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THESIS

**REBEL INTEGRATION IN CONFLICT SETTLEMENTS:
PAST LESSONS AND THE PROSPECTS OF MILF
REINTEGRATION**

by

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THE PROSPECTS OF MILF REINTEGRATION**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the rebel reintegration programs of the peace agreement between the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The study involves a broad analysis of lessons learned in previous rebel integration programs and an in-depth evaluation of successful and failed disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs in selected conflict settlement cases. The case studies include the civil war settlements in Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone as well as the peace accord between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front. The analyses of these cases are used to assess the policy direction of the current rebel integration program with the largest and the last remaining secessionist group in the Philippines—MILF. The study also develops a prognosis about future problems and opportunities in the implementation of the rebel reintegration program specified in the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB), which was a product of the peace accord entered between the GRP and MILF. Though the CAB presents an all-inclusive peace agreement that suggests a likelihood of sustainable peace, its DDR program follows a totally different path of reintegrating the rebels, making it a determining factor in the outcome of the peace deal. This study determines the issues and prospects of the MILF reintegration program that will aid in formulating policy interventions to increase the prospect of implementation success.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AHJAG	Ad Hoc Joint Action Group
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BBL	Bangsamoro Basic Law
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force
BJE	Bangsamoro Juridical Entity
BTC	Bangsamoro Transition Committee
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro
CCCH	Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DND	Department of National Defense
EC-15	Executive Council of 15
FAB	Framework Agreement of the Bangsamoro
FAR	Rwandan Armed Forces
FPA	Final Peace Agreement
GRP	Government of the Philippines
ICP	Independent Commission on Policing
IDB	Independent Decommissioning Body
IMATT	International Military Advisory and Training Team
IMT	International Monitoring Team
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MOA-AD	Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PNP	Philippine National Police
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
SPCPD	Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development

SRSF	Special Regional Security Force
UN	United Nations

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—Allen Van L. Estrera

I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Muslim population residing in the south of the Philippines has been at war periodically for more than 400 years.¹ It has persisted through the Spanish occupation, U.S. colonization of the Philippines, and now the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).² The GRP has tried to integrate the Muslim minority with the rest of the Philippines; to that end, the GRP has encouraged resettlement of non-Muslim Filipinos with the Muslims in the south.³ However, the Muslim minority has always believed that it should have a homogenous Islamic government or total autonomy, which is paramount to its religion.⁴ The GRP did not agree to such a demand as it would have led to separation; this situation ignited the latest Moro insurgency.⁵

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) engaged the GRP in armed conflicts in a bid to liberate the *Bangsamoro* (Moro nation).⁶ In the process, the MNLF gained control of areas around Cotabato City and its airport.⁷ Eventually, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi intervened and mediated the Tripoli Agreement in 1976, signed between the GRP and the MNLF.⁸ The agreement stipulated the establishment of an “autonomous government, a judicial system for Sharia Law, and the observance of a

¹ Dennis Bryce Fowler, “The Moro Problem: An Historical Perspective” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1985), <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/21452>.

² Fowler, “The Moro Problem.”

³ Fowler, 15.

⁴ Fowler, 15.

⁵ Fowler, 15.

⁶ Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷ McKenna.

⁸ “The Tripoli Agreement,” Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), accessed May 5, 2017, http://mnlfnet.com/The_Tripoli.htm.

ceasefire.”⁹ Following this agreement, in 1989, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) was established.¹⁰ However, of the 13 provinces and nine cities, only the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi agreed to be part of the ARMM.¹¹ This agreement brought about a separation within the MNLF of a group of officers led by Hashim Salamat, who believed in having independence over autonomy.¹² Salamat eventually formed the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and continued armed conflict with the GRP.¹³ The GRP continually tried to negotiate to bring an end to the Moro insurgency, but none of its efforts had any traction to achieve peace with the Islamic separatists.¹⁴ In an effort to rectify the situation, Malaysia, with the support of the International Contact Group, started to mediate peace talks between the GRP and MILF in 1997.¹⁵ In 2014, the GRP and MILF signed the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro, which allowed the “creation of the new Muslim autonomous entity called Bangsamoro under a law to be approved by the [Philippine] Congress, in exchange for a deactivation of rebel forces by MILF.”¹⁶

⁹ “Mindanao Conflict: In Search of Peace and Human Rights,” Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, December 2008, <http://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section2/2008/12/mindanao-conflict-in-search-of-peace-and-human-rights.html>.

¹⁰ “1987 Constitution,” Supreme Court of the Philippines, E-Library, accessed May 5, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121028105057/http://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/index7.php?doctype=Constitutions&docid=a45475a11ec72b843d74959b60fd7bd64558f82c40d9d>.

¹¹ “ARMM History,” Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, accessed May 5, 2017, <https://armm.gov.ph/discover-armm/history/>.

¹² “Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF),” Federation of American Scientists (FAS), November 27, 2001, <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/mnlf.htm>.

¹³ “Moro National Liberation Front,” FAS.

¹⁴ “Philippines Reach Landmark Peace Deal with MILF,” Conciliation Resources, March 26, 2014, <http://www.c-r.org/news-and-views/news/philippines-reach-landmark-peace-deal-milf>.

¹⁵ Kristian Herbolzheimer and Emma Leslie, “Innovation in Mediation Support: The International Contact Group in Mindanao,” Conciliation Resources, July 2013, <http://www.c-r.org/resources/innovation-mediation-support-international-contact-group-mindanao>.

¹⁶ Kristine Angeli Sabillo, “500 MILF Members to Attend Bangsamoro Accord Signing at Palace,” *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, last modified March 25, 2014, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/588852/500-milf-members-to-attend-bangsamoro-accord-signing-at-palace>.

The Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB) has the potential to end the Moro conflict although in similar cases, governments or rebels have not honored signed peace agreements. For example, the government of Rwanda did not honor a peace agreement—the Arusha Accord. The president of Rwanda and Hutu extremists refused to accept the terms of the agreement, and the death of the president of Rwanda subsequently halted the progress of the Arusha Accord.¹⁷ In Sierra Leone, rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) violated the Abidjan Peace Accord and the Lomé Peace Agreement by refusing to disarm.¹⁸ Therefore, the GRP or MILF may not honor the terms in the CAB despite signing it. If either party violates the terms of the CAB, the Philippines may plummet back into armed conflict.

B. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Given past cases of peace agreements signed between governments and rebels in search of prolonged peace, what key variables are possibly required to ensure that the rebel integration under the CAB contributes to prolonged peace in the southern Philippines? The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program of major peace agreements between the GRP and the Moro rebels need to be thoroughly examined against these cases.

This thesis, therefore, conducts an in-depth analysis of DDR programs from previous conflict settlements, particularly the peace accord between Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front. Additionally, case studies of past success and failures of similar peace agreements are also examined. These analyses are used as a guide in assessing the policy direction of the current rebel integration program, which addresses the largest and the last remaining secessionist group in the Philippines, MILF. The study also develops a prognosis about future problems and opportunities in the implementation of the DDR program specified in the 2014 CAB entered into by the GRP and MILF. Though the CAB presents an all-inclusive peace agreement that suggests

¹⁷ “Hutus ‘Killed Rwanda President Juvenal Habyarimana,’” British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), January 12, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8453832.stm>.

¹⁸ “Sierra Leone,” Global Security, accessed August 8, 2017, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/sierra_leone.htm.

a likelihood of sustainable peace, its DDR program follows a totally different path of reintegrating the rebels from previous agreements, making the rebel integration program the determining factor in the outcome of the peace deal. This thesis suggests policy interventions in the DDR programs of the GRP–MILF peace agreement to increase the prospect of success.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Moro Struggle in Relation to Literature on Conflict Theories

The Moros' struggle in the Philippines has continuously challenged the state's authority to rule among the Muslim ethnic minorities in the southern part of the nation's archipelago. A bloody conflict has persisted since the start of this ethno-nationalist revolution in 1970s. Although ongoing peace talks between the GRP and MILF have ceased violence and armed skirmishes so far, except violence incited by Abu Sayaf and other ISIS-Affiliated terrorist group, the final resolution of the Moro problem remains to be seen. Considering the general citizenry is still divided on the substantive components of the peace agreement, the potential for relapsing into another major armed clash becomes imminent.

There are several useful and applicable theories on ethnic conflicts and civil war settlement. Renowned social scientist Louis Kriesberg asserts that a conflict is cyclic and follows a sequence of stages moving from emergence, escalation, and de-escalation to termination, and culminates with an outcome that normally results in another conflict.¹⁹ He has, however, stated that the conflict can be influenced by internal and external forces at different stages with varying results, depending on the nature of the issues of disagreement, the characteristics and relations of adversaries, and the manner in by which the parties are fighting.²⁰ It is also not surprising that scholars have different views of dispute resolution: some perceive the use of military force as an indispensable element in resolving conflicts while others think using force hinders a genuine and lasting

¹⁹ Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 25.

²⁰ Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, 342.

settlement. Among the social conflicts, research tends to agree that ethnic insurgency or ethno-secession similar to the case of MILF remains the most complex and challenging problem to resolve. As Rajat Ganguly has said, once an ethnic political movement emerges, it becomes more intractable and engages the state in attrition warfare.²¹ The Moro problem exemplifies the characteristics of an enduring *ethno-secessionist* movement, challenging conflict management experts.

2. Differing Views on Using Autonomy as a Means of Ethnic Conflict Resolution

Recent studies on dispute resolution, both in academic and policy circles, claim that autonomy is becoming a key component of the solution in addressing ethno-secessionist movements.²² Ted Robert Gurr, a prominent scholar on ethnic struggles, emphasizes that the primary principle in resolving insurgent groups wanting to establish their own separate country is through decentralization of state power, whereby “communal fighting are restrained through recognition of group rights and the sharing power.”²³ The wide acceptance of this method in resolving ethnic conflict is “evidenced by the international community’s preference for autonomy, power sharing, or some combination of the two in countries where it has intervened or mediated, such as Angola, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Macedonia, and most recently Afghanistan and Iraq.”²⁴ Therefore, the ongoing peace settlement between the GRP and MILF, which will allow MILF to gain autonomy, may be the key to success in the comprehensive agreement.

Another school of thought, however, disagrees with the method of using autonomy as the primary tool of resolving ethnic secession. Alexander Downes explains that, in a federal or autonomous arrangement, the state always suspects the other group of

²¹ Raymond Taras and Rajat Ganguly, *Understanding Ethnic Conflict*, 2nd ed. (London: Pearson, 2001).

²² Alexander B. Downes, “The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars,” *Security Studies* 13, no. 4 (July 1, 2004).

²³ Ted Robert Gurr, “Ethnic Warfare on the Wane,” *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 3 (May/June 2000): 52.

²⁴ Downes, “The Problem with Negotiated Settlements.”

exploiting autonomy as a means for building more muscle in the fight for secession.²⁵ On the other side of the coin, this rebellious group remains skeptical of the government's sincerity in its concessions and future intentions. As autonomy is implemented, each side distrusts how the political institutions work and whether each side will strictly abide by the rules of the game.²⁶ Downes supports this argument and his doubts about the effectiveness of autonomy by examining previous agreements that provided self-rule to ethnic insurgencies. His research observes that a large percentage of rebellious ethnic groups have failed to resolve conflict through autonomy: "Ethiopia's Afars, Somalis and Oromo, Sri Lankan Tamils, India's Assamese and Bodos, and Pakistan's Baluchis . . . saw serious conflict resume sometime after the agreement was implemented."²⁷ Despite the flaws in autonomy as a method in settling ethno-nationalist conflicts, another author, Svante Cornell, argues that this scheme remains the preferred option, being "one of the few conceivable compromise solutions in conflicts over the administrative control of a specific territory."²⁸

Even if the CAB had already been signed between the GRP and MILF in 2014, the prospect of ending the armed secession through autonomy would remain a question. A number of political analysts in the Philippines argue that autonomy alone cannot address the complexity of the Mindanao problem. A leading professor of the University of the Philippines laments the CAB by describing it as a repetition of the failed congressional act that created the existing Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.²⁹ He further argues that the "inevitable failure of such a law would only recruit more people into the secessionist rebellion."³⁰ In the pursuit of autonomy as the centerpiece in the peace

²⁵ Downes.

²⁶ Downes.

²⁷ Downes, 4.

²⁸ Svante E. Cornell, "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective," *World Politics* 54, no. 2 (January 2002): 247.

²⁹ Randy David, "History Repeating Itself," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, June 4, 2015, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/85484/history-repeating-itself>.

³⁰ David, "History Repeating Itself."

agreement between the state and its ethnic insurgent group, it is therefore important to plan an innovative supporting strategy that comes with autonomy to increase its likelihood of success.

3. Reasons Rebel Integration in the Military Strengthens Conflict Settlement

Integration of rebels into the national military is a supporting strategy that can further strengthen peace agreements. Rosalie A. Hall defines integration as the “amalgamation of previously opposed military forces into a new state security force or the absorption of ex-rebels into an existing armed force.”³¹ She further stresses that the merger of former rebels into the military can address identity-based conflicts because the “military is widely seen as an institution where men and women, by their collective experience of combat, regimented-living and patriotic values, learn a national identity.”³² Therefore, the military institution provides a unique environment for eradicating differences in ethnicity, religion, or language among a nation’s citizens.³³ A series of investigations on case studies conducted by Matthew Hoddie and Caroline Hartzell also conclude that rebel integration in the military decreases the danger of deterioration into conflict, especially when combined with other components in conflict settlement such as political, economic, and territorial power-sharing.³⁴ The importance of military integration in peace agreements is also espoused by contemporary conflict management experts, who find “provisions for military integration will reduce the likelihood of peace failure in a meaningful and statistically significant way.”³⁵

³¹ Rosalie A. Hall, “From Rebels to Soldiers: An Analysis of the Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants into the Armed Forces,” in *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars*, ed. Roy Licklider (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014).

³² Hall.

³³ Hall.

³⁴ Mathew Hoddie and Caroline Hartzell, “Civil War Settlements and the Implementation of Military Power-Sharing Arrangements,” *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 3 (May 2003): 303–320.

³⁵ Karl DeRouen Jr., Jenna Lea, and Peter Wallenstein, “The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 26, no. 4 (2009): 367–387.

The concept of rebel integration in ethno-conflict settlements is a relevant field of study in light of the Philippines' ongoing peace agreement with MILF. Recent efforts to demobilize MILF's ranks produced negative results, as the rebels refused to surrender their firearms. It is also known locally that Muslim residents in the conflict-affected areas in Mindanao consider owning firearms a way of life because of their culture of blood feuding, or *rido*.³⁶ With the complex dynamics surrounding the Moro problem, an integration program may be the most valuable ingredient in the CAB for resolving the Mindanao conflict.

4. The Role of the International Community in Peace Agreements and Rebel Integration

Beside the importance of autonomy and rebel integration in conflict settlement, a number of studies also emphasize the critical role of the international community in the entire peace process. A study conducted by Barbara Walter on civil war peace agreements stresses the crucial role of "third-party guarantors," which diffuse the level of tension and insecurity during peace treaty implementation.³⁷ She adds that these third parties, which are normally international actors, ensure contending parties adhere to promises and agreements.³⁸ Walter further warns that if outside actors are not involved, the peace process will fail.³⁹ In the same manner, Roy Licklider, who conducted a comprehensive study of rebel integration, emphasizes the critical role of the international community. He claims these outside actors are crucial in military integration because they can provide "side payments, offer reassurance, or knock heads together as necessary."⁴⁰ He also notes that international involvement, though not a requisite for

³⁶ Simone Orendain, "The Persistence of Blood Feuds in the Philippines," Public Radio International, July 25, 2011, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2011-07-25/persistence-blood-feuds-philippines>.

³⁷ Barbara F. Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement," *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 340.

³⁸ Walter, 340.

³⁹ Walter, 336.

⁴⁰ Roy Licklider, ed., *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Militaries after Civil Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 250.

successful peace accords, has been prominent in almost all civil war settlement cases.⁴¹ Similarly, authors Katherine Glassmyer and Nicholas Sambanis stress that rebel integration can be better implemented when outside assistance provides the needed financing and monitoring during peace treaty implementation.⁴²

Conversely, some instances of international community involvement in rebel integration have failed. The international community worked with the new Zimbabwe government to implement rebel integration even though it was not part of any peace agreement.⁴³ However, the new government eventually undermined rebel integration by favoring its own armed wing over the rebels and subsequently forcing the rebels out of the military.⁴⁴ The Democratic Republic of the Congo is another example of international community involvement—the UN and southern African leaders—that failed to integrate the rebels into the military.⁴⁵ The Tutsi rebels were supposed to join the Congo military but backed out due to delays and lack of confidence in ironing out long-term issues.⁴⁶

The role of the international community is a relevant theme in examining the GRP–MILF peace agreement, particularly in its rebel integration provisions. Notably, the international community was more involved in the peace process with this last remaining Muslim insurgent group in the Philippines. Malaysia, together with other international partners, is at the forefront of the peace negotiations that led to the signing of the CAB. Various monitoring and implementing committees of the peace agreement comprise local

⁴¹ Licklider, 250.

⁴² Katherine Glassmyer and Nicholas Sambanis, “Rebel—Military Integration and Civil War Termination,” *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 3 (May 2008).

⁴³ Anja Melin, Anders Themnér, and Kristine Eck, “Military Integration of Former Enemies: Do Previous Identities Matter for the Creation of a New ‘We’?” (master’s thesis, Uppsala University, 2016), <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:930454/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Paul Jackson, “The Civil War Roots of Military Domination in Zimbabwe: The Integration Process following the Rhodesian War and the Road to ZANLA Dominance,” *Civil Wars* 13, no. 4 (December 2011): 371–395.

⁴⁵ Mark Caldwell, “‘Need for Another Round of Negotiations’ in DRC,” Deutsche Welle, December 13, 2013, <http://www.dw.com/en/need-for-another-round-of-negotiations-in-drc/a-17296194>.

⁴⁶ Joe Bavier, “Congo Rebel Integration Plan Fails to Begin,” Relief Web, January 28, 2009, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/congo-rebel-integration-plan-fails-begin>.

and foreign counterparts. Specifically, an independent decommissioning body headed by a foreign expert supervises the rebel integration program under the CAB.

D. THESIS METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

The main purpose of this study is to conduct an analysis of rebel integration programs to forecast prospects and issues in the implementation of the reintegration program under the CAB. A comparative study of rebel reintegration programs in previous peace agreements, particularly those related to ethno-nationalist movements, was conducted to establish patterns or commonalities to assess the viability of the reintegration program of the ongoing GRP–MILF peace agreement. The analyses include the historical background of related conflicts, the details of the corresponding reintegration programs, and the result of the entire process. Literature from think tanks and researchers, including comparative analyses, on rebel reintegration from previous peace agreements was consulted. The selected case studies center on the peace agreements in Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and the Philippines; these cases were chosen especially because they are among the few models with many similarities to the ongoing GRP–MILF peace agreement. Notably, these cases are all ethno-nationalist movements wherein parties agreed on the path toward autonomy and rebel-reintegration played an important part in peace implementation. Most of the sources that inform this thesis come from the academic literature on conflict theories, civil war settlements, and reintegration processes. Other sources include quantitative and qualitative comparative analyses of DDR programs of ethno-national conflicts. Studies conducted by scholars from Philippine universities regarding the Moro problem, including recent official documents related to peace processes between the GRP and the Moros, are also included as major references.

This thesis is presented in six parts. Chapter II examines lessons learned from past rebel integration programs around the world. It discusses the increasing trend of rebel integration in civil war settlement. The chapter also provides a wide-ranging method for implementing rebel integration programs and determines important variables that mattered in most cases of DDR processes. Chapter III discusses three specific examples

of rebel integration programs, namely Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. It scrutinizes the integration process and the role of the international community in each case and analyzes why each agreement failed or succeeded. Chapter IV discusses the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement and its corresponding rebel integration program. It conducts a historical review of the Moro insurgency in the Philippines and the signing of the peace accord as well as discusses the integration of former MNLF rebels into the national military and police force. Chapter V examines the dynamics in the GRP–MILF peace accord leading to the signing of the CAB and ongoing efforts to implement this agreement fully. This chapter specifically reviews the rebel integration program under the CAB to determine its prospects in of successfully implementing the peace agreement.

This study concludes with a comparative analysis of the broad examples of rebel integration programs outlined in Chapter II; the specific cases in Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Sierra Leone; the MNLF; and the MILF case. Chapter VI focuses primarily on the key variables identified in the previous rebel integration cases that mattered most in their success or failure. Using the important variables affecting the implementation of past rebel integration programs, the final chapter analyzes the prospects of the MILF reintegration plan as outlined in the CAB.

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II. LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST REBEL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS

Before the end of the Cold War, civil wars used to end with military victories.⁴⁷ Since then, however, peace agreements have come into play in a bid to end civil conflicts.⁴⁸ Rebel integration programs are one common component used as part of peace agreements to promote peace and possibly prevent civil war from recurring.⁴⁹ Forty percent of peace settlements following the 128 civil wars between 1945 and 2006 engaged in some form of rebel integration.⁵⁰ Rebel integration was one component in the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB) signed by the GRP and MILF. Would the agreement prolong peace? How would the rebel integration program promote or strengthen peace? This chapter highlights factors that contribute to civil war; reasons to include a rebel integration program in an agreement; ways to implement the integration program; and the results of past conflict settlements that involved a rebel integration program.

A. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CIVIL WAR

Civil wars often push a state into domestic chaos, undermining and delegitimizing the government and legal institutions.⁵¹ Hartzell identifies the struggle for power over a state as the fundamental reason why states enter civil war.⁵² When a group of actors has sufficient resources and capabilities, it may challenge the government with the aim of

⁴⁷ Roy Licklider, "Merging Competing Militaries after Civil Wars," *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations* 5, no. 1 (2014), 53.

⁴⁸ Licklider, "Merging Competing Militaries after Civil Wars," 53.

⁴⁹ Ronald Krebs and Roy Licklider, "Misplaced Faith in Military Integration after Civil War," Policy brief, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, March 2016, <http://www.belfercenter.org/publication/misplaced-faith-military-integration-after-civil-war>.

⁵⁰ Caroline Hartzell, "Mixed Motives? Explaining the Decision to Integrate Militaries at Civil War's End," in *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars*, ed. Roy Licklider (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 13.

⁵¹ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," 368.

⁵² Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 14.

claiming power over its state.⁵³ Other possible contributing factors in starting a civil war may include the fight for justice for the people, ethnicity issues of a state, money and grievances, and ideology over how a country should run.

In the Colombian civil war, which involved the Colombian government, paramilitary groups, and guerrilla groups, rebels claimed to be fighting for justice for the people. In particular, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a communist guerrilla group, asserted it was fighting for the rights of the poor against the violence of the Colombia government.⁵⁴ This violence was used to enforce social inequality and an unfair arrangement of land ownership, which started during the colonial regime. Moreover, rural poor workers were not allowed to participate in any forms of politics.⁵⁵

Ethnicity was also a common issue in causing a series of civil wars during the post–Cold War period. Fearon and Laitin assert that the fundamental concern in these civil wars was either the rebellion of ethnic minorities who felt discrimination from ethnic majorities or ethnicity forming a wedge between different cultures and nationalist aspirations.⁵⁶

Other contributing factors to civil war include money and grievances. The Libyan civil war is a good example. While the arrest of Fathi Terbil may have been the catalyst, it was likely the combined greed of the rebels motivated by possible oil income, economical grievances, the lack of political rights, the lifestyle of Gaddafi’s children, as well as regional and tribal differences that instigated the civil war.⁵⁷

⁵³ Hartzell, “Mixed Motives?,” 14–15.

⁵⁴ “Farc-EP Confirms Marulanda’s Death through a Press Release,” Rebellion, May 26, 2008, <https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=es&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.rebellion.org%2Fnoticia.php%3Fid%3D67904>.

⁵⁵ Nazih Richani, *Systems of Violence: The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (Albany, NY: Suny Press, 2013), 12–14.

⁵⁶ James Fearon and David Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (February 2003): 2–3.

⁵⁷ Wim van Doorn, “‘Greed’ and ‘Grievance’ as Motivations for Civil War: The Libyan Case,” E-International Relations, March 9, 2013, <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/03/09/the-libyan-case-greed-and-grievance-as-motivations-for-civil-war/>.

Ideology is another factor in starting a civil war. The American civil war originated in two differing views of civilization.⁵⁸ As the people in the South earned their living through farming, they used slaves to work the land. Therefore, when the people from the North attempted to end the practice of slavery, they faced strong opposition from the South.⁵⁹ The ideology of using slave labor was the main cause of the American civil war.⁶⁰

To find peace amidst such chaos is not simple. DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein offer many possible methods and circumstances for ending a civil war: military victories, stalemates, ceasefires, bilaterally arranged agreements, or third-party mediated agreements.⁶¹ Werner and Yuen highlight that recent efforts to use agreements in whatever form to end a war is important for prolonging peace.⁶² Fortna shares the same sentiment that agreements are important, as they present an opportunity to highlight the pros and cons of returning to war.⁶³ However, peace agreements are not fool proof. Werner and Yuen note that the inability of the parties involved in the civil war to provide credible promises to keep their commitments may cause the breakdown of a peace agreement.⁶⁴ The need for rebels to disarm and disband in a peace agreement equates with relinquishing their ability to hold the government accountable for fulfilling the terms of an agreement. In addition to such insecurity, rebels are expected to trust in an

⁵⁸ Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "A Book for Every Perspective: Current Civil War and Reconstruction Textbooks" (Book review, Kent State University Press, September 2005), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/208257701/>.

⁵⁹ Kivumbi, "Difference between the North and the South during the Civil War," Difference Between, September 28, 2017, <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-the-north-and-the-south-during-the-civil-war/>.

⁶⁰ Sheehan-Dean, "Current Civil War and Reconstruction Textbooks."

⁶¹ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," 368.

⁶² Suzanne Werner and Amy Yuen, "Making and Keeping Peace," *International Organization* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 263–265.

⁶³ Virginia Page Fortna, "Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace," *International Organization* 57, no. 2 (April 2003): 337–372.

⁶⁴ Werner and Yuen, "Making and Keeping Peace," 263–264.

inexperienced government to make decisions for the state and to consider the interests of both parties.⁶⁵

It is therefore important to specify terms carefully in the agreement. If the agreement includes terms that go against the military's expectations of the consequences of fighting, there will be at a high risk of failure.⁶⁶ An agreement should determine how the civil war will end, and it should address the aforementioned issues that caused the civil war. Fortna also recommends that an agreement include components such as removing the military presence from the war zone and making credible promises to build confidence between parties.⁶⁷

B. REBEL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS

For an agreement to provide assurance to the rebels for them to disarm as well as credibility in the commitment of fulfilling the agreement between parties, it must enumerate components of power sharing. Many authors indicate that when there are more components of power-sharing variables in an agreement, the chances of peace are greater.⁶⁸ Power sharing is meant to address discrimination, to grant the rebels' desire for recognition, and to give the rebels some form of authority in parts of the government, territory, or military.⁶⁹ Therefore, power-sharing variables should include, but are not limited to, shared government, autonomy, and sharing of military power.

Nevertheless, power-sharing variables that are more expensive and difficult to implement may hamper the chances of prolonged peace, as the government may renegotiate the terms stipulated in the agreements, and rebels may choose to take action

⁶⁵ Peter Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace and the Global System* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002).

⁶⁶ Werner and Yuen, "Making and Keeping Peace," 263–265.

⁶⁷ Fortna, "Scraps of Paper? Agreements and the Durability of Peace," 337–372.

⁶⁸ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallensteen, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," 371; and Caroline Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, "Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (April 2003): 321.

⁶⁹ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallensteen, 368.

against the government for delaying the implementation of the agreement.⁷⁰ Therefore, it is important to simplify the implementation of the power-sharing variables at a low cost to facilitate the chances of prolonged peace.

As the GRP and MILF recently signed the CAB, which includes sharing of military power, this section focuses on one form of military power sharing, rebel integration. The simplest way to share military power is to integrate rebels or non-state actors into the military to form one military force.⁷¹ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein also highlight that it costs less for the government to undertake such a risk by allowing ex-rebels into the military, and the government will eventually gain full control of the integrated military.⁷² Rebel integration is thus defined as the absorption of ex-rebels into an existing armed force.⁷³ Table 1, provided by Hartzell, indicates a rising trend of rebel integration with the military in peace agreements since 1960.⁷⁴ For example, the first civil war in Laos did not include a form of power sharing in a peace agreement and only a second civil war included the agreement of rebel integration with the military.⁷⁵ The Republic of Congo, too, made a similar arrangement for rebel integration with the military as part of the peace agreement.⁷⁶

Rebel integration reduces the rebels' insecurity, so such programs have become increasingly popular.⁷⁷ Rebel integration also allows the rebels to maintain some level of self-enforcement as well as to reap benefits of employment.⁷⁸ Therefore, rebel integration

⁷⁰ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," 369–371.

⁷¹ Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 15.

⁷² DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein, "The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements," 370.

⁷³ Hall, "The Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants," 104.

⁷⁴ Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 16.

⁷⁵ Fox Butterfield, "Laos Still Beset by International Rivalries," *New York Times*, December 25, 1975, <http://www.nytimes.com/1975/12/25/archives/laos-still-beset-by-international-rivalries.html>.

⁷⁶ Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 13.

⁷⁷ Glassmyer and Sambanis, "Rebel—Military Integration and Civil War Termination," 365.

⁷⁸ Glassmyer and Sambanis, 365.

would in a way provide credible security assurance to MILF that the government would not renege on the signed CAB.

Table 1. Trend of Rebel Integration in Peace Agreements⁷⁹

1945–49	1950–59	1960–69	1970–79	1980–89	1990–99	2000–2006
7 civil war settlements	11 civil war settlements	10 civil war settlements	21 civil war settlements	14 civil war settlements	47 civil war settlements	18 civil war settlements
0 provisions for military integration	0 provisions for military integration	1 provision for military integration	5 provisions for military integration	5 provisions for military integration	47 civil war settlements	18 civil war settlements
0% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	0% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	10% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	24% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	36% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	49% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement	56% of settlements include military integration as a term of settlement

C. WAYS TO IMPLEMENT REBEL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS

In order for the rebels to agree to the peace agreement, the government needs to provide credible security guarantees.⁸⁰ Such guarantees may be provided by integrating the rebels into a new army.⁸¹ Hartzell offers three means of integrating rebels with the military: using a formula for the division of troops among the active military, integrating the leaders of the rebel group into key leadership positions of the military hierarchy, and maintaining a balance of rebels retaining their arms or their own security forces.⁸² Hartzell's recommendations seem intuitive, but this thesis offers the following deviation for rebel integration. The first method for integrating rebels into the military is to integrate the rebels as troopers in the military. Another method is to integrate the

⁷⁹ Source: Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 16.

⁸⁰ Glassmyer and Sambanis, "Rebel—Military Integration and Civil War Termination," 365.

⁸¹ Glassmyer and Sambanis, 365.

⁸² Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?," 15.

leadership of a rebel group instead of integrating the rebel troopers. Lastly, the rebel group may be allowed to form a unit using its own people and leaders as part of the government's military structure.

There are a few formulas that may be used to decide on the proportion of rebels and active military troops. If the government is concerned with integrated rebels taking up arms against the government again, the government should consider the proportion of active military forces to the number of the integrated rebels. This consideration ensures the government has sufficient military muscle to overcome the integrated rebels in the event they decide to rebel against the government. If the government is confident that the rebels will not take up arms, the proportion of active military troops and integrated rebels may be equal. Integrating the rebels at the troop level not only provides assurance to the rebel leaders that the government genuinely wants to fulfill the peace agreement; it also provides assurance to the government that the rebels also genuinely want to end the civil war and cooperate to stabilize the state of affairs.

At the strategic level, integrating the leaders of the rebel group into military leadership positions sends a strong message to the rebel group that the government is sincere about ending the civil war and provides a strong sense of security that the government will fulfill the terms of the peace agreement. This option allows rebel leaders to have a sense of authority as part of power sharing. However, this may not go down well with active military troopers who had to climb the ladder to reach a leadership position. The rebel leaders may be seen as "parachuting" into the leadership role and military troopers may not fully submit to them, which may lead to morale problems among the active military troops.

Another viable option is for the military to allow the rebels to form a unit under its command using their own people and leaders. It is important for their own leaders to be placed on the leadership position, leading their troops in training and operations. It will ease the tension of rebel troops having to submit to new authorities and will work well under the familiar leadership style of their leaders. This option eliminates the aforementioned submission and morale issues and sends a strong message to the rebel group that the government is sincere about ending the civil war. It also provides a strong

sense of security that the government will fulfill the terms of the peace agreement at the strategic level.

D. ANALYSIS OF PAST CONFLICTS

It is important to examine past civil wars that ended with a peace agreement and had rebel integration as a component to offer insight into what variables are required to successfully end a civil war. Licklider cites the following as civil settlements in which rebel integration was instrumental in ending civil war: Lebanon (1989), Rwanda (1993), Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995), Philippines (1996), Sierra Leone (1996), South Africa (1997), and Burundi (2004).

The Bosnian civil war was the most detrimental conflict in Europe since 1945 with more than 100,000 people killed and two million displaced.⁸³ The Dayton Accords signed by Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia in 1995 eventually ended the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina with the aid of the NATO and the United States.⁸⁴ The Dayton Accords stipulated the integration of the militaries, which resulted in one strong and unified force.⁸⁵

Rwanda ended its three-year civil war when the government of Rwanda and the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front signed the Arusha Accords in 1993.⁸⁶ The peace agreement was mediated by the Tanzanian, French, Belgian, and U.S. governments as well as the Organization of African Unity.⁸⁷ This agreement also successfully integrated 50,000 rebels to form one powerful military force.⁸⁸

⁸³ Riada Asimovic Akyol, "Remembering Dayton: The Accord That Ended Bosnian War," Aljazeera, December 14, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/12/remembering-dayton-accord-ended-bosnian-war-151213140151610.html>.

⁸⁴ Akyol, "Remembering Dayton."

⁸⁵ Akyol.

⁸⁶ David Wage and Lois Haigh, "A Case Study on the Arusha Peace Agreement" (Florida State University, July 19, 2004), http://consensus.fsu.edu/academic_directory/2004casestudies/HaighWageRwandaCaseStudy.pdf.

⁸⁷ Wage and Haigh.

⁸⁸ Jeffrey Gettleman, "The World's Worst War," *New York Times*, December 15, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/sunday-review/congos-never-ending-war.html>.

Similarly, Sierra Leone had a series of signed peace agreements before effectively ending its civil war in 2002.⁸⁹ Under the aid of the UN, the Organisation of African Unity, and the Commonwealth, the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) signed the first Abidjan Peace Accord in 1996.⁹⁰ However, the RUF did not honor the terms of the agreement, and the president of Sierra Leone was forced into exile by a military coup, resulting in the failure of the peace agreement.⁹¹ After many years of conflict, the Sierra Leone government decided to negotiate with the RUF and signed the Lomé Peace Agreement with the help of the international community in 1999.⁹² However, the RUF reneged on the terms of the Lomé Peace Agreement and refused to disarm, leading to the breakdown of the peace agreement.⁹³ The Sierra Leone government finally signed the Abija Ceasefire Agreement with the RUF, with a UN mission in Sierra Leone enforcing the RUF's cease-fire.⁹⁴ All three peace agreements had the component of rebel integration.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, the RUF did not honor the terms in the first two agreements and needed the UN mission to enforce the cease-fire after the last peace agreement.⁹⁶

With the previous three examples, it is clear the international community needs to intervene to enforce the peace agreement for rebel integration to happen. The

⁸⁹ "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

⁹⁰ Lansana Gberie, "First Stages on the Road To Peace: The Abidjan Process (1995–96)," *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives* 9 (March 2000), http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord%2009_4First%20stages%20on%20the%20road%20to%20peace_2000_ENG.pdf.

⁹¹ Gautam Shrivastava, "The Revolutionary United Front: Why Peace Failed in the Sierra Leone Civil War," Undergraduate Awards Library, accessed August 8, 2017, http://www.undergraduatelibrary.org/system/files/the_revolutionary_united_front__why_peace_failed_in_the_sierra_leone_civil_war.pdf.

⁹² "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

⁹³ "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

⁹⁴ "Abuja Ceasefire Agreement," Sierra Leone Web, November 10, 2000, <http://www.sierra-leone.org/ceasefire1100.html>.

⁹⁵ "Abidjan Peace Agreement," University of Notre Dame Peace Accords Matrix, accessed August 8, 2017, <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/abidjan-peace-agreement>; "Sierra Leone," Global Security; and "Abuja Ceasefire Agreement," Sierra Leone Web.

⁹⁶ "Abidjan Peace Agreement," University of Notre Dame Peace Accords Matrix; "Sierra Leone," Global Security; and "Abuja Ceasefire Agreement," Sierra Leone Web.

international community can pressure both parties to negotiate a peace agreement, provide resources such as money and training to ensure the success of the peace agreement as well as assurance and enforcement of the peace agreement. However, it is naive to think that the intervention of the international community alone is sufficient to bring about peace and to end a civil war. As the saying goes, it takes two hands to clap. Thus, both the government and the rebel group must be able to see that a military victory in the civil war is no longer possible, and only a compromise can end the conflict.

E. CONCLUSION

Wars are expensive, yet wars recur. Fearon gives three reasons why wars persist. First, people are generally irrational and carry biased perspectives that lead to war without considering its cost. Second, leaders who agree to go to war are unlikely to feel its cost and may actually benefit from it. Third, rational leaders may still end up at war as long as the cause is justifiable.⁹⁷ No existing studies prove peace agreement is the key to ending civil wars. However, it is clear that rebel groups have clear goals for what they want from the start of the civil war. As long as the expectations and goals of the government and the rebel group have something in common, an agreement may be put in place in search of peace.

While statistics indicate that the success of prolonging peace using rebel integration is low, this component assists the government in gaining trust from the rebels and convincing the rebels to disarm. It is already a step toward prolonging peace away from violence. Putting violence aside makes negotiations on the peace agreement slightly easier, so both parties can work out their differences amicably. Rebel integration as part of a peace agreement provides assurance to the rebels that, despite disarming, they are neither vulnerable nor devoid of bargaining power. The benefits of employment by the military allow the rebels to bring food to the table for their families. On this note, the government should not take too long to implement the rebel integration as it may lose their confidence, causing them to take up arms against the government again. The

⁹⁷ James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379.

government, therefore, should not bite more than it can chew by not to overpromising on the terms of the peace but should keep the terms of the peace agreement simple and easy to implement.

The international community's involvement to help piece the peace agreement together provides greater assurance that either party will be under certain pressure to honor the terms of the peace agreement. The international community may also assist in the enforcement of the agreement's terms. In the case of the Bosnian war, when the Serbians failed to comply with the cease-fire and fired around Sarajevo, NATO fighters performed enforcement by shooting down the Serbian aircraft.⁹⁸

Whichever form of rebel integration is adopted by the GRP and MILF, the rebel integration should be able to provide credible security to rebels when they disarm, offer the rebels some form of economic benefits through employment, as well as help both the GRP and MILF form one identity as a state. The involvement of Malaysia with the support of the International Contact Group will also apply pressure and assurance for both the GRP and MILF to honor the terms of the CAB.

98 Michael R. Gordon, "Conflict in the Balkans; NATO Craft Down 4 Serb Warplanes Attacking Bosnia," *New York Times*, March 1, 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/01/world/conflict-in-the-balkans-nato-craft-down-4-serb-warplanes-attacking-bosnia.html>.

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III. CASES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The pursuit of peaceful resolution by many countries in civil wars reveals that political integration efforts are often futile when there is a lack of deep understanding of the particular context and origins of the rebels.⁹⁹ Thus, studying the failed and successful cases of Zimbabwe's, Rwanda's, and Sierra Leone's integration of rebels helps to sieve out variables for sustainable peace is important. This chapter considers these three cases by examining the backgrounds and political agendas of the rebels, the implementation of the rebel integration between parties involved, and key variables that led to either the failure or success of the integration.

A. ZIMBABWE

Following the independence of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland from the British in 1964, the white settlers in Southern Rhodesia organized themselves and unilaterally declared independence with the aim of maintaining white rule.¹⁰⁰ The declaration was in response to the foreign policy of British decolonization, which supported black African rule.¹⁰¹ The self-declared independence molded the white minority Rhodesians into a state capable of fighting against African liberation movements, which were pursuing black rule and total independence from Britain, with the help of Portuguese East Africa and the apartheid regime of South Africa.¹⁰² As such, the highly capable Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) was formed to conduct counterinsurgency operations.¹⁰³ Against this backdrop, three liberation movements were

⁹⁹ Mats Berdal and David Ucko, *Reintegrating Armed Groups after Conflict: Politics, Violence and Transition* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Paul Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," in *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars*, ed. Roy Licklider (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 50.

¹⁰¹ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies."

¹⁰² Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 50.

¹⁰³ Jackson, 50.

formed against the white minority government.¹⁰⁴ The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) as well as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) chose to go into armed conflict with the RSF using their armed wings, the Zimbabwe African National Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), respectively.¹⁰⁵ A third movement, the African National Council (ANC) chose to engage politically with the white minority government and believed in progressive change over violence.¹⁰⁶

In an agreement in 1979, Rhodesia was renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, and after a general election, Muzorewa from the ANC became Rhodesia's first black prime minister.¹⁰⁷ However, neither ZANU nor ZAPU recognized the new government, and they increased their presence within Rhodesia.¹⁰⁸ Four separate attempts by different organizations and countries were made to mediate a settlement to the civil war.¹⁰⁹ Only the fourth, the Lancaster House Conference, succeeded in producing an agreement among all parties to end hostilities, form a new majority rule constitution, and hold elections.¹¹⁰ All parties were willing to accept the terms of the agreement because they were confident they would win sufficient seats in the 1980 election to assert influence over the political direction of the new state.¹¹¹ Eventually, ZANU won the election, and the Republic of Zimbabwe was declared independent.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ Jackson, 50.

¹⁰⁵ Jackson, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Jackson, 50.

¹⁰⁷ "1979: End of White Rule in Rhodesia," BBC, June 1, 1979, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/1/newsid_2492000/2492915.stm.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 51.

¹⁰⁹ Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974–1980* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991), 225.

¹¹⁰ Stedman, 225.

¹¹¹ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 52.

¹¹² Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 29.

1. Background of the Rebels

Melin, Themnér, and Eck explain that ZANLA, which formed in 1965, consisted of forced recruitment of peasants from Zambia.¹¹³ ZANLA's ultimate aim, they continue, was to reinstate black rule. With the collapse of the Portuguese regime in Mozambique, ZANLA began a campaign against the Rwandan government in the early 1970s.¹¹⁴ Thereafter, the authors affirm that many students and refugees joined ZANLA due to their awareness of the growing politics. Members of ZANLA were mostly Shona-speaking and came from the eastern parts of the country; they were indoctrinated in Maoist teachings as ZANLA followed the lead of its sponsor, China.¹¹⁵ Melin, Themnér, and Eck go on to explain that members of ZANLA were also educated on the national grievances such as inequalities, discrimination, and oppression. ZANLA also penetrated deep within communities, forming networks between political cells and fighters.¹¹⁶ The Shona ethnicity played a big part in creating a strong identity for ZANLA.¹¹⁷

Melin, Themnér, and Eck also highlight that ZIPRA was formed about the same time as ZANLA and had a similar aim of black rule.¹¹⁸ Most ZIPRA members were of Ndebele ethnicity and, hence, were recruited primarily from the western part of the country.¹¹⁹ The authors also share that many members joined ZIPRA due to their background in political activism, anger toward the current system, discrimination, and a lack of economic opportunities. The authors go on to explain that, similar to ZANLA, members of ZIPRA were educated with political training and principles of socialism.¹²⁰

¹¹³ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 37.

¹¹⁴ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, 37.

¹¹⁵ Christopher M Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB : The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1990), 465.

¹¹⁶ Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB : The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations*, 465.

¹¹⁷ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 37.

¹¹⁸ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, 33.

¹¹⁹ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, 34.

¹²⁰ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, 35.

As ZIPRA preferred to use military force, the authors indicate identity as soldiers as well as a Ndebele ethnic background created a common identity for the group's members.¹²¹

While ZANLA and ZIPRA had a common goal of black rule, the desire for power within each party may have led them to hate each other. The ethnicity of both parties may have also played a part in their mutual animosity. However, the key difference that led to this hatred was their differing methods: ZANLA preferred political activities and to unsettle military training while ZIPRA preferred to use military force.¹²²

When Muzorewa from the ANC became the first black Rhodesian prime minister,¹²³ ZANLA and ZIPRA increased their violent guerilla activities against the new government.¹²⁴ Consequently, the international community had all leaders involved in the civil war come to an agreement during the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference in search of peace.¹²⁵

2. The Integration Process

The United Kingdom, the United States, and the UN played a big role in the negotiation process for peace. Meetings among ZAPU, ZANU, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the UN began in 1978 in search of peace.¹²⁶ The UN Security Council eventually adopted Resolution 445 to condemn the Rhodesian elections in 1979.¹²⁷ Subsequently, the British were given the mandate to mediate, which led to the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference held in London between September and December

¹²¹ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "34–35.

¹²² Melin, Themnér, and Eck, 33.

¹²³ "1979: End of White Rule in Rhodesia," BBC.

¹²⁴ "1979: End of White Rule in Rhodesia," BBC; and Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 51–52.

¹²⁵ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 51–52.

¹²⁶ Jackson, 51–52.

¹²⁷ Jackson, 51–52.

1979.¹²⁸ All leaders involved in the civil war were invited to the conference, and the discussion at the conference eventually led to a comprehensive set of agreements:

The summary of the independence Constitution, arrangements for the pre-independence period and a cease-fire agreement signed by the parties. The signatories would agree to accept the authority of the Governor, to abide by the independence Constitution, to comply with the pre-independence arrangements, to abide by the cease-fire agreement, to campaign peacefully and without intimidation, to renounce the use of force for political ends and to accept the outcome of the elections and instruct any force under their authority to do the same.¹²⁹

Upon the start of the cease-fire in 1979, the British sent a governor with the Commonwealth Observer Group to assist the governor in ensuring the security that would allow free and fair campaigning and elections.¹³⁰ A Commonwealth Monitoring Force of 1,300 troops, mostly from the British Army, was also deployed to seal the border upon the implementation of the cease-fire, to prevent any operations by the RSF from across the border, as well as to manage any breach of the cease-fire.¹³¹ The British also established a process for demobilizing the rebels, which included designating rendezvous points around the country for any guerillas willing to demobilize.¹³²

Although integrating rebels into the military was never part of any agreement, the agreement provided a platform to develop cooperation between parties.¹³³ A stronger involvement of UK Ministry of Defense officials in the Lancaster House Conference became necessary when it was decided the United Kingdom would assist in military development.¹³⁴ The first step of the integration process was to assist in the integration of

¹²⁸ Jackson, 52.

¹²⁹ Jackson, "Civil War Roots of Military Domination in Zimbabwe," 378.

¹³⁰ Jackson, 379.

¹³¹ Jackson, 378.

¹³² Jackson, 378.

¹³³ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 52.

¹³⁴ Jackson, 52.

all demobilized guerrillas into the old structures of the Rhodesian Army.¹³⁵ The ex-guerrillas were given the same salaries as the Rhodesian African soldiers.¹³⁶ Prior to the elections, all parties agreed to undergo combined training, with ZANLA and ZIPRA to go under the authority of Commonwealth and Rhodesian forces.¹³⁷

However, the integration was chaotic, as clashes between ZIPRA and ZANLA combatants were common in the integrated military.¹³⁸ White soldiers also resigned from the military en masse, which resulted in a weakened Zimbabwe National Army following the successful election of ZANU.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the new government continued to integrate ZIPRA, ZAPU, and select elements of the RSF into the military as the new government saw rebel integration as a platform for providing internal security as well as employment prospects for former combatants.¹⁴⁰ Mugabe also removed the South African ANC units and returned them to Zambia in a bid to avert attacks from South Africa.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, Mugabe of ZANU undermined the integration by favoring ZANLA over ZIPRA.¹⁴² Such favoritism led to a series of violent acts by ZIPRA, causing the disintegration of three battalions and fighting between parties.¹⁴³ Mugabe eventually arrested all ZIPRA senior leadership in the military and sacked all senior leadership of ZAPU from his cabinet.¹⁴⁴ Even though the Unity Accord, signed in 1987, had reintegrated ZAPU back into ZANU, Mugabe managed to gain complete control of

¹³⁵ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 30.

¹³⁶ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 53.

¹³⁷ Jackson, 52.

¹³⁸ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 30.

¹³⁹ Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "30.

¹⁴⁰ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 53.

¹⁴¹ Jackson, 53–54.

¹⁴² Melin, Themnér, and Eck, "Military Integration of Former Enemies," 30.

¹⁴³ Jackson, "Military Integration from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," 58.

¹⁴⁴ Jackson, 58.

the security forces, and ZANLA was the only remaining party from the initial tripartite power-sharing structure.¹⁴⁵

3. Analysis

It is interesting to note that rebel integration into the military was never part of any agreement, yet it was implemented by the international community and the new government. Both parties believed in the importance of the rebel integration, as it would provide cooperation between parties and provide jobs for ex-guerrillas. All demobilized guerrillas were simply integrated into the old structures of the Rhodesian Army and were paid the same amount as the Rhodesian African soldiers. The international community effectively developed the demobilizing process for guerrillas and provided training to ZANLA and ZIPRA prior to the elections.

Unfortunately, the rebel integration in Zimbabwe was ultimately a failure, as more violence occurred after the integration. The new government also undermined the integration by favoring ZANLA, which led to violence by ZIPRA. Mugabe schemed to purge ZIPRA and ZAPU out of the system and took total control of the military and government. Despite its involvement, the international community was ineffective after the election as the new government took charge of the integration. The key point of failure was that the rebel integration into the military was never part of the agreement, despite support from the international community and the new government. Hence, the international community was unable to oversee the integration and follow through effectively. Moreover, the new government also did not follow through with the integration, as it showed favoritism toward its own party rather than believing in the integration.

¹⁴⁵ Jackson, 58.

B. RWANDA

Rwanda has been plagued with violent conflicts since its pre-colonial period due to inequality and social tensions.¹⁴⁶ In the pre-colonial period, Rwanda was occupied by a range of ethnic groups including the Twa, Tutsi, and Hutu.¹⁴⁷ The Tutsi were generally in positions of power during the pre-colonial and colonial periods.¹⁴⁸ In transition toward independence, the Hutu took over control and pushed the Tutsi officials out of power.¹⁴⁹ The Tutsi had no choice but to leave Rwanda and become refugees in Uganda.¹⁵⁰ Massacres of Tutsi continued and became common under the dictatorial rule of the Hutu.¹⁵¹

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was formed primarily by Tutsi who were in exile.¹⁵² The Rwandan civil war began in 1990 when the RPF launched an attack against Rwanda from Uganda that lasted for three years.¹⁵³ Consequently, the Rwandan government and the RPF signed the 1993 Arusha Accords, which included rebel integration into the military as well as the transfer of powers from the president to the

¹⁴⁶ Herman Musahara and Chris Huggins, "Land Reform, Land Scarcity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A Case Study of Rwanda," *From the Ground Up: Land Rights, Conflict and Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa* 314 (2005): 270, <https://oldsite.issafrica.org/uploads/6LAND.PDF>.

¹⁴⁷ "Rwanda – History," University of Pennsylvania, African Studies Center, accessed August 30, 2017, <https://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/rwhistory.htm>.

¹⁴⁸ Alan J. Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide: a Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 1 (2004): 63.

¹⁴⁹ Kuperman "Provoking Genocide," 63.

¹⁵⁰ Ted Dagne, "Rwanda: Background and Current Developments," *Current Politics and Economics of Africa* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 1, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1709511834/&pq-origsite=primo>.

¹⁵¹ "RPF – History about Rwanda," Republic of Rwanda, accessed August 30, 2017, <http://www.rwandahope.com/rpfhistory.pdf>.

¹⁵² Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide," 66.

¹⁵³ Abdul Tarr, "Arusha Accords: Rwanda" (Policy paper, University of the Witwatersrand, October 2015), https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Abdul_Tarr/publication/282439793_Arusha_Accords_Rwanda/links/560fac2708ae6b29b49a6d45.pdf.

incoming government.¹⁵⁴ Progress in implementing the Arusha Accords was halted as the president of Rwanda and Hutu extremists disagreed and refused to accept the terms of the agreement, which had been settled by a delegation from the Rwandan government at the Arusha negotiations.¹⁵⁵ The president of Rwanda was subsequently killed when his plane was shot down when making an approach to Kigali airport.¹⁵⁶ The assassination of the president led to the Rwandan genocide wherein many Tutsi and Hutu opposition members were killed.¹⁵⁷ Eventually, the RPF successfully took control and forced the Hutu government out in 1994, which led many Hutu to seek refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo, then Zaire.¹⁵⁸ The RPF subsequently used military integration to form a security force that assisted in stabilizing and legitimizing the country.¹⁵⁹

1. The Rwandan Patriotic Front

The Tutsi were in the minority of the total population, comprising 17 percent prior to independence in Rwanda.¹⁶⁰ Despite their small numbers, the Tutsi were the upper class and in power during the pre-colonial and colonial periods.¹⁶¹ The status and power of the Tutsi were the result of a long-standing contract that made Hutu serve the Tutsi in exchange for the loan of cattle and land.¹⁶² The Tutsi reaped the benefits of the hierarchical system, which gave them power over the Hutu.¹⁶³ The exile of the Tutsi

¹⁵⁴ Stephen F. Burgess, "From Failed Power Sharing in Rwanda to Successful Top-Down Military Integration," in *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars*, ed. Roy Licklider (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 90–91.

¹⁵⁵ Burgess, "Successful Top-Down Military Integration," 90–91.

¹⁵⁶ "Hutus 'Killed Rwanda President,'" BBC.

¹⁵⁷ Dagne, "Rwanda: Background and Current Developments," 1.

¹⁵⁸ Dagne, 1.

¹⁵⁹ Burgess, "Successful Top-Down Military Integration," 91.

¹⁶⁰ Kuperman, "Provoking Genocide," 63.

¹⁶¹ Erin Galloway, "The Tutsi," Mount Holyoke College, accessed August 23, 2017, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~gallo22e/classweb/website-World%20Politics/The%20Tutsi.html>.

¹⁶² Erin Galloway, "History of the Tutsi and Hutu," Mount Holyoke College, accessed August 23, 2017, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~gallo22e/classweb/website-World%20Politics/History.html>.

¹⁶³ Galloway.

followed shortly after the independence, when the nationwide ethnic massacres against them began. The exiled Tutsi eventually formed the RPF with its armed wing, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), and leveled several attacks against Rwanda.¹⁶⁴ The RPF eventually managed to force out the Hutu and used military integration to form a security force that assisted in stabilizing and legitimizing the country.¹⁶⁵

2. The Integration Process

The United States, France, Belgium, Zaire, Burundi, and the Organization of African Unity started formal negotiations for the Arusha peace process in June 1992, when the Hutu and Tutsi could not come to a compromise and had to gather in France to discuss the terms of the peace agreement that was to take place in Arusha.¹⁶⁶ The Arusha Accords were eventually signed in August 1993; part of the agreement stipulated rebel integration as well as the transfer of power from the president of Rwanda to the incoming government. Unfortunately, the assassination of the president led to the Rwandan genocide, which led to approximately 800,000 death.¹⁶⁷ The international community was unable to assist when the genocide happened, as the major powers were hesitant to bolster the overwhelmed UN peacekeeping force.¹⁶⁸

The RPF continued to fight against the genocidal forces on its own. The RPF eventually overcame opposition forces and effectively ended the genocide in 1994.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ William Cyrus Reed, "Exile, Reform, and the Rise of the Rwandan Patriotic Front," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 3 (September 1996): 479.

¹⁶⁵ Burgess, "Successful Top-Down Military Integration," 92.

¹⁶⁶ Reed, "Exile, Reform, and the Rise of the Rwandan Patriotic Front," 492; Lindsay Scorgie, "Rwanda's Arusha Accords: A Missed Opportunity," *Undercurrent* 1, no. 1 (2004): 68.

¹⁶⁷ Dagne, "Rwanda: Background and Current Developments," 1.

¹⁶⁸ Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, 1st ed. (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 364.

¹⁶⁹ "RPF – History about Rwanda," Republic of Rwanda.

Subsequently, the RPF formed the Government of National Unity¹⁷⁰ and focused on forming a security force used in stabilizing and legitimizing the country.¹⁷¹

As the RPF faced the possibility of attacks by the exiled Hutu forces residing in Democratic Republic of Congo, a national army was created.¹⁷² The national defense of the country was the national army's only objective.¹⁷³ The RPF started to transform its RPA guerrilla force into a conventional military.¹⁷⁴ It was no easy task, as the guerillas refused to be reeducated and retrained to form a national army.¹⁷⁵ As Rwanda required a large force to defend the country, the RPF also had to take the risk of integrating former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) soldiers into the national army¹⁷⁶ in multiple absorption programs between 1995 and 1997.¹⁷⁷ Fortunately, the leaders of the RPF/RPA insisted that integration was the right choice for stability and sustainable peace, so they bit the bullet to pull through the integration.¹⁷⁸ A total of 10,500 former FAR soldiers were integrated into the RPA.¹⁷⁹ The foundation of the integration process was based on Protocol III of the Arusha Accords.¹⁸⁰ The integration included an indoctrination process as well as comprehensive military training before deployment of forces.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁰ "RPF – History about Rwanda," Republic of Rwanda.

¹⁷¹ "RPF – History about Rwanda," Republic of Rwanda; and Burgess, "Successful Top-Down Military Integration," 92.

¹⁷² Burgess, "Successful Top-Down Military Integration," 92.

¹⁷³ Burgess, 92.

¹⁷⁴ Burgess, 92.

¹⁷⁵ Burgess, 92.

¹⁷⁶ Burgess, 92–93.

¹⁷⁷ Burgess, 92–93.

¹⁷⁸ Burgess, 92.

¹⁷⁹ Burgess, 94.

¹⁸⁰ Burgess, 93.

¹⁸¹ Burgess, 93.

3. Analysis

Military integration seemed to have failed after the Arusha Accords were signed. The failure was due to the refusal of the president of Rwanda and Hutu extremists to accept the terms of the agreement. Furthermore, the death of the president of Rwanda, for which the Tutsi were blamed, also caused a halt to the progress of the Arusha Accord. The subsequent genocide in 1994 and the invasion of the Tutsi-led armed group¹⁸² also caused delays in the progress of the Arusha Accord. Against this backdrop, the international community could do little to oversee the military integration or the transfer of power to an incoming government.

Subsequently, the successful integration of the RPA and former FAR soldiers was due to a top-down process driven by the newly formed government. Notably, the RPF's desire to integrate the military force was strong, as doing so would provide stability and legitimacy to the country and government. The RPF wasted no time in integrating the former FAR into the national army. The integration was also made simple for the former FAR soldiers by indoctrinating them and having them join the ranks of the established RPA. Furthermore, the aid of the international community that led to the signing of the Arusha Accords paved the way for the integration process.

Despite multiple attacks by the exiled Hutu, the RPA was able to defend against them. The RPA was also able to turn from a defensive mode to an offensive mode when it attacked the Hutu residing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and destroyed their refugee camps. This victory caused many Hutu refugees and former FAR to return to Rwanda and had them integrated into the military.

C. SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone had a series of signed peace agreements before effectively ending its civil war in 2002.¹⁸³ Under the aid of the UN, the Organization of African Unity, and the Commonwealth, the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front

¹⁸² "Rwanda: 100 Days of Slaughter," British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), April 7, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26875506>.

¹⁸³ "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

(RUF) signed the first Abidjan Peace Accord in 1996.¹⁸⁴ However, the RUF did not honor the terms of the agreement, and the president of Sierra Leone was forced into exile by a military coup, causing the failure of the peace agreement.¹⁸⁵ After subsequent years of armed conflict, the Sierra Leone government was pressured domestically and internationally to negotiate with the RUF and signed the Lomé Peace Agreement with the help of the international community in 1999.¹⁸⁶ However, the Lomé Peace Agreement was disrupted, as the RUF again reneged on the terms of the Lomé Peace Agreement and refused to disarm.¹⁸⁷ The Sierra Leone government finally signed the Abija Ceasefire Agreement with the RUF, with an UN mission in Sierra Leone enforcing the ceasefire before the resumption of the Lomé Peace Agreement.¹⁸⁸

1. The Revolutionary United Front

The RUF was a guerrilla unit in Sierra Leone that aimed to destabilize and depose Sierra Leone's government.¹⁸⁹ The formation of the RUF went back to the beginning of 1990s; it was started by Foday Saybana Sankoh and Charles Taylor, leader of National Patriotic Front for Liberia and eventual president of Liberia.¹⁹⁰ The RUF was greatly unpopular as it derived its funding from attacks on the population.¹⁹¹ The RUF also recruited children into its ranks by force through these attacks.¹⁹² As such, the RUF comprised many uneducated youths with no political awareness. Another target for recruitment was the large population of youths who were outcasts from society, unable to

¹⁸⁴ Gberie, "First Stages on the Road to Peace."

¹⁸⁵ Shrivastava, "Why Peace Failed in the Sierra Leone Civil War."

¹⁸⁶ "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

¹⁸⁷ "Sierra Leone," Global Security.

¹⁸⁸ "Abuja Ceasefire Agreement," Sierra Leone Web.

¹⁸⁹ Richard McHugh, "Revolutionary United Front," in *SAGE Encyclopedia of Terrorism*, ed. Gus Martin (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2011), 518–519.

¹⁹⁰ McHugh, "Revolutionary United Front," 518–519,

¹⁹¹ McHugh, 173–174.

¹⁹² McHugh, 173–174.

enjoy the benefits of citizenship in Sierra Leone.¹⁹³ These youths had to survive by working in diamond mines and illicit trades.¹⁹⁴ Despite having to engage in violence against the people, these youths were willing to join the RUF in exchange for physical security and social empowerment.¹⁹⁵

The domestic and international community exerted immense pressure on the president of Sierra Leone due to the constant violent attacks of the RUF against the capital. Consequently, the Sierra Leone government negotiated the 1996 Abidjan Peace Accord and the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement with the RUF to end the civil war.¹⁹⁶

2. The Integration Process

The UN, foreign diplomats, and some Sierra Leone civil society representatives assisted in the negotiations, which led to the signing of the Lomé agreement.¹⁹⁷ The British, together with the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), initiated and supervised the security sector reform with plans that included reorganizing the Ministry of Defence and establishing the Military Reintegration Programme.¹⁹⁸ A UN peacekeeping force was also deployed to oversee the disarmament and demobilization process of the RUF.¹⁹⁹

The Lomé agreement targeted power sharing between the government and the RUF.²⁰⁰ Four cabinet posts and four deputy ministerial positions were provided by the

¹⁹³ McHugh, 174.

¹⁹⁴ McHugh, 174.

¹⁹⁵ McHugh, 174.

¹⁹⁶ Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, "Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold: The Republic of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces after the Lomé Peace Agreement," in *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars*, ed. Roy Licklider (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 198.

¹⁹⁷ Kovacs, "Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold," 198.

¹⁹⁸ Desirée Nilsson and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, "Different Paths of Reconstruction: Military Reform in Post-War Sierra Leone and Liberia," *International Peacekeeping* 20, no. 1 (2013): 6.

¹⁹⁹ Kovacs, "Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold," 200.

²⁰⁰ Kovacs, 198.

government for the RUF.²⁰¹ The Lomé agreement included the appointment of Sankoh as the chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic, Resources, National Reconstruction, and Development.²⁰² All RUF rebels were acquitted of crimes committed during the armed conflict.²⁰³ The Lomé agreement also provided for a military integration, which allowed willing rebels and soldiers from the RUF, Civil Defence Forces (CDF), and Sierra Leone Army to join if they met the “established criteria.”²⁰⁴ The Ministry of Defence was reorganized according to the British model of joint civil and military management, and the Sierra Leone Armed Forces were also restructured to accommodate the integration.²⁰⁵

Unfortunately, the integration did not gain traction, as the RUF turned against the Lomé agreement and refused to disarm.²⁰⁶ The UN peacekeeping force came under attack in the RUF-controlled areas while assisting with disarmament and demobilization.²⁰⁷ The president of Sierra Leone decided to integrate a significant number of former junta soldiers from the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council with the CDF and existing SLA forces to fight against the RUF.²⁰⁸

The RUF was eventually subdued by the ad hoc integrated force with the aid of the UN and British forces.²⁰⁹ The United Kingdom, IMATT, and the UN peacekeeping force continued to see to security sector reform.²¹⁰ The new Ministry of Defence was eventually established and integrated about 2,500 former rebels and soldiers from the

²⁰¹ Kovacs, “Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold,” 198.

²⁰² Kovacs, 198.

²⁰³ Kovacs, 198.

²⁰⁴ Nilsson and Kovacs, “Different Paths of Reconstruction,” 5.

²⁰⁵ Nilsson and Kovacs, 5–6.

²⁰⁶ Kovacs, “Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold,” 200.

²⁰⁷ Kovacs, 200.

²⁰⁸ Nilsson and Kovacs, “Different Paths of Reconstruction,” 6.

²⁰⁹ Nilsson and Kovacs, 6.

²¹⁰ Nilsson and Kovacs, 6.

RUF and CDF who accepted the invitation to join the new armed forces.²¹¹ The integration amounted to 14,500 soldiers in the new Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.²¹²

3. Analysis

The refusal of the RUF to disarm and demobilize delayed the reform. The delay was of no fault of the government or the international community, however, as it already planned to implement the reform. The Military Reintegration Programme was also relatively simple, as anyone who joined the armed forces would go through a nine-week basic infantry training program.²¹³ Former rebels or soldiers involved in the arm conflict were also deliberately separated into different units.²¹⁴

The involvement of the international community was critical in the entire reform process. Unlike the cases of Zimbabwe and Rwanda, in Sierra Leone, the international community was able to be involved in the negotiation of the Lomé agreement and provided guidance to the government in planning the reform. The international community also closely monitored the progress of reform and, most importantly, saw through the entire reform right to the end.

D. CONCLUSION

Zimbabwe's military integration failed because the component was never part of any peace agreement, and it was eventually undermined by the new government. Even with the aid of the international community, and even though the process of integrating the rebels into the military was made simple, the integration could not be successful.

Rwanda had a taste of both failure and success with military integration. The refusal of the president of Rwanda and Hutu extremists to accept the terms of the Arusha Accords, coupled with the death of the president of Rwanda, halted the progress of the

²¹¹ Nilsson and Kovacs, 6–7.

²¹² Nilsson and Kovacs, 6.

²¹³ Kovacs, "Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold," 201.

²¹⁴ Kovacs, 201.

Arusha Accord. The chaos that followed prevented the international community from overseeing the military integration and the transfer of power to an incoming government. Fortunately, the new government insisted on forming an integrated military, which led to the successful integration of the RPA and ex-FAR soldiers. The new government wasted no time in integrating the ex-FAR soldiers and made it simple for them to join the ranks of the established RPA. Remarkably, the aid of the international community, which led to the signing of the Arusha Accords, paved the way for the integration process.

Sierra Leone is an example of a successful military integration. This is not to say that Sierra Leone had an easy time integrating formal rebels and soldiers involved in the armed conflict into the military. The Sierra Leone government did not delay in the planning and implementation of the integration and made it relatively easy for former rebels and soldiers to join in the military. The key to its successful military integration was the deep involvement of the international community, which monitored the reform until the end.

The aforementioned failures and successes highlight the importance of genuine commitment by both the government and the rebels to end the civil war. Similarly, the GRP and MILF must genuinely commit to end the civil war in the Philippines. Furthermore, there are three more key variables to ensure that the integration would be successful. First, the GRP should not take too long to integrate rebels into the military, as this would cause insecurity among the rebels during the disarmament and demobilization process. Second, the GRP should also make it easy for the rebels to join the ranks of the military so as not to cause any delays in the integration. Third, as Malaysia and the International Contact Group start to mediate peace talks between the GRP and MILF, it is important that they should see the integration through to the end. The GRP and MILF should also involve Malaysia and the International Contact Group fully in the planning and implementation of the integration to increase the likelihood of success.

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IV. MUSLIM INSURGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE REBEL INTEGRATION UNDER THE 1996 GRP–MNLF PEACE AGREEMENT

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) has been confronted continually with domestic insurgencies since the country's independence from the United States in 1946.²¹⁵ The GRP has frequently carried out military operations to crush the insurgents, but the government ultimately resorted to peaceful resolution of the conflict. In most cases, conflict settlements introduced by the GRP offered the rebels amnesty, resettlement, and reintegration programs.²¹⁶ This approach of integrating former rebels into Philippine society or into the government's security forces became a norm in almost all peace accords entered by the state and the different rebel groups in the country. In particular, the program of integrating former insurgents into the national military or police was seen as an important component of the GRP's peace agreement because it was widely accepted among the rebels. This type of program was therefore considered as an important element of an effective long-term formula in resolving the conflict. Among the notable cases of rebel integration initiated by the GRP are the Economic Development Corps program for the resettlement and reintegration of *Hukbalahap* rebels in 1951; the GRP–MNLF Peace Accord in 1996, whereby Muslim rebels were integrated into the Philippine military; and the peace agreement between the GRP and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army in 2011, which resulted in the integration and conversion of a communist rebel group into a socio-economic organization.

Of these initiatives, the Philippines' most significant and comprehensive rebel integration program was the 1996 peace agreement between the state and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). As part of the peace package agreed to by the GRP and the MNLF, more than 5,000 Muslim insurgents were integrated into the country's national army and police units. More than 10 years since the peace agreement was signed,

²¹⁵ Melanne A. Civic and Michael Miklaucic, *Monopoly of Force: The Nexus of DDR and SSR* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2011).

²¹⁶ Civic and Miklaucic, 183.

most of these rebels remain in the military service. Nowadays, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) consider these rebel-integrees as regular soldiers because they have been fully integrated into the state's security forces. Despite this seemingly remarkable achievement of the rebel integration program, some question the outcome of this effort. In his study of rebel integration cases, based on success variables for reducing the probability of civil wars, renowned author Roy Licklider classifies the MNLF integration program as a relatively successful endeavor.²¹⁷ Licklider admits, however, that success in military integration, as in the MNLF case, does not guarantee an end to the resurgence of civil war. It only reduces the chances of renewed hostilities.²¹⁸ On the other hand, Rosalie Alcala-Hall argues that the MNLF integration program contributed very little to lasting peace in the southern Philippines.²¹⁹ She adds that the Muslim rebel integration in the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace accord was mainly a “window dressing” for the government's failed efforts to implement the needed structural reforms on the issue of poverty and Muslim marginalization.²²⁰

Nonetheless, many aspects in the MNLF rebel integration case provide valuable lessons in the planning and implementation of similar programs to support long-term conflict settlement. This chapter examines the 1996 GRP–MNLF Peace Agreement, particularly its rebel integration program, discussing the history of conflict involving Muslim rebels in Mindanao, the negotiation process that led to the GRP–MNLF peace deal, the MNLF integration program, and its implications in the current security situation in the southern Philippines.

²¹⁷ Licklider, *New Armies from Old*, 265.

²¹⁸ Licklider, 265.

²¹⁹ Hall, “From Rebels to Soldiers: An Analysis of the Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants into the Armed Forces.”

²²⁰ Hall, 116.

A. BANGSAMORO PROBLEM AND THE GRP–MNLF PEACE AGREEMENT

To better grasp the conflict in Mindanao where the MNLF rebellion surfaced, it is important to look back to the introduction of Islam in the Philippines, the Spanish and American colonization, and the struggle of a young independent Philippines to consolidate its porous and ethnically divided archipelago of more than 7,000 islands. According to various studies of the conflict involving the Muslim people in the southern Philippines, the Mindanao problem resulted from the history of politicization of the Moro identity, the underdevelopment and unequal wealth distribution of the region, and the shortcomings of the Manila central government in consolidating the Moros into the political institution of the nation.²²¹ The abundance of natural resources in Mindanao also provided the impetus for the government and Moros to engage in an armed struggle starting in the late 1960s.²²² It is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an exhaustive historical background of the conflict. Nevertheless, significant events and their implications in the conflict are presented as a brief background to the centuries of armed struggle involving the Muslim people in the Philippines' southernmost islands.

1. The Birth of the Moros and Their Struggle

The MNLF rebels were fighting for ethnic minority Muslim communities, representing less than 10 percent of the country's populace and residing mainly in the southern region of Mindanao.²²³ Their history as a community is tainted with antagonism against the colonial powers and the central government in Manila.²²⁴ The Muslim people, or Moros, were dragged into a conflict with the central government on the arrival of Western colonizers three centuries ago.²²⁵

²²¹ Ricardo David, "The Causes and Prospect of the Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003).

²²² David, 1.

²²³ David, 2.

²²⁴ David, 2.

²²⁵ David, 2.

Prior to the arrival of colonizers in the 15th century, the Philippine islands were not yet united as a nation. Mindanao, which is one of country's three largest islands, was virtually a separate region from the rest of the Philippines. Historical records show that independent Islamic sultanates already existed in Mindanao, with their own socio-political-economic systems and even trade relations with neighboring nations like Borneo, China, and Malaysia.²²⁶ Islam was introduced to Mindanao and other parts of the Philippines by traders from Central Asia, India, China, and Southeast Asia.²²⁷ Arab merchants and scholars brought Islam using these trade routes, which gave rise to Islamic settlements in Mindanao.²²⁸ The settlements later became sultanate systems with well-organized administrative and governing structures. The Sultanate of Sulu was in fact once considered a military authority in the Sulu Sea, as demonstrated in its assistance to the Sultan of Brunei in 1658 to quell a rebellion.²²⁹ As a show of goodwill for military support, the Sultanate of Brunei gave the Sabah region of Borneo to the sultan of Sulu (see Figure 1).²³⁰ As a result of the strong Islamic political system endured in Mindanao, the Moro people resisted the military campaigns of Western colonial powers for centuries, effectively preserving their political and social identity as a *Bangsamoro*, or Moro nation.²³¹

²²⁶ Chandra K. Roy, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and Amanda Romero-Medina, *Beyond the Silencing of the Guns* (Baguio City, Philippines: Tebtebba Foundation, 2004).

²²⁷ Salah Jubair, *Bangsamoro: A Nation under Endless Tyranny*, 3rd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: IQ Marin SDN BHD).

²²⁸ David, "Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 2.

²²⁹ Ed Umbao, "History of Sabah: Sultanate of Sulu's Claim against Malaysia," *Philippine News*, March 2, 2013, <https://philnews.ph/2013/03/02/history-of-sabah-sultanate-of-sulu-claim-against-malaysia/>.

²³⁰ Umbao, 1.

²³¹ Abhoud Syed M. Lingga, "Role of Third Parties in Mindanao Peace Process" (paper presented at the International Conference on Peace Building in Asia Pacific: The Role of Third Parties, Khon Kaen, Thailand, July 2006).



Figure 1. Map of the Sultanates in Mindanao (Early 15th Century)²³²

2. Moro Subjugation during the Colonization Period

The continuing conflict involving the Muslim people in Mindanao can be traced back to the Spanish and American colonial periods.²³³ Unlike the early settlements in other parts of the Philippines, which submitted easily to the colonizers, the Moros fiercely resisted conquests for centuries. Spain attempted but failed to incorporate Mindanao and convert the people to Christianity as it had on the islands of Luzon and the Visayas.²³⁴ Resistance from the Sultanates of Maguindanao and Sulu successfully frustrated attempts by Spain to conquer them, so the colonizers managed to raise heavily

²³² Source: "Southeast Asia Map," Free Vector Maps, accessed August 16, 2017, <https://freevectormaps.com/world-maps/southeast-asia>.

²³³ Federico V. Magdalena, "The Peace Process in Mindanao: Problems and Prospects," *Southeast Asian Affairs* (1997): 245–259.

²³⁴ David, "Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 3.

defended forts only on some coastlines of northern Mindanao.²³⁵ The Muslim sultanates retained varying degrees of independence from Spanish rule for more than three centuries. The Moro struggle even today claims to continue this legacy of defending the ancestral dominions of the Muslim sultanates.²³⁶

Western historians, however, attribute the confrontational approach of Spanish colonizers to the Muslim pirates who continually seized Spanish trading ships passing the Sulu and Celebes Seas in the southern Philippines. As commerce prospered, so did piracy; Sulu bandits increasingly struck ships and looted, murdered, and enslaved captured civilians.²³⁷ Filipino Christians were kept as slaves in the sultanates or sold in the Dutch East Indies.²³⁸ Regardless of the real story behind these conflicts, the most persistent effect of Spanish colonization in Mindanao was the geographical divide between the Christian north and Muslim south, an alienation that unintentionally led to a non-Christian Moro identity.²³⁹

The United States inherited the Moro problem when it bought the entire Spanish colony in the Philippines under the Treaty of Paris in the wake of U.S. victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898.²⁴⁰ The United States continued its predecessor's strategy of establishing absolute control over all regions of the country, including the sultanates in Mindanao.²⁴¹ The Americans, however, were more effective than the Spanish had been in gaining a foothold in Mindanao.²⁴² The Americans had initially made treaties with the sultans by promising not to interfere with the Muslim culture or

²³⁵ "Mindanao's Peace Process Stumbles On," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, August 19, 2008, www.internal-displacement.org.

²³⁶ "Mindanao's Peace Process Stumbles On," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

²³⁷ John Harber, "Conflict and Compromise in the Southern Philippines" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998).

²³⁸ Harber, "Conflict and Compromise in the Southern Philippines," 23.

²³⁹ Harber, 23.

²⁴⁰ David, "Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 40.

²⁴¹ David, 40.

²⁴² "Mindanao's Peace Process Stumbles On," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

religious matters. Then, U.S. corporations started taking control of large tracts of land and forest.²⁴³ This prompted the migration of people from the Christian-dominated islands of Luzon and Visayas to work on large plantations as well as for mining and logging corporations.²⁴⁴ Eventually, migrant workers from outside Mindanao dominated in number and social status.²⁴⁵

Later on, corporations in Mindanao further polarized the Muslim people and ignited conflict.²⁴⁶ Moros started organizing an armed resistance against the American colonizers in 1902; bloodshed began with an attack on a U.S. cavalry regiment.²⁴⁷ The conflict escalated when the Americans responded with bloody military offensives, such as the infamous 1906 Bud Dajo massacre in Jolo, Sulu, where a thousand Muslims were slaughtered by U.S. troops.²⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the American colonizers were able to take control of Mindanao for two decades, and Muslim leaders agreed to assimilate into the U.S.-run government in the Philippines. However, when the United States promised independence to the Filipino people as early as 1921, Moro leaders vehemently opposed the annexation of Mindanao to an independent Philippine nation.²⁴⁹ Moro leaders demanded they be granted a separate independence, particularly for the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and Palawan.²⁵⁰

²⁴³ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

²⁴⁴ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

²⁴⁵ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

²⁴⁶ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 19.

²⁴⁷ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 19.

²⁴⁸ Magdalena, “The Peace Process in Mindanao,” 246.

²⁴⁹ Lingga, “Role of Third Parties in Mindanao Peace Process.”

²⁵⁰ Datucan Abas, “Muslim Secession Movement in the Philippines” (master’s thesis, Manuel L. Quezon University, Philippines, 1972).

3. The Moros under the Philippine Republic

When the United States finally passed the reigns of governance to the Filipino elites in 1935, the Moro situation remained the same.²⁵¹ Despite the objection of Muslim rulers, the sultanates in Mindanao were assimilated into the independent Philippine republic.²⁵² The new Filipino administration under President Quezon dubbed Mindanao a “land of promise” that had to be used to generate revenue for the national government.²⁵³ The government encouraged Christian settlers to migrate to the resource-rich region as a solution to peasant discontent, the result of rising population and low production in Visayas and Luzon.²⁵⁴ Consequently, a law was eventually passed and approved by the Philippine congress declaring all Moro ancestral domains as public lands.²⁵⁵ In Mindanao, the Moro people became a minority, second-class residents as more and more Christians settled.²⁵⁶

Moro leaders continued to assert their right to independence from the Philippine Republic.²⁵⁷ In 1968, the Muslim provincial governor of Cotabato, Mindanao, issued a manifesto, known as the Mindanao Independence Movement, calling for independence of the Moro land.²⁵⁸ The seemingly passive Moro independence movement quickly spread into an armed rebellion after being triggered by local and international events. One such incident was the infamous 1968 Jabidah massacre on Corregidor Island, where 28 young Muslim recruits, trained by the Philippine military for a secretive operation in Sabah,

²⁵¹ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

²⁵² David, “Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement,” 72.

²⁵³ David, 72.

²⁵⁴ Lela Garner Noble, “The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines,” *Pacific Affairs* 49, no. 3 (1976): 405–424.

²⁵⁵ Satur Ocampo, “Deeper Look at the Moro Problem,” *Sun Star Manila*, May 5, 2000.

²⁵⁶ David, “Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement,” 73.

²⁵⁷ Lingga, “Role of Third Parties in Mindanao Peace Process,” 5.

²⁵⁸ Lingga, 5.

Borneo, were allegedly killed by their trainers. Reports claimed that the Muslim trainees mutinied because of maltreatment and refused to obey orders to infiltrate Sabah.²⁵⁹

This bloodbath affected Muslim Filipinos, especially Moro students in secular colleges in Manila and in Islamic universities in the Middle East. Many of these young Muslim students became radicalized during the worldwide trend of Arab nationalism and the revitalization of Islamic awareness in the 1960s.²⁶⁰ These incidents further solidified the Mindanao Independence Movement and prompted the subsequent confluence of all Muslim tribes in the sultanates of Mindanao for the creation of the Moro National Liberation Front in 1969.

4. The MNLF and the 1996 Peace Agreement

The Moro National Liberation Front was formed as a politico-military revolutionary movement of the Muslim people in Mindanao, advocating the right to self-determination and secession from the Republic of the Philippines, with the aim of establishing an independent *Bangsamoro* (translated as “land of the Moros” in the local dialect). Among the major causes of the movement’s creation, as identified by key MNLF leaders, were the rise of Islamic nationalism, land-grabbing in Mindanao by new settlers, the Jabidah massacre, and discontent in the government’s failure to solve social, political, and economic problems.²⁶¹

It was the massacre in Corregidor that most galvanized the Moros because it emboldened them to fight back after gaining a potent international ally, a Muslim brother and neighbor—Sabah, Malaysia. When the Jabidah incident happened, Malaysia suspended bilateral relations with the Philippines.²⁶² There were reports that the Malaysian government conducted training for Moro rebels in Sabah and provided weapons, transportation, and ammunition to the movement as early as 1969.²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Noble, “The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines,” 408.

²⁶⁰ David, “Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement,” 74.

²⁶¹ Noble, “The Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines,” 410.

²⁶² Noble, 408.

²⁶³ Noble, 408.

Accordingly, the MNLF was formally created in western Malaysia, where one of its first batches of trainees was named for the front's chairman, Nur Misuari.²⁶⁴ Armed confrontation became violent in Mindanao, especially after President Marcos declared martial law in 1972. Casualties quickly rose—thousands were killed by government forces and MNLF rebels while hundreds of civilians were displaced from intense fighting. Christian settlers in Mindanao also formed vigilante groups called *Ilaga* due to growing hatred from Muslims, further exacerbating the volatile situation.

As the skirmishes dragged on, both the MNLF and the Marcos administration eventually bore the brunt of the war. MNLF chairman Misuari requested firearms and funding from rich Islamic states, with Libya becoming one of the principal sponsors.²⁶⁵ The rising number of Muslim civilians affected by the conflict caught the attention of the influential Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which eventually recognized the MNLF with “observer status” in the organization by 1975. Meanwhile, the conflict drained the Marcos government of financial resources. From 1973 to 1975, the administration had already deployed 80 percent of its armed forces in Mindanao.²⁶⁶

With the increasing international support for the MNLF, rising expenditures for the rebellion, and the risk of sanctions from oil suppliers in the Middle East, Marcos pushed for negotiations with the MNLF.²⁶⁷ In 1976, representatives from the Marcos government and the MNLF finally met in Libya in the presence of the OIC, which brokered a peace settlement known as the Tripoli Agreement.²⁶⁸ The agreement generally adopted the principle of autonomy, instead of secession, as the solution to the Moro problem. As stipulated in the agreement, 13 provinces and nine cities of Mindanao would be granted autonomy. The central government, however, remained the authority in

²⁶⁴ Noble, 408.

²⁶⁵ Noble, 409.

²⁶⁶ Harber, “Conflict and Compromise in the Southern Philippines,” 52.

²⁶⁷ Harber, 52.

²⁶⁸ Harber, 52.

matters related to international relations, military affairs, mines, and mineral resources.²⁶⁹ Similarly, the autonomous Muslim areas were also given the freedom to establish Sharia courts and educational institutions, administer their own financial and economic systems, and organize a regional security force.²⁷⁰ These broad principles outlined in the agreement have become the basic framework for resolving issues with the Moros.²⁷¹

The Tripoli Agreement did not materialize as intended, however. The supposed granting of autonomy for 13 provinces and nine cities in Mindanao was met with opposition from non-Muslim political groups. They claimed that Christians were the majority in many areas mentioned in the agreement, but they had not been consulted on the matter. Christian-dominated communities also expressed their concern once they were forced to be incorporated into MNLF-ruled provinces, as shown in Figure 2.

²⁶⁹ Jacques Bertrand, "Peace and Conflict in the Southern Philippines: Why the 1996 Peace Agreement is Fragile," *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 1 (2000): 38.

²⁷⁰ Bertrand, 39.

²⁷¹ "Mindanao's Peace Process Stumbles On," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 22.

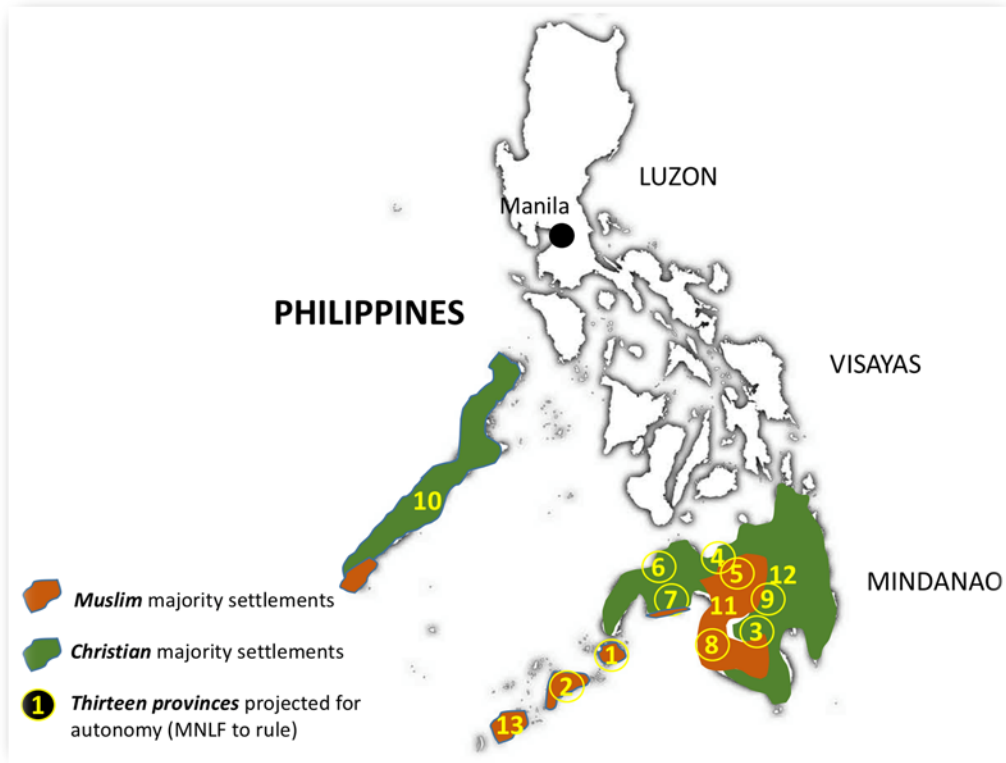


Figure 2. Location of 13 Provinces for Autonomy under the Tripoli Agreement vis-à-vis Muslim-Christian Settlements in Mindanao²⁷²

Marcos insisted that a plebiscite should be held in the 13 provinces; the MNLF denounced these deviations from the provisions of the agreement. In 1977, the peace settlement collapsed, with Misuari claiming that the Marcos administration did not abide by the terms of the Tripoli Agreement.

The peace agreement started working again when Marcos was succeeded in a “people power” revolution in 1985, by President Corazon Aquino, who opened the line for a peace negotiation. The MNLF leadership and the Aquino administration ultimately pursued the terms of the Tripoli Agreement; the government, however, insisted that, as part of the democratic process, a plebiscite be held in the 13 provinces and nine cities before autonomy was granted. The plebiscite took place, with the people voting either “yes” or “no” for autonomy. As expected, only the four Muslim-majority provinces voted

²⁷² Source: “Philippine Map,” D-Maps, http://d-maps.com/pays.php?num_pay=104&lang=en.

for autonomy.²⁷³ The result led to the creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a self-governing political entity bestowed with executive and legislative powers over the four provinces and cities that voted for autonomy.²⁷⁴ However, the MNLF initially rejected the conduct of the plebiscite, claiming it did not adhere to the Tripoli Agreement. The implementation of ARMM was stalled, and fighting resumed.²⁷⁵ Aquino's presidency ended without achieving a mutually accepted and workable approach to end the conflict.

5. The 1996 Final Peace Agreement

In 1996, the administration of President Ramos, with the help of Indonesia and the OIC, made a breakthrough in the government's peace efforts with the signing of the GRP–MNLF Final Peace Agreement (FPA).²⁷⁶ This historic event received worldwide accolades, earning both MNLF leader Nur Misuari and then Philippine President Fidel Ramos the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The agreement was considered groundbreaking because it fully implemented the Tripoli Agreement.

The FPA was to be implemented in two phases. The first phase was a three-year transition period for confidence building and public awareness in the 14 provinces and ten cities under the management of the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (SPCPD), headed by Nur Misuari and a consultative assembly.²⁷⁷ During this phase, major projects in infrastructure, water supply, energy, agriculture, and health, among others, were implemented with financial support from local and international

²⁷³ Harber, "Conflict and Compromise in the Southern Philippines," 53.

²⁷⁴ Bertrand, "Peace and Conflict in the Southern Philippines," 38.

²⁷⁵ Astrid S. Tuminez, "Neither Sovereignty nor Autonomy: Continuing Conflict in the Southern Philippines," in *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law*, vol. 102 (Washington, DC: American Society of International Law, 2008), 122–125.

²⁷⁶ Tuminez, "Neither Sovereignty nor Autonomy," 123.

²⁷⁷ Kenneth E. Bauzon, "The Philippines: The 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines: An Assessment." *Ethnic Studies Report* 17, no. 2 (1999): 253–80.

sources.²⁷⁸ This phase also provided for the planning and integration of 7,500 MNLF rebels into the national army and police.²⁷⁹ The second phase created a new autonomous political entity, an expanded ARMM, with provinces and cities determined through a plebiscite. Other important aspects of the agreement comprise the autonomous region's representation in all departments of the national government, inclusion of Islamic curriculum in the education system, the establishment of Sharia courts, and the creation of a special regional security force.²⁸⁰ Both the SPCPD and ARMM were to be headed by Nur Misuari. With Misuari's leadership in both institutions, it was obvious early on that this peace settlement would gain the confidence of Muslim residents in the region and assure non-Muslims that autonomy would be beneficial to all.²⁸¹

While the GRP–MNLF Peace Agreement was considered a breakthrough in Mindanao's decades-long conflict, based on the events that followed during its implementation, observers were divided on whether the agreement was successful.²⁸² The peaceful relationship between the GRP troops and the MNLF rebels during the implementation period was viewed by some as a sign of success for the FPA. Reports indicated that there were no more major armed skirmishes between the mainstream MNLF and the AFP. These reports are attributed to the more than 5,000 MNLF rebels successfully integrated in the Philippine military and police units within the first three years of FPA implementation. The GRP, however, was still conducting combat operations in Mindanao while the FPA was being implemented. But these actions were directed against other armed groups in Mindanao, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf Group. Meanwhile, many observers were dissatisfied with how the autonomous Muslim political entity, or ARMM, governed. Though the FPA provided autonomy in Muslim-majority areas in Mindanao, it failed to satisfy the expectations of

²⁷⁸ Eleanor P. Dictaan-Bang-oa, "The Question of Peace in Mindanao, Southern Philippines," in *Beyond the Silencing of the Guns* (Baguio City, Philippines: Tebtebba Foundation, 2004): 153–184.

²⁷⁹ Bertrand, "Peace and Conflict in the Southern Philippines," 41.

²⁸⁰ Bertrand, 42.

²⁸¹ Bertrand, 42.

²⁸² Bauzon, "The 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines," 266.

the public and international community.²⁸³ In the first three years of its implementation, ARMM under Nur Misuari was frequently blamed for mismanagement and corruption.²⁸⁴ For example, nepotism was rampant in many offices of the region. One respected figure in the peace movement even accused Misuari of making ARMM positions an “exclusive club of the MNLF.”²⁸⁵ Other Muslim tribes, such as the Maranao and Maguindanao in the provinces of Cotabato and Lanao districts, accused Misuari of supporting only his Tausug constituents.²⁸⁶ Consequently, reports of corruption were high as there were instances when ARMM employees did not receive their pay or benefits²⁸⁷ Moreover, a large portion of the funding was routed to projects that benefited people close to Misuari, instead of allocated for needed programs in Muslim villages.²⁸⁸ Misuari, however, claimed that his administration’s shortcomings were by and large a result of the failure of the national government to supply ARMM’s needed resources. Some observers contended that ARMM was exclusively dependent on foreign aid, which gave the impression that the GRP lacked commitment.²⁸⁹ Philippine leadership responded that support given to ARMM was based on the financial capacity of the state with consideration for reasonable and proportionate allocation of resources to all other regions of the country.

In the implementation of the FPA, Misuari was not successful in resolving internal tensions among the different Moro groups inside ARMM, which affected security in the region. The most prominent among these groups is the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is a breakaway faction of the MNLF. MILF began receiving more extensive support from the Maranao and Maguindanao tribes, who felt that ARMM was already controlled by their longtime rival—Misuari’s Tausug tribes of

²⁸³ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 18.

²⁸⁴ Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict in the Southern Philippines,” 44.

²⁸⁵ “Mindanao’s Peace Process Stumbles On,” Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 23.

²⁸⁶ Bertrand, “Peace and Conflict in the Southern Philippines,” 48.

²⁸⁷ Bertrand, 45.

²⁸⁸ Bertrand, 45.

²⁸⁹ Bertrand, 45.

Sulu. The rivalry among these three major Moro tribes in Mindanao originated centuries ago when Mindanao was ruled by the Sultanates of Maguindanao, Lanao and Sulu. The leaders of both rebel groups had been in opposition partly because of their tribal disparities but primarily due to their ideological and political differences. MILF leadership continued to fight for an independent Islamic state while the MNLF had given up independence in exchange for regional autonomy.²⁹⁰

Misuari's term as governor failed to fulfill the people's expectations for a peaceful and progressive autonomous region for the Muslim communities in Mindanao. Discontent began to rise in the region, and many people started to view the 1996 peace agreement as flawed.²⁹¹ The MNLF leaders splintered into new factions with the majority challenging the chairmanship of Misuari with ARMM. Among the most prominent factions was the MNLF Executive Council of 15, or EC-15, which represented the most respected MNLF commanders in ARMM provinces. Misuari was eventually deposed from ARMM and then imprisoned when he led an armed attack in 2001 against military units at his hometown in Sulu. The attack was prompted by Misuari's rejection of the ARMM's elections proposed by the government and EC-15, for which Misuari would have had a slim chance of winning. Despite its imperfections and limitations, the 1996 Final Peace Agreement has endured with ARMM gradually improving its governance over time. Former MNLF commanders have also shown great progress in leading the autonomous Muslim region, with Mujiv Hataman as the eighth ARMM governor, in office since 2011.

B. THE MNLF REBEL INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Along with the concept of an autonomous Muslim region, the prime movers of the 1996 Final Peace Agreement also considered the status of the MNLF combatants as a critical component in resolving the armed conflict. As such, the FPA provided for the integration of MNLF fighters into mainstream society either by absorbing them into the

²⁹⁰ Bauzon, "The 1996 Peace Agreement for the Southern Philippines," 264.

²⁹¹ "Mapping Militant Organization: Moro National Liberation Front," Stanford University, last modified August 14, 2015, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/379#note68>.

Philippine military and police units or by returning them to their communities as peaceful and productive citizens.

The provisions pertaining to the MNLF rebel integration program are stipulated in Articles 19 and 20 of the agreement. The agreement specifically states that the Philippine government, through existing laws and regulation, must provide vacancies for 1,500 MNLF fighters in the Philippine National Police (PNP) and for 5,750 in the AFP.²⁹² For the remaining MNLF members who are not absorbed into the government's security sector, the agreement specifies, "There shall be a special socioeconomic, cultural and educational program . . . to prepare them and their families for productive endeavors, provide for educational, technical skills and livelihood training and give them priority for hiring in development projects."²⁹³ One of the MNLF commanders was also allotted the position of deputy commander of the Southern Command, AFP, during the transition period. The position is a one-star general equivalent because the Southern Command is the AFP's largest unified command, responsible for providing command and control in all military operations in Mindanao. Another section of the agreement requires the establishment of the Special Regional Security Force (SRSF). The SRSF shall be composed of former MNLF rebels and shall perform police functions within the ARMM. Among the projected roles of the SRSF are the following: "the enforcement of all laws for the protection of persons and properties; the maintenance of public safety, law, and order; the investigation and prevention of crimes, apprehension and or detention of the alleged offender for prosecution, among others."²⁹⁴ The SRSF is under the authority of the chairman or governor of the autonomous region.

²⁹² Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), *The Final Peace Agreement on the Implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement between the GRP and the MNLF* (Manila, Philippines: OPAPP, September 2, 1996), <https://www.scribd.com/document/148683763/The-Final-Peace-Agreement-on-the-Implementation-of-the-1976-Tripoli-Agreement-Between-the-GRP-and-the-MNLF>.

²⁹³ OPAPP, *The Final Peace Agreement*.

²⁹⁴ OPAPP.

In fulfilling the integration program, President Ramos issued Administrative Order 295, directing the defense department as the implementing agency.²⁹⁵ This directive outlines the period of implementation, rules and responsibilities, phases of integration, disposition of surrendered firearms, and funding support. The MNLF integration program was to be carried out in three years to commence within one month of the administrative order with the following phases of implementation: processing, individual training, c (OJT) with deployment as separate units, and integration into AFP units.²⁹⁶ In the processing phase, the MNLF was given the leeway of selecting from among its ranks 5,500 primary candidates and 2,500 alternate candidates to be processed for integration into the AFP.²⁹⁷ Selected rebel candidates were also required to turnover their individual weapons upon reporting to training centers; otherwise they would not be processed.²⁹⁸ The MNLF was also expected to submit the complete roster of personnel by unit and location as reference for the processing teams. The individual training phase included a 48-week basic military officer or candidate soldier course similar to military entry training for regular soldiers of the Philippine Army. Upon completion of the basic military courses, the provisions required candidates to undergo OJT in AFP units within ARMM and to organize as separate units during the peace agreement's transition period. After their OJT, candidates would be fully integrated as regular officers and enlisted personnel in the AFP.²⁹⁹

Though there were reported shortcomings in its actual implementation, the rebel integration program pushed through as planned. The AFP was able to process 448 officer candidates and 8,473 enlisted personnel candidates who were further screened for the military training phase. In consideration of the limited capacity of training sites and the

²⁹⁵ Office of the President of the Philippines, Administrative Order 295, "Providing for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on the Integration of the Members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) into the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)," October 7, 1996, <http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1996/10/07/administrative-order-no-295-s-1996/>

²⁹⁶ Office of the President of the Philippines, Administrative Order 295.

²⁹⁷ Office of the President of the Philippines, Administrative Order 295.

²⁹⁸ Office of the President of the Philippines, Administrative Order 295.

²⁹⁹ Office of the President of the Philippines, Administrative Order 295.

staggered submission of the MNLF list of candidates, the training was divided into five batches, which began in November 1996 and ended in August 2002.³⁰⁰ Out of these groups, 220 officers and 5,530 soldiers completed the training and were organized into 47 separate rifle companies and ten separate engineer companies.³⁰¹ After completing their OJT, they were eventually absorbed into different Army units deployed in Mindanao—completing their full integration as members of the AFP. These former rebels turned soldiers continue to serve the Philippine Army today, performing the same tasks, subject to similar regulations, and receiving the same privileges as any other soldiers in the AFP. Meanwhile, the MNLF applicants for police integration were administered by the Philippine National Police. Those who qualified underwent training in courses related to the criminal justice system, adherence to human rights, and police operations.³⁰² One thousand MNLF fighters completed the police integration process.³⁰³ This number was within the quota stipulated in the peace agreement. Looking at these data, the total number of rebels who were fully integrated into the country's security forces reached more than 6,000 individuals. This significant number of former rebels, now having stable jobs and incomes, was expected to wield a substantial impact in the long-term outcome of the peace process. It was also anticipated that the success in the program would further resonate into the families and communities of the rebels-turned-soldiers.

MNLF members who were not absorbed into the security sector also benefited from various socio-economic and educational programs. Among the notable projects implemented in support of these endeavors were the college-level educational training to qualify for Army enlistment; project management and construction training, which provided skills to build 163 bridges in the conflict-affected areas in Mindanao with support from British engineers; the hybrid corn farming and seaweed growing programs that benefited more than 5,000 MNLF members; as well as the United States Agency for

³⁰⁰ Pedro Ramboanga, *AFP's Implementation of the MNLF Integration Program* (Armed Forces of the Philippines, 2008).

³⁰¹ Ramboanga, *AFP's Implementation of the MNLF Integration Program*.

³⁰² Friedrich Plank, "Not Enough Pieces of the Cake? The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the Mindanao Final Agreement," *Asian Security* 11, no. 2 (2015): 154–177.

³⁰³ Plank, "Not Enough Pieces of the Cake?"

International Development and United Nations Development Program–sponsored socio-economic and livelihood projects that benefited more than 14,000 former MNLF fighters and their families.³⁰⁴

Despite the number of implemented programs and projects, rebel integration did not transpire seamlessly for both parties and all stakeholders involved. The program came with varied stories of problems, shortcomings, misunderstandings, compromises, and sacrifices. One of the most significant concerns in the early part of the program was that not all rebel-applicants could be integrated.³⁰⁵ Even when some of the requirements were waived, a large fraction of the rebels were not accepted because they were illiterate, and some were already in their 50s. This created delays in the processing as well as frustration among the military and rebels alike. The parties reached a compromise when MNLF fighters were given the option of recommending a proxy, such as a younger relative, who met the qualifications.³⁰⁶

Another important issue was the disarmament program that accompanied integration. The AFP was able to collect more than 5,000 assorted high-powered firearms from the MNLF, who turned over their weapons either as a requirement for the rebel-military integration or through the government’s cash reward program for every weapon surrendered. However, some reported the MNLF as an organization was not actually disarmed through this program. The Moro were known to embrace a culture of gun-ownership due to their history of inter-Muslim tribal conflicts called *rido*, or blood feuds. Because of this culture, a number of MNLF rebels turned over only lesser quality or caliber rifles. Some even “sold” their guns through the government’s cash-for-weapons program and used the profit to buy higher quality guns from the black market. MNLF members who were absorbed in the military also reportedly applied for bank loans to purchase personal weapons for protection at home. The consequence was not

³⁰⁴ Plank, “Not Enough Pieces of the Cake?,” 154.

³⁰⁵ Plank, “Not Enough Pieces of the Cake?,” 154.

³⁰⁶ Hall, “From Rebels to Soldiers: An Analysis of the Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants into the Armed Forces.”

disarmament but arms proliferation in the Muslim communities and the retention of the rebel's weaponry.³⁰⁷

The AFP found the task of integrating its former enemies a challenging experience. For one, the program was the first time a large number of Muslims were to be trained and absorbed into the Army units in Mindanao. This meant an Army battalion that may have had few or no Muslim personnel would have to fill 50 percent its ranks with former MNLF rebels, about 250 slots for the average battalion. Integrating more than 5,000 MNLF personnel into the AFP made a significant impact on the Army battalion's culture, traditions, and support facilities. Among the significant transformations or adaptations made by the Army were training modules and routine unit activities that considered the religious practices of Muslims, such as Friday prayers and fasting; mosques in military camps or at least designated Muslim prayer rooms; Muslim food menus in mess halls; and special literacy training and educational grants for Muslim soldiers to keep them on pace with the standards of the Army.³⁰⁸ Through these efforts and despite some reported cases of discrimination, most of the MNLF who were integrated felt fully accepted in their military units as their religious practices had been respected.³⁰⁹

There were also instances when both the GRP and the MNLF had differences in the interpretation of the rebel integration provisions of the agreement. Nur Misuari raised the issue of creating separate MNLF units from the rebels who had been integrated. He insisted the MNLF integrees should not have been absorbed into Army battalions, but organized and employed as separate units. However, the AFP officer in charge of force integration explained the creation of separate units was implemented only during the OJT phase.³¹⁰ The separate units were eventually dissolved when the MNLF integrees were finally integrated into Army battalions. The AFP officer further opined that it would be a

³⁰⁷ Hall, "From Rebels to Soldiers: An Analysis of the Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants into the Armed Forces."

³⁰⁸ Hall.

³⁰⁹ Hall.

³¹⁰ Hall.

ridiculous idea for the military to support the organization, equipment, and operation of purely MNLF-integree units from a national security perspective.³¹¹ Doing so might have resulted in these separate units being used by unscrupulous MNLF leaders against the state.³¹² Even with all the challenges faced in implementing the integration program, many observers described it as generally successful, and one that provides prime examples for how two warring groups “can work on building trust and confidence and later on, achieve a common goal.”³¹³

C. CONCLUSION

This chapter essentially presented the complexity of the Moro problem whose origin can be traced back centuries ago when colonizers and then the Philippine government manipulated, oppressed, and neglected these people until they became minorities in their own lands. The conflict further galvanized with President Marcos’s repressive policies and was exacerbated by the rise of ethno-religious pride among the Moro people. The 1996 GRP–MNLF Final Peace Agreement was therefore a milestone in the decades-long effort to end the conflict because it contained provisions that both the leaders of the Philippine government and the Moro people agreed with and believed could bring lasting solution to the conflict. Most observers would, however, critique the peace agreement as a failure. Instead of peace, fighting continues to exist in Mindanao. Nonetheless, many also agree that the FPA provided many lessons learned and somehow made considerable progress in the path toward lasting peace in the region.

One key lessons learned from this experience is the critical role of the international community. This study confirms the importance of international organizations in all stages of the peace process. The intervention of the OIC that pushed both parties to come to the table and start negotiating for peace eventually led to the Tripoli Agreement. Similarly, the OIC and Indonesia were also instrumental in

³¹¹ Hall.

³¹² Hall.

³¹³ Merliza Makinano and Alfredo Lubang, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: The Mindanao Experience* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2001).

facilitating the signing of the final peace agreement. The international community was also significantly involved throughout the implementation of the FPA. Nevertheless, most of the foreign assistance focused solely on the provisions of socio-economic and educational programs. There was less involvement of international organizations in matters that had a direct impact on exercising autonomy and in the disarmament and reintegration programs. In future peace endeavors, the international community can be valuable in these areas because it can hold parties accountable in adhering to the agreement's provisions.

The forerunners of the FPA have identified autonomy and rebel integration as key elements in the peace formula for Mindanao. This thesis tends to conform to the idea that the peace agreement was not a hastily made contract but a product of painstaking years of negotiations, compromises, and facilitation. Autonomy should therefore be the centerpiece in the implementation of an agreement with rebel integration as a key component. The establishment of ARMM as an autonomous political entity for the Muslim community, and its continued existence today, indicates significant progress in this peace endeavor. Though there were shortcomings in how ARMM governed during the early years of its creation, the organization continues to evolve and improve over the years as well as gain the trust and confidence from its constituents.

The rebel integration program in the FPA has also played an important role in the peace accord. Without it, other programs may not have been implemented or may have been limited. Rebel integration somehow reduced the tension among soldiers and MNLF rebels as they now work together under one organization. The relative success in the rebel integration program has been attributed to the flexibility and adaptability of the AFP in absorbing former MNLF members. The Army units had to make abrupt organizational changes to accommodate former enemies into their ranks. That these rebels-turned-soldiers still serve the AFP after 20 years of military service attests to the success of the program. There are, however, many areas in which the rebel integration program did not considerably succeed. The disarmament and demobilization of the MNLF was not fully attained. Only those who availed themselves of rebel integration and the cash-for-guns programs turned over their firearms, which was a small fraction of the

reported strength of the MNLF organization. The MNLF did not allow their entire organization to demobilize as in other disarmament programs. Possible approaches to facilitate complete disarmament and demobilization include the establishment of programs that cater to all MNLF members and the adoption of unit integration instead of individual application.

This chapter concludes that the Moro problem is indeed complex and unique in itself. The experience in the GRP–MNLF agreement illustrates how difficult it is to implement seemingly perfect peace formulas in the real-world setting. Despite its flaws, the implementation of the agreement showed chances of realizing the goal of lasting peace in the region. Efforts must first be geared toward garnering the support and cooperation of the people. This can be achieved by progressively removing the history of hatred among Muslims and Christians through various programs that address the matter. There are already many areas in Mindanao where Muslims and Christians live peacefully together. Attaining this peaceful situation in the entire region may facilitate the disbandment of all armed groups and ultimately contribute to lasting peace in Mindanao.

V. THE MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT AND THE PROSPECTS OF THE INTEGRATION PROGRAM UNDER THE GRP–MILF COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT OF THE BANGSAMORO

The Moro problem in Mindanao did not end with the implementation of the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement; the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a splinter group of the MNLF, continued the armed struggle for Moro independence. The Government of the Philippines (GRP) and MILF, however, had explored possibilities of peacefully ending the conflict. As early as 1997, President Ramos opened talks with MILF. These talks continued with succeeding administrations, though these negotiations were oftentimes interrupted by violent skirmishes between the government forces and MILF armed groups. The most recent among these peace efforts resulted in the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014. Many observers believe that the CAB is the answer to the Moro problem because it is a more inclusive peace agreement. Moreover, both the government and MILF leadership, having learned many lessons from their experiences with the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement, have become more adept at providing valuable feedback in the formulation of the CAB. This chapter examines the dynamics in the GRP–MILF peace negotiations leading to the signing of the CAB and the significant efforts to realize this agreement. In particular, the rebel integration program outlined in the CAB is examined to determine its prospects of contributing to the outcome of the peace agreement.

A. MILF AND THE GRP–MILF PEACE AGREEMENT

1. MILF as a Secessionist Movement

The MILF insurgency was originally part of the MNLF, which successfully united the Moro people in the fight for independence from the Philippine government in 1971.³¹⁴ The emergence of MILF in 1977 was a result of splintering in the central committee of the MNLF due to ideological and ethno-religious differences—most

³¹⁴ Ariel Caculitan, “Negotiating Peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Southern Philippines” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2005).

notably between Hashim Salamat and Nur Misuari, who had deeply rooted disparities in their political and religious views.³¹⁵ The MNLF leader, Misuari, a Tausug from the island of Sulu, espoused a Marxist-inspired movement, having been a professor at the University of the Philippines where frontrunners of the country's communist insurgency also originated. Salamat, on the other hand, led a breakaway group and created MILF. In contrast to Misuari's predispositions, Salamat was a Maguindanaoan from mainland Mindanao, educated at Egypt's Al-Azhar University during those times when Arab nationalism and Islamic independence movements were on the rise.³¹⁶ The ideological break manifested in the two opposing approaches of the MNLF and MILF, which continue to the present day. The MNLF advocated for a more secular orientation for Moro self-rule under Philippine sovereignty.³¹⁷ MILF, however, pursued self-determination, with the establishment of an independent Islamic state as its ultimate goal.³¹⁸ The split also resulted in polarization among ethnic associations of both groups. MILF received the support of majority Maguindanaoan, Iranun, and Maranao tribes in mainland Mindanao while the MNLF membership was generally confined to the Tausug tribes in the island provinces of Sulu and Basilan.

From a mere splinter group, MILF managed to gradually increase its organizational capabilities and influence in the region, becoming even more dominant than the MNLF. It was able to build up its war machinery and manpower surreptitiously while the GRP and the MNLF were engaging in peace talks—even when it sought recognition to participate. Nevertheless, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), which facilitated the negotiations, excluded MILF from the peace process, as it recognized the MNLF as the sole representative of the Moro people.³¹⁹ Having been sidelined in the GRP–MNLF peace process, which dragged on for more than 30 years, MILF was able to expand by 1999 from 5,000 ill-equipped members to around 11,000

³¹⁵ David, "Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 88.

³¹⁶ Tuminez "Neither Sovereignty nor Autonomy," 122–125.

³¹⁷ David, "Southern Philippines Secessionist Movement," 81.

³¹⁸ David, 81.

³¹⁹ Dictaan-Bang-oa, "The Question of Peace in Mindanao," 153–184.

fully armed fighters.³²⁰ Aside from its weaponry, MILF also claimed it had established 13 major camps and 33 auxiliary camps in Muslim-majority provinces in Mindanao.³²¹ MILF was therefore in a position of strength when it started entertaining the government's offer of a negotiated settlement in 1997—a year after the signing of the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement.

2. Negotiating Peace with MILF

a. Early Efforts to Cease Hostilities and Begin Talks

Because MILF was outside the GRP–MNLF peace talks, early efforts of the government and MILF to negotiate was conducted only through unofficial channels. Formal peace talks between the Philippine authorities and MILF began after the signing of the GRP–MNLF peace agreement in 1996. When the Ramos administration finally concluded the armed conflict with the MNLF through the FPA, it began sending peace emissaries to MILF.³²² In 1997, MILF eventually agreed to a ceasefire to pave the way for peaceful negotiations.³²³

During the early part of the negotiations, the Ramos government and MILF presented two opposing positions. MILF demanded an independent Islamic state while the Philippine government asserted that talks should remain within the bounds of the constitution, which would not compromise the country's territorial integrity.³²⁴ MILF finally came up with nine key issues that became the agenda for resolution in the negotiation process: “ancestral domain, displaced and landless Bangsamoro, destruction of properties and war victims, human rights issues, social and cultural discrimination, corruption of the mind and the moral fiber, economic inequities and widespread poverty,

³²⁰ Rizal G. Buendia, “The GRP-MILF Peace Talks: Quo Vadis?” *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2004): 205–221.

³²¹ Buendia, “The GRP-MILF Peace Talks,” 206.

³²² Dictaan-Bang-oa, “The Question of Peace in Mindanao,” 164.

³²³ Dictaan-Bang-oa, “167.

³²⁴ Nathan Quimpo, “The Thorny Issue of the MILF Camps,” *Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières*, May 31, 2000, <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article432>.

exploitation of natural resources and agrarian related issues.”³²⁵ The talks did little to bring concrete settlement on these issues. Instead, observers noted an alarming increase in the intensity of armed conflict between the two parties.³²⁶ As a result, the peace initiatives of the Ramos administration focused only on the cessation of hostilities.

Under the succeeding Estrada presidency, the negotiations continued sluggishly but eventually came to a halt, resulting in a full-scale government offensive. The controversial issue that triggered the hostilities was the MILF’s demands for recognition and delimitation of their camps. MILF argued that a ceasefire agreement would not hold because government forces deployed on the ground were intruding in their communities. They claimed that the recognition of their camps for the duration of the peace talks would help prevent unintentional confrontations between the military and rebels.³²⁷ As a “confidence building measure,” the GRP acknowledged seven of MILF’s major camps.³²⁸ This condition, however, only worsened the situation because the specific boundaries of these camps were the most difficult detail to settle. The government recognized only “those areas where MILF forces [were] actually situated” while MILF insisted that each camp extended more than a thousand square miles.³²⁹ To make matters worse, MILF began establishing its own military checkpoints along the highways near its camps and started collected “taxes” from the commuting public.

The GRP panel’s decision to recognize these camps was eventually met with severe criticism. Many observers viewed it as a blunder³³⁰ that facilitated MILF’s goal of achieving belligerency status, a step toward gaining international recognition as a state. Thus, President Estrada pushed to reverse the decision and demanded MILF arrive at a

³²⁵ Dictaan-Bang-oa, “The Question of Peace in Mindanao,” 165.

³²⁶ Dictaan-Bang-oa, 165.

³²⁷ Quimpo, “The Thorny Issue of the MILF Camps.”

³²⁸ Quimpo.

³²⁹ Quimpo.

³³⁰ Quimpo.

peace agreement with the government within a year or before the end of 1999.³³¹ MILF reacted with a hard stance and initiated large-scale atrocities, such as a passenger ferry boat bombing that killed 41 civilians and the MILF armed-takeover of a Christian-majority municipality of Kauswagan.³³² President Estrada eventually declared “all-out war” against MILF, which resulted in the government’s seizure of all rebel camps. The skirmishes killed and wounded hundreds on both sides and displaced thousands of civilians. Though MILF was forced from its camps, or “territories,” it continued the struggle in guerilla-type warfare.

The ouster of President Estrada due to civilian–military protest and his succession by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo provided optimism in the peace efforts with MILF. The Arroyo administration and MILF immediately resumed dialogues and introduced many innovations and improvements to the peace process. The GRP and MILF jointly committed to a political approach to solve the Moro problem and attain lasting peace and development in Mindanao.³³³ Both parties agreed to simplify the agenda of the peace talks to viable issues related to security, rehabilitation, and ancestral domain. Both the GRP and MILF also acknowledged the importance of third-party facilitation and monitoring. The Arroyo government invited Malaysia to be the facilitator and asked the support of international organs to monitor the cessation of hostilities. The government also facilitated the creation of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) composed of officials from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Libya, and Japan among others. To coordinate and facilitate law enforcement operations against criminals and terrorists operating inside MILF-controlled areas, the negotiating parties agreed to organize the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG).³³⁴ The AHJAG comprised representatives from MILF and the GRP whose main purpose was to prevent the military and police from

³³¹ Quimpo.

³³² Edwin Espejo, “Mindanao Bombs: Over 300 Killed in 12 Yrs,” *Rappler Philippines*, August 3, 2013, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/35493-mindanao-bombs-300-killed-12-years>.

³³³ Caculitan, “Negotiating Peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front,” 46.

³³⁴ “Ad Hoc Joint Action Group Overview,” Office the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), accessed November 19, 2017, <https://www.scribd.com/document/255516282/Ad-Hoc-Joint-Action-Group-Overview>.

unintentionally hitting MILF when pursuing criminals in MILF territories.³³⁵ These peace mechanisms reinforced the resolve of both parties to end the conflict. Though there were some major armed confrontations between government forces and MILF, such as the Buliok incident in 2003, the peace settlement made substantial progress.³³⁶ The negotiating parties were already expecting to sign a peace agreement at the end of 2005, with significant steps taken by both parties on the security and rehabilitation agenda. What remained a major challenge among the negotiating teams was the issue of ancestral domain, which triggered subsequent events affecting the peace process.

b. The 2008 Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain

In 2008, the negotiating panels from both the GRP and MILF came close to resolving the most contentious issue in the peace negotiation agenda—ancestral domain. For MILF, ancestral domain was the answer to the Moro problem because it would define the breadth of Moro territories and determine their power over the political entities and resources. In the negotiations, MILF accepted that it could no longer take back the original domains of the historical Moro sultanates, which comprised almost the entire islands of Mindanao and Palawan. However, they had also wanted more than the territory granted to the Moros during the 1996 GRP–MNLF Final Peace Agreement (FPA), which included the areas covered by the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).³³⁷ These demands made the ancestral domain issue contentious because MILF was essentially asking for the same territories that had already been granted to the MNLF through the FPA. Moreover, the additional territories that MILF demanded were small Muslim villages inside Christian-dominated provinces and cities. MILF’s petition for full jurisdiction over economic and natural resources in these areas required a constitutional amendment, which could only be done with the approval of Congress.

³³⁵ “Ad Hoc Joint Action Group,” OPAPP.

³³⁶ John Unson, “68 MILF Rebels Killed in Pikit Offensive,” *Philippine Star*, March 13, 2003, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/198723/68-milf-rebs-killed-pikit-offensive>.

³³⁷ Tuminez, “Neither Sovereignty nor Autonomy,” 84.

The negotiating teams from the GRP and MILF, with Malaysia as the facilitator, eventually came to a compromise on this issue, which led to the crafting of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD). Under this proposed agreement, a new political entity called the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE) would replace ARMM and have an additional 712 barangays.³³⁸ The BJE would also have its own “basic law, police and internal security force, and system of banking and finance, civil service, education and legislative and electoral institutions, as well as full authority to develop and dispose of minerals and other natural resources.”³³⁹ This proposal was announced by representatives of the government panel and MILF in July 2008 and scheduled to be signed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the following month.³⁴⁰

The news about the forthcoming MOA-AD was met with strong resistance from government officials and constituents in Christian communities in Mindanao. These Mindanao-based politicians, particularly two city mayors and one vice governor, vehemently opposed inclusion of the BJE and demanded that the negotiating panels publish the MOA-AD draft.³⁴¹ They accused the government panel of doing the negotiations in secret and without consulting the affected communities. Subsequently, these local leaders filed a petition with the Supreme Court prohibiting the GRP panel from signing the MOA-AD until after the publication and public discussion of the draft agreement.³⁴² Public opposition in Christian-majority provinces intensified with symbolic demonstrations and prayer rallies attended by as many as 10,000 protesters.³⁴³ The day before the scheduled signing in Kuala Lumpur, the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order based on petitions submitted to prevent the GRP panel from

³³⁸ Tuminez, “Neither Sovereignty nor Autonomy,” 85.

³³⁹ “What Went Before: The Proposed MOA-AD,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 9, 2012, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/285604/what-went-before-the-proposed-moa-ad>.

³⁴⁰ “What Went Before,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

³⁴¹ Timothy Williams, “The MoA-AD Debacle – An Analysis of Individuals’ Voices, Provincial Propaganda and National Disinterest,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 29, no. 1 (2010): 121–144.

³⁴² Williams, “The MoA-AD Debacle,” 125.

³⁴³ Williams, 125.

signing the agreement.³⁴⁴ The Supreme Court's investigations led to a ruling that declared the MOA-AD unconstitutional.³⁴⁵ The court cited, among other reasons, that there was no consultation process despite the seriousness of the matter to the people; that the agreement offset existing laws on indigenous tribes' rights to ancestral domains; and that the proposed BJE's "associative" relationship with the Philippine republic resembled a legal term, which implied a prelude to granting full independence.³⁴⁶

The judicial ruling not only prevented the signing and implementation of the MOA-AD, but also led to renewed hostilities. A few days after the Supreme Court issued the restraining order, MILF attacked its neighboring Christian communities in the provinces of North Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, and Sarangani.³⁴⁷ The ensuing violence resulted in a hundred deaths and thousands of displaced families.³⁴⁸ MILF leadership denied giving the orders but blamed the delay in the peace agreement as the culprit for the impatient behavior of some of its field commanders.³⁴⁹ Later on, the Arroyo administration announced it was planning to suspend negotiations in light of the atrocities committed by rogue MILF elements, and the MOA-AD was never implemented.³⁵⁰ Eventually, the GRP panel withdrew and called for a halt in the peace negotiations.³⁵¹ The Philippine government pledged that future negotiations with MILF would only proceed if they included all stakeholders.³⁵² Arroyo's term concluded without achieving any tangible outcome from the GRP–MILF negotiations.

³⁴⁴ "What Went Before," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

³⁴⁵ Romelo Delos Santos, "Can the 2014 CAB Succeed in Mindanao Where Previous Peace Agreement Failed?" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015).

³⁴⁶ Williams, "The MoA-AD Debacle," 128.

³⁴⁷ "What Went Before," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1.

³⁴⁸ "What Went Before," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2.

³⁴⁹ "What Went Before," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 2.

³⁵⁰ Delos Santos, "Can the 2014 CAB Succeed in Mindanao?," 42.

³⁵¹ Delos Santos, 42.

³⁵² Delos Santos, 42.

c. *The Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro and the Bangsamoro Basic Law*

A brighter prospect in the GRP–MILF peace efforts began under the leadership of President Benigno Aquino III in 2010. As part of its urgent security agenda, the new administration vowed to peacefully end the conflict with MILF by inking a comprehensive agreement within the six-year term of the president. The government immediately assembled a new negotiating panel, headed by Marvic Leonon, a dean from the University of the Philippines’ College of Law.³⁵³ The new leadership also announced that Malaysia would continue to act as the facilitator, including the peace mechanisms that were established in the previous administration. President Aquino’s sincerity in the peace negotiation was highlighted when he made the unprecedented gesture of meeting MILF leader Murad Ebrahim, hosted by Japan, where they both agreed to a speedy resolution of the conflict.³⁵⁴ One year later, the negotiating parties promulgated and signed a 14-page document called the Framework Agreement of the Bangsamoro (FAB), which outlined the general principles on which the end agreement should be based.

The FAB eventually paved the way for the signing of the final peace pact between the GRP and the MILF, known as the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB). The signing of the CAB received accolades from local and international observers because of the agreement’s all-inclusive character—a great improvement over previously signed accords with the Moros. For one, the CAB exemplified the best peace formula in providing adequate measures for the Moros’ political demands.³⁵⁵ The agreement also considered the concerns of all other stakeholders in Mindanao, such as the mainstream MNLF, the *Lumads* and other non-Muslim ethnic tribes, and Christian political leaders and civil-society organizations, which had not been consulted in earlier negotiation efforts. Significantly, the CAB

³⁵³ “Timeline: Peace Talks with the MILF,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, October 15, 2012, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/289154/timeline-peace-talks-with-the-milf>.

³⁵⁴ “Peace Talks with the MILF,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1.

³⁵⁵ Ryan D. Rosauro, “Power Sharing Central to Moro Self Rule,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 27, 2014, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/589347/power-sharing-central-to-moro-self-rule>.

provided a more detailed declaration of the terms of the agreement, encompassing the general principles outlined in the FAB, and the addition of signed annexes related to power sharing, income generation and wealth sharing, and rebel reintegration.³⁵⁶

The CAB also embodied a win-win compromise between the GRP and MILF. It signified MILF's abandonment of the armed struggle for independence with a guarantee of gradually decommissioning its armed wing, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Force (BIAF). The GRP in return would establish an expanded and empowered autonomous region for the Bangsamoro. This new political entity would replace the existing ARMM, which was created under the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace accord, and would be imbued with “far greater political and economic powers.”³⁵⁷ The power-sharing aspect was among the important components of the settlement, such that out of the 81 state powers identified by the parties, 58 were delegated to the Bangsamoro, 14 remained with the national government, and 14 were mutually shared.³⁵⁸ This meant that the future Moro autonomous region would be given some degree of tax collection authority and a larger share of revenue from natural resources and other revenues of the region.³⁵⁹ While a number of state powers were devolved for Bangsamoro's self-rule, the national government maintained its authority on “foreign policy, defense and external security, monetary policy, and citizenship.”³⁶⁰

The CAB also stipulated the processes and mechanisms upon which the current Muslim autonomous region would transition to the new Bangsamoro political entity. The agreement required the creation of a Bangsamoro Transition Committee (BTC), comprising members from both the GRP and MILF, who would draft a Bangsamoro

³⁵⁶ Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), *Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro* (Manila, Philippines: OPAPP, October 15, 2012), <https://www.scribd.com/document/137673080/Framework-Agreement-on-the-Bangsamoro>.

³⁵⁷ Rosauro, “Power Sharing Central to Moro Self Rule.”

³⁵⁸ Rosauro, 1.

³⁵⁹ Rosauro, 1.

³⁶⁰ Fred Goddard, “Philippines: Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro,” Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, accessed 28 August 2017, <https://maryknollogc.org/article/philippines-framework-agreement-bangsamoro>.

Basic Law (BBL) to be passed in the Philippine Congress as an urgent bill.³⁶¹ The BBL would have become the basic law governing the new autonomous region. This organic law had included sections on “general provisions, Bangsamoro identity, territory, political autonomy, inter-governmental relations, justice system, fiscal autonomy, economy and patrimony, natural resources.”³⁶² If the BBL had been enacted into law, a plebiscite would have been held in the proposed Bangsamoro territory for the people to decide whether they would join the new autonomous region. If the extent of territories had been identified, a MILF-led Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) would have initially served in the Bangsamoro government within the interim period. The BTA would have relinquished its position to the winning candidates in the first election conducted in the Bangsamoro region.³⁶³ This entire process had been set to be accomplished within the six-year term of President Aquino, which ended in 2016.

The CAB did not progress according to its intended and imposed timeline. When the BBL was submitted and deliberated in Congress, the Senate Committee on Local Governments requested more time to study the proposal in detail because of the many controversial provisions found therein.³⁶⁴ The approval process was further delayed when the House of Representatives drafted a “substitute bill” that incorporated 28 “substantial amendments” from the original BBL document.³⁶⁵ The BTC, which drafted the BBL, passed a resolution rejecting the substitute bill and demanding the passage of the BBL in “its original form.”³⁶⁶ The BTC contended that the proposed revisions were

³⁶¹ Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), “Annex on Transitional Arrangement and Modalities,” in *Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro* (Manila, Philippines: OPAPP, 2014).

³⁶² Bangsamoro Transition Commission, *Primer on the Proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law*, accessed September 1, 2017, <https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Primer-on-the-proposed-Bangsamoro-Basic-Law-December-2014.pdf>.

³⁶³ Bangsamoro Transition Commission, *Primer on the Proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law*.

³⁶⁴ Christina Mendez, “Senate Sets New Timeline for BBL Approval,” *Philippine Star*, August 4, 2015, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2015/08/04/1484327/senate-sets-new-timeline-bbl->.

³⁶⁵ Carolyn Arguillas, “BTC Rejects HB 5811; Urges Congress to Pass BBL ‘in Its Original Form,’” *Minda News*, July 30, 2015, <http://www.mindanews.com/peace-process/2015/07/btc-rejects-hb-5811-urges-congress-to-pass-bbl-in-its-original-form/>.

³⁶⁶ Arguillas, “BTC Rejects HB 5811.”

contrary to what was agreed to in the FAB and the CAB and that the substitute bill provided even less of the current Muslim autonomous region than the BBL sought to replace.³⁶⁷ The Senate further deferred the interpellation of the BBL in January 2016 after 44 policemen were killed in an operation that neutralized a foreign terrorist leader inside the MILF community in Mamasapano, Maguindanao. The incident also claimed 18 MILF rebels, which increased the suspicion of the rebel group's collusion with the terrorist organization.³⁶⁸ MILF, however, quickly blamed the police for operating inside its territories without coordination. The incident put the BBL in jeopardy, with the Senate president declaring the "BBL [was] the 45th victim in Mamasapano."³⁶⁹ The BBL did not pass in Congress when President Aquino's term ended in June 2016; it found a reliable sponsor, however, with the latter's successor, President Rodrigo Duterte. The new president is supportive of the BBL, being a Mindanaoan himself, and is also advocating "federalism," which favors the MILF concept of autonomy. With the current administration's mindset, many legislators are expediting the approval of the BBL, which will set the precedent of creating a federal form of government.³⁷⁰

B. THE MILF REINTEGRATION PLAN AND ITS PROSPECTS

With the brighter prospects of the BBL under the Duterte presidency, the CAB and its program for MILF combatants will finally be implemented. Under the GRP–MILF agreement, the would-be status of the armed wing of MILF is stipulated in the CAB's Normalization Annex. Normalization is essentially the agreement's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program; MILF prefers the use of the term *normalization* because DDR's *disarmament* has the "negative connotation" of denoting

³⁶⁷ Arguillas, "BTC Rejects HB 5811."

³⁶⁸ "AFP Recovers 'BIFF of the MILF'-Shirts in Maguindanao," GMA News, March 10, 2015, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/450197/afp-recovers-biff-of-the-milf-shirts-in-maguindanao/story/>.

³⁶⁹ Amita Legaspi, "BBL the Last Casualty of Mamasapano Incident," GMA News, January 28, 2016, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/553093/bbl-the-last-casualty-of-mamasapano-incident-drilon/story/>.

³⁷⁰ Marc Jayson Cayabyab, "Alvarez renews call for federalism, BBL," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 24, 2017, <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/916651/alvarez-renews-call-for-federalism-bbl>.

surrender to the central government.³⁷¹ The theme of the normalization plan is not therefore centered on disarmament and demobilization but on programs to build peaceful Bangsamoro communities that “achieve their desired quality of life” and “where long-held traditions and values continue to be honored.”³⁷² To this end, the normalization process includes the establishment of transition mechanisms, with the Joint Normalization Committee as the main coordinating body; the decommissioning of the BIAF, the armed component of MILF, with the objective of ending its use; the organization of the Bangsamoro Police Force; and the provision of socio-economic programs in Bangsamoro communities.

The disbanding and reintegration of MILF’s armed elements are stipulated in the normalization plan as two important segments: the phased decommissioning program and the organization of the Bangsamoro Police Force. The demobilization of the rebels will be carried out by the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB) that will “oversee the process of decommissioning of the MILF forces and their weapons”³⁷³ The IDB comprises local and foreign experts and is currently headed by Ambassador Haydar Berk from Turkey.³⁷⁴ The IDB’s primary functions involve accounting for and confirming BIAF members and their weapons, scheduling decommissioning timelines, and subsequently disposing of the rebels’ firearms.

The decommissioning process is unique among civil war settlements around the world because the turnover of MILF guns will be done in phases that correspond with their attainment of political commitments in the peace agreement.³⁷⁵ The first phase is

³⁷¹ Terrence Hopmann and I. William Zartman, ed., *Mindanao: Understanding Conflict 2014* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2014), https://www.sais-jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2014%20Mindanao-Final%20Report_April%202b_0.pdf.

³⁷² Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), *Annex on Normalization* (Manila, Philippines: OPAPP, January 24, 2014), <https://www.scribd.com/document/202738210/Annex-on-Normalization>.

³⁷³ OPAPP, *Annex on Normalization*, 5.

³⁷⁴ R. G. Cruz, “MILF, Gov’t Sign Terms on Decommissioning Body,” *ABS CBN News*, January 30, 2015, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/01/29/15/milf-govt-sign-terms-decommissioning-body>.

³⁷⁵ Angela Casauay, “Aquino Witness Historic MILF Arms Turnover,” *Rappler Philippines*, June 16, 2015, <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/mindanao/96482-milf-first-decommissioning>.

the inventory of BIAF members and the ceremonial handover of firearms. In the second phase, 30 percent of MILF armed elements are slated for decommissioning, but this will only take place once the BBL becomes a law and is endorsed through a plebiscite.³⁷⁶ In the third and fourth phases, the number of decommissioned BIAF members will reach 65 percent and 100 percent, respectively, which will also coincide with the establishment of the Bangsamoro Police Force and the signing of an exit agreement.³⁷⁷

As a prelude to this endeavor, MILF turned over the first tranche of its firearms on June 2015 in a ceremony administered by the IDB and attended by President Aquino in Mindanao. This event, during which the MILF handed over 75 high-caliber weapons, also signaled the start of the decommissioning process whereby “145 rebels out of the estimated 10,000 BIAF members” have prepared themselves to be incorporated into mainstream society.³⁷⁸ For turning over their guns and leaving rebel life, they were given socio-economic and livelihood programs such as educational scholarships or assistance for business investments.³⁷⁹ Those who qualified to join the military and police were also given assistance in processing their applications.³⁸⁰ Currently, however, the succeeding phases of the decommissioning program are still held in abeyance pending the passage of the BBL in the Philippine Congress.

With the projected disbandment of more than 10,000 armed elements of MILF, the negotiating panels had to devise viable methods for reintegrating the rebels considering the region presently lacks employment and livelihood opportunities. One option is the rebel-military integration program—wherein former insurgents are merged into the national military. This was done during the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement, whereby more than 5,000 Moro rebels were integrated into the Philippine military and police units. These former MNLF rebels continue to serve as regular officers and enlisted

³⁷⁶ Casauay, “Historic MILF Arms Turnover,” 1.

³⁷⁷ Casauay, 1.

³⁷⁸ Casauay, 1.

³⁷⁹ Casauay, 2.

³⁸⁰ Casauay, 2.

personnel in the AFP today. Many of them are also currently rendering duties in the infantry and engineer battalions stationed in Mindanao.

MILF, however, came up with a different approach. Instead of integrating its armed elements into the military, the MILF aims to create a separate Bangsamoro Police Force in the autonomous region. This proposal was ultimately included in the Normalization Annex when the CAB was signed in 2014. As stated in the CAB's normalization plan, the new autonomous region will create its own Bangsamoro Police Force.³⁸¹ It will be responsible for enforcing the law and maintaining peace and order in the Bangsamoro region.³⁸² The police force will also be under the operational control of the chief executive of new political entity.³⁸³ With this plan, the central government's Philippine National Police (PNP), currently performing duties inside the region, will relinquish its jurisdiction to this separate Bangsamoro Police Force. Furthermore, the agreement also clearly specifies that AFP units stationed in the autonomous region, which were once at the forefront in the Muslim rebellion, will redeploy outside the region when the police force is in place. The AFP will maintain, if necessary, installations intended only for external defense.³⁸⁴ To achieve these goals, the Independent Commission on Policing (ICP) has been organized and primarily tasked with planning and making policy recommendations related to the creation of the Bangsamoro Police Force.³⁸⁵ The ICP is currently staffed with three foreign and four local commissioners.³⁸⁶ The implementation of this program is also presently held in abeyance pending the passage of the BBL in the Philippine Congress.

³⁸¹ OPAPP, *Annex on Normalization*, 1.

³⁸² OPAPP, 1.

³⁸³ "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), March 7, 2015, <http://archive.peace.gov.ph/milf/news/bangsamoro-police-not-separate-pnp>.

³⁸⁴ OPAPP, *Annex on Normalization*, 6.

³⁸⁵ OPAPP, 1.

³⁸⁶ Yuji Uesugi, "The Independent Commission on Policing (ICP): Process and Challenges in Peacebuilding," Asia Peacebuilding Initiatives, June 15, 2014, <http://peacebuilding.asia/1732/>.

The plan for MILF's decommissioning and reintegration has again come back as a contentious issue as the new administration of President Duterte has pushed for the passage of the BBL. Presently, there are different views among legislators, peace advocates, and experts on this controversial issue. There are groups who vehemently oppose the creation of a separate Bangsamoro Police Force and who even describe the plan as an "imminent threat and worst nightmare to non-Muslims in Mindanao: the MILF's armed force being legalized as a police force."³⁸⁷ They add that this set-up is a clear violation of the constitution, under which the sovereign state is supposed to have "the sole legal monopoly on the use of force."³⁸⁸ Conversely, the GRP and MNLF peace panels contend that the proposed Bangsamoro Police Force is consistent with the constitution.³⁸⁹ They argue that it will not operate as a separate entity but will be set up like other PNP regional commands in the country.³⁹⁰ The "recruitment, training, personnel promotion, firearms procurement," and other administrative services shall remain under the PNP.³⁹¹ They also deny the allegations that MILF combatants will automatically become the Bangsamoro police, citing that they still need to apply and qualify individually.³⁹² Despite these differences, the ICP has assured the public that it understands that transforming the BIAF into "professional and neutral policemen" will be a big challenge. Hence, they will not compromise the trust of the people by allowing any member of MILF to be part of the police force without going through the required processes. Interestingly, the ICP states it also had conflicting ideas within its committee as it crafted policy recommendations.³⁹³ The most evident disagreement was on the issue of how much authority should be retained by the PNP or assumed by the Bangsamoro

³⁸⁷ Rigoberto Tiglao, "MILF to Have Own Police Force; Won't Lay down Arms Yet," *Manila Times*, January 28, 2014, <http://www.manilatimes.net/milf-to-have-own-police-force-wont-lay-down-arms-yet/71526/>.

³⁸⁸ Tiglao, "MILF to Have Own Police Force," 2.

³⁸⁹ "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," OPAPP.

³⁹⁰ "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," OPAPP. 1.

³⁹¹ "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," OPAPP. 1.

³⁹² "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," OPAPP. 1.

³⁹³ Uesugi, "Process and Challenges in Peacebuilding," 1.

Police Force.³⁹⁴ The ICP, therefore, has formulated a guideline that all of its proposals be in accordance with the Philippine constitution and the CAB as well as in principle be desirable to the Bangsamoro people.³⁹⁵

Despite that the Bangsamoro Police Force is not yet operational, a number of implementation issues have been anticipated. One concern is the existence of approximately 6,000 Muslim policemen in the present ARMM.³⁹⁶ These policemen have had a bad reputation among the locals, as they allegedly function only as protectors of corrupt politicians who helped them get through the police recruitment process illegally.³⁹⁷ These existing policemen have posed problems because they sometimes resist being transferred to Christian-dominated areas outside the region. Similarly, they may also demand to be absorbed into the Bangsamoro Police Force, which could affect the noble intentions of the agreement. Another concern is over how to quickly capacitate and professionalize the new police force given the prevailing security situation in Muslim areas in Mindanao. These security challenges include, among others, the pervasive clan wars, or *rido*, among Muslim families, which have endured for centuries; the existence of private armed groups maintained by Muslim warlords, drug lords, and politicians; and the presence of MNLF/MILF break-away factions and Islamic terrorist organizations. These concerns become even more problematic because of the reported collusion among some MILF elements with these armed groups.

C. CONCLUSION

As emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, the purpose of this discussion has been to examine the dynamics in the GRP–MILF peace efforts, paying particular attention to the rebel reintegration program to determine its prospects as an important component of the peace accord. This study observed that the stability of the GRP–MILF

³⁹⁴ Uesugi, 1.

³⁹⁴ Uesugi, 1.

³⁹⁵ Uesugi, 1.

³⁹⁶ Uesugi, 1.

³⁹⁷ Uesugi, 1.

peace agreement is largely influenced by three factors: the sincerity of the political leaders, the involvement of international actors, and the establishment of peace mechanisms throughout the course of the conflict. Each of these factors has a parallel impact on the peace agreement's rebel reintegration programs. The caveat, however, is that political leaders impose varying policies that can affect the tempo and direction of the peace plan. Nonetheless, the presence of peace mechanisms, along with international actors not affected by changes in political leadership, can be the deciding factor in attaining a successful peace accord and rebel reintegration program.

Notably, most of the Philippine presidents, beginning with President Fidel Ramos in 1997, had shown their willingness to forge a peaceful settlement with MILF. Each of these leaders' administrations also provided a distinct contribution leading to a more stable and comprehensive peace agreement. It was during the Ramos administration that the GRP–MILF ceasefire agreement was forged. The cessation of hostilities was the most important concession during those times because it opened the doors for the succeeding negotiations. It was during President Estrada's term that peace talks completely stalled as he pursued an all-out war with MILF in 2000. Interestingly, the government's major offensives and MILF's retaliatory attacks were also instrumental in bringing both parties back to the negotiating table to come up with a feasible agenda and to accept new compromises that would have been hard to achieve before. With all its camps seized by government forces, MILF had severely reduced its bargaining power. MILF, however, continued its struggle by bombing Christian-dominated urban centers. Both parties had to go back to the negotiating table with mounting local and international pressure. Since then, MILF has already changed its original demand of secession to full autonomy. The notable achievements during the term of President Arroyo included the strengthening of peace mechanisms and the deeper involvement of international organs. It was during her time that Malaysia was invited as a third-party facilitator and the IMT, AHJAG, and CCCH were established. With all the peace mechanisms and international support in place, the Aquino administration was able to focus on arriving at a final peace agreement, which ultimately resulted in the signing of the CAB in 2014. Now that a comprehensive agreement has been signed, the major challenge facing the current administration of

Rodrigo Duterte is to pursue the government's commitment to the CAB. Part of this commitment is the implementation of the Normalization Annex, which covers the most important aspect of the peace settlement—the demobilization and reintegration of MILF's armed wing.

Despite its imperfections, the normalization plan offers a distinct but viable approach to demobilizing and reintegrating MILF rebels. One important indication is the involvement of local and foreign experts in independent oversight committees and the establishment of mechanisms that are specifically designed for the implementation of the normalization plan. Among these are the creation of the Joint Normalization Committee, the Independent Commission on Policing, and the Independent Decommissioning Body. These types of neutral organizations were not present in the 1996 GRP–MNLF peace agreement, yet rebel integration was successfully implemented. Hence, these may significantly improve the implementation of rebel reintegration packages.

The presence of independent committees and normalization mechanisms may also reduce the public's speculations on the creation of the Bangsamoro Police Force. Most external observers, especially the majority Filipino constituents who live outside the Muslim region, may have a negative impression of the creation of a Bangsamoro Police Force. Some may interpret it as an act of legitimizing MILF rebels as police and, even worse, sustaining them with the taxes of the Filipino people. There are also suspicions that MILF will rearm itself in the guise of police capacity building until it is able to wage another war for secession. With this in mind, the role of these independent committees becomes critical in the success of the program.

Notwithstanding the apprehension toward the establishment of the Bangsamoro Police Force, there have already been successful cases of reintegrating former rebels into an independent police force as part of civil war settlement. This police integration method was successfully implemented in South Africa and Ireland such that reforms in the policing structures and arrangements had lasting effects in the countries' peace and development efforts. There have been cases, however, in which rebels reintegrated as police forces were misused for the self-interest of their political leaders or employed as instruments of repression. Thus, it is important that integrating rebels as a separate police

force must involve a comprehensive plan encompassing the recruitment process, education, and training.

On the other hand, the creation of a Bangsamoro Police Force is not only an additional source of power and authority for the leaders of the Bangsamoro region. It also comes with great responsibility for leaders of the new autonomous entity. They will now be accountable for the peace and security of the region. Failure in maintaining a secure environment for their people will eventually give the central government the legitimacy to intervene in the police structure of the region.

The Normalization process is indeed a complicated undertaking with a variety of challenges. Even with some strong opposition, many still believe that normalization requires lengthy discussions, sacrifices, and compromises among the negotiating parties whose ultimate aim is to bring peace and unity in Mindanao. While processes of demobilization and reintegration may indeed be time-consuming and painstaking, the concerted effort between two parties that are united in achieving the common goal of peace will make it happen.

VI. CONCLUSION

The rebel integration plan under the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro is an essential element that may shape the outcome in the recent effort to bring closure to the last remaining Muslim insurgency, except violence incited by Abu Sayaf and other ISIS-Affiliated terrorist group, in the southern Philippines. Studies on civil war settlements tend to support the idea that rebel integration is an integral part of ending ethno-nationalist insurgencies, such as the MILF case, as indicated by the increasing trend of peace agreements settled with an integration program. The cases examined in this study provide diverse ways of reintegrating former rebels and reveal key factors in the rebel integration program that influenced the outcome of each cases. This chapter encapsulates the significant findings in the rebel integration cases covered in this research, highlights the prominent themes or variables that set the course of their outcomes, makes a concluding statement on the prospects of the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro (CAB)'s MILF integration plan, and suggests policy interventions for the Philippine government to implement the agreement's reintegration program successfully.

A. OVERALL OBSERVATION ON CIVIL WAR PEACE AGREEMENTS AND REBEL INTEGRATION PROGRAMS

The literature and case studies examined in this research show that rebel integration can be an indispensable piece in prolonging peace in civil war settlements—with integration being a form of power-sharing arrangement, which addresses the issue of power struggle as a triggering factor in civil wars. Caroline Hartzell identifies the struggle of power over a state as the fundamental factor for a state entering a civil war.³⁹⁸ With power struggle as a major culprit in civil wars, the idea of power sharing is therefore an essential component of a peace agreement. Power-sharing variables include the devolution of state powers through autonomy and the sharing of military or police power—with rebel integration among the simplest to implement and

³⁹⁸ Caroline A. Hartzell, "Mixed Motives?"

most effective forms of power sharing.³⁹⁹ Recently, rebel integration programs have been used as part of peace agreements to promote peace and, possibly, to prevent civil war from recurring.⁴⁰⁰ Out of the 128 civil wars between 1945 and 2006, about 40 percent of the peace settlements engaged in some form of rebel integration.⁴⁰¹ The GRP–MILF peace agreement has followed this path of civil war settlement. The parties have willingly compromised to share powers, which include among others the promise of autonomy in the Muslim region and the integration of rebels through the creation of the Bangsamoro Police Force.

B. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS ON REBEL INTEGRATION CASES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON THE MILF REINTEGRATION PLAN

With rebel integration as an important component of the peace agreement, one critical question is how MILF integration would be implemented. The broad cases of civil war settlements with a rebel integration component examined in Chapter II provide important answers to this question. There are three basic methods of integrating rebels commonly used in previous conflict settlements: integrating the rebels as troopers in the national military, absorbing the rebel leaders into the military hierarchy, and allowing the rebels to create units using their own people and leaders, with the units forming part of the national military or police organizational structure. This study has shown that each of these methods has its own pros and cons, and their applicability depends on the distinctive nature of the conflict.

Out of the three basic rebel integration methods, the CAB adopted the third one, which allowed MILF rebels to create their own police force comprising their own men and leaders. This approach is distinct from the specific cases undertaken in this study. The Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and MNLF cases all embraced a method in which former rebels were directly integrated into the national army. Nonetheless, there had already been successful reintegration cases in which former rebels were organized as an

³⁹⁹ DeRouen, Lea, and Wallenstein, “The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements,” 367–387.

⁴⁰⁰ Krebs and Licklider, “Misplaced Faith in Military Integration.”

⁴⁰¹ Hartzell, “Mixed Motives?”

independent police force. However, these were not specifically covered in this study. For example, the civil war settlements in South Africa and Ireland adopted the police integration scheme with reforms in the policing structures, which were considered successful peace initiatives. On the other hand, political leaders have been known to misuse reintegrated rebels in the police force as instruments of repression. This scheme of reintegration, therefore, entails more comprehensive planning to increase its likelihood of success.

Since the MILF's rebel integration plan is totally different from the MNLF case, this scheme has become a very contentious issue in the peace agreement. A number of individuals and legal organizations in the Philippines have opposed the implementation of this form of rebel integration and described the plan as a violation of the constitution.⁴⁰² They have accused the negotiating panels of legalizing the MILF as a police force and thereby posing an imminent threat to non-Muslims in Mindanao.⁴⁰³ Despite this opposition, the government and MILF peace panel have emphasized that the proposed Bangsamoro Police Force is consistent with the constitution; they even argue that the police units will operate under the existing organization of the Philippine National Police force.⁴⁰⁴ In contrast to these comparisons, this study has underscored that an integration scheme whereby rebels are allowed to create their own military or police unit is a viable option for a number of reasons. First, the rebels are used to the leadership style of their comrades. Second, this method may eliminate morale issues more effectively than the option in which the rebels are inserted in regular military units. Third, and most importantly, this arrangement sends a strong message to the rebel group that the government is sincere because it is willing to agree to this compromise for the sake of lasting peace.

On the other hand, the establishment of the Bangsamoro Police Force also comes with great responsibility for MILF leadership. For one, MILF will now be directly

⁴⁰² Tiglao, "MILF to Have Own Police Force."

⁴⁰³ Tiglao.

⁴⁰⁴ "Bangsamoro Police Not Separate from PNP," OPAPP.

accountable for the peace and security of the region. If it fails to maintain a secure environment for its people, the central government can legitimately intervene in the case of major lapses in police administration. Hence, it is also important that the GRP maintain a strong national military or police force to quell possible abuse resulting from the employment of the separate police force.

The next question is what key variables should be considered to increase the likelihood of success in MILF rebel integration. As it emerges in most literature and in the cases examined in Chapters I and II, the role of the international community has been the most important factor that influences the outcome of rebel integration programs. Notably, foreign actors can serve as third-party sponsors in peace treaty planning and implementation and can also provide financial support and monitoring. There have been cases, however, when involved outside actors did not categorically influence the outcome of the rebel integration—such as in Congo, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda. Nevertheless, the role of the international community remains a crucial element primarily because it can pressure the parties involved to honor the terms of the peace agreement, as in Sierra Leone and Bosnia and the case of the MNLF.

Of the cases considered in this study, the GRP–MNLF peace settlement provides a more comprehensive illustration of the important role of the international community. Accordingly, it was the Organization of Islamic Conference that pushed the Philippine government and the MNLF to peacefully negotiate, and Indonesia’s role as facilitator with the support of a number of countries—the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom—led to the signing of the peace accord. These international actors were also significantly involved throughout the implementation of the agreement. Notably, during the implementation phase, most of the foreign support was directed toward the socio-economic programs. There was less or even negligible international support in the disarmament and reintegration programs, which prevented a full demobilization of the MNLF. Meanwhile, the Sierra Leone case showed a higher level of international participation. The international community was deeply involved in the negotiations that led to the signing of the Lomé agreement. The foreign actors were present during the

reform process, which included a rebel integration program. They were also highly involved in monitoring the progress of the peace agreement's implementation to the end.

The analysis of the case studies in this research suggests that the international community is an indispensable partner in forging civil war settlements in most cases, and there is a greater chance of success in rebel integration when foreign actors are deeply involved from planning to implementation. The GRP–MILF peace accord and its Normalization Plan exemplifies these features—there is a higher degree of international community participation in almost all aspects of the peace agreement. Notably, the negotiations leading to the signing of the CAB were a product of three important international organs: Malaysia as the facilitator since 2001; the International Monitoring Team, composed of representatives from Malaysia, Libya, Norway, Japan, Indonesia, and the EU since 2005; and the International Contact Group (ICG), composed of foreign diplomats and NGOs, providing wide-ranging technical expertise and political or economic support since 2009.⁴⁰⁵ This study also finds a higher potential for success in the implementation of the rebel integration if both the GRP and MILF commit to the plan of entrusting the normalization program to independent organizations composed of local and foreign experts. These agencies, which were specifically created for the DDR program, include the Joint Normalization Committee, the Independent Decommissioning Body, and the Independent Commission on Policing.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The GRP–MILF conflict fits closely with Kriesberg's conflict cycle.⁴⁰⁶ MILF had its underlying condition of wanting independence from the Philippines. This condition had already manifested when the MNLF was in conflict with the GRP. When the MNLF eventually agreed to sign the ARMM, the manifestation of wanting independence, escalated to breaking away from the MNLF and continued the armed conflict with the GRP. With the influence of the international community, MILF eventually gave in and

⁴⁰⁵ Mary Ann Arnado, "International Contact Group in Mindanao," Conciliation Resources, accessed October 8, 2017, <http://www.c-r.org/where-we-work/southeast-asia/international-contact-group-mindanao>.

⁴⁰⁶ Kriesberg, "Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution," 342.

agreed to have autonomy instead of independence. This led to the signing of the GRP–MILF peace agreement, which directly relates to the de-escalation phase in Kriesberg’s conflict cycle and a step toward the termination phase. The Muslim population in the Philippines has been at war for more than 400 years.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, the GRP–MILF peace agreement should aim to prolong peace for the next 400 years.

What has this research gleaned from the case studies on military integration and its application to the MILF situation? First, rebel integration is an essential form of power sharing that is best paired with autonomy in a civil war peace agreement such as in the GRP–MILF case. Second the international community plays an important role in conflict settlement and a corresponding rebel integration program from inception to implementation. Third, the reintegration plan must be simple and must not take too long to implement. Based on these lessons, there is a greater probability of success in the MILF reintegration plan, as it subscribes to the first two findings. Conversely, its impending success may be derailed if it falls short of the third finding—a delay in the implementation of the reintegration plan. This thesis therefore recommends that the Philippine government reconsider its commitment in the peace process and push for the urgent passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law in congress. The Philippine legislature should set aside political bickering and promptly decide on this important bill, which will jumpstart the implementation of the provisions in the GRP–MILF peace agreement. As General George Patton famously stated, “A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan executed tomorrow.”

The MILF rebel integration plan under the CAB is indeed a complicated undertaking, which has varied challenges even before its implementation. Even so, this study attests to the fact that the CAB and its provisions are a product of a concerted effort between the two parties with the steadfast support from the international community. The DDR or the normalization plan under the CAB may not be a perfect proposal, but it certainly reflects a number of key elements that are crucial to a potentially successful reintegration program. In the end, it is the collaborative effort between two parties

⁴⁰⁷ Fowler, “The Moro Problem.”

committed to achieving the common goal of attaining peace that will guarantee the program's success.

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