Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations as Partners in the Conduct of US Military Strategy: An Examination

A Monograph

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The establishment of the human domain as the key factor in the Competition Spectrum provides the US Military with an understanding of this amorphous domain to plan and execute strategy. Grassroots and Civil Society organizations permeate the human domain. How are these organizations organized, and how might they apply to the execution of strategy by the US military in the Competition Spectrum?

This monograph argues that by understanding these specific organizations, the US military could find viable partners for the execution of strategy in the Competition Spectrum. Through an examination of existing literature, relevant case studies, and specific potential issues that arise when partnering with Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations, there are potential gains to be made in understanding the human domain, and in executing strategy throughout the Competition Spectrum.

Through this analysis, there are several proposed ways forward to analyze whether partnership with this varied set of organizations makes sense to both the US military and to the organization in question.

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Abstract

Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations as Partners in the Conduct of US Military Strategy: An Examination by COL Nicholas J. Dickson, 55 pages.

The establishment of the human domain as the key factor in the Competition Spectrum provides the US military with an understanding of this amorphous domain to plan and execute strategy. Grassroots and Civil Society organizations permeate the human domain. How are these organizations organized, and how might they apply to the execution of strategy by the US military in the Competition Spectrum?

This monograph argues that by understanding these specific organizations, the US military could find viable partners for the execution of strategy in the Competition Spectrum. Through an examination of existing literature, relevant case studies, and specific potential issues that arise when partnering with Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations, there are potential gains to be made in understanding the human domain, and in executing strategy throughout the Competition Spectrum.

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Abbreviations

GRO/CSO	Grassroots Organizations/Civil Society Organizations
GRO	Grassroots Organizations
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
LC	Local Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
UNHCR	United Nations Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USAID/OTI	United States Agency for International Development/Office of Transition Initiatives

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Introduction

> We tend to see the world in terms of successes and failures, winners and losers. This default win-lose mode can sometimes work for the short term; however, as a strategy for how companies and organizations operate, it can have grave consequences over the long term.
>
> — Simon Sinek, *The Infinite Game*

In Simon Sinek's work, *The Infinite Game,* he exhorted his readers to find a new perspective. Sinek's view breaks common approaches to problem sets by challenging the reader to expand strategy formation perspectives. While aimed at the general business population, Sinek's words apply to the formulation of US military strategy as well. The purpose of this study is to examine how Grassroots organizations and Civil Society organizations (GRO/CSO) impact the application of US strategy with regards to Sinek's infinite game. Sinek challenges his readers to look to the long term. This concept is not a new idea, as many international theorists posited similar theories. Kenneth Waltz, one of the leading theorists in the neorealist school of international relations theory, clearly understood this concept. His view of the anarchic world order to help describe how nation-states interact does not have a time component.[1] Joseph Nye, a lead proponent of the neoliberalism school of international relations theories, also understood this concept. His concept of soft power does not contain a time component either. "The soft power of a country rests heavily on three basic resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority)."[2] A key commonality among leading theories of international relations, how states interact in the global setting, and why they do so, is that time is not a dependent variable. As such, Sinek's concept of the infinite game is at

[1] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1979), 103.

[2] Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 84.

home in international relations theory. The concept of the infinite game is also gaining purchase in US military doctrine. Instead of a series of win or lose engagements, military leaders are starting to look at strategy as a continuum. Everett Dolman referred to strategy as "an ongoing interaction that has no finality."[3] This ongoing conversation that Dolman described underpins how the US is now looking to shape its military doctrine.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations impact the application of United States strategy with regards to this strategic continuum, often referred to as the competition continuum. This monograph looks to answer this question through an analysis of two different historical examples. First, an examination of the roles of GRO/CSO in function provides an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as potential partner organizations. Second, a review of the role and use of GRO/CSO by the Russian government in Crimea and eastern Ukraine provides a timely case study to examine GRO/CSO as partners in strategy execution. Third is an examination of how the partnership with GRO/CSO impacted the US' strategy in Syria combatting the Islamic State. Fourth is an analysis of several critical issues inherent in dealing with these organizations provides a more rounded view of the problem set. Finally presenting a way forward regarding the potential of these organizations and key issues to consider when partnering with them in the competition spectrum provides useful tools to consider during work and engagments with this sector of civil society.

The *2018 National Defense Strategy* states that, "We must use creative approaches, make sustained investment, and be disciplined in execution to field a Joint Force fit for our time, one that can compete, deter, and win in this increasingly complex security environment."[4]

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[3] Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power And Principle In The Space And Information Age*, Cass series: Strategy and History (New York: Routledge, 2005), 5.

[4] Jim Mattis, "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge," 11, last modified 2018, accessed July 19, 2020, https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

Specifically, the strategy refers to the "reemergence of long-term, strategic competition by… revisionist powers" as the central challenge to US prosperity.[5]

The *2018 National Defense Strategy* clearly calls for a force that will excel in complex environments. The development of doctrine in the US military over the past five years struggled to capture this requirement. The first recent forays into the timeless nature of competition are found in the recent explorations of the concept of Strategic Landpower. "What we know and project about the future operating environment tells us that the significance of the 'human domain' in future conflict is growing, not diminishing…In a word, the success of future strategic initiatives…will rest more on our ability to understand, influence, or exercise control within the 'human domain.'"[6] Further development of the requirement to work within the human domain led to the gray zone concept. Here the "'gray zone' refers to a space in the peace-conflict continuum."[7] Furthermore, it highlights the theme of timelessness also found in Sinek's *The Infinite Game*. "A Gray Zone 'win' is not a win in the classic warfare sense. Winning is perhaps better described as maintaining the US Government's positional advantage."[8]

The most recent development of doctrine on the Gray Zone concept and the concept of never-ending competition is evident in *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19* from June 2019 and is titled "The Competition Continuum." "Rather than a world either at peace or at war, the competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict and armed conflict."[9] Furthermore, this joint

[5] Ibid., 2.

[6] Raymond Odierno, James Amos, and William McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills* (United States Army, United States Marine Corps, United States Special Operations Command, January 2013).

[7] Joseph L Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," *Joint Force Quarterly* 80, no. 1st Qtr 2016 (2016): 102.

[8] Ibid., 108.

[9] US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019), v.

doctrine note states, “Within competition below armed conflict, joint force actions may include security cooperation activities, military information support activities…and other nonviolent military engagement activities.”[10]

Joint Doctrine Note 1-19 established the competition continuum. However, there is no further information highlighting what type of nonviolent military engagement activities should be employed. More specifically, it does not explain how to navigate within competition to continue to maintain the US Government’s positional advantage, “namely the ability to influence partners, populations, and threats toward achievement of our regional or strategic objectives.”[11]

The human domain is a large and varied landscape of actors and organizations. Some of the key organizations that exist in this landscape are Civil Society organizations (CSO). The United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles defines CSO as “Non-State, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market.”[12] A specific subset of CSO are Grassroots organizations (GRO). The United Nations High Commission on Refugees defines GRO as “primarily made up of civilians advocating a cause to spur change at a local, national, or international level.”[13] Ostensibly, both definitions are quite wide. Both definitions together encompass an extensive array of the potential organizations that exist in the competition continuum space. Also, these organizations represent a potential untapped resource and creative approach mentioned in the national Defense Strategy. Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations exist throughout the fabric of the human domain. As such, the US Army and the Joint Force are already interacting with Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations daily.

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[10] Ibid., 2.

[11] Votel et al., “Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone,” 108.

[12] United Nations, “UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework,” *UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework*, accessed August 16, 2020, https://www.ungpreporting.org/.

[13] Alexandria Bettencourt, “Grassroots Organizations Are Just as Important as Seed Money for Innovation,” *UNHCR Innovation Service*, accessed August 16, 2020, https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/grassroots-organizations-are-just-as-important-as-seed-money-for-innovation/#:~:text=And%20how%20does%20it%20connect,%2C%20national%2C%20or%20international%20levels.

Do these organizations present an opportunity for strategy execution for the US military? The purpose of this study is to examine how Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations impact the application of US strategy with regards to the competition continuum.

Part I: Literature Review

To accurately explore how Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations impact the application of US strategy regarding the competition continuum, it is necessary to understand some of the underlying themes in existing research on the overall question. This section covers the literature's main trends regarding GRO/CSO. The literature presents a rich academic exploration of GRO/CSO formation. However, a gap exists regarding the efficacy of GRO/CSO in the conduct of US strategy. First, a review of literature and themes regarding the effectiveness of GRO/CSO allows for further understanding of these organizations. Second, a look at the evolution of the Competition Continuum concept in literature and doctrine provides a basis for examining case studies.

Review of Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations Studies

GRO/CSO provide a rich area of research. The term *GRO/CSO* encompasses a wide variety of organizations. Also, the nature of GRO/CSO makes them challenging to study, as there is no formal structure for either type of organization. As the world entered an era of unipolarity with the collapse of the Soviet Union, attention shifted from preparing and countering the USSR in the Cold War to US expansion of liberal values. One critical tool in this spread was the increase of aid (both non-military and military) to developing countries. With the rise in aid, academic exploration of GRO/CSO flourished in the 1990s. Most studies looked at how GRO/CSO organized and the success or failure of this endeavor. Ann Bettencourt, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri, explored the themes of successful grassroots

organizing in “Grassroots Organizations: Recurrent Themes and Research Approaches.”[14] Bettencourt concluded in her canvas from 1999 that a GRO needs strong involvement by members to succeed. However, GRO/CSO are vulnerable to manipulation by those seeking to profit from the grassroots cause.[15] In 1996, Marc Pilisuk, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, and his collaborators, also explored GRO/CSO formation in “Coming Together for Action: the Challenge of Contemporary Grassroots Organizing.” The focus remained on the organizing of GRO in the post-industrial, global information society.[16] The authors contended that GRO/CSO are essential because top-down government functions can no longer meet the local populace's needs. In 1999, Mary Anderson, founder of the Local Capacities for Peace Project and the Do No Harm program, published her book, *Do No Harm*. The Do No Harm program formed in 1993 to help aid workers find ways to address human needs in conflicts without exacerbating said conflicts.[17] Anderson’s work described the Do No Harm programs' basic tenents in the aid community and concisely examined if delivering aid in conflict situations exacerbates the underlying conditions feeding the conflict.[18] Through an in-depth analysis of aid projects in Tajikistan, Lebanon, Burundi, India, and Somalia, she explained underlying issues in providing aid. Anderson does not deal with the efficacy of GRO/CSO directly but offered a critical analysis of the environment the GRO/CSO often exist within.

Literature continued to center on the formation of GRO/CSO and their ability to achieve goals and maintain purpose during the first decade of the 21st century. The majority of research

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[14] B. Ann Bettencourt, “Grassroots Organizations: Recurrent Themes and Research Approaches,” *Journal of Social Issues* 52, no. 1 (April 1996): 207–220.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Marc Pilisuk, JoAnn McAllister, and Jack Rothman, “Coming Together for Action: The Challenge of Contemporary Grassroots Community Organizing,” *Journal of Social Issues* 52, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 15–37.

[17] CDA Collaborative, “The Do No Harm Program,” *CDA Collaborative*, n.d., accessed January 21, 2021, http://www.cdacollaborative.org/cdaproject/the-do-no-harm-project/.

[18] Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace--or War* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

did not address the effectiveness of GRO/CSO in accomplishing their objective. Diana Mitlin, Professor and Managing Director of the Global Development Institute at the University of Manchester (England), addressed a portion of this in her article titled, "With and beyond the state – co-production as a route to political influence, power, and transformation for grassroots organizations." Mitlin studied the usefulness of GRO/CSO in cooperative actions with other entities in extending influence. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of GRO/CSO in partnering in co-production.[19] Mitlin established that CRO/CSO are useful partners for state governments to use as a bottom-up approach in administration. Joanne Sobeck, Professor and Director of the Center for Social Work Research at Wayne State University took this further in her analysis of the capacity building efforts related to GRO. In "How Cost-Effective is Capacity Building in Grassroots Organizations," she looked to measure the impact of building efforts on GRO. The study determined that capacity building can be successful but is not without challenges that deal with the makeup of GRO.[20] James Orbinski, past president of Doctors Without Borders, in his book *An Imperfect Offering,* described the central issues in dealing with GRO/CSO in conflict environments. More specifically, Orbinski detailed examples where the partnership with these groups developed unintended consequences.[21]

While not an academic study directly on GRO/CSO, Orbinski's book highlighted key planning considerations through case studies. These considerations offered a unique view into potential criticism of partnering with GRO/CSO. Continuing this examination, Paul Staniland, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, looked at a particular subset of GRO

[19] Diana Mitlin, "With and beyond the State — Co-Production as a Route to Political Influence, Power and Transformation for Grassroots Organizations," *Environment and Urbanization* 20, no. 2 (October 2008): 339–360.

[20] Joanne L. Sobeck, "How Cost-Effective Is Capacity Building in Grassroots Organizations?," *Administration in Social Work* 32, no. 2 (February 25, 2008): 49–68.

[21] James Orbinski, *An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Walker & Co., 2009).

in his book, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse.* Staniland analyzed several case studies and examined insurgent groups' successes and failures in accomplishing their intended goals. The unique method Staniland developed to compare groups provided a base-line to explore insurgent groups in further study.[22] Staniland's book, and the other mentioned works above, sought to understand the increased interaction with GRO/CSO that the International Community experienced during the first part of the twenty-first century. Specifically, the rise of transnational terrorist organizations and criminal organizations that directly threatened global order.

Although most of the literature examined dealt with internal GRO/CSO structure and the organization's effectiveness, there was not a wealth of information regarding partnering with these organizations. Timothy Donais, Professor of Global Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, sought to explore how external organizations partner with GRO/CSO. Donais, inspired by work in Bosnia during the 1990s, wanted to explore why externally driven peace processes failed to generate sustainable transformations. In his article, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes," he looked at top-down partnerships with GRO, the more typical Western or liberal approach, and the bottom-up empowerment of GRO. He concluded that external entities (Western liberal governments) often over-rely on GRO/CSO in the post-conflict peacebuilding environment, which often led to the failure of peace-building efforts.[23] The literature on CSO/GRO continued to examine the effectiveness of these organizations. Allison Carnegie, Professor of Political Science at Columbia University, provided the most recent examination of foreign aid's impact and efficacy. In "Winning Hearts and Minds for Rebel Rules: Foreign Aid and Military Contestation in Syria," Carnegie examined

[22] Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014).

[23] Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes," *Peace & Change* 34, no. 1 (January 2009): 3–26.

the effectiveness of foreign aid directly regarding local councils involved in the Syrian Civil War.[24] The study identified where the application of foreign aid is successful and not successful, specifically regarding the Syrian Civil War. Carnegie et al. established a clear linkage between the region's security and the impact of aid in that same area.

While literature examined GRO/CSO efficacy, it also covered examples of the use of GRO/CSO by belligerents in conflicts. Much of this increased study focused on the use of proxy forces by Russia. The United States Army Special Operations Command published a report titled *Little Green Men: a Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013-2014.* This study followed the developments in Russian tactics and operations in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014. Specifically, the study highlighted the use of proxy forces in Ukraine as a tool of the Russian plan. Included in this group are both Crimean and Ukrainian GRO/CSOs. The study provided multiple examples but did not assess these organizations' successes or failures in their ability to accomplish the plan desired by the Russians. Furthering this literature is Vera Zakem's study "Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union." Vera Zakem, Senior Technology, and Policy Advisor at the Institute for Security and Technology and founder of Zakem Global Strategies, examined the use of compatriots (those Russians living outside of Russia, Russian speakers, and those with close ties to Russia mainly from the former USSR states) in the conduct of Russian foreign policy.[25] Both examples provided a wealth of anecdotal information on how GRO/CSO helped or hindered Russian activities in Ukraine.

These case studies primarily dealt with only post-conflict peacebuilding events. The literature contains anecdotal case studies on the use of GRO/CSO in conflict. There is a literature

[24] Allison Carnegie et al., "Winning Hearts and Minds for Rebel Rulers: Foreign Aid and Military Contestation in Syria," December 20, 2019.

[25] Vera Zakem et al., *Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union*, Occasional Paper Series (Washington, DC: Center for Naval Analysis, November 2015), 5.

gap on partnering with GRO/CSO in other types of events, such as the space before the conflict. GRO/CSO exist in all phases of conflict, from peace to war; thus, it is crucial to explore this aspect further.

Review of the Competition Spectrum: Development and GRO/CSO Involvement

While the Competition Spectrum concept is more recent than the studies cited above regarding GRO/CSO, understanding the key themes and development of this concept is needed to explore the stated problem fully. The development of the term "competition spectrum" is a more recent phenomenon. As described in *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19*, the concept states, "rather than a world either at peace or at war, the competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition."[26] The concept of a world of eternal competition is not new. "Concepts such as political destabilization, support for proxies and militias, information campaigns…have been a staple of statecraft since the city-states of ancient Greece."[27] Russia's synchronization of all elements of national power, including subversion, division, and covert political "active measures" to achieve strategic goals,[28] is a continuation of the concept of eternal competition. The development of the Gray Zone theory in the US military is also a continuation of the competition discussion. The idea of applying this to how the US military conducts and executes strategy is more of a recent development. Recent literature explored competition, GRO/CSOs in competition, and the US military's adoption of the Competition Spectrum in planning and operations.

[26] US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum*, v.

[27] Michael J Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2015), 3.

[28] Mark Galeotti, "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine'," *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018, 1, accessed January 21, 2021, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/.

While not specifically referred to as the competition spectrum, several studies and articles referred to the struggle in competition. Roger Cohen, author and journalist, explored specifically how one GRO helped to bring down Slobodan Milosevic, then president of Serbia, in his article "Who Really Brought Down Milosevic." Cohen links grassroots organizing to Milosevic's fall. He further linked American partnership and funding to the Serbian GROs as a central reason for the success of the campaign.[29] This organization functioned inside of the competition spectrum operating directly in competition to the ruler Milosevic. Cohen also highlighted the fate of the GRO in the case study after Milosevic's fall from power. In 2014, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan specifically explored civil resistance in their article, "Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works." The authors concluded that nonviolent resistance is more successful than violent resistance. Specifically, that "policymakers should prioritize a 'responsibility to assist' nonviolent activists and civic groups, rather than only seeking to protect civilians through military force."[30] Similar to the Cohen article, Chenoweth and Stephan do not specifically mention the competition spectrum. However, it is clear that their studies directly deal with the concept of competition and the overall competition spectrum.

The most recent examination of competition and the competition spectrum and its impacts on the military started in 2010 with GEN Ray Odierno (Chief of Staff for the US Army), GEN Jim Amos (Commandant of the US Marine Corps), and ADM William McRaven's (Commander for US Special Operations Command) concept of Strategic Landpower. Faced with increasingly long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the rise of global terrorist organizations like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the authors determined that these long-term conflicts would be the norm in the future. In the article titled "Strategic Landpower: Winning the

[29] Roger Cohen, "Who Really Brought down Milosevic?," *New York Times*, November 26, 2000, accessed November 1, 2020, https://www.proquest.com/docview/215487476?accountid=28992.

[30] Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, "Drop Your Weapons: When and Why Civil Resistance Works," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (August 2014): 1.

Clash of Wills," Odierno, Amos, and McRaven described the application of landpower short of war and landpower at war. Further, the authors established the concept of a struggle short of war. "Operations in the 'human domain' provide a unique capability to preclude and deter conflict through shaping operations that leverage partners and populations to enhance local and regional stability."[31] The concept drove military thought over the next few years. Colin Gray, Professor of International Relations at the University of Reading, explored this concept further in his study "Always Strategic: Jointly Essential Landpower." Gray determined that American Landpower is a strategic instrument and that "landpower by its nature must exert itself upon and within a geography that nearly always includes a foreign population."[32] Gray backed up the assumptions presented by Odierno et al. in their Strategic Landpower article discussed above. However, neither article addressed how to navigate the human domain. Also, neither article examined the impact or the importance of GRO/CSO in this domain.

Further exploration in landpower transitioned over to the Gray Zone concept, the area short of war in the conflict continuum.[33] GEN Joseph Votel, Commander of Special Operations Command, explored the theme in "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone." The article highlighted the impact of Special Warfare through human domain-centric core tasks for SOF (Special Operations Forces).[34] Votel asserted that SOF can accomplish these gray zone operations and further develop doctrine and training. Moreover, they concluded that further work on "what Gray Zone success looks like"[35] and what winning in the gray zone means. Dan Madden, author for the RAND Corporation, and others continued this exploration in their article

[31] Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*.

[32] Colin S. Gray, *Always Strategic: Jointly Essential Landpower* (US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, February 2015), 40.

[33] Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," 102.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 108.

"Special Warfare: The Missing Middle in US Coercive Options." The authors continued the theme from Votel regarding the need for Special Operations Forces in the Gray Zone. Furthermore, it linked these operations to strategic goals.[36] It did not explore the usefulness of partners, including GRO/CSO, in the conduct of these operations.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) furthered the gray zone concept research in the two-part study titled "By Other Means: Campaigning in the Gray Zone." Hicks and his co-authors argued that the US lacks a concise effort to compete in the Gray Zone and that the competition for interests is playing out in a place beyond diplomacy and short of war.[37] The authors concluded that there is a large gap with regards to planning campaigns in the Gray Zone. They proposed a list of considerations in planning efforts. Also, they suggested a more robust synchronization of these planning efforts at the whole of government level. The literature surrounding the Gray Zone idea established the concept and the requirement to consider activities in the Gray Zone to get after strategic ends. However, the literature did not explore the ways or methods.

As discussed above, the exploration and discussion of the Gray Zone often occurred in the past decade. A more recent development is the renaming of the Gray Zone as the Competition Space of the greater Competition Spectrum. The Army's lead operations manual, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, from 2017 identified the need to plan "shaping activities within an environment of cooperation and competition."[38] The doctrine mirrored that of Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, in that the concept of the conflict continuum contained two separate areas: cooperation and competition, the other for conflict or war. The ARSOF (Army Special

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[36] Dan Madden et al., *Special Warfare: The Missing Middle in U.S. Coercive Options*, 2014, 4, accessed November 11, 2020, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR828.html.

[37] Kathleen H. Hicks and Melissa Dalton, *By Other Means Part II; Adapting to Compete in the Gray Zone*, CSIS reports (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2019).

[38] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, 2017), 3–2.

Operations Forces) Strategy published in 2018 identified the requirement to understand Multi-Domain Operations and its impact in Competition Below Armed Conflict, Large Scale Combat Operations, and Homeland Defense.[39] It was not until Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, *Competition Continuum*, that the Joint Force recognized the need to consider these activities under one umbrella. The Doctrine Note also introduced the concept of integrated campaigning throughout the competition spectrum.[40] A Doctrine Note is pre-doctrinal and only captures concepts for future inclusion into doctrine. As such, Joint Doctrine does not officially address the Competition Continuum.

An examination of the literature shows that studies mainly examine GRO/CSO in the post-conflict state. Studies regarding the efficacy of GRO/CSO in the pre-conflict state are not common, and specifically, there are no examinations regarding the question at hand for this specific monograph. However, the studies do provide insight into the problem at hand. Studies can help shed light on the nature of GRO/CSO, issues inherent in GRO/CSO formation and function, and case studies involving GRO/CSO. These elements combined help to address the gap in the literature and answer the premise of this monograph.

Part II: Grassroots Organizations/Civil Society Organizations and the Competition Environment

To fully explore the ability of GRO/CSO as potential contributors in the conduct of US Strategy in the competition spectrum, it is necessary to understand the makeup of these specific organizations. GRO/CSO are a set of individually unique organizations, and understanding their nature is key to examining this paper's thesis. Furthermore, understanding the development of the concept of the Competition Continuum helps to set the stage for further exploration of GRO/CSO in this specific frame of reference.

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[39] United States Army Special Operations Command, "Army Special Operations Forces Strategy," 3, accessed August 26, 2020, https://www.soc.mil/AssortedPages/ARSOF_Strategy.pdf.

[40] US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum*, 4.

Understanding Grassroots and Civil Society Organizations

GRO/CSO are an extensive category of organizations. As mentioned, the class consists of an incredibly varied amount of unique organizations. To further the discussion, exploring these organizations allows for a shared base of understanding. The knowledge gained enables these organizations classification and further inferences of these organizations' potential strengths and weaknesses, specifically concerning the competition spectrum. Before transitioning to examining case studies, it is essential to explore what these organizations are and the key points in the potential classification of said organizations.

GRO/CSO are a substantial subset of organizations that function in the human domain. To properly understand, the larger of the two sets of organizations we have linked under the moniker of GRO/CSO is undoubtedly the CSO portion. The United Nations (UN) defined CSO as "Non-state, not for profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market. CSO's represent a wide range of interests and ties."[41] There are several vital points to distill from this definition. First, CSO do not derive from the state. Second, CSO are voluntary entities. The voluntary nature of CSO is key to understanding more about the basic nature of the organizations. Third, CSO exist in the social sphere and the human domain. GRO are a subset of CSO. An accepted definition of Grassroots organizations advanced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is "Grassroots organizations are primarily made up of civilians advocating a cause to spur change at local, national or international levels."[42] It is difficult to draw a distinction necessarily between GRO and CSO using only definitions. Mitlin discussed several examples of GRO in her co-production study. She referred to a grassroots "local NGO [called] the Orangi Pilot Project [that] developed a

[41] United Nations, "UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework."

[42] Bettencourt, "Grassroots Organizations Are Just as Important as Seed Money for Innovation," 1.

new solution to sanitation to address the … living conditions and … health problems".[43] in Karachi. Another grassroots organization example is the Shack Dwellers Federation in Namibia. "The federation is a grassroots organization made up of women-led saving schemes within very low-income settlements."[44] These two examples show how Grassroots Organizations fall within the more extensive encompassing term of Civil Society Organizations. However, both terms would be an acceptable definition for these organizations; thus, they remain grouped as GRO/CSO for this study.

GRO/CSO exhibit key characteristics. Further exploring these characteristics allows for an understanding of GRO through formation, operating characteristics, and internal dynamics. Expressly, these categories set the stage for the analysis of GRO/CSO in the conduct of this study's thesis. Through an examination of each of these key aspects, a deeper understanding of these organizations can develop. This understanding also helps to set the stage for discussions in the way ahead about GRO/CSO classification and characteristics.

The first characteristic to examine is the formation of these organizations. Pilisuk, in his examination of Grassroots organizing, stressed the locality of the development. "The emphasis in locality development is upon the slower process of creating a web of continuing relationships so that people may indeed come together, share their supportive attentions and resources, and experience a sense of belonging in their community."[45] Mitlin described conditions often found in the development of grassroots organizations. "Their context is characterized by a weak state unable to provide basic services and/or the conditions under which good quality private support is affordable."[46] Both descriptions highlight the tentative nature of the formation of these organizations. GRO/CSO often form to address key specific needs in the community. Often their

[43] Mitlin, "With and beyond the State," 347.

[44] Ibid., 348.

[45] Pilisuk, McAllister, and Rothman, "Coming Together for Action," 17.

[46] Mitlin, "With and beyond the State," 341.

existence is entirely framed by these particular needs. As these needs shift or conditions change, so do the organizations as they morph, change, come into existence, and also cease to exist.

As discussed above, these continual relationships, the network of relationships that form the basis for GRO/CSO formation, shape how they evolve. Pilisk highlighted that grassroots organizing is increasing, and the most stable groups often exist among the poorest and disadvantaged populations.[47] However, organizing GRO/CSO is only the first step. Internal and external dynamics provide strong forces that act upon these groups. These largely informal groups face the same external pressures that other organizations face. Pilisik described how some are building coalitions to bring multiple groups together across boundaries and how others look to create groups that help each other in mutual aid.[48] On the internal side, GRO/CSO groups still need to "set up an effective neighborhood meeting; enlist citizen participants…; develop an organizing plan; and find information."[49] Also, GRO/CSO must "address issues raised by the fragmentation of communities, identity politics, complex and concealed information about vested interests, and specialized knowledge."[50] The success of these GRO/CSO at identifying both internal and external needs relates to the GRO/CSO ability to function in the long term. Bettencourt also understood this in her examination of Grassroots Organizations. "Because grassroots organizing is essentially a group-level phenomenon, intragroup process variables are central."[51] She continued to discuss "that social ties, both preexisting as well as those that develop between members of grassroots groups, are important predictors and consequences of grassroots involvement."[52] These internal and external forces end up creating a very fluid nature

[47] Pilisuk, McAllister, and Rothman, "Coming Together for Action," 24.

[48] Ibid., 25.

[49] Ibid., 26.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Bettencourt, "Grassroots Organizations: Recurrent Themes and Research Approaches," 208.

[52] Ibid.

for GRO/CSO. “Movements may move between autonomy and dependency on party politics/or clientelist relations, and back again in a context that is often fluid.”[53]

As demonstrated, GRO/CSO form and exist in an extremely dynamic environment. Understanding how they form and how they evolve makes it easier to draw on some models to understand their nature and further examine their usefulness as a partner in strategic execution. Understanding some of the critical dynamics involved within GRO/CSO formation and functioning allows for a more in-depth exploration during the remainder of this study. Before diving into further research of GRO/CSO and their usefulness as a partner in the conduct of strategy in the Competition Spectrum, it is necessary to understand the development of the Competition Spectrum concept.

Development of the Concept of the Competition Spectrum/Continuum

As the second part of the thesis of this study, the application of US Strategy in the Competition Spectrum through GRO/CSO, an exploration of how the concept of the Competition Spectrum developed in US Military Doctrine helps to box the problem set. The first step in developing this concept is the idea of Strategic Landpower advanced by leaders of the US Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and the US Special Operations Command in 2010. This paper “identifies a growing problem in linking military action to achieving national objectives and describes the requirement for rigorous analysis to determine solutions that will ensure we provide the right capabilities for the nation in an era of fiscal austerity.”[54] Furthermore, this concept started the conversation about linking activities in peacetime, those short of war, with the national objectives described above. Specifically, the idea of the human domain entered into the discussion for military doctrine. “Operations in the ‘human domain’ provide a unique capability to preclude and deter conflict through shaping operations that leverage partners and populations to enhance local

[53] Mitlin, “With and beyond the State,” 343.

[54] Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, 1.

and regional stability."[55] The authors further stated that "It could not be otherwise as all institutions, States, Corporations, NGOs, etc. – are populated, controlled, and directed by people."[56] Odierno recognized the importance of the human domain and realized that all organizations the US will partner with are essential elements of this same human domain. Odierno continued, "Influencing these people—be they heads of state, tribal elders, militaries and their leaders or even an entire population—remains essential to securing US interests."[57] As explored above, GRO/CSO are directly related to the human domain, as Odierno discussed.

Following this development, Colin Gray writing for the US Army Strategic Studies Institute, set to examine Odierno's concept of Strategic Landpower. Gray concluded that "the United States has a permanent need for the human quality in Landpower."[58] He also determined that "Landpower is always and indeed necessarily strategic in its meanings and implications."[59] The connection between the human domain's primacy in the strategic nature of Odierno's concept is clear. Gray concluded that "Strategic Landpower is dominated … by the human domain."[60] Strategic Landpower, the constant influence on the human domain, next influenced the Gray Zone concept development in US doctrine.

The US military worked through what the concept of strategic landpower truly meant, and precisely how it linked activities in peacetime and wartime. While the US military is not a stranger to partnership activities occurring in both peacetime and actions short of conflict, the wider coordination of these elements often was staggered in the typical phases of the operations found throughout the military doctrine of the 1990s and 2000s. The development of the Gray

[55] Ibid., 4.

[56] Ibid., 3.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Gray, *Always Strategic: Jointly Essential Landpower*, ix.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 28.

Zone continued to challenge the assumptions of the five-phase model. Votel captured this challenge as he laid out the concept of the Gray Zone, "our nation is entering a period where threats and our response to those threats will take place in a segment of the conflict continuum that some are calling the 'gray zone.'"[61] He then linked the human dimension to this concept. "In these human-centric struggles, our successes cannot be solely our own in that they must be largely defined and accomplished by our indigenous friends and coalition partners as they realize respectively acceptable political outcomes."[62] Votel advanced the human domain concept in the Gray Zone, a constant refrain as this concept advanced. He also established that a gray zone win is not like a regular win in warfare in the classic sense. "Winning is perhaps better described as maintaining the US government's positional advantage, namely the ability to influence partners, populations, and threats toward the achievement of our national strategic objectives."[63] Votel described the evident long term struggle that exists in the gray zone.

Michael Mazarr continued the development and thought into the Gray Zone in his study titled "Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict." Mazarr saw that the gray zone will most likely contain the main areas of conflict with other nations in the near future. "Large-scale operations in this indistinct landscape will be the dominant form of state-to-state rivalry in coming decades…international rivalry may be characterized by such campaigns."[64] Mazarr contended that planning must consider this gray zone area in the overall conduct of operations and strategy. He provided a bridge from the gray zone concept to the further development of the competition continuum.

Joint Doctrine Note 1-19 continued this discussion. While not a prescriptive doctrine, a doctrine note begins the discussion on a topic for potential future inclusion into doctrine, typically

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[61] Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," 102.

[62] Ibid., 109.

[63] Ibid., 108.

[64] Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone*, 2.

done to address identified doctrinal gaps. This doctrine note specifically connected the gray zone into the overall competition continuum. “Rather than a world either at peace or at war, the competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict and armed conflict.”[65] The development of a spectrum of competition that, instead of being broken up by non-congruent phases of operations, contains linked efforts throughout is the latest iteration of the concept that started with strategic landpower. The Joint Doctrine Note further laid out that “for the joint force to successfully campaign through competition…it should adopt a similar long-term approach but one supple enough to react to rapid changes in the political, diplomatic, and strategic environments.”[66] The Note also highlighted the need to campaign through competition but remain flexible.

The evolution of thought from strategic landpower, to gray zone, to the competition continuum is relatively straightforward and understandable. The Joint Doctrine note established the need to campaign throughout the competition spectrum. It discussed a ‘supple’ approach to reacting to rapid changes in conditions. As a critical part of the human domain, GRO/CSO permeate the competition spectrum. To truly understand the human domain and effectively campaign throughout the competition continuum, a further examination of GRO/CSO potential as partners to conduct US strategy is necessary.

Part III: Case Studies

A more detailed understanding of the nature of GRO/CSO assists in further analyzing the central purpose of this study. Can this varied set of organizations truly assist in the conduct of US strategy in the competition spectrum? The next step in the examination is to look at two separate case studies briefly. Each case looks specifically at the use of GRO/CSO by the entities involved

[65] US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum*, v.

[66] Ibid., iv.

in the conflict, focusing on how GRO/CSO potentially helped or hindered the execution of strategy.

Ukraine – Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014 and Following

Through actions in the Baltic States, Transnistria, Chechnya, and Georgia, Russian military and political leaders learned valuable lessons and continually refined their theories on unconventional warfare. The final iteration of these theories often called the Russian Way of War, features many key principles. Most important to this study are two main points. First, non-military factors, including politics, diplomacy, economics, finance, information, and intelligence, enjoy primacy.[67] These factors show the stress on the complete picture. All elements of the human domain are part of the Russian Way of War. Second, the Russian Way of War also stresses the use of "armed civilian proxies, self-defense militias, and imported paramilitary units."[68] These organizations provide the ultimate tool to start the action highlighting asymmetric, nonlinear efforts. As discussed previously, GRO/CSO are local organizations made up of civilians attempting to influence change at the local, national, or international levels.[69] Through this interpretation, militias are a type of grassroots organization.

Furthermore, Russia's understanding of three distinct categories of people colors their actions. The first one is *russkiy*, which refers to ethnic Russians. The second is *rossisskiy*, which refers to citizens of the Russian Federation.[70] Of most importance is the use of the term *sootechestvennikii*. It "encompasses both of these categories as well as individuals connected to Russia by culture or family background."[71] The Putin government tends to use the latter term

[67] "'Little Green Men': A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013-2014" (The United States Army Special Operations Command, n.d.), 1.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Bettencourt, "Grassroots Organizations Are Just as Important as Seed Money for Innovation," 1.

[70] Zakem et al., *Mobilizing Compatriots*, 3.

[71] Ibid., 4.

most often to draw and connect people to Russia. The use of compatriots is key to Russia's Ukraine efforts and helps set the conditions for further discussions.

Russia sought to leverage its compatriot population to accomplish its goals in both Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. "Russia's practical policy towards its compatriots abroad also appears to approach them as instruments…as tools to implement broader policies."[72] Compatriots serve to support the fully integrated way of war discussed above. "Russian compatriots can serve as an invaluable intelligence resource, providing information about military capabilities, trade, financial and economic policies."[73] The compatriots are a vital method to "bolster Russian soft power in post-Soviet states."[74] While different than Nye's concept of soft power deriving from culture, political values and foreign policies,[75] these compatriots seek to tilt the balance of local, state, and national politics towards Russia. It is a crucial part of the overall Russian Way of War.

Russia did count on its compatriots in many different organizations, often during Crimea and Eastern Ukraine actions. A specific example is the use of Russia backed proxy groups in both Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. One such group in Crimea was the Chetnik Guards.[76] This group operated in conjunction with the Cossack paramilitaries and were among the groups dubbed 'little green men' during the Russian invasion of Crimea, who seamlessly secured vital infrastructure and institutions.[77] An example of these proxy forces in Eastern Ukraine is the Russian Orthodox Army that are "motivated by their devotion to the Russian Orthodox Church and a strong sense of nationalistic outrage toward the encroachment of Western influence in the region."[78] This

[72] Ibid., 18.

[73] Ibid., 19.

[74] "'Little Green Men'," 40.

[75] Nye, *The Future of Power*, 84.

[76] "'Little Green Men'," 44.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

specific example of a GRO/CSO works on "special activities, including storming buildings, sniping, reconnaissance, and defense."[79] These organizations provide direct access to the very basic level of the human domain. As demonstrated, Russia used GRO/CSO throughout its campaign in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine as a tool to execute Russian strategy.

There are several key lessons that derive from this example in the larger picture of using GRO/CSOs to execute strategy. First, the situation as of the writing of this study shows different results in each example. Crimea is now a de facto part of Russia, while the conflict in Eastern Ukraine continues to rage. The Russian plan for use of GRO/CSO in eastern Ukraine was much the same as in Crimea. One of the key reasons why there are drastically different results between the two examples is environmental or operational attributes found in each specific region. "The populations in the two eastern provinces were more divided—and less geographically isolated—than Crimea, and those conflicts quickly became more complex."[80] A valid point, as 'compatriots' made up almost eighty percent of the population in Crimea. This was not so in eastern Ukraine, as the 'compatriots' composed a significantly smaller portion of the population.[81]

Even with an overwhelming population of Russian linked 'compatriots' in a particular area, it is essential to realize that GRO/CSO are independent organizations. The shooting down of the Malaysian Airlines by a Russian backed eastern Ukrainian separatist group demonstrates that these organizations operate independently.[82] In addition to this, simply having a "shared language, history, and culture do not guarantee that an ethnic Russian or broader Russian

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Zakem et al., *Mobilizing Compatriots*, 33.

[81] "'Little Green Men'," 28.

[82] "Identifying the Separatists Linked to the Downing of MH17," *Bellingcat*, last modified June 19, 2019, accessed January 13, 2021, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/06/19/identifying-the-separatists-linked-to-the-downing-of-mh17/.

compatriot population will support Kremlin foreign policy."[83] There needs to be a turning point for these organizations in Ukraine to support Russia. Zakem, in his study on Russian Compatriots and their usage, identified two main criteria that reach the tipping point. He contends that the compatriot level of social alienation from the local culture impacts their willingness to work with an outside entity. The separation shows the compatriot is willing to look outside of the existing society to seek a solution to his/her grievance. Secondly, the compatriot also has to be "determined to remain within those societies rather than return to Russia."[84] The organizations and population in Crimea already experienced a great deal of alienation from the central Ukrainian administration. Those in Eastern Ukraine did not share the same level of separation.

Also, compatriots are blunt instruments, and continuous usage will result in diminishing returns.[85] Once the proverbial genie is out of the bottle, the use of a compatriot GRO/CSO does not offer the same bang for the buck. The organization becomes a known commodity by all involved. "By using the Russian Orthodox Church as an instrument of state power in its conflict with Ukraine, the Kremlin galvanized a Ukrainian campaign for independence…for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church."[86] The potentially overzealous use of the Russian Orthodox church by Russia as a proxy took this organization out of play in the future in Ukraine as a tool for Russian strategy execution. While this is a starker example, even without the campaign for an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church surely would be much diminished in its ability.

Overall, this demonstrates how and why GRO/CSO usage in Crimea may have accomplished the Russian desired strategy. However, the attempts in Eastern Ukraine met with

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[83] Zakem et al., *Mobilizing Compatriots*, 12.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid., 49.

[86] "Russia's War on Ukraine Roils the Orthodox Church," accessed January 6, 2021, https://www.printfriendly.com/p/g/8W2vnh.

resistance and less than the same amount of success experienced in Crimea. From this, the case study offers several insights that apply to further exploration of the issues inherent in partnering with GRO/CSO in the conduct of strategy.

Syrian Civil War and the Execution of US Strategy

After the brief analysis of the Russian use of GRO/CSO in Crimea and eastern Ukraine noted above, it is important to examine an example from the US perspective. During the most recent actions in the Syrian Civil War from 2011 on, "donors have provided non-military aid to members of the Syrian opposition in an effort to bolster 'good' rebel governors."[87] This case study is different from our previous example because it exclusively deals with post-conflict activities. However, there are still lessons to distill, which apply across the competition spectrum.

The US partnered with many different GRO/CSO in its strategy in Syria during the recent civil war. Carnegie points out that "USAID/OTI assistance was expressly intended to bolster public support for rebel institutions through service provision."[88] As one of the central portions of US Strategy in the conflict, this effort directly depended on GRO/CSO.

US strategy depended on partnering with Local Councils (LCs). "Despite the fracturing of the military opposition, western donors—along with countries in the region—saw LCs as key civilian stewards of the moderate opposition and moved to support them."[89] These local councils are the very essence of GRO/CSO in the competition spectrum. "These civilian-led local councils (LCs) aimed to fill the void by the regime in opposition-controlled areas."[90] Specifically, this case reviews a detailed case study conducted by Carnegie et al. testing the effect of this aid on public support for government bodies.

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[87] Carnegie et al., "Winning Hearts and Minds for Rebel Rulers," 1.

[88] Ibid., 10.

[89] Ibid., 9.

[90] Ibid., 8.

There are two major findings from this study that apply directly to this monograph. First, in uncontested spaces, foreign aid amplifies the governing reputation of the partner LCs.[91] In an environment free from competition, partnership with these GRO/CSO leads to success in executing strategy. Conversely, in contested areas, this plan does not work as well. In Aleppo, the Aleppo City Council "sought to govern in a highly contested space."[92] Competition is an ever-changing environment, and the more players in the overall system, the messier it can get, which impacts the conduct of strategy. "Due to a variety of service providers, it was often difficult for residents to ascertain who had delivered particular services."[93] There are numerous players in the competition space in this example. With the contested nature of the competition environment, it served to degrade the GRO/CSO's ability to accomplish the strategic tasks that the US expected in the partnership with the GRO/CSO. Intra-rebel contestation made support much more complicated than in non-contested regions. Insecurity often stopped people from traveling to the Local Council offices.[94] In this situation, partnering with a specific GRO/CSO requires patience and potentially altering strategic goals as the competition environment presents numerous potential challenges.

External forces impact the GRO/CSO to partner and conduct with the US to execute strategy. Carnegie then looked deeper into if the aid accomplished its goals. Through this analysis, the authors determined that "Aid directed in support of these states as part of campaigns to subdue rebellion and violent extremism are likely to fail."[95] The same identified issues concerning the contestation of space in the competition environment transfer over to state actors. Success in influencing the human domain relates directly to the ability to access the populace.

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[91] Ibid., 21.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., 20.

[94] Ibid., 10.

[95] Ibid., 27.

Carnegie continues that there is a need "for careful consideration of the various forms of local contestation and cooperation at play…as part of any meaningful analysis about the impact of foreign aid in conflict systems."[96] Risk mitigation for actions is essential to plan activities in the competition space successfully and requires as much knowledge as possible of the environment's actors and intentions.

Finally, the Syria case study demonstrates that these GRO/CSO remain independent. They will change and adapt pending to internal and external pressures. This change might not agree with the intended strategy in the competition space. Carnegie discovered this in the Syria study. "Findings suggest that aid may improve the credibility of rebel governing institutions in the absence of contestation, but it may also facilitate the consolidation of politics at odds with democratic ideals held by many western donors."[97] Overall, this case demonstrates how the US strategy application through a GRO/CSO produced mixed results and the reasons behind these results. While this study concerned the post-conflict portion of the competition spectrum, it also translates and applies to the other parts of the spectrum. These studies also relate to the next section in this monograph, an in-depth exploration of additional issues to consider while working in and around GRO/CSO.

Part IV: Main Considerations in Planning Strategy through GRO/CSO

In the two limited examples explored above, partnering in executing strategy with GRO/CSO produced both positive and negative effects overall. Russia experienced both success and failures in its plans in Crimea and Ukraine. While the analysis demonstrates that GRO/CSO can be useful as partners in executing strategy, there are several important issues to explore prior to, and during, partnership with these organizations. Several significant issues must enter into planning considerations when seeking to potentially partner with GRO/CSO. These issues,

[96] Ibid., 28.

[97] Ibid.

covered in depth below, require attention throughout the life of the partnership with the GRO/CSO. As discussed previously, this paper concerns the US military partnering with GRO/CSO to execute strategy. However, these impacts easily translate to the other elements of national power and their partnering with the same set of organizations.

Backfire Effect

The backfire effect in this study refers to the concept that by working with an organization, the partnership hurts the organization's ability to conduct its mission and, subsequently, the potential execution of US strategy. This effect is akin to the observer effect, often described in science as the mere interaction by observing a system changes the nature of the said system. The mere partnership with GRO/CSO has the potential to alter the system drastically. Using post-conflict studies of work with GRO/CSO as an analog for the potential work inside the Competition Spectrum provides examples of this effect. Donais stressed perspective in his study on the dilemmas of relationships with GRO/CSO. He cited Western liberalist tendencies as a primary root to many issues inherent in these relations. "According to this perspective, peacebuilding is about transforming war-shattered polities into functioning liberal democracies where the liberal democratic framework is seen not only as the gold standard of good governance, but also as the most secure foundation for sustainable peace."[98] This is a simple example of the equivalence fallacy; just because we are all exist in the human domain does not mean we all have the same experiences or background. This fallacy invites misunderstandings and potential failure by layering Western Liberalist theory and beliefs onto potential GRO/CSO partners.

Furthermore, partnering with GRO/CSO is destabilizing to that organization, and therefore to a potential strategy implementation goal. Post-conflict studies demonstrate that imposed actions upon a GRO/CSO often result in instability internal to the GRO/CSO. The nature

[98] Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition?," 6.

of GRO/CSO explored above indicates how these organizations form. As highlighted, it is a very fluid environment. Imposed or externally driven agendas often upset the fluid natures of GRO/CSOs and potentially separate them from their base. The base is one of the main reasons why GRO/CSOs are so important and potentially attractive to work within the Competition Spectrum. James Orbinski discussed how externally driven agendas often cause chaos throughout the GRO/CSO from a position of authority as Medicine Sans Frontiere's ex-director. "Accusations of Western imperialism in Afghanistan and Iraq have made humanitarian practice even more difficult."[99] In my own experience as a young Captain in Iraq in 2004, my superiors told me to avoid Doctors Without Borders, that this organization would not work or partner in efforts with the US military. At the time, I was surprised by this. I felt that the US forces, and especially my Civil Affairs unit, were there to help the locals. With the benefit of maturation and the effects of time widening the perspective, it is clear why Doctors Without Borders did not seek partnership. Orbinksi stated succinctly, "humanitarianism is little more than a wolf in sheep's clothing as the US and its allies use humanitarian assistance as a political tool to win hearts and minds."[100] It is not the purpose of this study to extract a mea culpa moment from the US military or Government. It is essential to understand, however, that past actions influence current actions. In Afghanistan, I worked alongside incredibly dedicated Afghan individuals and organizations who truly wanted to make their country a better place. However, due to their relationship with the US, they faced persecution and violence. The act of partnering with GRO/CSOs can often result in this type of backfire effect. This effect impacts the relationship between the US and its potential GRO/CSO partners.

Outside interference can also feed intergroup tensions and weaken intergroup connections. Mary Anderson, the author of *Do No Harm – How Aid Can Support Peace—or War*,

[99] Orbinski, *An Imperfect Offering*, 11.

[100] Ibid.

presented one of the Humanitarian Assistance Community's go-to references for dealing with aid in conflict zones. Anderson summarized the basic requirements for aid workers in a conflict zone. "In the complex conflict settings in which aid is provided, aid workers must be both realistic and humble enough to know what they cannot affect and what is not their responsibility, and they must be idealistic and bold enough to hold themselves accountable for the events they affect or cause."[101] This simple statement requires aid workers to have perspective and honesty. To help gain perspective and honesty in dealing in conflict zones, Anderson offered a framework that helps to provide this missing perspective. The framework, covered in more depth in the way forward section, seeks to group important information and highlight critical relationships in the information that predicts outcomes.[102] Without the perspective and honesty that Anderson refered to, the simple act of partnering with a GRO/CSO can often destabilize the relations that made the GRO/CSO function initially.

Akin to this destabilization of a GRO/CSO's internal relations, partnering with these organizations could remove the GRO/CSO as an entity of usefulness by separating the organization from the base of support in the population. In the analysis of the Syrian Civil War above, the Aleppo City Council demonstrated this effect. "Its reliance on external assistance may have actually undercut its reputation vis-à-vis competing service providers."[103] Here the population base saw the City Council as dependent on foreign support and therefore not as an independent organization. The act of partnering served to cut the council off from the base of support, thereby reducing the organization's usefulness in its intended task, and as a partner in the execution of US strategy. Similarly, the Russian experience in Eastern Ukraine also demonstrates this effect. In Eastern Ukraine, "Moscow's active and visible support for the Donetsk and

[101] Anderson, *Do No Harm*, 68.

[102] Ibid., 75.

[103] Carnegie et al., "Winning Hearts and Minds for Rebel Rulers," 23.

Luhansk People's Republics (separatist eastern Ukrainian provinces) has encouraged expectations among Russian compatriots in those regions…that the Kremlin cannot fully satisfy."[104] By partnering with GRO/CSO in eastern Ukraine, Russia has entered into a bit of a dilemma. As discussed in the case study, "the populations in the two eastern provinces were more divided – and less geographically isolated – than Crimea's."[105] In effect, the GRO/CSO, due to their partnership with Russia, can now reach the other side of the populace in question. Prior to Russian collaboration, it is reasonable to believe that these GRO/CSO may have made some inroads across the entire populace. As already highlighted, this action led to the complete separation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Donais, in his study on GRO/CSO empowerment, discussed the "complex relationship between insiders and outsiders [that] lies at the very heart of contemporary peacebuilding process."[106] While Donais explored the peacebuilding aspect, this complex relationship exists in any relationship between GRO/CSO and an outside entity. Donais concluded that GRO/CSOs should be wary of external intervening actors. "There are also dangers in accepting external interveners as unerringly benevolent and unfailingly committed to seeing peace processes through to their just, sustainable conclusion."[107] GRO/CSO understand that often these external interveners bring more issues than solutions. As Orbinski stated due to his experience as a veteran of the humanitarian conflict and post-conflict space, "even for the neutral and impartial humanitarian, politics matters, and matters a lot."[108] The summary of this is that large, politically motivated organizations often bring more issues, and partnership with these entities is usually not worth the trouble. Even in one of the most referred to success stories for the US, the surge in Iraq

[104] Zakem et al., *Mobilizing Compatriots*, 33.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition?," 3.

[107] Ibid., 21.

[108] Orbinski, *An Imperfect Offering*, 7.

and the subsequent Anbar awakening, the backfire effect required a significant outlay of resources to overcome. Robert Kaplan accurately identified the true power broker in the human domain in his 2007 article "It's The Tribes, Stupid." He stated that "quelling anarchy in Iraq, Pakistan, and elsewhere, will require building on tribal loyalties—not imposing democracy from the top down."[109] Kaplan understood the power of the human domain. More specifically, he stated that "Restoring peace in Anbar has been accomplished by a lot of money changing hands, to the benefit of unelected but well-respected tribal sheiks, paid off with cash and projects by our soldiers and marines."[110] The Anbar Awakening occurred partially because the tribes received enough money to ignore the backfire effect's impact. In hindsight, from the time of this paper's writing, arguably, the tribes may not have escaped the backfire effect with the rise of ISIS in the area. The backfire effect is a serious roadblock that can impact GRO/CSO ability to partner with the US in strategy execution successfully. However, this is not the only crucial potential roadblock to examine.

Principal-Agent Relationship/Effect

There is a balance between the sponsor and the actor, which needs to be fully explored and understood. For this paper, the sponsor is the US military, and the actor is the partner GRO/CSO. Fox, in his report on the Theory of Proxy Warfare, outlined this as a circular model. The nature of both the sponsor and the actor is exploitative in nature from both sides. As highlighted in the backfire effect above, no parties enter into these relationships with altruistic intentions.

[109] Robert Kaplan, "It's the Tribes, Stupid!," *The Atlantic*, 1, last modified November 2007, accessed August 20, 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/11/its-the-tribes-stupid/306496/.

[110] Ibid., 2.

Fox pointed out that "the United States lacks a coherent theory of war or related doctrine to support proxy war."[111] Other great power peers are much more adept at understanding and using proxies to pursue strategic goals. Russia's use of proxies is explored above in this paper. Beyond the scope of this paper is China's use of proxies to accomplish its strategic aims. The development of the Competition Spectrum and the idea of a world at constant competition shows that US doctrine is attempting to incorporate proxy warfare more into doctrine. To this end, Joint Doctrine Note 1-19 does not mention proxy forces once. However, it does mention that there are "situations in which joint forces take actions with another strategic actor in pursuit of policy objectives."[112] Fox pointed out that "The United States Department of Defense sidesteps proxy reality and repackages the concept of operating through intermediaries in an idea known as by, with, and through and security force assistance."[113] This lack of acknowledgment may be due to US leaders' aversion to potentially showing approval of Russian and Chinese methods by incorporating it into US doctrine. However, it is accurate that without clear and concise addressing of proxy force use in doctrine, confusion may enter into the planning and execution of operations involving proxy forces. For this study's purpose, while Fox discussed the use of proxy forces in warfare, the concepts presented extend over to the use of GRO/CSO in the conduct of US strategy throughout the Competition Spectrum.

Fox explored the principal-agent relationship further, stating that it consists of two fundamental relationships: exploitative and transactional.[114] Fox highlighted the need for a common interest among the principal and the agent. "If the common interest goes away, self-interest exceeds the common interest, or the level of acceptable risk is too high, the relationship

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[111] Amos Fox, "Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019): 44.

[112] US Department of Defense, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, Competition Continuum*, 3.

[113] Fox, "Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare," 44.

[114] Ibid., 57.

can decouple."[115] He proposed that there is a specific ratio of self-interest and acceptable risk to analyze in the understanding of these relationships. "As time progresses and objectives are accomplished, each parties' self-interest begins to supplant the objectives and end states that brought the principle and agent together in the first place."[116] Decoupling can occur in the exploitative model, where the principal leads and the agent follows, or in the transactional model, where the agent leads the principal.

The nature of the relationship brings several considerations for planning into focus. First, in working with GRO/CSO to conduct strategy, it is necessary to assess and understand the type of relationship paradigm over time. The principal, led by the agent, potentially adds risks of strategic missteps. Second, understanding potential decoupling conditions regarding relations with the GRO/CSO also helps plan strategy execution. Fox presented valuable considerations for planning in an environment dealing with the principal-agent effect.

Inherent Nature of GRO/CSO

GRO/CSO are an incredibly varied set of organizations. Working with one provides little to no insight on working with another. It is essential to understand as much as possible about the organization; its cohesion, its makeup, its raison d'etre, and anything that helps improve understanding to make partnership easier and more effective. The nature of these organizations inherently makes it difficult to partner with them as a tool for conducting US strategy.

Paul Staniland, in *Networks of Rebellion*, looked at what keeps insurgent groups together. His central question is, "why some insurgent groups are unified and disciplined while others struggle with splits and feuds?"[117] Specifically, Staniland developed a new "typology of insurgent groups, a social-institutional theory of insurgent organization…to explain how

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid., 56.

[117] Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, ix.

insurgent groups are constructed and why they change over time."[118] His typology surmised four key types of insurgent groups: Integrated, Vanguard, Parochial, and Fragmented. Staniland concentrated his study on the cohesion of these insurgent groups. Through the analysis of the cohesion, Staniland distilled much about the nature of these specific groups. Insurgent groups are a subset of GRO/CSO. While the typology is covered further later in this study, the point remains that each group is different, and each group's cohesion is as well. Understanding this will aid in partnership.

Donais' highlighted a similar point in his study. Each GRO/CSO is an individually different organization. "There are few guarantees that local owners (GRO/CSO) will possess either the capacity or the will to pool their efforts towards the recreation of a just and stable order."[119] Donais claimed that simply because the GRO/CSO exist, they might not be able to do anything to help. Also, when they are able, or willing, to partner, there is no guarantee on results to any timetable. Donais succinctly described strategies with local ownership in the peacebuilding process as "less easily controlled by outsiders—like any democratic process—tend to be messy, time-consuming, and inherently unpredictable."[120] While this quote references specific peacebuilding strategies using local ownership, the analogy transfers over into using GRO/CSO as partners for executing strategy. Due to the nature of these GRO/CSO, timeframes associated with strategy implementation are often little more than loose guidelines and need to be considered, as Donais stated, messy and unpredictable.

In conjunction with the observations above about GRO/CSO's nature, the organization partnering with the GRO/CSO must seek to understand as much as possible about the mission of said GRO/CSO. As discussed earlier, GRO/CSOs are independent organizations that form under

[118] Ibid., 1.

[119] Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition?," 12.

[120] Ibid., 9.

a varied set of conditions. Each GRO/CSO forms for different reasons. However, one universal truth is they each have an individual mission. If the GRO/CSO accomplishes its set missions, often the organization ceases to exist or changes. These changes are important to understand. Mission accomplishment for the GRO/CSO is often unrelated to any separate external partnership. Otpor, a GRO/CSO in Serbia that orchestrated Milosevic's overthrow in Serbia, is a recent example of this phenomena. Otpor partnered with the US during its efforts to bring down Milosevic. Organizations across the US saw Otpor as a tool to help bring democracy to the region. "The United States Agency for International Development says $25 million was appropriated…[with]…several hundred thousand dollars … given directly to Otpor."[121] Additionally, "Otpor leaders intimate they also received a lot of covert aid – a subject on which there is no comment in Washington."[122] Otpor also benefited from training American experts. Among this training were teachings from Gene Sharp, who developed a process to undermine political leaders by undercutting their base. Sharp said, "My key principle is not ethical. It has nothing to do with pacifism. It is based on an analysis of power in a dictatorship and how to break it by withdrawing the obedience of citizens and the key institutions of society."[123] Through this, it is clear that Otpor partnered with the US, and other institutions, in strategy execution.

In this example, mission alignment between the principal and the agent overlapped almost completely. There was no principal-actor effect and minimal backfire effect since Otpor was largely an underground movement. The partnership succeeded in accomplishing the primary goal of overthrowing Milosevic. "Optor used its growing legitimacy as a popular grassroots movement to shame the fractured coalition parties into uniting behind a single opposition candidate to face Milosevic in the 2000 presidential elections."[124] When he refused to leave,

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[121] Cohen, "Who Really Brought down Milosevic?," 4.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid., 5.

[124] "Otpor and the Struggle for Democracy in Serbia (1998-2000)," *ICNC*, February 2010, 1,

Otpor action teams "developed a strategy for escalating pressure."[125] This strategy culminated in protests that forced Milosevic to resign.

At this point, the situation turned messy. Portions of Otpor considered this the culmination point for the organization and called for its disbanding. Others wanted Optor to continue as a sort of independent watchdog of the political party. Other members wanted Optor to transition to a political party seeking Serbia's transformation into a more European like democracy.[126] Soon, the organization fractured, with embezzlement claims of donated funds leading to the organization's eventual downfall.[127] Otpor could not adapt as a separate grassroots organization with cohesion issues, among others, causing the organization to fall apart. GRO/CSO exist for their own specific mission sets; once the organization accomplishes these missions, there are no guarantees of survival.

These common issues that occur when working in, around, and with GRO/CSO are potential roadblocks that would prevent successful partnerships. Each needs consideration separately during the planning of any possible collaboration with a GRO/CSO. Furthermore, each needs constant monitoring during the life of the partnership to ensure risk mitigation. In the end, are these organizations useful tools to conduct strategy in the competition space of the competition spectrum? Summarizing the key findings of this study provide insights into potential ways forward.

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accessed January 19, 2021, https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/otpor-struggle-democracy-serbia-1998-2000/.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Cohen, "Who Really Brought down Milosevic?," 9.

[127] "Resistance Millions $," *Internet Archive Wayback Machine*, last modified February 28, 2004, accessed January 19, 2021, https://web.archive.org/web/20120331153113/http://arhiva.kurir-info.rs/Arhiva/2004/februar/28-29/V-05-27022004.shtml. Original source translated from Bosnian to English using Google translate.

Part V: Conclusion and Way Forward

GRO/CSO permeate the competition environment. They are the most numerous type of organization that exists in the human domain. As such, any entity interested in engaging the human domain, as a rule, will deal with GRO/CSO. The case studies discussed previously demonstrate that GRO/CSO are useful in specific situations regarding the application of strategy in the competition space of the competition environment. However, there are numerous issues to consider before working with these organizations. To truly tap into these organizations' potential and successfully navigate the competitive environment to attain what Votel mentioned as "maintaining the US Government's positional advantage,"[128] understanding each organization and taking nothing for granted is of utmost importance. There are no absolutes in the competition environment, and there are no absolutes when dealing with GRO/CSO. The following recommendations are expansive; they are a starting point for further discussion and consideration. These recommendations are not restrictive; they are not the only answer, only a starting point for exploration. The following models attempt to provide perspective and allow for this exploration to occur.

As discussed previously, Staniland's developed a typology for understanding insurgent cohesion. This typology explored insurgent groups inner workings to illuminate why some successfully transitioned to operational insurgencies while others failed. These groups are a type of GRO/CSO, so expanding on Staniland's typology sheds light on the cohesion present in GRO/CSOs. Staniland presented four categories of groups; integrated, vanguard, parochial and fragmented. He overlaid these four categories across three areas of comparison: the central process of control, the local process of control, and the nature of dissent. Staniland stated, "an organization with robust central control coordinates its strategy and retains the loyalty and unity

[128] Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," 108.

of its key leaders as it implements strategy."[129] Furthermore, "it establishes and maintains institutions for monitoring cadres, creating ideological 'party lines' that socialize new members, engaged in diplomacy, and distributing resources."[130] Organizations that exhibit fragile central control processes often exhibit splits in the leadership, lack a single voice for the group, and show non-consistent policies.[131] Local control processes shift on a scale from reliable, consistent obedience to a lack of obedience and revolts from subgroups. The following table highlights the differences with regards to these groups and the categories discussed above.

Table 1: Types of insurgent organizations. Staniland, Paul. Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014, 6.

Type of Organization	Central processes of control	Local processes of control	Nature of dissent
Integrated	Robust	Robust	Minimal
Vanguard	Robust	Fragile	Central vs. Local
Parochial	Fragile	Robust	Between factional commanders
Fragmented	Fragile	Fragile	Pervasive

Furthermore, Staniland then looked at "how horizontal, and vertical prewar networks combine to create new initial wartime organizations."[132] He concluded that to make the transition from an ideological linked group of people to a fully functioning insurgency, or rebellion, a "group (must) mobilize prior linkages of trust and commitment for the purposes to violence."[133] The following table overlays the type of group against its horizontal and vertical ties.

[129] Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 5.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid., 9.

[133] Ibid.

Table 2: Prewar social bases and wartime organization. Staniland, Paul. Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014, 9.

	Strong Vertical Ties	Weak Vertical Ties
Strong Horizontal Ties	*Integrated organization* Robust central processes Robust local processes	*Vanguard organization* Robust central processes Fragile local processes
Weak Horizontal Ties	*Parochial organization* Fragile central processes Robust local processes	*Fragmented organization* Fragile central processes Fragile local processes

Staniland stated that Integrated Organizations are the most cohesive. The most crucial step in an organization's evolution is its transformation into an Integrated type of organization.[134] As established earlier, cohesion within GRO/CSO is one of the most important qualities to understand. Staniland's understanding of insurgent groups transfers to an overall understanding of GRO/CSO. Cohesion matters and understanding as much as possible regarding the group's cohesion is essential in mitigating risk regarding partnering with GRO/CSO in the conduct of US strategy.

Akin to Staniland's typology above, Bettencourt provided a list of considerations to examine when attempting to understand intergroup dynamics in GRO/CSO. These considerations shed further light on how GRO/CSO form and function. Bettencourt said, "Although ingroup identification and group cohesion seem similar, their effects on grassroots activism may not be one and the same."[135] Bettencourt summarized that factors like; "prejudicial attitudes toward members of other groups, failure to establish useful intergroup coalitions, and manipulation of group identity by others"[136] provide further insight into the true group dynamics occurring in a GRO/CSO. Bettencourt also listed other characteristics of GRO/CSO that help in understanding them further. Coalitions between groups "may facilitate the success of grassroots activities."[137]

[134] Ibid., 6.

[135] Bettencourt, "Grassroots Organizations," 209.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 211.

These coalitions may indicate that GRO/CSO are tied into the greater human domain better. It may also indicate that the GRO/CSO are better set up to accomplish its mission. It is not a direct relation to if GRO/CSO could viably partner in the execution of US strategy. Leadership within groups provides insight into group dynamics. "A lack of effective leadership may have dire effects on grassroots groups' attempts to achieve change."[138] Prior to partnering with GRO/CSO, it is essential to understand the leadership of said GRO/CSO. Bettencourt also highlighted the need for GRO/CSO to access or possess other resources for success. Among these are the time available to work on the GRO/CSO mission and skills in the information domain. Members of GRO/CSO volunteer their time, and everyday requirements compete with their ability to participate in GRO/CSO activities.

Similarly, "Activists need the skills necessary for uncovering information about social and political structures as well as the capacity to understand them and apply expert knowledge."[139] Bettencourt summarized these characteristics as a "broad theoretical framework for understanding grassroots"[140] organizations. For this paper, this theoretical framework offered additional examples of better understanding the dynamics at play in the GRO/CSO.

As discussed, Mary Anderson also presented a worthy model that helps to understand some of the complex factors that exist in conflict situations. Anderson's matrix dealt specifically with providing humanitarian aid in a conflict or post-conflict setting. It involved several steps. The first step "involves identifying the dividers, tensions, and war capacities in the context of the conflict and assessing their importance."[141] Anderson continued, "Aid providers must first understand and assess what divides people, the tensions between them, and the capacities for war

[138] Ibid., 212.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 213.

[141] Anderson, *Do No Harm*, 69.

in any area they are working."[142] Anderson then distilled these dividers down into categories for further exploration. Among the types presented is root vs. proximate causes, broad vs. narrow impact, and internal to the populace vs. external to the populace.[143] The next part of this step is to assess the importance of these dividers, tensions, capacities for war.

Step two of this framework "involves identifying and assessing connectors and local capacities for peace in the context of the conflict."[144] She continued, "to identify genuine connectors and local capacities for peace in any specific location requires attentiveness to the actual systems, actions, and interactions in that setting."[145] There are a host of questions presented to explore these connectors as completely as possible. Step three of the framework "involves identifying the characteristics of an aid program according to the categories outlined and relating them to the analysis of the context to anticipate how each programmatic choice will affect the context."[146]

Anderson's tool does three useful things. First, "it identifies the categories of information that have been found to be the most important in affecting the way aid interacts with conflict."[147] Secondly, it provides a system of organization for these factors. Third, it highlights relationships.[148] While designed for the aid context, Anderson's framework directly applies to understanding the human domain where the GRO/CSO exist. The framework provides a potential way to widen perspectives and explore relations between the sectors of the human domain. Also,

[142] Ibid., 70.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid., 71.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid., 73.

[147] Ibid., 75.

[148] Ibid.

the framework helps to assess the risk of activities in the human domain. It reaffirms the concept Oderino started with Strategic Landpower; the human domain matters most.[149]

These three theoretical frameworks offer suggestive methods with which to understand GRO/CSO better. They are expansive, not restrictive, and serve as potential tools to help determine if partnership with GRO/CSO in the conduct of US strategy in the competition space makes sense overall. GRO/CSO do not exist to implement other organizations' strategies. Pilisuk described the paradox that outside assistance to a GRO/CSO sometimes causes the GRO/CSO to fail.[150] As explored above, the US strategic goal in the competition space is not necessarily the potential partner GRO/CSO's goal. Understanding what the GRO/CSO sees as its purpose is key to working with and alongside these organizations. Fox described this, "moreover, in the case of proxy environments, the pursuit of one's strategic ends has to be sensitive and responsive to both oneself, and to the proxy force…especially in transactional relationships."[151]

Partnering with GRO/CSO as a tool to conduct US strategic goals in the competition space is fraught with unknowns. The nature of these organizations presents many opportunities. GRO/CSO offer the most direct route to tap into and understand the human domain, as discussed throughout doctrine examination above. However, the case studies and individual explorations throughout the monograph demonstrate that success in partnering with GRO/CSO to conduct strategic goals is difficult unless there is a direct overlap of the principal's and actor's goals. Understanding these organizations' nature provides a wealth of information to better navigate the competition space and the human domain. US doctrine identifies the human domain as critical to the success of US strategy throughout the competition spectrum. Partnership with GRO/CSOs is not easy for all of the reasons and case studies discussed previously. The relationship can be

[149] Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, *Strategic Landpower*.

[150] Pilisuk, McAllister, and Rothman, "Coming Together for Action," 29.

[151] Fox, "Conflict and the Need for a Theory of Proxy Warfare," 28.

complex and counterproductive at times. Management of US strategic expectations in these potential partnerships needs to account for the uniqueness of these organizations.

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