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Hybridity of Peace Efforts in the Philippines: Implications to the Administration of Socio-Economic Development

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Abstract

Aim: This study investigates the hybridity of peace efforts in the Philippines and examines implications for public administration, specifically the administration of socio-economic development. Anchored in the post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding framework, it explores how national agencies, local governments, and community actors interact and negotiate shared governance spaces to sustain peace and development in conflict-affected areas.

Methodology: A qualitative case study was conducted in the National Capital Region and selected sites in Cordillera Administrative Region, Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, Mindanao, and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. Data collection (third trimester, AY 2024–2025) involved semi-structured interviews with thirty-six (36) key informants and peace actors from agencies such as Department of National Defense, Department of Interior and Local Government, Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Economy, Planning, and Development, local government units, and civil society. Documentary analysis of policy frameworks complemented interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic coding and cross-case comparison to identify recurring governance patterns.

Findings: Hybrid peacebuilding manifests through multi-agency coordination (Whole-of-Nation convergence), localized adaptation of national frameworks, and participatory mechanisms that integrate indigenous practices with formal bureaucratic processes. These arrangements support inclusivity, adaptability, and the sustainability of peace and socio-economic initiatives. Persistent challenges include bureaucratic fragmentation, policy-practice gaps, weak monitoring and evaluation, and uneven socio-economic reintegration.

Conclusion: Hybrid peacebuilding in the Philippines has evolved organically through local practices and inter-institutional negotiation rather than solely from external models. Institutionalizing hybrid approaches within public administration - through adaptive leadership, multi-level coordination, and context-sensitive socio-economic planning - can strengthen the sustainability and responsiveness of peace and development efforts.

Keywords: *hybrid peacebuilding; post-liberal peace; socio-economic development; public administration; peace governance; Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary peace and conflict studies show that violent conflict continues to disrupt state institutions and socio-economic development across many parts of the world. Global monitoring agencies also report persistent internal displacement due to conflict, governance breakdown, and protracted insecurity, which create long term pressures on public administration and development planning (United Nations Development Programme, 2025). These global trends are also evident in Southeast Asia, where post-conflict transitions increasingly rely on negotiated governance arrangements and hybrid peacebuilding strategies that combine state authority, community participation, and non-state involvement (Lee, 2022; Mac Ginty, 2021; Richmond, 2021)

In the Philippines, long-standing conflicts have deeply affected communities around the country (Mendoza et al., 2021). These conditions have led to limited access to basic services, disrupted livelihoods, and displaced millions. Since 2008, more than three million conflict-related displacements have been recorded, including an estimated one hundred twenty three thousand internally displaced persons in 2024 (Internal Displacement Monitoring



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Center, 2025). Such disruptions strain households, host communities, and local governments that must respond to their socio-economic needs.

While peace agreements have reduced large-scale armed confrontations, peace actors emphasize that the absence of violence marks only the beginning of a more complex transition. Sustaining peace requires coordinated action among state agencies, local governments, and community organizations to ensure that services, livelihood opportunities, and institutional support reach conflict-affected populations (Atienza & Tablatin, 2023; Fernandez & Gutierrez, 2022). These realities highlight the critical role of public administration in managing the shift from conflict response toward long-term socio-economic development.

Despite these developments, a clear gap persists in the literature. Existing studies on peacebuilding in the Philippines remain grounded largely on liberal peace frameworks, with limited application of post-liberal or hybrid peacebuilding perspectives (Kim, 2017a; Kim, 2017b; Lee, 2019a). Recent peace and governance studies still emphasize security-centered views by focusing on active conflicts (insurgency, rebellion, and terrorism) rather than on the governance strategies and institutional arrangements required to sustain peace following the reduction of violence (Fernandez & Gutierrez, 2022; Mac Ginty, 2021). Very little attention is given to peacebuilding as a concern of public administration and socio-economic development (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2021; Richmond, 2021). Searches across major academic databases confirm that studies linking hybrid peacebuilding with public administration in the Philippine context are extremely limited.

This gap is significant because hybrid peace processes rely on coordinated and adaptive governance arrangements that directly influence socio-economic development outcomes. In addition, socio-economic factors are central drivers of conflict, displacement, and community vulnerability (Rodriguez, 2022; Tanabe, 2022). Without understanding how agencies, Local Government Units (LGUs), and communities operationalize hybrid approaches in practice, both academic scholarship and policy-making risk overlooking the administrative mechanisms required to sustain peace.

Addressing this gap offers opportunities to strengthen governance, improve institutional coordination, and support more responsive and context-sensitive peace strategies. It will also help policymakers and peace actors in crafting of more responsive peace strategies focused on addressing the root causes of conflict, the risks of relapse, and the institutional challenges that shape peace outcomes. Therefore, this study examines hybrid peacebuilding in relation to the administration of socio-economic development in the Philippines, contributing new empirical evidence to an understudied field and offering practical insights for national agencies, LGUs, peace practitioners, and communities involved in sustaining long-term peace and development.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Peacebuilding efforts in the Philippines have long involved national government agencies, local governments, and international partners whose programs aim to promote peaceful coexistence, strengthen community capacities, and support a culture of peace grounded in the diverse identities and histories of Filipino communities (Lee, 2019b; Tanabe, 2022). These initiatives contributed to the notable decline of armed insurgents under the "Whole-of-Nation" approach (Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity, 2024), yet, conflict persists in several areas. This continued instability demonstrates the limitations of security-centered responses and highlights the need for peacebuilding strategies that integrate governance reforms, effective service delivery, and socio-economic development (Rodriguez, 2022). The success of these programs depend not only on national institutions but also on the participation and ownership of communities, civil society groups, and development partners.

Recent literature emphasizes that sustainable peacebuilding requires coordinated action across actors and institutions to improve public service delivery and expand socio-economic opportunities. Post-conflict transitions in Southeast Asia increasingly rely on hybrid arrangements that combine state-led initiatives with community-based processes, negotiated relationships, and adaptive governance practices (Lee, 2022; Mac Ginty, 2021; Richmond, 2021). In the Philippines, similar findings show that peacebuilding must address poverty, expand access to education and health care, and support livelihood development to secure long-term stability, especially in historically marginalized regions (Atienza & Tablatin, 2023; Fernandez & Gutierrez, 2022).

Liberal Peacebuilding and Contemporary Critiques

Liberal peacebuilding remains the dominant framework in many Philippine studies. It assumes that the establishment of democratic institutions and standardized governance models provides universal solutions to conflict (Roberts, 2018). However, recent scholarship questions its applicability in complex, culturally diverse, and deeply



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stratified societies. Studies highlight that liberal frameworks often overlook local agency, customary political structures, and the everyday realities of communities in conflict-affected areas (Ibrahim, 2021; Maca, 2022; Tanabe, 2019). These critiques argue that liberal peacebuilding models tend to neglect the institutional dynamics, cultural values, and community priorities that shape how people negotiate peace on the ground.

Mindanao in particular presents challenges to liberal peacebuilding due to its multilayered political environment shaped by clan leadership, religious identities, traditional governance structures, and long-standing historical grievances (Kim, 2017a; Lee, 2019a). Because liberal peacebuilding privileges top-down institutional reforms, it fails to fully capture the local political dynamics. This has led scholars to call for peace approaches that place local actors, community values, and indigenous governance processes at the center of analysis (Ragragio & Villarin, 2024; Richmond, 2021).

Post Liberal and Hybrid Peace Approaches

Although still limited, studies applying post-liberal or hybrid peacebuilding frameworks to the Philippines offer significant insights. Taniguchi (2019) demonstrates the importance of understanding peacebuilding through the complex interactions among clan leaders, insurgent groups, and government institutions, noting that hybrid arrangements reflect negotiated and context-specific governance practices. Mendoza and Reyes (2022) highlighted the community resilience and peace formation through social participation. However, these studies focus primarily on political structures and do not address socio-economic dimensions or the roles of local peace actors.

Similarly, Espesor and Manaysay (2021) explore hybrid interactions between civil society organizations and state institutions in Mindanao. Their work shows how hybrid peace emerges from the interplay of actors across various governance levels but remains centered on formal institutions and national stakeholders. It overlooks the local sphere, which includes community-based leaders, informal actors, and local governments (Richmond, 2021). Moreover, both studies give limited attention to how peacebuilding intersects with public administration and the administration of socio-economic development.

More recent works fill some of these gaps by examining governance and institutional transitions in the Bangsamoro (Ibrahim, 2021) and the challenges of local governance during post-conflict transformation (Maca, 2022). These studies highlight the importance of local governance capacities, institutional convergence, decentralization and service delivery in sustaining peace (Bertrand, 2021). Complementing these findings, emerging research on the theme shows that post-conflict reintegration, livelihood support, and multi-level governance arrangements are essential to consolidating peace (Ishikawa, 2023).

Despite these developments, the literature still lacks a comprehensive examination of peace efforts in the Philippines using a post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding framework grounded in public administration, particularly the administration of socio-economic development. The current body of literature still does not fully explain how peace efforts in the Philippines operate through hybrid arrangements that integrate administrative functions with socio-economic development processes. Most works remain concentrated on conflict episodes, political structures, or formal institutions, leaving limited understanding on how national agencies, local governments, and community actors jointly sustain peace on the ground. This unresolved gap demonstrates the need for research that links hybrid peacebuilding with the practical realities of public administration and socio-economic development in order to capture the full complexity of peace efforts in the country.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the post-liberal peacebuilding framework, specifically hybrid peacebuilding. Hybrid peacebuilding views peace as an outcome of interactions among multiple actors, institutions, and levels of governance shaped by historical experiences, external interventions, and community-based practices (Mac Ginty 2021; Richmond, 2021). Rather than treating communities as passive recipients of peace programs, the framework recognizes local actors as active agents whose identities, knowledge, and everyday experiences influence how peace initiatives are understood and implemented (Ibrahim, 2021; Maca, 2022).

Hybrid peacebuilding departs from the liberal model, which often relies on standardized, top-down reforms and overlooks cultural contexts, traditional authority structures, and localized decision making. Scholars argue that these limitations create legitimacy gaps when peace processes fail to reflect local needs and priorities (Ragragio & Villarin, 2024; Richmond, 2021; Roberts, 2018). Hybrid peacebuilding responds by integrating both external interventions and local practices, acknowledging the negotiation, adaptation, and resistance that occur between state institutions, international actors, local governments, and communities (Fernandez & Gutierrez, 2022).

Recent studies demonstrate how hybrid arrangements emerge through the interaction of state agencies, clan networks, civil society groups, and community leaders, particularly during post-conflict transitions (Ibrahim,



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2021; Maca, 2022). These works highlight that peacebuilding is sustained not through singular, externally designed models but through coordinated, multi-level governance and socio-economic development efforts.

The post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding framework is appropriate for the study because hybrid peacebuilding directly explains how state institutions, local governments, and community actors negotiate and implement peace efforts in practice, and it guided the analysis by providing a lens to examine the interactions, adaptations, and socio-economic development processes that shape peace on the ground.

Statement of the Problem

Despite recent gains in reducing armed conflict, sustaining peace in the Philippines remains a persistent governance challenge. Existing scholarship continues to rely heavily on liberal, top-down perspectives that inadequately capture how peace efforts unfold across national agencies, local governments, and community actors. As a consequence, there is limited empirical understanding of the hybrid nature of these interactions, particularly how locally-driven practices intersect with national peace frameworks and influence the administration of socio-economic development. This knowledge gap restricts both academic analysis and policy formulation, highlighting the need to examine how hybrid peacebuilding actually manifests in Philippine peace efforts and how these dynamics shape public administration, especially in the delivery and management of socio-economic development interventions.

General Objective:

This study aims to examine the hybridity of peace efforts in the Philippines using the post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding framework, with particular attention to their implications for public administration and the administration of socio-economic development.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify and describe the hybridity present in current peacebuilding and peace management processes in the Philippines.
2. To examine whether the hybrid practices observed in peace efforts emerge organically from local contexts or are shaped primarily by external interventions and government initiatives.
3. To identify the challenges and socio-economic issues encountered in the implementation of peace strategies on the ground.
4. To analyze the implications of these findings for public administration, with emphasis on socio-economic development, governance, and policy formulation.

To achieve these objectives, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What forms of hybridity are present in current peacebuilding and peace management processes in the Philippines?
2. Does the hybridity observed in peace efforts originate from local contexts, or is it primarily shaped by external interventions and government initiatives?
3. What challenges and socio-economic issues affect the implementation of peace strategies on the ground?
4. What are the implications of these findings for public administration, particularly the administration of socio-economic development and governance?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine how hybrid peacebuilding operated in the Philippines, particularly in relation to public administration and the administration of socio-economic development. The case study approach was applied as a multi-site case orientation, focusing on peace efforts across national, regional, provincial, and community levels as a bounded case of governance interactions. This design was appropriate because it enabled an in-depth examination of how peacebuilding processes unfolded within real-life institutional and community contexts, and it allowed the researcher to capture the lived experiences of national government agencies, Local Government Units (LGUs), and community-based practitioners. Guided by the post-liberal hybrid peacebuilding framework, the study investigated how peace strategies were implemented on the ground, how different actors interacted within multi-level governance arrangements, and how these processes influenced the administration of socio-economic development.



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Population and Sampling

The study was conducted across multiple governance levels, with the primary site located in the National Capital Region (NCR), where major national peace and development agencies are based. To capture contextual variation and reflect the multi-level nature of hybrid peacebuilding, additional sites included the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Central Luzon, Southern Luzon, Mindanao, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). These locations collectively provided a diverse field for examining how peace efforts operated across national, regional, provincial, and community settings.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who possessed direct experience and authoritative knowledge related to peacebuilding, public administration, or socio-economic development. Participants were included if they (1) were actively involved in policy-making, program implementation, or local operations relevant to peace or socio-economic development; (2) represented institutions engaged in the country's peace efforts or administrations of socio-economic development; and (3) voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. This approach ensured that only individuals with substantive and relevant engagement in peace efforts and administration of socio-economic development were invited.

A total of 36 key informants were interviewed. They consisted of senior, mid-level, and field-level personnel from the Department of National Defense (DND), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU), National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDEV), along with governors, mayors, barangay officials, civil society peace actors, and community leaders. The distribution of participants across multiple governance levels supported a comprehensive understanding of hybrid peacebuilding practices in varied institutional and community contexts. Recurring perspectives among these informants indicated that a sufficient level of thematic redundancy or data saturation had been reached.

Other Data Sources

To contextualize interview findings, documentary sources were reviewed, including national and local peace (and socio-economic development) policy documents (e.g. National Peace Framework, Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, Local Government Code of 1991, Executive Order No. 70 – Institutionalization of the Whole of Government approach, etc.), agency operational guidelines, historical records, and institutional reports. These documents were accessed through official websites, public archives, and institutional permissions.

Instruments

The primary instrument for this study was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide tailored for three respondent groups: (1) national government agencies, (2) LGUs, and (3) other peace actors such as civil society organizations and peace volunteers. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed narratives on peace strategies, governance challenges, institutional interactions, and socio-economic development processes.

For validation, the instrument was reviewed by two experts - a peace and conflict scholar, and a public administration professor - who assessed the guide for clarity, relevance, logical flow, ethical suitability, and alignment with the study's objectives. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. Before formal use, the interview guide also underwent a brief pilot check with personnel from the DND and AFP to ensure that the questions were understandable and capable of generating the depth and type of responses required for the study.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted during the third trimester of Academic Year 2024 - 2025. Semi-structured interviews were carried out through face-to-face engagements and audio or video conferencing, depending on participant preference, location and availability. Each interview session lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. In addition to the interviews, documentary materials including policy frameworks, official issuances, and institutional reports were gathered and reviewed to support and contextualize the information obtained from the interviews.



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Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed using a systematic thematic analysis approach aligned with the study's hybrid peacebuilding framework. A total of 890 usable statements were analyzed and organized into a Master Quote Bank containing verbatim quotations, translations, thematic codes, and interpretive notes. This process ensured that the findings were firmly grounded in participants' lived experiences while revealing broader governance and socio-economic development implications. The overall process involved the following steps:

1. Familiarization – Transcripts were read repeatedly to develop a comprehensive understanding of participants' narratives.
2. Data Cleaning – Transcripts were verified against recordings or notes, with prompts, redundancies, and off-topic content removed. Filipino and local-language statements were translated into academic English while preserving meaning and context.
3. Extraction of Significant Statements – Statements relevant to hybrid peacebuilding, governance processes, multi-level interactions, and socio-economic impacts were identified.
4. Formulation of Meanings – Significant statements were interpreted to derive underlying meanings, insights, and relational patterns.
5. Organization into Themes – Meanings were grouped into major thematic clusters and consolidated into a comprehensive Thematic Codebook.
6. Cross-Case Comparison – A Cross-Case Matrix was used to compare themes across national, regional, and local actors to identify areas of convergence and divergence.
7. Member Checking – Preliminary interpretations were shared with selected participants to confirm accuracy and strengthen credibility.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to established ethical protocols to protect participants' rights and uphold research integrity. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could decline or withdraw at any point without any penalty. Confidentiality was maintained by conducting interviews in private settings whenever possible and assigning randomized participant codes to ensure anonymity.

Prior to each interview, permission to record was requested; when recording was not allowed, detailed written notes were taken instead. Formal letters of request were issued to all prospective participants, and institutional approval to conduct the study was secured from the College of Public Administration and Governance, Tarlac State University. Ethical compliance was fully documented as part of the research process.

All interview transcripts, audio and video files, and notes were stored in password-protected digital folders accessible only to the researcher. Printed documents that were used were kept in a locked cabinet in a secured location. In accordance with standard ethical practice, all data will be retained for three years and will be permanently deleted or destroyed afterward to ensure continued protection of participant information.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the participants. The findings follows the sequence outlined in the study's statement of the problem to ensure coherence and alignment with the research objectives. Moreover, the thematic presentations are organized into emergent themes, and each accompanied by a corresponding interpretation and discussion.

1. Locating and Characterizing the Hybridity of Peace Efforts

The findings of this study revealed that the hybridity of peace efforts in the Philippines is not fixed but a continuously evolving condition. It operates across three overlapping layers which are: policy convergence and institutional coordination, localized adaption, and social inclusion.

Themes

Whole of Nation Approach and Institutional Convergence

Security – Development Nexus

Localization and Decentralization Implementation Process

1.1 Whole-of-Nation Approach and Institutional Convergence



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The findings revealed that the Whole-of-Nation approach operated through unified collaboration among national agencies, Local Government Units (LGUs), and civil society actors. Participants consistently described this collaboration as a form of institutional hybridity in which bureaucratic hierarchies and community-based initiatives worked within shared "mission spaces." This was reflected in statements such as, "Peacebuilding is not just an agency mandate but it is everyone's shared duty" (R-019, Mid-Grade Officer, AFP, Visayas), and "When convergence works, it is not command but a commitment" (R-002, Senior Official, DILG, National). The data showed that peace efforts were multi-agency, mission-oriented, and process-driven. Participants from the Office of Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity (OPAPRU), Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Interior and Local Governance (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDEV) emphasized that the Whole-of-Nation approach functioned not merely as a formal directive but as an administrative system through which security, development, and welfare were implemented synchronously. Inter-agency collaboration transformed formerly linear and sector-specific programs into cooperative governance mechanisms capable of addressing complex peace and development challenges.

These findings aligned with Mac Ginty (2021) and Richmond (2021), who argued that hybrid peacebuilding developed through negotiated relationships among institutions and actors rather than through rigid, top-down templates. They also support Roberts' (2018) claims that hybridity emerges when there is a natural combination of bottoms-up and top-to-bottom processes. The observed convergence demonstrated how hybrid arrangements emerge when centralized policies interact with localized initiatives and inter-agency coordination.

The theme indicated that institutional convergence was a central feature of hybrid peacebuilding in the Philippines. It contributed to answering the research question on how hybrid processes operated across governance levels by showing that national and local actors jointly shaped peace efforts through shared administrative tasks and collective responsibility.

1.2 Security - Development Nexus

The findings showed that defense and socio-economic development were integrated under a unified governance perspective, revealing a clear manifestation of the security-development nexus. Participants consistently described peace and development as inseparable. This convergence appeared most visibly in joint operations between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and LGUs, particularly through civic-military activities. Examples included: "Development is the strongest deterrent to insurgency" (R-010, Program Officer, OPAPRU, National); "The military provides the structure; the LGU provides the connection; the community provides the trust" (R-007, AFP CMO Officer, AFP, National); and "We built roads and trust at the same time. We built schools and other infrastructures as we built the confidence of the people to the men in uniform" (R-019, Mid-Grade Officer, AFP, Visayas). These accounts indicated that the security-development nexus blurred traditional bureaucratic boundaries and created shared governance spaces where security, welfare, and development functions operated simultaneously. At the national level, hybridity emerged through institutional learning among OPAPRU, DND, DILG, and other agencies. Over time, these institutions redefined peacebuilding from a sector-specific intervention that is primarily associated with defense into an integrated governance process linking social services, infrastructure development, and local governance reforms. One OPAPRU program manager described this shift as a movement "from containment to coordination," reflecting a broadening of peace efforts to include socio-economic interventions alongside security initiatives (R-006, Peace Program Manager, OPAPRU, National).

This finding supported the scholarship of Ragragio and Villarin (2024), who argued that hybridity emerged when peacebuilding moved away from standardized, top-down reforms centered solely on securitization. It also aligned with the post-liberal perspective in which hybrid peacebuilding operated through intersections of defense, development, and governance functions, making administrative and community-based collaboration essential to sustaining peace.

The integration of security and development functions demonstrated that hybrid peacebuilding in the Philippines relied on coordinated governance practices across institutions and levels. This contributed to answering the research question on how hybrid processes were located, showing that peacebuilding became more effective when security frameworks were integrated with development programs and local governance initiatives.

2. Organic Evolution vs. External Interventions

The findings revealed that the hybridization process of peace efforts in the Philippines has evolved not only as a response to internal governance dynamics but also as an adaptation to external policy influences. The data indicates that hybridity organically evolved because it arised from accumulated local experiences, administrative



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improvisations (adaptation and localization efforts), and inter-agency negotiations. Meaning, it is not a mere extension of externally induced liberal peace models.

Themes

*Community Participation and Social Inclusion
Cultural Sensitivity and Indigenous Approaches*

2.1 Community Participation and Social Inclusion

The findings revealed that community participation played a central role in shaping peace efforts, particularly through local dialogues, local peace councils, and participatory governance mechanisms. Participants emphasized that citizen involvement transformed peace initiatives from state-centered interventions into more people-centered and contextually responsive processes. Illustrative statements included: "Peace begins when people are invited, and definitely not when instructed. It should really start from the grassroots" (R-031, Social Worker, DSWD, Mindanao); "Consultation without follow-through is useless" (R-014, Peace Facilitator, NGO, Luzon); and "The agenda always changed, especially when women and youth were in the room" (R-017, Field Coordinator, OPAPRU, Visayas). These accounts showed that peacebuilding operated through a bottom-up process that complemented the top-down flow of national directives. Community participation created informal networks of collaboration that is built on relationships, trust in local leaders, and continuous communication while intersecting with the formal hierarchy of government institutions. This duality revealed that hybrid governance did not rely solely on institutional mandates but also on social legitimacy generated at the community level. Participation broadened decision-making spaces and allowed local concerns, especially those of women, youth, and grassroots groups, to influence peacebuilding priorities.

The pattern aligned with Ibrahim (2021) and Maca (2022), who argued that local actors functioned as active agents whose identities, knowledge, and everyday experiences shaped how peace initiatives were interpreted and implemented. Community participation produced adaptive and grounded forms of hybrid peacebuilding that extended beyond externally-driven liberal peace models.

The integration of community voices demonstrated that hybrid peacebuilding in the Philippines evolved organically through local engagement and participatory governance. This contributed to the study's objective of identifying how hybrid processes were formed, showing that social inclusion strengthened the legitimacy, responsiveness, and sustainability of peace efforts across governance levels.

2.2 Cultural Sensitivity and Indigenous Approaches

The findings showed that peacebuilding became stronger and more sustainable when local customs, indigenous systems, and cultural norms were integrated into governance processes. Participants emphasized that peace efforts became fragile when detached from cultural legitimacy, and that culturally grounded approaches created deeper trust and acceptance among communities. Illustrative statements included: "Peace must sound like our language. It should not be foreign and it should not be hard for us to understand. It should fit perfectly with our means and ways of life here in the mountains" (R-029, Indigenous Leader, Local Community, Luzon); "Government recognizes cultural traditions; we recognize its spirit. They will never know that because they are not the ones on the ground" (R-032, Former Rebel Reintegration Partner, Local Community, Mindanao); and "Respect for elders is our first peace agreement. There is no other way" (R-026, Peace Council Representative, Local Community, Mindanao). These accounts indicated that peacebuilding was most effective when it aligned with cultural identities and locally shared values. Participants noted that long-term success no longer depended on adapting external models but on ensuring local ownership and tailored-fit strategies that reflected indigenous governance practices. This perspective was echoed by a senior DND official who stated, "Our approach to peace cannot be imported. This has changed. It actually grew from what we already have" (R-001, Senior Official, DND, National). This reflected a shift from external templates to organically developed systems shaped by local knowledge, community authority, and deeply rooted traditions.

The theme supported Bertrand (2021), who argued that peacebuilding must be localized and authority decentralized for approaches to fit community realities. It also aligned with post-liberal and hybrid peacebuilding perspectives, which maintain that lasting peace arises when liberal mechanisms are blended with indigenous administrative norms and community-based governance practices (Roberts, 2018).

The prominence of cultural sensitivity in shaping peace efforts demonstrated that the hybridity of peace efforts in the Philippines evolved internally rather than being imposed externally. This contributed to the study's



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objective of identifying the evolution of hybridity by showing that peace processes became more legitimate, adaptive, and sustainable when anchored on indigenous traditions, bureaucratic collaboration, and shared community missions.

3. Challenges and Problems in Current Peace Strategies

The key findings revealed that while the peace efforts in the Philippines are well-intentioned, there are still persistent administrative, socio-economic, and coordination challenges. However, it is important to note that these challenges do not invalidate the gains of the peace efforts but rather revealed the gaps between the bureaucratic processes and the realities on the ground. They revealed the real issues that fall between the creation of the policies (national) and the actual implementation on the communities (local).

Themes

Institutional Coordination and Bureaucratic Challenges

Socio-Economic Reintegration and Livelihood

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainability

3.1 Institutional Coordination and Bureaucratic Challenges

The findings revealed that institutional coordination remained one of the most persistent challenges in the current peace strategies. Participants described complex interactions among agencies where overlapping mandates, unclear roles, and bureaucratic bottlenecks hindered operational harmony. This tension appeared in statements such as, "We spent more time reporting than responding. That was always the case so the response was not enough" (R-024, Regional Director, DSWD Mindanao); "Everyone coordinated, but not everyone cooperated. When the work needed to be done, those who were active in the planning were no longer there to implement" (R-012, Provincial Officer, DILG Visayas); and "The problem was not the people but the process itself. There were so many things that needed to be addressed in the systems and peace processes" (R-019, Mid-Grade Officer, AFP, Visayas). A mayor from the Visayas further highlighted the issue of duplication: "May duplication pa rin ng mga proyekto kahit na may task force. Pati ang mga involved e confused kasi di malinaw kung kanino talaga nakatoka ang trabaho. Lahat na lang nagpapameeting. Napakadaming plano." ["There were still duplicate projects even with a task force in place. The people involved were confused because roles were unclear. Everyone kept calling for meetings. There were too many plans."] (R-013, Mayor, LGU, Visayas). These accounts indicated that the fragmentation of roles and processes created what participants referred to as "coordination fatigue." Frequent convergence meetings, unclear reporting lines, and competing key performance indicators slowed implementation and reduced administrative efficiency. The findings showed that although agencies converged at the policy level, operational-level collaboration remained constrained by bureaucratic practices that were not aligned with the pace and needs of community-based peace work.

This pattern corresponded with the broader observation in hybrid peacebuilding scholarship that negotiated governance processes often encounter institutional friction when formal bureaucratic structures intersect with collaborative, multi-level arrangements (Mac Ginty, 2021; Richmond, 2021). These frictions reflected the challenges of adapting traditional administrative systems to hybrid environments that required flexibility, shared decision-making, and continuous coordination.

The persistence of coordination and bureaucratic challenges demonstrated that peace efforts required not only convergence at the policy level but also adaptive administrative systems capable of supporting multi-agency implementation. These findings addressed the study's objective of examining the gaps between national-level policy creation and local-level execution, showing that institutional alignment remained essential for sustaining hybrid peacebuilding processes.

3.2 Socio-Economic Reintegration and Livelihood

The findings revealed that socio-economic reintegration was central to peacebuilding, particularly through programs that linked peace efforts to economic rehabilitation, livelihood development, and community resilience. Participants consistently associated peace with the restoration of dignity which is expressed through stable income, food security, education, and mobility. Examples included: "Peace is when families do not need to wait for relief goods. It was when they had enough food on the table and a sustainable source" (R-024, Regional Director, DSWD, Mindanao); "Livelihood was not assistance but more like a restoration" (R-023, Regional Director, OPAPRU, Mindanao); and "We could not talk about peace when hunger was louder. Food on the table and basic needs come first before anything else" (R-034, Peace Education Advocate, Local Community, Visayas). The data indicated that reintegration had both symbolic and material dimensions. Symbolically, it represented a shift from conflict to



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normalized community life. Materially, it transformed former conflict areas into productive communities through livelihood restoration. However, participants emphasized that livelihood interventions were fragile due to delays, fragmentation, and limited sustainability. As the OPAPRU official further explained: "Mahirap ang pagbabalik sa normal kung walang kabuhayan ang mga tao. Minsan din kasi, ang efforts ng gobyerno ay di talaga sapat. Kadalasan pa, parang Band-Aid solutions lang." ["It was difficult to return to normal life without livelihood. There were times when government efforts were not enough. Most of the time, they were only band-aid solutions."] (R-023, Regional Director, OPAPRU, Mindanao). The DSWD official similarly added that programs often ended when funding cycles closed, leaving beneficiaries vulnerable to relapse into poverty (R-024, Regional Director, DSWD, Mindanao). These accounts highlighted that peace could not take root without sustained and stable socio-economic support.

These findings aligned with emerging research emphasizing that post-conflict reintegration, livelihood support, and multi-level governance arrangements were essential to consolidating peace (Ishikawa, 2023). The results also affirmed earlier arguments that peace efforts must address poverty, enhance access to education, and strengthen health services to secure long-term stability (Atienza & Tablatin, 2023; Fernandez & Gutierrez, 2022).

The theme demonstrated that weaknesses in the peace effort lay not in the frameworks but in institutional continuity and sustainability. The absence of a sustained reintegration pipeline (from immediate assistance to long-term socio-economic development) revealed a structural disconnect between peace administration and mainstream development governance. These findings addressed the study's objective by showing that socio-economic reintegration was indispensable to preventing relapse and ensuring durable peace in conflict-affected communities.

3.3 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainability

The findings revealed that monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability mechanisms in peace programs were weak, inconsistent, and vulnerable to political turnover. Participants emphasized that the absence of systematic evaluation undermined long-term gains and created discontinuity across administrative transitions. This was reflected in statements such as, "Every new administration reset our progress. There was no continuity because everything depended on who held the positions" (R-008, Senior Official, DSWD, National); "Without monitoring, we repeated the same mistakes over and over again" (R-024, Regional Director, DSWD, Mindanao); and "Sustainability was the quiet partner of peace. It needs to be long-lasting" (R-034, Peace Education Advocate, Visayas). The interviews showed that monitoring and evaluation systems were often procedural rather than developmental. Participants noted that assessments tended to focus on outputs such as the number of trainings, meetings, or beneficiaries rather than on outcomes such as behavioral change, trust restoration, or livelihood sustainability. A peace council member described this gap clearly: "Pag natapos ang project, wala na nagmomonitor if nagtuloy-tuloy pa." ["After the project ended, no one monitored whether it continued."] (R-035, Peace Council Member, Local Community, Luzon). This indicated that sustainability was frequently sacrificed for compliance, as the administrative focus leaned heavily toward reporting requirements rather than the long-term effectiveness of programs.

These findings aligned with Rodriguez's (2022) observation that socio-economic vulnerabilities were key determinants of conflict relapse, making sustained program follow-through essential. The administrative weaknesses described by participants also echoed Mendoza et al. (2021), who noted that Philippine counter-insurgency and development programs often struggled with coordination inefficiencies. Together, these insights reinforced the broader understanding that weak monitoring and fragmented evaluation systems limited the long-term impact of peace and development efforts.

The theme demonstrated that despite progress in multi-level coordination, peace efforts remained fragile when sustainability mechanisms were not institutionalized. Weak monitoring, fragmented evaluation, and inconsistent follow-through revealed a structural gap between peace administration and socio-economic development governance. These findings addressed the study's objective by showing that the absence of sustained systems and developmental monitoring hindered the consolidation of long-term peace in conflict-affected communities.

4. Implication of the Findings in Public Administration (Socio-Economic Development)

The findings carried important implications for public administration in the Philippines, especially in administering socio-economic development in conflict-affected and transitioning areas. The hybridity of peace efforts that emerged showed a form of governance that moved beyond traditional boundaries between security, welfare, and development, reshaping the bureaucracy into a more collaborative and adaptive system.

First, the results indicated that the administrative identity of the state was shifting from hierarchical control to networked governance. The Whole-of-Nation approach illustrated how authority became shared and negotiated among agencies, LGUs, and community actors. While national bodies provided direction, local governments and



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communities carried out peace initiatives in ways that were culturally grounded. This transition required public servants who could navigate ambiguity, coordinate across institutions, and balance accountability with flexibility.

Second, the findings suggested that administrative hybridity offered a workable model for socio-economic development. Programs from agencies such as OPAPRU, DILG, DSWD, and DEPDEV demonstrated improved outcomes when inter-agency cooperation and community participation were institutionalized. Livelihood and reintegration interventions were more sustainable when linked with education, governance support, and social services. This showed that socio-economic development functioned best as an administrative synergy operating in shared mission spaces rather than as isolated sectoral efforts.

Third, the study highlighted the human and relational dimensions of public administration. Peace administration was described as relational rather than purely procedural, with success depending on trust, empathy, dialogue, and moral legitimacy. Governance effectiveness extended beyond outputs to include the restoration of social relationships and community confidence, consistent with post-liberal perspectives that view citizens as active partners in peace and development.

Lastly, the findings implied that effective governance in post-conflict contexts required transformative hybridity. By blending formal and informal systems, balancing authority with participation, and anchoring development in collaborative governance, hybrid peace redefined success. It shifted focus from compliance to contextual adaptation, from program delivery to relationship building, and from administrative efficiency to long-term community resilience. This positioned hybrid peace not only as a peace strategy but also as a developmental paradigm connecting security with socio-economic reform.

Conclusions

The study concluded that peace efforts in the Philippines were shaped by a deeply hybrid form of governance where national agencies, local governments, and community actors worked together across multiple layers. This hybrid character was not theoretical; it was the actual condition under which peace work unfolded on the ground. Collaboration, cultural grounding, and adaptive leadership collectively redefined how governance operated in areas affected by conflict.

The findings showed that the hybridity evolved organically. They did not originate from externally imposed models but grew out of local experience, administrative necessity, and the continuous negotiation between national directives and local realities. Formal mechanisms such as inter-agency task forces and peace and development councils provided the structure, but the substance of implementation came from the way local actors interpreted, adjusted, and translated these policies into practices that were meaningful to their communities. This demonstrated that peace efforts were most effective when they were flexible, context sensitive, and co-produced by state and non-state actors.

Moreover, the study also concluded that peace and socio-economic development interventions remained limited by administrative fragmentation and uneven implementation. Overlapping functions, unclear roles, and weak monitoring systems reduced program effectiveness and hindered long-term continuity. Local governments and communities also faced fiscal, technical, and political constraints that made it difficult to sustain gains once projects ended. These conditions revealed a continuing gap between national policy design and local operational realities.

Lastly, the study concluded that hybrid peace offered important contributions to public administration. The experiences of peace actors showed that governance in complex and post conflict environments could not rely on rigid and purely hierarchical structures. It required a more collaborative and relational approach where authority, responsibility, and legitimacy were shared among all actors engaged in the process. In this way, hybrid peace served not only as a peacebuilding strategy but also as a developmental perspective that connected the domains of peace, security, and socio economic reform through cooperation, adaptability, and grounded community engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several actions may strengthen hybrid peace administration and improve the delivery of socio-economic development in conflict affected communities. These recommendations emphasize institutionalization, stronger local engagement, improved coordination systems, and sustained research support for evidence based governance.

1. National government agencies such as Office of Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of National Defense, and Department of Economy, Planning, and Development may institutionalize hybrid



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peace as a guiding framework for peace and development administration. This may include reinforcing interagency cooperation, aligning national directives with local adaptation, and ensuring that collaborative governance is embedded in standard administrative practice.

2. Local Government Units (LGUs) may strengthen community-based participation mechanisms to ensure that peace initiatives reflect cultural legitimacy and local ownership. Integrating regular dialogues, indigenous practices, and inclusive planning processes may enhance the responsiveness and acceptance of peace efforts.
3. National agencies and LGUs may establish unified coordination and monitoring systems that reduce duplication, clarify roles, and track both outputs and outcomes of programs. Improved monitoring and evaluation systems may ensure continuity, prevent administrative fragmentation, and sustain gains beyond political transitions.
4. Academic institutions, policy centers, and peace practitioners may collaborate to develop tools that measure hybridity in governance and assess the long term socio-economic effects of peace interventions. These tools may guide policy evaluation, strengthen program design, and support the theoretical development of hybrid peace in the Philippine context.

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