the Pearson Institute exists as an institution is to enable us to help be those knowledge brokers to translate this information that is being collected among academics and in our own work to help shape policy. And this is part of a broader mission of a bunch of individuals who were very closely related to and invested in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most notably people like Jake Shapiro, who started the Empirical Cities of Conflict group, and that has served for the last decade as sort of an institution for people to turn to when they were gathering data or needed to talk to a set of individuals who had those set of contacts. So when I think of Pearson Institute as really being the institution that will make sure that, that kind of core mission is accomplished.

But I think to get back to the earlier question that you asked Rebecca about how much can we think about across contexts? Right, and this is ... this really is the core question that a lot of policy makers ask right, not just what's the result, but does the result travel? Does it tell me about relationships in other contexts? And I think that this is incredibly important, and we always need to be mindful of the various idiosyncrasies of particular locations, but at the end of the day when we sit back and we think about dynamics, whether it be about conflict, or it be about crime, many of these are similar across contexts.

And one that we talked about as a group earlier in the week is some work that we've been doing in Afghanistan on the impact of police abuse of power on the willingness of civilians in that context to report crimes being committed in their communities, and what we find thanks to data that was shared with us by NATO as part of the Pearson Institute is that in fact, it's exactly the relationship that we're worried about. Those kinds of misconduct, whether it be assaulting individuals, or unlawful arrest, or

bribery and extortion, all of those undermine the willingness of individuals to actually cooperate with the government to share that information, help them clear crimes. These are the kinds of questions that we want answers to in the American context too.

Right, if we think about the trial that's even happening now, with the shooting of Laquan McDonald, we want to know in the aftermath of that shooting, did it actually impact the communities trust and most of these communities just like in Afghanistan are being policed in ways that perhaps even put them at more risk and further undermine that community policing dynamic, and so I think that it's certainly the case that you, there are ways that we can share this information with policy makers, and that they're ... They often desire that information, but they do ask critical questions, like how far do these results travel? And although we always have to be careful and mindful of what are the scope conditions of our findings, there are some core things that I think do travel.

HAL WEITZMAN: Building on that, the ability to collect sophisticated data, the kind of data that you talked about is becoming easier and cheaper all the time, and the amount of data that we're able to generate is vast and our ability to analyze those data is becoming better and better. Given that, how concerned should we be about bad actors, whether they're let's say authoritarian states, or non state actors using data in nefarious ways? Rebecca?

REBECCA WOLFE: So I think this is actually in some ways one of the limitations in terms of traveling. And so I know in the gang violence prevention space, we've been able to develop some relatively good models of predicting who's going to engage in violence and join gangs. I think in the violent extremism space, we ... it's such a low end problem that so few people have engaged in that behavior, we don't have those models. But I see and I get pressure from donors to be able to come up with a model to predict who's going to join a violent extremist group, and I'm very worried if in certain countries that data was accessed that security forces would in a sense do preventive action that would actually make the problem worse in human rights abuses. And so I am very strong particularly in the violent extremism space that we need very strong data protections for those reasons.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay. Austin? Do have a view on that?

AUSTIN WRIGHT: Yeah. So I think you know, I think one approach is to be concerned about what can be done with your findings, and perhaps even what can be done with the data that you've gathered, the output from your predictive models. Another concern that we have to be mindful of is that one thing that's on the agenda for the conversation is talking about remote sensing, the use of high resolution, high frequency satellite imagery for understanding various conflict dynamics. And one of the things that that data was used for very recently is to track things like village burnings in Burma. And of course, when the news stories broke that human rights watch had been gathering all this data and had been processing a bunch of satellite imagery, it always raises the concern that, that will lead to a strategic response by the part of actors that have an incentive to conceal their behaviors, that they'll simply



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adjust the abuse and conduct it in a way that avoids that particular kind of detection. And that of course, if we don't know, or are unaware of, or don't think that they're acting in that way and we then draw inferences from the lack of evidence of that kind of behavior in the future right? We're actually drawing a very flawed inference that could be incredibly problematic.

I think we always have to be mindful of the fact that these actors are incredibly strategic, that they are aware of these processes. They may not take the data from a warehouse, but they know that they can manipulate researchers into thinking that, that behavior may be going away when in reality they're just simply switching to a type of behavior that can't be detected with that technology.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay. Liam do you have view on this question of using data for nefarious ends?

LIAM COLLINS: Yeah let me go back to a earlier question you asked though first about on a military ... or the government using data. Yeah sometimes I mean if there's an incentive to not seek it out then they won't do it. And to give an example, right, governments [inaudible 02:39:34] more incentivized to lump all terrorists groups under the Al Qaeda umbrella. So you got the authorities that come with the AUMF, Authorized Use of Military Force. So they aren't looking for difference in the organizations, which might be useful from an exploitation standpoint. And so, early on it was hard for them to understand the difference between Al Qaeda and ISIS even though CTC and others were trying to show the difference on that. And so, sometimes if you look at where the incentives lay, then that sometimes will help you understand if the data is going to be sought after or not. If you're trying to achieve victory in Afghanistan or Iraq then they're clearly going to go after it. If it has to do with acquiring a weapon system or something, and they have an incentive to get this weapon system then they may not go after the data.

I guess [inaudible 02:40:19] turn to the question that you asked, which was ...

HAL WEITZMAN: The ... We were talking about let's say authoritarian regimes. Maybe at some point in the future being able, let's imagine to predict where unrest might flare up, and thereby being able to stifle decent of freedom of speech or freedom of movement.

LIAM COLLINS: Yeah I mean, that's always a risk right, as the data gets out there. If both sides have access to it, what does that mean? So, I'd be surprised if they didn't try to manipulate ... use that data for their benefit. Just like we're trying to use it, you know large data trying to identify where they might be, they're trying to do the same.

HAL WEITZMAN: Ginny?

JEANNIE ANNAN: If I can bring it to a much more local level I think one of the ... IRC and some of my own work focus on violence against women, and of course women in conflict settings are exposed not only to violence from armed actors, but are also many of them exposed to violence, or violated in their own

homes by their husbands. And this is higher rates of domestic violence in conflict settings. So one of the things we're very conscious of when we're doing surveys with women on violence against women, and it's usually a whole range of gender based violence is how might their husbands, or other men in their household, or in their community actually overhear or understand what they're being asked about, and how might that put them at greater risk. And so, we take great pains to think about the privacy, the confidentiality of the data where it's stored, but also where that interview takes place.

We use ... have moved to more audio recorded, where they're actually listening to recordings and not ones asking the questions aloud. We have protocols for when someone comes into a room, and that has ranged from uncles and husbands, to [inaudible 02:42:10] doctors who are in the community actually walking into interviews while we're ... are interviews are conducting them, and we have protocols for switching the questions immediately and those are practiced. So we're worried not just about the higher level actors, but also about those in homes and communities, and take great ... work hard to prevent the use of that.

HAL WEITZMAN: So are those techniques, they're translatable across lots of different settings?

JEANNIE ANNAN: Yes, I mean where the interview has to take place can differ greatly from a women's center to another women's home to a room in their own home. So the principles translate across all settings exactly what that looks like changes.

HAL WEITZMAN: And that actually speaks to something else we could talk about. Perhaps I'm going to turn it over to questions, which was about the challenges of collecting data in conflict zones. But I do want to make sure that we have some time for your questions. So I see a question down the front. Do we have a microphone? Great.

JOEL BRAUNOLD: Hi I'm Joel Braunold. I'm the executive director of the Alliance Middle East Peace. Genine, you mentioned RCTs and the growth of that as a field, and we know from the Institute of Peace and Economics that it's RCTs aren't generalizable across conflict zones, and on the translation question. When policy makers are looking for a public health evidence base, should we really be indulging that, or should we be trying to move them to more of a systems based approach? Because if we don't have generalizable results across conflict zones, policy makers are often saying, well if you can't prove it then I'm not going to do it. Should we really just be trying to educate them in a different more systems based place? Thanks.

JEANNIE: Rebecca you could probably speak to that as well. So I think if I understand ... So we ... I think as Austin spoke to some of the results, or some principles are certainly translatable and when you have studies ... So there are now ... We have several mental health interventions. I mentioned community driven reconstruction. We have caregiver or parenting interventions where we've done trials in multiple very different contexts and seen similar findings. We're very careful not to just translate something that

a study that we've done in DRC to say this works in Afghanistan, but rather to say what's the body of evidence that exists? What are those findings, and what do we know about the conditions on which are the factors that matter, for whether they worked or not. And whereas ... And I think that's an important part of also collecting not just outcome data in RCTs but also the implementation factors, what does it take to do this at a pilot level? How much fidelity is there to that intervention? What are the other factors around it, so that we can inform would this translate, what are the questions we should be asking?

REBECCA WOLFE: To add to that, so one, I think we are seeing some replication of things in different conflict zones. So Chris talked about his Liberia study this morning, [inaudible 02:45:15] did a similar study in Afghanistan, it was vocational training and [inaudible 02:45:18] we actually got the same exact pattern of results. It was actually remarkable. We did not expect that. And so I think I'm actually really curious about cash as this boosting effect for a lot of different interventions, so people can absorb what we're doing, whether it's CBT, vocational training, or something else. And that goes to Ginny's other point about the importance of understanding the implementation. So I think a lot of the [inaudible 02:45:45] results we see in RCTs is because of potentially poor implementation, it's not about the theory of change or the hypothesis we're testing. And so, it could be a dosage effect, or the fact that a training was held in at a bad time, or something else that is effecting the results, and not that it's a poor theory.

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay another question. I see one here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, a very nice, interesting approach to data for social sciences. My question is, we do in biology think about reductionist experiments, and it's really interesting that now you're thinking about getting data and then developing intervention. So my question to each one of you, it's the way you interpret data really is so much dependent on who is interpreting in the data and so, what kind of workforce do you think you're going to need to really be able to translate the work that needs to be translated, and the context of where the conflict is actually occurring?

HAL WEITZMAN: Okay thank you. That's a wonderful question. Liam you talked about exactly that issue of how people ... of how the interpretation data doesn't match the data that's received by military establishment. Is the US military aware of that? Is it changes it's hiring to get in the people who can interpret data in the way that it should be interpreted?

LIAM COLLINS: I mean probably about 15 years ago we created specialties within it, within the military so at a certain point your career they can become operations research specialists and so we've made some changes to acknowledge that and try to create some expertise within the organization. So we have made progress, I mean I don't think we need ... we're where we need to be, but we've done some of that internally so that we have that resident expertise and then rely on the outside community to help us as well.



HAL WEITZMAN: Okay thanks. Austin do you have a view on this?

AUSTIN WRIGHT: Yeah, I think this is an incredibly important question because the workforce needs to have a combination of the institutional knowledge of that particular context that you're studying. They need to be thinking about how is the data being processed itself, and then at the end of the day they need to be able to analyze the data and interpret those results that they're finding, and check to make sure that what the ... the inferences that they're drawing are not potentially either spurious or biased in any number of ways. That's a huge skillset, right? And I think that if I'm thinking about what is the core mission of a place like the [inaudible 02:48:36] school or really any sort of leading public policy school, it's to bring policy together with the sort of rigorous analytical approach that often requires data. And I think that's the ... that is effectively the workforce that we're looking for, those individuals that have the skillset and the understanding of the policy or the context, and how it's being implemented, but also the ability to analyze it and bring those two worlds together.

HAL WEITZMAN: Ginny?

JEANNIE ANNAN: Sure, I can just add it. I think that ... Agreed. So it's a big skillset and one of the things along that chain that we worked on is really work shopping the results, early results, and so the conversation ... So a recent example is findings on a social emotional an education program in [inaudible 02:49:25] and results came out and they were let's say less positive than we would've liked to see, and it's presenting those early findings with the team that has been implementing the program in [inaudible 02:49:37]. And then having them ask a lot of questions about what would this mean and what are the other questions that we could ask of the data, and then going back and the researchers then doing further analysis, and then coming back and saying, okay let's have another conversation about these ... this further analysis. So it's a range of people including those implementing the program, those doing the research, and it's really a ... In the best cases, I think it's a conversation that then helps to move into what the best findings and really recommendations from those results.

REBECCA WOLFE: And I'll just add briefly to what Ginny just said, I've becoming increasingly more uncomfortable when I see a lot of papers with all foreigners interpreting behaviors of people in another place. And so we've ... I mean, but that's what I've seen a lot of, and so I've made a personal commitment on this issue of not doing that anymore. And that we really have build research teams that include local researchers as well as externals. So, who really design the whole project from the start and both in terms of designing the questions, and interpreting the data. And so I think that I've seen both with an institute like Pearson, bringing so many international scholars here and students here to learn the more rigorous methods that Austin was just talking about. But groups like, The Evidence for Governance and Politics is ... does a lot of outreach, IPA, JPAI. I think as much as these groups really try to build and increase skills of this data analysis, we'll have more ... We'll understand the context a lot better, and why these interventions are effective.



HAL WEITZMAN: Okay great. Well unfortunately, this conversation could run and run, but I don't want to keep you from your lunch, so let's continue the conversation over lunch. And I'm going to thank Ginny [inaudible 02:51:26], Liam Collins, Rebecca [inaudible 02:51:27], and Austin [inaudible 02:51:28], and thank you for your fantastic questions.