Scholars and policymakers alike have struggled to explain civil war recidivism. The question of why some civil wars recur and others do not has become critical because, as Barbara Walter puts it, “the problem of civil war is now almost exclusively a problem of repeat civil war”: 90 percent of all civil wars begun since 1990 have taken place in countries that experienced a civil war in the recent past. Few solid answers are available for why some civil wars recur and others do not. It is generally thought, however, that capable, legitimate postwar states that collect revenues and deliver public goods equitably are less likely to experience renewed civil war. Among the components of such a state, claims the conventional wisdom, is an army drawn from members of the civil war’s opposing sides. Equally important, this proposition has been influential in the practice of peacebuilding. As Caroline Hartzell has observed, nearly 40 percent of the settlements ending the 128 civil wars that took place from 1945 through 2006 called for some form of integration of combatant military forces.

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Civil war participants, scholars, transnational civil society, and international governmental organizations all seem to believe that military integration significantly reduces the risk of a society’s relapse into civil war. The intuition appears to be that a professional, communally representative force could allay vulnerable groups’ security fears by serving as a credible signal of the government’s commitment to power sharing and by keeping communal or ideologically compatritions under arms.5 Such a force could also provide a symbolic model for the political community, allowing all to identify with a larger national project. If a new national army rising from the ashes could help stabilize polities devastated by civil war, then military integration should be a priority for international peacebuilding. Specifically, the international community should promote a set of universal “best practices” for local actors to employ and should develop the capacity for the rapid deployment of technical experts.

Yet calls for such action are premature. Other than a few scattered case studies and some contradictory aggregate data analyses, there has been little theoretical or empirical investigation about what constitutes “good” military integration and how and under what conditions integration yields beneficial consequences for postwar peace and stability.6 Case studies often assert that military integration contributes substantially to preventing the renewal of civil war, but their ringing endorsements, and the implicit causal mechanisms, rest on sparse evidence. This paucity of evidence is not surprising: it is not exactly intuitive that bringing together the very people who have been killing one

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another with considerable skill and enthusiasm and giving them guns will dampen the fires of civil war, rather than causing them to flare up once again.

We argue in this article that both the theoretical logics and the empirical record identifying military integration as a significant independent source of post–civil war peace are weak. We agree that it is hard to imagine peace enduring where efforts to forge an integrated national military have fallen short, and indeed we find that military integration often accompanies sustainable post-war peace. We contend, however, that local actors’ embrace of deep military integration is a reflection of propitious underlying political conditions. Similarly, local actors’ resistance to deep military integration, their retention of the means of coercion, and their hedging their bets against the breakdown of peace are symptoms of the malady, not the malady itself. The failure of military integration is more an indicator of underlying distrust or incompatible win-sets than it is a fundamental cause of peace’s breakdown. To ascribe responsibility for sustainable postwar peace to military integration is to suggest that integration is largely an engineering problem: when it is competently designed and implemented, it bolsters peace; when it is not, peace is undermined. The difficulties confronting post–civil war militaries, however, are rooted more in politics than in ignorance or flawed engineering. The same interests, institutions, ideas, and deep historical structures that drive a given peace settlement, warts and all, also shape the corresponding military integration. It is these forces, more than the particulars of integration, that affect the duration of the peace. To assess the effects of post–civil war military integration and the sources of its failure, we explore the experiences of eleven states that suffered civil war and either included military integration provisions in the negotiated settlement or pursued some form of integration after the war’s termination. We see little evidence in these cases that military integration played a substantial causal role in nurturing peace and in preventing the return to civil war, as well as little support for the likely causal mechanisms. Process-tracing evidence from these cases is, we argue, more consistent with our skeptical account.

Our doubt that military integration contributes to postwar stability is at odds with the international community’s embrace of the practice. Civil war settlements that provide for integration are far more likely to have substantial international involvement than settlements without such a provision.7 International peacebuilders thus seem to believe that military integration promises to fulfill the need for security in post-conflict societies. Their guides to peacebuilding and security sector reform, however, contain at most passing discus-

sion of the practice, despite its prevalence. The international peacebuilding community implicitly treats military integration as a matter of common sense, and thus in little need of distinctive theorization or empirical backing. This is no surprise considering that the conventional wisdom is that postwar stability hinges on inclusive institutions of governance and the provision of public goods, and it follows that the same approach would be applied to military institutions as well. Our analysis suggests that the international community’s endorsement of military integration is misplaced. We object less to military integration when it emerges organically from negotiations among local combatants. As we argue in the conclusion, however, we are especially concerned about integration from above, urged and organized by international actors, for two reasons. First, resources devoted to military integration might more profitably be put to other purposes. Second, military integration has the potential to undermine the stability of civilian politics and to invite the recurrence of civil war.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. First, we review the sparse literature on military integration. Second, we conceptually unpack military integration into its component dimensions. Third, we lay out four possible causal pathways between military integration and civil war recidivism and evaluate the coherence of their theoretical logic. Fourth, we draw on a medium-n, cross-national body of case evidence to assess whether those mechanisms are operative and with what effects. The article closes with a skeptical reconsideration of military integration as a focus of international peacebuilding efforts.

**What Is Known About Military Integration**

Not much is known about what constitutes ideal military integration, how it might produce desirable political effects, or whether it has actually produced those effects. The international community has long endorsed security sector

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reform (SSR) as a pillar of post-conflict peacebuilding. In part, SSR seeks to reform and transform the existing military and security structures to sustain economic and political development, to promote respect for human rights, to foster democratic civil-military relations, and to consolidate newly established democracy. Through the stabilizing effects of democratic rule, therefore, SSR would indirectly shape the prospect of civil war’s recurrence. The SSR project has also sought to make less likely the recurrence of civil war through more direct routes, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), which involves transitioning members of security forces to civilian life, and military integration, which entails merging individuals from competing forces to form a single military force. DDR presents a distinct set of theoretical and practical challenges, has developed a substantial literature, and is the subject of much explicit discussion among peacebuilders. Although it has seemed obvious to peacebuilders that combatant forces must be integrated after civil war, and thus the practice has become widespread, it has received much less attention in peacebuilding guides.

Scholarly study of military integration has not been extensive, has generally focused on formal rules rather than implementation, and has produced inconclusive findings regarding its political consequences. Some scholars conclude that military integration has had positive political effects on either civil war recurrence or subsidiary processes. Thus Walter finds that agreements on quotas in a post–civil war state’s new military force—a common, but not universal,
feature of military integration—increase the willingness of both sides to participate in negotiations but have no impact on their willingness to sign or implement agreements.\textsuperscript{13} Monica Duffy Toft claims that post–civil war countries that pursued security sector reform were significantly less likely to re-erupt in civil war than countries lacking such reforms.\textsuperscript{14} Matthew Hoddie and Caroline Hartzell maintain that civil war settlements with provisions for military integration make war’s resumption less likely.\textsuperscript{15} Examining cases of formal power-sharing, Karl DeRouen Jr., Jenna Lea, and Peter Wallensteen similarly aver that military power-sharing agreements contribute to postwar peace.\textsuperscript{16} In perhaps the most sophisticated study to date of civil war recurrence, Charles Call concludes that the most powerful driver of peace is inclusion of relevant elites by the government—in particular, military and police forces.\textsuperscript{17} There have been contrary findings as well, however. Katherine Glassmyer and Nicholas Sambanis argue that military integration does not make renewed civil war less likely once one controls for factors such as power sharing.\textsuperscript{18} Based on case study evidence, Mark Knight concludes that in practice the integration process is often flawed, and thus integrating rebels into government forces has not been conducive to peace.\textsuperscript{19}

Studies on both sides of the military integration debate suffer from three common flaws. First, they generally measure whether integration, in some form, was formally part of the negotiated settlement. With the notable exceptions of Call and Knight, however, they rarely examine whether those portions of the settlement were ever implemented. There is little reason to believe that formal agreements alone greatly affect the recurrence of civil war, when there is substantial evidence that these agreements are typically not fulfilled. As Glassmyer and Sambanis note of the cases in their dataset, military integration was typically so badly carried out that “the label ‘military integration’ is often meaningless.”\textsuperscript{20}

Second, even when these cross-national aggregate studies find evidence of a significant association between formal military integration and a durable

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Hoddie and Hartzell, “Civil War Settlements and the Implementation of Military Power-Sharing Arrangements.”
\item \textsuperscript{16} DeRouen, Lea, and Wallensteen, “The Duration of Civil War Peace Agreements.”
\item \textsuperscript{18} Glassmyer and Sambanis, “Rebel-Military Integration and Civil War Termination.”
\item \textsuperscript{19} Knight, “Military Integration and War Termination.”
\item \textsuperscript{20} Glassmyer and Sambanis, “Rebel-Military Integration and Civil War Termination,” p. 381.
\end{itemize}
peace, they leave open the direction of causation. Combatants already inclined to negotiate a settlement and uphold it are presumably also those most likely to make major concessions in costly arenas, such as the new military. If this is true, then military integration has little independent causal impact on the stability of postwar peace.

Third, these studies do not delve, conceptually or empirically, into the terms of the negotiated military integration. They typically introduce a dummy variable indicating simply whether the parties agreed to integration. But the terms of integration differ substantially, and agreements are implemented to varying degrees. The institutional context for integration may differ dramatically as well: post–civil war armies come in different sizes, with different degrees of public visibility and cultural prominence, and with different levels of involvement in civilian affairs. The efficacy of military integration in sustaining peace may lie in its particulars and in the institutional context. Knowing which of these features of an integrated military does, or does not, conduce to postwar stability has important implications for policy—both for international organizations eager for results and for local governments with limited resources.

**Military Integration: A Conceptual Analysis**

The preceding review of the existing literature has, in a way, put the cart before the horse, as we have not yet defined “military integration.” Military integration, in the context of post–civil war states, means that combatants from the formerly warring parties—of which there are often more than two—and/or the populations they represent are all included in the state’s new national military. For purposes of theoretical analysis and empirical study, however, the concept so defined remains bulky and ambiguous. We thus conceptualize processes of military integration as varying along three dimensions: the magnitude of integration, the horizontal integration of units, and the vertical integration of the officer corps.

First, when the magnitude of integration is low, the ranks of the new armed forces are heavily skewed toward combatants from one side or from certain populations and include virtually no or just token participation from other combatants or populations. This was the case in the Philippines, where only 5,750 former members of the Moro National Liberation Front were integrated.

21. We do not address here the even more difficult question of whether, in a given case, informal dynamics of control depart from formal lines of authority. This phenomenon can often occur in non-Western militaries. We thank Judith Verweijen for reminding us of this point.

22. Thanks to Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs for suggesting this terminology.
into a much larger national force.\footnote{Rosalie Arcala Hall, “From Rebels to Soldiers: An Analysis of the Philippine Policy of Integrating Former Moro National Liberation Front Combatants into the Armed Forces,” in Licklider, \textit{New Armies from Old}, p. 103.} A high level of integration means that the new military includes individuals roughly proportional to the size either of the warring parties at the time of settlement or of the communal populations they claim to represent.\footnote{It should be noted that these two need not be the same. In a communal civil war, combatant forces may be larger or smaller, and may possess greater or lesser military muscle, than their underlying population base.} Because purely professional considerations may result in skewed militaries—notably, when some groups of combatants are better trained, as government forces often are—attaining an integrated military may require departing from professional norms. Quotas, guaranteeing that a certain percentage of the military will come from particular combatant or communal groups, are a means to this end. Quotas featured, for instance, in the postwar militaries of Burundi, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Lebanon, maintaining communal balances albeit at some cost to military efficacy.\footnote{See similarly Gaub, \textit{Military Integration after Civil Wars}, pp. 122–126.}

Second, even militaries that are highly inclusive in terms of overall numbers may not be integrated horizontally—that is, at the unit level. When integration is low along this dimension, units are constituted on the basis of their members' communal, organizational, or ideological affiliation. This has been a common strategy of control among states whose armed forces employ minorities they distrust,\footnote{See especially Alon Peled, \textit{A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multiethnic States} (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).} and it was also embedded in the post–civil war militaries of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sudan. Segregating units in this way has obvious appeal: it eliminates one source of disobedience of orders (when enlisted soldiers and officers hail from different communal or combatant groups); it may diminish dissension in the ranks and contribute to unit cohesion;\footnote{There is, however, good reason to think that task cohesion matters more than social cohesion in military units. See Elizabeth Kier, “Homosexuals in the U.S. Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness,” \textit{International Security}, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 1998), pp. 5–39.} and it limits distrusted populations' opportunities for treasonous behavior and the costs of their prospective treason—such as by having them patrol far from borders across which lie coreligionists or coethnics, relegating them to menial tasks rather than assigning them to combat roles (or, alternatively, using them as cannon fodder), or shunting them away from especially sensitive roles in intelligence, the air force, or nuclear weapons programs. High levels of horizontal integration mean that individuals are assigned to units without regard to any consideration other than their substantive qualifications and merits—in line with the dictates of military professionalism.
Third, even militaries that are highly integrated in total numbers and across units may not be integrated vertically—that is, up the chain of command. It is common for certain populations to be overrepresented in the enlisted ranks while others dominate the highest levels of the officer corps. This appears to be the case, for instance, in the post-genocide Rwandan military, in which there are very few Hutu senior officers. Such minimal integration allows dominant groups to claim, at home and especially abroad, that this crucial institution is integrated, and even to point to concrete evidence consistent with integration, while they retain exclusive decisionmaking power. Low integration on this dimension can also be the unintended consequence of the application of professional standards, given that the requisite training is often not equally distributed across combatant forces and population groups. High vertical integration means that combatants from the formerly warring parties are included in the new national military in positions roughly equivalent to the ranks they held during wartime and that they are represented at all levels, including command ranks, in proportions approximately equal to the size either of the warring parties at the time of settlement or of the communal populations they claim to represent. As with the overall magnitude of integration, achieving balance among combatant or communal groups may require the application of quotas even at the military’s highest levels. It is not always the case, however, that government personnel have better military or general education than their rebel counterparts. In Burundi or Sierra Leone, for instance, the rebels enjoyed superior training. Occasionally, rebel groups have even acquired special training for their officers in anticipation of integration: in South Africa, the military arm of the African National Congress sent personnel to military academies abroad.

The ideal-type integrated military achieves high levels of integration across all three dimensions, though in practice few states achieve this ideal. This article explores whether a high level of military integration along these three dimensions makes the resumption of large-scale violence less likely. This is the critical question for policymakers and scholars interested in preventing future civil wars. There are of course other criteria by which integration might be judged successful. One is military efficacy: whether the new armed forces can effectively perform its designated tasks, as determined by each state based on its external and internal security situation and its ambitions. Another is civilian control, per the priorities of security sector reform: whether the new armed forces obeys the commands of civilian officials or ignores civilian desires in favor of its own aims. These are important issues, but they are, from our perspective, second-order matters in post–civil war states, where the chief fear is violence that could again tear them apart.
Military Integration as Cause of Peace?

There are four causal pathways through which military integration might substantially affect the recurrence of civil war: by serving as a costly signal and thereby mitigating the security dilemma, by providing security to vulnerable populations, by employing former combatants, and by serving as a symbol of the unified nation. Some of these mechanisms suggest that the more closely integration approaches the ideal along the three dimensions elaborated in the previous section, the greater its positive impact on the duration of peace. Other mechanisms place heavier emphasis on some dimensions and discount others. We argue that none of these four pathways supports a regular, systematic causal relationship between deep military integration and enduring postwar peace. They are, on the whole, lacking—either theoretically implausible, narrow in scope, or ill-suited to post–civil war contexts. Some mechanisms, however, are plausible under particular conditions, which we identify below.

Military integration would seem an appropriate response to two common problems afflicting societies emerging from a civil war. First, in the short run, members of these societies confront an acute security dilemma. Civil war renders insecurity especially salient, cultivates distrust of state institutions and fellow citizens, and prompts communal self-help. The survivors are understandably reluctant to entrust their security to untried institutions controlled in part by those who were, until very recently, their deadly enemies. Building an inclusive and effective military would plausibly alleviate the security dilemma by providing a key public good, nurturing trust in the state, and encouraging citizens to contribute resources to public institutions; consequently, it would advance the postwar mission of constructing a functioning state. Second, in the longer term, states torn asunder by civil war seek to build a unified nation—that is, a cohesive political community resting on shared political identity—which is crucial to state institutions’ long-run sustainability.28 There is a long tradition of turning to the armed forces to achieve this task: nation builders have hailed the military for its potential as a “school for the nation.”29 Building a nation is far more difficult than building a state, but it is not impossible: today’s major nation-states were once deeply divided and fought bloody civil wars, but eventually forged common identities.

Postwar military integration might alleviate, or exacerbate, security con-

cerns or contribute to, or detract from, inclusive nation-building projects in at least four ways.

SOLVING COMMITMENT PROBLEMS

Especially after a bloody civil war, promises to uphold negotiated settlements and not to return to the battlefield have little credence. They would seem to be paradigmatic cases of “cheap talk.” Some civil wars recur as a result of such intractable commitment problems, because former combatants cannot resolve their intense security dilemma and deeply distrust each other. Military integration might help the formerly warring parties signal credibly that they are truly committed to peace. On the one hand, integration may be sufficiently costly that those merely pretending to support peace would never undertake it: military integration may be a credible signal of their “type.” The costs of integration include opportunity costs: mixing personnel from two (or more) fighting forces makes it less likely that the new army could be readily used against any particular population. Integration also entails security costs: by disbanding and disarming communal militias, it limits groups’ capacity for self-defense. Finally, integration includes political costs: leaders who agree to military integration risk being outbid by hard-liners within their own population. It is no surprise then that, within the negotiation process, military integration is a common obstacle. That, however, makes its successful resolution a crucial hurdle that, when overcome, increases trust among contending elites.

On the other hand, deep military integration can also be a meaningful signal because it is not easy to reverse. Such a “tying hands” signal ensures that, even if new leaders arise who are less supportive of the peace settlement, they will have difficulty reneging on their predecessors’ past commitments.

Military integration is most credible as a signal under four conditions. First, when it requires former rivals to overcome opposition among their supporters. Ironically, too smooth a process of integration—when the parties readily accept it, without hesitation—may undercut its signaling power. Excluding those

32. Hoddie and Hartzell, “Civil War Settlements and the Implementation of Military Power-Sharing Arrangements.” Of course this does not require military integration. It just requires reaching agreement—even agreement on having no military at all, as in Costa Rica.
who are least trusted, whose inclusion would provoke an outcry, and who most require reassurance weakens the signal.

Second, when the military is, compared to other national institutions, more salient. In some countries, a communally dominated military has long been at issue and was among the reasons war broke out in the first place. In such cases, surmounting opposition to integration is especially costly because political actors across the spectrum are especially attentive to who controls the military’s reins and because the interests in favor of continued domination are entrenched.

Third, when military integration has been rendered less reversible. Even local actors who believe that war serves their long-term interests may want to negotiate a temporary halt to the fighting: their soldiers may need rest; they may need time to acquire more matériel; or they may hope to lull opponents into complacency and later to reap the rewards of surprise. For them, peace may be but a short-term exigency, and they may accede to military integration if it can be reversed later. If the new national army segregates combat units by communal or ideological affiliation, soldiers can more easily return to the civil war battlefield than if soldiers from diverse backgrounds are merged at the unit level.

Fourth, when international actors are less central to the integration process. International parties have often helped promote military integration by providing side payments, offering reassurance, or applying pressure as necessary. But the more central such actors are to military integration—whether by providing carrots to induce compliance or by beating the recalcitrant with sticks—the weaker military integration is as a signal of the warring groups’ commitment to peace and thus as a predictor of their behavior once outsiders leave or lose interest. The more international actors—the United Nations, former colonial powers, nongovernmental organizations—drive military integration, the less applicable the signaling logic.34

These four conditions impose substantial limits on the conceivable scope of the signaling mechanism, but there are also two fundamental reasons to be skeptical that military integration can serve as an effective solution to nasty commitment problems and thereby limit civil war recurrence. First, the logic presumes that all observers can clearly identify when the parties have upheld the bargain, but there is often substantial disagreement about whether they have complied with or violated the settlement. Identifying violations is especially thorny because vagueness, or incomplete contracting, is often what en-

34. Even if deep military integration originates more with international than local forces, however, it still potentially serves as a strong tying-hands signal, insofar as it remains difficult to reverse.
abled the deal to go through in the first place. A vague agreement on military integration cannot serve as a costly and credible signal. Second, to conceptualize civil war as a commitment problem is to presume that leaders are sincere in their devotion to peace and just need to find a way to communicate that sincerity credibly. It is not clear, however, how often post-civil war environments, even when the parties have reached a settlement, are really security dilemmas bedeviled by commitment problems. This is not a matter of incomplete information that can be overcome by a sufficiently costly signal. It is a fundamental uncertainty regarding the very rules of the game.

Providing Security
After a civil war, there is always the possibility that spoilers, who prefer war to peace, will arise and try to spark renewed conflict. The new national armed forces are typically tasked with combating these internal threats. Even when the costs of military integration are low—and thus acceding to integration does not distinguish those sincerely committed to peace from pretenders—there are four ways that a highly integrated and operationally capable military might provide the domestic population with protection against predation and thereby ameliorate the security dilemma. First, a highly integrated military, with proportional representation from former combatants, communal groups, or both is less likely itself to employ violence against any single population. Second, it is more likely to provide protection to all populations against violence from militias composed of irreconcilables and communal extremists. Third, under these circumstances, elites are more willing to disarm communal militias that protect the in-group and threaten out-groups. Fourth, at the very least, having a substantial number of one’s coethnics or coreligionists distributed throughout the new force can give early warning that a new round of warfare is approaching. Regardless of its signaling capacity, military integration thus may contribute to a virtuous circle in which groups’ capacity for violence declines, their sense of security swells, the security dilemma is eased, and openings for escalatory spirals close. In the long run, the increasingly stable security situation extends time horizons, makes investment in the country

possible, and contributes to economic development, which in turn makes re-
newed civil war less likely.38

The security provision mechanism can operate only when the following four 
circumstances hold. In combination, these scope conditions provide substan-
tial reason to doubt that military integration systematically contributes to a 
stable post–civil war security environment via this pathway. First, the level of 
integration must be high. It would still be fairly easy for mass killing to take 
place if soldiers of a given population group were severely underrepresented 
or concentrated in particular units (or both). Second, the new force must have 
substantial operational capabilities to patrol the state’s territory and to protect 
dispersed rural populations against highly mobile armed gangs. In either case, 
communal leaders would have little incentive to disband their militias, and the 
security dilemma would remain intense. Third, military integration can render 
postwar peace durable through the security provision mechanism only if the 
parties are driven by distrust and fear (rather than unrealized ambitions), if in-
tegration provides the needed reassurance, and if they do not define security 
so broadly that only utter dominance would make them feel safe. As noted re-
grading the preceding commitment problem mechanism, it is not clear that 
most civil wars recur owing to such security dilemmas. Fourth, even if the 
postwar situation is a security dilemma, it can be alleviated only if the postwar 
state makes striking progress toward monopolizing the means of coercion. In 
theory and in practice, however, the process of disarming nonstate violent ac-
tors is distinct from that of creating an integrated national army. The two need 
not, and often do not, proceed in lockstep. An integrated military could con-
tribute to disarmament by undertaking a vigorous campaign against hold-
outs, but that would mean the return to civil war—not enduring peace.

OFFERING EMPLOYMENT

Military integration may contribute to stability and security by providing 
employment to former fighters from all sides.39 Prosecuting a civil war re-
quires manpower. The idle hands of former fighters, who often have no skills 
of value to a peacetime economy, must be occupied. One approach is to teach 
them marketable skills, which is the ambition of the reintegration component 
in DDR. Teaching such skills takes time and funds, however, and there is no

38. Stephen John Stedman, “Policy Implications,” in Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth 
M. Cousens, eds., Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne 
and Willemijn Verkoren, eds., Postconflict Development: Meeting New Challenges (Boulder, Colo.: 
guarantee that the peacetime economy will be able to absorb thousands of new workers once their retraining is complete. Thus, the World Bank observes, “The ‘least-bad answer’ between fiscal costs and security risks may be tolerating an oversized security sector for a transitional period as a source of employment for combatants who would otherwise have little chance of finding work,” and it cautions against aggressive demobilization of combatants.40 This mechanism can operate even if integration is not an especially credible signal and even if the new military lacks the coercive capacity to clamp down on violence. It requires only low levels of integration—that is, just with respect to magnitude. It can help sustain peace even if units are not integrated (weak horizontal integration) and if some populations are poorly represented in the military’s upper reaches (weak vertical integration).

However, the integrated military’s employment of former combatants cannot regularly have underpinned postwar peace because postwar militaries have typically been much smaller than the numbers under arms during the civil war. As table 1 indicates, in only three of our eleven cases did the national armed forces employ more personnel five years after the end of the civil war than the government and rebels did at the war’s conclusion. On average, the national army was, five years in, around 27.5 percent smaller than the combined combatant forces were when the war ended. In practice, many former combatants have found themselves excluded from the integrated military. That said, this mechanism may help sustain peace when the postwar military is approximately the same size, or larger, than the wartime combatant forces.

Serving as a “School for the Nation”

In a divided country, an integrated military might be a powerful symbol of national unity and help advance a common national identity and thereby political stability. The military was historically central to processes of state building and nation building in Europe, where militaries were key institutions for the labeling and transmission of social values, and where, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of the military as a “school for the nation” had become popular.41 Inspired by this military mythology, leaders from tsarist Russia and Meiji Japan to the Soviet Union and Israel sought to use their militaries to create and strengthen their nations. The rulers of young African

Table 1. Armed Forces Personnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil War Years</th>
<th>Military Integration Begins</th>
<th>At Conclusion of Civil War</th>
<th>Five Years after Civil War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government Military Personnel</td>
<td>Rebel Combatants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>1992–95</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>97,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1993–2003</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>49,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>1983–90</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>1981–92</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1990–96</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>118,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1990–94</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1998–2000</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1978–91</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1963–72</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1976–79</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

average, all cases: –27,706 | –27.51% |

DATA SOURCES:


Civil War Years: Based on judgment of authors, in consultation with datings from Correlates of War Project, UCDP, and country experts.
and Asian states, rising out of the ashes of decolonization, looked to their new national armies to inspire the masses of people who did not identify with their nationalist projects. It is possible that the military’s symbolic power is especially great in post–civil war contexts.

Yet, this faith that an integrated army can overcome centrifugal forces and promote a shared national identity rests on two equally weak implicit theories. One theory lies at the level of individual experience: individuals with weak commitments to the nation enter the integrated armed forces, become deeply committed to a civic national identity via institutional socialization or intensive contact with fellow soldiers, and spread this inclusive national vision to their communal fellows outside the armed forces. This theory seems reasonable on its face. Working toward a common goal can generate a common identity, especially when that goal is deemed important. Alone in the deeply divided Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Habsburg officer corps developed an identity revolving around devotion to that supranational entity. But the theory is not plausible, because identity is not cohesive, uniform, or unvarying. We all wear multiple identity hats, and which hat we put on depends on the social context. It is unlikely that identities developed in the military would smoothly transfer to interactions in other social milieus. Even if they did, it is not clear why soldiers’ identification with a harmonious, unified nation would systematically trump civilians’ everyday experiences of communal tension and distrust. The Austro-Hungarian experience is instructive, for, notwithstanding the officer corps’ sincere faith in the empire, it was teetering before the Great War finished it off.

The second implicit theory resides at the level of symbol. Seeing soldiers from different communal groups marching in unison in military parades and attaining the highest ranks in this key institution can, this theory suggests, inspire average citizens to transcend parochial commitments and to embrace a civic national identity. Symbolic politics is extraordinarily important, as Murray Edelman’s classic work reminds us. But the political is as important as the symbolic. This theory, however, is apolitical: it presumes that the

42. On these and other cases, see Krebs, “A School for the Nation?”
44. For a fuller elaboration of the critiques in the next two paragraphs, see Krebs, “A School for the Nation?”
meaning of the integrated military is clear to all observers and that individuals unthinkingly mirror those national ideals in their own behavior and local institutions. The successes and flaws of military integration, however, let alone their meaning, are not apparent to all. They are tools that political contestants can use to further their agendas. The integrated military is only one among many conceivable symbols available to political entrepreneurs to craft a narrative—whether of a new, inclusive, civic nationalism or of a persistent, exclusive, communal nationalism. It becomes politically important only to the extent that those competing to define the nation—politicians, activists, intellectuals, journalists—invoke it and that the military is culturally salient. In addition, its political effects are contingent on whether contestants frame military integration as successful or deeply flawed—even model processes are filled with errors—and which of these understandings emerges as dominant. Whether an integrated military’s symbolic power sustains peace depends largely on the purposes of political elites.

SUMMARY
There are good reasons to be skeptical that military integration systematically works to produce peace in post–civil war environments. The above analysis concludes that some mechanisms are entirely implausible and that most operate only under fairly restrictive scope conditions. This conclusion should not be surprising, insofar as military integration takes place as part of, or subsequent to, a larger negotiated settlement. Its terms and implementation are political decisions, not technocratic ones. It generally cannot be either credited with the disappearance of warfare and formerly intense communal divides or blamed for their persistence. Put differently, military integration is largely endogenous to wartime and postwar political dynamics and structures. Therefore, it can only rarely, and only potentially under the specific conditions identified above, serve as a major independent cause of peace, and its failure can only rarely be a substantial independent cause of civil war’s resumption.

Military Integration and the Durability of Peace: Findings

Does military integration have a substantial, systematic independent causal effect on the durability of peace after civil war? Based on our examination of eleven cases, stretching over three continents and four decades—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, Congo, Lebanon, Mozambique, Philippines, Rwanda,

Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, and Zimbabwe—we argue that the answer is no. These cases are not a random sample, and they seem not to be identical to other cases of civil wars whose settlements included military integration provisions. While our cases involve countries whose populations and economies are roughly the same size as the larger universe of cases, the civil wars we examine seem to have lasted considerably longer, been substantially more costly in terms of battle-related deaths, been much more likely to have peacekeepers deployed, and had rebel forces that were relatively strong.

With respect to civil war recurrence, however, the ways in which our cases may not be representative appear to point in contradictory directions: although more intense civil wars may be more likely to recur, longer civil wars may be less likely to do so, and peacekeeping missions tend to keep the

48. We draw here in part on a larger collective project: Licklider, *New Armies from Old*. See also Roy Licklider, “Merging Competing Militaries after Civil Wars,” *Prism: A Journal of the Center for the Management of Complex Operations*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (July 2014), pp. 53–61. The case narratives and interpretations we advance here are, however, distinctively our own, and indeed ones with which our collaborators in that larger project would often not agree.

49. It is not a random sample in part because of pragmatic considerations. The larger collective project required locating country experts with highly specialized knowledge who would agree to contribute essays—and who would then follow through on that agreement.

50. All the claims that follow, however, should be taken with a large grain of salt because the quantitative literature on civil war is so contradictory, so sensitive to small changes in specification of the key variables, and based on such poor data. Thus our language throughout is tentative. See Nicholas Sambanis, “What Is Civil War? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (December 2004), pp. 814–858; Håvard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis, “Sensitivity Analysis of Empirical Results on Civil War Onset,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (August 2006), pp. 508–535; and Call, *When Peace Fails*, pp. 65–66.

51. These differences were generally not statistically significant, however, given the small number of cases and the large standard deviations. We also have less confidence in the force ratio finding, given that the larger universe of cases suffers from so much missing data and that the data that we do have is imperfect. For substantiating data, see the supplementary online appendix, http://dx.doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FJJSL.


Although it is not clear precisely how these cross-cutting tendencies aggregate, we conclude that, on the whole, the case selection would not seem to bias the analysis. Moreover, as table 2 indicates, the cases represent substantial variation with respect to the depth of military integration and the stability of peace. Findings from these cases are thus likely generalizable.

As expected, the quality of military integration and the durability of peace are related. In table 2, we compile a simple index of military integration, based on the three dimensions discussed previously. The table records whether there is rough numerical balance in the armed forces across relevant groups, proxied by quotas; whether units are, across the bulk of the armed forces, communally heterogeneous or homogeneous; and whether all communities are represented up the ranks. Given the general paucity of hard data regarding military integration, our measures are necessarily rough ordinal estimates, based on the reported judgment of case experts. The resulting index is a crude additive measure, ranging in principle from 0 to 3, but in practice from 1 to 3. In general, the results in table 2 seem on their face to suggest that the peacebuilding community’s faith in military integration is justified. For the most part, countries with a higher overall score on the index, of either 2 or 3, do not revert to civil war within ten years of the last war’s conclusion. The countries with the lowest overall scores are also the ones that fell back into civil war within that time frame. Even the one apparent exception—Sudan—succumbed just a year outside our arbitrarily chosen cutoff. Only in the case of Zimbabwe was military integration substantial and civil war resumed. In many cases, though, despite a significant degree of military integration and the avoidance of civil war, communal strife remained intense in postwar politics. Also, there was sometimes widespread low-level communal violence that did not reach the level of civil war—as in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Lebanon and, with lower levels of integration, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sierra Leone.

It is no surprise that the depth of military integration is related to the dura-

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55. For substantiating data, see the supplementary online appendix.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil War Years</th>
<th>Level of Military Integration</th>
<th>Postwar Outcomes</th>
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<td>Numerical Balance: Quotas?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992–95</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Burundi 1993–2003</td>
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<td>DRC 1998–2001</td>
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<td>Lebanon 1983–90</td>
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<td>South Africa 1978–91</td>
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<td>Sudan 1963–72</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe 1976–79</td>
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NOTES Resumption of Fighting: Coded “yes” (Y) if civil war resumed within ten years of the termination of the first civil war—and “no” (N) if not. These classifications are based on the expert judgment of secondary literature (contained in Licklider, ed., New Armies from Old) and three datasets (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia, the Correlates of War Intra-State War Data, and Monty G. Marshall’s Major Episodes of Political Violence and Conflict Regions dataset). We follow the datasets when they are in agreement. When the datasets differ, we take the judgment of secondary sources into account.

*Civil war, however, does break out in Sudan in 1983—just barely outside our ten-year window.
bility of peace. It would be more surprising if it were not. But correlation does not indicate causation. In none of these eleven cases, we argue, can one persuasively ascribe either the reduction, or persistence, of communal strife and the absence, or resumption, of fighting to military integration. Military integration is, foremost, a local political problem. When local actors resist military integration, keep their weapons, and protect themselves against the prospect of civil war’s recurrence, they are responding to, and reflecting the pressures of, a domestic environment in which the issues that drove the war still matter (or not) and in which publics remain willing to pay the price of war (or, exhausted, are not). Sustainable peace does not rest on compelling local actors, or giving them incentives, to undertake deeper military integration, as its flaws are symptomatic of the underlying problems. It is therefore unlikely that the failure of military integration is responsible for the breakdown of peace after civil war or, conversely, that it accounts for peace’s durability after civil war. Consistent with this intuition, we find little evidence in the following case studies that any of the hypothesized causal mechanisms are operative, and in most cases the mechanisms’ scope conditions do not hold. Although we present the cases individually, we have, for the sake of analytical clarity, grouped them into three categories based on the depth of military integration and the outcome with respect to recurrent violence.

BROKEN PEACE, SHALLOW INTEGRATION

In four cases—the Philippines, Rwanda, Sudan, and Zimbabwe—military integration was shallow, and substantial violence resumed after the end of each country’s civil war. But integration was limited in these states’ militaries for the very same reasons that peace failed.

PHILIPPINES. In the Philippines, integration of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) into the national army proceeded smoothly but had little impact on the civil war raging around it. Facing poor military prospects in 1996, the MNLF sued for peace and agreed to end its violent campaign in return for the designation of an autonomous Muslim section in the province of Mindanao and the integration of some personnel into the Filipino army. By that time, however, the MNLF was very much in decline, having been replaced as the main rebel force by a spinoff, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).56 The integration that followed reflected the MNLF’s weakness: it did not reserve a place for many MNLF fighters, and high-ranking rebels were not granted equivalent positions in the Philippine army. On the other hand,

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there was meaningful unit-level integration: the MNLF leadership, which originally envisioned its former personnel forming independent military units under the control of local authorities, reluctantly conceded to the government’s vision of integrating individual Muslim soldiers into its predominantly Christian army. In addition, the Philippine army did accommodate the Moros’ religious requirements, including dietary options, time for prayer throughout the day, leave on Muslim holidays, and the construction of mosques in training camps.57

None of the four mechanisms we identified earlier seems to be powerfully at work in the Philippine case. With respect to commitment problems, military integration was not a very credible signal of intent on either side. Although the peace agreement was costly to the MNLF leadership, insofar as it involved sacrificing what had been core aims, it was a noisy signal because the organization was in sharp decline, and the MNLF’s political concessions might thus have been seen as concessions to circumstance. Regarding military integration, the process was unusually smooth, which further muddied its signaling power. Crucially, integration was not costly for the Philippine government, as it entailed little risk. That MNLF fighters were brought into the Philippine army in only small numbers undercut the next two mechanisms. On the one hand, former Moro combatants were minorities in their integrated units and were too few to provide security to the Moro population; also, the new recruits were sent into the field where they served the army’s needs—not where they might have most effectively reassured fearful coethnics. On the other hand, although integration did provide employment for some former rebels, permitting MNLF leaders to reward their favorites, their small numbers only slightly reduced the potential manpower pool for the MNLF and thus served as only a minor deterrent to that group’s return to civil war or inducement for its remaining at peace.58 Finally, with respect to symbolic force, continued resistance by the MILF undercut the integrated military’s capacity to project a coherent message of national unity. In sum, there is little theoretical reason to expect that MNLF integration would have helped sustain a durable peace in the Philippines.

The weaknesses of MNLF military integration cannot be held responsible for the continuation of the civil war. The MNLF’s stark decline was the primary reason that the group sought peace, that integration was deficient, and even that the civil war continued.59 As a result of MNLF weakness, the MILF

59. Hall, “From Rebels to Soldiers,” especially pp. 108–115; and Ivan Molloy, “The Decline of the
had become the lead rebel group, and its preference for war endured—and would have even if the MNLF’s integration into the army had been deeper. In the end, festering issues such as limited political autonomy, inadequate access to education, and economic underdevelopment sustained the continued Moro rebellion more than did the details of military integration. It is revealing that, while histories by supporters of President Fidel Ramos hail the political and economic features of the agreement with the MNLF as a signature achievement, they do not even mention military integration.60 In his own retelling of the peace negotiations, Ramos, too, hardly mentions military integration.61 The conditions of the MNLF’s integration into the Philippine army were of great consequence to the individuals involved, but they seem to have been of little larger political consequence, whether for good or for ill.

Rwanda. The post-genocide Rwandan military reflects the power and nationalist ideology of the Tutsi-dominated postwar regime. The new Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) confronted a major demographic problem: it was a Tutsi force in control of a country whose population was overwhelmingly Hutu. In preparation for this reality, its predecessor rebel force had started integrating outsiders fairly early, initially Tutsi from the diaspora but later Hutu prisoners. The RPA accelerated integration, accompanied by intense political indoctrination involving small group meetings that sought to lead participants to replace their exclusive ethnic identities with an inclusive Rwandan national identity.62 This process usually lasted months for those joining the army and was much more serious than the version eventually applied to the population as a whole.63 Roughly 39,000 Hutus—many of whom had certainly partici-
participated in the genocide—were integrated into the Rwandan army in this way. Real integration has been meager, however: while Hutu constitute a majority of the enlisted personnel, the senior officer ranks remain Tutsi-dominated, specifically by exiled Tutsis who started the civil war.64

Again, none of the four mechanisms seems to be in play in the Rwanda case. With respect to commitment problems, military integration was not a very credible signal of intent on either side. Implementing integration was not costless for the Tutsi leadership: it led to much grumbling within the army, especially after the magnitude of the genocide became clear. Given total Tutsi domination of the government and army, however, the former Hutu génocidaires could be expelled from the new armed forces as quickly as they had been invited to join: integration could easily be reversed, which substantially undercut the signal’s strength. For the Hutu who joined, it was a somewhat risky commitment because they would have been in trouble had the RPA been defeated. Yet most entered the military only after the Tutsi victory had been achieved—which limited their risk, but also limited the signal’s power. With respect to the provision of security, the new Rwandan national army did provide security against both Hutu resistance beyond the nation’s borders and Tutsi reprisals within them. The limited scale of Hutu integration and complete Tutsi control up the chain of command, however, meant that Hutu security remained in the hands of Tutsi commanders; if the RPA provided security in a communally neutral fashion, it would be because its Tutsi officers chose to, not because the new military’s communal balance and organizational structure guaranteed it. In terms of using the military to busy the idle hands of former combatants, too few former génocidaires were brought into the RPA, compared to their total number, to make much difference. Finally, while the government did seek to use the process of integration and the integrated army to forge a Rwandan national identity transcending particularistic ethnic identities,65 this inclusive conception of the nation does not appear to have taken root within the population as a whole or to have displaced Hutu and Tutsi commitments.66 One would not, therefore, expect the RPA’s shallow in-


clusion of Hutus to have played a substantial role in forestalling the recurrence of civil war.

The terms of military integration in post-genocide Rwanda reflected the Tutsis’ overwhelming victory in the country’s civil war. It also, predictably, did not prevent the renewal of war by Hutu forces operating out of refugee camps in the DRC. Regardless, it is unlikely that deeper integration would have stopped the extremist perpetrators of genocide, who had little to lose and who resided in safe havens across international borders, from continuing to fight: only the RPA’s clear victory in the second war brought the conflict to an end, albeit at a high cost to human rights. Peace has proved durable within Rwanda’s borders, but military integration cannot take much credit. The Tutsi-dominated regime has maintained tight political control and has ruthlessly punished and suppressed dissent. Its political commissars in the army keep the rank and file in line, and the government has secured the army’s loyalty by giving it a prominent role in the nation’s economy. The real test of Rwanda’s domestic stability will come when President Paul Kagame leaves office or when elite unity otherwise erodes, and the structure of control weakens.

Sudan. Sudan descended back into civil war not because its postwar military integration had failed, but ironically when President Gaafar Mohamed el-Nimeiri boldly attempted to deepen military integration. Under the terms of the 1972 Addis Ababa peace agreement, 10,000 former South Sudanese rebel fighters were brought into the Sudanese army and police. Southerners formed separate units, however, and both the government and former rebels understood that they would be stationed in the South. This understanding was part of a much larger settlement that established the South as a self-governing unit within Sudan (thus creating a democracy within an autocracy), permitted the South to adopt English as its principal language (in contrast to Arabic in the North), and guaranteed religious freedom in the South (an important provision given that much of the population was not Muslim).

67. Some estimate that the Rwandan army killed more than 200,000 civilians in the DRC in 1996–97. See Reyntjens, Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda, pp. 98–123, especially p. 111.
Although Sudan’s military integration was not especially deep, one might have expected it to help bolster peace in the country. First, it was a costly signal: the compromises caused considerable dissent on both sides. Overcoming opposition required both Northern and Southern leaders to expend substantial political capital and thus likely revealed something meaningful about their commitment to the peace deal. Second, the creation of units of distinct regional affiliation and their assignment to their home regions should have helped reassure Southerners, in particular, and alleviate the security dilemma. The other two mechanisms would not seem to hold: the number of Southerners integrated into the military was fairly meager, which left many former fighters without gainful employment, and units remained regionally constituted and stationed, which reduced the symbolic value of the merger. Overall, then, military integration might have been expected to assist modestly in rendering peace in Sudan fairly resilient.

After eleven years, Nimeiri found himself under increasing pressure from Islamists in the country’s North. At one point, he was even rescued by Southern members of the military, whom he had used as his private guard because they had no ties to other Northern groups. In what proved a futile attempt to save his regime from the Islamists, Nimeiri sought to revise the peace settlement’s terms and strengthen the Sudanese central state. He thus assigned former rebels to geographically dispersed units, including deployment to the North, and stationed Northern personnel in the South. These steps, which sought deeper military integration and a more capable state, moved the Southerners in the army to revolt and led to the start of Sudan’s Second Civil War in 1983. Renewed violence was, then, a response not to the failure of military integration, but to the revision of its terms—specifically, to its deepening.

Although Nimeiri’s effort to modify Sudanese military integration was unquestionably important in sparking the return to war, it cannot be separated from the larger political context: Southerners believed that Nimeiri was systematically undermining all of the major terms of the settlement. John Garang, leader of the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Army, identified the transfer of Southern military personnel to the North as one of six “provocations” that had led to the peace agreement’s collapse—alongside the dissolution of Southern assemblies and governments, the signing of an integration agreement with Egypt, the changing of the border to seize resources for the North, the refusal to build a refinery for the newly discovered oil in the South, and the division of

the South into three districts. Garang did not, perhaps for strategic reasons, cite an additional concern: the imposition of Sharia law in the South. Finally, since the end of the first civil war, Nimeiri had not delivered the promised economic growth and public services to the South, which would have demonstrated to Southerners the benefits of a unified Sudan. As a result, Southerners felt that they needed insurance against Northern aggression and therefore viewed the assignment of Southern forces to distant regions as threatening. Garang attributed Nimeiri’s desire to disperse the absorbed forces in the first place to his fear of Southern revolt, which was rooted in the Southerners’ long-standing grievances. In short, the relative shallowness of Sudan’s postwar military integration was not itself a cause of war’s recurrence, but a symptom of the problems confronting the fragile state.

ZIMBABWE. In Zimbabwe, too, the failures of military integration were a sign of the postwar polity’s underlying problems. In the wake of the civil war, the new Zimbabwean military brought together individuals from the two competing rebel groups: the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front, led by Robert Mugabe, and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo, along with members of the former Rhodesian military. Although the two rebel groups drew from different ethnic communities and had been trained by different foreign powers (China and the Soviet Union, respectively), integration proceeded smoothly under the leadership of former Rhodesian officers and a British advisory team. Zimbabwe’s military integration was much better, on a technical level, than the other cases in this group; indeed, it was nearly a model process. Yet tensions persisted between the two groups, aggravated by South African meddling to destabilize the new government. The integration experiment came to a crashing halt after sporadic violence, followed by a second civil war that broke out in 1980–81. Three of the nine integrated brigades collapsed as ZAPU members deserted, and Mugabe purged the rest. While the government created a new military force, trained by North Korea, to break ZAPU resistance at great cost to civilian life, it ordered the army into Mozambique and Angola to support their governments against South Africa and secure access to Mozambican ports.

Military integration in Zimbabwe might have been expected to have a modestly positive effect on peace’s durability. On the one hand, the decision to integrate combatant forces was only somewhat risky for all of the parties because all expected to win the upcoming election. Moreover, Mugabe himself had originally rejected military integration, coming around only when Mozambique threatened to close his bases there, which made integration seem less risky than the alternatives. Finally, the central role of international actors in Zimbabwe’s integration process—notably, Britain and Mozambique—undercut its power as a signal of the local actors’ commitment to peace. On the other hand, the number of former combatants merged into the new armed forces was substantial. The military was originally planned to be 35,000 strong, but it swelled to 65,000 because of the failure of demobilization plans. The representation of all combatant groups, combined with the fact that units were fully integrated, should have helped ease the security dilemma. Moreover, the bloated military could have helped address unemployment among former combatants—except that the peace agreement, and the new military along with it, collapsed within a year.

Contrary to conventional theoretical expectations, Zimbabwe’s military integration, although in ways technically exemplary, posed no barrier to the renewal of civil war. With Mugabe at the helm, the lessons of military integration were swiftly unlearned, as he co-opted the Zimbabwean army into the kleptocratic state both at home and abroad. Rather than the embodiment of a unified Zimbabwe, the armed forces became the preeminent symbol of a corrupt, autocratic regime.

**DURABLE PEACE, MIXED INTEGRATION**

In four cases—Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and the DRC—mixed levels of military integration coincided with something approximating durable peace, yet military integration could take little credit.

**BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA.** In Bosnia, the 1995 Dayton accords, which ended the war, established a weak central government and two separate “entities,” each with its own defense ministry and army. The military of the Federation—one of those two entities—was not properly integrated: although it nominally united the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Croats, units remained in practice

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entirely segregated. The military of the other entity, the Serbian Republika Srpska (RS), was not integrated at all. An integrated national military emerged only several years later at the impetus of the High Representative, the foreigner charged with overseeing implementation of the accords, to strengthen central state institutions and facilitate economic reform,79 to reduce prohibitive costs, and to mitigate the persistent communal security dilemma. Local actors were divided on the prospect: Bosniaks supported integration because they expected to control the new force by virtue of their larger population; Bosnian Serbs strongly opposed integration for the same reason; and Bosnian Croats, as the smallest group, were content merely to be represented. When European and NATO institutions, however, imposed military integration as a condition for Bosnia’s accession, opposition dissipated.80

Yet Bosnia’s supposedly integrated military is a small, politically irrelevant force whose units are still organized by nationality. Thanks to a program, generously funded by the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf emirates, to establish military parity between the Federation Army and the forces of the Republika Srpska, Croat and Bosniak forces were smoothly brought together—but only at the upper levels, not the lower ranks.81 Fully integrating RS forces was seen, by both international and local actors, as out of the question. Although the new army was composed of three multiethnic brigades of 4,000 troops each, each brigade contained three communally distinct battalions. Not only did soldiers serve exclusively with their communal fellows, but their uniforms reflected the still-powerful communal divisions: each soldier wore the patch of Bosnia-Herzegovina on one sleeve and of the Republika Srpska or the Federation on the other. Even the command level was integrated by quota: in the offices of the defense minister, the chief of the joint staff, and the head of the operational command, the commander and the two senior deputies had to each come from one of the three ethnic groups.82

There is no theoretical reason to expect the “integrated” Bosnian military to

have bolstered the country’s postwar peace. First, it was not a credible signal of the former combatants’ commitment to peace. The intensity of international involvement and pressure in the integration process in Bosnia exceeds that of any other case in this analysis. The continued segregation of units, moreover, has rendered integration easily reversible. Second, the new military could not alleviate the security dilemma because it was not charged with providing security. That was the responsibility of the NATO/EU international force. Third, the new military was small—with just 10,000 soldiers—so it could not help lower unemployment. Fourth, as discussed above, the Bosnian military did not systematically project the image of a unified nation: its symbolic messaging was as divided as the polity it served. The army is perhaps the most successfully integrated institution in Bosnia, but that is a low bar, and there is no evidence that it has inspired civilians to support other national institutions. As one participant-observer correctly concludes, “On the whole, military integration is not a significant positive or negative factor in the context of renewed violence in BiH [Bosnia-Herzegovina]. The risk of violence is independent of the armed forces and has been for many years.”

Bosnia has not erupted into renewed civil war, but it is hardly a success story. Twenty years after the war’s end, the country remains deeply divided and essentially under military occupation. Although the outcome is in line with conventional theory, we cannot infer that deeper military integration would have been a boon. The shallowness of integration in Bosnia is a reflection of the enduring communal divides, not their cause.

SIERRA LEONE. Sierra Leone’s military integration has been much deeper than Bosnia’s, but it has had similarly little effect on the nation’s politics. A 1999 power-sharing agreement between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and its allies included provisions for military integration involving all forces. The renewal of the civil war in 2000 interrupted implementation, but it resumed that year under British guidance, after the RUF’s decisive defeat. Roughly one-sixth of the new army consisted of former members of the RUF and other irregular forces. There was little attempt to exclude human rights violators, in part because of the absence of written records of the relevant events. Nevertheless, the new army is more effective, more

83. Ibid., p. 192.
transparent and accountable, less likely to trouble civilians, and under firmer civilian control than its predecessor. In addition, its human rights record is better than its predecessor’s. Some observers have hailed Sierra Leone as a success for security sector reform.87

Although a more professional, more effective army may be an obstacle to revived civil war in Sierra Leone, there is little evidence that integration per se has contributed much to peace—nor would theory expect it to. First, the signal was not an especially strong one, given that an outside actor (the United Kingdom) had both made military victory possible and led the integration process. Second, the integrated military could not diminish the contending parties’ security fears because the institution itself was so deeply distrusted, thanks to its abysmal wartime human rights record, that leading figures in both the government and civil society wanted to abolish it. Third, relatively few combatants were integrated into the new armed forces, in part because they had high expectations for the DDR process occurring at the same time, and thus the integrated military was not a substantial source of gainful employment. Indeed, about 2,000 former combatants went to fight in the Liberian civil war.88

Despite much skepticism in the early postwar period, the new military has won support within Sierra Leone, but there is little evidence that this support has extended to other state institutions or has otherwise had a significant impact on the country’s stability.89 While this is what the pro-integration theory would also expect, it is hard to foresee how a different military integration process—in which, for instance, the British had played a less central role—would have made much difference. If civil war starts up again in Sierra Leone, it will be the result of any number of challenges on which military integration can have little bearing, including continued poverty and high levels of youth unemployment, weak civilian oversight of the military, the state’s failure to maintain order (as revealed by the explosive increase in private security firms), political corruption, deep economic inequality, and continued weakness in other state institutions.90

89. Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, “Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold: Sierra Leone’s Armed Forces after the Lomé Peace Agreement,” in Licklider, New Armies from Old, pp. 199, 207–208.
90. Adedeji Ebo, “The Challenges and Lessons of Security Sector Reform in Post-Conflict Sierra
South Africa. The limits of integration’s impact are apparent as well in South Africa—by some accounts, the exemplar of both military integration and the negotiated settlement of civil war. The integration process presented a major challenge: the new South African Defence Force (SADF) brought together personnel from eight forces, some of whom had radically different military cultures and spoke different languages. Nevertheless, integration proved a striking success. Several senior rebel military leaders were immediately given the rank of general and then sent for professional training. Many former rebels were granted positions—though the number declined as the military downsized over time to create a more sustainable force: in 2002, at the formal end of the integration process, the armed forces were almost 115,000 strong, but just five years later had fallen to 70,000. An aggressive affirmative action program complemented integration, so that the South African armed forces has become a largely black army; 85 percent of the top officers are black, as is 72 percent of the total force. It has a sterling human rights record, and it has participated in at least fourteen peace support missions. On the whole, military integration in South Africa was inclusive, professional, and peaceful, although it has acquired an unfortunate reputation as the “paper tiger of peacekeeping.”

Theory suggests that there might be reason to give some credit for South Africa’s post-apartheid stability to this model military integration process. First, it was a highly risky and costly commitment for both the African National Congress and the apartheid regime. Indeed, had President P.W. Botha not suffered a stroke in January 1989 and been succeeded that summer by F.W. de Klerk, it is unclear whether the regime would have accepted the risks a settlement entailed. Neither side was sure how dissident groups within

the combatant forces would react to the prospect of serving alongside their
former adversaries and to the loss of autonomy; notably, the Pan-African
Congress refused to integrate until late in the process. Moreover, integration
reached down to the unit level and was relatively irreversible. Also, it was a
process driven by South Africans, with minimal international involvement.
Observers at the time regarded this strong signal of the parties’ commitment
to peace as essential for the peaceful transition to democracy. Second, the
thoroughgoing nature of SADF integration should have contributed to the re-
duction of both whites’ and blacks’ fears of politically motivated violence and
reprisals.96 The integrated SADF is theoretically expected to have less impact
via other mechanisms. First, as detailed above, the SADF has absorbed only a
limited number of former combatants, and so has had little impact on the
problem of idle hands. Second, over time a fair number of white soldiers have
gone abroad (about 3,000 are in the British army), joined private security com-
panies, or left the security sector entirely. The government hoped that the new
military would serve as a model for a racially harmonious society, but its im-
age has been weakened by alienation among white armed forces members
who, even when they remain in the service, are reluctant to wear their uni-
forms in white neighborhoods.97 Nevertheless, with the scope conditions for
two mechanisms satisfied, the theoretical case for the integrated SADF’s im-
 pact on bolstering postwar stability is strong.

At a deeper level, however, the relative success of SADF integration cannot
explain the durability of South Africa’s post-apartheid peace. It is hard to
imagine a post-apartheid SADF in which black South Africans were not cen-
tral. Once de Klerk and the ruling regime had made the strategic decision to
end apartheid, and once apartheid-era officers had accepted that decision,
there was no going back—though reactionary forces might still have resisted
and spilled much blood in the process. With blacks a majority of the popula-
tion, and with the domestic distribution of power heavily favoring the African
National Congress, a post-apartheid military could not have remained a bas-

96. White fears of violent crime and theft without political motivation remain rife, and as a result,
private security firms do a brisk business in South Africa. Journalistic coverage of the privatization
of security in South Africa and elsewhere in the region has been extensive, as has scholarly com-
mentary. See, among many others, Greg Mills and John Stremlau, eds., The Privatisation of Security
in Africa (Pretoria: South Africa Institute of International Affairs, 1999); Rita Abrahamsen and Mi-
chael C. Williams, Security beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Tessa G. Diphoorn, Twilight Policing: Private Security and
97. Abel Esterhuysen and Lindy Heinecken, “Report to the Chief of the SA Army on the Military
Culture and Institutional Ethos of the South African Army,” Stellenbosch University, 2012, pp. 6–
22; and Lindy Heinecken, “Defence Transformation and Work Alienation among White Officers in
tion of white privilege. Civil war between blacks and whites was implausible, with or without deep military integration.

**Democratic Republic of Congo.** The DRC’s military integration process receives strong scores on the formal markers in table 2, but those measures are misleading: Congo’s integration has, in practice, departed far from the ideal. Yet integration’s flaws cannot be blamed for the country’s deeply dysfunctional postwar politics. Those flaws were more product than cause: integration’s shortcomings reflected the desire among former belligerents to retain the means of controlling territory and economic assets and of providing security to their constituents. It was the “climate of heavy distrust and ongoing violence” that contributed to the parties’ “halfhearted commitment to military integration”—more than the other way around.98

In the DRC, the national army had always been a predatory instrument of corrupt local leaders.99 Former belligerents agreed that they did not want a strong central government, including a national army, which might interfere with their connections to regional power centers. The new army thus became yet another forum in which to prosecute their war, another institution that it could bend to their parochial ends. Several major units remained outside the integration process—most notably, the presidential guard and the Tutsi militia RCD-G (the Goma-based faction of the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, or Rally for Congolese Democracy). When newly integrated brigades were sent into the field, they received few supplies and little money, forcing them to become as predatory as other government forces.100

Military integration, as it took place in the DRC, would not have been expected to contribute to peace in any case. Driven by outsiders, it did not represent a costly signal of the warring parties’ commitment to the civil war settlement and the postwar political order.101 If anything, it reduced the nation’s security: not only was it incompetent militarily, but it also supported re-

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bel groups both by illicit trading and by integrating former rebels who had previously deserted from government forces. Although the numbers of former combatants in the new army were substantial, their wages were so low that the soldiers occupied themselves with preying on civilians, as they would have had they not been employed. The DRC military was not a focus of national pride and unity, but a symbol of the state’s incompetence and corruption.102

At the same time, the failures of military integration in the DRC cannot be blamed for leading the DRC back into violence. It may be true that, as Judith Verweijen claims, the new armed forces “entrench[ed] incentive structures rewarding violence” and “enabl[ed] wartime power networks to remain partially intact and allow[ed] for the manipulation of the military for private ends,” thus “block[ing] a transformation of the war economy.”103 Even by her account, however, poor military integration was not the fundamental cause of the DRC’s return to violence. Weak military integration was a prerequisite for the parties to reach a negotiated settlement in the first place: contending elites would accept only a settlement involving a weak central government and a weakly integrated military, and they deliberately sabotaged integration. The DRC and its integrated armed forces were built to fail.

**DURABLE PEACE, DEEP INTEGRATION**

In the remaining three cases—Burundi, Lebanon, and Mozambique—substantial military integration has taken place and peace has proved fairly durable, but either communal violence persists below the level of civil war or other factors have played a much larger role in sustaining postwar peace.

**BURUNDI.** The army’s makeup had long been contentious in Burundi, where Tutsi from the Bururi Province—a minority within a minority—came to dominate soon after independence in 1962. The assassination of the elected Hutu prime minister in 1993 triggered a new round of killing on both sides. The (mostly Hutu) rebel Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (FDD) had long insisted on dismantling the army, which it saw as a crucial instrument of Tutsi domination, and (Tutsi) army leaders, who saw the armée monoethnique as essential to communal self-defense, resisted integration. Both sides, however, eventually lost faith in their capacity to defeat the other and retain popular support. After complex negotiations and repeated false starts, in 2003 they reluctantly acceded to an integrated military premised on equal Hutu and Tutsi representation, although they also agreed that integration would be

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Integration proceeded surprisingly smoothly. Assistance came from a wide variety of countries: Belgium (the former colonial power), France, and the Netherlands, but also China, Egypt, Rwanda, and South Africa. The United Nations also played a significant role. The newly integrated army proved effective in the field, defeating the remaining rebel holdouts by 2008 and contributing to peacekeeping missions.

Theory would suggest that Burundi’s military integration, widely regarded as a success, should have helped underpin a resilient postwar peace. With respect to commitment problems, integration represented a fairly costly signal, given the army’s salience and the significant divisions in both camps that had to be overcome. The formation of fully integrated units also rendered integration seemingly less reversible. Although the heavy involvement of outside forces might have undermined the signal slightly, on balance it would seem to have been fairly costly and credible. With respect to the provision of security, the equal representation of Hutu and Tutsi should have been reassuring, and the new army proved itself quite capable, by defeating the last significant recalcitrant rebels. Although the integrated military’s fairly small size meant that it could not employ too many former combatants, the symbolic impact of military integration might have been expected to be substantial because the question of the *armée monoethnique* had long been so central and charged in Burundi.¹⁰⁵

Although Burundi has avoided large-scale intercommunal fighting since 2006, it is difficult to give credit to military integration. The still-heavily Tutsi officer corps has largely stayed on the sidelines, per the terms of the Arusha agreement, but experts have explicitly dismissed military integration as a significant cause of the country’s political stability. They attribute it instead to changed military norms, driven in turn by the populace’s war weariness, the leadership in particular of President Pierre Buyoya (1987–93 and 1996–2003), and the intensive involvement of the international community.¹⁰⁶ Neither side


¹⁰⁵. Wilén, “From Foe to Friend.”

has returned to war because neither foresaw the underlying distribution of power changing imminently and because neither believed that exhausted populations could again be mobilized. The situation may change, however, as the war recedes into the past and the sense of exhaustion wanes. Recent events give cause for concern: the current government, led by former rebel leader Pierre Nkurunziza, has resisted dialogue with its political opponents, and the military, in league with the governing party, has engaged in human rights violations against members of the opposition.107 The 2015 crisis over the presidential election, in which the president ran for re-election despite questions about his eligibility and which the opposition boycotted, has intensified fears of renewed violence.

LEBANON. In Lebanon, the integrated military is so hamstrung by the country’s fragile sectarian politics that it cannot serve as a bulwark against the renewal of civil war. Historically a multiethnic force and a symbol of the country’s delicate unity,108 the army stayed out of the civil war, unsullied but also irrelevant. In the conflict’s waning days it finally succumbed, dividing into factions aligned with the warring communities. Postwar military integration was rapid, though adapted to Lebanon’s consociational politics. First, army leaders declared an amnesty to welcome back the mostly Christian members and units that had abandoned their posts to defend their brethren. Second, the new army integrated many Muslim former militia members at the lower ranks, and it recruited many Christians who had never served in organized force. Third, units were no longer organized on a communal basis, which had been the norm prior to the war. The implementation of communally mixed units precluded the integration of the largest Christian militia, whose members insisted on integrating en masse. Finally, officers were assigned according to a communal quota—with equal numbers of Christian and Muslim officers. Commanders and their deputies, in particular, had to hail from different confessional groups.109

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Theoretically, the Lebanese army’s postwar integration lines up mostly on the side of an expected significant, positive impact. It is, admittedly, mixed with respect to its status as a signal of the parties’ commitment to the postwar order. On the one hand, the Lebanese readily accepted integration, diminishing its costs. On the other hand, integration abolished communally segregated units. Also, because Lebanese Muslims had long harbored fears of the “Christian army,” the integration signal was stronger by virtue of its being relatively salient and irreversible. When it comes to two other mechanisms, however, the Lebanese military’s integration speaks more clearly. In principle, the thoroughly integrated Lebanese army should be able to provide internal security to Lebanon’s religiously diverse populations and allay the country’s internal security dilemma. Moreover, this highly professional armed force should, in principle, be capable of at least trying to provide external security against incursions by its much more powerful Israeli and Syrian neighbors. Finally, the integrated army is a rare site and symbol of national unity and communal harmony in a country with a much-deserved reputation for communal conflict.

Yet, in practice, the army’s impact on Lebanon’s postwar politics has been minimal. Scrupulous integration of the armed forces, displaying deep sensitivity to Lebanon’s complex communal fabric, seems to have allayed Muslims’ fears of a “Christian army.” Still, the country remains deeply divided along religious and ethnic lines. As before the civil war, the price of the army’s neutral status is that it cannot be readily used internally. Weaker than its neighbors’ militaries, and even the Shiite militia Hezbollah, “the Lebanese Army embodies the end of the civil war more than it acts as an actual military force.” It is incapable of heading off future civil war, whether caused deliberately by local or foreign leaders or inadvertently by spillover from turmoil across Lebanon’s borders. The Lebanese case highlights the dilemmas that a professional, integrated military confronts if the political system starts to break down. As a professional force, it is supposed to stand aside and allow the civilian leadership to set the nation’s strategic course. Yet, as violence looms, such professionalism both limits the military’s ability to prevent war from breaking out and, once war erupts, consigns the military to irrelevance until the war ends.

Mozambique. Mozambique’s story is similar to Lebanon’s. A brutal civil war went on for years, sustained by the South African apartheid government’s

112. An exception was the army’s 2007 attack on a Palestinian faction. Palestinians, however, are not part of Lebanon’s power-sharing arrangements. They are generally regarded by Lebanese as foreigners and blamed for disturbing the country’s delicate ethnic balance.
desire to undermine the black government next door. The Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, the rebel group better known as RENAMO, insisted on military integration as essential to postwar security, while the government, led by the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), saw integration as primarily symbolic but also as a process it could control. After protracted negotiations, the two sides concluded a detailed agreement allowing for equal numbers of former fighters from each side to join the new military and naming some RENAMO personnel to senior officer posts. The parties themselves made the key decisions about military integration, but Britain furnished substantial training, which was especially necessary for RENAMO personnel. 113

Although military integration in Mozambique was fairly deep and comprehensive, it satisfies few of the scope conditions for the theoretical mechanisms to be operative. It does not appear to have constituted a strong signal of the parties’ intent: the settlement did not provoke much resistance, and thus implementing it did not entail substantial intra-group costs for either RENAMO or FRELIMO. The number of former combatants merged into the new national military was smaller than planned, as filling the ranks proved difficult. 114 Consequently, the new army lacked sufficient coercive power to provide much security and ease the former parties’ fears, and it did not provide gainful employment for many. The recruitment troubles suggest that the army was not a prominent institution in postwar society and that war exhaustion had reduced its value as a symbol of national unity.

Nevertheless, Mozambique has been an unlikely success story, as peace has proved durable in one of the world’s poorest countries. In 2013 RENAMO charged the government with having broken the peace agreement, by, among other things, failing to ensure adequate representation of RENAMO personnel in the security sector. Low-level violence broke out, 115 but the issue was resolved through negotiations rather than war. The new national army clearly cannot claim credit for Mozambique having avoided descent back into civil war. True, the failure of military integration in Mozambique, as elsewhere, would have doomed the postwar peace. But battlefield stalemate and war exhaustion created the circumstances conducive to peace in Mozambique: these factors both brought RENAMO and FRELIMO to the negotiating table and compelled them to undertake military integration. 116 Both the end of the civil

114. Ibid., pp. 163, 169–170.
war and the success of military integration in Mozambique had roots in the same configuration of power relations.

**SUMMARY OF CASES**

The eleven cases discussed above do not provide much support for the international community’s faith in military integration. On the one hand, the applicable scope conditions for military integration to have an independent effect on the durability of post–civil war peace rarely hold. When they do, the cases suggest, on the whole, that post–civil war military integration reflects more than it shapes the incentives confronting political actors. Neither theoretical logic nor the case evidence suggests that military integration, whether deep or shallow, profoundly alters local actors’ preferences over strategies or ultimately their preferences over outcomes. Moreover, neither suggests that military integration enmeshes local actors in processes from which they cannot ultimately, or even disturbingly easily, extricate themselves. As these cases demonstrate, they have done so too often.117

**Conclusion**

Peacebuilders and scholars often presume the virtues of military integration in post–civil war contexts. This article has shown that, on both theoretical and empirical grounds, they should not. As it stands, the benefits seem questionable at best, especially when the international community is deeply involved in designing and implementing the merger of combatant forces.

Although the findings here are less than encouraging, this article is not a definitive statement and therefore does not represent an absolute indictment. We recognize that it would be premature to conclude that military integration has no independent impact on the durability of postwar peace, because much research remains to be done. First, analysts need fine-grained cross-national information on postwar military integration in practice across all three dimensions discussed in this article. The collection of such data is difficult given the political sensitivity of military manpower policy and the fact that practices on the ground often diverge from official claims. This article presents a medium-n examination of eleven cases, based on the deep knowledge of country experts specifically commissioned for the purpose. Extending this work across space and time is an imposing, but necessary, step.

Second, such data would permit exploration of the circumstances that

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117. It is notable that Knight, using a different set of cases, reaches the same conclusion. See Knight, “Military Integration and War Termination,” pp. 74–75.
Conduce to military integration. Specifically, does deeper integration tend to transpire in the easy cases—where political conditions would predict its success—or in the hard cases, where it is most needed because postwar security is direst and integration’s implementation most uncertain? If the former, then attributing causal power to military integration is problematic. If the latter, as with peacekeeping, then analysts can more safely credit military integration with independent effects.

Third, such data should be married to careful process-tracing to assess which, if any, of the hypothesized causal mechanisms was at work and whether other factors were more responsible for peace’s durability or its demise. This again is an imposing research endeavor, requiring substantial local knowledge.

Fourth, research on military integration, including this article, tends to explore this technique in isolation. This is a common research strategy when examining policy instruments, but, in reality, multiple tools are often deployed simultaneously. Military integration is normally part of a larger package of security sector reforms that are themselves combined in myriad ways, and SSR itself is just one part of a larger peacebuilding enterprise. Policymakers are understandably less interested in whether military integration works on its own than in whether it can render peace more durable in conjunction with other policies, such as transitional justice, power sharing, judicial reform, and development aid. Future research must explore military integration in this more realistic, if scientifically messy, context.

Finally, scholars need greater understanding of how polities whose civil wars ended via negotiated settlements absent military integration provisions resolve internal security dilemmas. Nearly 65 percent of concluded civil wars lack such programs, yet their postwar experiences are varied, with some relapsing into civil war and others remaining more or less peaceful. Even if military integration is one avenue to sustainable peace, it is apparently not the only one.

Based on the current state of scholarly knowledge, however—and all the more so if subsequent research bears out our preliminary findings—we have serious reservations about the central place of military integration in international peacebuilding efforts. Military integration is rooted conceptually and

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118. Doyle and Sambanis, Making War and Building Peace; and Fortna, Does Peacekeeping Work?
120. We thank an anonymous reviewer for reminding us of this important point.
practically in a dominant peacebuilding paradigm centered around the construction of inclusive post-conflict institutions. It is also now a widely accepted dictum that successful peacebuilding requires local knowledge and buy-in, and international handbooks on security sector reform and peacebuilding routinely express an avowed commitment to local ownership of these processes. In practice, however, there is a profound disconnect between the international community’s rhetorical genuflection to local initiatives, on the one hand, and, on the other, its embrace of policies that displace national authorities and pay little regard to the preferences of local stakeholders.

As Séverine Autesserre has powerfully shown, the liberal worldview retains a tight hold on everyday institutionalized practices among the international community of peacebuilders—despite little evidence that liberal peacebuilding works, and despite much evidence to the contrary. This is of special concern with military integration, given the intense security concerns that typically pervade post-conflict polities. The international community has often featured centrally in the process of military integration and has sometimes even pressed it on reluctant local forces. Outside promotion of military inte-


gration makes little sense when local forces see it as an alien imposition and thus oppose it.

Military integration makes more sense when local forces are eager for it but simply require technical assistance. Even in this auspicious context, however, the military integration cure may be worse than the disease. First, in many post–civil war countries, the greatest threats are internal, and a competent and professional armed forces may be needed to crush pockets of armed discontent. Professional armed forces would rather focus their efforts externally, and thus may be tempted to acquire training and equipment at odds with national needs. Consider South Africa, whose military wants to build and maintain an expensive, mechanized, land-based force that is ill-suited to its most likely missions: counterinsurgency, peacekeeping, and monitoring of coastal waters. Second, there are good reasons—contrary to the position of the World Bank—that post–civil war polities do not, and should not, expand the ranks simply to employ former combatants. Sustaining a large military is typically beyond their fiscal capacity. These states have many legitimate demands on their limited resources, and future growth hinges on investment in infrastructure and human capital. Large armies are expensive ventures and crowd out spending directed toward other goals, both short term (e.g., alleviating human suffering) and long term (e.g., creating a base for development). Third, a strong security apparatus can also exercise troubling influence on politics, especially when the central state is weak and ineffective. Its very existence threatens neighboring states, and generals may then be tempted to engage in foreign adventurism or interfere in domestic politics.

In light of the above, why has military integration proved so enduringly attractive to the international peacebuilding community? We offer, in a speculative vein, two complementary possible reasons. First, military integration fits nicely with the entrenched liberal peacebuilding paradigm. Why not build an inclusive, post–conflict armed forces alongside other similarly inclusive political institutions? Given that no one would argue that a communally exclusive military is conducive to postwar peace, military integration seems the only viable alternative. Second, the attraction of merging combatant forces may derive less from its supposedly beneficial effects on security than its seeming
feasibility—compared to transforming civilian political, judicial, and law enforcement institutions deeply embedded in local power structures. Constructing capable and responsive civilian state institutions is more essential to establishing security and intercommunal trust, but it also more difficult insofar as it requires broader societal engagement and may encounter more resistance. As the World Bank has reported, “It is much harder for countries to get international assistance to support development of their police forces and judiciaries than their militaries,” and the capacity for such specialized technical assistance is underdeveloped. In contrast, substantial numbers of qualified international trainers can readily be deployed to post-conflict zones to promote military integration.

Perhaps, though, military integration is of great utility—even when it fails. Perhaps it can serve as the proverbial canary in the coal mine. When the canary breathes the noxious fumes, its death saves lives by giving early warning to vulnerable miners. But military integration is a wrenching process even under the best of circumstances. To use it as an early-warning system is like replacing the canary with an endangered and expensive parrot. The parrot’s death will still help the miners, but there are far cheaper ways of achieving the same end. It is true that attaining durable peace sometimes requires sacrificing other values. Thus realists have, with justification, endorsed order over justice: save the lives one can, impose stability, and worry about the consequences later. Strengthening the armed forces in post–civil war contexts does not, however, sacrifice justice in the future for order in the present. It risks sacrificing order in the future for order in the present, if military government is the result. Military governments are fragile, and they often lead to political instability and civil war. They seem to be responsible for more violations of physical integrity and are more inclined to use force when confronted with opposition. Such a trade-off hardly seems wise.

This article has focused on the practice of military integration in post–civil war states, but its ultimate target is the larger program of liberal peacebuilding, of which military integration is a core, seemingly commonsense ele-

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ment. If so intuitive and unquestioned a pillar of liberal peacebuilding cannot stand, then presumably the edifice as a whole cannot either. The structure rests on a foundation that is theoretically and empirically rickety—notwithstanding its firm grip on the mind of the international peacebuilder. And the international community’s promotion of military integration, sometimes even over local opposition, is ethically questionable as well. The benefits are unclear, the costs potentially substantial, and the outsiders pressing for it do not bear the consequences. Military integration in post–civil war states, like liberal peacebuilding in general, risks violating the first rule of international intervention: first, do no harm.