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**NAVAL  
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SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**THE SUCCESS FACTORS TO DEFEAT INSURGENCY IN  
THE PHILIPPINES AND ITS APPLICABILITY IN THE  
COLOMBIAN CONTEXT**

by

Luis E. Cortes  
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December 2013

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**THE SUCCESS FACTORS TO DEFEAT INSURGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES  
AND ITS APPLICABILITY IN THE COLOMBIAN CONTEXT**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Colombian government has been coping with insurgent groups for almost fifty years. The evolution of the Colombian internal conflict reflects the state's ongoing desire to defeat the insurgency militarily to bring the situation back to peace. The state's purpose in doing so is to boost the country to become a more robust and stable nation. Although many peace processes have been undertaken (including one in October 2012 sponsored by the international community in Oslo), the efforts have been unsuccessful. Terrorist groups, especially the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), remain unwilling to cooperate and have strengthened their capabilities, armaments and human resources, and increased their capacity and span of control.

The study and comparison of similar cases for conflict resolution and peace achievement is a viable option to gain insight into and develop new solutions to cope with the Colombian internal conflict. The Philippines' successful peace process in the province of Bohol deserves special consideration for parallel application to address the Colombian conflict. The peace process in Bohol particularly stands out because it is a unique instance of turning around an insurgency, and it is currently being used as a model to counter other insurgent groups in the Philippines. Moreover, it could be applied to Colombia, given the similarity of the two states and the nature of their internal conflicts. This thesis will examine the success factors used in the province of Bohol to end the conflict and its applicability to the Colombian internal conflict.



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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AGOL	Armed Groups Outside the Law
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
CAFGU	Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units
CNDP	Colombian National Development Plan
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
ELN	National Liberation Army
EPL	Popular Liberation Army
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IPSP	Internal Peace and Security Plan
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
LGU	Local Government Units
M19	19 <sup>th</sup> of April Movement
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
NDF	National Democratic Front
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISP	National Internal Security Plan
NPA	New People's Army
PNP	Philippine National Police
RRP	Rehabilitation and Reintegration Process
SDPP	Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. BACKGROUND

For more than fifty years, the Republic of Colombia has struggled with an internal conflict which had its origins around the early 1960s. This conflict emerged within the context of the Latin American situation: the rise of revolutionary insurgent movements on the basis of national liberation struggles, the boom of socialist ideas (particularly Marxism), and, undoubtedly, the influence of the Cuban revolution.<sup>1</sup> The creation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), and later on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April Movement (M19), has scourged the civilian population and the official institutions, disrupting democracy for more than five decades in the country.

Although the insurgency in Colombia has been primarily countered on a military basis, the government has undergone various peace processes in the past, but none of them have been successful. During the presidential period of Cesar Gaviria Trujillo (1990–1994), the M19 and the EPL, and a faction of the ELN culminated in a demobilization process as the outcome of a peace agreement with the government after being granted social and political guarantees. However, the FARC and the ELN have persisted in their attempts to achieve their political goals through the use of terrorist actions and protracted insurgent struggle. More recently, the contemporary political will from the government and the attitude from the guerrilla movements, especially from the FARC, have set the right environment for dialogue in the capital of Cuba. While some political experts are skeptical about the intentions of the FARC, international observers and facilitators involved in the process may guarantee the basis for legitimacy and transparency, helping to bring the conflict to an end.

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1. Jaime Zuluaga, “La Guerra Interna y el Desplazamiento Forzado,” [www.docudesk.com](http://www.docudesk.com).  
[http://www.virtual.unal.edu.co/cursos/humanas/2004945/docs\\_curso/descargas/2da%20sesion/Basica/Jaime\\_zuluaga.pdf](http://www.virtual.unal.edu.co/cursos/humanas/2004945/docs_curso/descargas/2da%20sesion/Basica/Jaime_zuluaga.pdf), 21.

The study and comparison of similar cases of conflict resolution and peace achievement is a viable option to gain insight into and to develop new solutions to cope with the Colombian internal conflict. The Philippines' successful peace process in the province of Bohol deserves special consideration for parallel application to address the Colombian conflict. The peace process in Bohol particularly stands out as compared to others, because it was a unique instance of turning around an insurgency, and it is currently being used as a model to counter other insurgent groups in the Philippines. Moreover, it could be applied to Colombia, given the similarity of the two states, and the nature of their internal conflicts.

This thesis will examine the success factors used in the province of Bohol to end the conflict, and their applicability to the Colombian internal conflict. Bohol was one of the most rebellious provinces in the Philippines due to the rampant violent activities pursued by communist groups. High levels of poverty, pitiable security, limited access to public services, and social injustices caused the insurgency. But because of the “holistic approach”<sup>2</sup> lead by “Team Bohol,”<sup>3</sup> which comprised the different stakeholders of the province, and the counterinsurgency and peace process program, a new overall approach addressing the root causes of the problem, including the rehabilitation and integration of former rebels into the society and their incorporation into the peace and development program, brought peace to the region, making the Bohol province an insurgent-free area since March 2010.

## **B. RESEARCH QUESTION**

Which “success factors” used to end the Philippine conflict in Bohol could be applied to the Colombian conflict?

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2. The “holistic approach” is a strategy used by the government to cope with insurgency, consisting of political, economic, psychosocial and security components to address the root causes of insurgency.

3. “Team Bohol” is composed of the Tagbilaran bishop, the military commander, the Philippine national police provincial director, and the local government unit, which served to accomplish peace and progress in the region.

### **C. HYPOTHESIS**

In order to establish an adequate method to address the problem of persistent insurgency and to determine relevant success factors, the authors hypothesize that the theory on which insurgent conflicts are brought to a final end relies on the combination of the following factors:

- Government's social approach
- Government's military approach
- Economic Development
- Peace (defined by Security and Development).

We suspect that counterinsurgency programs are generally more successful when they are initiated by the government's commitment to know the exact causes of violence or rebellion by its people, and the provision of short and long term solutions to address these problems. This includes the creation of programs to meet the honest needs and demands of the people, igniting a sense of belonging and instilling the belief that they have an innate capacity to progress individually and collectively as a whole nation, seeking a common goal of internal and external security, peace, progress and economic and socio-cultural development.

This argument comes from studying the actions taken by the Philippine government to eradicate the insurgency in the province of Bohol, which was rooted in the local government's social awareness. The government helped give the people a sense of ownership. Furthermore, the local government instilled in the people's hearts and minds the notion of belongingness to their community. The local government's basic goal was to generate concern for the area's native land and resources, their cultural values, and their future. In doing so, the government started a process to establish credibility by developing short and long term goals through the following programs: the Local Peace Reduction Action Plan, the Local Peace Forum, the Poverty Alleviation Program, the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Process, the Propagation of Social Justice and a special focus on gaining the people's commitment to peace in order to lead to security and development. The government also focused on conveying the program's goal of

achieving zero insurgent factions in the area, which has been the case for roughly eight years.

The overall process in the Philippines was based on a strategy called the “holistic approach” which encompasses political, economic, and psychosocial and security components to address the root causes of insurgency. The focus of the strategy was to gather the province’s stakeholders, the military, the church, and official institutions in order to alleviate poverty, incorporate rebels into society and generate economic growth, grounded in the implementation of four basic sub strategies:

- (1) Social Awareness and People’s Commitment to Peace
- (2) Modified Special Operations Teams
- (3) Information Operations
- (4) The Role of the Church

The Republic of Colombia has been focused on a similar approach over the past ten years through the implementation of national policies, and especially through its four-year National Development Plans. The Colombian National Development Plan (CNDP) 2010–2014, “Prosperity for all,” was created in order to face the challenges of consolidating security, wiping out poverty and diminishing the unemployment rates.<sup>4</sup> It has set the principles and the vision for the forthcoming four years, and laid out the policies to generate sustainable national growth and competitiveness, equality of opportunities for the population, consolidation of the peace, and environmental sustainability and risk prevention.<sup>5</sup> The Colombian government also states in its Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity (SDPP) that consolidating peace means “to guarantee the prevalence of the rule of law, internal security, and the full observance of human rights, as well as the efficient functioning of justice throughout the national territory.”<sup>6</sup> It also states the importance of security issues and defines a new strategy on the basis of

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4. National Planning Department, *National Development Plan* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian National Press, 2011), 20.

5. *Ibid.*, 23.

6. Defense Ministry, *Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian National Press, 2011), 11.

“responding to the new characteristics of the threat, and a real dimensioning of the overall security and defense status.”<sup>7</sup> Summarizing the plan: “the dream is to become a country with prosperity for all: more employment, less poverty, and more security.”<sup>8</sup>

Although the governmental policies and the CNDP are set to cope with the current challenges, the general approach focuses on the duties and responsibilities of the state’s institutions and entities to overcome the insurgent threat, focusing primarily on a military approach to force the rebels to sit and talk at the negotiation table, and procuring the consolidation and re-establishment of governance in the “consolidated areas.”<sup>9</sup> The authors suspect that this approach leaves a gap in developing a social awareness of the population and the effort to gain the people’s will and commitment to peace, which strongly constitutes one of the main elements of the process’ stalemate in Colombia.

#### **D. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a wide variety of research on the conditions driving successful and failed peace processes during the past decades, focusing especially on the particular aspects that lead those processes to achieve a positive or negative outcome. In a study developed by Hastings and Mortela in 2008 at the Naval Postgraduate School, “The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines,” the authors identify the various factors leading to the decline of the different insurgent groups in the Philippines, as well as several lessons learned by conducting counterinsurgency campaigns in the region by utilizing an indirect approach strategy, based on “McCormick’s magic diamond counterinsurgency model”<sup>10</sup> which promotes legitimacy through good governance, improved security and social and economic conditions.

In another thesis, written by Ernesto Torres, Jr., entitled “A Success Story of Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol,” the efficient method to defeat

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7. Defense Ministry, *Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity*, 11.

8. National Planning Department, *National Development Plan*, 22.

9. The term refers to areas or territories regarded as free from insurgent activity.

10. This model created by Professor Gordon McCormick, develops a structural context of a symmetrical view of actions for counter-insurgency forces and insurgent groups in order to achieve success.

communist insurgencies is laid out. This argument is based on the fact that the province of Bohol was considered an insurgent hotbed area in 2002, but over the years it was declared an insurgent-free area in 2010, and is now considered the number one tourist attraction in the country after applying a new strategy with a holistic approach.

The purpose here is quite different because it aims to determine not simply specific environmental conditions leading to a successful outcome for a single case, but to establish the similarity of two democratic nations, and the applicability of a nation's strategic approach and planning to successfully counter an insurgency. The current literature on the topic reviews the universal guidelines framing general circumstances under the overall concept of peacemaking processes, not making the finer distinctions needed for this particular question.

The literature on the Colombian conflict mainly covers the history of fifty years of struggle with the FARC and the ELN, as well as other extinct insurgent revolutionary groups and paramilitary movements. Authors like Luis Alberto Villamarín, who is a former Colonel in the Colombian Army, reveal the insurgency's evolution and its constant desire to take over power.<sup>11</sup> "Plot Against Colombia," "The FARC's Cartel," and "Win the War to Conquer Peace" are some of his masterpieces talking about the regional and international influence of the guerrilla groups, and their strategy to manipulate the Colombian government and the population, inhibiting the general desire to achieve peace.<sup>12</sup> The protracted conflict in which Colombia has been struggling is surrounded not only by the national relief and sense of victory when successful peace processes have been achieved, for example with the M-19 Movement in 1990, or with the so-called paramilitary groups (self-defense organizations)<sup>13</sup> between 2003 and 2006, but

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11. Luis Alberto Villamarín's book collection on the Colombian conflict is a set of 17 books, which encompass the evolution and the contemporary history of the insurgent revolutionary groups in Colombia.

12. The "Book Collection on the Colombian Conflict," authored by Luis Alberto Villamarín, embraces the strategic approach of the Colombian insurgent groups, especially the FARC, in order to take over the power through the application of protracted warfare, terrorism and deception. The book collection portrays the contemporary history of the Colombian internal conflict, the atrocities committed by the guerrillas, the failed peace processes and its repercussions, and the Colombian government's approach and strategies to counter the threat.

13. Peasant organizations created around 1997 in Colombia, whose main purpose is aimed to protect different local economic, social and political interests from insurgency in the rural areas.

also by the sour taste of defeat in previous failed peace talks, especially with the FARC, in 1999 and 2001.

In the Philippines the situation is not much different. Since the 1930s the Philippine government has been fighting the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) movements, which have been radically inspired by the Marxist ideology and have adopted the Maoist theory focusing on people's protracted war on the countryside, aiming to generate insurrection to take over power in the rural areas to topple the state. Though the Philippine government has been facing a long struggle against these communist insurgencies, the successful counterinsurgency model using a "holistic approach" conducted in Bohol has been applied in the whole country since 2011. From the implementation of this model, a remarkable decline of insurgency occurred and the economy of the Philippines has improved noticeably.

In order to gain a deeper insight into insurgency and this particular context, our theory is developed through the study of the following concepts and principles.

### **1. McCormick Magic Diamond**

The Magic Diamond model, created by Professor Gordon McCormick, develops a symmetrical view of the actions taken by counterinsurgency forces and insurgent groups in order to achieve success, focusing on the interaction of four basic actors: the insurgent force or the counter-state, the counterinsurgency force or the state, the population and the international community.<sup>14</sup> In his theory, the state and the counter-state compete to gain control from the third actor, which is the population. The fourth actor, or the international community, refers to the participation of outsiders represented by an international actor. Professor McCormick states that there is a direct relationship between the actors, in which the outcome or the behavioral result depends, based on either a direct approach (use of military force) or an indirect approach is conducted, demonstrating a direct correlation to the success or failure of either the counterinsurgency or the insurgent

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14. Gordon McCormick, "The McCormick Diamond Counterinsurgency Model," lecture presented during Dr. McCormick's Seminar on Guerrilla Warfare, Naval Postgraduate School.



forces.<sup>15</sup> This theory is particularly important in order to gain a new approach to the Colombian internal conflict because, as was stated before, the Colombian government has tackled the insurgency mainly through military means, lacking a stronger effort to boost the probabilities of success through completely shifting the ideology and beliefs of the remaining population still supporting the FARC and the ELN.

## **2. Galula's Counterinsurgency Warfare**

Galula's theory widely agrees with Professor McCormick's Magic Diamond Model. Galula defines insurgency as a "protracted struggle conducted methodically, step by step, in order to attain specific intermediate objectives leading finally to overthrow the existing government."<sup>16</sup> He also points out that in today's conflict, no revolutionary war remains as internal conflict.<sup>17</sup>

Galula argues that in a revolutionary war, there is a multiple set of actors: population, internal and external actors, and the counterinsurgency force. His strategy focuses more on the population rather than chasing and harassing the insurgent groups. The author believes that the objective of counterinsurgency forces is to provide more security to the people (commonly called in military terms the "population-centric" approach) stating that victory is grounded on "the permanent isolation of the insurgent groups from the population."<sup>18</sup> In order for the counterinsurgent group to succeed, there is a need to use an indirect approach. "The soldiers must then be prepared to become a propagandist, a social worker, a civil engineer, a school teacher, a nurse, or a boy scout."<sup>19</sup> Galula states that through conducting an indirect approach, the counterinsurgency force is able to gain people's trust, therefore, gaining more access to collect intelligence on the enemy, turning the situation favorably to the government's

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15. Gordon McCormick, "The McCormick Diamond Counterinsurgency Model."

16. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 1964), 2.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 54.

19. Ibid., 62.

side. McCormick's and Galula's theory on the indirect approach was used in Bohol to successfully eradicate insurgency off the province.

### **3. Understanding the Root Causes of Rebellion**

The book, *Why Men Rebel* by Ted Gurr, discusses the theory of relative deprivation, which is "the perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities,"<sup>20</sup> and based on that, "the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity."<sup>21</sup> The author concludes that the "primary source for the human capacity for aggression is the frustration-aggression mechanism,"<sup>22</sup> wherein aggression comes out when people get frustrated because expectations are not met; they act out and create violence against the government in different forms of rebellion. The theory of relative deprivation is related to the scenario in Bohol's pre-counterinsurgency programs, because at the time the population felt hopeless, frustrated and deprived due to poverty and poor access to government aid. The situation made the locals vulnerable to communists' recruitment.

Although Gurr further discusses emotion versus reason as possible causes of rebellion, he also reiterates that there are many factors influencing man's capacity to react and create rebellion in as much as there are also a multitude of social, cultural, and environmental issues and concerns that influence man in his daily decision making.

Gurr's theory of relative deprivation is applicable to the scenario found in the Philippines' pre-counterinsurgency programs. The people were full of socio-economic frustrations and were generally feeling hopeless, helpless and deprived because of poverty and poor access to government's basic services. In Bohol alone, the people's frustration was fanned into greater proportions by the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA), creating an aggression that has made the

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20. Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 37.

21. *Ibid.*, 24.

22. *Ibid.*, 36.

locales vulnerable to communists' recruitment, and thus, the province became an insurgent "hotbed" in 2000.<sup>23</sup>

#### **4. Jones's *Red Revolution Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement***

In *The Red Revolution Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*, Gregg Jones recounts his daily experience with the CPP/NPA communist group. In his book, not only does he share his critical insights of the rebel group's violent and subversive operation against the government and civilians, but he also provides an honest critique of the Philippine government's efforts, as well as its shortcomings. Jones provides first-hand information of the group's core principles and activities. He says that the Philippine revolution was a product of the "classical Third World fusion of peasant unrest and nationalism,"<sup>24</sup> honed by the blend of different historic events in the 1960s like the Vietnam war, felt inequality and injustice between the Philippines and the United States that dates back from its mock battle with Spain, the radicalism in college campuses, and China's Cultural Revolution. All of these forces were one and the same in igniting the communist groups to mobilize and expand their propaganda against the government. This book is helpful in putting the pieces together as to why and how the rebel group is able to sustain its activities, where its principles are rooted and from where its resources arise.

However, the book is also a testament to how much effort has been expended and how much further the government should go to provide support and security for its people, address their needs and grievances, and create a better system of governance to finally eradicate insurgency, and achieve economic development. This issue is precisely one of the foundations of the holistic approach used in Bohol, because it aims to set the basis to develop the overall social and political approach to counter insurgency.

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23. Ernesto Torres, "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College," *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, June 2011. <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a548898.pdf>, 1.

24. Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press Inc., 1989), 5.

## **E. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology employed in this thesis relies on the analysis of the successful counterinsurgency in Bohol, Philippines. In order to establish the applicability of the success factors of counterinsurgency measures applied in Bohol to the Colombian internal conflict, the authors compare and contrast the different geophysical, sociocultural, religious, and economic aspects of both countries and correlate these factors with the existence and persistence of the insurgent groups, digging deeper on the root causes of rebellion. Once the factors are established, the previous policies and activities implemented by the government of the Philippines are studied as to their success and failure in solving the insurgency. This is to ascertain the evolution of the counterinsurgency measures used in Bohol, how it was formulated and implemented, and how it became the most successful counterinsurgency program in the Philippines. The success factors are then isolated based on the outcome of the concerted effort done by the different stakeholders. Quantitative and qualitative indicators have been considered to verify the validity of the people's and government's claims of the success of the counterinsurgency which relied on the following pillars: social awareness and people's commitment to peace; Modified Special Operations Teams; Information Operations; the role of the church; and the use of a holistic approach.

Once the success factors implemented in Bohol are identified, the authors determine which of them could be applied, and how, with the purpose of creating an alternative solution to overcome the current stalemate in Colombia and bring the struggle to a final end. The study also presents an analysis of the CNDP, whose primary tool is the SDPP, the Philippines' National Internal Security Plan, and the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) in order to determine the government's approach to improving the situation.

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## **II. A SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO COUNTER INSURGENCY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

For more than 50 years, the Philippines has encountered a multitude of armed internal security threats caused by different insurgent groups such as the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Breakaway Group; the terrorists Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI); and most importantly, the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army.<sup>25</sup> The CPP remains the primary threat because it has endured the most challenges and lasted for the longest time and still continues to pose threats in the entire country as compared to other insurgent groups.

In order to address the insurgency, it is imperative that the country's geography, history, religion and socio-cultural aspects be considered in order to fully understand the core of the problem and be able to develop an extensive and appropriate solution. These factors greatly influence the lifestyle and ideology of the Filipino people, shaping their minds to a certain level of awakening that may have causal effects on the root causes of insurgency.

The Philippines has undergone a lot of counterinsurgency measures, each specific to the nature of the insurgency and the type of insurgents. However, this study focuses mainly on the successful counterinsurgency against the CPP-NPA in the province of Bohol, using a holistic approach, and its impact on the latest counterinsurgency plan of the Philippines, which is being patterned after the Bohol counterinsurgency model. With the success of the counterinsurgency in Bohol, the model has been much studied and applied all throughout the country, with modifications detailed to the areas of concern and people involved, as implemented by the IPSP since January 1, 2011.

As early as two months after its implementation, the IPSP had already gained ground in the various parts of the country because of the Philippine government's awareness of the extent of the insurgency and its dedication to addressing the cause of

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25. Armed Forces of the Philippines, "Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan," *Camp Aguinaldo* (2011), January.

violence. Tangible solutions based on both short- and long-term development plans are slowly but assuredly being delivered to the people.

#### **A. CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS**

Because of its location at the far southeastern part of Asia, the Philippines has historically been isolated from much of the world, which gives Filipinos a sense of insulation from their own heritage. According to Rodell, this relative isolation has given the people the freedom to pick and choose, and even modify from other cultures, what they wanted to keep in their system to suit their nature, and thus “helped to produce the very unique amalgam that is the Philippines.”<sup>26</sup> But the same geographical remoteness and diversity has also led to the presence of a diverse population, which speaks more than 80 languages and dialects.<sup>27</sup>

This situation has had a positive and negative impact on the counterinsurgency measures being implemented in the country. The remoteness of some areas makes it difficult for government agencies to provide adequate welfare and development to the people; hence, the insurgents would often take advantage. According to Jones, the communist revolution’s agenda is to take hold of the countryside and control the barangays<sup>28</sup> where the armed groups recruit peasants.<sup>29</sup> They use economic and educational disparities to gain the sympathy of the countryside and teach the people, while gently incorporating their communist propaganda until they persuade the people to revolt against the government.

The communist insurgents take advantage of the ignorance and vulnerability of the people by blending in with them, showing sympathy for their difficult situations and then brainwashing them by blaming the government for every single misfortune that happens to them. The people, who have been desperately in need of refuge from thieves

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26. Paul A. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.

27. 2013 Index of Economic Freedom, <http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2013/countries/philippines.pdf>.

28. Barangay is a small town or village. It is the basic unit of the government in the Philippines.

29. Jones, *Red Revolution inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*, 5.

and oppressors, and those who never had the chance to be heard by the government, were convinced and later became the core leaders of these groups.

The communists provided a de facto government within these remote areas, and developed their own justice system, to the extent of executing people whom they found dangerous to the society.<sup>30</sup> This is one of the reasons why it is difficult and dangerous for the government forces to neutralize this group. They have slowly, but surely, gained sympathizers and have gotten deep into the system of the society. To uproot them would therefore require patience and a systematic move by a legitimate government to respond to the needs of the people.

The Filipinos have had the “misfortune of being liberated four times in their history.”<sup>31</sup> The first came when the Spaniards “liberated” them from the “devil” via “Christianization,” the second when the Americans “liberated” the people from their Spanish tormentors, the third when the Japanese “liberated” them from American domination, and then came again, the Americans who “liberated” the people from the Japanese fascists.<sup>32</sup> This repeated suppression and colonization by different countries gave the Filipino people a sense of resilience, which has encouraged them to maintain their core values over the years of foreign invasion.

The Filipinos have repelled each and every foreign ruler. Each revolt has had a distinct form with a different type and severity of struggle, depending on the nature and character of the colonizing country.<sup>33</sup> The situation and experience of the Filipino people has varied with each and every invasion, shaping the Filipino people to fight for freedom from any form of intrusion and oppression.<sup>34</sup>

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30. Jones, *Red Revolution inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*, 5.

31. Renato Constantino, *A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 10.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.



The Filipinos had a civilization of their own even before the Spaniards colonized the country.<sup>35</sup> Before Spain, the Filipinos had their own religious beliefs and traditions, gender relations and social organizations;<sup>36</sup> women already had social equality unknown to other Asian neighbors like India or China.<sup>37</sup>

The smallest unit of government was the Barangay, from the Malay term “balangay,” meaning a boat, which consists of only 30 to 100 houses, with a population that ranges from 100 to 500 people.<sup>38</sup> The estimated population in the islands at the time of conquest was 750,000, as published in the “Relacion de las Encomiendas” in 1591, a proof that even before its alleged discovery, the Philippines had its own people and its own identity. A chieftain ruled the barangay, and each of the barangays was independent, but the rulers respected each other.<sup>39</sup> There was no national or central government, only villages that were mostly composed of blood-related people that formed a simple society lead by a chieftain, the eldest male or the strongest or wealthiest in the clan.<sup>40</sup>

The chieftain had the demanding role of an executive leader, legislator, judge and even a war commander.<sup>41</sup> He looked after his people and promoted their safety and welfare, and in return, his constituents served him with loyalty and his descendants were also highly respected and regarded as his successors.<sup>42</sup> The barangays were involved in commerce and carried out agreements of friendship and alliances.<sup>43</sup> Laws were made, written, and published to protect the people and their resources; a judicial process was

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35. Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People* (Queson City, Philippines: Garcia Publishing Company, 1973), 38.

36. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, 3.

37. *Ibid.*, 9.

38. Constantino, *A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War*, 27.

39. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 45.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*

implemented with the help of the chieftain's circle of elderly advisers, where trials were held publicly and decisions made promptly.<sup>44</sup>

The Filipinos had a written language long before the first colonization occurred.<sup>45</sup> They had literature, music, and dance, and played different musical instruments they had indigenously crafted.<sup>46</sup> The Filipinos had an array of dialects from each of the large islands, and also had a system of writing, a unique syllabary that was said to be a form of Sanskrit or Arabic provenance.<sup>47</sup>

The early communities were mostly settled along the coastal area, where the seas were the main source of food and income, due to the abundance of seafood and trade among the neighboring barangays and other Asian neighbors.<sup>48</sup> Despite the country's exposure to neighboring trading partners,<sup>49</sup> the ancient Filipinos filtered the cultures and traditions that they wanted to adopt, for even though they were exposed to the Chinese and Hindus, they never took Hinduism or Buddhism, nor accepted Confucian philosophy. The only pre-colonially accepted religious practice was Islam, but even this was distinct from the conventional practice of the Islamic World, evidence that the Philippines have a way of metabolizing foreign influences.<sup>50</sup>

The Philippines was colonized four times, as previously mentioned. Each country had its distinct influence in the Philippine Archipelago; each left its own legacy in the history and development of the country.

Ferdinand Magellan, as part of his circumnavigation of the world, in March 17, 1521, accidentally found the archipelago and landed in Homonhon Island, Samar.<sup>51</sup> He was later killed on the Mactan Island of Cebu on April 27, 1521, in a battle with native

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44. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 45.

45. *Ibid.*, 58.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*, 59–60.

48. Constantino, *A History of the Philippines: From the Spanish Colonization to the Second World War*, 27.

49. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, 9.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 77.

warriors led by a chieftain named Lapu-Lapu.<sup>52</sup> Magellan's crew left to finish the voyage and was able to prove that the East could be reached by sailing westward from Europe and brought the discovery of the Philippines to the world.<sup>53</sup> Another expedition was led by Ruy Lopez de Villalobos from Navidad, Mexico on November 1, 1542; following the route of Magellan, he reached Mindanao on February 2, 1543,<sup>54</sup> and established a small colony in Sarangani Province. Because of the lack of food, they did not stay long; however, they left a legacy by naming the archipelago "Las Islas Filipinas," in honor of King Charles' son, Prince Philip, who later became king of Spain.<sup>55</sup>

During this century, the Spaniards were at their peak of expansion, heavily competing with the Portuguese in territory. Hence, another expedition was sent forty years after Magellan to colonize the Philippines permanently in 1564.<sup>56</sup> The Spaniards had three objectives in colonizing the Philippine Archipelago—to secure a share in the lucrative spice trade, to establish direct contacts with China and Japan and to Christianize the inhabitants of the archipelago.<sup>57</sup> On April 27, 1565, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and his troops arrived at the island of Cebu.<sup>58</sup> Their arrival was at a time when Muslim influence over the central and northern Philippines was superficial; allowing an easier process of Christianizing the inhabitants in that area.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the southern part of the Philippines had been Islamized, giving the Spaniards a hard and long battle to fulfill their goals, which faced Muslim resistance for 250 years.<sup>60</sup>

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52. Philippine Centennial Celebration, *A Brief History*, Philippine-History.org, n.d., <http://park.org/Philippines/centennial/history.htm>.

53. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 68.

54. Philippine-History.org, *Spanish Expeditions*, <http://www.philippine-history.org/spanish-expeditions.htm>.

55. Ibid.

56. John L. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 7.

57. Ibid., 8.

58. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 78.

59. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 8.

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

The Philippines was a prize catch for Spain because of its strategic location in the Pacific and because its shores make a natural hub for commerce.<sup>61</sup> Manila's port was a channel for the "galleon trade" that exchanged Mexican silver and gold for goods from South China.<sup>62</sup> Spanish colonization lasted for almost four hundred years, from 1565 to 1898.<sup>63</sup> Though they were able to impart Christianity and helped develop the country in trade, education and agriculture, the Spaniards ruled in tyranny, suppressed the rights of the native Filipinos and were guilty of a long list of injustices and human rights violations that paved the way to a series of revolts.<sup>64</sup>

The Philippine Revolution that sprung up after Jose Rizal's death was first led by Andres Bonifacio and then General Emilio Aguinaldo. On June 12, 1898, General Aguinaldo in Kawit, Cavite, proclaimed Philippine independence.<sup>65</sup> According to some historians, the Americans fooled the Philippines by staging a mock battle against the Spaniards. The Americans pretended to be liberators, but in truth they wanted to get the Archipelago for their own expansion in the Pacific.<sup>66</sup> Americans, by means of the Treaty of Paris with Spain, then annexed the Philippines on December 10, 1898.<sup>67</sup> The following were the reasons of the United States in proclaiming the Treaty of Paris—"a benevolent assimilation that would expand American business in the Orient, the naval and military interests of making the Philippines their first line of defense, and for the expansion of the American Protestantism."<sup>68</sup> This conspiracy between the United States and Spain brought the Filipinos to doubt the sincerity of the Americans, and later on ignited the Filipino-American War.<sup>69</sup> Filipinos initiated guerrilla warfare against U.S. troops that persisted

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61. Philippine Centennial Celebration, *A Brief History*, <http://park.org/Philippines/centennial/history.htm>.

62. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, 11.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Philippine Centennial Celebration, *A Brief History*.

66. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 245.

67. Philippine Centennial Celebration, *A Brief History*, <http://park.org/Philippines/centennial/history.htm>.

68. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 246.

until Aguinaldo's capture in 1901. "By 1902, peace was established except among the Muslims on the southern island of Mindanao."<sup>70</sup>

The first U.S. civilian governor-general was William Howard Taft (1901–1904). The Jones Law (1916) established a Philippine legislature composed of an elective Senate and House of Representatives. The Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934) provided for a transitional period until 1946, at which time the Philippines would become completely independent. Under a constitution approved by the people of the Philippines in 1935, the Commonwealth of the Philippines came into being with Manuel Quezon as president.<sup>71</sup>

On December 8, 1941, the islands were invaded by Japanese troops. Following the fall of General Douglas MacArthur's forces at Bataan and Corregidor, Quezon instituted a government-in-exile that he headed until his death in 1944. Vice President Sergio Osmeña succeeded him. U.S. forces under MacArthur reinvaded the Philippines in October 1944 and, after the liberation of Manila in February 1945, Osmeña reestablished the government.<sup>72</sup> The Philippines finally achieved full independence on July 4, 1946.

## **B. ECONOMIC FACTORS**

As of the last census in May 2010, the population was 92.34 Million.<sup>73</sup> Most of the population is concentrated on the twenty largest islands, with about 56% of the population residing in Luzon, 20.3% in Central Philippines (or the Visayas Islands) and 23.7% in Mindanao (or Southern Philippines). About 55% of the total population is categorized as urban. Continuous migration to highly urbanized centers has increased the number of urban dwellers looking for employment opportunities in the industrial, commercial and service sectors. In large cities like Metro Manila and Cebu, urban dwellers represent about 63% of the city's population. The poverty threshold countrywide

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69. Philippine Centennial Celebration, *A Brief History*.  
<http://park.org/Philippines/centennial/history.htm>.

70. Pearson Education, *Philippine History*, <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0107887.html>.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Philippine National Statistics Office, *The 2010 Census of Population*,  
<http://www.census.gov.ph/content/2010-census-population-and-housing-reveals-philippine-population-9234-million>.

is P13,823 (USD 261), while that of Metropolitan Manila is P17,713 (USD 335).<sup>74</sup> The Philippines' economic freedom score is 58.2, making its economy the 97<sup>th</sup> in the 2013 index.<sup>75</sup> Its score is 1.1 points higher than last year, with notable improvements in investment freedom and freedom from corruption outweighing a decline in business freedom.<sup>76</sup> The Philippines rank 17 out of 41 countries in the Asia–Pacific region, and its overall score is slightly below the world average.<sup>77</sup>

Weathering the ongoing global economic slowdown with a high degree of resilience, the Philippine economy has been on a steady path of economic expansion growing at an average annual rate above 4.5% over the past five years. The government has pursued a series of legislative reforms to enhance the entrepreneurial environment and develop a stronger private sector to generate broader-based job growth.

Nevertheless, institutional challenges require deeper commitment to reform. Although the perceived level of corruption has declined in recent years, more effective anti-corruption measures need to be institutionalized. The inefficient judiciary remains susceptible to political interference and does not provide strong and transparent enforcement of the law, undermining prospects for long-term economic development. President Benigno Aquino III took office in 2010 with a mandate to address pervasive corruption and has launched investigations into abuses of power by prior administrations. The previous government's failure to do anything substantial to liberalize the economy set back efforts to attract much-needed foreign investment in basic industries and infrastructure. Emigrants' remittances are equivalent to more than 10% of gross domestic product (GDP).

However, there is still a very wide gap between the rich and the poor, and the increasing unemployment rate, the failure of the government to produce an extensive agrarian and land reform program, and the issues of corruption of those in power, are still

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74. 2013 Index of Economic Freedom. <http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/2013/countries/philippines.pdf>.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

among the top reasons why people of the countryside still sympathize with the communist group. There is a need to evaluate the economic concerns of the country and integrate them with the peace and development process to achieve lasting peace and security, where a strong economy can flourish. In the case of Bohol, the peace and development plan included a revamp of the economy, incorporating livelihood programs not only for the rebel returnees, but also for the entire populace. The focus on its ecotourism and agricultural development was integrated into the long-term goals, and the people were united by their will to improve their state of being. According to Hastings and Mortela, this approach to poverty reduction is strategic, and it is further guided by Bohol's new focus towards economic growth through Aumentado's Ten-Point Agenda: agriculture, tourism, infrastructure, managing population growth, improving health and social well-being, attaining environmental sustainability, expanding economic opportunities, fostering creativity, peace and development in the communities, and better governance.<sup>78</sup>

### **C. RELIGIOUS FACTORS**

Because of the Spanish colonization of the archipelago for more than 300 years, the predominant religion in the country is Roman Catholicism. It has an estimated distribution of at least 81% of the entire population. Based on the 2000 survey of Philippine demographics, the remainder of the population is distributed among different religions as follows: Evangelical 3%, Iglesia ni Kristo 2%, Aglipayan 2%, other Christian 5%, and Islam 5%.<sup>79</sup> The diversity of religion greatly affects the current peace and security situation of the country. The church whenever possible is deemed not to intervene in state functions; however, because of its mass influence, whatever the position of the church on a state issue, the people have a tendency to be persuaded. Since morality according to the Christian perspective is deeply rooted among the Filipino people, this factor plays a key role in the values that affect the decision making of the people in their daily activities. The cases of ousted former Presidents Marcos and Estrada

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78. Jonathan Hastings and Krishnamurti Mortela, "The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2008), 64.

79. Pearson Education, Philippine History, <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0107887.html>.

were both fueled by the influence of the church, in its plea for morality and justice for all Filipino people.

#### **D. POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE INSURGENT GROUPS**

In order to understand the insurgency in the Philippines, it is important to determine the background of the insurgent groups in the country, as well as its geographical context, which somehow has presented an advantage to the insurgents.

The Philippines is an archipelago of approximately 7,107 islands.<sup>80</sup> The total area is 300,000 square kilometers, comprising around 298,000 square kilometers of land and about 2,000 square kilometers of water.<sup>81</sup> The three main islands are Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.<sup>82</sup> The country's mountain ranges are expansive and mostly volcanic in origin, and in each of the three major islands there are sets of mountain and river systems making the "circuit and watersheds of the Pacific basin of the earth's surface."<sup>83</sup>

The vastness of the mountain ranges and the irregularity of the shoreline, make good nesting and hiding places for the insurgents. The insurgents have a lot of different islands and terrains to choose from, and the long stretch of shore allows them to hop around from one island to another discreetly, making it difficult for the government forces to totally eradicate them. In Richard J. Kessler's book, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, he discusses the framework of the CPP and the key points to a successful anti-government/communist movement. He points out the importance of geography in their structure and tactics. The geographic features of the archipelago create a positive and negative impact on counterinsurgency. As an example of the negative effect, Kessler mentions that the "fragmented island geography" of the country would turn into a great advantage by "providing a cover for the spread of cadres in the second

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80. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, 3.

81. Tagalog Lang, The Philippines: Geography, Location, Size, and Boundaries, [tagaloglang.com/The-Philippines/Geography/location-size-and-boundaries.html](http://tagaloglang.com/The-Philippines/Geography/location-size-and-boundaries.html).

82. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, 3.

83. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 1.



and third phases of development while dispersing their opponent's military strength."<sup>84</sup> On the other hand, such geographical complexities have helped wear down the resistance of the insurgents because the archipelagic nature of the country separates the people at war, and the complicated geographic distribution of the country hinders them from their advancement and gives the government the advantage.<sup>85</sup>

Currently, the armed threat in the Philippines is basically composed of four insurgent groups: (1) Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); (2) Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG); (3) Jemaa Islamiyah (JI); and (4) and the New People's Army (NPA). The members of MILF are self-professed supporters of the "Bangsamoro nationhood," in reaction to both real and perceived marginalization in Muslim Mindanao. Because of this, the MILF has created an impression as a legitimate group and gained popular support fighting for the rights of the Muslim Mindanao. As of early 2010, the presence of about 10,500 MILF members is felt in 18% of the total 9,962 barangays in Mindanao.<sup>86</sup> Bangsamoro is defined as "those at the time of conquest and colonization were considered natives or original inhabitants of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago and its adjacent islands including Palawan, and their descendants..."<sup>87</sup> They are concentrated mainly in the provinces of Central Mindanao, specifically in Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur. At present, the secessionist movement has shown its willingness to reach a negotiated political agreement with the national government through the conduct of peace talks and the recent signing of the Framework Agreement last January 17, 2013, on the Bangsamoro as a part of the IPSP Bayanihan movement.<sup>88</sup>

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84. Richard J. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 59.

85. Ibid.

86. Armed Forces of the Philippines, "Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan," *Camp Aguinaldo* (2011), January, 11.

87. Renato T. Oliveros, *The Bangsamoro Reframes the Muslim-Filipino Identity*, <http://www.theguardian.com/2013/02/the-bangsamoro-reframes-the-muslim-filipino-identity/>.

88. Balita, *IPAP 'Bayanihan' Working-AFP Chief*, January 2013, <http://balita.ph/2013/01/17/ipsp-bayanihan-working-afp-chief/>.

The ASG claims to establish a fundamentalist Islamic society in Mindanao through violent jihad.<sup>89</sup> The group is in alliance with the MILF, MNLF, JI, and other foreign terrorist organizations.<sup>90</sup> As of the first half of 2010, ASG was estimated to have approximately 400 members with more or less 300 assorted firearms. Their ability to stage kidnap-for-ransom and extortion activities affords the group sustenance and recruitment of members. They are reported to have ties with local politicians, providing increased fluidity in movement and various sources for the procurement of firearms. They acquire mass base support through kinship and familial ties. At present, the ASG has been confined to the vicinities of Basilan and Sulu, and because of this localization, their operations do not significantly affect the whole country.<sup>91</sup>

There are about 50 known foreign terrorists in the country, most of them with connections to al- Qaeda. Twenty-eight are members of the JI. The JI has its origins in Indonesia, influenced by the teachings of the radical Islamist cleric, Abu Bakar Bashir.<sup>92</sup> “The group aims to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate in Southeast Asia, purged of any Western influence.”<sup>93</sup>

Their primary effect upon internal peace and security in the country is their transfer of terrorist knowledge (i.e., assembly and use of improvised explosive devices) to local groups. Foreign terrorists, however, have limited capability to launch attacks, relying on the support of local armed threat groups.<sup>94</sup> The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) remains vigilant against these groups, in close cooperation with the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was established on December 26, 1968, influenced by Chinese Communism’s Marxist-Leninist ideology, or the “Mao Tse-

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89. Armed Forces of the Philippines, “Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan,” *Camp Aguinaldo* January, 11, 2011.

90. Ibid.

91. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*.

92. Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 2003), 126.

93. Armed Forces of the Philippines, “Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan.”

94. Ibid.

tung Thought,” and its organization and leadership descended from the *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* (*Hukbalahap* or People’s anti-Japanese Army)<sup>95</sup> movement, an agrarian reform and urban socialist movement of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>96</sup> Through a series of meetings between the radicals and the former members of the *Hukbalahap*, a merger was formed in March 29, 1969, officially creating the NPA as the armed group of the communist movement.<sup>97</sup> The founding leader, Jose Maria Sison, projected a lingering people’s war, wherein the oppressed Philippine peasants would form the core of the movement and create the rebel army.<sup>98</sup>

The CPP’s strategy is a long-term organization developed slowly and systematically under a shadow government and its impact was built on creating political awareness among the farmers, liberating them from their restricted outlook, and teaching them to expect and demand more from the national government.<sup>99</sup> The group had gained mass followers not only from the peasants and elite radicals, but also from the religious groups that advocated revolution and freedom from oppression.

According to Kessler, revolution and rebellion flourished in the Philippines despite a lack of ideological motivation on the part of peasants because of the persistent lack of support from the elites and the absence of fundamental structural reforms. Kessler explains, “they never wished to integrate the peasants into society nor share their wealth and power ... [They] ignored the provinces and their problems ... [and] local governments lacked authority and the means to effect change.”<sup>100</sup> The CPP-NPA exploited this issue and capitalized on the peasant’s emotional awakening. The previous government’s counterinsurgency approach lacked the tenacity to uphold the rules and further lost gentleness in implementing the guidelines creating a more fertile ground for this group to flourish. Kessler notes, “In terms of history, the CPP’s development

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95. Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon (*Hukbalahap*) is a guerilla group that worked together with the U.S. Forces to fight against the Japanese Imperial Army during the WWII.

96. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 38–40.

97. *Ibid.*

98. Jones, *Red Revolution inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*, 5.

99. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 28–50.

100. *Ibid.*, 49–50.

represents a qualitative and quantitative improvement over previous rebellions,”<sup>101</sup> creating a vicious cycle whereby this group outlives the other insurgents in the country.

The NPA persists as the major threat to the country’s internal peace and security. Its aim of replacing the country’s democracy with a totalitarian communist state by conducting war against the government and organizing crimes that even involve the civilians has prevented the country from developing to its best capacity. The CPP provides the general line and direction of the insurgency. It acts as political force along with the National Democratic Front (NDF) to try and influence government’s policy with the latter wielding a well-built propaganda machinery that allows them to solicit support. The CPP-NPA-NDF also establishes linkages with local and international networks/organizations.

As of the first half of 2010, the NPA was estimated to have fewer than 5,000 fighters and firearms, wielding varying degrees of influence in about 2.4% of the total barangays nationwide.<sup>102</sup> With mass support, the NPA gains access to safe havens, intelligence information, and a pool of recruits and resources. Each guerilla unit has the ability to arouse, organize, and mobilize communities, conduct ideological, political and organizational works, launch tactical offensives, and acquire resources through criminal acts.

## **E. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH INSURGENCY**

The former president Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972 to allegedly contain the massive insurgency caused by the CPP-NPA. He directed thorough and extensive military operations to quickly eradicate the emerging CPP-NPA. Sympathizers of the group grew on a large scale, causing these insurgents to become bolder and fiercer, to the extent of perpetuating acts of terror around the country. Such is the case of the bombing of Plaza Miranda in 1971, killing nine people and injuring more

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101. Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 28–50.

102. Armed Forces of the Philippines, “Internal Peace and Security Plan: Bayanihan,” *Camp Aguinaldo* (2011), 10.

than 100.<sup>103</sup> The communist group fanned the turmoil and aggressively pointed to evidence against the former dictator. Most Filipinos believed the CPP's propaganda and immediately blamed the government of Marcos, but history once again unfolded the truth when a former member of the CPP-NPA divulged the fact that it was their founder who ordered the bombing to create chaos and confusion among the masses, blaming everything on the government.<sup>104</sup>

However, the advent of martial law escalated the number of human rights violations, making it more difficult to contain the growing CPP-NPA. Hence, in "1982 the Marcos regime launched a more comprehensive and coordinated counterinsurgency program, OPLAN Katatagan (steadfastness), to neutralize and destroy the political infrastructure of the communist party."<sup>105</sup> During this time, the Marcos regime was frantically clinging onto its authority while the movement against its dictatorship had gained force and the communists had grown extensively.

After the Marcos dictatorship was overthrown by the people's "Edsa Revolution in 1986," the Armed Forces of the Philippines' counterinsurgency programs did not end. In 1987, the Corazon Aquino administration launched OPLAN Lambat-Bitag (fly-trap).<sup>106</sup> The Armed Forces of the Philippines through Lambat-Bitag employed the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) and vigilante groups such as the *alsa masa* in military operations.<sup>107</sup> This strategy was patterned after the low intensity conflict strategy of a proxy war approach of the United States Armed Forces.<sup>108</sup> The paramilitary CAFGU were assigned to prevent the communists from reorganizing and returning to the countryside after intensive military operations.<sup>109</sup>

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103. Jones, *Red Revolution inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement*, 59.

104. Ibid.

105. Torres, "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College," *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 11.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid., 12.

108. Ibid.

109. Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, "OPLAN Bantalay Laya, A Premier." 2006, <http://stopthekillings.org/stknpv1/files/OBL%20ENGLISH%20BOOKLET.pdf>.

After Aquino's term, the former defense secretary and chief of staff of AFP, General Fidel V. Ramos, carried on the counterinsurgency measures. Ramos made further modifications to Lambat Bitag and supervised the organization and implementation of OPLAN Lambat Bitag I, II, III, and IV, until his term as president between 1992 through 1998 was over.<sup>110</sup> These policies were comprehensive methods to counter insurgency, highlighting the use of psychological warfare and intelligence operations wherein target areas and suspected individuals were identified first before massive military operations to ensure success; then amnesty and incorporation were afforded to those who surrendered.<sup>111</sup>

The Ramos administration also initiated agreements that defined the agenda and conduct of the peace talks between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Communist Party of the Philippines.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, the Estrada government implemented OPLAN Makabayan (nationalistic) in 1998 and OPLAN Balangai (villages) in 2000, which were focused on heavy troop deployments, and rigorous and persistent military operations on identified havens of the communist insurgents, MILF and the ASG. This administration also employed intensive military operations against ASG and MILF, but it was short lived because Estrada was ejected from power by another popular revolt putting Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacanang in 2001.<sup>113</sup>

The Arroyo regime changed Balangai with OPLAN Bantay Laya (guarding freedom), which started in January 2002. It was geared toward conquering the insurgents to achieve and sustain peace and security for national development. Bantay Laya aimed to "prevent the Abu Sayyaf group resumption by maintaining visibility of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; diminish communist influence in the countryside, reduce manpower and firearms, and disintegrate its politico-military structures; and degrade the

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110. Torres, "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College," *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 12.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., 13.

113. Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, "OPLAN Bantalay Laya, A Premier," 6.

military capability of the Southern Philippines Secessionist Groups.”<sup>114</sup> The significant variations of Bantay Laya, which was in operation until December 31, 2010, emphasized its operations against the communist insurgents, strengthening the coordination between and among military area commands and government units, and reorienting intelligence operations towards target research.<sup>115</sup> Thus, in 2003, the military documented thirteen priority areas in seven regions namely, Ilocos-Cordillera, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Bohol in Central Visayas, Caraga, and Compostela Valley in Southern Mindanao.<sup>116</sup>

According to Torres, the final part of Bantay Laya was successful, especially in Bohol. The success of counterinsurgency in Bohol led the then-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, ex-Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro, Jr., and former National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales to establish the Bohol counterinsurgency model as a guide of the national government in fighting poverty and insurgency at the same time.<sup>117</sup>

Bohol was one of the most rebellious provinces in the country because of the rampant violent activities caused by the communist groups. The insurgency was attributed to poverty, poor security, social injustice, and poor access to services from the government. The province was said to be an insurgent hotbed in the year 2000, but was declared insurgent free in the year 2010,<sup>118</sup> after successfully addressing the problem by applying a “holistic” approach to counterinsurgency. The successful counterinsurgency measures pursued in the province of Bohol then became a model for the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ Security Plan entitled Internal Peace and Security Plan “Bayanihan”<sup>119</sup> (IPSP “Bayanihan”) 2011–2016, or OPLAN Bayanihan. The OPLAN “Bayanihan” is an AFP security plan, which invites all Filipinos to take part in attaining lasting internal

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114. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 13–14.

115. Ibid.

116. Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, “OPLAN Bantalay Laya, A Premier,” 7.

117. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 14.

118. Ibid., 1.

119. “Bayanihan” means cooperation.

peace and security in the country. The OPLAN Bayanihan also serves as the main guide to the AFP in performing its function of protecting the state and the people.

Bohol is the tenth-largest island in the Philippines with a total land area of 4,117.3 square kilometers consisting of 47 municipalities, and 1,109 villages that are divided into three congressional districts. According to the 2010 census, Bohol has a population of 1,255,128 people.<sup>120</sup> Poverty and hunger nurtured the insurgency in Bohol. A poor family could only earn six hundred pesos (P600.00) or US\$15 a month.<sup>121</sup> According to the 2000 census, poverty incidence was at a high of 50.2%, ranking Bohol as the 16<sup>th</sup> poorest province in the country.<sup>122</sup>

Realizing these problems, the former governor of Bohol, Erico Aumentado, initiated poverty alleviation programs that would address poverty and deprivation. The poverty alleviation program then was assumed as an anti-insurgency solution rather than a poverty reduction strategy.<sup>123</sup> Aumentado also believed that poverty reduction efforts should be aligned with the peace and development efforts. Still, according to Aumentado, “Poverty breeds unrest, and to address insurgency, one must first address poverty and deprivation.”<sup>124</sup>

With this in mind, in July 2001, the Bohol government created the Bohol Poverty Reduction Program. While the government was in the process of developing strategies to address poverty and counter insurgency, the communist party took advantage of the situation by distributing propaganda claiming that all government programs were false promises. The people of Bohol then felt hopeless and helpless, and they perceived that the government could not provide its people with their basic needs.<sup>125</sup> The lack of

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120. “Population of Bohol,” *Bohol Provincial Government Official website*, <http://www.bohol.gov.ph/index.php??=boholPopulation>.

121. Hastings and Mortela, *The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines*, 60.

122. Erico B. Aumentado, *Poverty Reduction Program for Peace and Development: The Bohol Response to Insurgency Challenge*, <http://tubagbohol.mikeligalig.com/index.php?topic=3248.msg16812#msg16812>.

123. Hastings and Mortela, *The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines*, 60.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid., 62.



government legitimacy doubled up the recruitment of the communists, capitalizing on the people's grievances against the government, and as a result "there were about 283 armed men organized into four fronts in the province, about three of every ten villages in Bohol became hotbeds for conflict."<sup>126</sup> Having gained this force, the communists launched violent attacks against government forces and facilities while also conducting massive extortion on businesses and organizing a propaganda campaign of their own to further discredit the government. One of the violent incidents conducted by the NPA in March 2000 was the raid and ambush of an army unit in Sagbayan, Bohol, killing seven soldiers including Second Lieutenant Que and five militiamen.<sup>127</sup>

To address the conflict, the government developed the first situation map that became the basis for the strategy. It was initially an insurgency map used by the government and military to depict the level of communist influence in the area, but it eventually became a great tool towards the development of an innovative Local Peace Reduction Action Plan.<sup>128</sup> According to Hastings and Mortela, the map traced the zones of rebel concentration camps and labeled them as areas of immediate government intervention, allowing the province to concentrate on the 41 insurgency-influenced barangays in 20 towns within the CPP-NPA-NDF's four guerilla fronts.<sup>129</sup>

This holistic approach paved the way to the creation of Team Bohol. The team was composed of representatives of local government institutions like the Tagbilaran Bishop, Military Brigade Commander, Philippine National Police Provincial Commander, and the heads of the local government units.<sup>130</sup> The objectives of Team Bohol included alleviation of poverty by bringing peace in the area, improvement in the quality of life of the people by conducting civic action programs, medical and dental missions in the conflict areas, delivering basic health services, and organizing the

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126. Ibid.

127. Mike Frialde, "In the Wake of Bohol Ambush: PNP Beefs Up Intelligence Gathering in the Visayas," *PhilippineStar.com*, March 2000, <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/95195/wake-bohol-ambush-pnp-beefs-intelligence-gathering-thevisayas>.

128. Hastings and Mortela, *The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines*, 63.

129. Ibid.

130. Torres, "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College," *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 45.

residents in conflict areas into cooperatives or associations for livelihood programs. These objectives were achieved by the close coordination and collaboration among local and national government agencies, with the help of police and military as well. This was done by reorganizing the provincial peace and order council that provided the opportunity for discussions on issues affecting peace and order, and the organization of a barangay security system to ensure security in the area. The team also addressed unemployment problems, thus preventing the insurgents from exploiting incidents for propaganda and recruitment. In addition, the team led an enhanced information drive on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; immediately addressed the needs of the people who were victims of natural calamities; allowed the insurgents to surrender; and reintegrated the rebel returnees into the society.<sup>131</sup>

The Philippine Executive Order Number 21, dated June 19, 2001, creating a Coordinative and Integrative System on Internal Security, inspired the counterinsurgency measures set in Bohol. Executive Order No. 21 declares that:

Insurgency continues to pose a serious threat to national security; therefore, the government response to insurgency requires a holistic approach consisting of political, economic, psychosocial and security components to address the root causes and armed threats of insurgency. To facilitate this, the government has to coordinate and integrate peace and development in order to enhance the effectiveness of the holistic approach, there is a need to institutionalize a system at the national, sub-national, and local levels to provide direction, assign roles and define responsibilities to ensure consistency in the formulation and implementation of national internal security policies, plans and programs and further establish relationships and synchronize the operations of existing government structures to achieve synergism and efficiency.<sup>132</sup>

With all the efforts of Team Bohol, the province became progressive in terms of economy, security, and development. Torres argues that “the team ultimately became the vehicle for peace and eventual progress in the area with the implementation of effective innovations that any other peace and order council can initiate if the collective passion to

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131. *Ibid.*, 46–62.

132. Joeselito G. Chan and Reynaldo B. Robles, “Executive Order # 21 from June 2001,” *Creating a Coordinative and Integrative System on Integral Security*, Chan Robles Virtual Law Library. <http://www.chanrobles.com/executiveorders/2001/executiveorderno21-2001.html#.UeCSuEGkofU>.

achieve a culture of peace is present.”<sup>133</sup> The local government was able to gain support from different groups and organizations to include the national government. Economic development was significant, as manifested in the rise of the tourism industry and economic growth. The local government was able to eradicate insurgency, making Bohol insurgent free in 2010 and converting the province into one of the primary tourist spots in the country.

## **F. QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS IN BOHOL**

To gauge the success and effectiveness of the holistic strategy in the Bohol province, data was collected from 2001 to 2012 on the poverty incidence rate, Bohol’s Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), Insurgency Rate, and the annual number of tourists that visited the province. Below are the quantitative indicators depicting a successful counterinsurgency plan using the holistic approach that made Bohol an insurgent-free area and one of the most visited provinces in the Philippines, with a flourishing eco-tourism and agricultural industries.

In the year 2000, Bohol was among the top 16th poorest provinces in the Philippines, including it in the “Club 20” of the Philippines’ poorest. The province had a poverty incidence rate of 47.3%, and out of 1,109 Barangays, 305 Barangays (30% of the total) were in various stages of insurgency: threatened, infiltrated or influenced.<sup>134</sup>

To solve the worsening poverty and insurgency problem, the local leaders and the stakeholders created a peace and development framework, concentrating on poverty reduction to remove Bohol from Club 20 by reducing poverty incidence by 50% in 2015 under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) commitment, and true enough, the province was declared one of the Top 10 improved and developed provinces in 2010.<sup>135</sup>

In a survey on Bohol Poverty Incidence Statistics by the National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB), the poverty incidence rate between 2000 and 2003 declined

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133. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 45.

134. Aumentado, “Poverty Reduction Program for Peace and Development,” *Tubagbohol.com*.

135. National Statistics Coordination Board, “Poverty Incidence Statistics, Province of Bohol, CY 2003–2012,” <http://padayonbohol.blogspot.com/2013/05/bohol-poverty-incidence-drops.html>.

from 47.3% to 40.2% (see Figure 1), but it rose up from 40.2% to 41% from 2003 to 2006.<sup>136</sup> It was during this time that the communist insurgents made several violent activities to disprove the government's anti-poverty and anti-insurgency campaign, and instill fear in the people of the area so that the people would not support the government.

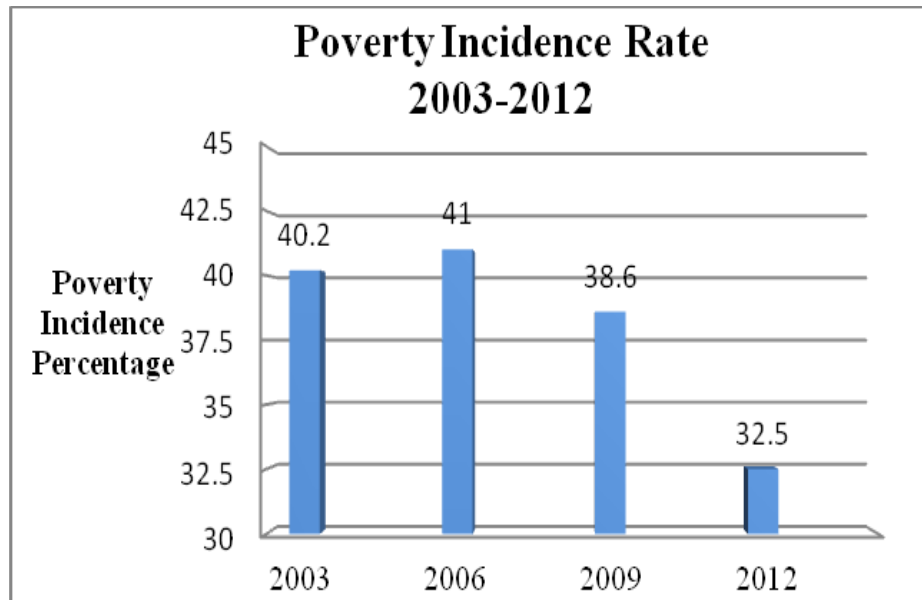


Figure 1. Bohol Poverty Incidence Statistics 2003–2012.<sup>137</sup>

With the continuous effort and collaboration of the different stakeholders, poverty incidence has shown a remarkable decline from 41% in 2006 to 38.6% in 2009, and from 38.6% to 32.5% in 2012. This is a clear manifestation that the holistic approach is working and that as the insurgency rate declines, poverty rate also declines, and vice versa, making Bohol insurgent free since 2010.

The different economic indicators rating the continuous growth and development of Bohol include the flourishing agri-business industry, eco-tourism and other multi-million dollar investments in the area. The tangible result is the improved way of life and the progressive state of the province in terms of infrastructure and business ventures. The provincial budget remarkably displays the concerted effort of the people and the

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136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

government to earn and save more for the planned development that would enhance the personal, social, and economic well-being of the area. Hence, as shown in Figure 2, the annual budget of the province of Bohol has experienced steady, linear growth. It is computed as the previous year's savings (Gross Annual Budget less Annual Expenditure) plus the current annual Internal Revenue Allotment plus other income from investments and business ventures.

Internal Revenue Allotment, or IRA, is the share of the local government units (LGUs), such as the provincial government of Bohol.<sup>138</sup> The 1987 Constitution, Article X Sec. 6 stipulates that "Local Government Units shall have a just share as determined by law in the national taxes which shall be automatically released to them."<sup>139</sup> This is to ensure that subsidiarity is sustained (i.e., responsibilities/concerns are handled by the smallest, lowest, or least centralized competent authority) and that local fiscal autonomy is preserved. As the basis for intergovernmental transfer, the Local Government Code (Sec. 284) assigns 40% of national internal revenues to LGUs based on the collection of taxes of the third fiscal year preceding the current. Internal Revenue Allotment is distributed as follows: provinces (23%), cities (23%), municipalities (34%) and barangays (20%). Individual shares of LGUs shall be determined based on population (50%), land area (25%), and equal sharing (25%).<sup>140</sup>

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138. Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department House of Representatives, "Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) Computation," <http://www.cpbo.gov.ph/images/PDF%20Attachments/Facts%20in%20Figures/03-FnF%20IRA.pdf>.

139. Ibid.

140. Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department House of Representatives, "Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) Computation."

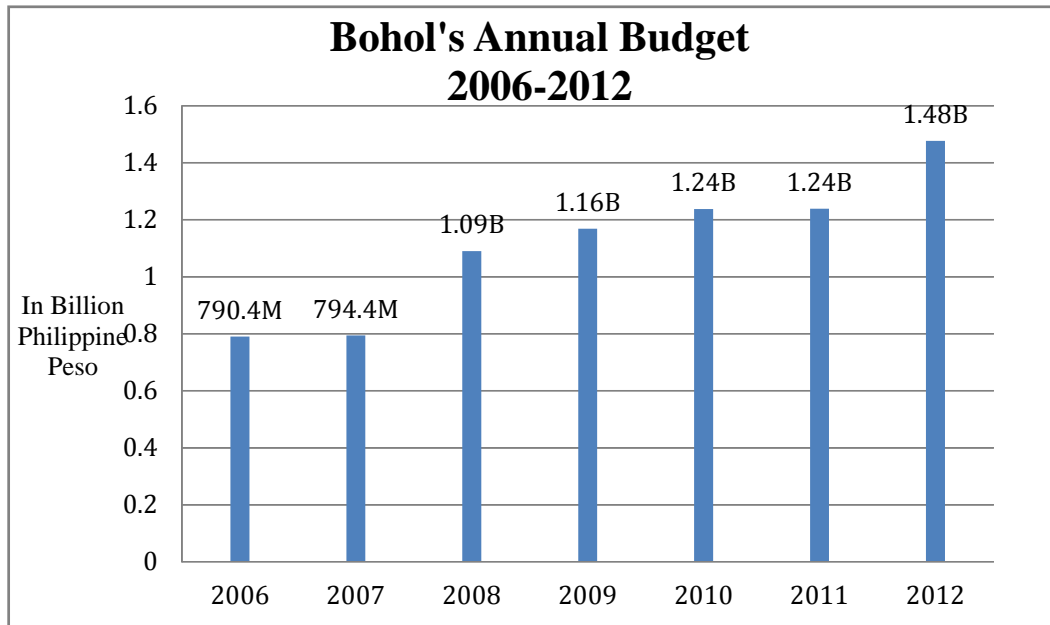


Figure 2. Internal Revenue Allotment.<sup>141</sup>

The economic impact of tourism is significant. According to a paper entitled “The Usefulness of International Tourism and Air Transport Statistics,” by Maria S. Rodolfo, tourism is a complex activity that encompasses various activities such as transport (air, land, and sea), accommodation, food and beverage consumption, sightseeing, etc.<sup>142</sup> It is not reflected as a separate item in the National Income Accounts (NIA). Rodolfo therefore reiterates that in contrast to other industries, like manufacturing, its contributions to the GDP on a quarterly or annual basis (the frequency of release of NIA) is not directly and readily measured.<sup>143</sup>

Hence, in the case of Bohol province, the booming tourism industry is considered one of the biggest contributors to the steady growth in economic welfare and development.

141. Ibid.

142. Maria S. Rodolfo, “The Usefulness of International Tourism and Air Transport Statistics,” October 4, 2004, [http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ncs/9thncs/papers/tourism\\_Usefulness.pdf](http://www.nscb.gov.ph/ncs/9thncs/papers/tourism_Usefulness.pdf).

143. Ibid.

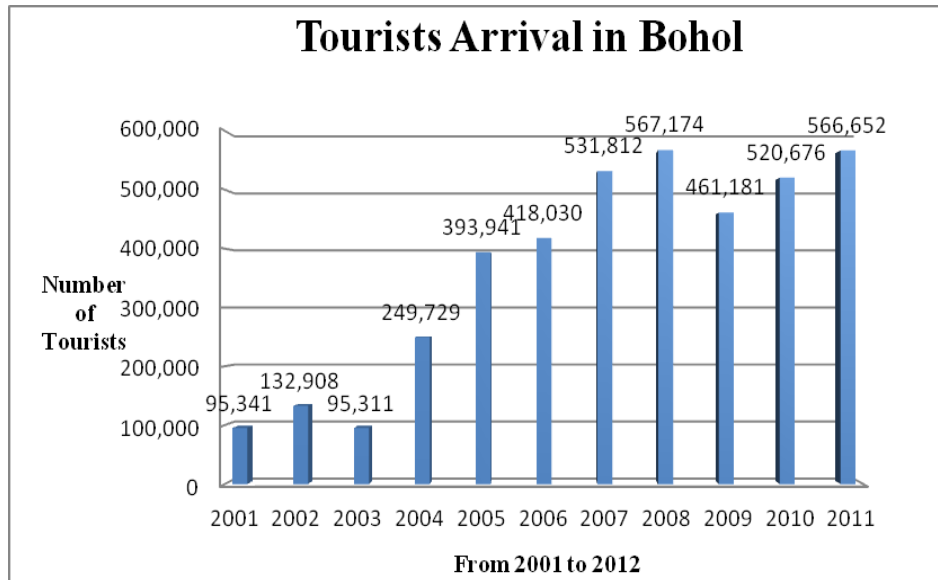


Figure 3. Tourism in Bohol from 2001–2011.<sup>144</sup>

The successful venture of provincial tourism is not possible without the ongoing peace and stability in the area that was achieved using the holistic approach of counterinsurgency. The graph in Figure 3 indicates a progressive increase in the number of visitors that frequented the province of Bohol from 2001 to 2011. This also shows a dramatic improvement in the peace and order situation of the area allowing the influx of tourists.

In 2006, in two successive instances, two of the highest officials of the CPP-NPA surrendered causing the biggest blow to the CPP-NPA-NDF in Central Visayas.<sup>145</sup> One of the surrendered rebels confessed he wanted to have a normal life after undergoing a major kidney operation and feeling the heat of combined PNP-AFP intensified operations against him. He realized that insurgency would not prosper anymore in the province due to the genuine and very effective Poverty Alleviation Program of the governor, which

144. Chato, “Bohol Economic Fact Book,” [http://www.boholinvest.com/index.php?action=download\\_resource&id=21&module=resourcesmodule&src=%40random498a72e45e06c](http://www.boholinvest.com/index.php?action=download_resource&id=21&module=resourcesmodule&src=%40random498a72e45e06c)

145. PPBO Bohol, “Annual Provincial Report, Province of Bohol year 2006. P65,” <http://www.ppdobohol.lgu.ph/plan-reports/annual-reports/2006-annual-reports>.

also uses the holistic approach.<sup>146</sup> After 2007, no armed rebels were recorded, and no violent activities reported either (see Figure 4).

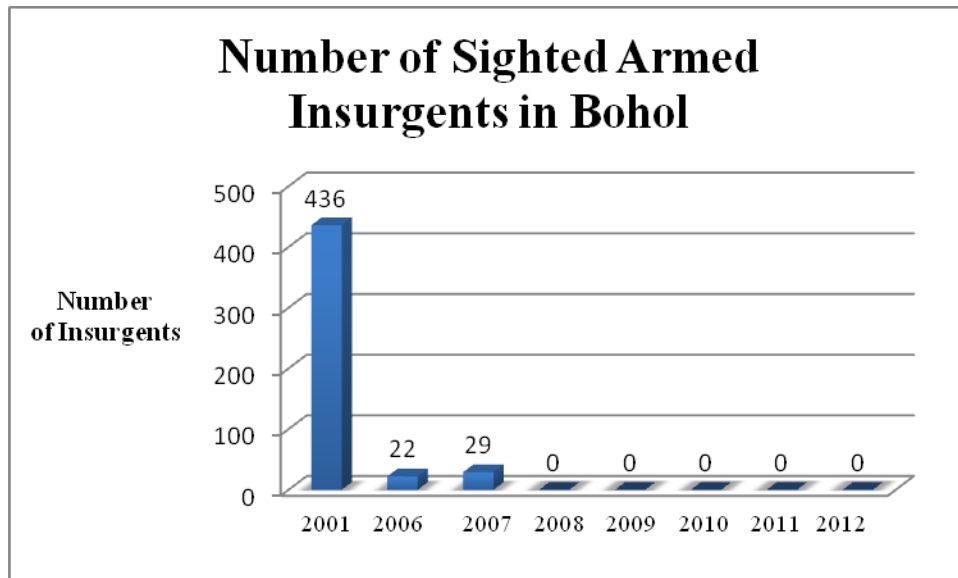


Figure 4. Rate of Insurgency from 2001–2012.<sup>147</sup>

According to Bohol’s annual provincial report in 2008, the consistent decline in and disappearance of insurgency in the area was a result of a concerted effort among the different stakeholders. Because of the increased awareness of the deceptive tactics of the CPP-NPA-NDF, and the effects of the communist insurgency on the economic stability of the country, starting at the municipal and going down to the barangay levels, the local government officials and the people of Bohol showed a sense of belongingness and helped in the eradication of the insurgent group.<sup>148</sup>

Even though no armed insurgent group has been recorded since 2008, Bohol was not recognized as insurgent free during that year. There was a continuous assessment and reassessment conducted by the AFP and the PNP on the various violent and non-violent activities, influences, barangay affectation, and guerilla fronts of the CPP-NPA. After a series of studies and intelligence gathering, the AFP declared Bohol as insurgent free on

146. PPBO Bohol, “Annual Provincial Report, Province of Bohol year 2006. P65.”

147. Ibid.

148. Ibid.



March 10, 2010.<sup>149</sup> The AFP credited the counterinsurgency plan using the holistic approach, and indicated that as long as there is good governance and unity among stakeholders to completely condemn the CPP-NPA, and focus on the peace and economic programs that have been initiated, Bohol will remain insurgent free and will develop as envisioned.<sup>150</sup>

The number of rebel returnees (NPA) increased in the entire country since the implementation of IPSP in 2011. It is because these former rebels felt the sincerity of the government and wanted to be integrated to receive the benefits that the government had promised in the IPSP.<sup>151</sup> In 2012 data showed that about 367 NPA surrendered as compared to an already satisfactory record of 235 surrenders in 2011.<sup>152</sup> According to Colonel Arnulfo Burgos, AFP spokesperson, there is a high chance that more rebels will surrender in the succeeding years because of the efficient and highly rewarding integration program of the Bayanihan that includes employment and financial assistance for the former communists and their dependents.<sup>153</sup> Data gathered also showed a decrease in atrocities in the recent years; however, the AFP is still very vigilant because the NPA continues to pose a threat against the government and the civilians.<sup>154</sup>

## **G. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SUCCESS FACTORS OF COUNTERINSURGENCY IN BOHOL**

### **1. Social Awareness and People's Commitment to Peace**

The counterinsurgency model used in the province of Bohol is a mirror of the society's desire for peace and improvement. It is important to learn from past experiences and gain wisdom from every mistake, as Torres points out in his thesis. He notes that Teruel, the Director of Bohol Development Planning Office, asserted:

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149. *Bohol Sunday Post*, "Insurgency-free Bohol is Aumentado's legacy—Army," <http://www.discoverbohol.com/bsp/2010/0627-10/insurgencyFree-0627-10.htm>.

150. *Ibid.*

151. AFP Radio, *Bilang Ng Mga Sumukong Tumaas Ayon sa Militar*, March 6, 2013, <http://www.afpradio.ph/article135.html>.

152. *Ibid.*

153. *Ibid.*

154. *Ibid.*

“As political leaders were prone to avoiding conflict that would put their political hold of the locality to risk, local government officials had the tendency to leave the insurgency problem to the police and the military thinking that it was all a military problem that needed military solution. They found out that military solution only piled up statistics on body count. For every body counted after each violent encounter, this leaves us one family bitter and angry with government.”<sup>155</sup>

This made the political leaders of Bohol realize that the military should not be the only one involved in every counterinsurgency. National and local government officials also needed to take the lead for their constituents; hence, “the governor took the lead while the military and the police took a support role in the overall effort to defeat insurgency in Bohol.”<sup>156</sup>

With the example of the successful counterinsurgency in Bohol, the government is now using it to create similar counterinsurgency programs that are specific and appropriate to the given type of insurgency. The process was initiated by the governor’s leadership who took the principal role in addressing the root cause of rebellion and deprivation; having a short and long term peace, security, and development plan; honest and sincere implementation of the plan; collaboration with the different stakeholders; involvement of the church; and the support role of the military and the police creates a greater impact in eradicating insurgency in the province. It has also helped in alleviating poverty. Unlike government efforts of the past, this time the people felt the sincerity from the local government officials and the other stakeholders of Bohol, who were also sincere in providing help in eradicating insurgency in the province. Providing a sense of ownership through Team Bohol, the people were committed to supporting the government in attaining total peace and development.

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155. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 35.

156. *Ibid.*, 36.

## **2. Modified Special Operations Teams**

The military operations in Bohol shifted from traditional to a non-traditional/supportive role in counterinsurgency. As an alternative, the military did not implement tactical operations alone; it involved the civilian community coordinators to organize residents into cooperatives or associations for livelihood.<sup>157</sup> As compared to former counterinsurgency models, the military not only provided security, but also entered an “immersion into the population through dialogues and information patrols to build legitimacy for the government.”<sup>158</sup>

The trust and confidence of the people were immediately established because the civilian community organizers worked with the soldiers as they lived, ate, and stayed in the communities to insure that the needs and honest demands of the people were met in the establishment of livelihood programs.<sup>159</sup> The military strategy employed in Bohol is similar to the original special operations team concept of collaboration and networking to acquire cooperation from among the government agencies, the private sector, the LGUs, line government agencies, and the populace to work hand in hand against insurgents.<sup>160</sup> This paved the way to the dismantling of the communist insurgents’ political infrastructure of the barangays, building intelligence networks in the barangay, and the organization of village defense forces.<sup>161</sup>

## **3. Information Operations**

To gain the trust of the people and obtain cooperation, the government addressed the need of the public for transparency on its programs and the development of their implementation. The people were also educated on the nature of the communist struggle. Information operations were conducted because the government saw the significance of

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157. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 56.

158. Aumentado, “Poverty Reduction Program for Peace and Development,” Tubagbohol.com.

159. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 56.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid.

the information campaign in ensuring better control of the area of operations, which also paved the way to a safe and stable environment while showing determination to pacify and neutralize the enemy.<sup>162</sup>

Because of this, the information campaign secured the approval and support of the local population and its leaders. The information campaign also provided an avenue for the military to help in the development of a culture of peace by the launching of provincial caravan for peace and unity, a massive demonstration of peace advocacy wherein the local government officials, NGOs, and other peace-oriented groups in the province of Bohol actively participated.<sup>163</sup> The local government also gained support from national government agencies and helped in fostering a framework for peace and development in the area that centers on poverty reduction and worked for the common good and general well-being of the people.<sup>164</sup>

To further persuade the remaining insurgents to surrender, and at the same to discourage the rebel sympathizers, the AFP utilized a program called the “Speakers Bureau,” which engaged the rebel returnees to tell their stories and speak about their struggles. The returnees talked about the evils of communism and discouraged the active members of the CPP-NPA by publicly telling their upsetting stories from the field, including the extortion and murders they committed. They also told of the punishment system among members suspected of defecting from or trying to get out of the group, and thus prevented the people from supporting and joining the organization.

#### **4. Role of the Church**

As already mentioned, the counterinsurgency in Bohol was a collaboration that gave birth to Team Bohol: all government units and agencies “shared and took part by integrating in their respective plans, peace-promoting, and conflict-sensitive programs

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162. Hastings and Mortela, *The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines*, 68.

163. Torres, “U.S. Army Command and General Staff College,” *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 45.

164. *Ibid.*

and projects.”<sup>165</sup> The private sector and various religious denominations also took part in the counterinsurgency by building alliances as they engaged in poverty reduction and anti-insurgency drives, recognizing that the insurgency would be solved because of the unity of the people. According to Mortela, as an island, Bohol has a more homogenous population as compared to those in the Mindanao, who are of the “tri-people”—Christians, Muslims, and the indigenous tribes. Thus, transporting the entire template from Bohol to Mindanao would meet the challenge of building consensus among groups with different languages, cultures, beliefs, and political aspirations.<sup>166</sup>

In Bohol province, history played a role in homogenizing the people. During the Spanish colonization, Bohol was one of the Philippine islands that fought hard against the Spaniards because of the many injustices that happened. Known as the “Dagohoy Rebellion,” this resistance against the Spanish rulers was led by Francisco Dagohoy, and was recorded as the longest rebellion fought by the Filipinos against the Spaniards, lasting about 85 years from 1744 to 1829.<sup>167</sup> The Spanish colonization, however, was successful in bringing Christianity to the people; hence, most of the Boholanos are bound by their Christian faith, largely by the Catholic religion. In the case of the Bohol counterinsurgency, the church was one of the stakeholders, which actively participated in the peace and development program. Led by Bishop Tumulak, the people were gathered to share their grievances, and information dissemination gatherings were also held to educate the people. Hence, the church worked as a bridge in uniting the government and the people in relaying information. The church also served as an emissary of hope by helping the insurgents find their way against violence, and by leading them toward the government initiated “social integration” programs.

## **5. Use of a Holistic Approach**

The holistic approach is a strategy in which the government agencies, the AFP and the PNP, and the civil society, such as NGOs, act collectively to provide a concrete

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165. Hastings and Mortela, *The Strategy-Legitimacy Paradigm: Getting It Right in the Philippines*, 62–63.

166. Ibid.

167. Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 118–119.

and effective solution to the lingering insurgency.<sup>168</sup> The holistic system works under the leadership of the president, directly managed by the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security.<sup>169</sup> The AFP and PNP, in addition to their lawful obligations, also manage and train the Area Coordinating Centers which are composed of AFP and PNP units, local government agencies, and others like NGOs in the local area of counterinsurgency operations.<sup>170</sup>

The use of the holistic approach started when former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo initiated the implementation of Executive Order Number 21, dated June 19, 2001, that became a framework for the counterinsurgency strategy applied in Bohol. This is in view of the government's plan to provide a holistic approach in addressing insurgency by the collaboration of the different government agencies and area stakeholders to specifically target the main reason for the armed threats.<sup>171</sup>

The provincial head of Bohol coordinated with the leaders of the military, the police, and the church, together with the heads of the local government units and NGOs, to form a group that would provide a holistic solution to poverty and insurgency.<sup>172</sup> The team worked to bring peace by starting at the barangay area. The provincial government started by organizing a provincial peace and order council that allowed communication between the people and the government, a grievance committee that provided discussions affecting insurgency in the local area while creating an avenue for the government to reach out and help in the long-term improvement plan. The military and police worked together not only in security and defense but also helped in training the people to create a barangay security system that prevented the communist groups from exploiting the people and spreading their propaganda. The church leaders opened and maintained the

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168. Benjie Oliveros, "U.S. Role in Counterinsurgency Operations," <http://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2010/09/30/us-role-in-philippine-counter-insurgency-operations/>.

169. Ibid.

170. Ibid.

171. Chan and Robles, Executive Order # 21 from June 2001, "Creating a Coordinative and Integrative System on Integral Security."

172. Torres, "U.S. Army Command and General Staff College," *A Success Story of the Philippine Counterinsurgency: A Study of Bohol*, 45.

line of communication between the insurgents and the government institutions by acting as go between, initiated peace talks, and ensured that peace and order, and human rights were upheld during the process. The team addressed all the basic concerns of the people, offering information drives using the media and a continuous forum in the barangays to educate the people with respect to human rights. There were also awareness campaigns regarding personal and social commitment to peace and order, so that economic development could prosper.

The holistic strategy implemented a step-by-step process that was eventually orchestrated on its own and promoted the success of the peace process. The following are the sub-strategies that the team provided: (1) social awareness and people's commitment to peace; (2) modified special operations teams; (3) information operations; and (4) involvement of the church. All were important and provided specific actions but were not limited to their line of concern. Most importantly, though, they were united in promoting peace and order and in fostering economic development.

The involvement of the stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating the peace plan, evoked the commitment and sense of ownership. The stakeholders felt an innate need to stop the insurgency because of their genuine concern over their lives, their homes, their properties, and the future of their children. The police and the military were successful in their modified operations; aside from the usual combat operations, they worked in a support role in counterinsurgency and collaborated with the NGOs and the church in creating civic actions and other livelihood programs that offered a friendly environment in which insurgents could freely surrender and reintegrate themselves in the society. This program created a unified front against the rebels and showed the legitimacy and sincerity of the government in their offer for peace and development. The rebels had no place to go because the people were already educated and no longer sympathized with them. It was easier for the insurgents to surrender than keep on fighting.

The presence of a system that secured their human rights was further reinforced by the involvement of the church in the entire process, and the sincerity of the military and police to stay behind the lines. With the NGOs, the military, the police, and other government organizations helped in the civic programs providing medical, dental, health

and educational assistance. Hence, the insurgents eagerly availed themselves of the integration and amnesty program, as well as the readily available livelihood programs provided by the team. The implementation of a strategy joining all the society's stakeholders + the military + government + church was a big help in gaining the trust of the people; thus, it was even easier winning the respect of the rebels and persuading them to help in the process of rebuilding the province to overcome poverty.



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### **III. FIVE DECADES OF STRUGGLE AGAINST INSURGENCY IN COLOMBIA**

Before examining the origins and evolution of the insurgency in Colombia, it is necessary to study the country's economic, political, social and religious factors, and how these factors contributed to the emergence of guerrillas. This chapter will briefly cover each of the factors during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### **A. CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS**

Colombian culture is the result of a complex racial mixture of Native Americans (Muisca, Quimbaya, and Tairona), white Europeans (Spaniards) and African blacks. As a result of this mixture, it is a multiethnic country, with different cultures and different features associated with Colombia's different regions. In this context, there are three major cultural groups. The first one is located in the center of the country, where European heritage remains; the second one inhabits the Caribbean region, and its population consists of a mixture of indigenous and African people; a third cultural group is settled on the Pacific coast, and it is mainly inhabited by black and indigenous people.

As a result of this cultural mix there is a wide range of rich traditions and customs, which are expressed in art, crafts, architecture, painting, music, cuisine, sculpture, literature, dance, and theater. According to the Colombian National Statistics Department (DANE), there are 87 indigenous communities and 64 native languages spoken in Colombia. Other important data from the census reveals that out of the 41 million Colombian nationals, the 48.6 % are males, and the 51.4 % are women; around three million Colombian nationals live outside in foreign countries. Of the overall population, 89.9 % is literate; life expectancy is over 71 years; In Colombia, 46.7 of establishments are dedicated to commerce, 33.4 % to public services, and 10.6 % to industry. About 75 % of the population is settled in the urban areas, and the remaining 25 % in the rural areas; 96 % of the population has access to electricity and basic services.

## **B. ECONOMIC FACTORS**

During the last decade, the Colombian economy has experienced significant and sustained growth, placing the country at the level of an emerging economy, which has become very attractive for foreign investment. It is the fourth largest economy in Latin America, after Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Argentina; and the 28<sup>th</sup> among top economies of the world.

In order to seek cooperation and consolidation of its economy, Colombia has implemented economic strategies by participating in economic and partnership organizations within the international community. In this sense, Colombia is member of the World Trade Organization, and is considered part of the six favored emerging market countries, composed of Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa. At the continental level, Colombia is also a member of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Andean Community, the Union of South American Nations, and the Pacific Alliance. Similarly, as a part of its economic liberalization policy, Colombia has signed off a number of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) in order to strengthen its economic growth and increase exports. Some of the most important FTAs are signed off with the United States, Canada, Mexico, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Chile, Peru, Central America and the Pacific Alliance.

The production of raw materials for export is the basis of the national economy, reaching an average rate 14.9%. The production of consumer goods for the domestic supply is 8.4%, and the cultivation and export of coffee is one of the most traditional and important activities, becoming the largest export item and placing Colombia as the number one producer of mild coffee in the world, and second in production after Brazil.<sup>173</sup> Oil, coal, natural gas, and energy production are other items favoring the country's economy. The nation currently produces one million oil barrels per day (fourth in oil production in Latin America and sixth in the continent, after Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico), as well as eighty-five million tons of coal, nine million cubic meters of natural gas. Colombia also produces and exports electricity to the neighboring countries. In

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173. Jose A. Ocampo, *Modern Economic Formation since 1930*, vol. 8 of *The Great Encyclopedia of Colombia* (Bogota, Colombia: Circulo de Lectores, 1994).

addition, there are large deposits of gold, platinum, iron, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, coal, nickel, emeralds, oil, gas, cobalt, tin, marble, sulfur, and limestone. All these resources are artisanally mined on systems of ridges and valleys where they are easily found.

Being a developing country, Colombia's agriculture and livestock industry are not fully developed technologically, but the variety of climates and rich soil provide a diversity of crops that supply domestic consumption and export.<sup>174</sup> The livestock industry in the Ubaté Valley, Savanna of Bogotá, Valle del Cauca, eastern plains and Caribbean coast have achieved significant development in the production of dairy and meat.

Aiming to bring about a competitive and self-sufficient country on the international market, the government has issued important economic policies in order to accelerate the industrialization process. In this regard, substantial progress has been made. One area of focus is industry (including textile, food, beverage, household appliances, paper, chemicals, automotive, plastics and petroleum products, steel and metalworking), and another is strengthened tourism.

Due to the country's complex topography, infrastructure development has been growing slowly; however, Colombia has an extensive road network system, consisting of primary networks (highways funded by the nation), second level networks (funded by territorial divisions called departments, which resemble states in the U.S.), and third level networks (funded by municipalities). The most important harbors are located in Barranquilla, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Tumaco, and Buenaventura, where most of the imports and exports leave from and arrive in the country. Likewise, commercial aviation has reached regional development standards, to the extent that each departmental capital has its own airport.

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174. The main agricultural products in Colombia are rice, barley, corn, wheat, sorghum, sesame, cotton, soy, kidney bean, potato, banana, cocoa, sugar cane, tobacco, oil palm, vegetables, fruits and flowers. Agro-industrial production crops predominate over of food crops. The forest provides timber production and resins.

### C. RELIGIOUS FACTORS

Without any doubt, the Catholic religion has been influential in defining society, culture, economics, and political ideology in Colombia. It is essential to study religion from its colonial roots, particularly as it relates to three key areas: the economic and social legacy of royal patronage, the confiscation of goods, and the concordat.

Through the religious form of “royal patronage” taken from the European Middle Ages, the Roman Papacy granted the King of Spain special privileges and authority to choose himself the ecclesiastical authorities he deemed necessary. The authority granted by the Pope placed the King as the highest ecclesiastical and administrative authority in the American colonies; therefore, he was able to carry out evangelism in the New World; choose candidates for bishops and priests; and build churches, seminaries, convents and abbeys, following the social, political and economic principles established by the Spanish crown to the colonies. Due to their academic background and the authority of the clergy, priests were usually appointed to public office, causing a fusion between the religious and political activity of the Viceroyalty. In this regard Dr. Fernando Diaz argues that religion was used as an ideological tool for social subjugation, placing the Catholic Church at the service of the colonizing empire and instilling a nature of domination ideology.<sup>175</sup> In *Politica Indiana* (Indiana Policy), Juan Solorzano y Pereyra contends that “religion must be a first order cause in any well-founded republic, and maintaining its purity and defense should be one of the main foundations of the empires.”<sup>176</sup>

As the Republican era started out, governments sought to free the neo-Granadian society from the political influence of the church. However, this was not possible due to the unquestionable authority exerted by the clerics over the population, and its influence at the state level. Robert McAfee, an American diplomat, stated at the time that in spite of

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175. Fernando Diaz, *Confiscation of Church Property* (Tunja: Pedagogical—Technological University of Colombia, 1977), 197.

176. Juan Solorzano y Pereyra, *Politica Indian*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Editorial Ibero-Americana, 1989).

the three hundred years evolution in New Granada, people still lacked freedom of conscience, and considered the influence of the Catholic Church to be a relentless domination over a nation that was supposed to be free.<sup>177</sup>

The government of Santander strengthened the power of the Catholic Church<sup>178</sup> by returning previously seized property, and granting clerics the role of evangelization and education of the people. This type of education was not only exclusionary for the lower social classes in the country (only the wealthy families had access to education), but also in the sociological foundations of the curriculum, rejecting free trade and liberal reforms.

Along with the takeover of liberalism in the mid-nineteenth century, the country's economic system was changed due to the inclusion of capitalist policies. Liberal policies established state strategies to separate ecclesiastical activity from political activity, and restrain the power of the church, the purpose being to expel the Jesuits, to disentail church property, and encourage popular classes to attack the established ecclesiastical authority.

However, modernization was running parallel to the country's economic growth; hegemony exercised by merchant parties and the rise of trade increased the development of capitalist policies and rejected the prevailing conservative slave system.

As a consequence, a bourgeoisie class arose, taking away power from the church and its dominant traditional ideology, by considering that the linkage to the global market requires a liberal, democratic, and bourgeois state. This economic and social phenomenon allowed the ideological definition of political groups (political bipartisanship: liberals and conservatives), who had already appeared in the country's political arena, but had not yet

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177. Robert McAfee and Louis McLane, "Diplomatic Dispatches," May 4, 1834, Quoted by Carey Shaw Jr. in "The Colombian State and the Church as seen by the Americans," Colombian Cultural Institute, Bogota, 1975, 334.

178. After Simon Bolívar died in 1830, General Santander went back to the country and promulgated a new constitution. The 1832 constitution was drafted derogating the previous one in place since 1821, as well as the Great Colombian Republic. As a consequence, the nascent republic is called Nueva Granada and General Santander becomes president. This new government returned all privileges granted previously to the church during the Great Colombia span. Indalecio Lievano, *Colombian Thinking in the XIX Century*. Edited by Javeriana. Bogota, Colombia: Temis, 1986, 72.

been consolidated. Conservatives defended the power derived from social relations organized by religion and the effective exercise of authority, while liberals conceived social and economic progress through freedom by limiting political power to the clergy against the citizens.<sup>179</sup>

Radical liberals (Golgothas), defenders of mercantilist bourgeoisie inspired by socialist ideologies, opted for the freedom of trade and industry, posing the need to push the final separation between the church and the state. They felt this issue was compulsory to hold a democratic state based on the principle of freedom, where the civil power shall enjoy complete independence from religious power. Likewise, it was essential that the Catholic Church did not exercise authority over educational institutions. Professor Gerardo Molina notes, “The Liberal Party thought that the incorporation of the church’s wealth in the country, could solve financial difficulties in pursuit of stability and organization, all this by incorporating the European economic and social model in order to obtain the desired progress through the innovation of freedom.”<sup>180</sup>

Liberals believed that the lack of motion and circulation of the church’s real estate created an obstacle to the nation’s prosperity, and therefore, in 1861 the property of the Church was confiscated (by the decree of confiscation of mortmain bins, 1861). Subsequent steps sought the freedom of education, a new approach to spur economic changes, the abolition of tithes and the ecclesiastical law, and the selection of priests by municipal councils, all based upon the fact that the clergy remained subject to the civil authorities. The final determination to separate the church from the state in all these policies was enshrined in Law 15 of 1853.<sup>181</sup> The Constitution of 1863 embodied the foundations of a liberal federal state. On the subject of federalism, Alvaro Tirado Mejía states, “Federalism was the most suitable way in which regional oligarchies sought to take advantage from the national budget in their favor without entering in a general

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179. Diaz, *Confiscation of Church Property*, 207.

180. Gerardo Molina, *Liberal Ideas in Colombia from 1853 through 1878: From Centralism to Federalism* (Bogota, Colombia: Editorial Sucre, 1959).

181. During the government of liberal president José María Obando in 1853, it was decreed the separation between the church and the state. This policy identified the Nueva Granada as the pioneer in separatist policies within the South American republics.

confrontation.”<sup>182</sup> The federal state worked until 1886, when President Nuñez established a new government program called “Regeneration.”<sup>183</sup> The church took advantage of the gaps and inconsistencies embedded in the new system in 1887, and seeking to get compensation for the damage caused by the liberals, proposed a concordat between the Vatican and the Holy See.<sup>184</sup> This agreement was a victory for the church, because it sacrificed the principles of freedom and economic development benefiting the ecclesiastical tenets in relation to the economy and the society, grounded in the belief that the country’s development should be achieved by the clergy’s policies. An apparent political calm returned to the country with the signing of the concordat.

Diego Yunes asserts that the 1886 Constitution acknowledged the legitimacy of the Catholic Church, and it was considered the essential element of social order, and the government and political institutions of the state had an obligation to pay respect to the church according to its superior mandate. Furthermore, the church should also be in charge of conducting public education in the country.<sup>185</sup> Leaders of the church, among them Bishop Miguel Angel Builes, who was characterized by his belligerent attitude in defense of the Catholic faith and his persistent attacks against liberalism, Freemasonry, and Communism, issued a pastoral letter on secularism, attacking women’s “hellish fashion” for not dressing modestly.<sup>186</sup>

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182. Alvaro Tirado, *Social Issues in Colombian Civil War*, Vol. 1 (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian Institute of Culture, 1976), 104.

183. Regeneration is the denomination of the policy used during the presidency of Rafael Nuñez, former president of the country in several opportunities (1880–1882; 1884–1886; 1886–1888; 1892–1894), which aimed to shift political, economic, social, educational and religious institutions towards a centralized supervision and control, due to the state of anarchy held in the country.

184. The concordat states that the goods acquired by individuals from the church will not be confiscated, and the government establishes a commitment with the church in order to return all the goods impounded. The commitment also compels the government to grant perpetual compensation to the church by all harm caused, and recognized the Catholic religion as the countries’ official religion, approving the collection of tithes, and catholic instruction in all educational institutions and schools.

185. Diego Yunes, “Constitutional Law in Colombia” (Public Administration School) 2 (1982), 32.

186. Magdalena Vasquez, “Social and Legal Status of Women,” in *Colombian History* (Bogota, Colombia: Planeta, 1989).



Indeed, a troubled relationship existed between the church and the state in nineteenth century Colombia. These problems were chiefly derived from the privileges and powers of royal patronage. As it can be noticed, the church was instrumental in strengthening the social and political conflict in the country, based on the unconditional alliance with conservative ideologies and its governments. The church demonized liberal ideas, treating them as the depiction of evil embodied within the communist sector, the Freemasons and in the popular classes. The church also supported anti-communist repression exerted by the military regime on the countryside and the cities, condemning protests, labor unions, and all types of social grievances, building a favorable context for the origin of the insurgent groups.

#### **D. POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE INSURGENT GROUPS**

Before examining the background of the insurgency in Colombia, it is necessary to address some of the geopolitical conditions in the country, particularly those features that allowed insurgency to develop its clandestine activity. Professor Fabio Zambrano notes that one of the images identifying Colombia is its regional diversity, because it is a constituent element of Colombian nationality;<sup>187</sup> for Braudel, regions and their diversity are a direct product of the distances, of the immensity that have preserved all our idiosyncrasies, coming from the earliest centuries.<sup>188</sup> Colombia's geomorphological structure presents a variety of climates, ranging from the hot climates of the coasts, plains and inland valleys, through temperate climate in mountain ranges and foothills, to cold climates in the Andean highlands. Colombia is the South American country with the largest number of rivers flowing in all directions. Navigation is partially possible only in some areas of the rivers nurturing fertile valleys and savannas. Such diversity and geographical configurations have traditionally been an advantage for the origins, development, and continuity of the insurgent groups in the country.

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187. Fabio Zambrano, *Great Regions of Colombia* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian Academy of History, 1993), 205.

188. Fernand Braudel, *L' identite de la France* (Paris: Arthand-Flammarion, 1986).

To find the origins of insurgency in Colombia, it is essential to review the political history of the nineteenth century. Initially, it is important to consider that this issue is chiefly due to a number of internal political events. Political violence in the country, as well as the origins of the guerrilla groups, certainly originated from the desire of outlier groups to seize power and domination, backed by the belief that the state is the body that legitimizes interests and political actions.

At the start of the new Republic in 1810, the country faced political confrontations among other issues, rooted in the ambition of political leaders who thought of the war as a means to gain and maintain power. The interests of the ruling political class did not allow the establishment of a political system to consolidate territorial integrity and independence, as it was dreamed of by the “libertador.”<sup>189</sup>

Tension between the two political parties in the country led the situation to escalate and end in civil wars, generating political instability and social protest, forcing the government to take forceful measures against the strikers and the political and religious parties who did not share their policies. The most severely affected were marginalized rural communities, which saw the emergence of unhappy and rebellious peasant and indigenous leaders who decried the lack of basic social and economic living conditions. Political divergences started out with a conflict between the Free and Centralist State of Cundinamarca and the federalist United Provinces of New Granada (1811–1816). On the one hand, the centralists felt that it was necessary to establish a strong central government in order to avoid being re-conquered by the Spanish, and on the other hand, the federalists suggested the idea of a federal government with the purpose of strengthening the provinces and consolidating the new Republic.

Once the 1819 regime of terror was overcome, a new constitution was promulgated in 1821, reflecting the principle of freedom for the states, grounded in the Bolivarian ideas of integration and Latin American unity. These ideas were not fully accepted by some of Bolívar’s followers, who through the operation of separatist

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189. Libertador translates as “liberator,” and it was the term used to refer to Simón Bolívar.

movements sought the implementation of civil governments based on the slave system, the doctrines of the Catholic faith, and traditional political and social views.

After the death of Simón Bolívar in 1830, Santander turned back to the traditional political system based on slavery and the hegemonic power of the church, adopting a civil regime, which led to the war of the Supremos (1839–1841). This new war sprouted when several priests opposed a congressional order orchestrating the closure of Catholic convents, and the instauration of public schools on the church's property. Bogota's Archbishop and several other regional leaders revolted seeking political and economic vindication.

The birth of the traditional political parties (the Liberal Party in 1846 and the Conservative Party in 1848), produced a sequence of civil wars as a result of the political and ideological intolerance employed by the bi-partisan struggle in search of power: The 1851 civil war was held between conservative landowners of Cauca who opposed the liberalizing reforms of José Hilario López, regarding the freedom of slaves, the expulsion of the Jesuits, the abolition of the death penalty and prison for debt, as well as freedom of the press and trial by jury. During the presidential elections in 1853, the Conservative candidate José María Obando defeated the liberal candidate Tomás Herrera, who did not accept his defeat and led a coup de etat, which led to civil war in 1854. In 1860, the Liberals revolt against the national government and causes war in two states. It was a clash between the Conservative government and the Liberal party, advocating the federal principles. The Civil War of 1876 was caused by the Conservative claims advocating secular education and other Anti-Catholic procedures against the radical Government of Aquileo Parra. In 1884, radical Liberals declared war on Rafael Núñez's government because of the policy of Regeneration. The Civil War of 1899 or "War of the Thousand Days" came about because Liberals decided to regain power, declaring war on the State through the employment of small armies dispersed throughout the national territory. In 1948, the assassination of a political leader named Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, prompted violent events in Bogotá (the "Bogotazo") and rapidly scattered throughout the country; these event gave birth to the period of violence in Colombia (1946–1958).

Since their birth in the 1840s, these two parties have been competing to remain in office until the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>190</sup> During this span there was no continuity in the Constitutional regime, or in the government's approach to allow the consolidation of democracy, as the rise of one political party meant the collapse of the other and vice versa. The change in regimes brought constant changes in the Constitution and widespread confrontations among the civilian population.

The Conservative hegemony (1910–1930) was oriented toward policies that encouraged foreign investment, the entry of multinational companies in the country to the detriment of the working class' interests and needs. While in the Liberal period (1930–1946), it was completely the opposite; this regime opted for the leverage of farmers and the working class, and ran against the interests of the national and foreign capital, in compliance with the program of the “Revolution in March.”<sup>191</sup>

During the period of “la violencia,” (1946–1958)<sup>192</sup> Colombia experienced the most critical civil war in its national history, caused by bipartisan political intolerance and power struggles. Daniel Pecaut points out that the term “la violencia” was used to designate a period of ongoing convulsion, and such was this phenomenon linked to the political traditions of Colombia, where every scenario of violence had involved proselytism or grievances between Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>193</sup>

The breakdown of the liberal party in 1946 contributed to the election of Mariano Ospina Pérez as president. However, the party was a political minority and only exercised control over the Executive branch. In order to counter that, Ospina proposed a National Alliance as a part of his regime's strategy to rule, the purpose being to remove the

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190. The Liberal political party was born in 1846, and the Conservative party in 1848, as essential elements of Colombian democracy, creating two opposed ideological arguments ranging from leftist ideas to moderate liberals, governing the country for more than a century. Raul Pacheco, “Raul Pacheco Blanco.” *Ideological Origins of Political Parties in Colombia*, December 4, 2008. <http://raulpachecoblanco.blogspot.com/2008/12/origen-e-ideologia-de-los-partidos.html> .

191. The “Revolution in March” was Alfonso López Pumarejo's (1934–1938) governmental program to modernize the State and promote industrial development of the country. Alvaro Tirado Mejia, *Political Aspects During the Government of Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo*. Bogota, Colombia: Procultura, 1981.

192. “La violencia” translates as violence: The period of violence.

193. Daniel Pecaut, *Origins and Violence: Colombia 1930–1959* (Bogota, Colombia: Norma, 1989), 34.

struggle between political parties within the government. This Alliance was accepted by the Liberals but not by Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, leading to further division within the liberal party. In the 1947 elections Gaitán obtained outstanding results, bringing him close to becoming the President of the Republic. However, on April 9, 1948, he was killed, triggering an event known as the “Bogotazo,” which aggravated the conditions of violence throughout the country.

In 1949, the Conservative candidate Laureano Gómez was elected president, with a handful of rightist ideas; he sought a connection with the United States, promoting the struggle against the Bolshevik threat of the cold war. In addition, he unleashed a campaign of denigration and persecution of Liberal leaders, accusing them of possessing false identification cards and of serving as spokesmen for the International Communist Party. The lack of constitutional guarantees and the actions of the “Chulavita” police<sup>194</sup>, brought about uncontrollable violence and therefore great trouble for the government, leading to the rise of Liberal armed gangs. At the beginning of 1953, the picture of the civil war was uncertain, the political situation offered a blanket of uncertainty due to the intensity of violence, the clandestineness of liberalism, the division within the Conservative party, and the rupture of the ecclesiastical hierarchy within the government. These facts obligated Laureano Gómez to travel to Spain, and the absence of national leadership brought a sense of anarchy and total confusion to the country.

In such circumstances, the conditions for the establishment of a military regime were given. The army gathered around Lieutenant Colonel Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who appeared to be the only solution to save the State from the final collapse. In a period of political cruelty and overwhelming violence caused by the bloody confrontation between Liberals and Conservatives, Rojas Pinilla took power. His government’s slogan was: “Peace, justice and freedom for all Colombians;” and his greatest challenge was to reconcile the political discord between the political parties, landowners, and gangs, and to become the savior of a society martyred by the civil law of Gómez’s regime. The general

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194. “Chulavitas” was a term used to address army and police force members. Its main job was to find Liberal and communist party militants in order to hinder their actions and thought, and help to restore order by imposing the Conservative government’s authority. These actions forced the local farmers to paint their houses blue in order to distinguish to what militancy they belonged.

began to fulfill his role as a peacemaker; he offered amnesty to all insurgents, and promised guarantees and respect for their lives and properties. Gaining support from the political directorates, Rojas managed to demobilize thousands of insurgents who laid down their weapons. By appointing ministers from both political parties, he also managed to reconcile Liberals and Conservatives. Other achievements included the reincorporation of rural guerrillas into the society, an important breakthrough in national infrastructure, significant support to culture, and aeronautical development, all by experiencing a relative calm in the actions of the war.<sup>195</sup>

In this new perspective of peace, a national Constitutional Assembly was convened in order to legitimize the military government, which initially endorsed Rojas's government until 1954, and later on, until 1958. Nevertheless, peace could not be completely achieved due to some essential factors related to the reconstruction of politics and society. Many of the rebels were nomadic peasants with no life prospects, for example, mostly dedicated to agricultural activities to survive. In many municipalities, the Communist Party managed to penetrate peasant organizations, instilling in them radical political views such as the settling of a local alternative authority. The need for jobs, local budget, and basic public services were not included in the national development plan. Such unfortunate omissions served as a proper justification to revolt, and also for the deployment of troops in those areas to control the populace, creating scenarios for military operations. Supported by the "Pájaros,"<sup>196</sup> it was mainly in the departments of Valle, Tolima, and Antioquia, where the army carried out an intense anti-communist repression.

Rojas's attempts to reconcile both political parties clashed with the anti-communist and peasant repression, although these events prompted support for the

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195. There was only a relative calm in the country because peace was still conditioned by several issues: landless peasants and families who had been stripped of their rural properties through violence. Alvaro Tirado, *Political Aspects During the Government of Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo*. Bogota, Colombia: Procultura, 1981.

196. The "Pájaros" were armed peasants paid by landowners, supporters of conservative policies or regional politicians; they collaborated with the army in Valle del Cauca, Tolima, and Antioquia during the anti-communist repression. Raul Pacheco, "Raul Pacheco Blanco," *Ideological Origins of Political Parties in Colombia*, December 4, 2008. <http://raulpachecoblanco.blogspot.com/2008/12/origen-e-ideologia-de-los-partidos.html>.

government from the economic and political elites. But the ultimate fact that caused the final rupture between the ruling classes and the military dictatorship were Rojas's intentions to step above the political parties in order to form his own political and social organization. This event produced his overthrow, and gave birth to emergence of the National Front.<sup>197</sup>

Social organizations in the countryside and in the city were too weak to claim prerogatives according to the new social and political realities of the country.<sup>198</sup> Within this context, several armed groups emerged in favor of unprotected classes and the apparent social injustices in rural areas. It was apparent that only capitalists and landowners were benefiting from economic growth. Farmers enticed by industrial development and the growth of urban centers, and the working class, were forced to move into cities seeking better living conditions, altogether increasing the basic needs of housing, health and education.

Embracing this social and political scenario, the Marxist guerrillas were born in Colombia. They emerged from peasant militias fighting against the gaps in Rojas's government and his intention to maintain national order and peace through the use of the military. Without any doubt, the events that occurred on April 9, 1948 shaped the framework for the Colombian guerrillas' outbreak, because this period was the cradle of bipartisan hate and violence. Liberal peasants led by Pedro Antonio Marín (alias Tirofijo), formed self-defense organizations in order to defend themselves against aggressions from the government and the political parties. These peasants believed that it was the only way to guarantee their lives and survival.

General Rojas Pinilla sought to end the bipartisan violence, offering amnesty to insurgents, from which nearly 5,000 liberal guerrillas laid down their weapons. Nevertheless, the Colombian Communist Party, suspicious of the legality of the amnesty,

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197. The National Front was an agreement between the traditional political parties in order to govern the country alternately for sixteen years each party, and this way, decrease power to the military regime. Gerardo Molina, *Political Ideas in Colombia* (Bogota, Colombia: Procultura, 1981).

198. Social and economic tensions, as well as problems arising from the political violence in Colombia led to substantial transformations in which poor people from the countryside and cities turned out the biggest losers. Gerardo Molina, *Political Ideas in Colombia* (Bogota: Procultura, 1981), 20.

opted for keeping their weapons and concentrating in the Sumapaz region. These Communist groups and several radical Liberals, such as Manuel ‘Tirofijo’, based on Marquetalia, created what they thought could be a “Liberated zone” in the southern part of the country. This zone was replicated in El Pato (Caquetá), Riochiquito (Cauca), Guayabero, and the southwest of the department of Tolima, becoming a safe haven for rebels and outcasts.

Liberals and Conservatives finally signed off on the agreement to stop the violence through the creation of a National Front. The new regime, aware of the so-called “independent republics” believed that they were harmful to the government, because they were not legal and under its control. In 1964, embedded in the framework of the Plan LASO,<sup>199</sup> Operation Sovereignty was launched in order to strike and wipe out the independent republics. A large military operation was conducted over El Pato and Marquetalia, which at the time were the two largest Communist strongholds, managing to recover the regions and place them under the state’s control. This set the stage for the birth of guerrillas in Colombia, inasmuch as those who managed to survive the bombing regrouped with the mission of taking power through the use of force.

The emergence of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) took place with the proclamation of the first conference of the southern bloc,<sup>200</sup> on July 20, 1964,<sup>201</sup> right after the army’s campaign over the independent Republic of Marquetalia, one of the autonomous Communist regions formed by illegal armed groups and radical

liberals at the end of the era of ‘la violencia.’ However, it was not until May 5, 1966, when it was proclaimed the birth of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-FARC.

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199. Plan LASO was a counter-insurgency policy developed by the Colombian government and supported by the United States in 1962, which called for both military operations and civic action programs in violent areas of the country.

200. The southern bloc was one of the first armed structures of the FARC.

201. Erich Saumeth, *History of the Guerrilla Groups in Colombia* (Brazil: Juiz de Fora University, 2009).



The Popular Liberation Army (EPL) was founded as a Communist dissent group in 1965. Influenced by the Cuban revolution, the EPL rejected the leadership of Nikita Kuschev in the Soviet Union and advocated the need for a revolution in Colombia; Pedro Vásquez Rendón founded the Marxist-Leninist Colombian party in the country, from which the EPL grew as the armed wing.

The National Liberation Army (ELN) was founded on July 4, 1964, when 60 young Colombians, who were awarded scholarships by the government of Cuba, decided to receive revolutionary military training to support there. After returning to the country they decided to form the Proliferation Brigade José Antonio Galán, under the command of Fabio Vásquez Castaño, whose clear objective was to support the Marxist revolution.

The guerrillas' initial goal aimed to fight on behalf of the country's peasants and unprotected communities based upon Marxist ideologies; however, nowadays those social and political ideals have ceased to be their primary objectives. These insurgent groups have become an essential part of the narcotics business, partnering with drug dealers and gaining economic power. This process started in 1980 with the imposition of a tax called the "weighting," which was charged to farmers and drug growers over illegal crops (marijuana, poppy, cocaine, etc.). The business became very profitable, and so, they diversified their activity by charging the tax to the drug cartels, including laboratories and clandestine airfields, getting larger economic income. As a result, the guerillas were able to acquire more armaments and resources to keep expanding. According to the information provided by the Financial and Informational Analysis Unit (UIAF), the economic estimate for the FARC weighting taxes in 2005 were 30% of its total revenues, which reached upwards of 600 million dollars annually; however, kidnapping and extortion are still the main source of its finances.<sup>202</sup>

Pecaut argues that the guerrillas found a favorable territory for expansion in Colombia, and also have managed to push the limits of violence in all possible ways in

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202. The many kidnappings and extortion of governors, majors, Congressmen, foreign citizens and members of the military services back up this assertion.

which a conflict is expressed.<sup>203</sup> The FARC have used armed strategies, guerrilla war and conventional combat, combined with kidnapping, terrorist acts, and the use of non-conventional weapons such as land mines, mortar gas cylinders,<sup>204</sup> strikes over military and police posts, assaults over municipalities, appropriation of peasant's lands and under-age forced recruitment.

Professor Román argues that the end of the Cold War should have marked the end of the Colombian conflict era, by peacefully developing the right solutions for social grievances, leaving no space for those who resorted to war as the means to achieve their ideological goals. However, the FARC, far from declining, adapted to the new strategic scenario in order to survive, adopting new policies, new resources, and new strategies.<sup>205</sup> Various assessments of public knowledge recognize several of the strategies adopted by the FARC: ditch the Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and get a new ideological foundation based on the “Bolivarian doctrine;”<sup>206</sup> introduce themselves as alternate public managers to provide public services in areas where the State is absent; obtain domain of a demilitarized zone, as a geographical framework to develop a backward area for war activities and training; organize and train special forces units in order to fulfill specific missions; set up and profit from a strong drug dealing structure with the purpose to generate economic income to purchase arsenals, benefiting from the black market of weapons; and increase its military capability.

## **E. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH INSURGENCY**

In past years, Colombia has conducted peace talks with some of the insurgent groups, in some cases reaching a cease-fire and some commitments; however, the efforts to achieve peace and demobilize the FARC and the ELN have failed. This failure is mainly because of a lack of understanding, the ability to reach a joint agreement, and

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203. Daniel Pecaú, “Present, Past and Future of Violence,” *IEPRI Political Analysis Magazine* (National University of Colombia) 30 (1997): 3–36.

204. One of the most remembered cases occurred in Bojaya (Choco). The FARC indiscriminately attacked the village's church launching mortar gas cylinders killing 74 unarmed civilians.

205. Roman D. Ortiz, “Guerrillas and Narcotics in Colombia,” *Public Security Magazine* (Security Analysis Center UMNG) XXII (2000).

206. The ‘Bolivarian Doctrine’ is a combination of nationalism and the leftist ideas.

opposing ideological views. As a result, the government has been forced to take its military approach, while the insurgency continues the struggle, financing it from the narcotics business and kidnappings.

From 1982 through 1986 during the Belisario Betancur's administration, the first peace process took place. Although no agreement was reached with the guerrillas, two important elements served as the basis for the national political rhetoric: on one hand, it was assumed that the armed opposition was a political factor, and therefore, dialogue would always be a viable option. On the other hand, it was recognized that like any other Latin American country, Colombia requires a democratic opening. These approaches radically shifted the ongoing conflict, producing ceasefire agreements, prompting dialogue through joint round-table discussions on the country's most dire situations, and raised political reforms in agricultural, urban, and legislative issues and human rights. Despite all this, somehow peace was not achieved.

President Virgilio Barco (1986–1990), continued with the effort to eradicate the insurgency problem. Seeking an evolution from the previous peace policy based on the principle of “Outstretched hand, Strong pulse,” he created the National Council for Reconciliation, Normalization and Rehabilitation of the Presidency as a mechanism of commitment at the highest level. The recently created institution aimed to negotiate, disarm, and incorporate insurgents into the society and give them the opportunity to join politics from a legal standpoint. Parallel to the negotiation mechanism and in order to legitimize the state and delegitimize the guerrillas, President Barco launched the National Rehabilitation Plan in the most sensitive and violent areas of the country, encouraging citizen and municipal participation with the purpose to gain legitimacy and state control. The peace strategy proved to be effective because the M-19, most of the EPL, and the indigenous group, Quintin Lame, laid down their weapons and reincorporated into society.

At the center of a national political crisis caused by the assassination of three presidential candidates (including the candidate of the M-19 after they laid down their weapons) in 1990, President Cesar Gaviria called for elections to choose a National Constituent Assembly, including participation from members of the insurgent groups.

The negotiations started out in Caracas (Venezuela), but the process reached a stalemate which led the negotiations to fail. The peace policy proposed by President Gaviria was the extension of President Barco's unsuccessful policy to end the conflict.

Currently, a joint negotiation committee composed of government officials and the FARC is discussing peace in Cuba on the basis of a pre-established agenda. At the moment these negotiations have not made any significant progress. Parallel to that, current President Juan Manuel Santos has been seeking to establish a joint agreement with the ELN in order to start peace negotiations in the near future, given the apparent will of the insurgent group to reach peace.

Due to the failure of several peace processes in the country during the last twelve years, the government has implemented other types of strategies to delegitimize the guerrillas' rhetoric at the national and international level, releasing information on its drug dealing and terrorist activities, and their violations of human rights. At the national level, the government has set policies primarily focused on countering the guerrilla groups through a military approach. The former president of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, considered it necessary to weaken the FARC and the ELN's military and economic power in order to force them to sign off on a peace agreement. These strategies were encapsulated in the Democratic Security Policy (DSP),<sup>207</sup> which brought about a major breakthrough, decreasing significantly the capabilities of the insurgent groups. In only eight years, it managed to considerably reduce the number of insurgents from 28,000 in 2002, to approximately 8,000 in 2010. The DSP started to deliver a significant shift in the internal conflict in Colombia, focusing all its efforts on the modernization and re-engineering of the armed forces, as well as on fostering state building throughout the whole nation. This outcome was achieved mainly through demobilization, detentions, and neutralizations in combat, generating a meaningful reduction in kidnapping, growth of

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207. The Democratic Security Policy (DSP) is a Governmental policy calling society's active role coupled with security agencies to cope with guerrilla groups and other illegal actors. It poses the need to strengthen social institutions and security agencies throughout the national territory. The basic idea is to release a joint effort between society and the military in order to push illegal actors to demobilize. It includes cooperation networks, payment of rewards to informants, incentives for the demobilized, peasant soldiers military units, and an increase in the national defense budget. National Planning Department. *National Development Plan* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian National Press, 2011), 12.

illicit crops, and also confiscation of narcotics which weakened the guerillas' economic power. The DSP also focused on strengthening military intelligence, increasing deterrence and logistical capacity, professionalization of security forces, and control of the national territory, and effectiveness in defense of national sovereignty.<sup>208</sup>

Due to the increase of governance and the decrease in the number of rebels and many other important results, once President Juan Manuel Santos took office, he largely continued with the legacy of the previous policy, with only minor changes. Santos implemented what he named the Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity (SDPP), which was basically the continuation of Uribe's approach to counterinsurgency. The policy introduces strategies to address the insurgency by focusing on a basic precept: the origination of more jobs, less poverty, and more security in order to consolidate peace.

Although the initial concept of the policy is still in place, albeit with some changes and a different name (Democratic Security Policy for Prosperity), the state is facing the challenge of bringing peace to the country, defeating the security threats, and bridging social disparities.

The DSPP is embedded in the Colombian National Development Plan (CNDP) as state law. The Colombian government states in its CNDP ("Prosperity for all") that consolidating peace means "to guarantee the prevalence of the rule of law, internal security, and the full observance of human rights, as well as the efficient functioning of justice throughout the national territory."<sup>209</sup> It also states the importance of security issues, and defines a new strategy on the basis of "responding to the new characteristics of threat, and a real dimensioning of the overall security and defense status."<sup>210</sup>

By definition, the DSPP is the political instrument to face the security challenges threatening the country at the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century. The DSPP represents an adequate combination of continuity and change. The incorporation of

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208. National Planning Department, *National Development Plan* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian National Press, 2011), 3.

209. Defense Ministry, *Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity* (Bogota, Colombia: Colombian National Press, 2011).

210. *Ibid.*

political objectives on instrumental components (also called “pillars”) is the key to attaining strategic goals contemplated by the CNDP. The aim of the policy is to stop violence and common crime, and propitiate higher security conditions to obtain an incremental growth in private investment, economy, and prosperity (stability) for all Colombian nationals.<sup>211</sup> In summary, “the dream is to become a country with prosperity for all: more employment, less poverty, and more security.”<sup>212</sup>

The policy is intended to embrace a joint effort from all of the state’s institutions, but mainly the policy appoints a great responsibility to the Defense Ministry, which has one of the most challenging tasks: the consolidation of security, defeating the “armed groups outside the law” (AGOL),<sup>213</sup> the improvement of public safety, national defense, and the modernization of law enforcement and the defense sector. The DSPP also shapes the framework aiming to bring to a complete halt the violence in Colombia, and the neutralization of any new situation posing a security challenge within the national context. At the same time it seeks to achieve optimal security conditions to guarantee democratic prosperity and national progress.<sup>214</sup> Although an important effort has been sustained in time by the Colombian government and its society, and it has reached significant achievements towards recovering the “empire of law,”<sup>215</sup> the terrorist and criminal organizations have transformed themselves, adopting new strategies. These strategies are based upon “endurance and attrition,”<sup>216</sup> and the systematic involvement of the narcotics business, constantly dodging confrontation with the government’s official forces, and lengthening the terms to the final defeat of their criminal and violent activity.

Yet, over the past few years, based on the study and evolution of the Colombian internal conflict, rear strategic areas of insurgent activity have been identified and clearly

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211. Ibid.

212. DANE, National Department of Statistics, National Development Plan 2010–2014, n.d., <http://www.dnp.gov.co/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=4-J9V-FE2pI%3D&tabid=1238>.

213. Terminology used to define terrorist groups, criminal gangs, and organized crime.

214. Defense Ministry, *Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity*.

215. In other words, it means the “rule of law” and the legitimacy of the national official institutions.

216. Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf Jr, *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgency Conflicts* (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970).

plotted to focus the government's effort toward tipping the balance in its favor. Following every two-year period, the total extension of the country is outlined with three distinguishing colors, showing the areas where acceptable conditions exist, where they do not, and where critical security areas are to be considered for transformation, with the purpose being to defeat violence and criminality. This means that a differential status is given to each zone according to the overall conditions. The government recognizes that there are still non-consolidated zones where the rule of law does not apply, and, therefore, the influence of the AGOL is a destabilizing factor. To relocate the efforts and increase not only the military and law enforcement capability, but also state building, three areas describe the degree of stability of the regions, as denoted:

Red zones: These are areas where the AGOL maintains a still-strong presence, control, and influence over the population. Special strategies to disarticulate terror and violence are required. Regarding defense and security, the disarticulation of these zones by 2014 is a fundamental issue.<sup>217</sup>

Yellow zones: These areas are recovering from violence, or still a lack of the state's presence. The state's strategies used with this respect include the consolidation of security through the use of law enforcement, international cooperation, and the state's action towards civil affairs.<sup>218</sup>

Green zones: (consolidated). An adequate institutional level, investment, and governance characterize these areas. The state's strategy in these areas is to set out the foundations of security for prosperity through the implementation of law enforcement, intelligence, and technology.<sup>219</sup>

Although the implementation of the policy has been successful throughout the last decade (from 2004 to 2010 the red zones decreased from a 14.82% to 6.08%, the yellow zones also decreased from 38.66% to 24.93%, and the green zones went up from 46.52% to 68.99%),<sup>220</sup> there is still a huge weakness in the capability of the government's official institutions in small urban centers and in the rural sector. The lack of resources and strong social institutions leaves the population vulnerable to the insurgency's range. So far, the

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217. Defense Ministry, *Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity*.

218. Ibid.

219. Ibid.

220. Ibid.

SDPP has achieved strong results against the insurgent groups by taking out of the picture some of the most important leaders. Among those leaders is Alfonso Cano, who used to be FARC's leader, as well as other important figures from the FARC and the ELN. Nevertheless, despite huge efforts spurred by political parties, neighboring governments, international organizations, sponsor states and the Colombian society itself, the insurgency's dual interests and goals on the basis of retrograde ideologies still makes them think that it is possible to take over power, and therefore, its protracted struggle continues on behalf of less than the four percent of the Colombian population, triggering their weapons against innocent people.



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## **IV. DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CASES**

To identify similarities and differences between the factors described in the previous chapters, it is useful to resort to the comparative method of the social sciences, which allows us to establish the criteria for determining similar or dissimilar characteristics within societies. Despite being two geographically distant countries, the colonizing process in both generated social, political, religious, and economic similarities with similarly conducive contexts for the development of insurgent groups.

We analyze the positive experiences resulting from the implementation of policies, programs, and government strategies in search of peace, while recognizing that these may be conditioned by similarities or differences in social and economic structures. This study does not seek to compare isolated factors, but rather pursues an analysis based on the broader structures underlying the origin and existence of guerrilla groups.

### **A. CONTEXTUAL SIMILARITIES UNDERLYING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSURGENT GROUPS**

Despite the dissimilar characteristics between Colombia and the Republic of the Philippines, it is possible to find geographical, cultural, social, economic, and religious elements with a degree of similarity, which ultimately allowed the formation of insurgent groups in the two countries.

#### **1. Geographic Factors**

The geographical similarity of the countries under this study lies in the existent territorial structures, which provide the basic elements needed for insurgent groups to conduct armed activity and revolutionary struggle. Both nations are characterized by regional and geographical diversity; conditions which are essential for developing clandestine activities and the survival of individuals outside the constitution and the law, as is the case with existing insurgent groups.

Colombia and the Philippines are both characterized by territorial diversity and plurality, implying the existence of geographical divisions into regions, where each has its own customs, myths, images and beliefs, which shape its identity; relationships between the various cultural regions thus constitute a set of images that support and augment these internal divisions.

Similarly, both nations are formed by geographic structures, allowing a well-defined geographical and political division of the territories. In the case of Colombia, it is divided into five regions (Caribbean, Andean, Pacific, Eastern and Amazonian), while in the Philippines the territory is divided among three main islands (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). While in the Philippines most of the islands are volcanic and mountainous, covered with dense rainforest and valleys crossed by watersheds, in Colombia, the physical geography consists of ridges, plateaus, savannas, forests and valleys, rivers, and deserts. Geographical conditions and terrain complexity hinder permanent government action, which became an advantage for the insurgents, as topographical conditions enabled them to advance their clandestine and illegal activities. It also allowed them to obtain material and financial resources to achieve their objectives. Hence, despite the differences in the topography, in both countries there were geographical conditions favoring the origin and development of subversive groups. They offered specific elements conducive to concealed activities which are necessary for survival and financing. These elements primarily are: great distances between rural and urban areas; inhospitable, wild, and uninhabited land; the wealth of flora and fauna, soil fertility; and the existence of mineral deposits of gold, coal, copper, chromium, zinc, oil, and nickel, among others.

## **2. Cultural Factors**

The cultures of the Republic of Colombia and the Philippines, as was stated previously, are the products of complex racial mixes, which occurred during the span of discovery and colonization. In Colombia, the ethnic mix occurred between Native Americans (Muisca, Quimbaya, and Tairona) with white European (Spanish) and black (African), bringing about the emergence of mulatto as the predominant race. In contrast,

the fusion of races that occurred in Latin America did not happen in the Philippines, but rather a practice of coexistence between Spanish, Asian, and native peoples (African, Malays and Austronesians) was established, which resulted in deep cultural diversity.

Despite these differences, the discovery and colonization of the two countries were conducted by the same Spanish empire, and its effects fell similarly on native populations as did the methods of exploitation and submission; the coexistence of different races brought about an acculturation process, which allowed the emergence of diverse languages,<sup>221</sup> traditions and customs, which were expressed in art, crafts, architecture, painting, music, cuisine, sculpture, literature, dance, and theater.<sup>222</sup> These are common aspects to both states, which in the end generated socially-rooted arguments to justify subversive acts.

The culture in the Philippines is the result of a combination of Eastern and Western culture, because it presents aspects found in other Asian countries with Malay heritage, yet, the culture shows a large amount of Spanish and American influence. On the other hand, Colombian culture is the product of combining European, African and American cultures. However, because acculturation in both countries was not a peaceful process, but a violent one, it was characterized by a clash of cultures and led to the imposition of new practices from the dominant culture while wiping out native customs. The acceptance of these new cultural influences, of course, was not peaceful. This in turn, sowed the seeds of rebellion against imposed authority from outside.

In this scenario, culture is a factor that favored the formation of insurgent groups. First, the imposition of a dominant culture justified the rebellion because it was necessary to rescue the lost cultural heritage. In Colombia and the Philippines, groups of students, intellectuals, trade unionists, and leftist parties argued that during the colonization of the states there was a rude cultural invasion, which was urgent to confront and repair. Secondly, these same groups embodied hate against foreign cultural, economic, and

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221. According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution, English and Filipino are the official languages. Local auxiliary languages include Bikol, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon (Ilonggo), Kapampangan, Tagalog and Waray.

222. National Department of Statistics —DANE, Colombian Presidency, Bogota, 2005, 136.

political models; they strongly believed that the existing rulers, cultural systems, and constitutional regimes were imposed from outside with the unique purpose of guaranteeing its own interests. Hence, it was essential to attack and destroy them.

The guerrilla groups were fed by these ideals and the general claims of the population, taking them as a flag to wave in armed struggle. At the same time, these groups were trying to sympathize with the protesters to gain popular support. Without any doubt, these cultural contexts also allowed the insurgencies in Colombia and the Philippines to find enough reasons to establish a common identity with their supporters, in many cases bringing about strategic alliances between them.

### **3. Economic Factors**

The economy is another common element of the states being compared. Both nations are in the range of developing countries with growing economies; therefore, both present emerging economies, and the production and export of raw materials constitutes the economic basis from which they derive sustenance and social progress. Colombia, as well as the Philippines is rich in sources for mining, possessing deposits of gold, platinum, iron, copper, lead, zinc, uranium, coal, nickel, emeralds, oil, gas, cobalt, tin, marble, sulfur, limestone, and many other primary resources.

The agricultural and livestock industries are not well developed yet; however, the variety of climates and soil fertility allows high levels of crop diversity and possibilities for export.<sup>223</sup> Both countries have made progress in industries related to textiles, food, beverage, household appliances, paper, chemicals, automotive, plastics and petroleum, iron and steel, metallurgy, services, and tourism. The two states are members of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, among others.

Nevertheless, despite being two relatively affluent states with many social development opportunities, there are margins of poverty, misery, social inequality,

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223. Domestic consumer products: rice, barley, corn, wheat, sorghum, sesame, cotton, soybeans, beans, bananas, cocoa, sugar cane, snuff, oil palm, coconut, vegetables and fruits. Export products: oil, flowers, wood, coal, oil, sugar, coffee, coconut oil, fruit and agricultural products.

inequity, marginalization, and lack of opportunities for young people and professionals. The insurgency has attributed these evils to the economic model of the capitalist system, which according to them, seeks to maximize profits and capital accumulation and exploit the working class, while favoring territorial and economic control of the country for development, protection of multinationals, and control and monopoly of the markets.

In both countries, the origin of the insurgency was attributed to poverty, insecurity, social injustice, and limited access to public services as a result of the capitalist system. These and other arguments were used to justify the armed struggle. The insurgents felt that immensely rich countries could not legitimately have so many poor and so few rich, and a change was necessary in order to build a welfare state to distribute wealth in an equitable manner without class struggle.

#### **4. Religious Factors**

As a result of the colonization process, Colombia and the Philippines received similar effects produced by the evangelization of the Catholic faith, based on the impact exerted by ecclesiastical leaders of the church becoming political and administrative authorities of the colonies, according to the tenets of royal patronage. The Catholic Church was a very powerful institution in the service of the Spanish empire, and religion was used as an ideological tool for social subjugation on behalf of the dominant ideology.

The church considered liberal and socialist ideas incompatible with Catholicism; its ruling principles were viewed as opposed to God and religion, which were primarily expressed in civil marriage and divorce, the absolute freedom of religion and worship, and secular and compulsory education; it also criticized the infiltration of Freemasonry in the educational system and the disruptive labor of communism. According to the church's principles at the time, socialist and liberal ideas sought the separation between the church and the state, events that were an absurdity for peace and social progress at the time.

Meanwhile Liberals proclaimed freedom of religion and the need to adopt the concordat system according with the realities of the time; they were in favor of free secular and compulsory education. They also argued that society should be governed by

civil law, and that divorce should be regulated by national legislation. Liberalism also advocated for the exclusion of the clergy from the political and economic activities in order to avoid religious strife and allow national reconciliation.

The church did not accept constitutional systems that did not recognize the feelings and religious soul of the people; rather the church sought to implement the Catholic faith as the official religion in order to allow the states to be worthy of divine protection, which at the time was thought essential for maintaining social order. Conservative parties backed the church's postulates to reject all liberal and progressive thought against traditional thinking, leaving few political options for the marginalized.<sup>224</sup>

Thus, both in Colombia and the Philippines, liberal governments sought a secularization of politics and legislation, which clashed sharply with the mentality of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These ideological differences were exploited by radical groups to attack the religious hierarchy and declare it responsible for the socioeconomic and political problems faced by the population in the absence of concrete political answers to the interests and motivations of the people. This issue also brought to debate the fact that the church maintained an alliance with the traditional and bourgeois governments. For insurgent groups in both countries, the church and state were thus viewed as suspect bureaucratic institutions that frequently function to ideologically alienate the poor, driving them away from their true reality through rhetoric of salvation and fear, as well as personal and social welfare.

In the particular case of the Philippines, the insurgent groups exploited the role of the Catholic faith in society. Using the premise of Christianity as equated to social equality, freedom and justice, the insurgent groups were able to recruit priests and other church leaders to support their struggle against the government. This history reveals that the church, as in Colombia, has traditionally been a powerful institution capable of influencing the political system and the society. For instance, during the period of "people's power" in 1986, which overthrew President Marcos' dictatorship, the church

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224. Ana M. Bidegain, *Church, Populace and Policy. A Study on Interest Conflict. 1930–1955* (Bogota, Colombia: Javeriana University, 1985).

played an essential role in achieving this goal.<sup>225</sup> Similarly, as we will see in the following sections, the leverage exerted by the church in Bohol was central to encouraging the insurgents to participate in the peace process, bringing about a sense of trust and cooperation between the state and the society, and contributing to the ending of the insurgency.

Thus, we can see that the religious contexts in these two states have been very similar, not only in simple demographic terms,<sup>226</sup> but also because Catholics follow the same principles and the same tenets, and it was the same ecclesiastical institution that acted in search of the same objectives. Both in Colombia and in the Philippines, the indigenous population remained in the hands of religious orders that Christianized virtually all natives. Today, the Catholic Church continues to have enormous social and political power. Colombia and the Philippines alike can thus be seen as two countries with similar fates, traditionally mistreated by history and insulting inequality.

## **B. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSURGENT GROUPS**

After analyzing the elements that favored the formation of the guerrilla groups in the two countries, we now establish some differences based on the additional criteria for comparison, considering that it is essential in order to evaluate our main hypothesis. Among the elements that offer some degree of divergence are ideological factors and the means of financing.

### **1. Ideology**

At the outset, insurgent groups in Colombia (FARC, ELN, EPL), and the New People's Army (NPA) in the Republic of the Philippines, followed the revolutionary ideas of the Soviet Communist Party as an ideological basis. After the demise of the Soviet bloc, these revolutionary groups also grounded their insights in the experiences that emerged from the Cuban revolution. In the case of Colombia, they also looked to Venezuela and the "Socialism of the XXI Century" of Hugo Chavez. The FARC and the

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225. *Philippine History*, <http://www.philippine-history.org/edsa-people-power-revolution.htm>.

226. Ninety percent of Filipinos profess the Catholic faith. Philippines census, 2005, Table 11. Gender, Religion and Ethnic population. Ninety-five percent of Colombian population professes the Catholic faith.



ELN saw that their struggle should be guided towards defending the Bolivarian-Castrist movement and the integration of Latin American, while the NPA in the Philippines followed the ideals of the Maoist ideology. These groups have in common the purpose of waging war and developing armed struggle to claim the rights of peasants and unprotected people. According to their views it is necessary to overthrow the democratic system and install a communist regime apart from the influence of capitalism.

On the other side, the MILF, the ASG, and the JI differ from the previous groups, because their ideological foundations are based upon the principles of Islam and the ideology of Al-Qaeda. The purpose of their struggle was to produce Muslim caliphates inside the democratic republic, away from the influence of the West, in order to avenge the Arab and Muslim people from American aggression.

It can be noticed that the revolutionary ideas of the Soviet Communist bloc, as well as Mao's philosophy, were initially the inspiration for the revolutionary ideas of the insurgent groups in Colombia and the Philippines. The logic of the Cold War also prompted this situation. For instance, in the Colombian case, the FARC, the ELN, and the EPL received logistical support, weapons and training in exchange for their acceptance and dissemination of the principles of Soviet communism, which allowed them to strengthen their organizations and resist pressure from internal military forces and the United States.

In short, the insurgent groups are ideologically grounded in leftist and communist ideas. Though, the insurgency both in Colombia and the Philippines shows a process of three stages of ideological evolution: (1) initially, insurgency was born as a reaction to poverty, social injustice and marginalization of local industries and farmers; (2) thereafter, they based their struggle on those internal ideals of social grievance; and (3) as a product of the dynamics of the Cold War, Soviet ideology and Mao's theory were adopted, seeking to bring about the acceptance of leftist ideas through local revolutions.

Although it can be noticed that both in Colombia and the Philippines the insurgent groups have similar goals and foundations in order to support their causes, the Colombian insurgency has apparently shifted to a new approach. The actual peace process in

Colombia shows the insurgency's desire to end the stalemate and reach a common agreement in order to stop the struggle and become a legal political actor, leaving aside the use of weapons. This is the case of the FARC, which for the first time has joined a negotiation table showing serious intentions to reach peace. At the moment, two out of six pre-negotiated topics from a common agenda with the Colombian government have been agreed to, and the prospects to achieve a negotiated solution to the protracted struggle may be in sight. The ELN has supported the logic of the negotiation process, and it is also evaluating the possibilities of starting to dialogue with the government in formal negotiations. As opposed to this behavior, the NPA in the Philippines has not shifted its radical ideology of overthrowing the democratic system.

## **2. Financing**

The general principle is that anywhere in the world, insurgent groups finance revolutionary activities by using resources obtained from kidnapping, extortion, assaults on banks, illegal taxes, contributions received from supporting governments and national or international NGO's. The exception is when the insurgency makes use of local resources by opting for other unlawful activities to acquire financial resources, such as drug trafficking and illegal mining.

The financial element was important for the consolidation of the insurgent groups in the two countries, because it allowed the rebels to acquire more resources to support their cause and to implement their strategies. By virtue of the existence of a variety of mining resources, agricultural and fishery products, the rebels in many cases were allowed not only to live comfortably, but to achieve economic power at the local and national level, gaining recognition within the international black market. The result was the illegal exploitation of resources, environmental degradation, subjugation of the local population, augmented military capacity, and widespread confrontation with the state's military. Particularly, in the case of Colombia, the revolutionary political ideals were exchanged for the economic interests of terrorism and drug trafficking, to the point that scholars today address the most belligerent group of the country as "the cartel of the FARC." As already mentioned, in Colombia, the guerrilla groups initially became

involved in drug trafficking by charging taxes on farmers and drug growers, as well as processors and drug exporters; thereafter, they became actual drug cartels monopolizing a great deal of the drug business.

In the Philippines, guerrilla groups also utilized criminal and illegal activities to achieve their revolutionary purpose. These groups engaged in multiple extortion activities in the form of a revolutionary tax on mining, logging, and telecommunications companies. These companies are either burned, bombed, or their owners ambushed or killed, if the demands are not met. In the countryside, the farmers and small-scale businessmen and professionals are also bullied to pay or provide for the insurgents' needs. The following paragraphs discuss the notable instances of the communist groups' illegal and criminal activities.

The communist insurgents exert influence in the barangays as if they were their own territories, and anybody who resides into those areas is threatened unless they negotiate. Businessmen and politicians are the most vulnerable to this situation. Investors, as well as their properties and families are threatened, if not destroyed or ambushed, if payment is not made or demands are not met. In the case of the politicians, especially during elections, the communists demand a certain amount of money from political candidates in exchange of freedom to campaign or even the assurance of gaining the popular vote. Most politicians would want to secure their win, so they will pay or provide whatever is asked of them.

The AFP's 8th Infantry Division in Eastern Visayas revealed that the NPA collects a "permit to campaign"<sup>227</sup> fee from politicians during elections.<sup>228</sup> The recovered documents show a breakdown of what the NPA calls an "electoral alliance fee" to all candidates seeking their support: for governor, five million pesos; vice governor/congressman, five hundred thousand pesos; board member/mayor, one hundred thousand pesos; vice mayor, seventy-five thousand pesos; and councilman, fifty thousand

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227. CPP-NPA consider their influenced barangays as their own territory. The communists issue a Permit to Campaign to the politicians before they distribute and conduct electoral campaign activities. This permit to campaign will only be issued if the politicians give in to the demands of the insurgents.

228. *Panay News*. <http://www.panaynewsphilippines.com/nation/260-afp-to-foil-npa-extortion-activities-this-election.html>.

pesos.<sup>229</sup> This means that there is a corresponding price for each of the government seat; the higher the position, the bigger the amount of money required by the communists to allow the politicians to conduct campaigns in the area. The money collected by the communists will then increase their funding to operate and conduct propaganda activities, purchase high-power firearms, and contribute to their subsistence.

On the other hand, news about criminal activities involving the communist insurgents includes kidnapping, robbery, and extortion. In his thesis, Ricardo Morales points out that in February 2003, Rodolfo S. Salas, NPA leader from 1976–1986, claimed that in 1986 the Executive Committee of the Party’s Central Committee had directed the NPA General Command to resort to “criminal acts to raise funds.”<sup>230</sup> Such criminal acts included but were not limited to anything that endangered the lives, businesses, and professions of the population. For instance, the insurgents have seen transportation companies as a lucrative source.<sup>231</sup> For example, in consecutive incidences in Negros Occidental during 2002 and 2003, the NPA burned nine busses and bombed a cellular telephone station.<sup>232</sup> Bus companies are allegedly subject to approximately P5 million a year in extortion.<sup>233</sup> An amount of P 1.5 billion (about US\$27 million) was also noted to have been collected from one gold mining firm alone as an annual subsidy in Davao del Norte.<sup>234</sup>

Although many similar tactics for financing and obtaining resources are common to insurgent groups in Colombia and the Philippines, the primary difference lies in the involvement of the narcotics business. In the Philippines, as opposed to the Colombian context, the NPA maintains as primary financing sources the collection of revolutionary taxes and extortion. In the early 90’s the Colombian insurgent groups, especially the

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229. *Panay News*, <http://www.panaynewsphilippines.com/nation/260-afp-to-foil-mpa-extortion-activities-this-election.html>.

230. Ricardo C. Morales, “Perpetual Wars: The Philippine Insurgencies” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2003), 24.

231. *Ibid.*

232. *Ibid.*

233. *Ibid.*

234. *Ibid.*

FARC, started to get involved not only with trafficking but also with growing marijuana, coca, and poppy crops, in order to increase their financial resources to support their cause. This particular issue boosted the capacity of the FARC to the point that in the late 1990s, it achieved its maximum belligerent capacity. Alliances with drug lords and criminal gangs, as well as the decrease of coca crops in Peru and Bolivia, constituted key elements that substantially increased the involvement of the insurgency in the business. In turn, this involvement enabled them to expand their buying capacity in the illegal market and to intensify the struggle against the government.

## V. APPLYING THE SUCCESS FACTORS TO COLOMBIA

According to the analysis of the successful peace process in Bohol presented in previous chapters, five success factors were critical to countering the insurgency and bringing peace to the province: (1) building social awareness and people's commitment to peace, (2) the use of modified special operations teams, (3) the consistent deployment of information operations, and (4) building alliances with the Catholic Church, (5) with all of these grounded in a holistic approach. Due to the differences discussed in the previous section, it is possible that the factors do not apply in full to the situation in Colombia, but the focus and approach on which the precepts are built will constitute a source of relevant information in order to adopt new ideas and approaches to counter insurgency in Colombia. One of the most important lessons learned, though, is that the integration of an overarching endeavor from civil society, the military, the government, and the church made possible a radical change in the situation, bringing peace to the area and bringing about economic growth, lending support to the hypothesis of the authors.

The situation in Bohol is similar to the situation in Colombia in many ways. Although the Philippines is constituted by islands, the similarity of the territorial structure and the geographical conditions of both countries has been an essential factor for developing clandestine activities and the survival of insurgency. The violent acculturation process in both countries; the margins of poverty, misery, social inequality, inequity, marginalization and lack of opportunities; and the rise of communism fed insurgent ideals to wage armed struggle for the purpose of overthrowing the regimes and taking power. Social disparity, insecurity, social injustice, and limited access to public services boosted popular support in favor of the insurgent groups, justifying the existence of insurgency as an ideal formula to overturn the capitalist system. In Colombia and the Philippines alike, the arguments to justify armed struggle are rooted in the fact that both countries are widely rich in agricultural, mining, and natural resources, but the inequitable distribution of wealth favors the wealthier classes and the most powerful, leaving aside the welfare of the rest of the population.

These similarities show that the holistic approach used in Bohol could be used in Colombia, not only because it was a successful counterinsurgency program, but also because of the relevant and similar considerations, and the framework within which the popular claims and the development of insurgency were contextualized. While some scholars might argue that the financial streams from narcotic trafficking in Colombia will make the insurgency far harder to defeat, the holistic approach described here could still work, given that one of its primary goals is to alleviate the population's grievances. Among these is also the goal to address the population's basic needs in order to stop support for the insurgent groups, and therefore, erase any links between the population and insurgency. This practice has already started in Colombia in order to isolate the population from the insurgents' influence. The government has started to help farmers exchange illicit crops for legal farming, helping to physically eradicate drug crops, providing seeds for free, and making it easier to obtain loans and subsidized economic resources. Despite these efforts trafficking still constitutes a big income source for the insurgency; during the past decade, the narcotics business in Colombia has been strongly countered and neutralized, which coupled with the government efforts, would not stand in the way of using Bohol's holistic approach.

Our analysis shows that the processes by which insurgent conflicts are brought to a final end relies on the combination of the following factors:

- Government's social approach
- Government's military approach
- Economic Development
- Peace (defined by Security and Development)

Given the evidence provided by our analysis of the evolution of the conflict in Bohol, and given also the similarities with Colombia described previously, the success factors described below could bring an overwhelming turn to the stalemate in Colombia.

## **A. SOCIAL AWARENESS AND THE PEOPLE'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE**

This commitment consisted of generating collective social consciousness, where political leaders understood that the military could not be the only actor involved in the struggle who was responsible for solving the problem; the local and national government also recognized that it was their duty to support and cooperate in ways for finding peace. Acknowledging the mistakes of the past, not only those of the government, but also of the church and the society itself, the Philippines developed a joint model to achieve peace in the province of Bohol. In this effort, the army and the police played a supporting role in the global effort to defeat the insurgency.

We believe that; for the implementation of this phase in Colombia, it is necessary to legitimize the civil authorities and the military within the overall society. Although the military enjoys a great reputation and is one of the most trusted entities in Colombia, many governmental institutions lack credibility with certain sectors of the society, and this perception is mainly due to either their actions or omissions, which have gravely affected the population. Furthermore, in some areas of the country the state is not present, or lacks enough capability to support and relieve the grievances of its inhabitants.

This situation has been realized by the central government, and some efforts have been made to achieve a major change, especially in legitimizing the military. In 2007, when the current president of Colombia was serving as Defense Minister, he stated:

“The main difference between the use of weapons by our military, and the use of weapons by terrorists, consists in the legitimacy that people have given the first, a vote of confidence that must be gained and renewed every day. The existence of the military makes sense to the extent that it upholds the virtues of a Democratic State, according to the sovereign mandate that all Colombians are granted through the Constitution and the law, and that includes the absolute respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law ... Hence, within the objectives of the DSPP, it is stated the need to ensure increasingly legitimate Armed Forces for the country.”<sup>235</sup>

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235. Juan M. Santos, “Legitimacy, the Strongest Weapon against Terrorism,” *Armed Forces Magazine*, December 2007.



In order to increase its legitimacy, the Colombian military has undertaken significant marketing campaigns through television, film, and radio. These campaigns let the population know about the work developed by the military. In addition, comprehensive action campaigns and civic military operations, including the construction of roads and infrastructure, with the support of the state's agencies are often conducted in remote areas.

Although the military has been playing a very important role, it is essential to increasingly incorporate the state at the regional level. Existing policies and plans are mainly designed to counter the guerrillas at the national level, but the implementation of policies and plans occurs at the regional level. Understanding the needs and grievances of locals and the nature of the problems in different areas could make the difference. In Bohol it is clear that the solution to the problem relied critically on incorporating the leadership at the regional level. The process was initiated based on the regional leader's leadership, taking the principal role in addressing the root cause of rebellion and deprivation. This process also included drafting a short- and long-term peace, security, and development plan involving regional stakeholders, the provincial church, and the aid of the military and the police in the area in order to eradicate insurgency and alleviating poverty.

The authors believe that integrating the military and governmental agencies at the regional level, and increasing leadership on behalf of the state, will provide a sense of ownership and encourage the people's commitment to support the government in attaining peace and economic development. This approach could bring the society together and prevent insurgent practices from taking hold in more distant regions, thereby also making a significant improvement at the national level.

## **B. MODIFIED SPECIAL OPERATIONS TEAMS**

In Bohol, success consisted of making radical changes to traditional military operations to implement new alternatives, in which not only strictly military operations were conducted, but also the actions of community coordinators who organized residents in associations for subsistence. The role of the military was to provide security and

interact with people through dialogue and informational patrols, allowing the soldiers and the community to become a single team, sharing housing, food and work. This relationship at the community level ensured the satisfaction of people's needs. This military strategy was similar to the concept of collaborative special operations teams, which rely on coordination and networking. The result was enhanced mutual trust, and an increase in governmental and military legitimacy.

There have been many efforts to integrate social leaders and the military in Colombia, along with governmental officials, but still much work can be done to achieve the same results as those seen in Bohol. Emphasizing this issue could bring about great changes in Colombia, especially in areas where the lack of the state's involvement is noticeable. In many cases, children grow up thinking that insurgent groups are legitimate forces fighting for a real cause. Many psychological operations campaigns and medical and support activities are led by the military, and the population attends events to obtain these benefits and relief. Even so, the fact that there is no permanent interplay between all actors makes many hesitate, wondering whether it is really worth taking the side of the government and abandoning the aspirations of the guerrilla groups.

Restoring confidence requires permanently interacting with grassroots communities, helping to solve their grievances, and boosting their initiatives. In many cases, the mindset of most of the villagers and rural inhabitants is strongly linked with the aspirations and ideologies of the guerrilla groups, and this is especially due to the lack of education and the insurgents' long-term influence. In other cases, they have voluntarily joined the cause of insurgency because the lack of interplay with the army and government agencies makes them see legitimacy in the guerrillas.

The presence of the state in many regions has also been weak, and the army has only sporadically remained in certain areas. As in Bohol, it is necessary for the army to remain in the most affected areas, living and interacting with the society at all times. Through continuity and the construction of trust and legitimacy it could be possible to educate the minds of the children, so that they grow up favoring the state, and change the perceptions of those who never had the opportunity to know how the state works, how it plans to recover the regions, and the likely downsides of being on the guerrillas' side. By

creating legitimacy, it will be possible to gain trust from local leaders and the society, generating cooperation in order to solve the common grievances and bring about change to the situation.

The incorporation of “professional officers”<sup>236</sup> to perform an educational role supporting military operations in the most affected rural areas would be an ideal solution to generate positive change. Their professional skills and background could be very convincing to the ears of the rural societies. In this event, it would not only be the regular soldiers with basic education trying to teach and interact with the population, but experienced and skilled individuals who could nourish the knowledge of the population and change their expectations, creating a different image of the state and the military in order to generate legitimacy, trust, and cooperation. This approach would also facilitate understanding with local leaders and regional government officials through the nature and skills of the professional officers.

### **C. INFORMATION OPERATIONS**

Disseminating information was another tactic used in Bohol that united the population and gained their trust. The local government realized the need for transparency and legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Thus, the people were educated on the nature of the communist struggle, because the government and the military saw the importance of getting feedback in order to increase control over the area of operations. Although in many cases the government and the military had conducted social and military operations either to neutralize the insurgent threat or to enhance the living conditions of the population, these efforts had not been fully recognized. Gaining trust and cooperation from the population is also about spreading information. This consists of letting people know about what the state and the military are doing in order to bring about better living conditions. The information operations campaign in Bohol allowed the government to create a secure and stable environment while showing determination to pacify and neutralize the enemy, creating a culture of peace.

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236. Professional officers is the term used for civilians who are not directly enrolled in the military, but according to their expertise they serve as supporters and advisors in developing military operations when needed.

In Colombia, the efforts have been primarily focused on gaining hearts and minds through conducting civic-social activities by the military at the regional and national levels, but still more efforts at the local level must be pursued in order to obtain the same results as in Bohol. These efforts must concentrate on getting closer to the local and rural villagers, who are ultimately the ones capable of supporting the guerrillas. The campaign also must focus on educating the local inhabitants; many of them lack formal education, and given the remoteness of their homes, they frequently have more contact with the rebels than they do with individuals from the government or the military.

A great many psychological campaigns are being conducted in Colombia, and their focus is targeting three groups: the troops, the society, and the enemy. Special emphasis has been set on the population, because the Colombian government realizes that gaining trust and cooperation from the population will also improve the collection of information valuable to map out military operations. The experience examined in Bohol shows that it is also necessary to educate the people regarding the nature of the insurgent struggle and the evils of communism, and this is an area where the military and the government must work in order to make people comprehend that insurgency and illegality are not the right ways to achieve better living conditions, and to solve their claims and grievances. Although efforts to change people's mindset are being conducted in Colombia, it is necessary to develop new programs in order to more fully educate the population. This can only be achieved by directly and permanently interacting with the villagers, and hosting conferences in order to show people that unity, cooperation, and working with the state will help to bring peace to the regions.

The role played in Bohol by insurgent returnees proved that it was an effective strategy to persuade other insurgents to surrender and to discourage guerrilla sympathizers. The Speakers Bureau strategy demonstrated that locals would listen to returnees' stories regarding how they mistakenly joined the insurgency and never realized any of the promised payoffs. This strategy could be implemented in Colombia at the local level in order to persuade supporters and rebels to counter the spread of insurgency. It could also to encourage rebels to lay down their weapons. Currently, returnees are being used only as a source for gaining intelligence from the areas where they used to work, but

a new strategy could incorporate programs in order to improve results by letting the population interact with the returnees. Their experience and stories may have a different impact than the one created only by the government and the military. The fact that an individual who joined the insurgent cause is reincorporated into society and recognizes the downside of insurgency can make the reasoning more credible, discouraging the population from supporting the insurgency, and also encouraging rebels to think about rejoining society.

#### **D. ROLE OF THE CHURCH**

The church was a vital part in the composition of Team Bohol. Coupled with the private sector and the government's agencies, the church incorporated and promoted conflict-sensitive programs and projects to bring peace to the region. These institutions built alliances in trying to eradicate poverty and reduce insurgency by bringing together the overall population. In the counterinsurgency program developed in the region, the church actively participated in the peace and development program, primarily led by Bohol's bishop, who served as a bridge between the government and the population. The church's main goal was to hear the population's complaints and expose its grievances in order to coordinate with the state and bring suitable solutions, disseminate information, and educate the people. It also acted as an emissary to orient and help insurgents find the path of peace through social integration programs.

Although the church does not have the same political influence in Columbia that it once did, its social, political, and economic principles are still a powerful source of influence on the population and the state. The fact that around the 95% of the Colombian population is bound to the Catholic faith constitutes an important factor to take into account. The Catholic Church has traditionally focused on developing its religious duties aside from the current situation and the social realities of the country, acting as an independent and isolated institution. Its official postulates and opinions are posed at the national level, mainly regarding the marriage between homosexual couples and abortion, but little is being done to support the incorporation of rebels into society or to bring peace to the country, beyond issuing statements that they welcome the initiative. Taking into

account the crucial role the church had in Bohol, and the fact that most of the Colombian population professes the Catholic faith, we believe that a new strategy to involve the church in bringing peace to the country should be developed.

The Catholic faith has constantly been losing adherents due to some of its postures. As shepherd Castaño from the Colombian Federation of the Evangelical Council states, “the role of Catholic priests has merely complied with conducting Mass moving away from its social and vocational functions, which added to the scandals of pedophilia and homosexuality, has helped to draw believers away from the country’s traditional religion.”<sup>237</sup> Between 15 and 20 new cults and religions are daily born in Colombia,<sup>238</sup> taking advantage of the people’s grievances, and developing a rhetoric of salvation, poverty, disease, and economic crisis, which makes people feel they are close to their needs. This reality shows how important religion continues to be for the Colombian population, and that people will follow the precepts of whatever faith offers to solve their problems.

The new strategy from the Catholic Church must pose different alternatives and open itself to the grievances and needs of the people, not only to regain believers, but to take advantage of the high percentage of devotees in order to bring about changes in the national landscape regarding peace. At the local level, priests are very influential on social opinion. Their role must shift from the traditional focus of conducting mass and occasionally developing social activities, to incorporate a discourse of peace and progress. In Bohol this strategy worked with outstanding results, bringing the state and the population together and increasing the number of rebel returnees. The role of the church should begin with a national campaign to incorporate into its rhetoric the importance of achieving peace, disseminated through the rural and regional levels. Most of the insurgency problems are rooted in the rural areas and are based on the population’s grievances and support. This is exactly where the church must endeavor to partner with the state and the population to make a change. Social and religious leaders must

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237. Edgar Castaño, *El Tiempo*, October 5, 2013, [http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/poco-control-en-la-legalizacin-de-nuevas-iglesias-en-colombia\\_13103493-4](http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/poco-control-en-la-legalizacin-de-nuevas-iglesias-en-colombia_13103493-4).

238. Andrea F. Aguirre, *Eltiempo.com*, October 5, 2013, [http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW\\_NOTA\\_INTERIOR-13103493.html](http://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-13103493.html).

incorporate not only evangelical discourse on salvation and poverty, but also on achieving peace, as an important focus from the church. The church can also serve as a reliable institution for increasing the number of returnees and changing the minds of insurgent supporters. In many cases, rebels and their supporters do not rely on the state and the military because they do not believe they have sufficient guarantees to return to society, a mistaken perception that can only be corrected by credible societal actors.

#### **E. HOLISTIC APPROACH**

The Bohol peace program used a holistic approach, as the government's strategy to cope with insurgency, consisting of political, economic, psychosocial, and security components to address the root causes of insurgency. This endeavor gathered the province's stakeholders, including the state itself, the military and the church. The joint effort to address the root causes of insurgency brought about the necessary changes in order to alleviate poverty, incorporate rebels into society, and generate economic growth, turning the province of Bohol into an insurgent-free area, and a worthy model to be applied to cope with insurgency under similar conditions. The experience collected in Bohol suggests that the incorporation of all the society's stakeholders and the church, coupled with the government's military and social approach, was the key element in achieving peace, bringing economic growth, and improving people's welfare.

Considering the nature of the conflict and the geographical, cultural, religious, and socio-political similarities between Colombia and the Philippines, we have observed that among the existing guerrilla groups in Colombia and Bohol, there are many factors in common. This supports our claim that similar peace strategies could produce similar results.

Although in Colombia great efforts towards integrating the society and the state have been deployed, this issue still needs more effort in order to achieve greater results. The incorporation of a holistic approach in Colombia must follow the precepts and experiences collected in Bohol, by incorporating not only the church, but the society's other stakeholders. The strategy must focus on creating a culture of peace, starting at the local level, gathering the effort of the society's stakeholders, the local government, the

state's institutions, and the church. This includes creating programs that meet the needs and demands of the people, creating a sense of belonging and affirming individual and collective progress, while working for the common goals of safety, peace, progress, and economic and social development.

These principles are already partially reflected in Colombia's National Development Plan (NDP) 2010–2014, Prosperity for All, which was created to meet the challenges of building security, eradicating poverty, and reducing unemployment. It lays down the principles of democratic prosperity for the following years, outlining policies to bring about sustainable and competitive national growth grounded in the principle of equality of opportunities for people and the consolidation of peace. The NDP's social, economic and military approach benefits the development of social consciousness and commitment to peace, and through its Security and Defense Policy for Prosperity (SDPP) it also seeks to consolidate peace, the prevalence of the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the efficient functioning of justice throughout the country. This approach has brought great benefits to the social and security situation in Colombia.

Following the model established in Bohol, this existing strategy can be complemented by emphasizing social issues through the implementation of a strong holistic approach, including an increase in efforts to incorporate national, rural, and local stakeholders, and the church, along with the military and the state's institutions.

Finally, it should be noted that this research demonstrates strong evidence for our main hypothesis, showing that it is possible to end insurgency by using methods other than military action alone. Rather, as was demonstrated in Bohol, it is a combination of the government's social strategy, the government's military strategy, investment and economic development, and a joint effort focused on a holistic social approach, which made it possible to solve the grievances of the population, eradicate poverty, and bring peace. Counterinsurgency strategies are successful when governments are committed to eradicating the real causes of violence and applying reasonable solutions. This is only possible when using a combination of social, political, economic, and military strategies.



## **F. CONCLUSIONS**

Colombia and the Philippines, two geographically distant countries, share the painful experience of dealing with insurgent groups on their territories. As a result of these armed conflicts, both nations have endured various forms of violence encompassing social and family disintegration, poverty, underdevelopment, deprivation, degradation, terrorist actions, and a protracted insurgent struggle. All of which have continually affected the population's living conditions and social progress.

The nature of the conflict has led both nations to implement various kinds of strategies and policies in order to end insurgency and achieve peace. The successful counterinsurgency model used in Bohol reflects the fact that achieving peace, generating economic growth, and enhancing the population's living conditions is possible through the implementation of five key factors encompassed in the same strategy: (1) building social awareness and people's commitment to peace' (2) using modified special operations teams; (3) deploying information operation consistently; (4) building alliances with the Catholic Church; and (5) grounding these first four factors in a holistic approach.

Generating a collective social consciousness will bring about a sense of ownership and the population's commitment to support the government in attaining peace and development. This was the experience witnessed in Bohol, wherein political leaders realized that the military should not be the only institution responsible for eradicating insurgency and bringing peace. It was necessary to instill in people's minds that society and the state's institutions, hand-in-hand with the military and the church, play a vital role in developing a joint effort to defeat insurgency and solve their grievances.

The use of Modified Special Operations Teams involved civilian community coordinators and the military in order to organize residents into cooperatives or associations for livelihood. The army's traditional approach shifted, incorporating a supportive role, in which its primary mission was not only to conduct tactical operations and provide security, but also to become immersed in the population and help to alleviate its grievances, establishing trust and legitimacy. The teams aimed to create links and joint

cooperation among the army, the state's institutions, and the society, in order to improve security and increase efforts to gather intelligence and dismantle insurgent groups.

An essential factor in neutralizing and dismantling insurgency is precisely the gathering of intelligence. The information operations' strategy was created with the purpose of achieving this goal. The need for acquiring information to increase the effectiveness of military operations and neutralize the enemy, as well as the need to maintain trust and cooperation from the population and enhance the state's legitimacy, was the key motivation behind this effort. It aimed initially to keep the population informed of all activities staged by the army and the government, and to educate people on the nature of the communist struggle. It also allowed the government to create a secure and stable environment, collect information, and reinforce security, while showing determination to pacify and neutralize the enemy, creating a culture of peace.

Due to the longstanding influence the Catholic Church has had in the history of the Philippines, it played an important role in the strategy established by the government in Bohol. The Catholic faith was essential to encouraging insurgents to participate in the peace process and to cut off its support from the population. The church staged and executed key parts of the strategy, not only by instilling in people's minds the need to overcome insurgency, but also by deterring the rebels from continuing their fight against the state. The employment of religious arguments based on people's faith generated a significant impact on the population, encouraging them to walk away from the insurgency and join a peace process in order to reincorporate into society.

By combining political, economic, psycho-social, and security components to cope with insurgency, instead of keeping an approach focused only on fighting insurgent groups by military means, the process in Bohol called for a joint strategy based on a holistic approach. The joining of the province's stakeholders, the state, the military, and the Catholic Church, brought about the necessary changes in order to alleviate poverty, incorporate rebels into society, generate economic growth, and increase people's welfare. The scope of the overall holistic approach conducted in Bohol suggests that the simultaneous application of military operations parallel to social integration developed by

joint efforts between the government and the society will bring about peace, which can be defined in terms of increases in security and development.

Bohol's experience shows that the combination of these five success factors contained within the same strategy will bring about the suitable conditions to generate trust and understanding in order to develop a successful peace process. Despite some geographic, social, political, and economic differences between Colombia and the Philippines, as well as the nature of some of their insurgent groups, the deep similarities which can be seen between the two cases, lend strong support to the idea of applying Bohol's successful strategies to an enduring achievement of peace in Colombia. The Colombian government has struggled to overcome insurgency while focusing on a military approach. As was evidenced in Bohol, a local and regional strategy emphasizing social issues through joint efforts among the society's stakeholders, the Catholic Church, the military, and the government, united by a holistic approach, can increase the probabilities of peacefully bringing more than fifty years of insurgent struggle to a lasting end.

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