BROKERS OF POWER: CAN BLOODY HANDS & BLEEDING HEARTS GET ALONG?

BY

MAJOR GARRETT D. DAWSON

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The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Garrett Dawson earned his commission in 2001 through the United States Air Force Academy. A Distinguished Graduate of Combat Control School, he has completed numerous deployments and has held several positions at the squadron, wing, and headquarters level as a Special Tactics Officer. During his career, he has deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Maj Dawson holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from the US Air Force Academy and a master's degree from Marine Corps Command & Staff College, Quantico, VA. Upon graduation from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, he was assigned to the Pentagon as the Executive Officer for the Deputy Director, Air National Guard.

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ABSTRACT

During crisis or in politically complex environments Special Operations Forces and NGOs end up sharing the same tradespace. Future growth and demand for SOF in both governed and ungoverned spaces, during times of conflict as well as humanitarian assistance missions, means the trend toward greater involvement with NGOs is on the rise. Yet, there is an existing history of NGO aversion to cooperation with US Military Forces (and vice versa). Predominantly those aversions are often discussed in relation to differences in worldview, organizational culture, operational time horizon, or mission. However, SOF and NGOs share similarities in commitment, values, organizational footprint (size), and their level of proximity to local populations with whom they closely work. Subsequently this paper attempts to discover under what conditions and when it may be most beneficial to facilitate more cooperative relationships, or when it is best to simply pursue independent strategies and goals.

There are a number of variables, which may affect the level of cooperation between SOF and NGOs (e.g. culture, time horizon, mandate, ethno linguistic characteristics of the local population, ideology, geography, etc.). This thesis assessed the level of threat in the security environment and organizational dynamics as the two most important variables impacting cooperation. First, from a normative standpoint when the surrounding threat level is high, two organizations should want to increase cooperation in order to improve their survival and chances for mission success. However, in many instances NGOs may perceive a failure in trying to meet their goals because the military is pursuing security objectives that appear counter productive. In the event of perceived failure, combined with heightened threats to personal safety, military or civilian components find fault with each other. Second, with respect to organizational dynamics, friction occurs when hierarchical organizations (SOF) must partner with flatter more networked organizations (NGOs). These arrangements view the flow of power, control over resources, and information differently, yet there are unique opportunities to achieve high levels of cooperation.

This thesis traces key inter-organizational arrangements between the military and NGOs across several case studies – CORDS program in Vietnam, PRTs in Afghanistan, and Counter-Lord's Resistance Army operations in Northern Uganda. Each case study highlights unique conditions that foster or discourage cooperation. More importantly it becomes apparent that cooperation flourishes and positive interdependence between the two groups occurs when competition is removed from the environment. Changing the reward structure and how resources are allocated has the potential to align goals, increasing chances for cooperation. When the two groups are no longer concerned with competing for resources, attention, or time and they are rewarded for mission accomplishment cooperation is a by-product.

CONTENTS

Illustrations

**Chapter 1**

**Introduction**

*Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives* – Defense Strategic Guidance, January 2012

Currently, US forces are descending into Nigeria to retrieve nearly 280 school-age Nigerian girls and capture Boko Haram's leader, Abubakar Shekau. Offensive operations conducted by Nigeria's military are on-going, but the operational space in which the US military and US Special Operations Forces will soon be called is cluttered with international, non-governmental, and private volunteer organizations such as UNICEF and Amnesty International. Each of these organizations is committed to their cause; advocacy for global action, actively reintegrating women or combatants back into communities, or restoring the socioeconomic balance disrupted by terrorism. In this multilayered, multidimensional conflict, US Special Operations Forces (hereafter SOF) will need to embrace the political and population-centric nature of the divisions between adversaries such as Boko Haram, the local government, and the local population. In complex environments, success can only be achieved through a willingness to cooperate between those entities working toward a common end but with significantly different, and often opposing pathways. Few are so similarly driven toward a common end, yet experience such incredibly divergent methods of practice as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and SOF. Unfortunately, NGOs have a history of adversity in cooperation with US military forces (and vice versa). Predominantly those aversions are often related to differences in worldview, organizational culture, or mission. Yet, SOF and NGOs share similarities in commitment, values, organizational footprint (size), and their level of closeness to the populations with whom they are tasked to work. It is subsequently useful to discover under what conditions and when it is best to facilitate these relationships, or when it is best to merely pursue independent strategies and goals.

More importantly, SOF will be asked to fuse their tactical objectives with a broader strategy for defeating the influence of a terrorist organization in the context of a

broader political and ideological struggle. Of further interest is the fact that SOF's involvement is not directly correlated to US national security interests. Therefore, in light of greater US involvement in local or regional micro-conflicts in the more frequent "ungoverned spaces" means SOF and NGOs should learn how to cooperate.

**Background**

The story above is a relevant, evolving, and dynamic situation that yields some insight into the current and future strategic landscape; a landscape that is becoming infinitely more complex, difficult to navigate, and subject to accelerated change. The uncertainty and change associated with the world today is characterized by multiple factors: increased globalization; diffusion of advanced technologies; increasingly fractured and fragmented religious, ethnic, and tribal identities; intensified inequality and economic instability; climate change; food and resource scarcity; and, progressively hazardous threats to public health. Addressing these issues requires a global community dedicated to a shared interest in meeting these challenges in a unified and comprehensive fashion. Doing this means encouraging more private sector, inter- and non-governmental organization, and transnational organization involvement in both policy formulation and local level implementation.

A by-product of this rapid change and expanding growth suggests more complex humanitarian and political emergencies will cause complicated and dynamic relationships to develop. Of particular interest to senior leaders, policymakers, Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs), government agencies, and civil service organizations (CSOs) is assessing how well the relationship between NGOs, private volunteer organizations (PVOs), and small footprint military organizations, like SOF and Civil Affairs (CA), evolve and adapt. The confluence of these "strange bedfellows" invites interest primarily because these individuals and organizations find themselves sharing the same space in close contact with the most vulnerable and affected peoples.[1] Sentiments in many circles characterize relationships between relief, development, and defense entities as ranging from hostile to cooperative, or at a minimum, hovering between toleration and dysfunction. Success, however, requires individuals and organizations alike to identify

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[1] Donna Winslow, "Strange Bedfellows: NGOs and the Military in Humanitarian Crises," *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 2002, Vol. 7, No. 2; 1

and understand beneficial methods of resolving friction and facilitating success.

Defining circumstances under which NGOs and SOF coordinate their operations is a difficult venture; primarily for reasons such as the purpose and use of information collection, divergent views on security, or the incompleteness of quantifiable data. For instance, many SOF missions are highly classified in nature to protect sources and methods, and information often compartmentalized making mission parameters, participant identities, and relationships difficult to isolate or release. Many NGOs, for their part, do not have the extensive administrative capacity or inclination to file, record, distribute, and store numerous field reports, thus making data collection difficult.

There is also an argument there are no conditions under which SOF and NGOs can work well together based on their different mandates, cultures, methods of doing business, and the nature of their operating environments. Although this argument has some merit, it is neither that simple nor complete. America and its SOF must increasingly find new sources of collaboration and inter-organizational partnering to solve complex problems under conditions of increasing resource scarcity.

It is also important to recognize that the terms "NGO" and "military" or "SOF" are monolithic terms that inadvertently characterize all NGOs or elements of the military as equal in nature and in treatment. This is a false premise and poor assumptions drawn from this. Using broad terms like "NGO" and "SOF" fail to address the subtle nuances between the two organizations where points of potential synergy can occur. Adjusting this lens does not change how each of these organizations sees itself or functions, but potentially offers an alternative perspective and illuminates opportunities for further research or solutions.

Most military units, government agencies, and NGOs will admit diversity is good; this is in line with conventional wisdom. From a business point of view, fresh ideas and unique perspectives on a problem or solution set all foster growth, change, and better competition in the marketplace. When it comes to dealing with crisis and threats to personal security, however, SOF and NGOs do not get the benefit of resolving their issues in a boardroom. Their organizational diversity must meet with the reality of survival, trying to carry out delicate or sensitive tasks, and deliver the aid or conduct the development with which they were tasked.

Take for instance the recent reliance on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan. PRTs represent an observable model of close working relationships between military and civilian agencies. They will be explored in further detail later in Chapter 5, however, many reports and anecdotal comments suggest that cooperation is unsuccessful. Although each PRT is different and their working relationships are nascent, the biggest concerns are that local security issues are not being met and the presence of US forces are changing local power dynamics and economies. Such reports and comments are leading to frustration and discontent from everyone involved. In these instances, NGOs perceive a failure in trying to meet their goals because the military is pursuing security objectives that appear counter productive. Subsequently, in the event of perceived failure, combined with heightened threats to personal safety, the military or civilian part of the team tends to find fault with the other. Additionally, the rhetoric from each group seeks to influence how the other side uses its resources and conducts its efforts. Worse still, a success for one side becomes a failure for the other. Such competition and dysfunction leads these two entities to apply scarce resources in a more restricted and exclusive manner to show their own progress in their particular area, rather than working together to accomplish broader objectives.

Despite some of these differences, it appears NGO mission statements frequently contain overlapping similarity with SOF operational objectives. If this is the case then the goal of this paper is to determine where synergies can be reinforced, new synergies exploited, and also identify where SOF and NGOs should purposely part ways and only monitor the other's activities for incursions into their particular domains.

**Policy Setting**

Each policy document—the White House *National Security Strategy 2010* (NSS), *Department of Defense's Strategic Guidance Jan 2012* (DSG), *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010* (QDR), and *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2010* (QDDR)—states that as a global power, the strength and influence of the United States is deeply intertwined with the fate of the broader international system. That system is one of alliances, partnerships, and multinational institutions. Under these premises US military and other elements of US influence must prepare to support broad national goals of promoting regional stability, providing assistance to nations in need, and promoting the

common good. In order to adapt to these dynamic times and various challenges US policy clearly recognizes that the whole of government approach is necessary and vital to retaining America's competitiveness and influence abroad:

> The need for enhanced whole of government capabilities will be driven by the complex operating conditions, strong potential for civilian interaction, and the need in many cases to work closely with the agencies of a foreign government. It is in the interest of the Department of Defense to work closely with the National Security Council, the State Department, State/USAID, and DHS to develop support for more enhanced civilian capability and for putting into operation whole of government and Comprehensive Approach solutions to security challenges… Before any type of contingency arises, U.S. governmental efforts typically rely on the U.S. State Department and other interagency interactions with the host nation on a day-to-day basis, including the military through the ongoing and routine activities of the Combatant Commands. This persistent engagement is required up to and through the end state of a contingency or crisis, and thereafter. A crisis or conflict will require the addition and integration of whole of government and Comprehensive Approach capabilities. Although civilian agencies have historically held the lead role in maintaining and developing international relationships, the need to deploy civilian and international personnel in settings of "security insecurity" (e.g., post- conflict states, failed states) requires a more integrated approach in terms of partnership with the military forces up to and through the end state of a crisis or conflict.[2]

Some would argue that dwindling budgets and America's diminished appetite for military activism abroad indicates fewer engagement opportunities for the military. This may be true in certain capacities such as large-scale, conventional combat operations, or nation building. Diplomacy, engagement, development, and defense, however, are increasingly recognized as essential functions necessary to protect America's national interests.[3] Therefore it appears military mandates are now wider, more ambiguous, and the tasks more multi-dimensional and multi-functional.[4] For example, from 2001 to 2011, the annual average number of people affected by natural disasters rose by 232%, compared to 1990 to 2000.[5] With this increase, domestic and foreign militaries play

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[2] Stephen J. Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century* (DTIC Document, 2010); 34

[3] Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective*, 28

[4] Donna Winslow, Strange Bedfellows, 1

[5] Lydia Poole, "Counting the cost of humanitarian aid delivered through the military," *Global Humanitarian Assistance*, March 2013; 1

more significant roles in responding to humanitarian needs.[6] In fact, since September 11, 2001 (9/11), the military has been heavily engaged in more and more humanitarian operations than ever before. In the past year alone, military aircraft delivered food aid into the Philippines, rescued flood victims after the Haiyan Typhoon, and delivered medical teams and peacekeepers into South Sudan.

In each of these cases, intervention proved crucial but created an intersection where skills inherently resident in civilian agencies met the burden of execution that fell on the Department of Defense.[7] This meant a normalization of military actors engaged in traditionally civilian managed humanitarian and aid-like tasks determined to support security objectives.[8]

Additionally, the advent of 9/11, the Global War on Terror, counterinsurgency, and counter-terrorism—all significant issues on the strategic agenda—increased the importance of military and interagency integration.  Crosscutting principles, integration, and cooperation vertically, horizontally, and orthogonally between civilian agencies and military organizations is being touted as determinants of success. Models such as the PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq represent this evolution in civilian-military relations. Coupled with this relational evolution are more operational requirements for US military forces. US forces are now expected to broker deals, shelter the displaced, protect human rights, supervise the return of refugees, support civilian construction, and conduct disaster relief. This brings Defense Department personnel in direct contact with other entities and the domain of typically civilian organizations.

The military is not the only institution responding to rapid change. The scope and nature of civilian power has changed over the past three-quarters of a century, leading to civilian organizations that are significantly more diversified, connected, resourced, and operational. For example, there are currently over 66,000 development-related International Government Organizations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in existence providing a plethora of functions.[9] In peace operations, one now finds NGOs conducting a wide variety of tasks; food delivery,

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[6] Poole, Counting the cost of humanitarian aid, 1

[7] Hadley and William J. Perry, *The QDR in Perspective*, 28

[8] Poole, Counting the cost of humanitarian aid, 3

[9] Union of International Associations, www.uia.org/yearbook, (accessed 13 December 2013)

supporting infrastructure development, monitoring elections, distributing medical supplies, and conducting crisis resolution. During and after conflict, those tasks may broaden to include: governance, rule of law development, management of displaced persons, and other tasks not directly linked to relief but associated more with stability or security requirements. Therefore, not only are more of these humanitarian entities active in crisis and complex political emergencies but the boundaries of their tasks and roles are increasingly blurred with that of military functions.[10]

Blurring lines causes friction between military and civil relief agencies. For example, the International Red Cross repeatedly rebuffs the blurring of lines produced by the militarization of aid through the "characterization of military 'hearts and minds' campaigns or reconstruction efforts sold as humanitarian."[11] With respect to the new operating environments many agencies and organizations will be expected to participate in, it is value-added to analyze the sources and conditions underlying the friction.

**Opportunities for Cooperation and Competition**

NGO and military organizations will typically encounter each other in moments of crisis and in tense or stressful conditions, arriving with very different resources, methods of conducting influence, sources of information, and agendas. Such conditions have the potential to create conflict, which is directly associated with friction or breakdown in communication. Traditional remedies for friction usually suggest military and other organizations remain stovepiped, effectively managing their own tasks. In fact, according to a recent policy brief by NGO InterAction, "In humanitarian and development work, differences in mandate, expertise and training make the military a poor substitute for civilian experts from the USG, UN, and NGOs…the most useful humanitarian role for the military is in responding to natural disasters where their logistical resources fill important gaps."[12] This perspective is a common one held by many NGOs and military establishments alike. Although it may be desirable or

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[10] Craig Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action," *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, 2008, 93.

[11] Raj Rana, "Contemporary Challenges in the Civil-military Relationship: Complementarity or Incompatibility?," *International Review of the Red Cross* 86, no. 855 (2004): 566.

[12] Interaction US Civilian-Military Guidelines, 2007, http://interaction.org/sites/default/files/Director%20Zients%20CR%20Humanitarian%20Letter%202%2020%2013_1.pdf (accessed 15 December 2013)

comfortable from a policy standpoint, it may not be wholly feasible in implementation. It is therefore important to explore ways in which humanitarian NGOs and military organizations interact in practice. Their capacity to work together instead of at cross-purposes is now pivotal in complex political emergencies to guarantee the consistency, efficiency and ultimately the success of the international action as a whole.[13]

Furthermore, as governments continue to outsource internal development and conflict stabilization to smaller-footprint groups, it is apparent NGOs and the military will continue working more frequently and in closer proximity. More specifically, smaller, more forward-engaged military groups would come from SOF and units that fall within the SOF umbrella, such as the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB). SOF and CA can be expected to increase operations in the same "ungoverned spaces" as their NGO counterparts, attempting to preserve human rights and security in failed states, providing direct or point-of-aid support during man-made or natural disaster, encouraging local empowerment, and managing population migrations (Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs]/refugees), etc.[14]

Over the last 15 years, there have been various comprehensive efforts to better chart out the "rules of the game" concerning the interaction, coordination and cohabitation of military and civilian actors responding to natural disasters, conflict, and complex political emergencies. The military, in particular, has benefited from a significant investment in developing new doctrine and policy, complemented by training at national and regional levels.[15]

The convolution of boundaries appears very disconcerting to both civil society organizations (CSOs) and military elements alike for a multitude of differing reasons; contributing factors include organizational structure, cultural diversity, anticipated operational time horizons, and measures or definitions of success. It has been suggested that the introduction of military forces actually increases the violence and threat to relief

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[13] Pamela R. Aall, *Guide to IGOs, NGOs, and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), 5.

[14] Adm. William H. McRaven, 2014 Posture Statement (Tampa, Fla.: U.S. Special Operations Command), 4, http://www.socom.mil/Documents/2014%20USSOCOM%20POSTURE%20STATEMENT.PDF

[15] Frank Reber, "CivMil Relations: Discussion Paper for NGO Seminar on Civil Military Relations," December 2007; 1

workers. It has also been suggested that undistinguishable NGOs, contractors, and private security detract from operational performance and confuses the aid or development recipient.

**Methodology**

This paper will examine both non-governmental and SOF organizations by looking at a theoretical framework for organizational interactions. In particular, three case studies will be examined: the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDs) program in Vietnam, PRTs in Afghanistan, and Counter-Lords Resistance Army operations in the tri-border region of central Africa. These case studies will be observed under the scrutiny of several factors: actor-environment, organizational structure and processes (inter-organizational dynamics), actor perceptions and interacting relationships that shape organizational responses (organizational psychology).

This paper will evaluate the dependent variable – cooperation – across the three case studies and against two main independent variables, security and organizational dynamics. For simplicity, cooperation refers to working together for joint purpose and assumes that both groups in the arrangement must be willing to compromise on certain goals or objectives to help the other achieve its goals. A major theme of this paper is observing *why* cooperation fails to occur when it would normally be expected. This study suggests that factors such as increased security for one group increases insecurity for another, thus preventing effective cooperation.[16] From an organizational dynamics perspective, the difference in structure—hierarchical for SOF and the military and flatter more networked for NGOs—create friction points that counter cooperation.

The first chapter examines three theoretical approaches to cooperation. The first considers actors in the environment – this perspective observes how the organization, group, or individual acts as an autonomous, rational, self-interested entity making decisions to maximize its own gains. The second perspective looks at institutional design – examining the interaction between hierarchical organizations versus networked or flat organizations as well as how the organization is structured. For instance, organizational size, differentiation, capability, scalability, all play a role in an organizations proclivity to

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[16] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1976), 5.

cooperate. The third perspective looks at organizational psychology – viewing the impact of the perceptions, in/out group dynamics, social bonds, and individual identity.

For case study selection there are multiple factors of importance: ethnic tensions; ideological divides; linguistic differences; operational time horizons; population migrations caused by political motivations, natural disaster, or active conflict; codified end-state or objectives; geographic boundaries; security environment (high or low threat); regional area expertise; organizational structure and dynamics; emergency assistance or reconstruction; or, levels of media involvement. This case study will use two independent variables: high- and low-threat security environment, and organizational dynamics.

The first case study, looking at the CORDS program in Vietnam, was chosen because cooperation between military and civilian entities was expected but did not occur initially. Cooperation developed over time due to changes in how the security environment was assessed and how the CORDS organization was arranged.

The PRTs in Afghanistan proved an interesting case study because they were designed to mimic the CORDS model but certain key differences existed, leaving very little cooperation between NGOs and the military.

In the third case study, an NGO-SOF relationship is examined because cooperation is not expected yet occurs anyway. Several underlying conditions describe why a cooperative strategy is chosen, particularly the removal of competition and a balanced reward structure.

**Chapter 2**

**Strategic Alliances and Opportunity for Cooperation in Crisis**

In an age of limited and diminished resources, partnerships allow for more flexibility to leverage competencies, share resources, and develop innovative options or solutions that would not be feasible as a unitary actor. They also offer convenient access to specialized or scarce resources, offer global reach with a customized local impact, and encourage more diverse perspectives allowing an organization to do more with less.[1] Therefore, as the world gets more interconnected and globalized, inter-organizational networks will not only constitute the future of many institutions but the subsequent complexity that comes with globalization will also increase the intensity of interaction. Therefore, traditional views of competition and cooperation must also adapt. This change in viewpoint is reflected in two ways: 1.) Traditional inter-organizational frameworks which explicitly assumed a zero-sum competitive system are antiquated; 2.) Cooperative strategies can and do facilitate social interaction, productivity, and broader solution sets to more complex problems.

When inter-organizational alliances offer greater diversity, specialization, access to resources, and the expertise required to solve complex niche problems, why don't more partnerships occur? More succinctly, what are the barriers to cooperation worth noting? And under conditions of crisis, when one would expect common interests to lead to cooperation, why would an organization turn toward competition and conflict?

Cooperation is multi-faceted and therefore requires a multi-theoretical approach. First, from the standpoint of how an organization relates to its environment, we assume actors—organizations, group, or individuals—are autonomous, rational, and self-interested. Consequently, as is true for any strategic decision, pursuing a cooperative strategy makes sense if it obtains a higher return on investment than by engaging in an alternative strategy. Resource dependence theory is also supportive of this claim and purports that cooperation is more useful when one possesses a resource for use as leverage to gain an advantage or the need exists to maximize access to scarce resources.

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[1] Bergquist, *Building Strategic Relationships*, 11,12.

In these cases, a cooperative strategy maybe more valuable when competition causes the costs associated with entry into or remaining in the environment exceeds the benefits. Under these conditions, it may be difficult for the NGO or SOF organization to garner enough resources, make the right contacts, or maneuver the local political landscape well enough to enter the area on its own. However, not all cooperation works this way. Just like in the Prisoner's Dilemma one-time interactions encourage defection, but greater interactions prompt cooperation.[2]

In order to further explain factors of cooperation, it is important to understand how an organization's structural properties influence partnering decisions. How an organization is built, either hierarchically or networked and flat, impacts how it prefers to both receive and process information. Centrality presupposes that hierarchical structures will centralize information and process it vertically. This is a very different mechanism when compared to a networked or flat organization. Thus, when the two types of organizations interact, expectations, communication flow, and struggles for power matter. An organization's size also corresponds to the complexity of tasks it can manage and its ability to meet those tasks at any appreciable scale.

Size and orientation matter, particularly when it relates to how information is moved, what tasks it can accomplish, and where it draws its resources. This is inextricably linked with how the organization can best deliver its products or services, achieving economies of scale, or whether it is best suited to produce localized, customized services. These customized products or services are a testament to an organizations needs for differentiation. Again, differentiation and specialization offer flexibility and truly encourage further partnerships with those trying to get access to their expertise. However, the flip side suggests that with more differentiation comes a greater opportunity for conflict.

The final method for analyzing cooperation is by observing how individual perceptions and organizational culture influence and even direct whether or not an inter-organizational arrangement or partnership can be created or maintained. Stereotypes,

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[2] Robert M Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 10.

predispositions, and institutional biases all factor into cooperative motivations. In-group and out-group dynamics and self-identification constrain actors and lead them towards paths of inconsistency and premature cognitive closure, thus denying opportunities for mutually beneficial arrangements.[3]  This insight is also critical to witnessing how important trust and continued interaction play in establishing helpful pro-social relationships.  Continued interaction through liaison and other means present opportunities that can lead to positive reciprocal arrangements and valuable collaboration.

*Why Inter-organizational Partnerships Form*

International alliances and inter-organizational cooperative strategies are achieving greater global recognition by more governments, businesses, and agencies than ever before. This is indicative of the trend that more diverse organizations with differing technical and cultural backgrounds are essentially being tossed in the same pool and being asked to swim together. These relationships represent efforts to combine the best available resources, take advantage of new opportunities and access afforded by globalization, and characterize a distinct attempt to manage the tempo of change.[4] These external trends also highlight several paradoxes in traditional organizational interactions. First, the gradual erosion of hierarchies are being replaced by more collaborative, partnership-driven structures thus challenging pre-established or antiquated views of competition and cooperation.[5] Hierarchies may be considered outdated because rapid technological change and increased networking opportunities across broader regimes with more diverse actors change conceptions of power and control over information.[6] Second, partnerships and cooperation offer prospects of reducing fiscal expenditures and mitigating transaction costs.[7] Literature on inter-organizational theory supports this notion arguing that alliance building creates greater opportunities for co-specialization,

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[3] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 189.

[4] Bergquist, *Building Strategic Relationships*, xi.

[5] Bergquist, *Building Strategic Relationships*,, 5.

[6] Catherine Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, Sage Library of Social Research 191 (Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications, 1993), 21.

[7] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 43.

co-option, and co-learning.[8] Each of these strategies can be pursued independently or comprehensively in a joint relationship, but the end result is an improved ability to manage change, capitalize on new opportunities, and shrink costs.[9] Third, increased partnerships are a response to desires for greater diversity, specialization, and access to expertise. In fact, rarely does any one organization possess the capacity or capability to provide the level of individualized expertise required to solve interrelated complex problems on scale. Diversity and specialization expand the talent pool and increase prospects for innovation, strategic agility, and organizational flexibility. This creates an impetus to explore more expansive and robust partnering options between, governments, militaries, corporations, and the public and private sectors.

The military and other hierarchical organizations have traditionally found partnerships and change risky and intimidating.[10] This is primarily evident in an institution like the US military because by design the institution is resistant to change. Change is confounding to a traditional hierarchical organization because hierarchical organizations by design represent rigidity and predictability; this is useful for producing expected and regimented outcomes but the size and structure make handling uncertainty and moving in different directions under changing conditions difficult.[11] For example, during Vietnam and the recent war in Afghanistan, the US military has been portrayed as the more domineering actor during active combat and post-conflict operations. Incidentally, US military viewpoints, right or wrong, inadvertently placed NGOs and other agencies as minor actors, second to military priorities. Thus, the US military's stance shaped perceived power differentials and negatively affected early civilian-military interactions. These distinctions are important because contrary to US military doctrine and culture, the expectation of a partnership requires the relinquishment of

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[8] Steve Cropper, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Inter-organizational Relations* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 95.

[9] Co-specialization: joining together to burden share and distribute while generating more value when two or more assets are used in combination versus independently. Co-option: subsuming or assimilating a smaller or weaker group for the purposes of recruiting members who have specific skills or abilities needed by the group which are not available elsewhere. Co-learning: working together to search for understanding, meaning, or solutions or to create an artifact/product of their learning

[10] Bergquist, *Building Strategic Relationships*, ix.

[11] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed (New York: Longman, 1999), 170.

control in favor of cooperation and collaboration. To a hierarchal institution, comfortable being in charge, this presents risk and creates a cognitive dilemma.

Heavy reliance on processes, structure, and a predefined flow of information seek to manage uncertainty by offering predictability. Yet change threatens normal standard operating procedures because the status quo does not generate new results nor is it designed to take advantage of unique opportunities. Additionally, in these cases, horizontal and vertical integration become a liability due to inability to promptly respond to change, especially if enabling technologies or relationships are not in place to fully react to the dynamic tempo. Take for instance Operation Unified Response in Haiti. Although a US military presence appeared early on the scene, in both cases military staffs and civilian responders encountered difficulties integrating hierarchical, Joint structures into the broader global response. The reason for such difficulties is staffs designed to provide certain types of information and produce certain products were ill-equipped to deal with an unusual or unique circumstance caused by crisis. This lesson informs us that effective and efficient responses require hierarchical organizations to do one of two things: recognize the independence of multiple parties and attempt to balance the power differential more equally among partners (i.e. by relinquishing power to other actors), or de-centralize in order to manage the change. In either case, balancing perceived power differentials and de-centralization require greater utilization of cooperative strategies with entities internal and external to the organization.[12]

In addition to balancing relational power or increased technical specialization of actors, inter-organizational partnerships reduce fiscal burdens, minimize transaction costs, and mitigate uncertainty by dispersing risk. Large vertically and horizontally integrated organizations are efficient when the output required is standardized and produced at economy of scale.[13] Again, the US military thoroughly prepares for and is equally well suited to conduct large-scale operations. Fiscal constraints and smaller scale operations requiring individualized or customized responses, however, mean that economies of scale cannot be achieved and therefore significant costs are incurred.

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[12] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 21.
[13] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 40.

Partnering with other governments, IGOs, NGOs, military or paramilitary organizations, and contractors all represent attempts to outsource in order to reduce these costs, defer accountability, and recoup savings.

Finally, inter-organizational partnerships offer access to greater diversity, specialization, and expertise required to solve highly complex niche problems. Many times it makes sense for an organization to take advantage of these opportunities especially as it relates to the complexity of the task, the existence of highly specialized functions, or as a result of the emergence of smaller de-centralized units that pair with internal or external entities in order to address unique problems.[14] Again, the cons of relinquishing power and control over products and outputs must be weighed against the pros of doing more with less, in concentrated or specific ways. Ultimately, by combining resources and ideas, cooperative work can help an organization innovate and produce value so that it can continue to gain necessary support from customers, governments, and other stakeholders.[15]

*Conflict: Cooperation versus Competition*

Conflict and cooperation have often been thought of as extremes of a single inter-organizational dimension, different ends of a single continuum descriptive of relationships within and between organizations.[16] Organizational and individual interactions, however, range in complexity from competitive to cooperative and occur only when entities co-exist in overlapping environments; those environments can be defined geographically as natural, man-made or virtual, functionally as business or policy related, or socially or relationally between in and out groups. Devoid of this overlap, organizations, groups, or individuals can be expected to pursue independent strategies.

A cooperative strategy is one that exhibits constructive, helpful, pro-social interaction, while a competitive strategy is one where an independent plan is pursued in order to achieve a relative advantage over a perceived rival. Competition is a natural and

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[14] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 42.

[15] Michael A. West, Dean Tjosvold, and Ken G. Smith, eds., *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working* (Chichester, West Sussex ; Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2003), 4.

[16] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 189.

easily recognizable interaction between organisms, actors, and organizations in all environments, especially under conditions of resource scarcity. In nearly all environments, competition is highly valued and equally rewarded. Competition refines efficiencies and garners advantages necessary for the immediate survival of the individual, group, or organization. This threat to survival exists when the actors possess directly opposed interests where any gain for another equals some diminished capability to fulfill essential objectives; hence, a zero-sum game.

As former President Franklin D. Roosevelt once mentioned, competition serves a purpose up to a point and beyond that cooperation begins where competition leaves off.[17] Implied is the notion at a given interval, the arena of interaction is no longer a pure competitive zero-sum system, but becomes a variable-sum system. In this variable-sum system more mature relationships develop and mutually beneficial advantages become evident through partnership. Under these new conditions, a gain for one does not necessarily become a loss for another, but perhaps a shared loss, gain, or resource-neutral exchange. This also implies there are opportunities for two or more independent actors to reach for the same higher goal, yet alternative methods exist for achieving them.

This paper accepts that cooperation represents collaborative, synergetic, and helpful efforts toward a common purpose or benefit. Cooperation as a studied human phenomenon, however, is often difficult to understand. Part of the reason is that cooperation is typically equated with coordination. Coordination is the articulation of elements in a complex system and a necessary function of cooperation. Cooperation differs from coordination in that the former includes both an attitudinal (absence of selfishness) and a behavioral component (willingness to work together).[18] This makes determining underlying conditions or causes of cooperation difficult to sift out from other forms of social interaction.

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[17] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Speech before the Troy, New York, People's Forum, March 3, 1912

[18] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 86.

*Theoretical explanations of cooperation*

Common explanatory approaches to cooperation stem from social psychology, organizational theory, and international relations research.[19] The first approach focuses on the relationship between the actors in the environment.[20] Organizational theories frequently look more to the structure of and processes involved in the interaction between organizations. The third perspective narrows in on perceptions of a given situation and assesses how interacting individuals and parties shape organizational responses to interactions. Each of these approaches offers more depth and refinement when it comes to deconstructing where and how cooperation is revealed.

When analyzing cooperation, the individual level of analysis looks to define cooperation as the quality of the relationship between human actors in a system consisting of mutual understanding, shared goals and values, and an ability to work together on a common task.[21]  This is a useful definition but again one applicable to individual personal interactions. Cooperation frequently occurs outside of shared value sets and even between groups with different goals. Therefore, a broader assessment of inter-organizational cooperation is required.

Many inter-organizational cooperation theories commonly begin their examination of cooperative strategies from the basis of several key assumptions.  First, the investigation begins under circumstances where individuals and organizations are in pursuit of a given strategy without the aid of a central authority to force them into cooperation.  Second, most theories assume individuals and organizations are motivated by self-interest and that these self-interests are relatively elastic and subjective.[22] One theoretical game, "the Prisoner's Dilemma," offers one way of observing self-interested

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[19] Lina M. Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises* (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009), 6.

[20] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises, 7*

[21]  Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 86.

[22] Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, 1st Princeton classic ed, A Princeton Classic Edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005), 52.

decision-making and drawing conclusions about cooperation.[23]

The Prisoner's Dilemma provides some insight into motivators for cooperation with important strategic implications. Typically higher rates of defection are observed when the game is played only once.[24] Under multiple iterations, however, cooperation begins to emerge. The issue then becomes analyzing the underlying conditions or characteristics necessary and sufficient for cooperation to materialize.[25] This indicates that relations between organizations in this competitive environment are exacerbated when there are no rules or enforcement mechanisms for agreements. It also suggests that when ad hoc arrangements are constructed in crisis, temporary alliances (one-time interactions) can lead to more competitive behavior similar to Prisoner's Dilemma as opposed to cooperative behavior when there is an expectation of repeated interaction in the environment; here reciprocity can be attained and will be explained further in later sections.[26]

Additional explanations for cooperation observe how task structure and resources shape cooperative behavior. For example, task attributes can influence cooperation based on level of complexity, coordination, or communication requirements. For example, tasks of high or increasing complexity typically invite more cooperation based on a belief that everyone involved shares the same goal with an equal desire for project success.[27] Yet, an organization may undertake a simple task alone. Also, the more coordination and communication required to accomplish a task may dissuade pursuing a cooperative strategy. Cooperation may not occur as coordination and communication require centralized decision-making and the latter is pathway dependent. Hierarchy as an organizational structure manages centralized decisions and channel communication in a

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[23] In the Prisoner's Dilemma game, there are two players. Each has two choices, namely cooperate of defect. Each will make the choice without knowing what the other will do. No matter what the other does, defection yields a higher payoff than cooperation. This means it is better to defect if you think the other will cooperate, and it is better to defect if you think the other will defect. The dilemma is that if both defect, both do worse than if both mutually cooperated.

[24] Defection here refers to the pursuit of self interest through a non-cooperative strategy

[25] Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, 11.

[26] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 7.

[27] West, Tjosvold, and Smith, *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*, 101.

preferred direction, usually from the top down.  When hierarchical organizations are confronted with flatter or networked organizations, coordination and communication take on different dimensions.

Resources affect cooperation when they are unevenly or asymmetrically distributed in the external environment; in effect another organization or entity may hold the resources an organization needs. Under these conditions, resource dependence theory predicts that with positive goal association (shared goals) and a condition of resource scarcity, there will be a higher opportunity for two or more groups to desire cooperation.[28] When resources are abundant the desire for cooperation should theoretically wane because the need lessens.  Without shared goals competition reigns as groups will pursue what they need independently.

*Cooperation as the Actor Relates to the Environment*

Robert O. Keohane offers a useful approach toward cooperation; one that views actors in relation to their environment and that draws its essence from international relations research. His approach assumes actors—organizations, group, or individuals—are autonomous, rational, and self-interested.[29] This approach essentially encompasses rational choice theory and assumes the economic "self-serving" man, state, or organization cooperates only under conditions of variable sum systems.  When economic actors perceive win-lose or zero-sum conditions in the system instead their cooperation drastically drops off.[30]

Keohane suggests that cooperation is unique because it occurs when goals or policies are not in alignment and discord or conflict exists, otherwise as he admits it is just harmony.[31] He goes on further to express that cooperation and harmony are not identical and should not be confused. Cooperation, Keohane asserts, "requires that the actions of separate individuals or organizations – which are not in pre-existent harmony –

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[28]  West, Tjosvold, and Smith, *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*, 102.

[29] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 7.

[30] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 7

[31] Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 51.

be brought into conformity with one another through a highly political process of negotiation."[32]  Thus from a behavioral perspective, cooperation occurs when actors adjust their activities to the actual or anticipated preference of others through policy coordination.[33] A better explanation would propose that NGO or IGO actions in cooperation with military activities take place when policies followed by each facilitate the realization of their own objectives through policy coordination.[34]

Unfortunately the rational choice theory does not capture or address why or when people give up private resources to gain access to collective ones. Essentially, solutions to complex problems represent joint goods versus private or self-interested ones. This is better explained by pro-social behavior or pre-established relationships that correlate to preferred contacts.

*Organizational Interpretations of Cooperation*

As previously discussed, the institutional design or structural properties of an organization directly impact inclinations to establish and maintain strategic alliances. Centrality, size, complexity, differentiation, and connectedness all constitute important factors that facilitate or hinder the growth and intensity of inter-organizational cooperation and collaboration.[35] Through these elements we can analyze their impact on administrative choices, negotiations and the political process of inter-organizational cooperation.  We can also witness how these factors affect each organizations desire to manage risk and uncertainty.

*Centrality*. Centrality relates to the core nature of an organization or network and is distinguished by the volume and flow of information that passes through its core.[36] Hierarchical organizations possess a strong degree of centrality or consolidation of unit activities and hence a substantial degree of control over the flow of information. Centrality is also correlated to a form of structural power. For instance, "organizations

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[32]  Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 51.

[33]  Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 51.

[34]  Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 52.

[35]  Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 150.

[36]  Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 152.

whose position in a network is central in the sense of having direct relationships with many other organizations may be in a strong position to influence others in the network."[37] Basically, centrally located actors can become power brokers using their unique positional advantage to connect or disconnect with many others.

With respect to centrality, hierarchical organizations are characterized by a degree of dominance where power and control are managed from the top and outputs can be tightly coordinated. Observations of organizations with this arrangement suggest that when resources are limited or come from a single source, the source will want to control the decisions of organization.[38] Additionally, hierarchical organizations that favor strong vertical communications channels encounter difficulty when linked with networked or flat organizations. This paper surmises that the convergence of hierarchical and networked organizations will introduce problems collecting and disseminating joint information and will cause friction when power and control differentials need resolution, particularly with respect to structural power versus other forms of power. For instance, NGOs are commonly integrated in a wider broader network with a common set of stakeholders. Network arrangements are flexible, but typically lack clear command or authority structures. This leads to more fluid cooperative arrangements based on changing nature of the network but offers a stronger brokering role.[39] According to Svedin, "organizations engaged in networks are arranged laterally with equal power distribution, authoritative structures within become dispersed and flat…because networks are flexible, the participant goals and preferences tend to interactive and changing, making cooperation fluid.[40] These arrangements typically come in conflict with military or government organizations, however, when fluidity and external relationships with other stakeholders can use this as a source of power over others. Networks also challenge the rigidity in communication flow or when different production outputs are required or expected.

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[37] Cropper, *The Oxford Handbook of Inter-organizational Relations*, 565.

[38] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 152.

[39] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 8.

[40] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 8

In *Essence of Decision*, Graham Allison discusses the outputs of organizations with a high degree of centrality, suggesting that predictability and control over outcomes is valuable but this also introduces institutional bias thus the organization loses a significant amount of flexibility and innovation.[41] Predictability and control work well with organizations catering to one expected outcome but prove limiting and detrimental when alternatives or contrary solutions are vital to a changing landscape. This makes inter-organizational alliances and cooperation both desirable and challenging at the same time.

*Size, Scalability & Complexity*. The size and complexity of the organization directly impacts its scalability. Scalability refers to an organizations capability and capacity to increase or decrease its product or service delivery to meet economies of scale. For instance, based on size and systems in place, the US military is exceptionally suited to deliver large pallets of food and water into areas affected by natural disaster rapidly. Delivering individualized aid to a specific point that fails to meet transport tonnage requirements, however, becomes very problematic for the military. SOF frequently runs into this problem. Repeatedly a small team requires airlift from one locale to another but based on the mission and requirements is not carrying enough gear to warrant a C-130 or C-17 transport. Hence, economies of scale are not being met and delays are incurred.

Comparatively speaking, the same scalability issues exist for NGOs. Typically, development-focused NGOs keep their interests mobile and their organizations relatively small by harnessing the energy of local citizenry and custom tailoring solution sets to a specific region. By the same token, that very same organization will not be able to meet any appreciable large-scale task or scale-up its operations. Hence, scalability speaks directly to an organization's ability to differentiate or specialize. Specialization is critical in some areas but gets diluted when economies of scale are desired.

The size of an inter-organizational network refers to the number of organizations

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[41] Allison, *Essence of Decision*, 149–152.

that participate in the work of the system.  Between government, military, IGO, and NGO activities, the size of the network may change.  For instance, if we viewed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq or Afghanistan as inter-organizational networks, sizes would vary but ultimately could represent large networks.  On the other hand, a single small NGO working with a SOF team in Uganda might simply represent an inter-organizational dyad. The importance is that the size of the network affects the level of communication, flow of information, and volume of work that must get done.

As previously mentioned, task structure and complexity are connected to size and scalability. More importantly, benefits of organizational networks are correlated to the complexity of tasks that must be accomplished and influence the requirement to pool resources and form strategic alliances.[42] Complexity is also introduced when the number of decentralized control structures increase. Decentralized structures are an attempt to manage power differentials and change. Svedin observes, "They work well in dynamic high-velocity decision making evolutions but meet friction in collaboration between different levels of organizations. In these decentralized systems, individual decision makers typically see only their part of the decision-making process making it difficult to achieve coordination with overarching goals. Additionally, attempting to solve short-term goals under pressure may exacerbate longer-term problems."[43] The proposition here is that the larger the network and more complex the tasks and interactions, the higher the need for collaboration, additional expertise, new funds, and risk-sharing, all balanced against a greater chance for conflict.

*Differentiation*. Structural differentiation in inter-organizational networks is the degree to which there is functional specialization among the members of the organizations in the system.[44] As discussed, specialization is a key motivator for establishing inter-organizational alliances and it is immediately correlated to scalability. Thus, functional partnerships enable organizations to take advantage of specific information or expertise for mutual benefit. In effect, divisions of labor and specialization prompt greater cooperation in and among organizations. For example, a distribution site

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[42]Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 157.

[43] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 8.

[44] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 158.

during a natural disaster would represent an inter-organizational partnership that contains high degrees of differentiation. Under these conditions the scope of work varies and humanitarian NGOs, development NGOs, government agencies, and military personnel all must work together, yet are all fulfilling specialized niches. When observing scenarios such as these, the premise of differentiation suggests that uncertainty, risk, and even tasks may be deferred among specialists but a wider divergence of objectives, goals, and operational concepts are subsequently introduced meaning there is a higher chance for conflict.[45]

*Connectedness*. To date there are a number of unresolved studies about how the total number of linkages an organization maintains affects its cooperation. Studies show that more linkages in a network produce greater exchanges of information or resources.[46] This has the potential of reducing uncertainty.[47]  The premise suggested here is that the higher the number of linkages and the more highly connected the inter-organizational team, the greater the levels of cooperation because conflict over resources or information should be minimized. For example, NGOs maintain a connection with a broader community of experts through the use of epistemic communities. These higher numbers of connections and linkages offer opportunities to reduce knowledge deficits and uncertainty about a particular policy topic. SOF activities, on the other hand, are centralized, classified, and many times compartmented limiting the number of useful connections or linkages. This diminishes any value that could be achieved through exchange networks. Coordination and control in large organizational networks becomes problematic but in order to overcome those problems, some autonomy must be surrendered, which is difficult for highly systematized and hierarchical organizations.[48]

Ultimately, each of the five factors—centrality, size, scalability, differentiation, and connectedness—adds insight into the dynamics of cooperation within the context of a highly political process. Such dynamics with this process also suggests that conflict or a divergence exists between different actor's goals or policies.  Hence, cooperation

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[45] Alter, *Organizations Working Together, 158*.

[46] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 161.

[47] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 45.

[48] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 161.

involves mutual adjustment and can only rise from conflict or potential conflict. Conflict stimulates policy action and the requisite political process of negotiation, which can lead to either additional cooperation or increased tensions and worsening conflict. This insight also anticipates that relations between organizations in this competitive environment are exacerbated when there are no rules or enforcement mechanisms for agreements.[49] This inspires deeper questions of sources of conflict, especially when goals or values appear in relative alignment. More importantly, it suggests that cooperation is more than purely unilateral action (i.e. we cooperate by not being around). For instance, one may argue that since NGOs and SOF are organizationally or culturally like oil and water, they should never mix and the best cooperation is unilateral action. This paper does not look at such cases as cooperation but merely the pursuit of independent strategies.

*Organizational Culture and Perceptions*

The final method for analyzing cooperation looks at how individual perceptions directly affect an organization's culture. Several variables within an organization's culture affect its affinity for forming alliances and coordinating: self-identification, in- and out-group dynamics, social bonds, and misperceptions. Pro-social behavior, altruism, and liaisons also comprise characteristics affecting organizational cooperation.

Social psychologists have a lot to say about how an actor receives and perceives incoming information, as well as how the subsequent process influences its decision to cooperate vice choose independent action. Through the act of self-identification, an individual often influences the type of partnership in which an organization participates. Self-identification is also a critical determinant addressed when observing in- and out-group dynamics. In-groups are those an individual psychologically identifies with based on culture, race, values, beliefs, or even organization. When a member of an out-group confronts a member of an in-group, perceptions and reactions are apt to deepen misunderstanding and conflict.[50]

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[49] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 7.

[50] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 73.

Excessive pre-mature cognitive closure also affects willingness to interact.[51] Cognitive closure is the act of psychologically restricting exposure to new alternatives, ideas, or information that may inform a different decision. For instance, when an NGO sees a person in military uniform, their perceptual pre-dispositions come to the fore and increase opportunities for conflict.

Ultimately, actors and organizations commonly misperceive external stimuli when they are linked to rare or unexpected phenomena; this is magnified in the face of crisis.[52] In a crisis, a low probability high impact event, there is a perceived threat to core values, survival, urgency, and new levels of uncertainty.[53] Although the crisis itself may motivate cooperation, misjudgment may play a big part in preventing effective cooperation or collaboration.

*Setting: Crisis Magnifies Instability and Uncertainty Creating a Strategic Dilemma*

Conflict introduces instability and uncertainty, which creates tension in any individuals or organizations involved. Instability and uncertainty exist both externally in the environment and internally in any given relationship. Therefore, the choice between cooperation and competition is a method for managing internal and external sources of instability and uncertainty.

Under certain conditions, exogenous factors equate to the rallying cry of a common interest, theoretically resulting in enhanced cooperation between actors. Hence, mutually beneficial outcomes or advantages should equate to greater levels of cooperation. From the individual level of analysis, cooperation should occur under conditions of shared values, goals, or in the attainment of common interests. Complex political emergencies represent just such opportunities. In a crisis or complex political emergency, the aid or enforcement mechanisms of a central authority or leviathan may be

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[51] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 188.

[52] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, 148.

[53] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 20.

limited or non-existent.[54] In these instances, cooperation theory suggests control must be replaced by cooperation and collaboration.[55]

It is important to assess exogenous and endogenous factors within inter-organizational relationships to assess motivators for cooperation. Several examples of endogenous factors that positively or negatively affect cooperation include organizational culture, structure, and sub-goals and objectives. Meanwhile, the local environment, geography, or ethnic tensions represent exogenous factors that stress even the best or harmonious relationships. Important insights can be gleaned from asking why organizations in crisis disagree, fight, or engage in other competitive behaviors, when the opposite would be socially expected or even planned for.

Complex political emergencies constitute dynamic situations with complex social, political and economic origins which involve the breakdown of state structures, the disputed legitimacy of host authorities, the abuse of human rights, and possibly armed conflict, thus exacerbating humanitarian needs. These emergencies generally tend to invite multiple organizations, groups, and individuals that find themselves in a resource-scarce environment striving to alleviate human suffering.  Under these conditions, one would assume that representatives involved in the delivery of aid or provision of assistance should share a common overarching goal. The assumption that a shared goal exists leads to a subsequent assumption that shared vested interests should facilitate greater and more successful cooperative relationships.

According to Svedin, there are a number of ways in which cooperation has direct relevance for crises and crisis management. Crises involve threats to individuals and organizations. An underlying assumption is that organizations and individuals are in agreement in seeking resolution to the crisis or alleviating suffering and therefore cooperation is a good thing. No one wants to see refugees fleeing their home country, people dying of treatable diseases, or citizens living in fear of losing limbs when they step outside their door. So why does cooperation fail to occur more regularly or at all in these cases? Self-interest can explain conflict but if common interests motivate

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[54] Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, 7.
[55] Bergquist, *Building Strategic Relationships*, 9.

cooperation, why does cooperation fail when it should be expected? Or, why does cooperation exist outside of shared goals? It is apparent theories of cooperation must take into account pro-social behaviors, preferential contacts, and the fact that cooperation is not merely a function of common interests.

In fact, based on the current fracturing and fragmenting of social groupings, increasing number of failed states, and civil strife on the rise in various parts of the world means there are more opportunities for instability and violence to spread from one country to the next. Nearby regions and the international community alike are concerned about these consequential emergencies. One would expect cooperation to flourish since cooperation is one way of maximizing access to and use of scare resources. So what conditions derail cooperation attempts?

*Strategic dilemma.* Research demonstrates that a strategic dilemma is introduced during complex political emergencies because a series of conflicting choices are introduced requiring immediate resolution. First of all, cooperation in purpose does not mean that competition is non-existent. Additionally, collaboration and cooperation are not always panaceas that should be encouraged blindly. Collaboration may not always be a desirable strategy for resolving inter-organizational issues. Secondly, competition and cooperation can be maintained in balance or tipped one way or another. This section will look at different cooperative strategies and relevant conditions that make cooperation more feasible or lead to competition when the opposite would be expected, more specifically, the choice between cooperation or competition based on resource dependence, reciprocity, and trust.

Organizations successfully cooperate by facilitating other's goals in the process of facilitating the attainment of their own. Hence, we expect to see cooperation if the organizations can pool resources while adjust their use of resources on the basis of their own needs.[56] This is consistent with the resource dependence theory, which suggests that many of the resources any organization requires to survive or conduct operations exist externally in the environment. Therefore, in order for an organization to get what it

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[56] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 34.

needs, it must prioritize and expend precious resources to either compete or collaborate to gain access to them. Collaboration implies negotiation, joint decision-making and communication to achieve congruence, similarity of policy formulation, or action.[57] The Prisoner's Dilemma, discussed previously, suggests greater iterations of the game increases the chances for cooperation to emerge. This cooperation develops through two avenues, reciprocity or the establishment of trust and liaisons.

If sustained interaction equals mutual cooperation then reciprocity exists as a cooperative strategy that implies both a behavioral observation and anticipation for future interactions. According to the guidelines of reciprocity, other parties will be watching to determine signs of the presence or absence of reciprocate cooperation. This behavior is then mimicked.[58] Therefore a social framework is established indicating an expectation for future positive or negative interactions. This framework in turn establishes a set of norms or "way of life" ensuring mutual benefit. A strategic dilemma arises when disruptions occur in this cycle of normative reciprocity. For example, when the US military consistently rotates troops in and out of conflict zones, continuity and trust with partners is broken. This essentially resets relationships back to in the first iteration of the Prisoner's Dilemma, thus stunting scalable cooperative growth.

Honesty and trust are premier intrinsic conditions for cooperation.[59] This paper supports that conclusion. Trust and honesty, however, are fragile. When information asymmetry exists, and it is perceived that one has more information than the other, trust is reduced in the relationship. Again groups form partnerships and alliances in order to reduce uncertainty and share risks. When an actor feels uncertainty is actually increasing in the relationship due to information asymmetry, there is a higher likelihood of defection or terminating the relationship at the detriment of both parties. Of course, information asymmetry is always going to be present. One method for diminishing this incongruence is to establish liaisons or preferred contacts with which individuals or organizations can go to for repeated information exchange.

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[57] Svedin, *Organizational Cooperation in Crises*, 35.

[58] Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, 121.

[59] Alter, *Organizations Working Together*, 16.

Liaisons and preferential contacts facilitate feedback and mutual adjustments by creating social relationships. Partners can have different process orientations, however, inadvertently undervaluing liaisons and over-prioritizing information flow. This can be witnessed when SOF and the military rely on planning to coordinate the process prioritizing the flow of information, whereas NGOs rely on situational feedback, epistemic communities, or local sources. These different orientations mean that a strategic dilemma exists when the military and NGOs are "working together." By undervaluing critical liaisons each group is merely working independently and not realizing the full advantage of the benefits resident in cooperative action.

## Chapter 3

## Actors in Aid, Development, & Crisis

*If you can't measure it, it doesn't exist. – Unknown*

*If you don't know where you are going, any road will do. – Lewis Carroll*

*The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their proper name* - Confucius

The decade following the end of the Cold War witnessed an increase in Western military involvement in complex political emergencies. The end of superpower rivalry loosened the structures that constrained sectarian and intrastate rivalries.[1] The new unipolar order led to the beginning of tighter integration of political and military activities in multinational efforts toward conflict management and resolution. It also institutionalized a new trend of multinational forces being given humanitarian roles and mandates.[2]

Several priorities and considerations inspired this change. Political and national security considerations always remained a central priority, but moral and humanitarian obligations in the less-developed global "South" also came to the fore particularly for the more prosperous nations of the so-called "North". Additionally, economic and trade interests reinvigorated the search for new markets.[3] Taken in combination, the changing geopolitical and socio-economic landscape added increased pressure on the US to shift from a strategy of maintaining dominance in the world to one of actively promoting democracy. This adjustment led to a scrambling to redefine US government (USG) aid strategies and subsequently corresponded to a growth in the delivery of multinational foreign aid combined with troop deployments for conflict resolution. Aid and troop deployments led to an overall global security context within which peace building, stability operations, security and welfare services dominated the rhetoric. Simply stated,

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[1] Robert Perito, ed., *Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 103.

[2] Rana, "Contemporary Challenges in the Civil-Military Relationship," 566.

[3] John Degnbol-Martinussen and Poul Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid: Understanding International Development Cooperation* (London; New York; Copenhagen; New York: Zed Books ; Danish Association for International Cooperation ; Distributed by Palgrave, 2003), 9.

there were two means for the US to realize their global interests: the combined provision of foreign (primarily monetary) aid and military intervention(s).

The expansion of moral and humanitarian, economic, and national security interests manifested changes in several ways. Primarily, the US military, the largest, best resourced, and quickly deployable USG entity, became the executive agent responsible for spreading democracy and securing moral and humanitarian interests. In this respect, the USG chose the US military to respond to these situations by changing their mission sets and dramatically increasing their involvement in nation building, stability, and humanitarian operations. The vestiges of those choices are around to this day and are reflected in US military doctrine, counter insurgency, "Phase Zero" stability operations, and building partnership capacity to name a few. Secondly, institutional development and capacity building shifted from USAID merely transferring money and resources to governments or large IGOs to increased outsourcing of micro-development programs through CSOs; this inherently meant ensuring better, more efficient utilization of available resources, greater personal involvement, and closer monitoring.[4] The only CSOs capable of doing this and reaching the recipient populations were smaller flexible organizations. This basically meant larger aid providers such as USAID needed to differentiate, manage, and provide relief themselves or pursue more robust means of outsourcing delivery mechanisms, including management, and evaluation programs to more specialized organizations. Outsourcing to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proved the more economical decision.

The attacks on 9/11 and the subsequent USG-led 'Global War on Terror' inspired further changes in how the US perceived and tackled its national security challenges. It shed light on the notion that many of the challenges in the world today emanate from globalization and uneven development regarding access to technology, capital, public welfare, and human resources. More stakeholders beyond states are entering into the same circle, becoming more empowered, and influencing a broader audience; this invites more opportunities for political tension and conflict over resources, cultures, or ideologies. In light of these factors, the need for security and social services expands with

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[4] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 34.

the need for governments to contend with the rising frequency of natural disasters, population migratory patterns, and the proliferation of ethnic and ideological conflicts. The end result is that today the entire USG as a whole is now committed to operating in "ungoverned spaces" areas where fragile state governments are weak, institutions are struggling to serve local populations, populations are ethnically and religiously divided, and *security* is an ongoing challenge.[5]

The Department of State suggests globalization has made changes to the international system by confirming that non-state actors—from NGOs, religious groups, and multinational corporations to international cartels and terrorist networks—are playing an ever-greater role in international affairs. These entities are also challenging the USG and US military's approach to conflict resolution and concepts of security. The challenge these new entities pose suggests American engagement—politically, economically, and militarily—extends far beyond traditional constituencies and engages new actors in the 21st century. It signifies a shift toward a new focus on civil society and its involvement in providing a stabilizing presence and addressing the aforementioned concerns which threaten security.[6]

Adapting to this new environment meant that the US military needed to reprioritize local engagement while identifying new stakeholders and informants. In fact, the concept of the "three-block war" captured the new multidimensional nature of the military, and served as a prelude to today's reality.[7] The core idea of this concept is military forces and other organizations must all become acquainted with human rights prevention, humanitarian relief, refugee protection, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution. This concept also suggested the growing need for intimacy with local populations in conflict environments and the requirement to become acquainted with social and cultural contexts. In effect, there is a reworking of the relationship between aid, politics, and security. Development aid, and to an extent humanitarian assistance, are now seen as

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[5] Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Leading Through Civilian Power: The First Quadrennial and Development Review (QDDR)* (Washington, DC), 16

[6] Hillary Clinton, *QDDR 2011*, vii.

[7] Charles C. Krulak (former Commander, United States Marine Corps), "Three block warfare: Fighting in urban areas", Speech to the National Press Club, Washington, 10 October 1997.

tools for the promotion of national security.[8] Both NGOs and SOF have adapted to these changes and increasingly find they work in intensified political engagements involving new demands and new pressures. Essentially the morphing of engagements highlights the need for cooperation between SOF and NGOs. It also suggests a balance is required between prioritizing the security of staff and programs with the security of the communities at risk.[9]

SOF and CSOs have both stepped up to meet these challenges. In the past year, SOF manning was increased from 68,000 to 72,000 and are currently deployed in over 100 countries with the added intent of addressing some of the aforementioned problems. SOF growth is a reflection of working by, with, and through, local and regional actors in order to identify problem areas and facilitate their solution.[10] SOF will be joined by an increasing number of private volunteer organizations (PVOs) and NGOs working on a range of issues. Issues of concern for PVOs and NGOs include ending worldwide poverty, providing education for women and children, as well as offering trade skills and work placement education to young men and women susceptible to violence and extremism. In this respect, CSOs and PVOs are no longer just delivering aid but are actively involved at the grassroots level in promoting locally driven change.

The expansion of missions for CSOs and PVOs means they are increasingly able to deploy resources on the ground in countries around the world. Given their presence, SOF will intersect with these organizations in the operational dimension of civilian power. These new arrangements are clearly visible today where we see more frequent attempts at partnerships, cooperation, and collaboration such as the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Iraq or Afghanistan, in conflict zones such as Mali or South Sudan, or after natural disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. As such, it is in this operational dimension, or shared tradespace, where this chapter will focus.

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[8] Jonathan Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?: The Role of NGOs in Armed Conflict*, A Project of the International Peace Academy (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 90.
[9] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?,* 107
[10] Admiral William H. McRaven (Commander, USSOCOM), *Posture Statement Before the 113th Congress, House Armed Services Committee*, 6 March 2013

This chapter proceeds with a general overview of the monolithic terms "NGO" and "SOF," and goes on to examine their roles and constitutions in more depth respectively. It outlines the influential environmental, organizational, and an individual aspect of key components of each group and examines potential challenges to cooperation resident within. It concludes by describing several varieties of activities and commonalities where NGOs and SOF overlap and diverge in the operational space.

**Clarity of terms**

The language and descriptors we use mentally anchor us firmly on a path of understanding and influence or potentially frame solutions to any given problem. The lexicon we employ informs our policy choices and future interactions. Therefore, it is important to clarify two monolithic terms used to describe critical elements of our aid and development strategies: "non-governmental organization" and "Special Operations Forces." Each bears its own preconceptions and using each term in a generalized sense sometimes misses the nuances that make various organizations unique. Furthermore, it is precisely in this uniqueness where elements of conflict, competition, and cooperation manifest themselves in the operational dimension.

NGOs do not comprise a homogenous group.[11] The term "NGO" broadly encompasses a mosaic of different services, individuals, and organizations, that can be delineated by the fact that they each maintain a distinction from any government, are not for profit organizations, and receive their sourcing from a broad resource or donor base. We acknowledge the many forms of NGOs from a variety of positions, worldviews, and beliefs. They also vary between levels, ranging from small-scale initiatives to policy and advocacy organizations that seek to influence societal change.[12] They also operate in many roles and contexts, so generalizing them diminishes their diversity and obfuscates potential points of overlap with the military; humanitarian relief, development, peace and security, and governance. NGOs fill the gaps and seams where policy and implementation fail to meet the provision of public services or delivery of goods.

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[11] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?,*, 15.

[12] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 168.

Typically NGOs follow three main working modalities: policy and advocacy groups, humanitarian action or direct intervention, and capacity building or international development. Policy- and advocacy-related NGOs exist to formulate and push policy in various arenas but rarely come in contact with US military forces in the field. Humanitarian- and development-related NGOs, however, are more often observed in the environments in which the military and SOF are expected to work. Humanitarian NGOs are critical in crisis scenarios, as they handle much of the immediate aid and delivery of resources to affected peoples. For instance, during Operation Unified Response (2010), numerous humanitarian-relief focused NGOs descended upon Haiti to provide immediate medical aid, food relief, and shelter. Development NGOs typically have a different mandate and timeline and they primarily focus on development projects, sustainable solutions, and changing local behavior.

We also acknowledge that the term "SOF" carries with it various degrees of understanding about what they do, where and with whom they work, and why they are important to a discussion about development and NGOs. First, SOF is an inclusive term capturing all the organizations designated by the Secretary of Defense that conduct both direct and indirect missions not traditionally appropriate for or capable of being accomplished by general-purpose forces without unacceptable or costly risks.[13] Second, SOF are inherently joint in nature and represent small, uniquely-organized and selectively-trained units capable of conducting persistent, networked, distributed operations around the globe.[14] Finally, SOF are uniquely adapted to working side by side with interagency, international, and civil society partners in order to build partnership capacity, empower local leaders and military organizations, and provide security endemic to civil unrest.

Simply said, both "NGO" and "SOF" are umbrella terms that do not adequately address the intricate and nuanced characteristics of the different elements within. Parsing out these two broad-based organizations offers an opportunity to identify which groups contained within them will most likely have contact in the operational space.

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[13] Harry R. Yarger, *21st Century SOF: Toward an American Theory of Special Operations*, JSOU Report 13-1 (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, April 2013), 22

[14] Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, March 2014 (Washington DC, 2014),

Subsequently, understanding how each of these groups task organizes, interacts in the environment, and what constitutes their organizational psychology, will ultimately influence their cooperative strategies.

## Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

There has been a dramatic expansion in the size, scope, and capacity of civil society around the globe over the past decade, aided by the process of globalization and the expansion of democratic governance, telecommunications, and economic integration.[15] According to the Yearbook of International Organizations, the number of international NGOs was reported to have increased from 6,000 in 1990 to more than 66,000 today and that number continues to increase daily. In fact, "NGOization" is a fairly recent colloquialism used to capture the growing trend that witnesses NGOs as the favored institutional form through which every social problem is addressed, be it domestic violence, ecological devastation, food security or the aftermath of war.[16] Geopolitical imperatives are pushing this trend further along as a means or method for outsourcing complex problems to less expensive specialized groups that can reach preferred target groups.[17]

Synonymous with "NGOization," the many hundreds of NGOs in industrial countries that are involved in one way or another in international cooperation differ so much from one another that it is difficult to generalize about their development, aid, advocacy, or humanitarian goals.[18] Their motivations are just as fluid. What does remain common however is that NGOs operate in the seams where government services fail to reach and the business sector cannot make a profit. It is here in the seam or operational

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[15] The World Bank has adopted a definition of civil society developed by a number of leading research centers: "the term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations". http://web.worldbank.org/

[16] A. A. Choudry and Dip Kapoor, eds., *NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Prospects* (London, UK ; New York, NY: Zed Books, 2013), ix.
[17] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 158.
[18] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*., 35.

dimension, which allows NGOs to define their cause, create their structure, seek funding, and engage with their primary beneficiaries.

*NGO Identities, Roles, Motives & Interests*

A NGO's identity is primarily determined by its ability to vitalize its organizational philosophy and translate that into action. Thus, NGOs mainly derive their philosophy, sense of identity, and purpose from a cause tied to moral and humanitarian values and beliefs. Many times those values and beliefs, however, become muddled and difficult to deduce from the source of their origins: political affiliations, gender or environmental issues, or advancement of a particular ideology. Put simply, who you are is defined by what you do, and the cause directly influences roles and functions. In combination these different origins lead to greater diversity among NGOs, as well as frame how each organization structures itself, the roles in which it chooses to participate, and how it interacts with external agencies and organizations.

Theoretically the target recipient or main stakeholder should define the aid and services required.[19] One method for categorizing these work modalities or functions is to define NGO roles across a division of categories or types, also known as generations. External agencies, governments and US military, in particular, will interact differently with each generation, across the tactical, operational, and strategic spectrum. For instance, first-generation NGOs are primarily considered humanitarian NGOs seeking to help people in acute need through emergency relief (food, shelter, medical aid, etc.). They are considered first-generation because such NGOs are recognized as the first type to come into existence in response to war. Oxfam and International Red Cross are examples of a first-generation NGO. They each received their start delivering immediate emergency aid after WWII during Gen George C. Marshall's Plan for Reconstruction. *Médecins Sans Frontière* (MSF), also known as Doctors without Borders, is another example of a first-generation NGO that provides emergency medical aid in crisis.

Second-generation NGOs are considered those entering into cooperation with target-groups or beneficiaries and try to carry out activities together. These types of NGOs have

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[19] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 144.

transitioned to self-help aid strategies striving for locally driven behavior change and cooperation with particular target group(s). They are typically community-based organizations (CBO), very narrow in their geographic presence, and maintain a wealth of knowledge living and working in and among the recipients of aid. At the tactical or micro level, the military can be expected to participate the most with these types of organizations based on their local focus and knowledge, skills, and typical distance from city centers and loci of government.

Third-generation NGOs combine their initiatives at the micro level with initiatives at the macro level.[20]  They attempt to influence local and regional policies not only by enfranchising the poor and helping them improve their living conditions but also changing the societal structures that may be prohibitive toward development policies. This is development tied to advocacy across the operational spectrum. Finally, fourth-generation NGOs typically remain at the policy and advocacy level, lobbying policy-makers and decision-makers to promote macro-level change. They infrequently cross paths with SOF and the military, but they do on occasion have strategic influence.

Many second and third-generation NGOs are considered capacity building or non-government development organizations (NGDO). They are legitimized by the existence of the world's poor and powerless and the circumstances and injustices they experience.[21] They act as intermediaries between governments and business. This overlap in civil society tends to find the NGDO in frequent tension between the government and business sectors based on identity, purpose, and source of power or influence. These voluntary sector organizations do not have the legislative capability and coercive force of the state, or the economic clout of commercial capital and enterprise.[22] What they do have, however, is belief in a cause and self-willed, value-driven motivation.

This paper primarily addresses direct intervention and capacity building NGOs across the first three generations. SOF and the US military can expect to work in close contact with the NGOs that cross these generations at different times and in varying capacities.

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[20]  Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 145.

[21]  Alan Fowler, *Striking a Balance: a Guide to Making Non-governmental Organizations Effective* (London: Earthscan, 1997), 38.

[22]  Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 24.

The last case study in this paper is concerned with a fourth-generation NGO that transitioned some of its activities into active participation with local populations and balanced itself between a third and fourth-generation NGO; this model may currently be atypical but NGOs are starting to morph more frequently as they expand their means and methods. Ultimately, all actors need to appreciate the diversity existent within the NGO community and determine how their individual identities, organizational structures and cultures contribute to different types of activities, outcomes, and inter-organizational cooperation or conflict in shared spaces.[23]

### *NGOs acting in the Environment*

Nearly all NGOs claim adherence to some principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.[24] These principles offer some semblance of freedom of action and the ability to reach target demographics in areas of conflict. These principles also allow the professed cause to appear unbiased, unfiltered, and unhindered. For first- and fourth-generation NGOs this is an easier needle to thread. First- and fourth-generation NGOs can, generally speaking, maintain a single focus or agenda, whether that is providing food, shelter, and medical aid, or advocating for a particular issue of their choosing. In many cases, depending on the size or mandate of the organization, first- and fourth-generation NGOs will attempt to do both. Second- and third-generation NGOs must tread more carefully due to the many agendas at play and stakeholder inputs. These competing agendas and inputs will be explained more fully later, but they exact a toll on NGOs and occasionally limit some of their perceived flexibilities, and as a result the military and SOF should be aware of these idiosyncrasies. Contrary to popular opinion, environmental factors, internal capacity, and stakeholder influences more firmly anchor what and how NGDOs accomplish the vast array of tasks set before them and directly influence their cooperative strategies.

First, development NGOs seek to empower target groups, CBOs, and beneficiaries. This means NGDOs influence the distribution and utilization of power, or

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[23] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 14.

[24] United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/46/182, 'Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations', United Nations, 19 December 1991.

at least attempt to, through capacity building and transfer of knowledge.[25] They possess the potential to strengthen democratic processes, widen citizen participation in civic life, and contribute to the formation of social capital.[26] Although conceptually this may appear benign, empowerment becomes a highly politicized process and potentially threatens the original principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Simply stated, empowerment changes relationships. When NGDOs are the impetus for that change it creates tension not only between the group they want to empower and their relationship with the government but also between the NGO and other external groups.

Empowerment usually means inviting people to become more politically active through the process of strengthening the poor groups' own organizations, thereby increasing their influence in relation to other groups in society or government.[27] This basically means certain groups or organizations strengthen their ability to better safeguard and promote their own interests.[28] This is both desirable but also potentially destabilizing to government authorities in power, creating tension. For instance, "in weak states where authorities already have problems legitimizing their exercise of power, difficulties can arise when NGOs assume the role of supporting and communicating the demands of the poor, marginalized and oppressed groups in society. In each of these cases they do this in the name of humanism or in the interest of their proposed mandate or charter, but when such forms of support are combined with building the capacity of grassroots organizations that demand a more equal division of wealth and power, conflicts will arise."[29] This concept will be explored further when we look at the operational overlays that may put the US military and SOF at cross-purposes with NGOs or local groups.

Another important source of tension among NGDOs exists in the fact that nearly all tasks must be balanced against the needs and standards of the participatory process with the for-profit approach of business and accounting. This means NGOs balance their

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[25] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 143.

[26] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 77.

[27] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 37.

[28] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*.37

[29] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*,,169.

participatory efforts with for-profit competiveness. If they fail to remain competitive they will be pushed out and a "lower bidder" may replace them. Their replacement is not only costly to an overall strategy, if one exists but also represents a threat to the NGOs' survival.  This means NGOs must manage funds, donor sponsorships, and limited government grants with the same expectation of accountability as a business or corporation while serving a market that cannot pay the same market prices as a viable business. This leaves all NGOs aid-dependent. Again freedom and flexibility are desired but aid dependency creates a vulnerability and source of tension that actually inhibits freedom of action to pursue independent projects.  It also displaces field efforts and pushes time and energies that could be spent on projects toward disparate ends. NGDOs must balance tasks traditionally reserved for governments with the appropriate expenditure of public funds.  They must do this without creating a dependency and with the goal of eventually working themselves out of a job.  This means they must ensure the government system does not retract and that the NGO inadvertently frees the states from responsibilities that rightly should be theirs.[30]

The process of empowerment and balancing the need to become more business like in standardization and competiveness creates multiple points of tension that all converge at various points in time and place. It must be taken into consideration that NGOs are only one set of actors in a multilevel, networked system involving different contracting arrangements and partnerships with a range of state and non-state, commercial, and not-for-profit actors.[31] Any outside organization interacting with NGDOs must both acknowledge these realities and craft techniques or relationships that bridge the divides.

**Stakeholder Influence**

NGOs are influenced by mandate, political forces [intra-, inter-, environmental], and funding streams. Of these, it appears funding streams have the most direct influence on NGO operations, because they are the largest factor that regularly pushes and pulls an NGO in and out of commitments. For example, NGOs may be funded by membership

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[30]  Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 166.

[31] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 83.

contributions or private sources, by a small number of large individual contributors, or contrary to their label, by governments.  In fact, often times the largest financial contributor to an NGO is a national government. For example, official aid from the US to NGOs alone equaled $31.55B in 2013. Therefore, if an NGO receives much of their donations from a government, which many of them do, then any shift in state policy could jeopardize projects already initiated.[32] Additionally, NGOs may give priority to goals and development strategies other than their own, simply to gain access to those state funds.[33] It is important to note this does not mean NGOs will sacrifice their charter or ideals to get funding. On the contrary, this merely highlights a dilemma many NGOs face, when the strategy they choose to employ may be held hostage to the "market force" of donations.[34] The delicate balance that many NGOs need to maintain between their goals and strategies must be weighed against how is providing their funding. This paradox potentially affects the mix of products they deliver to their beneficiaries as well as the type of cooperation they can seek from others, appearing detrimental to participating stakeholders that may have differing expectations.[35] Consequently, NGOs and organizations associated with them often suffer at the whims of shifting donor priorities. The following example highlights the fragile nature of donor influence on NGO activities and how they also shape inter-organizational arrangements.

For example, when USAID is a primary donor and the national security strategy changes, it leaves NGOs reliant upon that funding vulnerable. Take for instance a consortium of NGOs that were implementing Counter Terrorism (CT) projects in Niger and Chad, called Peace thru Development (PDEV). The main premise of the project focused on enhancing the income generation activities of at-risk youth, defined as those who could join Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[36] When a coup occurred in Niger in October of 2009, the National Security Council (NSC) pulled funding and subsequently placed the NGOs formulating this program in a vulnerable position, forcing

[32] World Bank. Key Lending Indicators from the World Bank. http://www.worldbank.org (accessed April 23, 2014)
[33] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 163.
[34] Eric Werker and Faisal Z. Ahmed, "What do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?," The Journal of Economic Perspectives, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring, 2008): 78
[35] Werker and Ahmed, What do NGOs Do?, 79.
[36] Peace Through Development Factsheet, Chad and Niger, (2012), Washington DC

their personnel in the field to absorb the brunt of anti-US and political backlash. Discontinued funding left at-risk youth with training but no aid to start new businesses. This directly affected legitimacy, credibility and impacted any future dealings such NGOs had in that region. It subsequently hampered the attainment of future strategic interests and impacted local military CT operations in the area as well.

The foregoing discussion highlights the importance of recognizing NGO susceptibility to donor influence. Accordingly, NGOs are likely to respond to the availability of money rather than need. Additionally, there is an opportunity to be manipulated by donor agencies.[37] This NGO-donor tension has both positive and negative effects on any policies or strategies in place and equally impacts current or future cooperative arrangements. Donor influence creates difficulties by imposing norms and values by outside partners and establishing an unstable fluctuating sense of what priorities might exist. This makes it difficult for external agencies or organizations to predict future behaviors or expectations of future interactions. They also highlight that there is a limit to how much NGOs can be expected to adjust their activities to those of other organizations.

**Evaluation**

Assessing development and aid effectiveness is both an area of confusion and of relevant concern for many organizations, including military and SOF personnel.  It is worthy of brief examination because determining differences in how organizations measure success may be a correlational or causal factor in facilitating or corrupting inter-organizational cooperation. When it comes to evaluating and assessing socio-economic change it is difficult to define success and what effects are due to aid impacts (or joint development efforts) and what effects are due to other factors in the recipient country.[38] Additionally, assessing and evaluating aid poses somewhat of a "Catch-22" for NGDOs, creating internal tension and opportunities for policy fissures with external groups.

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[37] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 149.
[38] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 225.

Refining aid evaluation has both a professionalizing and bureaucratizing effect on many NGDOs. This proves valuable in one aspect but adds cost or may detract from the voluntary nature of aid work. It also may contradict demonstrated merits of aid work. Essentially the risk lies in overburdening an NGO with responsibilities with a diminishing capital base, leading to over-extension, and diminished quality.[39] Regardless, it is axiomatic that any aid or development organization, the military included, wants to remain credible and legitimate in the eyes of their aid recipients. That being said, this section does not prescribe specific solutions to evaluation problems, but merely seeks to illuminate a few of the many factors and challenges surrounding the evaluation and assessment of development aid. Observing some of these challenges sheds some light on underlying conditions for conflict or cooperation between NGOs and outside organizations or agencies.

Several factors account for NGDOs lack of ability to quantify or measure achievement. The first is the complexity of determining what must be assessed. Second, there are limitations to the instruments NGDOs use to monitor, measure, evaluate, and review. Third, there is a dearth of benchmarks to compare performance against along with a lack of clear objectives and positions. Finally, financial considerations are paramount, as assessment costs are frequently not allocated to project budgets and therefore are treated as additional expenditures or overhead cost, which must be kept low.[40]

With respect to complexity, NGOs typically are assessed as relatively good at meeting short-term or immediate needs but the transition from aid to development is rather tumultuous. This means first-generation or humanitarian NGOs have a comparative advantage when it comes to determining how many aid recipients have been met and what success was achieved in meeting emergency needs. This advantage stems from the results of their successes are typically immediately evident. For example, during a humanitarian emergency Cholera does or does not break out, wounds are healed, people are fed, and shelter is provided. When humanitarian aid transitions into more

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[39] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 139.
[40] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 160.

long-term aid and capacity building (i.e. developing state internal capabilities to meet needs or deliver services), however, multiple stakeholders get involved, agendas change, and assessment of success becomes more problematic.

There are structural limits to what an NGO can do and how it manages evaluation. The response to uncertainty and unclear outcomes is to tighten process of control through planning and accountability processes.[41] This is precisely how the military resolves problems and manages uncertainty. For the NGO, however, numerous reporting requirements for monitoring and evaluating are complex, time consuming, and bind the NGO to current methods of accountability they are frequently not prepared to staff or fund.[42] Again, these reporting and evaluation requirements increase for each donor involved in any given project, significantly expanding the scope and cost of such activities.[43] Recalling the donor-NGO relationship discussed previously, funding is critically tied to an increased pressure for counting, which undermines trust, flexibility, and adaptability; these are cornerstones of people-first aid and development.[44]  The military plays a part in focusing on measurability and this construct does not easily fit with a commitment to being responsive and empowering while undertaking work that is long-term and intended to tackle some of the world's most intransigent problems.[45]

Measures of effectiveness are usually found in the form of metrics, which are specific indicators that are measured to assess an intentional impact over time on the physical or social environment.[46] Linking metrics to the desired endstate in a mission is fundamental in measuring effectiveness, progress, and success.[47] As previously mentioned, military planners and operators take this very seriously. However, the indices of key performance indicators and the associated lexicon for discussing these matters,

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[41] Tina Wallace, *The Aid Chain: Coercion and Commitment in Development NGOs* (Rugby: Practical Action Pub, 2007), 111.
[42]  Wallace, *The Aid Chain*, 111.
[43] Sarah Jane Meharg, Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.), and Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations & Crisis Management* (Montreal: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2009), 166.
[44] Wallace, *The Aid Chain*, 40.
[45]  Wallace, *The Aid Chain*, 48.
[46] Meharg, Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.), and Lester B. Pearson Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations & Crisis Management*, 80.
[47]  Meharg, *Measuring What Matters*, 81.

available in other industry and government sectors, are rarely applicable to peace operations and crisis management.[48] This appears a point of serious contention between NGOs and military units. Coupled with different worldviews, distinct time horizons, and a lack of standardized language reduce the ability of stakeholders - donors, the target group, other NGOs, military- to understand intervention activities, tools and mechanisms for measurement.[49]

What should be obvious at this point is that funding is foundational to NGO and military cooperation. NGOs typically have a hard time acquiring the funds to return to a previous site in order to re-assess/evaluate long-term effectiveness or sustainability. The lack of clear performance indicators makes evaluation more difficult and complex than other sectors. Secondly, most critical feedback comes from the primary stakeholder –the NGO in question - but usually this reporting back to donor's highlights short-term measures, which are tracked because they attract more funding.[50] The work is made more difficult by the fact that today aid must contribute to realizing many goals that are not prioritized; they are sometimes contradictory; and they are often subject to change.[51] "It has little meaning to evaluate aid effects only in relation to goals set by donor-financed projects and programs. Aid's effects can be understood only in societal context, and aid's impact must primarily be analyzed on the basis of its qualitative and strategic influence on societal processes, institutions and power structures."[52]

Many times money from donors isn't available to learn from mistakes because it appears like a misallocation of every dollar going to the recipient. This can explain some frustration among different organizations make repeated errors or are unable to debrief from lessons learned.

None of this negates a responsibility to accurately and thoroughly evaluate and report on projects but it does elucidate where friction and tension lies within the NGO community, particularly with second- and third-generation NGOs. Judgment must be

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[48] Meharg, *Measuring What Matters*, 81
[49] Meharg, *Measuring What Matters*, 85.
[50] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 27.
[51] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 225.
[52] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 231.

made on behalf of cooperating agencies and organizations that reflect an understanding of these dilemmas.

## *Organizational Characteristics of NGOs*

If capacity is the ability to achieve an impact in terms of satisfying or influencing stakeholders, effectiveness means achieving this impact at an appropriate level of effort and cost.[53] For an NGO this means defining its activities and creating the correct organizational structure to serve their primary stakeholder(s). Subsequently, the fundamental premise that most non-governmental organizations have adopted suggests that local ownership and adaptation to local conditions are important to long-term impact.[54] Under this premise many NGDOs have determined that small-networked organizations allow them to make stronger local connections, create an atmosphere for empowerment, and reduce overhead expenditures. Essentially, a decentralized structure allows NGDOs to remain flexible and tailor their approaches to a number of internal and external challenges.

Tailored NGO approaches must balance project participants at different levels of status, capacity, and capability because the projects must be sustainable by the target demographic. With a first-generation NGO, beneficiary needs are typically immediate and well defined. Delivering medical services, books, and places of shelter do not require anything but making sure the beneficiary meets the point of service delivery. This does not minimize or trivialize the task of first-generation NGOs but does suggest a rather singular focus. For second or third-generation NGOs, however, empowerment, teaching someone how to read or participate in his or her representative government system is quite another process. This process also usually requires the input and influence of multiple stakeholders, ranging from government or ministerial services, international government organizations, and perhaps relevant corporations that provide materials to the target group or beneficiary.

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[53] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 43.
[54] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 156.

The formal organizational structuring of an NGO directly affects its ability to meet demands as well as achieve varying degrees of cooperation. First of all, with respect to centrality, many NGOs are quite decentralized and do not maintain an elaborate hierarchical structure.[55] Large hierarchical staffs are expensive but more importantly NGOs rely heavily on individual commitment, staff initiatives, and local personal engagement. Their desire to remain decentralized and largely networked equates to their focus on largely social problems, which typically deserve locally derived solutions which hierarchies have a difficult time delivering. Decentralization also equates to flexibility and the ability to manage rapid changes in funding, strategy, or local conditions. Organizations wishing to work with NGOs must then deal with this seemingly chaotic behavior and many times are left confused and frustrated (strange bedfellows, 2).

As formerly mentioned, NGOs range in size, scalability, and complexity and each characteristic affects external arrangements and cooperation differently. Larger first-generation NGOs such as the International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC) or MSF managed the size of their organization by either breaking up into several independent chapters or finely tuning their massive delivery of a particular service. Second- and third-generation NGOs, however, experience greater challenges when it comes to size, scalability, and complexity. The larger the size of an NGO the greater its funding potential must be. Along with increased size come increased administrative responsibilities, management, and overall control. This has a tendency to become unwieldy, professionalized, and bureaucratic, defeating the purpose of decentralizing. Additionally, large organizations find it difficult to scale down operations to local micro projects and vice versa small organizations do not easily scale up individualized or regionally focused projects onto grander scales. Furthermore, more complex or nuanced approaches to problems require specialization and differentiation.

As Fig 1 shows, NGOs have a number of comparative advantages with which other organizations, businesses, and governments cannot compete. Although comparative advantages exist among smaller or modest size NGOs, however, smaller should not be mischaracterized as the most effective means of achieving any particular goal. Modest

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[55] Perito, *Guide for Participants in Peace, Stability, and Relief Operations*, 109.

size NGOs are traditionally more flexible and better than official aid agencies at adapting new initiatives to local needs and conditions.  As their size and complexity relate to scalability this is not always the best method for NGOs.[56] Many times local changes must be tied in with macro-level policies and initiatives, otherwise real influence cannot be achieved on the socio-economic front. Thus, NGOs accept the fact that more cooperative strategies must be employed in order to affect sustainable change.[57] These implications are twofold: one, NGDOs actively look for partners and cooperative relationships that will help them bridge the micro-macro divides; and, two, SOF realizes that their efforts must span both micro level tactics and macro level political goals, meaning they are also looking for enduring cooperative strategies.

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1.) NGOs possess flexible forms of organizing and working. They are less bureaucratic and better adept at adapting to local conditions. They also react more quickly when conditions change.
2.) NGO staff members are motivated less by serving their own benefits and more by idealistic principles about benefitting poor people. This makes them better able to cooperate directly with target groups and to promote genuine people's participation.
3.) Due to close cooperation with local groups, NGOs are also better able to gin necessary insights into problems and the possibilities for solving them. They are able to learn from partners and can in this way be innovative and experimental.
4.) NGOs are not biased towards the capital city and areas of economic growth, but on the contrary are motivated to work in remote regions.
5.) NGOs can work within politically sensitive areas where official donors must show caution. This applies, to marginalized groups struggling for their rights.
6.) NGOs can create alternative development models and experiment with other forms of assistance and cooperation inspired by partners and CBOs.

Source: John Degnbol-Martinussen and Poul Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid: Understanding International Development Cooperation,* 157-158

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Fig 1. Comparative advantages

Ultimately, it should be understood that clear conclusions cannot be achieved in this level of discussion, since the effect of NGO expansion depends on specific circumstances, identify, societal context, political factors, funding streams, and how such

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[56] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 170.
[57] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 215–234.

a strategy would be combined with other's to achieve greater impact.[58] The main point is that NGDOs are looking more broadly at varying cooperative strategies and different means and methods for achieving their goals connected to larger policy initiatives.

*Epistemic Communities*

With respect to organizational influences it is important to discuss the networked aspect of NGOs, particularly with respect to epistemic communities. Exposure to and involvement in epistemic communities suggest a possible way forward for both SOF and the military to discover new or unique solutions to many complex social problems.

Epistemic communities represent knowledge-based networks of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular field or domain.[59] Although, epistemic communities cast their nets widely among experts and professionals from a variety of disciplines, participants typically share similar causal beliefs and a common framework of understanding; this produces a useful environment for dialogue, enhances the search for knowledge, and optimizes solutions to a range of issues. Epistemic communities prove useful to both policy-makers and practitioners because they articulate multiple facets of complex problems, help actors identify their interests, and frame issues for debate.[60] The rigorous intellectual capacity of these communities therefore illuminates useful solutions, policies, or salient points for negotiation.[61] Defining the problem, in turn, focuses decision-makers about how to approach and solve complex social challenges.[62]

More importantly, epistemic communities that revolve around aid, relief, health, and social services contain transnational, trans-sector, trans-functional networks of committed experts and practitioners capable of scoping problems faced by both the international aid community and the military. A readily apparent manifestation of the epistemic NGO community is InterAction.org. InterAction.org represents a virtual

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[58] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 173.

[59] Peter M. Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*, Studies in International Relations (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 3.

[60] Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination,* 2.

[61] Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination,* 2.

[62] Meharg, Queen's University (Kingston, Ont.), and Lester B. Pearson, Canadian International Peacekeeping Training Centre, *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations & Crisis Management*, 151.

meeting place for many NGOs, as well as other interested partners, knowledge workers, and stakeholders, to think critically about intervention and the social order it impacts.[63] SOF's online or physical presence is unknown in communities such as this, but perhaps participation in these groups may enhance understanding and perhaps draws clearer opportunities for cooperation.

## *Attributes of the Individual – Perceptions and Interaction*

As some business literature stresses, the focus of any successful enterprise is the relationship between customers and frontline personnel.[64] The typical NGO model tries to strengthen this relationship by implementing strategies, policies, and projects mediated through and operationalized by field staff in close proximity to the local population.[65] Additionally, the potency of any NGO lies in their ability to act as an effective bridge, facilitator, broker and translator for the underserved, in essence acting as the "connective tissue" of a vigorous civil society.[66] As previously mentioned, this ability is not only a politicized process but also a highly personalized one. Therefore, individual identities are an important determinate of legitimacy, access, and leverage within a community.[67] Thus their identity frames their perceived legitimacy and determines the NGOs role in the society and its potential impact on development. Individual actions and attitudes will define and scope credibility and the ability to play as a political actor in the empowerment process.

PVOs do not have legislative capability, the coercive force of the state, nor the economic clout of commercial capital and enterprise.[68] They simply have the power of self-willed human interaction—a cause people believe. Thus, PVOs are set up by value driven models that rely on strong identification and solidarity with their beneficiaries.[69]

A typical NGDO field worker can be characterized as value-driven, committed, and self-motivated, which naturally lends itself toward an appropriate stance toward its

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[63] Meharg and Pearson, *Measuring What Matters in Peace Operations,* 151
[64] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 160.
[65] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?, 160*
[66] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 166.
[67] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 156.
[68] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 24.
[69] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 24.

client. This is generally a departure from governments and military staff, which tend to rely on hierarchical command and enforcement. While voluntary organizations rely on personal values, commitment, and self-motivation the military always carry a status of power.[70] This presents a considerable point of conflict and reflects a potential barrier to cooperation, which will be discussed in further detail later.

Aid work takes place in remote locations, staff is limited, and costs must be kept under control. Decentralization is the only way NGOs can reach people at the point they need help. Therefore most aid workers are generally independent-minded and retain considerable decision-making power at field level.[71] This constant position of being "alone and afraid" means most aid workers must be comfortable with uncertainty, ambiguity, and a limited safety net. Under these conditions their tolerance for risk goes up and with it opportunities for unique cooperative arrangements. Finally, a career in the NGO sector entails a substantial reduction in expected lifetime earnings compared to a career in the private sector, which is a testament to the altruism of the employees.[72]

One of the benefits that NGOs enjoy is they do not need to conform to set patterns of action or behavior, and as a result, they can adapt more readily to changing situations and remain self-selective. The International Peace Academy characterized their flexibility in the following way: "NGOs consist of innovators and individuals who take risks and have authority to effect change may influence the formal and informal rules in organizations. For example, two dynamic and committed Afghan leaders who worked for Norwegian Church Aid played an important role in diffusing ideas about peace building and conflict resolution to it's partners and the wider aid community. Such actors are interface experts because they master languages and cultures prevailing in different social domains."[73]

Ultimately, individual flexibility and personal values feed back into the organizational culture of many NGDOs. These individual characteristics are witnessed in

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[70] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 23.
[71] Henry F. Carey and Oliver P. Richmond, eds., *Mitigating Conflict: The Role of NGOs*, The Cass Series on Peacekeeping 12 (London ; Portland, OR: F. Cass, 2003), 30.
[72] Eric Werker and Faisal Z. Ahmed, "What do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring, 2008): 79
[73] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 159.

the operational space. More importantly each aid worker takes on the personal mission of striving for locally driven behavior change. Therefore, they function primarily as advisers that act as catalysts for the target group's self-organization and own initiatives.[74] This concept is important because the next section suggests some similarities to the SOF method of operation.  Specifically, SOF follow a very similar model, attempting to increase the target's groups capacity and assumption of responsibility for and control of the use of resources and implementation of military activities. In this shared operational space, cooperation and competition for the attention of a beneficiary begins to emerge.

## Special Operations Forces (SOF) & Civil Affairs (CA)

"The United States, its allies, and its partners will continue to face both traditional state adversaries and non-state actors, who will employ or sponsor the use of terrorism, insurgency, information operations, and other irregular aspects of warfare, well into the future. Accompanying this general upward trend in asymmetric actions is a shift from interstate to intrastate conflicts and the security challenges that they provoke. Weak, fragile, and failing states produce and exacerbate humanitarian emergencies, such as mass migrations of people or epidemics, which may call for external intervention. "Additionally, the breakdown in social contracts and the unwillingness or inability of governments to render care serve as breeding and recruiting grounds, transit points, and sanctuaries for insurgents, terrorists, and other violent sub-national actors."[75]  When intervention is called for it requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the social causes as well as their violent manifestations.

The publication of the National Security Strategy and Defense Strategic Guidance outline how the US intends on addressing these aforementioned threats. The US aims to comprehensively engage with nations, institutions, and peoples around the world to protect and advance its national interests.[76] As previously discussed, comprehensive engagement includes a "whole of government approach" that includes defense, diplomacy, development, and other tools of American power. The social aspect of these

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[74] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 152.

[75] Michele L. Malvesti, *To Serve the Nation: Special Operations in a Era of Persistent Conflict*, (Center for New American Security, June 2010); 5

[76] Strategic Landpower White Paper: Winning the Clash of Wills, May 2013

problems, combined with the whole of government approach, must take into account involvement of numerous institutions, including states, corporations, and NGOs, among others. Understanding and working by, with, and through these people—be they heads of state, tribal elders, community leaders, militaries and their leaders—is essential to ensuring stability.[77] SOF take action in this arena and are specifically trained organized and equipped to influence human activity in these environments.

Confusion often times results from a homogenous view of special operations. The past ten years of conflict, and a strong shift in focus toward CT and direct action missions, has emphasized SOF's commando role and limited non-kinetic strategic engagement activities.[78] This myopic view of raids, however, neglects the broader SOF activities throughout the world. Much of what SOF is doing may retain more enduring qualities that focus on building relationships, provide education and training in conflict resolution, and involve empowering local groups to support and defend their own interests. The next section will direct attention on US SOF and Civil Affairs (CA) teams that focus their energies in this human space and attempts to reveal their heterogeneity.

### SOF Actions in the Environment

SOF is the force of choice, as of late, based on its inherent flexibility, size, requisite attributes, regional and cultural skills, and rapid deployability needed to influence across multiple levels in distant, disparate places. They are now active in some seventy countries and, since 2001, have seen their combined budget nearly quintuple.[79] The use of SOF as a "force of choice" for the Department of Defense (DoD) is reflected in recent decision to increase special operation personnel from 66,000 to 69,700.[80] Furthermore, as the United States seeks ways to tackle a range of security threats worldwide, shore up the resilience of its friends and allies against terrorist and criminal networks, and minimize need for large-scale military interventions, the importance of

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[77] Strategic Landpower White Paper: Winning the Clash of Wills, May 2013
[78] Malvesti, *To Serve the Nation*, 23
[79] Linda Robinson, *The Future of US Special Operations Forces*, Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report No.66 (New York, NY 2013), vii
[80] The phrase "force of choice" comes from an edited volume on SOF. See Bernd Horn, et al, *Force of Choice: Perspectives on Special Operations* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004). Figures on SOF growth are available in Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, March 2014 (Washington DC, 2014), xi.

special operations forces continues to grow. Based on its task organization, networked associations, a strong group of critical enablers, and the ingenuity and fortitude of the individual operator, SOF has become a very useful and politically acceptable foreign policy tool.

SOF's direct-action skill and prowess was demonstrated time and again in both Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) on multiple raids and in the killing or capturing of numerous terrorist leaders in a time-sensitive environment. More importantly, the politically sensitive nature of their use received immediate attention after they killed Osama bin Laden in 2011 through a coordinated whole of government effort. Additionally, SOF's indirect missions may not receive much media attention but they have been critical in places like Afghanistan, the Philippines, and numerous countries in Africa. The indirect approach exemplifies SOF's capability to develop and work alongside indigenous forces necessary to combat terrorists, insurgents, and transnational criminal networks through an orchestrated set of defense, information, and civil affairs programs.[81] At the crux of this approach is building partnership capacity and trust through educating, training, and equipping indigenous groups to empower their own military and political success, in order to form enduring strategic relationships. These relationships are not only with indigenous groups but also NGOs, CSOs, and PVOs.[82]

Finally, SOF may engage in nonlethal activities such as dispute resolution at the village level, the collecting or disseminating of information, or civil affairs projects such as medical or veterinary aid and building schools or wells. Persuasion and influence are part of many of these operations, and their long-term effect should be to build enduring

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[81] David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 149–150.

[82] Special operations forces are assigned to conduct a variety of missions under USC Title 10, Section 167 and military Joint Publication 3-05. Special operations forces train for and execute the following "core operations and activities": counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, foreign internal defense, security force assistance, unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, information operations, military information support operations, and civil affairs operations, and activities specified by the POTUS or SecDef (Joint Publication 3-05, II-6); David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb provide a detailed account of the evolution of SOF missions and activities. See Tucker and Lamb, United States Special Operations Forces: 164-74.

relationships and partnerships. In many cases, these partners become part of alliance or coalition efforts elsewhere in the world. Whether the partner forces merely secure their own countries or become part of wider security partnerships, these relationships are the most powerful enduring effect that special operations can aim to achieve.[83]

SOF have a complex organization, a diverse set of capabilities, and a broad range of officially assigned missions.[84] Active, forward engagement is the new direction for SOF.  According to the Commander, US Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM's) recent posture statement, SOF's goal of global persistent engagement represents the comprehensive layered defense determined necessary to isolate violent extremist networks and prevent adversaries from conducting operations against the US.[85] At the same time building partnership capacity and augmenting local capability is the most cost-effective manner in doing so.  This highlights the importance of SOF's concern and influence in the same human domain as NGOs: the physical, cultural, social, and political environments that influence human behavior. The following section will outline the organizational structure and missions providing a baseline for understanding how they fit in the broader whole of government construct and how they intersect with the NGO and PVO community.

## Organizational Characteristics of SOF & CA

SOF comprises a wide variety of carefully selected and highly trained individuals from all four U.S. military services. USSOCOM is one of nine Unified Combatant Commands that maintains a number of Service-, department-, and agency-like responsibilities.[86] US Army SOF comprise nearly half of all special operators and include the largest and oldest element of special operations forces, the Special Forces as well as Rangers, aviators, and psychological operations troops. US Army Special Operations

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[83] Robinson, *The Future of US SOF*, 12
[84] Robinson, *The Future of US SOF*, 8
[85] Admiral William H. McRaven (Commander, USSOCOM), *Posture Statement Before the 113th Congress, House Armed Services Committee*, 6 March 2013
[86] Admiral William H. McRaven (Commander, USSOCOM), *Posture Statement Before the 113th Congress, House Armed Services Committee*, 6 March 2013

Command also manages Civil Affairs soldiers.[87] Navy SOF includes SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) operators, special delivery teams, and Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC). The Air Force Special Operations Command includes aviation assets, aviation advisors, and Special Tactics personnel, including combat controllers, pararescuemen, and special operations weathermen.

The SOF community falls between two distinct mission forces: Theater Mission Forces and National Mission Forces. Over the course of their career SOF operators may flow from one mission force to another but each maintains its own focus. Theater Mission Forces are assigned or attached to Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) and provide Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) with Special Operations capabilities, maintaining a persistent presence and cultivating long-term relationships within their respective regions. National Mission Forces, however, maintain a very specific and dedicated purpose, typically oriented toward missions of extreme sensitivity and national importance.[88]

The majority of SOF operators engaged in persistent engagement come from Theater Mission Forces. Theater Mission Forces develop the requisite long-term relationships and familiarity within an area or region in order to remain effective influencers. This does not mean Theater Mission Forces do not maintain skills in both direct and indirect approaches. In fact, all SOF missions—whether civil affairs, hostage rescue, counterinsurgency training, or some other primary SOF mission—require forces that maintain a dual heritage, in both commando and "cross-cultural skills":

> Special operations forces are one of the nation's key penetration and strike forces, able to respond to specialized contingencies across the conflict spectrum with stealth, speed, and precision. They are also warrior diplomats capable of

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[87]Civil affairs soldiers are both active duty and reservists that help military commanders work by, with, and through local civil authorities and civilian populations as liaisons and coordinators. They serve both an informing, coordinating, and messaging function for the commander in a particular area of operations acting to limit the impact of military operations in that area.

[88] Malvesti, *To Serve the Nation*, 9

influencing, advising, training, and conducting operations with foreign forces, officials, and populations.[89]

For clarity and ease of understanding, the Theater Mission Forces work for the GCCs are the ones in contact with and share the same operational space as CSOs. It is primarily these Forces that will exploit their warrior-diplomat role, relying on intimate knowledge of the local culture, language, and social order in order to build and leverage the capacity of host nation forces, develop partnerships with key leaders and change agents, and influence local conditions and the populace at large.[90]

The requirement to maintain close proximity to indigenous peoples while carrying out other core activities yields an organization that is internally complex, but organizationally smaller and leaner. Despite their networked attributes, SOF are a hierarchical organization in terms of centrality. Power within their organization is managed internally and information flows vertically within it. Since 9/11, however, there is a recognized need within SOF to try and adapt to the networked organizations with which they must interact. This challenge will be addressed further when compared to other organizations and agencies like NGDOs.

The size, structure, and mechanisms of control decrease friction and opportunities for SOF, but they must be resourced from the general-purpose forces and services adequately.[91] Simply stated, with respect to SOF, "smaller is better" and decentralized command arrangements offer flexibility, speed, and ingenuity. From a utilitarian's perspective, a smaller footprint offers an economical approach to problem solving. From a risk vantage point, certain SOF missions carry "high political risk" if mishandled but also constitute high payoff missions that conventional forces cannot achieve at their scale.

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[89] Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces*, 150.
[90] Malvesti, *To Serve the Nation*, 19
[91] Harry R. Yarger, *21st Century SOF: Toward an American Theory of Special Operations*, JSOU Report 13-1 (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, April 2013), 60.

*Attributes of the Individual – Perceptions and Interaction*

In today's parlance, the "human domain" constitutes the physical, cultural, and social environments within which people live and interact. SOF's role within the human domain is supported by the SOF truth that "humans are more important than hardware." It pervades everything SOF does and acts as a continuous reminder of not only the value of a SOF operator's life but is also a testament to the human terrain within which SOF is proscribed to work. Many if not all of the problems SOF will encounter in the operational environment are in some way population-centric and require dealing in the human dimension. SOF operations frequently involve close contact with various peoples from distinct backgrounds, especially during the course of Foreign Internal Defense, counterinsurgency (COIN), and CT operations. These mission sets in particular require SOF to become closely affiliated with local populations, prepared to provide security, develop relationships, and deliver social services.

Accomplishing any of these tasks in close relation with others requires some selectivity in personnel and recruiting, particularly with respect to proficiency, cross-cultural competence, maturity, character, experience, and skills to accomplish special missions.[92] SOF strives to recruit and select members that portray these traits. Additionally, SOF members are all volunteers. They possess the freedom to act responsibly on their own, as well as ingenuity, creativity, and resourcefulness to solve hard problems. SOF selection processes place a premium on flexibility and mental agility as desirable characteristics. Finally, intense mental and physical stamina are enduring traits that translate into effective decision-making and reasoned judgment in the worst of conditions.[93]

SOF attributes manifest themselves in a variety of ways but they do differ from conventional forces.  Conventional forces typically rely on support from other conventional forces, which preserves their self-sufficient from an organizational perspective. This self-sufficiency within conventional forces confines them to the

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[92] For details see James Kiras, "The Role of Special Operations Forces: Past, Present, and Future," *Pointer*, 37:2 (December 2011): 81-83.
[93] Kiras, "The Role of Special Operations Forces," 83.

military hierarchy for direction, guidance, and resources, leaving them with little impetus for cooperation. SOF, unlike their conventional counterparts, frequently find themselves operating in small numbers and in austere environments, which forces them to rely on other counterparts—NGOs, civilians, interagency personnel, or conventional forces—for mission success. Therefore, the SOF operator's need to integrate with others, combined with an ability to adapt, puts him in the unique position of being able to respond favorably to civilian or NGO lead. Specifically, based on size and attributes comparable to many NGDOs or NGHAs, SOF should see increased cooperation.

## SOF and NGO Overlap in the Operational Dimension

According to one author, the relationship between security and stability organizations is changing:

> A new development paradigm is evolving. A new, more direct relationship is emerging between the traditionally distinct fields of security and development. Due to the understanding that - development is ultimately impossible without stability and, at the same time, security is not sustainable without development. Therefore, new partnerships are forming between non-governmental humanitarian agencies (NGHAs), state governments, militaries, and private companies. These 'new multilateralism's' have arisen as a response to significant world changes resulting in part from the processes of globalization as well as the events of September 11, 2001.[94]

As the quote above highlights, security and development were once considered separate tasks to be accomplished independently. The former was a military task, while the latter resided with voluntary organizations. Security now, however, includes not just the traditional concepts of state-centric national security conceived of in military terms (arms rivalries, strategic alliances, defense and military training), but also dimensions of human security: individual security and human rights, economic prosperity, societal reconstruction and stabilization, regional organization development, and capacity building for states and their institutions.[95]

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[94] Mark R. Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London ; New York : New York: Zed Books ; Palgrave, 2001).

[95] Jessica Piombo, Reducing Insecurity in Africa: Roles and Responsibilities of the US Military, US Government and Non-Governmental Communities, (Naval Post-Graduate School, Center on Contemporary Conflict; Monterey, CA; April 2012), 4

The crux of the matter, however, is that the flow of information, the means of conducting affairs, and the method for managing control is changing previously defined roles and relationships. Looking at the basic sectors summarized on Table 2.1 one can see three sectors of organized society: government, business, and voluntary organizations.

| Table 1 - Sector Comparisons | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Characteristic** | **Sector** | | |
| | *Government* | *Business* | *Voluntary* |
| Relationship to those served based on: | Mutual obligation | Financial Transaction | Personal Commitment |
| Duration: | Permanent | Momentary | Temporary |
| Approach to external environment: | Control & Authority | Conditioning & Isolation | Negotiation and Integration |
| Resources from: | Citizens | Customers | Donors |
| Feedback on Performance | (In) direct politics | Direct from market indicators | Constructed from multiple users |

Source: Alan Fowler, *Striking a Balance: Guide to Making Non-governmental Organizations Effective*, 27

These sectors are not mutually exclusive but traditionally one category of actor dominated a sector. What is now relevant for discussion is that the current trend indicates no one sector can dominate, either due to increased integration of services, or lack of resources, or greater need for specialization. Therefore, more actors will find themselves in the same operational area as another working to address parallel or interrelated problems. Interrelated problems mean organizations cannot simply maintain their own pre-determined stovepipes but must now find seams for cooperation and integration. Broadly stated, the challenges and interests of the US today that are addressed by multilateral aid systems—specifically ones that are handled by one sector or another—

require participation from different groups with different cultures, approaches, or resources.

In this case, multilateralism aid is delivered in the regions and areas that need it most, those containing weak, failing, or failed states. In turn, each region or possesses a need for both security and development. It is here in the area of security and development where SOF and NGOs will find the most interaction and will experience opportunities for competition as well as cooperation. More specifically, in the last decade there has been a reworking of the relationship between aid, development, politics, and security.[96] Development and humanitarian assistance are seen as strategic tools for the promotion of security.[97] Furthermore, there is a balance between normative and operational activities in the shared multilateral security and development space. There is an opportunity, with respect to normative activities, to promote international understanding and agreements on common values.[98] For example, the NGO Invisible Children partnered with SOF in the venture to protect vulnerable groups such as refugees and children. Meanwhile, shared operational activities include implementation of aid projects and programs, including technical assistance and advice on policy or financing development and emergency relief projects.[99] In the interface between normative and operational activities lie SOF and NGOs, each taking on projects such good governance and poverty issues. Such issues are highly normative value-based but lead to partnered operational activities. At the end of the day, it is this differentiation of the military and the taking on of human security that is meeting the professionalization of the NGO corps that is creating a convergence in the operational dimension.

Another area where SOF and NGOs meet in the operational dimension happens to be in the realm of empowerment or according to Table 2.1 in the Voluntary approach to the external environment. In the Voluntary approach to the external environment, NGOs often rely on empowerment as a tool or avenue for increasing cooperation. Empowerment satisfies a person's need to participate on equal footing in the decision-making processes

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[96] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 90
[97] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 90
[98] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 96
[99] Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid*, 96

that affect them. In this case, many NGOs and SOF are directly involved in this process, recognizing that economic and social development for the poor often involves conflicts and struggles for political power.[100]  SOF and NGO similarities become even closer as the former's approach to the external environment mimics that of the voluntary sector, by facilitating negotiation, integration and cooperation among local populations. In the social, economic, and political context development and security is now a political process, linking SOF and NGO activities.

Empowerment, however, creates a unique dilemma of which both SOF and NGOs must be aware. Assistance, particularly with respect to empowerment, may undermine the social contract between governments and their citizens.  SOF and NGOs can get caught in this very seam. If SOF is working to advise and assist local or government security or police forces, but NGOs are working with citizens, there is an opportunity to inadvertently legitimize unrepresentative groups, putting NGOs and SOF at odds.[101]

The following case studies reflect that in contemporary conflicts peace cannot solely be engineered or imposed from the top-down through conventional diplomacy or military engagement. Peacebuilding goes beyond the aggregate or national level and addresses the local and human dimensions of conflict. It is here where SOF and NGOs have a comparative advantage, yet a distinct opportunity for cooperation or competition.[102]

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[100]   Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, *Aid,*, 153.
[101]  Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 87.
[102]   Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 125.

**Chapter 4**

**Case Study: CORDS Program - Vietnam**

*The Vietnam War like all wars has engendered a great deal of human suffering. USAID backed by public and Congressional demands and working with many private organizations, is doing the maximum feasible to assist the Vietnamese Government in alleviating this suffering. During the 1968 Tet offensives against the cities in Vietnam over, a million people were driven from their homes. Virtually all of that million have been reestablished by returning to their own homes if undamaged, by rebuilding homes with Government and USAID assistance, or by being rehoused in temporary quarters built by the Government.*

*- Joseph Mendenhall, Assistant Administrator for Vietnam, 22 July 1969*

**Introduction**

The quote above highlights both some of the challenges as well as the efficacy of the CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development Support) program in Vietnam. The CORDS program is unique as it offers an opportunity to assess some of the underlying conditions that affect civil-military cooperation. Cooperation between organizations is difficult to achieve during periods of normalcy, let alone periods of crisis. In a complex conflict like Vietnam, where conventional and irregular warfare operations overlapped, it became apparent that the Vietnamese civil society was deeply rooted in both the reason for the fighting and the source of its resolution. In this case, Vietnam represented a population-centric conflict that drew a number of ideas or concepts about how to "win," from both the "adversary" as well as from friendly forces.

For example, Viet Cong (VC) insurgents wanted to separate the population from their government, supplanting their own ideology and governance. On the other hand, members of USAID, local CSOs, and other non-governmental agencies fought to keep the local people connected to the basic social services being stripped in the fighting, while reversing the tide of ideological communist propaganda. It became apparent success could only be realized if both US military and civilian agencies worked together. Unfortunately, it is here in the murky space "between" where two completely different organizations must meet.

This chapter will look at both the security environment and organizational structure of CORDS as elements that affect cooperation between civil and military organizations sharing the same operational arena. Furthermore, this chapter contends that the security environment indeed highlights a need for cooperation but perceptions about how to achieve security are fraught with disagreement. Secondly, the nature of US military and civilian organizational structures lends themselves toward a propensity to not cooperate, but these characteristics can be overcome by modifying the structures themselves. This study is not judging the overall effectiveness of the CORDS program as a pacification mechanism. Instead this analysis is observing the interplay of IGOs and NGOs with that of the military and analyzing reasons to pursue cooperative strategies while under crisis.

Analyzing security is an important factor for examination in the Vietnam context because a high threat environment should improve cooperation between civilian agencies and military ones. Infighting or internal competition between these organizations should logically be kept to a minimum, as the goal of protecting lives should move to the fore. For instance, the CORDS program started a year before the 1968 Tet Offensive and faced extreme violence inflicted both on the people of South Vietnam as well as program advisors. Under these conditions, military and civilian entities should move toward each other, aligning roles and responsibilities in order to reduce uncertainty and gain efficiencies in the security environment.

Assessing organizational dynamics in the Vietnam context proves beneficial because the initial establishment of the CORDS program suffered internal disharmony and uncertainty based on the turbulence associated with creating a new organization. Rearranging the internal structure of the CORDS organization, however, put civilian actors on par with military members, leading to a more egalitarian system. Thus, improved coordination and cooperation occurred between civilian and military agents because power and information flowed equally between the two camps.

**Background**

During the early 1960s when Communist insurgency swept the Republic of Vietnam, one of the South Vietnamese government's key responses was a "pacification" program.[1] Pacification is a relatively ambiguous or imprecise term, but according to Thomas Scoville, it constitutes "an array and combination of action programs and broad activities designed to extend the presence and influence of the central government and to reduce the presence and influence of [an insurgent] that may threaten the survival of the government through propaganda, terror, and subversion."[2] Typically any social contract between the government and its people requires government provision of basic goods, services, and security. When this contract goes unfulfilled, other entities or ideological groups have the opportunity to fill this void. In other words, the battle between the insurgent group and the government can be considered a battle of narratives about who can or cannot provide basic services to the population. Working hand in hand with the military, local Vietnamese civil society organizations and USG sponsored IGOs attempt to fill this void by providing services to bridge the divide between the people and their government, countering insurgent propaganda.

During this period, the South Vietnamese government failed to provide sufficient goods, services, and security to its citizens due to an active and relatively successful insurgency. In this respect the insurgent Viet Cong, with Communist backing, were pressing home the narrative that the North Vietnamese and Soviet way of life was a better alternative. In response, the US offered assistance and material support toward the South Vietnamese pacification effort.

Military forces have concentrated concentrate on warfighting tasks and leave tasks such as building schools, clinics, and bolstering local government to civilian agencies. This dichotomy is not particularly disturbing nor surprising. When these tasks are not synchronized and done simultaneously with civil activities, however, it is a sign that cooperation is lacking, resulting in deleterious effects. For instance, when combat

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[1] Thomas Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support,* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1982), v.

[2] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 3.

operations destroy crops or village centers, the local economy suffers and citizens may gravitate toward the insurgent group seeking restoration of their social needs. On the other hand, civil programs instituted without properly integrating security can lead to projects that are soon damaged, corrupted, or unsustainable by the local population. Ultimately, the pacification process should be comprehensive in nature, including both civil and military aspects, coherent in its policy, and reflecting unity of purpose and action.

Prior to 1967, the method preferred by the US involved keeping military and civilian operations separate and stovepiped under MAC-V (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam), not a joint civil-military process. This separation of activities (stovepiping) with very little central coordination or cooperation resulted in numerous setbacks and very little success. Simply stated, the organizational structure may have been efficient from a hierarchical perspective but isolating agency's and tasks without an effective means of achieving simultaneity constitutes a barrier to coordination. Therefore, competition for attention and resources replaced cooperation. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation neither improved the security situation nor reconnected the local people with their government. Without cooperation neither civilians nor military members could say with any definitively that security came before political, economic, and social development or the other way around.

Additionally MAC-V privileged combat operations at the detriment of addressing development or pacification attempts. When combat operations receive the preponderance of the resources and the weight of effort, the security of the local people suffered and this directly led to competition and a divergence from any cooperative strategy. Troop increases from 23,300 in 1964 to 184,300 in 1965 are indicative of this trend.[3]

Synonymous with the troop increases comes the struggle for power and identity between stakeholders. The subtle power struggle suggested that more troops meant the military maintained the preponderance of manpower, resources, and material. More

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[3] Dale Andrade, "CORDS / Phoenix: Counterinsurgency lessons from Vietnam for the future," *Military Review* (March-April 2006): 12

power for the military reinforced the "us" versus "them," or civil versus military scenario. When looking at organizational dynamics the in-group (military) owned the battlefield and the out-group (civilians) were by-standers leeching resources from the "main effort."[4] The perceived drainage of resources led to a competitive environment where civilians could not cooperate without acquiring the resources they needed.

To remedy the ineffectual and contentious nature of the civil versus military situation President Lyndon Johnson directed the formation of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Directorate (CORDS) in May of 1967.[5] The CORDS program was created to merge all of the military and other government agencies (CIA, USAID, USIA) and pacification programs under one office.[6] Structurally, the CORDS program was still aligned under the military command of General Westmoreland, MAC-V Commander. What is organizationally unique about CORDS, however, is that Ambassador Robert Komer became the Deputy for CORDS, a civilian with three-star general equivalent rank.

According to Robert Komer, the CORDS program organizational structure "was a unique experiment in a unified civil/military field advisory and support organization, quite different from World War II civil affairs or military government."[7]  The hierarchy consisted of a mix of civilians and soldiers who reported to each other and blended the chain of command. This allowed, soldiers to serve directly under civilians, and vice versa, at all levels. Additionally, personnel were drawn from all the military services,

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[4] In early 1965, the US side of pacification consisted of several civilian agencies, of which the CIA, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Information Service, and the US Department of State were the most important. Each agency developed its own program and coordinated it through the American embassy. On the military side, the rapid expansion of troop strength meant a corresponding increase in the number of advisers. By early 1966, military advisory teams worked in all of South Vietnam's 44 provinces and most of its 243 districts. The extent of the military's presence in the countryside made it harder for the civilian-run pacification program to cope—a situation made worse because there was no formal system combining the two efforts.

[5] Scoville, v. This combined the civilian Office of Civil Operations and the military Revolutionary Development Support Directorate. The title was changed in 1970 to Civil Operations and Rural Development Support.

[6] Cameron Sellers, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Improving Effectiveness," (masters thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA, 2007): 72

[7] R. W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict*, Westview Special Studies in National Security and Defense Policy (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1986), 119.

from the Department of State, USAID, CIA, USIA, and the White House.[8] As previously mentioned, CORDS fully integrated organizationally into the theater military structure but as was the pacification mission. This deep integration equated to unified civil-military advisory teams in 250 districts and 44 provinces throughout South Vietnam, which expanded the reach and comparative advantages of both the CSOs and military. Additionally, organizational integration brought with it the necessary pressure to integrate the pacification mission into the overall strategy for South Vietnam.

The creation of CORDS encouraged innovation from its personnel, harnessed the expertise of civil society, and focused the program's precious resources on improving: local health and administration, expanding civil affairs programs, education, agriculture, psychological operations, and logistics. From a military perspective it helped provincial staffs prepare plans and direct security operations by the territorial forces.[9] The end result was greater civilian influence and considerable weight behind pacification. The reason for greater influence was that civilians adhered to the idea that economic, social, and political development success would foster political allegiance. Without popular support, the insurgency would wither away. Additionally, with a more equal voice in the distribution of energy and resources, civilians could influence change on par with the military.[10] Furthermore, civilians had a better handle on the root of the problem (i.e. the political nature of the insurgency). A pure security focus consumed a larger amount of American resources and civilians understood the fiscal and political disadvantages associated with an increasing military footprint. Ultimately, the empowerment of civilian participants in the CORDS program balanced the power dynamics within the organization and equated to better cooperation, and eventually achieved relative success in South Vietnam.

CORDS invigorated civil and rural development programs to provide increased support, advisers, and funding to the police and territorial forces (regional forces and popular forces); this initiative was initially started by USAID as a means to improve local security, but the military ended up being a key component of executing the training.

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[8]  Komer, *Bureaucracy at War,* 119.
[9] Andrade, *CORDS / Phoenix: COIN Lessons*, 16
[10] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 68

Essentially, this rural development allowed military and civilian USAID advisers to work with their South Vietnamese counterparts at the province and village level to improve local security and develop infrastructure. With CORDS input the Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF) became capable of providing close-in security for the rural population.[11]

The ultimate policy of the CORDS program was pacification by mitigating the destructive physical and social effects of the war on the people and the economy of Vietnam, and strengthening non-communist political forces in South Vietnam.[12] Again, the reason social, political and economic received such emphasis is that US military involvement on foreign soil typically brings an influx of money, creates false economies, and creates opportunities that would not normally exist, fundamentally changing the political dynamics within various local economies.[13] The creation of winners and losers creates tension among the people and upsets traditional power structures. NGO collaboration and inviting civil economic experience can help alleviate this impact by fostering an environment conducive to private sector growth and sustainability. Essentially, CSOs can counterbalance disturbances created by military operations, thereby reducing local violence and tension.

**Dissecting Security and Organizational Dynamics in the Civ-Mil relationship**

This sub-section explores the civilian-military interface within the CORDS program in South Vietnam. The analysis presented in this section highlights two things; first it looks at the security environment in South Vietnam and examines how that environment affected cooperation between military and civilian actors. Secondly, this section looks at how the CORDS organizational structure enhanced cooperation between civil and military entities. From this analysis certain conclusions suggest that both security and organizational structure impact civilian-military interactions. These conclusions contain implications for future SOF-NGO interaction.

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[11] Robert M. Cassidy, "Back to the Street without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars," *Parameters* (Summer 2004): 77

[12] Joseph A. Mendenhall, "US Government, USAID, and US CORDS Objectives and Organization in Vietnam" (speech, Washington Training Center, OPM USAID, Washington DC, 22 July 1969)

[13] United States, *Guidebook for Supporting Economic Development in Stability Operations*, Technical Report TR-633-A (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Arroyo Center, 2009), 119.

*Security*

During General Westmoreland's first year as MACV commander, the
performance of the ARVN declined while VC terrorism increased in both frequency and
effectiveness.[14] The number of civilians assassinated or kidnapped by the Viet Cong rose
from 2,100 in 1960 to 14,673 in 1965, and in 1968 civilian causalities jumped to 88,000
compared to 49,000 in 1967.[15] Under these conditions it makes sense that security would
become an issue of prime importance to both military and civil personnel. Based on the
nature of the threat in South Vietnam and the political situation in Southeast Asia,
CORDS became the unifying program that allowed the USG to support South
Vietnamese efforts to roll back the tide of Communism, exemplifying cooperative action
and integrated planning.

The early days prior to the CORDS program initially saw an antagonistic
relationship between USAID and the US military because each saw the root of the
problem (security) and its solution differently. The US military, through MACV, saw
annihilation of the VC as the best strategy for countering the Communist narrative;
meanwhile civilians saw the pacification program as the most sustainable way forward.
The US military version of security meant force protection, installation, facilities and
base security. Security for locally affected or dislocated populations was extremely low
on the priority scale as was security for civilian workers. Civilian agencies on the other
hand, more readily saw the political nature of the insurgency and believed security for
both themselves and the local population was critical to making headway into bridging
South Vietnamese government services in order to cleave support away from the
insurgent group. Ultimately, there were dichotomous views on security that needed to be
rectified if ever cooperation were to occur.

Based on the military viewpoint that security was a rear area function and not
where the war was, senior military leaders decided to concentrate on combat operations,
attempting to employ "the superior energy, mobility, and firepower of the US soldier

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[14] John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*,
Paperback ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 151.
[15] Joseph A. Mendenhall, "US Government, USAID, and US CORDS Objectives and Organization in
Vietnam" (speech, Washington Training Center, OPM USAID, Washington DC, 22 July 1969)

against the VC."[16] In this case, the military saw utilizing armor, close air support (CAS), artillery, and infantry to reduce VC and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) numbers, under the assumption this would equal security. According to Westmoreland, instead of conducting quasi-pacification efforts, "the Marines should have been trying to find the enemy's main forces and bring them to battle, thereby putting them on the run and reducing the threat to the population. Instead, the Marines were securing real estate and conducting small-scale civic action."[17]

Civilians, on the other hand, saw security as the need to protect of both the local populace and those working to institute rule of law, provide basic social services, and maintain a functional economy. According to USAID and many civilian aid workers, not addressing the political or socioeconomic aspects of the conflict only kept the insurgent group closer to the population, defeating the whole point of being there. Civilians wanted to continue developing pacification type security forces (RF/PF), pushing security under provincial control but this were neglected in favor of Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) regulars.[18]

Ultimately Westmoreland's attitude proved detrimental to cooperation and the pacification effort. Seek and destroy operations discounted the insurgents ability to connect and thrive within a population. Pursuing this purely firepower-centric approach alienated the civilian agencies trying to meet the needs of local citizens. Therefore, US military and civilian efforts needed to be both coordinated and cooperative but this required compromise and unity of action on both parts.

With locals still being killed or displaced due to combat operations, and civilians getting assassinated or kidnapped, something different needed to be done. In this case, better coordination and distribution of resources was not enough, but a compromise between military and civilian entities needed to place more emphasis toward pacification.

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[16] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 151

[17] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 157. Referenced in this quote, the Marines and US Army SF were a part of the Combined Action Program (CAP). CAP was designed to train, advise, assist, local Vietnamese defense forces (Popular forces) by living in and among villages or hamlets. It proved effective by providing direct support to village centers and offered access to US military resources, firepower, and medical care.

[18] Komer, *Bureaucracy at War*, 48.

Even Komer admits, "pacification was failing for lack of adequate military security, and the military would take security more seriously if directly responsible for pacification…"[19] Komer pushed to energize pacification under the CORDS umbrella because he determined that "very early on the key to success was local security, and that the guts of local security was pacification. And in order to do the civilian tasks (i.e. building schools, or instituting economic reforms) that needed to be done you had to get local security that major battalions, regular forces, and ARVN were not accomplishing."[20] Underlying Komer's view of security was also a hope that military operations might eventually be woven in to a broader political strategy, countering the insurgent narrative.[21] Weaving military operations in with the political struggle would most definitely require the active participation of the broader civil society.

The local security environment created a need for cooperation between civilian organizations and military forces, which made both normative and operational sense. From a normative perspective, military and civilian efforts are sometimes diametrically opposed. From an operational perspective, energy and resources dedicated toward one may translate into losses in the other, which is synonymous with a zero-sum interaction. Therefore, civilians and military need to cooperate to ensure their efforts are maximized. The military typically views security, however, from a warfighting perspective—killing the enemy and remove him from the battlefield. Civilian agencies will resist enabling operations that they view further destroys civil society. The magic of the CORDS program, however, re-vectored the view of security and how to go about accomplishing it. Enmeshing civilians into the organization effectively changed the perspective to one that elevated local sustainable security as a necessity in the hierarchy of objectives in order to make any progress against the insurgent narrative.

Additionally, prioritizing and resourcing CORDS adequately placed more manpower in the villages, allowing the allies to confront the guerrillas consistently. Artillery and bombing campaigns can temporarily achieve physical disruption in any environment but they cannot be sustained like active civil engagement. Nor can they

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[19] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 54
[20] Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, 165.
[21] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 55

replace any power vacuum within the social spaces that people live. Civil society groups are desperately needed because they can cultivate an environment that is not conducive to insurgency. Evidence suggests that by 1970, the enduring presence of civil society groups, along with coordinated military security efforts, enhanced services provided by the South Vietnamese government and resulted in significant gains.[22]

### *Organizational Structure and Decision-making Styles*

How an organization is structured influences how power is managed and where decisions are made. Traditional hierarchies improve their organizational output by keeping the flow of information vertical exerting control from the top down. Managing information and uncertainty in this respect, however, typically pushes the responsibility to cooperate down to lower levels. The US military exemplifies the hierarchical structure with power reserved at the top. Civil society organizations, however, diffuse power and decision-making down to field workers at the "tip of the spear" while keeping the flow of information more horizontal. As previously mentioned, each organizational structure has pros and cons but each is theoretically optimized for their environment, culture, and conditions. What becomes important is that these two unique power and information management techniques make cooperation difficult when the two groups need to interact.

According to the cooperation theory laid out in the first chapter, the larger size organization can drown out both the voice and desired benefits of the minority group. The overpowering effect of the larger entity can negate comparative advantages gained from the diversity and niche capabilities of the smaller group. Prior to the CORDS program, 90% of the resources came from the military and 10% from civilian.[23] Essentially, the military was both hierarchically arranged and the dominant of the two organizations. Under these conditions control and power became difficult to manage because the larger US military outpaced civilian activities in much greater scope. As one author observed, "The concern was that civilians were submerged by the weight of military command and lost their power to press support for pacification along with

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[22] Andrade, *CORDS / Phoenix: COIN Lessons*, 16
[23] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 33

combat ops."[24] The military basically attempted to co-opt civilian agencies or at least minimize them in order to pursue lines of operation of their choosing. Civilian agencies responded by either refusing to "get on-board" or "go it alone." In this case, neither "getting on board" nor "going it alone" worked for the civilians and the military pursuit of seek and destroy did not achieve the desired security environment. Security either remained elusive and unsustainable forcing the military to re-engage areas repeatedly or civilian projects never got off the ground to due insurgent disruption. CORDS remedied this dilemma by shifting the financing and manpower burden more in favor of the civilian pacification effort and shifted the balance of organizational power more in favor of cooperative behavior.

The CORDS reorganization improved coordination and cooperation because positions were filled with the best available personnel regardless of military or civilian pedigree. Although the military continued to provide the most money, people, and resources, civilians were held in most of the key policymaking and directorial positions.[25] For instance, USAID became a leading agency within CORDS where its personnel were overwhelmingly civilian. "Even in the hotly contested I Corps area of Vietnam, only 750 of 2,000 CORDS personnel were military."[26] The State Department assigned several hundred FSOs to serve on CORDS Provincial and District Advisory Teams. The new organizational mosaic of CORDS inspired increased funding for development assistance and received its own transport and logistical support. U.S. military operations now transitioned from seek and destroy and a strategy of annihilation to one of protecting local population vice alienating them and encouraging an environment not conducive to meeting insurgent needs for popular support.[27]

The structure and composition of CORDS, with civilians and military members serving at equivalent levels throughout, created a cooperative arrangement that appeared both more lasting and modified participants behaviors in more meaningful cooperative ways. The CORDS structure offered predictability and as representatives worked together

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[24] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 61

[25] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 80

[26] Andrade, *CORDS / Phoenix: COIN Lessons*, 16

[27] Robert M. Perito, *US Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: Lessons Identified,* United States Institute of Peace (Washington, DC): 14

over time they solidified relationships and distinctions between the two groups began to break down; they all became part of one group versus an in- and out-group. Ultimately, the equivalence in status and treatment promoted cooperation, offered unitary direction, and focused everyone's efforts on "sustained territorial security for pacification."[28]

**Conclusion**

The context of this case should have followed the logic that a higher threat in the operational environment equates to a greater desire for cooperation between military and civilian organizations tasked with stabilizing a violent conflict. In South Vietnam, the threat was on the rise but cooperation could not be achieved initially due to two factors. First, the US military and civilian agencies possessed divergent views of what security actually meant. Second, the organizational patchwork prior to CORDS was not conducive to cooperation. Following the initiation of the CORDS program, however, the US military and USAID, along with other civilian actors, gained a larger voice in the decision making process This larger voice effectively brought pacification and socioeconomic reform into the light as important counter-insurgency tasks and adjusted the military perspective regarding local security.

Security played a factor in affecting cooperation by highlighting a disparity in views between the military and civil society. The military initially interpreted security as a rear-area function (protecting installations and base support) that served as a distraction stripping assets from the main effort. That main effort included combat operations focused on killing insurgents and removing them from the battlefield. This method of operating proved both exhaustive, led to unsustainable security, and alienated the local population. Civilian actors saw security as a local issue, tying local and regional security to the insurgents' ability to promulgate their strategic message of government failure, effectively separating the population from its government. CORDS not only unified the vision of territorial security for pacification, but also acquired the resources and management necessary to support pacification countrywide.

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[28] Scoville, *Reorganizing for Pacification Support*, 82

Organizationally cooperation was extremely limited prior to CORDS. Civilian participation was widespread in the early 1960's but as violence and combat operations escalated, the US military cast a broader shadow over civilian contributions. Eventually, civilian and civil society filed workers were either cast aside or co-opted by the military to recover the damage done by seek and destroy missions. The military as the larger and hierarchically arranged intuition dwarfed civilian exertions, provided most of the resources, and drove the fight as they saw fit. Success was limited and temporal under these conditions and cooperation lacking.

After re-organization brought about by Robert Komer and the CORDS Program, however, civilians were given status and power on par with their military brethren. This fostered a culture of growing cooperation, smoothed power differentials, and established working relationships that worked to achieve similar ends. In the end, CORDS was a more successful program for the cooperation and contributed greatly to the overall pacification and counter-insurgency effort in South Vietnam.

The next chapter will look at the same factors in the PRT program in Afghanistan in an attempt to determine how the security environment and organizational structure and psychology affect cooperation. The CORDS program and the PRTs in Afghanistan demonstrate considerable similarities and some marked differences. For instance, the CORDS program faced the same type of violence that PRTs experience in Afghanistan yet cooperation in the PRTs appears lacking. Secondly, the CORDS program began with a rocky start but eventually civil and military organizations settled on pursuing cooperative strategies. Meanwhile, the PRTs in Afghanistan maintain very different organizational composition and ultimately reflect uneven cooperative results.

## Chapter 5

### Case Study: Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan

*"The violence directed against humanitarian aid workers has come in a context in which the US backed coalition has consistently sought to use humanitarian aid to build support for its military and political ambitions. MSF denounces the coalition's attempts to co-opt humanitarian aid and use it to 'win hearts and minds'. By doing so, providing aid is no longer seen as an impartial and neutral act, endangering the lives of humanitarian volunteers and jeopardizing the aid to people in need. Only recently, on May 12th 2004, MSF publicly condemned the distribution of leaflets by the coalition forces in southern Afghanistan in which the population was informed that providing information about the Taliban and al-Qaeda was necessary if they wanted the delivery of aid to continue."*
*(Statement by Médecins Sans Frontières, 28 July 2004)*[1]

**Introduction**

Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF-A) provides a unique opportunity to study the effectiveness of NGO-military cooperation in conflict zones in the conduct of complex counter-insurgency, stability, and support operations. Such a study provides valuable insight into how better to facilitate cooperation between the military and NGOs in conflict zones. At a minimum, this study seeks to understand why cooperation fails to occur when it is otherwise expected. Extensive literature already discusses the importance of cooperation but does not identify the underlying conditions that either allow cooperation to flourish or stifle it. The reconstruction of Afghanistan and the complexity of counterinsurgency operations suggest that the cooperation, integration, and planning for "winning hearts and minds" through defense, diplomacy, and development actually needs to begin early on between fellow stakeholders (civilian and military personnel). Understanding, dialogue and coordination should occur well before disparate groups of different organizational culture and structure try to share the same operational space under the stress of conflict. Furthermore, this case study contends that security threats, high turnover among rotational units, and decision-making factors, each contribute barriers to pursuing effective cooperative strategies.

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[1] "MSF pulls out of Afghanistan", Médecins Sans Frontières, 28 July 2004, available at: http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/msf-pulls-out-afghanistan,  (accessed 6 May 2014).

In the case of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, we inherently expect to see cooperation. The reason for this expectation is that if the majority of the international community is on board with easing the conflict and overall goals appear aligned, why would cooperation falter? Crisis in Afghanistan involves acute scarcity of resources, and cooperation should maximize access to and use of those resources. Furthermore, inter-organizational responses to crises offer better opportunities to disperse risk, increase the available information, and allocate assets. The PRT is such an example of an inter-organizational structure and its success or failure in producing cooperation invites further study.

**Background**

In Afghanistan, a large portion of US forces fall under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).  ISAF is the NATO-controlled multinational effort, "to assist the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment."[2] ISAF's goal is to protect the population while facilitating improvements in governance and socio-economic development. These goals seek to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that encourages a positive connection between the local populations and their central government.[3]  Within Afghanistan, ISAF has established five Regional Commands (RC) that geographically dissect the country into quadrants, North, South, East, West, as well as an area around the capital, Kabul. Each RC maintains a headquarters, logistics, and support element to the region, including multiple PRTs.

USAID describes PRTs as: "Joint Civil Military units, which strengthen the reach of the central government through improved security and the facilitation of reconstruction and development efforts."[4] PRTs are considered the loci of coalition civilian-military interaction where joint teams of international civilian and military personnel (numbering 50-150 per team) undertake activities in the areas of security, reconstruction, support to

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[2] International Security Assistance Force, Mission Statement, http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html
[3] International Security Assistance Force, Mission Statement, http://www.isaf.nato.int/mission.html
[4] USAID PowerPoint Presentation given for ICRC Kabul, April 2004.

central governance and limited relief operations.[5]

This chapter explores the civilian-military interface resident between PRTs, NGOs, the military and other organizations that conduct humanitarian assistance and development activities in Afghanistan. The analysis presented in this chapter highlights the underlying security conditions and decision-making styles that may enhance cooperation or risk increased competition between civil and military entities. From this analysis, certain conclusions suggest organizational structure and culture may impinge on civilian-military interactions and with implications for future SOF-NGO interaction.

## *PRTs in Afghanistan*

The suffering and turmoil in Afghanistan can be captured first and foremost in a multitude of external factors that warrant a unifying prompt for action. The rallying cry to ease the physical and economic destruction caused by war should theoretically result in enhanced cooperation between allies, partners, and stakeholders.[6] According to previously discussed theories of inter-organizational cooperation, normative influences, such as the reduction of violence, should prevail over any self-interested desires. Prevalent influences should equate to cooperation from the tactical to the strategic level. Furthermore, the existence of mutually beneficial outcomes or advantages should equate to greater levels of cooperation across the board.  The individual level of analysis suggests cooperation should occur under conditions of shared values, goals, or in the attainment of common interests. Therefore, resolving conflict and turmoil should be a universally accepted goal within Afghanistan, inherent within the PRTs, and therefore maximizing cooperative strategy seeking behavior.

In early 2002 one of the mission sets within Afghanistan included conducting not only combat operations but also Foreign Internal Defense (FID) operations.[7]  The 95th

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[5] Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, Save the Children (London, 2004), 5

[6] Internal factors that positively or negatively affect cooperation include organizational culture, structure, and sub-goals and objectives. Meanwhile, the local security environment, harshness of the climate or geography, and linguistic or ethnic tension represent external factors that may affect cooperation.

[7] Foreign internal defense (FID) is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.

Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB), which falls under US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), offered units to help conduct this mission and worked toward increasing the legitimacy of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA).[8] To augment the Civil Affairs (CA) effort, the US created the first PRTs, which added a robust force protection component and representatives of USG civilian agencies. In the words of one author, "The first PRT was established in Gardez in November 2002 and PRTs in Bamian, Kondoz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar, and Herat followed in early 2003. These initial sites were chosen to provide the US military and central government access to key locations, including Afghanistan's four primary ethnic groups, former Taliban headquarters, and key warlords. The primary purpose of creating these outposts was political, but PRTs were also seen as a means for dealing with the causes of Afghanistan's instability: terrorism, warlords, unemployment, and poverty."[9]

Ultimately, the PRTs facilitated active engagement with local government officials and village elders to determine their requirements for improving local infrastructure and building the capacity of those local power wielders to provide basic services to the public.[10] The reason for this effort is similar to the prior case study in Southeast Asia and pacification. ISAF leaders believed civil society through PRTs could actively develop the local level services and connect those efforts to the central Afghan government. The goal for this connection sought to remove any popular base of support from insurgents and the Taliban.

From the start, the PRT program served as a means of burden sharing among countries participating in the US-led Coalition, and as a mechanism for expanding the reach of the NATO-led ISAF beyond Kabul.[11] In essence, PRTs exemplify a typical cooperative strategy that seeks to create an inter-organizational partnership to reduce

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Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense, (Washington DC, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), 12 July 2010, ix

[8] Kenneth Finlayson, "*A Collective Effort: Army Special Operations Forces in Deh Rawood, Afghanistan*"," Veritas, Journal of Army Special Operations History, Vol 5, No. 4, 2009: 43-55
[9] Robert M. Perito, *The U.S. Experience with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan*, special report 152 (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, October 2005), 2
[10] Finlayson, "*A Collective Effort*"," 45
[11] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 3

fiscal burdens, specialize to local area needs, and mitigate uncertainty by dispersing risk across a series of countries and agencies.

The PRTs' civil-military inter-organizational contribution to the overall strategy in Afghanistan maintained several missions: "to facilitate information sharing among various agencies; strengthen and extend Afghanistan governmental influence; to provide advice and assistance; and, to provide a safer environment by assisting with the regional development of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and local law enforcement authorities."[12] These missions are perceived, at least according to doctrine, as fundamental to stability or at least setting the conditions for stability.[13] They are designed to empower local authorities and as that empowerment takes hold the PRT should dissipate further into the background.

Previously mentioned in the former case study, the premise of stability operations and COIN suggests that a social contract exists between a group of people and their government. It also asserts civic participation and a healthy government warrants that security and basic services will be provided. In a COIN environment, the insurgent tries to demonstrate that the government is failing to meet the local populations basic needs, thus allowing the insurgent group to supplant its own goals and ideologies. Therefore, cooperation between military members, civilian personnel, and organizations in this context is important. Cooperation is essential normatively speaking because if the government and political leaders cannot cooperate to provide governance, security, protection, and access to goods, the insurgent effectively wins the battle of narratives. Simply stated, in a population-centric conflict, security (military) and development (civil) require cooperation in order to meet the needs of civil society. Alternatively, failure to cooperate manifests itself in negative or harmful ways; civil society breaks down, rule of law or governance is not maintained and the security situation gets worse as insurgents exert more influence.

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[12] William J. Flavin, "Civil-Military Teaming: A Solution?", Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College (SSI), (Carlisle US, 2012); 324
[13] Headquarters of the US Army, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24, (Washington, DC 2006), 1-19

Under this cooperative construct, providing humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development assistance, as well as establishing a long-term security presence, were major goals of coalition operations throughout Afghanistan. Challenges to cooperation occurred, however, not because security was the issue but military and civilian processes and avenues of achieving security diverged.

**Dissecting the Civilian-Military Relationship in Afghanistan:**

Several underlying issues created turbulence or challenges to cooperation within the PRT structure and among organizations that interacted with them. First, this section looks at Afghanistan as a high security threat environment, dangerous for civilian workers, the local population, and military members. In this case, if the security threat is violent and dangerous for CSOs to work in then cooperation between the military and civilians should rise. Determining the best approaches and methods for managing the threats, however, created tension. Perceptions of the quality of that security also play a factor. At the most basic levels, these perceptions of security are not based on how secure one actually is but rather how secure one *feels*. Second, the military's hierarchical organization manages power and information in a manner potentially incompatible with the *modus operandi* of many NGOs. As previously mentioned, NGOs distribute power and decision-making authority out to the field worker with very little infrastructure, support, or need to manage day-to-day activities.  In contrast, the military is virtually the opposite of NGOs in every way, reserving decision-making for those at the top, offering little flexibility or responsibility to those in the field. This perceived power differential between partner NGOs and military members exacerbates differences in organizational culture and structural attributes that create conflict between the two. Finally, the military's rotational presence affected both the internal relationships built within the PRT, as well as external relationships, by offering very little predictability or an opportunity to grow trust.  Trust has proven vital between people and organizations when they rely on cooperation to accomplish their goals.

*Security*

Many NGOs operate independently from ISAF, coalition, and US Forces-Afghanistan. They function under different mandates, charters, and even goals that may not align evenly or are diametrically opposed to military interests. They do, however, come in contact with the military in the "humanitarian" space and through coordination efforts of the PRTs. This is an important note because NGOs, humanitarian or first-generation NGOs in particular, continue to wish to remain neutral, impartial, and independent. NGOs rely on neutrality, impartiality, and independence because they believe it assures them access, protection, and freedom of maneuver when operating in conflict environments. These concerns expand and shape their perceptions of security and role distinction between military and humanitarian entities.

From the military perspective there can be no development without security.[14] For the most part, many NGHA's and NGDOs would not disagree with this proposition. According to development theorist Mark Duffield, a new, more direct relationship is emerging between the traditionally distinct fields of security and development. This relationship is due to the understanding that "development is ultimately impossible without stability and, at the same time, security is not sustainable without development."[15] The end result is a need for both sides to overlap and cooperate if they wish to achieve any of their objectives.

Failure to protect NGOs is important in contested areas, given that the insurgents' strategic goal is to drive out competitors including humanitarian agencies, prevent any meaningful development, and thereby demonstrate that the government is incapable of fulfilling its promises.[16] This effectively constitutes a shaping operation on behalf of the insurgents to gain influence. Under these conditions foreign relief workers assumed PRTs would provide security when required.

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[14] Kenneth Finlayson, "Operation Baaz Tsuka: Task Force 31 Returns to the Panjwayi," *Veritas*, Journal of Army Special Operations History, Vol 4, No. 1, 2008: 16

[15] Mark Duffield. *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. (London: Zed Books, 2001)

[16] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 7

If stability is best achieved by integrating military security tasks with civil development activities, then the PRT should be a model for success. Many of the PRT's privileged security but due to structural considerations and mandate were inappropriately staffed, structured or resourced to conduct broad security missions. Therefore, the PRT "model of cooperation and integration" changed some of its original purpose and began focusing on increasing interaction with the Afghan populace, government, and assisting in reconstruction.[17] This subtle change in role and purpose created several dilemmas. First, if the PRT was unable to conduct security operations appropriately, proper security arrangements needed to leverage conventional external security elements and combat units. Using conventional forces to conduct security had a similar effect as it did in Vietnam. Conventional combat units focused on installation, force, and convoy security while pursuing "seek and destroy" tactics against the Taliban. Firepower and maneuver used to search and destroy the Taliban created physical destruction in the village centers, failing to repair political and socioeconomic factors that allowed the Taliban to reassert their influence among the local populace.

The PRTs small organizational footprint meant they were incapable of providing any sort of robust security presence. As a result, the PRT emphasis on relationship building created conflicts between local combat units, members of other PRTs, and outside NGOs. In certain cases, "combat units looked down on PRTs and treated their CA teams and National Guard units as 'not real soldiers' who required protection. In extreme instances, tension between soldiers in PRTs and those in combat units precluded cooperation."[18] This tension presented a barrier to cooperation between the PRT and local combat units leading to a bleed over into relationships with NGOs, corrupting further attempts at cooperation. More importantly, the relief community saw the PRTs' lack of military strength as an inability to confront the sources of insecurity.[19] This perception of an inability to create secure conditions led to tension between the PRTs and external humanitarian and development NGOs.

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[17] Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, Save the Children (London, 2004), 20

[18] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 9

[19] Volker Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma: Civil-military Cooperation in Stability Operations," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 11

Second, with no real security function, PRTs began focusing more heavily on reconstruction and development tasks, thus creating an overlap in the humanitarian space. The diversion from security to more development work signaled both a turn toward the militarization of aid and a confusion over the blurring of roles. It also had the potential of signaling to civilian aid workers that the military was incompetent, not only because they could not conduct security but they also did not have the expertise to be successful in development activities. Both of these phenomena disrupted pathways to cooperation.

Much of the literature on NGO-military relationships suggests that NGOs perceive their impartiality and neutrality compromised if they are associated with the military or other government entities.[20] More specifically, many NGOs felt that PRTs constituted a security risk for aid workers by making them "soft targets" for insurgents.[21] Civilian relief workers want local authorities and warring parties to feel that NGO presence is harmless. In essence, NGOs can stay safe by making themselves non-threatening and allowing their weakness to protect them.[22] This is particularly true of humanitarian (NGHAs) or first-generation NGOs who strive to deliver immediate aid regardless of political affiliation or ideology. These NGOs perceive a close physical presence with the military is endangering their impartial image. According to a report by the US Institute for Peace on civilian-military relations within PRTs in Afghanistan:

> Many first-generation NGOs argued that the aura of neutrality and impartiality that relief workers relied on for their personal safety would be compromised if local people were unable to differentiate between foreign civilian and military actors. If military personnel engaged in relief and reconstruction activities, the boundary between civilian and military efforts would be blurred, if not erased altogether. PRTs were accused of contributing to this ambiguity when troops wearing the same uniforms were seen fighting insurgents and building clinics. Relations with NGOs became strained, and many refused to have direct contact with PRTs, fearing retaliation from insurgents.[23]

Despite this claim, the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office has been unable to determine a connection between a rise in NGO security incidents and the presence of any

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[20] Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, Save the Children (London, 2004), 7
[21] Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma", 11
[22] Daniel L. Byman, "Uncertain Partners: NGOs and the Military," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, Survival 43, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 97-114
[23] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 9

NGO affiliation with the military. In particular, 2012 witnessed a total of 174 individual NGOs directly involved in 164 security incidents, of which 56% were attributed to armed opposition groups and 32% to criminality.[24] The data, however, also supported the conclusion that violent attacks on NGOs remained seasonal, circumstantial, and collateral in nature rather than suggesting routine or targeted attacks.[25] This suggests that security concerns that link military activities with NGOs in a blurring of roles may be misplaced. Anecdotal evidence nevertheless suggests that despite their restrictive mandate and practical limitations, PRTs did play a positive role in providing a security presence and in helping to improve the security environment.[26]

Outside of conducting patrols, and in order to improve their security posture and standing in the local communities, PRTs used quickly built village improvement projects to demonstrate goodwill and encourage a favorable reaction to their presence. CA teams hired local contractors to construct schools, clinics, wells, and other small village improvement projects to establish good relations with Afghans and collect intelligence on local events and personalities.[27] Blowback occurred because these activities are typically under the purview of NGOs, thus civil representatives argued soldiers were not experts in development and that CA projects often reflected a lack of expertise. Simply said, when the PRTs reached outside of their previously understood roles and responsibilities and conducted local projects and provided social services, it further opened the divide between the NGOs and PRTs. Security may be an organizational perception problem, and it depends on who (civil or military) owns the problem and how they wish to address it. The military sees protection and deterrence as an effective security solution and legitimacy for the military mission whereas NGOs garner acceptance and social change as the key to securitization.

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[24] In Afghanistan there can be considered four main sources of insecurity: (i) military and terrorist activities of various paramilitary groups opposed to the current government and political process; (ii) inter-militia fighting; (iii) increased general lawlessness and banditry; and (iv) violence related to the narcotics trade.

[25] Thomas Muzik, *Afghanistan NGO Safety Office Quarterly Data Report Q4 2012*, January 2013; 3

[26] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 8

[27] Ibid., 10

*Decision-making styles*

Some of the confusion regarding civil-military roles and responsibilities stems from the hierarchical nature of the PRT. PRTs are owned and managed by military institutions directed from higher headquarters to "get results" and demonstrate progress. There is nothing atypical about this arrangement. However, the hierarchical nature of an organization also implies something much more subtle; management of power and the flow of information go vertically. The vertical nature of the organization and how it directs its activities does come in conflict with organizations like NGOs, which are flatter and more decentralized in their activities. For instance, the power relationship and expectation for information is reflected in the opinions of some PRT military personnel. Some of them voiced concerns that cooperation and wide-area communication was less than desirable with local NGOs and that cooperation with field workers was relatively unresponsive.[28] This expectation comes in direct conflict with how NGOs process information, make decisions, or resolve social problems.

Governments, because of their public role and unique position of power, are inclined to act authoritatively in their dealings with citizens. They are also empowered to legislate and enforce, thus creating the environment in which they operate.[29] PRTs, extensions of coalition or US governments, operate no differently. With a preponderance of military personnel (around 90 - 95% military) and access to Commanders Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, PRT commanders placed considerable emphasis on control and feedback, as well as task execution. In contrast, the humanitarian and development organizations with which PRTs worked with tended to be less hierarchical and placed higher priority on participatory decision-making processes and the acceptance model of aid delivery.

Therefore, the structural attributes and institutional culture of the PRT set certain expectations: one, that the PRT was responsible for actions within the region and the allocation of resources within it; and, two, any participants must coordinate their

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[28] Solomon Major, "Cross Roads or Cross Purposes? Tensions Between Military and Humanitarian Providers," Parameters: US Army War College 42, No. 2 (Summer 2012): 86-96

[29] Fowler, *Striking a Balance*, 24.

activities. Both of these constraints do not equate to cooperation. In fact, both actions can be perceived as requests for control, which restrict cooperation and demand all outside organizations adopt their methods and approaches.

With respect to power, PRTs sought direction from above and exerted power or control down through the organization. This is the polar opposite of the participatory process utilized by both humanitarian and more so by development NGOs. Part of the reason is structural, as one author noted: "Efficiency of small NGOs depends on a minimal administrative overhead without the necessity of a formal management structure."[30] In the areas of development and civil society building, hierarchical structures that rely on a central headquarters are less effective at developing appropriate local strategies and meeting niche requirements.[31] Conflict arises because each individual NGO involved is specialized and operates according to a different size and scale. They cannot easily scale up or down their ability to provide aid or direct development projects easily. Any expectations to the contrary should be minimized because the requesting agency will penalize the NGO for performance or lack of cooperation when it is not actually feasible.

The need to control the flow of information is synonymous with the exertion of power vertically. Very little data suggests the military-led PRTs in Afghanistan utilized sources of information outside of their formal bureaucratic chain of command or pre-deployment experience. In fact, very few PRTs communicated with one another let alone outside entities.[32] On the contrary, many NGOs participate broadly in epistemic communities that will provide them a knowledge advantage in working local and regional problems.[33] Epistemic communities are relevant to COIN, relief work, and development activities because they can elucidate cause-and-effect relationships and help shed some light on the nature of complex linkages between issues.[34] NGOs receive much of their

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[30] Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma," 15

[31] Franke, "The Peacebuilding Dilemma," 15

[32] US House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Agency Stovepipes vs. Strategic Agility: Lessons We Need to Learn From Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan*. Washington DC: US House of Representatives 2008], 30

[33] An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area. For more information see, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*, 3.

[34] Haas, *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*, 15.

comparative advantage over the private or government sectors in this realm and thus create an information asymmetry that must be reduced or marginalized when in contact with the military. Despite a perception that the NGOs appear anarchic, these epistemic communities represent informal webs that promote coordination among fellow NGOs, professionalize standards, and increase information sharing. The NGO linking website, InterAction, is a microcosm of an online epistemic community that can bridge global expertise and policymakers to local problems.[35] Further study is recommended on the impact of and the benefits of participating within epistemic communities, however, it appears this information asymmetry can promote cooperation or elicit a desire to compete for more information.

### *Rotational Presence*

The final object of study when looking at conditions that may facilitate or prevent cooperation is the rotational nature of troop deployments. Frequent turnovers between PRT members do several things. First, it defeats the resultant cooperation put forth in the Prisoner's Dilemma discussed in Chapter 2. According to the Prisoner's Dilemma, more turnovers reduce the expectation of future interaction. The Dilemma further suggests decreasing expectations of need to deal with another organization decreases reasons to cooperate. Secondly, personnel rotation schedules have exhibited a lack of institutional memory or knowledge transfer and have constrained individual abilities to engage effectively with the local population and civil society actors.[36] Troop rotations and disjointed overlap creates interlocutor fatigue and distress, exacerbating the external security dilemma. Interlocutor fatigue can best be explained as a constant flow of different people from multiple agencies asking the recipients for the same types of information repeatedly. This effectively wears the aid recipient down, causes confusion, frustration, and potentially distrust of the very government they are supposed to turn to for services.

Rapid turnover among CA personnel also led to limited knowledge of local

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[35] http://interaction.org, accessed 6 May 2014

[36] Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, Save the Children (London, 2004), 30

conditions. Combined with pressure from senior military authorities to demonstrate progress, rapid turnover of such personnel often resulted in hasty construction projects without reference to the Afghan government's capacity to support, absorb, and sustain those activities.[37] These substandard results led to more criticism from the relief and development community, reduced the credibility needed for further cooperation, and enabled local leaders to further distance themselves from relying on the central government. Additionally, the PRT reconstruction mandate lacked accurate evaluation metrics, consistent staffing, and quality control. Applying these measures to the work of PRT Civil Affairs teams resulted in projects that were questionable both in terms of relevance and quality. Short tours and frequent turnovers further aggravated the problem.[38] Ultimately, such problems detracted from the very relationships the PRTs and NGOs wished to cultivate and led to further disruptions in pursuing cooperative strategies. Basically, a lack of PRT credibility does nothing to contribute to the desire of NGO to cooperate with them.

**Conclusion**

This case study suggests what originally seems obvious, that a higher threat in the external security environment should equate to a greater desire for cooperation. It appears, however, that those providing the security and perceptions of its quality affect attitudes toward cooperation. With respect to the high security concerns in Afghanistan, the PRTs were sanctioned as providers of security but were not perceived by both the military and NGOs as providing it adequately. Furthermore, PRTs were less successful when their CA teams undertook development projects. As military organizations, PRTs had an inherent difficulty coordinating on development projects, especially if they were ordered by higher authorities to undertake those operations. Not concentrating fully on

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[37] Save the Children, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Humanitarian-Military Relations in Afghanistan*, 30.

[38] Michael J. Dziedzic and Colonel Michael K. Seidl, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams and Military Relations with International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Afghanistan*, special report 147 (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, September 2005), 12

creating a secure environment risked failing to establish the level of stability required by other civilian actors with greater development expertise.[39]

This study net suggests that the organizational structure matters to cooperation. When an organization manages power, control, and information vertically exerts that institutional design that is networked or oriented horizontally it creates tension. When the civilians of the NGO sector are not aligned, structurally capable, or culturally attuned to being "directed from higher," they are not apt to cooperate with the military. Perhaps reversing the polarity and "civilianizing" the organization may change the way power is diffused. When there are more civilians imposing their culture and methodology vertically or horizontally then theoretically there should be a change in level of cooperation. Finally, troop rotations reduce the civil-military expectations of working together in the future. From explorations of cooperation theory and the prisoners dilemma a minimal expectation of future interaction leads to defection. Therefore, longer rotations or establishing a working relationship in the virtual world "pre-contact" between NGOs and military members prior to deploying may chances for cooperation.

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[39] Perito, *The U.S. Experience with PRTs in Afghanistan*, 12

## Chapter 6

### Case Study: SOF and NGOs against the Lord's Resistance Army

*The legislation crystallizes the commitment of the United States to help bring an end to the brutality and destruction that have been a hallmark of the LRA across several countries for two decades, and to pursue a future of greater security and hope for the people of central Africa…I signed this bill today recognizing that we must renew our commitments and strengthen our capabilities to protect and assist civilians caught in the LRA's wake, to receive those that surrender, and to support efforts to bring the LRA leadership to justice.* – Statement by President Obama on signing the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009 (May 24, 2010)

**Introduction**

The current hunt for Joseph Kony and remnants of his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) represent this study's final observation of security and inter-organizational interplay as underlying factors affecting civil-military cooperation. The previous two case studies considered cooperation between organizations under crisis or during a high threat environment. In addition, they also critiqued how different organizational structures and composition can affect cooperation between very disparate entities. With respect to the hunt for Joseph Kony and the US's Counter-Lord's Resistance Army (C-LRA) program, cooperation between several NGOs (specifically the Invisible Children) and US SOF has thus far proven successful. The following case study seeks to examine why successful cooperation occurred in this case and what factors may or may not be at play between the two organizations.

To remain consistent with previous case studies, the C-LRA one looks at both the security environment and organizational structures in order to find reasons for cooperation or competition. In this case, the security environment can be characterized as a variable threat environment: relatively low threat to military and civilian aid workers, but high threat to the surrounding population. Additionally, from an organizational perspective, SOF is working hand-in-hand with a very different type of NGO. The NGO in question, Invisible Children (IC), is predominantly an advocacy NGO. Advocacy NGOs carry a very different charter and mandate than NGDOs or NGHAs. From an analytical standpoint, however, Invisible Child's relationship with SOF deserves

consideration because they share the same Area of Influence and operational tradespace.[1] Under such close proximity with respect to task and function, it becomes apparent that success can only be realized if both US military and civilian agencies decide to work together. Yet, it is also here in the murky space "between" where task boundaries start getting blurry and cooperation may succumb to competition.

This chapter will look at both the security environment and organizational structure of the SOF and Invisible Children relationship in supporting the local population's ability to bring Kony to justice for atrocities he and his group committed. Furthermore, this chapter contends that the security environment presents less of an impetus for cooperation but the size and organization of both NGO and SOF elements combined with a unifying goal invites cooperation.

**Background**

The LRA is a small-armed group that originated in northern Uganda 26 years ago but currently operates in the remote border areas between the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. Led by Joseph Kony, the LRA has inflicted tremendous human suffering on the people of the central African region, through actions which include massacres, mass abductions, sexual assault, and the recruitment of child soldiers.[2]

In 2008, the Ugandan government and the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) attempted to crush the LRA using massive search and destroy tactics, in an offensive labeled Operation Lightning Thunder, on Kony's camps in northeast DRC and Northern Uganda. These military attempts failed, scattering Kony and his forces throughout a dense jungle region roughly the size of California in an area characterized by an extremely minimal government influence with a very limited international humanitarian presence.[3]

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[1] A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver or fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control (Joint Planning 1-02)

[2] Alexis Arieff and Lauren Ploch., *The Lord's Resistance Army: The US Response*, CRS Report RL42094 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, April 11, 2012): 1

[3] Arieff and Ploch, *The Lord's Resistance Army,* 4

In retribution, Kony's guerilla group increased attacks on civilians and plundered more villages. The LRA also continued to press children to commit atrocities against their own families if they wished to avoid mutilation or remain alive.[4] The LRA also displaced or killed a significant portion of the population.  Between 2008 and 2011, with potentially fewer than 200 "core combatants," the LRA is estimated to have internally displaced some 465,000 inhabitants, killed more than 2,400 civilians, and abducted more than 3,400 children.[5] The conflict has eluded a military or negotiated solution until recently, resulting in widespread insecurity and worsening humanitarian conditions.[6]

Interest in the LRA, including within Congress, the Obama Administration, as well as previous presidential administrations, has been spurred by advocacy from constituents, human rights groups, and other non-governmental actors.[7] The largest activist group has been the NGO Invisible Children. The importance of Invisible Children is critical for understanding the current approach to defeating Kony, as well as its relationship with US SOF.

In 2008, after peace talks between Kony and the Ugandan government collapsed, Invisible Children began to advocate for a more robust US response to assist African nations in pursuing Kony and his group.[8] In making its case to the public, Invisible Children used a short film, "Invisible Children: Rough Cut" to educate Americans on political conditions in northern Uganda.[9] Invisible Children subsequently created several other media stories attracting attention to the LRA culminating in their video released on YouTube, "Kony 2012."[10] To date, the video has been watched nearly 100 million times on YouTube. The response these videos provoked with the American general public

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[4] Ryan C. Henderickson., *"Congress's Efforts to Defeat Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army: NGO Activism, Terrorism, and Evangelism,"* The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations, (Winter/Spring 2013), Vol 14, No 1:113

[5] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response*, 5

[6] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response*, 5

[7] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response,* 8

[8] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Kony 2013: US quietly intensifies efforts to help African troops capture infamous warlord," *Washington Post*, 28 October 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/kony-2013-us-quietly-intensifies-effort-to-help-african-troops-capture-infamous-warlord/2013/10/28/74db9720-3cb3-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html (accessed 22 April 2014).

[9] Henderickson, *Congress's Efforts to Defeat Kony and LRA*, 114

[10] The video can be accessed on YouTube via the following URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc.

continues to influence Congressional action.

In May 2010, Congress passed the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009, which stated US policy toward the LRA was committed "to working with regional governments toward a comprehensive and lasting resolution to the conflict," and authorized a range of US humanitarian, security, and development responses.[11] Consequently, November 24, 2010, the White House finally released a policy document labeled "Strategy to Support the Disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army." It laid out four "strategic objectives":

1. increase protection of civilians from LRA attacks;

2. apprehension or "removal" of Kony and other senior LRA commanders;

3. promotion of defections from the LRA and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of remaining LRA combatants; and

4. provision of humanitarian relief to LRA-affected communities.[12]

The multi-year strategy emphasized that the United States will "work with national governments and regional organizations."[13] Additionally, the approach called for the "simultaneous" conduct of a number of activities, both security-related and humanitarian.[14]

To lend the strategy teeth, the Obama Administration announced the deployment of approximately 100 US military personnel (predominantly SOF) to central Africa to act as advisors in support of regional military efforts to capture or kill senior LRA leaders on October 14, 2011. The mission of SOF was to help facilitate the provision of "political, economic, military, and intelligence support for viable multilateral and partnering efforts to remove Kony and high-ranking LRA members."[15] SOF's mission began almost from the beginning to overlap with the advocacy and activist efforts of Invisible Children.

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[11] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response*, 5
[12] White House, *Strategy to Support the Disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army*, (White House, Washington DC) 24 November 2010; 1
[13] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response*, 9
[14] CRS Report, *The LRA: The US Response*, 16
[15] International Crisis Group, *The Lord's Resistance Army: End Game?*, Crisis Group Africa Report No.182, 17 November 2011: 14

Invisible Children shifted some of its efforts from advocacy to active participation in the promotion of defections by creating radio broadcasts, pamphlets, and spreading the message that defection was a viable option for young disenfranchised LRA soldiers. Concurrently, Invisible Children's field staff urged SOF to begin focusing on encouraging rebels to defect versus repeating Operation Lightning Thunder. It is here in the merging of boundaries between civil and military entities where Invisible Children activists saw an opportunity: SOF could focus their energy on air-dropping leaflets to encourage defections while persuading villagers in the Central African Republic to welcome those forsaking Kony.[16]

As the previous case studies highlight, the traditional military approach to many problems involves applying already honed and specialized warfighting skills: bringing resources and intelligence assets to bear on so-called "kill and capture" efforts. Initial impressions suggest that SOF initially assessing their task in this way, to support the UPDF manhunt. This is a broad organizational response and should not appear surprising. Eventually SOF leadership determined locating a scattering of rebels in order to kill or capture proved logistically intensive and resource consuming. Essentially, the jungle terrain and lack of security forces in the border region have allowed the LRA to move with relative ease between the three countries.[17] Under these conditions defections became a priority. Currently, SOF regard peeling away rebels as the most effective way to weaken Kony and defections have become "the most destructive tool," admits Kevin Leahy, the Special Operations commander in charge of SOF C-LRA operations:[18]

> While Invisible Children focused on creating flyers aimed at disaffected members of the rebel group headed by the elusive warlord Joseph Kony, the military has been instrumental in helping to get their messages out, says Sean Poole (C-LRA Program Manager with Invisible Children). So far, those efforts have been focused on the Central African Republic, though efforts are under way to ramp up a similar effort in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the LRA also is active.[19]

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[16] Chandrasekaran, "Kony 2013" *Washington Post*

[17] ICG, *The Lord's Resistance Army: End Game?,* 1

[18] Chandrasekaran," Kony 2013," *Washington Post*

[19] John Vandiver, "US Special ops, activists working together against LRA," *Stars and Stripes*, 28 February 2013, http://www.stripes.com/news/us-special-ops-activists-working-together-against-lra-1.210040#.Uzc1G9w9Qds (accessed 22 April 2014).

According to anecdotal reports, the mission has prompted an unusual degree of cooperation between the military and NGOs. Over the past few years, the US military dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets over the region printed by Invisible Children.[20] In turn, Poole and other activists are advising the military on its defection campaign and they have provided troops with intelligence about rebel movements gleaned from a network of informers in the Central African Republic and Congo.[21] NGO and military leadership both admit the sensitivity of working together, but in this case the military had the logistical resources to extend the NGO capability and reach.[22]

The civil-military relationship in this case study represents a positive model of cooperation, one that may contain characteristics applicable to future cooperative relationships. The cooperative strategies chosen by SOF and the NGO Invisible Children can be characterized by several factors. First, the local security threat can be categorized as high for the local population but relatively low for US forces and civil aid workers. Security exists where civil and military organizations normatively agree on its importance but typically disagree about how to resolve the problem. In this example, US forces and Invisible Children initially started off with divergent views of how to achieve security but eventually came to a common understanding, indicating the pursuance of a cooperative strategy. Secondly, the organizational aspects of Invisible Children and the SOF members led each of them to pursue a shared governance model correlated with a positive sense of interdependence. Essentially, the small size of each group did not allow either one to dominate the decision-making process, so both organizations determined "if you fail, we fail" and were thus united in purpose. Finally, resource dependence theory can explain why Invisible Children drew near the military. Again, the NGO could use military aviation assets to flood the region with defection fliers in return for information, behavior suggestive of a common cooperative tit-for-tat strategy.

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[20] Chandrasekaran, Kony 2013, *Washington Post*
[21] Chandrasekaran, Kony 2013, *Washington Post*
[22] Vandiver, US Special Ops, activists working together, *Stars and Stripes*

**Dissecting Security and Organizational dynamics in the NGO-SOF relationship**

*Security*

Over the past three decades, LRA fighters inflicted significant atrocities against civilian communities and caused tremendous economic damage in the tri-border central African region. According to reports from International Crisis Group, the security situation for many communities and local populations were so severe people were too frightened to go outside and farm or go to market, thus losing what little self-sufficiency they may have had. Aid agencies and NGOs stepped up deliveries of emergency provisions but the inability to farm and sell or exchange produce reduces a community's opportunity to work together for collective benefit. These conditions led to further instability, tension, and societal decay. Providing protection and internally developing local security enables civilians to go back to their homes, farm, and return to normal economic activity.[23]

Civil society organizations and the military are critical to the process of re-instating normalcy to local communities ravaged by conflict. In doing so, both entities can either work hand-in-hand or choose independent approaches. For instance, military forces originally committed to concentrating on warfighting tasks: search and destroy missions, designed to kill or capture LRA members. Even after the failed attempt to kill or capture Kony, the UPDF and US forces still wanted to chase Kony into the triple-canopy jungle pursuing an annihilation strategy. Yet, pursuing purely kinetic solutions left civil and government agencies to manage thousands of displaced people and provide basic emergency services without a sense of resolution or security. In fact, dispersing the LRA only motivated Kony to engage in more violent hit-and-run tactics. The blowback from operating in this method left civilian agencies and weak local governments hesitant to work with military organizations.

It is important to note that the hunt for Joseph Kony is not a counterterrorist (CT) or counterinsurgency (COIN) operation, but certain lessons learned from COIN experiences still remain applicable. Kony's actions interrupt the ability of the local

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[23] ICG, *The Lord's Resistance Army: End Game?,* 9

community or government to provide protection, while he uses the population as a base of support, even if that local community is being forced to provide sustenance. It is therefore necessary for both civil and military organizations to reconnect the people with their government and police forces in a healthy and positive manner. Scattering Kony's forces into the jungle did not prove helpful or meet those ends. Additionally, a prior history of distrust between government and military entities also strained their relationship with local populations. Therefore, refocusing military forces to work in concert with civil and government agencies strengthened local communities, contained the security threat, and improved the trust and connection with the community. The process of encouraging defection, reintegration, and reconciliation allowed the UPDF and SOF the opportunity to facilitate Invisible Children's goals of creating an environment where select areas could focus on rebuilding.

Invisible Children and SOF teamed up and strengthened their partnership by encouraging defection as a useful means for stripping away Kony's ability to violently disturb local communities. Although challenging at first, both organizations saw cooperation through the combined delivery of pamphlets and sharing of intelligence as both effective and necessary for achieving desired outcomes. The fruits of their cooperation are witnessed in the fact that the defection campaign is slowly dissuading members of the LRA from continuing the cycle of parasitic violence on the population. Civil-military collaboration improved the healing process within the broader society. By encouraging defection and paying specific attention to areas that were targeted by the LRA, the UPDF and US forces showed the population that they were not the enemy. Collaborative civil-military projects emphasized the message that the LRA was gone and quelled fears about the government of Uganda's ability to remain and help rebuild lives ruined by war.[24]

Interpretations of the security environment are informative for determining why the Invisible Children and SOF chose to cooperate. Again, military, government, and locally-based CSOs concur that security is important to ending violence and healing

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[24] Laura J. Perazzola, *Civil-Military Operations in the Post-Conflict Environment: Northern Uganda Case Study*, Naval Post Graduate School, (Monterey CA, December 2011), 74

communities. The difference appears in approach or methodology for accomplishing security. The military initially took a direct, kinetic approach to solving the security issue, anticipating that it could be achieved through annihilation of Kony's forces. This approach makes logical sense but was impractical for SOF based on the geographic environment, the size of the operating area, and the civilian susceptibility to attack. SOF leaders therefore concluded a new method required the cooperation of all stakeholders involved. Invisible Children brought innovation, media resources, and access to new information necessary to pursue defection, while SOF brought organizational and logistical resources to bear. Cooperation was the product of agreeing on what security meant to the local population and reinterpreting the best way to achieve it.

## *Organizational Structure, Composition and Resource Dependence*

Aside from security concerns, there are other factors that inform why Invisible Children and SOF decided to cooperate. The threat environment offered an opportunity for both the military and CSOs to reorient to the problem set, align their interests, and find a meaningful solution through enemy defections. Both the military and associated NGOs realized that in order to weaken Kony, both task structure and positive interdependence would influence a cooperative approach. The task structure dictated that to destabilize Kony's power base, defection must be achieved across a broad geographic, ethno-linguistic area. The dispersal of NGO-researched and produced pamphlets, along with radio broadcasts. were the chosen means to accomplish that and military assets could be leveraged in support. Task structure alone does not completely explain cooperation. Positive interdependence also played a role. Positive interdependence suggests that neither SOF nor NGO could go it alone. They both needed to "sink or swim together" and that meant they each needed to maximize their own productivity while maximizing the productivity of the group.[25] The conditions for positive interdependence were unique in this case because both Invisible Children and SOF had complementary resources. In essence, they cooperated for the same goals and did not need to compete for the same resources.

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[25] West, Tjosvold, and Smith, *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*, 173.

Security can help frame why the two organizations ended up with a cooperative task structure and positive interdependence, but common perceptions about differences in organizational culture, mandate, and resourcing indicate they may create power or relational imbalances that hamper cooperation. In the case of the C-LRA, however, a more detailed look at organizational size, composition, and the theories that support inter-organizational cooperation indicate that the traditional barriers to cooperation were easier to break down between the smaller SOF organization and Invisible Children.

The organizational nature of Invisible Children and SOF created a cooperative arrangement that appears strong and enduring. Yet, why would two organizations of varying degree continue to display cooperation just because goals are positively intertwined? For example, the PRTs in Afghanistan eventually developed similar goals and determined their fates were intertwined but cooperation was still difficult to achieve. It appears that structural aspects of the SOF-NGO relationship, particularly with respect to size and power, affected what cooperation looks like between the two organizations.

First, Invisible Children is relatively small advocacy NGO of approximately 100 employees that specializes in media relations and maintains a mandate to encourage broader governmental and community policy support.[26] However, Invisible Children holds a niche in marketing and influence by utilizing a diverse and extended network. The small size of the organization makes it appear as if it does not possess much power or influence, especially with respect to resources. Invisible Children, however, possesses a high degree of centrality in its network, which is comprised of all of the actors involved in the C-LRA program.[27] Therefore, proximity to the problem set and a central position allows Invisible Children to control information flow between other actors in the networked environment. In essence, Invisible Children accumulates power and status by virtue of its position and the size and centrality of their position impacts how much

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[26] http://invisiblechildren.com, accessed 22 April 2014
[27] For more information on the typology of networks refer to *Organizations Working Together* by Catherine Alter. Additional material can be referenced in the *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*

influence they have and where they can institute change.[28]

Invisible Children coordinated their lobbying activities, possessed strong advocates for countering Kony in Congress, and energetically mobilized grassroots action to advance legislation. This put them at the center of the C-LRA policy debate and allowed them to use public influence to shape Ugandan government and military responses. Furthermore, research on American public opinion and the use of force abroad indicates that the public will have little tolerance for military deployments that are primarily humanitarian in nature, but rather support deployments that address American strategic interests.[29] In this case, Invisible Children elevated the national conscience of the issue and created an impetus for greater SOF involvement. In the process, Invisible Children became central to addressing the conflict and balanced the power between them and the US military.

It should be noted that although Invisible Children still believes in maintaining a sense of independence, it is by definition a political organization. Therefore, based on its centrality, it denies its ability to claim any impartiality. Thus, Invisible Children's ability to achieve its goals is thoroughly intertwined with the goals of others. In essence, although Invisible Children may have a far-reaching network, ability to mobilize, and broad base of influential support, it is not physically sized, resourced, or capable of stopping Kony's atrocities unilaterally. In order for Invisible Children to achieve their goal of stopping Kony, it needed to embrace a cooperative strategy with an organization that could physically act on their behalf—SOF.

Large military organizations typically bring the preponderance of manpower and resources to bear on certain problem sets but frequently lack the knowledge, expertise, network, or directive to solve complex inter-related problems. Solving the world's social problems is simply not an organizational task set most military's are designed to accomplish. Additionally, based on the task, ease of deployment, and its hierarchical

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[28] West, Tjosvold, and Smith, *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*, 427.

[29] Richard C. Eichenberg, "Victory has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981-2005," International Security 30, no. 1 (2005): 140-177. Christopher Gelpi and Peter D. Feaver, "Success Matters: Casualty Sensitivity and the War in Iraq," International Security 30, no. 3 (2006): 7-46

nature, the military frequently outsizes other actors in a conflict environment, controlling the requisite resources, power, and flow of information. In the study of C-LRA operations, however, the military did not have these luxuries. It did not have centrality and the power associated with it. Therefore, military organizations involved in the C-LRA effort needed to operate differently than otherwise expected.

In this case, SOF came to the fore as a formidable military force that could influence and help neutralize Kony. It did not possess the centrality, size, or governing ability to overwhelm, outpace, or out-scope surrounding organizations. SOF possess the will, skill, and dominating fighting spirit of strong operator personalities. Based on their scope, experience, and maturity, SOF operators should encourage cooperation with others when it best fits their mission. Additionally, based on the centrality of the Invisible Children, SOF ended up on the exterior of the C-LRA network. Therefore, SOF could choose an independent strategy or line of operation but would not be able to dominate any inter-organizational arrangement, nor could they effectively go it alone. Collaboration and coordination were going to be the best strategies to employ in order to meet mission goals and directives.

Overall, it appears both organizations were right-sized for cooperation. It also seems to make sense that both SOF and Invisible Children pursued a shared governance model. Shared governance basically suggests that decision-making regarding what to do and how to resolve security and redevelopment in the central African region was approached on a basis of egalitarianism. Each organization had equal say and participation in the crafting of strategy and designing a pragmatic method for stopping Kony.

Resource dependence theory is also informative and additive when looking at cooperation between the Invisible Children and SOF. Resource theory suggests that as resources are asymmetrically distributed in the external environment, the stock of resources for one organization may not be enough to accomplish a task, while another holds the best resources. Under this condition of resource scarcity it makes sense that the accomplishment of individual organizational goals depends on both the alignment of

goals and the integration of critical resources from other contributors.[30] Based on the fact that SOF possessed access to logistical bases, information processing capabilities, and the ability to expand the communication reach for Invisible Children, cooperation makes sense.

In a resource-based cooperative relationship, however, there is an opportunity for one or more organizations to take advantage of this asymmetry and hold another organization hostage (i.e. resource hostages). In this case, resource hostage-taking may not have been possible based on SOF's position in the environment (network periphery vs. Invisible Children's centrality) and their smaller size limited their ability to exert greater power. Ultimately, the C-LRA arrangement between Invisible Children and SOF offered organizational structures that balanced power and resources, improving operations directed at Kony.

**Conclusion**

This study looked at the security environment and organizational dynamics between SOF and the NGO Invisible Children. The security environment constituted a lower threat to military and civilian workers and tried to determine whether security concerns posed enough of a reason for the two entities to cooperate. Under crisis, one would expect SOF and NGOs to cooperate in order to find suitable solutions and provide stability. In this case, LRA activities operated regularly in the tri-border region of central Africa for nearly three decades, so no immediate crisis existed. Under these conditions, rates of cooperation should be low unless operational and strategic goals are aligned and it would make sense to do so. Otherwise, the military and civilians workers will merely maintain independent strategies, coordinating occasionally to prevent interruptions in their work but otherwise pursuing their own objectives.

In this case, cooperation emerges not due to crisis, but out of operational necessity and resource scarcity. UPDF and SOF operators could not continue expending time, energy, and resources scouring the dense jungle terrain of the tri-border region on search

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[30] West, Tjosvold, and Smith, *International Handbook of Organizational Teamwork and Cooperative Working*, 101.

and destroy missions, looking for stray LRA members. The terrain and vastness of the area are too inhospitable and challenging for combat operations. At the same time, CSOs could not fully provide socioeconomic support while local groups felt threatened and LRA raids continued. Therefore, local territorial security became a unifying vision worthy of both civilian and government consideration, cooperation, and action.

From an inter-organizational perspective, cooperation also appeared to make sense. Complementary sizes and the relative power position of each organization can explain how power was managed between them. First, size matters. Looking at past case study's the larger the organization and the more resources it has, the easier it is for that organization to outpace and exceed the scope of surrounding organizations. This explains why many NGOs do not like to cooperate with the military. The military will overshadow their efforts, or even worse, try to co-opt them.

With respect to the C-LRA mission, both SOF and UPDF outsized Invisible Children in manpower and resources but not necessarily in power. Invisible Children maintained a positional advantage of being the center of the actor network against the LRA. SOF could therefore pursue its own independent strategy but it would have been outside the unifying efforts of all others involved in stabilization. SOF independence would have missed an opportunity for access to civilian groups that managed reconciliation, local government powerbrokers that support security, and economic development for the population. Although counterfactual, SOF would have most certainly missed an opportunity to strip Kony's forces via desertion, being forced to hunt Kony further into the jungle.

Finally, resource scarcity plays a role in choosing a cooperative strategy. Invisible Children may not have typically found a good reason to cooperate. Again, if NGOs and SOF were capable of pursuing independent strategies, what else would motivate cooperation? In the hunt for Joseph Kony, it appears the SOF and UPDF military relationship brought specialized aircraft, resources, and planning expertise that were otherwise unattainable by Invisible Children. From a resource perspective, Invisible Children was dependent on the military for this layer of support if it truly wanted to affect change. From the SOF perspective, Invisible Children possessed local and cultural

information, as well as an influential informal network useful to SOF. Resource theory can explain why both organizations pursued a cooperative strategy.

In the end, the cooperative relationship between SOF and the NGO Invisible Children appears fruitful. Whether or not it is a useful model for future cooperative interaction, however, remains to be seen. Invisible Children is an advocacy NGO that briefly transitioned into doing actionable work in the field, but it did not involve itself in the day-to-day working on specific programs directly linked to development or relief. Therefore, the type of cooperation in this operational space will present slightly different. The size, centrality and resources of an organization will also change the shape and scope of any inter-organizational cooperative arrangement.

**Chapter 7**

**Conclusion**

This thesis questioned the notion that a pre-existing history of NGO aversion to cooperating with US Military Forces would make future cooperation between the two organizations unlikely. The paradigm regarding when and why to cooperate is shifting. The old aversions based on differences in worldview, organizational culture or mission, can be breached. More often than not, SOF and NGOs share some similarities in commitment, goals of empowerment, organizational footprint (size), and a shared level of closeness to the local populations they work by, with, and through. Given these similarities, it is useful to discover the conditions where SOF and NGOs would work together and determine when it is best to facilitate cooperative relationships. Alternatively, it is equally useful to know when it is best for both to pursue independent strategies and avoid any inter-organizational partnerships.

This study emphasized that merely expecting to work with or coordinate with others in the same operational environment is no longer something that is nice to have, but now a precursor for success. The White House *National Security Strategy 2010*, *Department of Defense's Strategic Guidance Jan 2012*, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010*, and *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2010*, all support the notion that a comprehensive network of actors will participate in future complex humanitarian and political emergencies, striving for unified solutions. Subsequently, NGOs and SOF are only one set of actors in this multilevel, networked system, a system that involves different contracting arrangements and partnerships with a range of state, non-state, commercial, and not-for-profit actors.[1] Therefore, competition or simply pursuing an independent strategy must be balanced against the relative gains that can be achieved through cooperation in these wide networks. The price organizations pay for increasing cooperative arrangements means they should expect compromise as they direct their energies toward objectives that are inherently joint.

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[1] Goodhand and International Peace Academy, *Aiding Peace?*, 83.

Game theory provides one explanation for why cooperation may be more beneficial. In a zero-sum game where there is an expectation that the two participants will need to work together in the future, cooperation becomes attractive to ensure long-term gains at the sacrifice of short-term ones. Resource dependence theory suggests that a limitation or scarcity in resources in the external environment improves cooperation because it raises the odds of gaining access to those resources. Frequently, partnerships provide the flexibility to leverage other competencies or offer opportunities to share resources. From a different perspective, cooperation also equates to greater diversity, specialization, or access to expertise. Combined together these theories suggest these reasons of the value in cooperation and why it matters.

**What was studied, what was learned, and why it matters to SOF?**

Originally this paper suggested that during crisis, one would expect to see cooperation increase between most organizations for normative reasons. It only makes sense that from the outside looking in, the US military, various agencies, and NGOs arriving in an area of suffering should wish to help each other. Yet in such a scenario it is important to discover why cooperation actually succeeds or fails.

Before analyzing cooperation, this study defined some brief characteristics about both NGOs and SOF, recognizing that each categorical term can appear extremely broad, inadvertently obscuring the nuances between the two types of organizations that may lead to greater synergy. Illuminating the unique traits relevant to both SOF and NGOs uncovered different areas where cooperation may be easier to achieve, more beneficial, or simply not going to happen. For example, SOF may work with NGHAs but humanitarian organizations maintain very distinct roles and mandates with very different measures of success than NGDOs. This shapes the type and level of cooperation that can be expected.

The examination subsequently took three cases studies—the CORDs program in Vietnam, PRTs in Afghanistan, and Counter-Lord's Resistance Army operations in the tri-border region of central Africa—which were separated by timeframe and geography to analyze how the military and NGOs worked through different cooperative arrangements under similar conditions.

The context of the CORDS program in South Vietnam supports the logic that a higher security threat in the operational environment should equate to a greater desire for

cooperation between USAID field workers and the US military. As the threat conditions increased, however, cooperation actually faltered until certain perceptions and structural changes occurred. So what was the change that fostered cooperation?

Security conditions and inter-organizational relationships between the military and civilians dictated that cooperation actually becomes most fruitful when competition is removed from the equation. In this case, moving civilian leaders into the CORDS organizational structure and elevating the pacification mission to the same level as military search and destroy missions allowed for more equitable distribution of resources. Equitable does not necessarily mean equal, but it does remove some impetus to compete for attention and funding. Empowering civilians generated more cooperation because the existence of similar goals filled any void left by the lack of pressure to compete. Ultimately, under the CORDS program, USAID and other local CSOs gained a larger voice in the decision-making process. Equalizing the civilian-military power balance effectively brought pacification and socioeconomic reform into the light as important counter-insurgency tasks.

The CORDS case study illuminates several things for SOF and the military with respect to cooperation. First, the larger military organization, with greater resources and manpower, can overshadow any effects civilian workers may accomplish. This can diminish results and lead to competition for resources. Secondly, civilian inputs should be recognized and rewarded in order to motivate and strengthen cooperation.

A similar observation is made when examining PRTs in Afghanistan. PRTs were originally designed to follow a model similar to the CORDS program. Unlike the CORDS program, however, the PRTs in Afghanistan kept the military solidly in control of decision-making and resource allocation with only minimal civilian inputs. The main reasons cooperation did not take off between the PRTs and outside NGOs and civilian actors is twofold. One, there is competition for funding and resources. Two, there is a competition to win the hearts and minds of the locals. When the military undertakes building schools, wells, and other civilian infrastructure, it creates opportunities for competition for civilian aid and relief workers. This competition can be directly linked to media attention, which is correlated to donor funding and priorities. Essentially, when the military accomplishes tasks without the requisite expertise or credibility it reduces the

validity and reason for being for the NGO, thus creating conflicts of interest and inviting competition. It is important to note that security had an impact on cooperation but primarily due to competition for resource allocation, decision-making authority, and mission alignment.

Finally, the case study in Counter-LRA operations gives us the best view of cooperation when competition is removed from the environment. In this scenario, both SOF and the NGO Invisible Children operated in a resource-scarce environment. Both were therefore challenged to discover new or unique means or methods for accomplishing a mission that would reward them both equally. Invisible Children could be guaranteed of greater donor support and positive press if it diminished Joseph Kony's influence in the area. SOF also receives its rewards through mission accomplishment. Both organizations considered the killing or capturing of Kony as the primary mission and linked their reward structure accordingly, therefore negating performance based metrics and allowing cooperation to flourish. This case study provides the best illustration of positive interdependence between the two groups focused on achieving the same objective.

**Recommendation**

The primary recommendation of this thesis is to examine ways in which to remove competition from between military units and NGOs. One method of doing so is by making resourcing neutral and equitable. For example, this can be achieved by making projects outcome-based instead of resource-based, where both sides can feel equally rewarded for their work. This approach appears to be a mutually acceptable solution: a "win-win" scenario. When the emphasis for rewards is placed upon a successful outcome and not necessarily independent performances both sides can freely pursue similar ends without feeling the need to compete. Essentially it appears the more unique the two organizations, for instance Invisible Children and SOF, the better cooperation will be if the endstates are aligned and success is defined by achieving the outcome versus independent performances.

This thesis further recommends SOF consider greater attempts to reach into pre-established epistemic communities (NGO-based or otherwise) that may already be working to solve some of the complex social problems with which they are presented.

These epistemic communities generate several possibilities and solutions for SOF to consider. First, the community itself contains resident knowledge, support, and expertise in dealing with issues of specific concern to both SOF and the NGO community. Examples of mutual issues include establishing rule of law, providing health and human services, or delivering social services that undermine threats to stability and peace. Second, tapping into various epistemic communities increases the number of interactions and creates increased potential for greater interaction for the future. Increased opportunities for involvement can therefore occur early through virtual contact before meeting in the same tradespace. It also allows each organization to determine individual motivations, desires, and restraints offering an opportunity to craft cooperative or independent strategies that take these factors into account.

**Cooperative Strategies in Action**

This study began by observing the situation in Nigeria where Boko Haram, inspired by Abubakar Shekau and motivated by distorted ideological underpinnings, captured 280 Nigerian schoolgirls, provoking a response from the international community. Boko Haram's actions spawned a US response and brought a number of organizations—NGOs, CSOs, various agencies, and the US military—out of the shadows of their day-to-day grind and catalyzed them to act together as active participants in a multi-layered, multi-dimensional conflict. As a matter of perspective, this scenario illuminated the very real need for two of those groups, SOF and NGOs, to share the same operating area as a number of different actors and stakeholders.

If we determine Africa is currently a resource-scarce environment and both NGOs and SOF will be involved, the key to success in future operations is to create matching or complementary mission goals while tying rewards to the mission outcome of returning the girls, minimizing Boko Haram, and returning to the security environment to the status quo. If competition is not removed and both SOF and NGOs are forced to compete for the same resources or over the same population, then cooperation should not be expected.

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