Understanding Factors of Rebel to Military Integration: A Case Comparison of Cote d’Ivoire to Integration Efforts in Africa

Kennedy Middleton, Spelman College
Philip Martin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Abstract Since the end of the Cold War, numerous armed conflicts around the world have seen rebel groups become integrated into national militaries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This research seeks to understand what factors facilitate or hinder rebel group integration into national militaries by examining previous cases of integration and identifying the variables of the integration agreements. In the context of Cote d’Ivoire, the case study comparison develops a set of hypotheses to explain how integration processes affect present conditions in the country and military.

Rebel Integration & Cote d’Ivoire

Following years of colonization, French control and coup d’états, in May 2011, Alessandre Ouattara took office as President, integrating former rebel fighters into the military, to create a single force and long-term stability and peace.

1999 Bedie ousted and replaced by Guei
2002 Guei flees replaced by Gbagbo
2002 Civil war begins dividing North and South
2010 Presidential elections held. Ouattara (North) declared winner, Gbagbo (South) refuses to stepdown

Unrest Resumes

2011 Ouattara begins presidency in May and rebel to military integration efforts begin
2016 Mutinies occur in January and May

Methods

Literature Review

Goal: understand existing theories on rebel to military integration
Search Phrases: “rebel integration into national military” & narrowed the search using terms “power sharing” and “peace agreements”

Compiled Data Set

Goal: analyze existing data and compile them
The individual data sets include:
Hartzell and Hoddie (2003) data set
Implementation of Pacts IMPACT (2012) data set
Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Peace Agreements (2012) data set

Country Case Study

South Africa
- Examined the integration process post-apartheid
- Advanced training
- Political education
- Resulted in a unified and professionalized military
- Successful case

Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Integration process used to end civil war
- Rebel groups left out of discussion
- Rivalries between ranksbrewed
- Conflict persisted
- Failed case of integration

Rwanda
- Post genocide
- No disarmament phase
- Financial incentives
- Consistent training efforts
- Socialization programs
- Resulted in a coherent and unified force
- Successful case

Initial Findings & Recommendations

- Place more emphasis on the factors that precipitate integration: stalemate, defeat, lack of resources
- Military and territorial agreements have more significance than political on long-term peace
- Financial disincentives for conflict (e.g., employment, insurance and benefits) can incentivize conflict when these are not distributed fairly
- Transparent ranking systems are key to successful integration.
- Training, political education and rehabilitating soldiers seem to be a strong factor in successful cases of integration

Next Steps

It would be interesting to see how the integration process takes shape in Cote d’Ivoire in the future, will the mutinies continue to occur? Next steps maybe to analyze the impacts of international actors in integration efforts, some of the existing literature emphasized that external actors should play a limited role.

Acknowledgements

This project is to assist in the development of Philip Martin’s dissertation.
MIT GOV/LAB