An Imperfect Reality: Gender Mainstreaming and Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) in Liberia

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Abstract

An Imperfect Reality: Gender Mainstreaming and Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) in Liberia

Helen S.A. Basini

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes are a fundamental component in peacebuilding operations and feature in most contemporary peace agreements. Since the conceptualisation of peacebuilding in the early 1990s, there has been a marked shift towards promoting the spread of liberal democracy, rule of law and rejuvenation of markets in countries emerging from conflict. This liberal peacebuilding approach has been criticised by scholars for creating sequencing difficulties, for imposing a form of Western Imperialism and for neglecting the local context. Furthermore, feminists consider this type of peacebuilding as limited as it focuses on the priorities of men in the post-conflict environment and fails to recognise women’s changed roles through conflict or their agency, and frequently expects them to return to conventional gender roles. Despite policy revisions to include women’s perspectives (e.g. UNSCR 1325) women are still viewed as victims and peacemakers, and their roles and needs are not sufficiently addressed.

This is acutely evident in DDR programmes, which have neglected many of the concerns of women who help constitute fighting forces in modern warfare. Moves to include women through gender mainstreaming have not been researched in detail and in this respect this study provides an original contribution to knowledge. This study investigated the gender mainstreaming of DDR in Liberia from both implementer and participant perspectives. This hybrid approach reveals that the gender provision only fully exerted an impact within the DD process with campaigns to improve participation. Proxy cases stretched budgets that meant that the gender mainstreaming of both the RR was virtually non-existent. Women were treated largely the same as men with a programme that focused solely on economic reintegration. Issues of enhancing gender equality were sidelined. Despite the majority not using the skills learnt through DDR, most gained some empowerment from the process and had reintegrated well despite many showing signs of psychological trauma. Their positive reintegration was not much an effect of DDRR but rather a function of their social reintegration processes and in particular their social networks and community links. These findings represent an advance in understanding of social reintegration in African post-conflict settings and the extent to which such networks are an important feature of successful reintegration for women. This research advocates policy revisions that incorporate social reintegration as a basis for DDR programmes and use a hybrid approach to planning.
Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is the work of the candidate alone and has not been submitted to any other University or higher education institution in support of a different award. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

A shortened version of this work has been published under the following citation:

Signed

Date ______21/11/2013_______

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ID No: 0621102
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACS</td>
<td>American Colonisation Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFELL</td>
<td>Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>Armed Forces of Liberia</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>DD</td>
<td>Disarmament and Demobilisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDRR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEX</td>
<td>Direct Execution Mode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>Department of Peacekeeping Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOMOG</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoL</td>
<td>Government of Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDDRS</td>
<td>International Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>International Financial Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGNU</td>
<td>Interim Government for National Unity</td>
</tr>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INPFL</td>
<td>Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIU</td>
<td>Joint Implementation Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDF</td>
<td>Lofa Defense Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>LNP</td>
<td>Liberian National Police</td>
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<td>LPC</td>
<td>Liberian Peace Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>LURD</td>
<td>Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARWOPNET</td>
<td>Mano River Union Women Peace Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDD</td>
<td>Major Depressive Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDTF</td>
<td>Multi Donor Trust Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>Movement for Democracy in Liberia</td>
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<td>MOJA</td>
<td>Movement for Justice in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDPL</td>
<td>National Democratic Party of Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>National Patriotic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTGL</td>
<td>National Transitional Government of Liberia</td>
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<td>NCDDR</td>
<td>National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCDDRR</td>
<td>National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEPI</td>
<td>National Ex-Combatant Peacebuilding Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPFL</td>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPFL-CRC</td>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Liberia – Central Revolutionary Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGA</td>
<td>Office of the Gender Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Redemption Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>Rehabilitation and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUF</td>
<td>Revolutionary United Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRSG</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General</td>
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<td>SSR</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>TATP</td>
<td>Tumatu Agricultural Training Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWP</td>
<td>True Whig Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULIMO</td>
<td>United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Fund for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNOMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia</td>
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<td>UNMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPOL</td>
<td>United Nations Police Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWOMEN</td>
<td>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAC</td>
<td>Women’s Artillery Commandos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAFF</td>
<td>Women Associated with Fighting Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANEP</td>
<td>West African Network for Peacebuilding</td>
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<td>WIPNET</td>
<td>Women in Peacebuilding Network</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview and Rationale

The rise in intra-state conflicts and the end of the Cold War sparked a dramatic shift in international peacebuilding approaches. Moves away from third party interventionist strategies to a multidimensional method first outlined by Boutros-Ghali (UN Secretary General) in his Agenda for Peace (1992) conceptualised peace through a new framework. This new framework was anchored in a liberal vision of governance which transplanted the values and institutions of liberal democracy, rule of law and a market economy to the affairs of peripheral states (Paris 2002, p.638). Scholars labeled this framework the ‘Liberal Peace’ model and it codified a standardised toolkit of activities which focused on security, political and humanitarian objectives.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes have come to be a cornerstone of peace interventions from within this toolkit. In their simplest form these programmes aim to remove (and destroy) weapons from circulation, to disband military structures and provide short-term interim care, and to reintegrate ex-combatants back into the community by offering the economic and social outlets of a choice of vocational skills training, formal education and reconciliation activities. DDR’s aims are wide ranging because they bridge the divide between security and development; they aspire to provide a secure and stable environment in which the overall peace process can be planned and implemented. Given that it spans the entire peacebuilding operation DDR’s importance cannot be overstated. Unless it is implemented
carefully and effectively, DDR has the potential to derail the entire peace
process or to contribute to an escalation in violence.¹

When the modern version of these programmes arose in the late 1980s they
reflected the current international agenda at that time which was particularly
focused on matters of security. With the subsequent emergence of the liberal
peacebuilding approach and associated revisions, DDR strategy has inevitably
been amended by a similar security agenda. In recent years there has been a
marked recalibration of the earlier phases which Muggah (2010, p.1)
categorises as ‘minimalist’ focusing on maintaining stability, security and
upholding ceasefires to a more ‘maximalist’ approach which inhere
developmental oriented integrated qualities through attempts to coordinate
military, police, rule of law and social welfare programmes. In response to these
integrated reforms, extensive guidelines and policies have been devised to
assist in the planning and implementation of such programmes, culminating in

Despite the expanded strategy of DDR under the liberal agenda however, many
limitations to the liberal approach emerged. In particular, the liberal peace
model has been criticised due to sequencing issues that prioritise elections, the
reinforcement of inequality by promoting competition, the imposition of a
Western peace agenda and the failure to duly consider the local context and
social and indigenous processes. In the same way, DDR itself has been
accused of an overemphasis on security, inadequate consideration of context,
weak coordination, implementation and sequencing, and a top-down approach
that is oblivious to societal factors which are essential for reintegration.

¹ For example in Angola in 1991-2 the slow implementation of DDR, a rigid timetable and poor
resources lead to many combatants self-demobilising. The rise in weapons among the civilian
population, a decline in law and order and slow progress in establishing a central administration
lead to two further years of high intensity fighting (Porto and Parsons, 2003: 27). A similar
situation occurred in the failed DDR in Liberia in 1997 where a strict timetable forced the whole
process to be completed within three months and cut demobilisation to a day. Taylor’s forces in
particular were not committed and violence resumed shortly afterwards.
The top-down and imposed trajectory of the liberal peace approach and DDR, has neglected those that work at the grassroots which can be problematic. This is particularly the case for women, who are routinely sidelined from official peace negotiations through the hyper-masculine formulation of modern peacebuilding. The results are detrimental to women’s opportunities to capitalise on the post-war moment, with programmes (especially DDR) that are nominally designed to assist them but which do not properly reflect their needs. The rationale behind DDR stems from a narrow preoccupation with security and this perpetuates fear that ex-combatants who are inadequately reintegrated into society might become potential spoilers to any peace process. This deterministic preoccupation means that DDR programmes have been targeted primarily at arms bearers and hence at men. What has not been taken into account is the changing nature of women’s involvement in conflict and the complexity of the roles that women often assume. This is despite the fact that over the last twenty-five years there has been increasing institutional recognition of the active roles women play within military groups.

Conventional notions of warfare have generally regarded violence exclusively within the domain of men. As Zarkov and Cockburn (2002, p.12) suggest, militarist discourse predictably highlights masculinity, associating men with aggression, arms and glory with women assigned roles as procreators, victims and peace-builders. This dichotomy inherently reduces women to passive victims and thereby denies them personal agency as well as reinforcing patriarchal principles. Yet in most modern civil conflicts women fight and provide support, and they often play a central role in fighting forces. Whilst women’s involvement in active combat is not a recent phenomenon, in contemporary forms of war women’s roles are more deliberate and they often willingly choose

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2 This is a window of opportunity that offers women the potential to push their agenda within the formation of the new state.
3 I am aware that ‘women’ are not a homogenous group and one cannot assume that they react similarly. This research chooses to use the term women but acknowledges the differences across the group. It also assumes that girls will fall under the same group unless explicitly stated. Whilst some may view this as a limitation this research take the perspective of Kaufman and Williams (2010, p.4) that generalising across groups of women becomes a heuristic device from which tentative conclusions can be formulated.
to enlist in order to serve a religious, ethnic or political cause (Goldstein 2001). This can involve women taking up arms on the front lines, and in some cases to assume a command position in the orchestration of violence and execution of brutal acts. However, whilst some women become active combatants, the reality for the majority is that they support the war effort in an ancillary capacity or engage in a combination of the two. This covers a huge spectrum of roles, such as commanders’ ‘wives’, cooks, porters, spies, messengers, and medics. Frequently women are coerced into fighting, or they join to escape poverty, and/or for protection. All told, women and girls make up a significant proportion of armed forces. To reflect the diverse roles that they play, they shall be referred to in this study as women associated with fighting forces (WAFF)/ex-combatants.

The top-down modus operandi of the liberal model, the focus on security in DDR, the limited number of women in peace negotiations and the diverse roles of women in conflict, have weakened provisions for women in the DDR process. Feminist liberal ideals assert that women have the right to equal opportunities within DDR and it is therefore imperative in conflict transformation situations that women be consulted about programmes that directly affect them. However, historically this has not been the case. For WAFFs/ex-combatants little specific provision was made within DDR resulting in programmes that have fallen short of fulfilling their requirements, which may differ substantially from those of men. The first wave of academic analysis on gender issues in DDR (including Nilsson 2005; Farr 2002, 2003; de Watteville 2002; McKay and Mazurana 2004; Kingma 2002; Mazurana and McKay 2003) revealed that they were often excluded from DDR for reasons including restrictive entry requirements, such as not possessing a weapon (which was usually a condition for registration) or through misinformation from commanders. Additionally, logistical issues such as a lack of childcare provision during demobilisation and security concerns in the cantonments prohibited them from the process. In some cases women chose to stay away as they did not want to be labeled as fighters, which

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4 Up to date statistics of estimates of WAFFs/ex-combatants are difficult to obtain but Spellings (2008, p.11) suggests that anywhere from 6-50 per cent of child soldiers to be girls.
challenged traditional gender conceptions and was associated with social stigma. In fact, the organisation of programmes often resulted in women returning to their traditional gender roles and the new skills acquired during time with fighting forces or transformations in roles experienced during conflict were not taken into account (MacKenzie 2009a and 2009b).

This initial research on the gender dimensions of DDR taught us much about the experiences of women during the original DDR programmes and highlighted systemic inadequacies. However with the shift to the maximalist integrated programmes of recent years, women’s needs are now more frequently considered within post-conflict recovery programmes. Building on calls for gender balance and gender-mainstreaming in addressing armed conflicts at the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, and through the passage in 2000 of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, women’s rights and gender equality were elevated within the security agenda (Barnes and Olonisakin 2011, p.3). UNSCR 1325 called upon member states to ensure that gender is mainstreamed through all conflict prevention, peacekeeping activities and in post-conflict programming and to include more women in decision making and planning. But despite these positive moves, feminist scholars (Shepherd, 2008a and 2008b, 2011) have criticised the resolution for continuing to view women as peacemakers and victims who are in need of protection with few moves towards achieving gender equality. Furthermore, the gender mainstreaming mechanisms adopted are frequently hard to translate and implement in situ and as a result, do little to change the social and political reality for women in post-conflict contexts.

Special provision for such gender mainstreaming processes have occurred in DDR but exploring whether these gender mainstreaming initiatives are meeting the needs of WAFFs/ex-combatants has not been sufficiently addressed in the academic debate. Research is usually conducted too close to end of process to see any real reintegration effects and it does not review sufficient cases or consider them in enough detail. Also it often focuses on economic factors without considering the important aspect of social and psychological
reintegration. Much of the work to date on DDR has yielded information about programme modifications but has not revealed the constraints for implementers of gender mainstreaming or explored in sufficient detail the lived experiences of women and their perceptions of social reintegration. Neither has it considered whether specifically attending to women’s situations can have an overall positive effect on broader peace interventions or on societal gender relations (Anderlini 2007, p.95).

To explore these omissions, Liberia has been selected as the research test case for multiple reasons. Liberia was the first UN peacekeeping mission with an explicit mandate to mainstream UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 on sexual violence, and the uniquely integrated nature of the mission means that gender mainstreaming was coordinated with other UN offices present in the country. It followed that any practical measures emanating from policy revisions in gender and DDR since 2000 should have been considered in the programme. Such an explicit focus on gender mainstreaming means that the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme in Liberia should have been aware of the diverse and complex roles of these women, included their voices in the planning and implementation, and designed the programme according to these needs. Finally, the vast numbers of people who underwent the DDRR process (approximately 100,000 relative to the small population of 3.5 million) means that an exceptional 1 in 35 Liberians experienced the process.

What is known from existing research is that despite a clear gender mainstreaming remit, there were numerous shortfalls in the programme. Research in Liberia, in particular by Kathleen Jennings (2007, 2008, 2009), found that the mandates of the DDRR programme resulted in few changes in the economic and social condition for women ex-combatants and that the peacekeeping economy was gendered, in such a way that the exploitation of women was a central component. Further research by Spect (2006), McKay (2004), Boas and Hatloy (2008), Kilroy (2012), Njoki Wamai (2011), Pugel (2007), Paes (2005), Utas (2005), Tamagnini and Krafft (2010) and NGO
reports by Amnesty (2008) and others, similarly confirm the failures of the DDRR process to adequately address women’s needs. Moreover, the securitisation of Liberia and DDRR in the post-conflict environment, assumed that idle male ex-combatants were a security risk and contributed to instability. This is in itself a highly gendered conception which resulted in DDRR’s prioritisation of men’s participation in the process (Jennings 2009, p.481). Women were not counted as a security threat or as “idle” due to their commitments as caregivers although many of them had been on the front lines during the conflict. And although a special strategy was put into place for female ex-combatants they were largely treated in the same way as men, especially during reintegration. Likewise, the DDRR programme generally suffered from poor planning which lead to an over-subscription of non-genuine cases and damaged budgets and timescales. Poor planning also resulted in unattainable expectations among ex-combatants due to the dissemination of incorrect information. Those that had completed reintegration training believed they would be able to gain immediate employment, which was often not the case, leading to frustration and a this sense of betrayal as many participants felt they had not got what they were promised (Jennings 2008, p.7).

What we do not know from existing research is the complexity of implementing gender mainstreaming by those organisations tasked to do so. What are the issues for implementers regarding budget constraints, the nature of staff support and training provided, and the feasibility of implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy through DDRR via multiple organisations? It is also unclear how the women whose needs were not met through DDRR have actually re-integrated and how they continue to survive. It is important to identify this so that a deeper understanding of the complexities of reintegration for WAFFs/ex-combatants can be uncovered and used for future gender programming. Exploring how women have relied on norms, relationships and institutional arrangements that they have inherited over the years through customs and traditions, reveals vital information about social reintegration processes. An examination of how they rebuilt their social structures, leant on networks such as family, kinship, religious and partnerships to survive or
repositioned themselves to join new networks, can also allow us to gain a better level of understanding of these social processes and the realities of their lives in the post-conflict environment.

1.2 Aims and Research Questions

To address these lacunae in the current literature, this research aims to provide fresh insights into the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming of the DDRR in Liberia as an implementation tool under UNSCR 1325. It will contribute to an understanding of the ways in which women actually reintegrate into the post-conflict society. This will illuminate wider knowledge about these topics which can then be applied to further cases beyond Liberia.

This will be analysed from two distinct perspectives. The first will be the viewpoint “from above” in order to assess the constraints and opportunities of DDRR implementers in Liberia. This will allow an understanding of whether these programmes reinforce traditional gender stereotypes or if they have a more positive impact on gender equity more broadly. By situating this in the larger liberal peacebuilding context it will be possible to draw conclusions as to why problems arise regarding systemic issues of gender equity in the peacebuilding environment.

To complement this analysis the second perspective aims to investigate the lived experiences of WAFFs/ex-combatants over a number of years following the end of the programme by considering the longer-term effects of reintegration and impact of the gender elements of DDRR on their lives today. Investigating the gender-mainstreaming provision by analysing WAFFs/ex-combatants experiences through certain phases of the DDRR programme, namely the main programme from 2004-7 compared to the residual caseload programme in 2008-9, will help to determine the effectiveness of its gendered elements. This will be further contrasted against the experiences of those WAFFs/ex-combatants who have not gone through the process at all.
This analysis views women as social agents and recognises the fact that understanding the settings in which they act (for example their social networks and community environment) is essential to how they personally navigate the post-conflict environment. Since this research took place after the DDRR programme had been implemented, the impact is derived from the lived realities and testimonies of the women rather than from pre-determined baselines. This was a deliberate strategy as it was felt that understanding women’s situation today and any difference DDRR had made to their lives was a relevant research question.

This hybrid approach is useful as it avoids pitting top-down approaches against bottom-up ones. Neither does it assert that one perspective is more efficacious than another (Hudson et al 2012, p.119). What it does hope to reveal is a realistic interpretation of gender mainstreaming in DDR which acknowledges the international system whilst considering the perspectives and realities of the beneficiaries. Considering both perspectives through this hybrid lens anticipates the production of a more profound understanding of the women’s situation to reveal whether gender mainstreaming of DDRR was effective. Addressing what Potter (2008, p.115) refers to as “the imbalance between normative frameworks, tools and guidelines and actual experience”, exposes limitations as well as examples of positive practice with regard to gender mainstreaming in DDR which should drive new policy recommendations for future post-conflict programming for women in such contexts.

The central research questions that will be answered through this study are:

- To what extent was the DDRR programme in Liberia gender-mainstreamed?
- What were the constraints of the gender mainstreaming process on those implementing its objectives?
- How did gender mainstreaming in DDRR assist WAFFs/ex-combatants with successful reintegration and how does it contrast with those in different reintegration phases (residual caseload) and those that did not take part?
What other social, economic and psychological mechanisms did the women use to assist their reintegration?

In light of these findings, how does gender mainstreaming in DDR affect gender equity more broadly and what can the experiences of WAFFs/ex-combatants reintegration in this case reveal regarding the limits of the liberal peacebuilding model and policies such as UNSCR 1325?

How can this information be used to drive policy amendments and practical recommendations for WAFFs/ex-combatants in DDR?

1.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted in this research was wholly qualitative and derived from an interpretive epistemological perspective. Specifically, 59 WAFFs/ex-combatants underwent a series of semi-structured interviews to explore their experiences of DDR and their current lived reality, using an open-ended flexible approach. Women who had self-demobilised and therefore not taken part were also interviewed. In addition, 12 focus group discussions also took place with the women in attempts to explore whether discussing issues together as a group, would generate convergent or divergent responses. A similar focus group approach was undertaken to talk to community members, young male ex-combatants and older community men, to understand a range of opinions. The interviews and focus groups took place within the community in eight locations in the capital Monrovia and two more rural locations; Tubmanburg, Bomi County, about 80km from the capital and Tumatu, Bong County, in the North East of the country.

In order to understand the DDRR implementer’s perspective as well those engaged in the post-conflict reconstruction of the country, 31 semi-structured key informant interviews were also conducted. Finally, a reflexive journal was written to filter and understand any issues or constraints that may have arisen during the process. It also maintained a heightened awareness of the researcher’s assumptions and biases which could affect the interpretation of the data as well as capturing contextual information that may have been omitted
from the formal data notes. By reflecting in this way, constraints such as research fatigue, meta-data, logistics and security, the emotions of the participants and emotions of the researcher, can all be clearly considered.

1.4 Results
The results of this study revealed two major findings that help constitute the work’s originality. Firstly that gender mainstreaming in DDRR programmes was inconsistent with no specific gender budget, coordination between implementers or monitoring and evaluation. This left women’s needs largely sidelined as DDRR was designed under a top-down, liberal peace agenda that prioritises males and focuses on economic reintegration. As a result, DDRR failed to account for the important social and psychological factors that are necessary for successful reintegration. Many WAFFs/ex-combatants still appeared to be suffering from a residual trauma and as the DDRR was of limited use, they had to utilise other strategies to survive and navigate the post-conflict environment to reintegrate effectively.

Despite the failures of DDRR, most women appear to have reintegrated successfully. The second major finding which advances the knowledge of women’s social reintegration processes, uncovers these women’s use of various social networks (family, partners, religious, factional, friends) to assist them in returning to their communities. These networks provided a vital resource providing a buffer against stigma, as well as offering economic assistance and emotional support. However, these networks also privileged women engaging in personal reform to aid social acceptance, such as behaving obediently or joining religious groups. The difficulty with this approach is that it forces women to regress to pre-war gender stereotypes based under a patriarchal system. Had the DDRR programme been more effective at addressing issues of structural gender inequality through gender mainstreaming as well as providing sustainable employment they may have been more empowered to challenge dominant structures.
1.5 Thesis Chapter Synopsis

The structure of this thesis adopts the following format:

**Chapter Two** provides the context for the research by examining the advent of DDR programmes and their importance to peacebuilding. It will consider the emergence of the liberal peacebuilding approach with its focus on democratisation, security and economic reintegration and explore and critique the genesis of DDR within that framework. It will propose the contention that this type of approach is gendered, often sidelining women’s concerns in conflict situations, peace negotiations and post-conflict programming. Feminist responses to liberal peace will then be reviewed with particular reference to UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) to reveal how programmes have been gender mainstreamed (and policy revised) in light of the resolution. Critiques of these policies and how they are still embedded within the liberal framework will be presented with reference to women in DDR initiatives.

In **Chapter Three** the methodology of the study will be presented. It will consider the philosophical underpinnings to the research and provide a comprehensive account of the qualitative methods and logistics used to gather the data and explain how the data was analysed. It will outline the possible constraints to the methodology and how these were accounted for so as to increase the validity, reliability and generalisability of the data.

The specific case of Liberia will be reviewed in **Chapter Four**. It will begin by providing a comprehensive historical background to the fourteen-year civil conflict commencing with the arrival of the Americo-Liberian former slaves in the early nineteenth century. It will describe the traditional role of both indigenous and settler women before outlining the antecedents of the conflict and its various phases and peace process. It will then consider women’s roles and both combatants and peacemakers. **Chapter Five** continues to look in detail at the Liberian case by outlining the phases of the DRRR process as well as the specific post-conflict reconstruction initiatives that have been implemented. It will also consider some of the current issues that are pertinent for women.
Chapter Six will summarise the empirical findings of this research by assessing gender mainstreaming provision from above through drawing on key informant interviews. It will examine how the programme was planned from a top-down perspective with a lack of local engagement from women’s groups in the pre-planning of DDRR. It will then consider the kind of local engagement which took place and how these initiatives increased the participation of women into the process but still excluded many more. It will proceed to consider how the issue of proxy cases affected resource allocation and timescales, particularly in rehabilitation and reintegration components which did not meet WAFFs/ex-combatants needs or were completely omitted.

The testimonies of WAFFs/ex-combatants and the community will be synthesised in Chapter Seven through an examination of the realities of gender mainstreaming from the perspective of the beneficiary. The chapter will commence with general demographic information about the sample followed by an assessment of the gender mainstreaming provision in DD which was generally found to be favourable. An examination of reintegration experiences will utilise Ozerdem’s (2012) model of social reintegration as a framework for analysis. These include family and community networks, sustainable employment (including a detailed analysis of economic reintegration) and civic responsibilities. It will also consider the success of the rehabilitation programme in helping with psychosocial counseling and trauma healing. This more holistic analysis will allow for a consideration of the social processes that women highlighted as significant to their reintegration, to gain a deeper understanding of social reintegration mechanisms.

In the final chapter, the findings of the research will be summarised and developed. The success of the gender mainstreaming of the DDRR programme in Liberia will be consolidated, reviewing what proved successful and what needs modification from both implementer and beneficiary perspectives. It will also recapitulate the importance of social reintegration and specific psychosocial provision for WAFFs/ex-combatants. The implications of gender
mainstreaming as a process in DDR will be scrutinized in order to demonstrate why and how revisions to the liberal peacebuilding approach and associated gender policies need further attention and revision. Finally, the practical policy recommendations will be presented along with avenues for further research.
Chapter Two

DDR and Gender: Limitations under a Liberal Peacebuilding Model

2.1 Introduction

This chapter first reviews the process of DDR and its significance to post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. It continues by framing the design of the programme under a liberal peacebuilding model. The model is typically favoured by the UN and other international actors responsible for the planning and implementation of DDR. This approach is based in liberal philosophy and promotes democratisation and market led development. Its numerous contemporary uses have been criticised by scholars, and these criticisms will be evaluated in the third section. The central debates around the model’s limitations, including the sequencing of processes, and the argument that liberal peace is a form of imposed Western imperialism with little attention given to local ownership, will be critically examined.

In order to understand women’s perspectives in conflict and peace, the next section will consider feminist perspectives and gender responses in peacebuilding. Feminists have also critiqued liberal peace initiatives suggesting that the peacebuilding environment is hyper-masculine and focuses on the needs of men. They assert that this is a function of war being gendered and the perpetuation of this in post-conflict reconstruction where women are excluded from peace negotiations and consequently treated as a homogenous group. Special mention will be given here to the implications from policy amendments such as UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming under this liberal peacebuilding framework, to assess if the documents reflect liberal ideals which are exclusionary for women.
Finally, the last section will synthesise all the elements in the review by assessing if liberal peacebuilding and gender considerations really do impact upon programme delivery in DDR for WAFFs/ex-combatants. It will highlight how these approaches unfold practically and how the DDR programmes provided are both prohibitive and insufficient for women. It will propose that DDR programmes designed under a liberal peace agenda ignore important social and psychological factors that are critical to the success of WAFFs/ex-combatants reintegration.

2.2 DDR: Origins and Applications
The end of the Cold War was a critical juncture for peace operations. Traditionally United Nations (UN) missions deployed in the aftermath of the conflict were mandated to prevent the recurrence of violence through the monitoring of ceasefires. However, over time UN missions expanded to include a consolidation of civil order and they began to assist with organising the political and socio-economic conditions for peace to take hold.

The change in the nature of intervention led to calls for a more systematic approach, which culminated in UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali’s ‘Agenda for Peace’, published in 1992. This was considered by some to be the landmark text for peace missions and a blueprint for international intervention. The agenda documented four phases of action; preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding and the promotion of economic development and political freedom as the solution for nations emerging from conflict. This approach gave us a new term, the term peacebuilding; until the end of the Cold War no UN Peace operations had peacebuilding mandates. According to the Agenda for Peace, peacebuilding refers to:

Action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Preventative diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out; peacemaking and peace-keeping are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained. If successful, they strengthen the opportunity for post-conflict peacebuilding, which can prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples.
Defining peacebuilding in this way allowed the UN to re-envision its role as a progressive, autonomous agent for peace, development and global justice (Sabaratnam 2011, p.15).

This new peacebuilding approach was ambitious. It suggested that peace could be built around an idealised framework that included a broad array of activities focusing on security, humanitarian, human rights and political objectives. The rationale was compelling, hypothesising that without creating the necessary conditions for a stable and lasting peace to take root, relapse into conflict was likely (Paris 2004, p.3). The UN worked with other international agencies, governments and NGOs to realise this agenda and revolutionised the peacebuilding industry.

Included in almost every contemporary toolkit of peacebuilding activity is the process of DDR. This is defined as the voluntary disarmament and discharge of combatants from armed groups, followed by provision of education and training to facilitate reintegration towards a new life both economically and socially. As its name suggests it is composed of three complex elements that are defined in more detail by the UN in the Integrated DDR Standards (UNDDR, 2006). See Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disarmament</strong></td>
<td>The collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demobilisation</strong></td>
<td>The formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilisation may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampment, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilisation encompasses the support package provided to the demobilised which is called reinsertion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reintegration</strong></td>
<td>The process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Table 1**: Definitions of DDR (UNDDR 2006, p.4)
The above format shows DDR in its most common manifestation as a programme, through which in most instances individuals pass as outlined above. However, it must be noted that different sequences and additional processes are often appended depending on the context (as will be seen in the Liberian case, where rehabilitation was added). However, for the purposes of this examination we will use the generic form of DDR and clarify the process in this sequence unless referring to the Liberian case where we will use the term DDRR.

The process of disarmament and demobilisation (DD) are the sections of the DDR programme that are for the most part conducted relatively successfully and usually attract significant financial support. Both DD can be implemented in a comparatively short time-frame with funds usually readily available from international organisations and bilateral institutions. Due to its organisational protocols it is easy for those implementing the programmes to count the numbers of people registered and weapons collected, and therefore possible to achieve tangible results in a relatively short duration. Disarmament takes place in pre-designated areas where information is collected from ex-combatants and their eligibility is decided and weapon collected (which are then stockpiled and destroyed). Demobilisation is restricted to a limited period and has multiple elements such as disbanding the command structures, demonstrating opposition forces the willingness to disarm, and mentally and physically preparing the ex-combatant for civilian life by providing civic education, medical assistance and basic amenities and provisions.

Reintegration on the other hand, is more complex, and has been referred to as the ‘Achilles Heel’ of DDR. Those previously associated with armed forces are cut loose from structures and processes that are familiar to them to re-enter a society that is unfamiliar and of which, in many cases they may have no pre-war memory (UNDDR, 2006, p.422). It is a complicated process that encompasses social, political, economic and psychological components. The social aspect aims to create an environment which former combatants and their families feel
part of and accepted by the community, and re-establishes family and community ties; the political component ensures that they become a full part of decision making processes; the economic aspect enables them to build up their livelihoods and have access to employment opportunities; and the psychological component helps them to heal after the trauma of war (Kingma 2000). Reintegration is often poorly implemented, monitored and evaluated and suffers a lack of funding as these programmes are run over a much longer time-frame with less tangible results. A study by the ILO (Srivastava, 1994, p.5) considered 2-3 years as the minimum period for reintegration programmes to ‘get underway’ and another 3-5 years before the full impact of such a programme. The result is that DDR becomes conflated in terms of planning and implementation even though they are very distinct processes with differing funding and time frames to execute effectively. Consequently, it is the most challenging component but the section that has the potential to create a lasting impact on sustainable peace and is therefore the focus of this research.

DDR is thus an intriguing process because of its complexity. It seeks to achieve both security as well as development objectives with the ultimate aim of contributing to a peaceful society through preventing the recurrence of war, reducing military expenditure, stimulating spending on social welfare, preventing spoilers from disrupting peace processes and enhancing opportunities for their livelihoods (Muggah 2010, p.2). The DDR process highlights very effectively the relationship between security and development. In the post Cold War environment scholars, governments and international institutions have highlighted the symbiotic connection between the two concepts in which development is contingent on security and development itself is a precondition for security (Duffield 2007, p.1). By its very nature, DDR, namely two short-term securitisation elements followed by a longer-term developmental phase, means that the nexus between security and development is embedded from its foundation, and current debates suggest DDR is itself a process rather than distinct elements implemented independently. When planned and implemented, each activity overlaps and is mutually reinforcing and some believe that the success of the entire process is dependent on the success of each stage (Meek
and Malan 2004, p.7). Yet recent studies have shown (Jennings 2008) that since these elements have different agendas they do not lend themselves to being planned together and the focus is often on short-term securitisation rather than the longer-term development which usually is less well funded. However, the rationale for the focus on security is clearly justified as the initial disarmament phase is the most critical. As Berdal (1996, p.7) notes, if the process is derailed at the disarmament stage, measures aimed at long-term reintegration are rendered irrelevant.

Furthermore, since DDR bridges the gap between security and development it has been recognised as an important political inflection process in the transition from war to peace and suggests that;

Its structure and degree of success may have deep and long lasting influence on the shape of local and national institutions, the alignment of political power in the post-conflict context, and the consolidation of peace and speed of recovery.  

(Cartagena DDR 2008, p.9)

Therefore, the need to make the process successful depends on many things. As a result of its wide-ranging objectives if something goes wrong it can affect the entire peacebuilding system. Knight and Ozerdem (2004, p.501) believe that this is because peacebuilding and DDR exhibit a reciprocal relationship. They assert that sustainable recovery after war will not be achieved without a successful DDR process, but equally without a successful peacebuilding process the viability of DDR would be questionable.

This claim was reinforced by Kingma (2002, p.186-6) who suggested that due to its multiple aims DDR acts as a cross-cutting objective within peacebuilding operations. He depicted the range of activities in traditional peacebuilding missions which reflect DDR across the entire process (see Table 2). He further comments that processes such as democratisation, economic development and demilitarisation are affected by structural factors and policy interventions that can affect the success of peacebuilding. Structural factors include the security situation within in the country, the protection of human rights and the institutional capacity of the state to design and implement economic, social and other polices and programmes. Such structural factors, policies and
programmes have political, economic, social, cultural and psychological factors that play a direct role in creating a sense of confidence and well-being among people in a transition to peace. Since DDR cuts across them all it highlights the potential of the process to affect peacebuilding both positively and negatively.

As a result of its importance, it is not surprising that over the last 20 years DDR has become a pillar of the international peace support and peacebuilding architecture with over 60 documented programmes taking place globally from the first UN Security Council mandated DDR process in Namibia in 1989 (Muggah, 2009, pp.5-6). With more than 20 bodies such as international organisations like the UN, and World Bank, bilateral and multilateral institutions, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs all engaged in DDR activities, its

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### Table 2: The Concept of Peacebuilding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Political Processes</th>
<th>Economic Processes</th>
<th>Social/Cultural/Psychological Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratisation* (formal and informal)</td>
<td>Economic development*</td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/nation building</td>
<td>State/nation building Demilitarisation and conversion*</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demilitarisation*</td>
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<td>Demilitarisation *</td>
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<tr>
<th>Structural Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMR (patterns/role of armed forces)</td>
<td>CMR (defense industry)</td>
<td>CMR (new perceptions/roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security*</td>
<td>Economic Security</td>
<td>Human security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political (human) rights</td>
<td>Socio-economic (human) rights</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law and Order</td>
<td>Law and Order</td>
<td>Law and Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/capacity/'good governance'</td>
<td>State capacity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy/Programmes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural adjustment Repatriation*</td>
<td>Structural adjustment Repatriation*</td>
<td>Education/health care Repatriation*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demobilisation and Reintegration Support Disarmament and Demining*</td>
<td>Demobilisation and Reintegration support Disarmament and demining*</td>
<td>Demobilisation and Reintegration support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redistribution</td>
<td>Redistribution</td>
<td>Redistribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psycho-social assistance for trauma healing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* strong regional implications) CMR – Civil Military Relations

*(Kingma (2002, p.187)*)
implementation is challenging as often the process is “owned” by national structures in countries where the infrastructure has been decimated by war (Muggah 2010, p.2).\(^5\) Funding for the programmes comes from a variety of different sources with the World Bank being the largest financer of DDR (ECP, 2008, p.25). Other funds come from the UN and European Union (EU) as well as bilateral funding from individual countries or a consortium of nations called a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF). Muggah (2009, p.7) refers to the level of global investment in DDR operations as “breathtaking”, citing a review he had conducted that suggested that the annual aggregate budgets for DDR programmes in 2007 exceeded USD$630 million which amounted to US$1,250 per ex-combatant going through the process.

Despite the high costs, DDR is seen as critically important which explains its continual use. Initially, early conceptions of DDR focused on peacekeeping, stability and security and were comparatively limited or ‘minimalist’ in approach. Many of these early programmes were termed first generation DDR programmes and provided a steep learning curve for practitioners and policy-makers. They highlighted many difficulties that have been documented by numerous scholars. These include a lack of implementation coordination (Knight and Ozerdem 2004); inaccurate budgeting and funding gaps (ECP 2008; Save the Children 2005); restrictive entry requirements (McKay and Mazurana 2004); abuse of entry requirements (Ozerdem 2009); poor disarmament leading to uncontrolled weapons in circulation (Kingma 2002); a ‘cash for guns’ system (Meek and Malan 2007); overcrowding tension and violence in demobilisation camps (ECP 2008; Kingma 2004); poor psychosocial provision (Kingma; 2004); community resentment (Kilroy 2012; Denov and McClure 2009); and definitional inconsistencies and measurement problems (Pugel 2009).

\(^5\) There are a few cases of DDR that were organised and managed by the government itself and took place without assistance from external peace operations such as Angola, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Philippines (Muggah 2010, p.1).
Despite these initial limitations, as more peacebuilding missions were deployed, DDR programmes began to expand and refine in line with a more integrated focus of the UN and its partners. The challenge was not to deploy singular programmes but to try and integrate the post-conflict reconstruction efforts together to promote a more coordinated, reliable and effective approach. This in turn lead to a more ‘maximalist’ mandate, or 2nd generation DDR favouring integrated approaches with military, policing, rule of law and social welfare objectives, which remain the current focus today (Muggah 2010, p.1).

This expanded agenda was reflected in the landmark text for DDR published by the UN in 2006 entitled The Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) which attempted to capture the revisions that had taken place. According to the IDDRS the revised objectives of DDR are:

- To contribute to security and stability, facilitating reintegration and creating an adequate environment for starting recuperation and rehabilitation
- To return a sense of trust to relations between combating factions and the population in general
- To contribute to national reconciliation
- To free human and financial resources, as well as social capital, for reconstruction and development

(UNDDR 2006, p.4)

This expanded approach was more ambitious and reflected the need to embed the process from the grassroots and to try and move away from generic approaches to DDR. In particular it highlighted that it was not just security that was important but that the need to focus on reconstruction and development through reintegration was a key factor which in the past had always been the more difficult to successfully implement.

Even in light of these revisions, repeated DDR success remains elusive. Policy-makers and practitioners realise that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to DDR does not work and that actual context is of the utmost importance. One of the major stumbling blocks is an understanding of the ultimate objective of the process. If
the goal is sustainable peace then what is this peaceful society supposed to look like? What is the end goal? This is where DDR meets its biggest challenge as peace is often not defined in this context, or if it is, it does not take account of the local conditions and culture. With increasing prevalence those that implement DDR are defining peace in a particular way and within an idealised framework that includes a broad array of activities fostering on security, humanitarian, human rights and political objectives to establish the conditions for sustainable peace. This method Mac Ginty (2006, p.15) suggests affects how peace is “made, received and defined” and reflects the dominant power relations that manifest politically, economically and socially. This ‘social engineering’ has been of great interest to scholars (in both peace and security studies) examining its conceptual underpinnings, planning, implementation and impact which has been labeled as ‘liberal peacebuilding’ or the ‘Liberal Peace Project’ which reflects the liberal principles.

In order to understand how DDR has been conceptualised under this agenda, the precepts concept of the liberal peace will be explored and the prevalence of this approach in modern peace approaches examined.

2.3 Liberal Peace Theory

The liberal peace approach, as its name suggests, draws upon liberal political ideas which are concerned with the construction of a particular type of social order organised around the individual and their rights (Barkawi and Laffey 2001, p.14). In order to bring about peace under this, the term liberal refers to a set of principles and institutions that can be recognised by certain characteristics such as individual freedom, political participation, private property and equality of opportunity, protection of human rights and support of international cooperation, support and norms (Doyle 1986, p.1152). Through building democratic institutions ‘checks and balances’ openly operate and result in the citizenry developing a respect for other democracies such that they do not wish to engage in violent conflict with them (Spiro 1994, p.77). In addition, the key difference with liberal peace approaches over those that just promote
democracy, is that they propose economic development and mutual trade are powerful inhibitors of war (Schrodt 2004, p.292). Theoretically, the provision of these two principles and institutions to implement them lay the foundations for a peaceful society to be built.

2.3.1 The Foundations and Rationale of Liberal Peacebuilding

Liberal peace ideas stem from Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, Emmanuel Kant and others. These thinkers focused around the core liberal assumptions of universal rationality and individual liberty connected with harmony and cooperation in domestic and international relations and the need for a rational, legitimate domestic government as well as international governance (Richmond 2008, p.23).

However, with respect to liberalism and peace, Kant, developed one of the most comprehensive representations. His approach was called liberal/republican internationalism or democratic peace. In 1795 Kant published ‘Perpetual Peace’ which dictated that humans should be viewed as ends rather than means (Richmond 2008, p.24). Kant’s main argument focuses on the fact that democracies tend to be pacifist in their foreign relations with each other, which promotes greater cooperation and peace. This interdependence is forged through modernisation and focuses around common themes and issues of global importance and is enhanced through trade. War therefore, occurs through an absence of this democracy and rule of law and in order to prevent conflict, codes of conduct and international laws are created by which people abide. This rule of law, he claims, must be implemented by a powerful sovereign whose powers are limited to those that concern preserving the rule of law in order that all can enjoy freedom and security. His ideas established a vision of liberal order suggesting that individuals were motivated by social learning. He also espoused a universal rule of hospitality to other states and suggested the concept of human rights (ibid 2008, p.25).
2.3.2 Contemporary Uses

Over the last century the liberal peace approach has been promoted on numerous occasions. President Woodrow Wilson\(^6\) encouraged its adoption during the Versailles Peace Conference in the aftermath of the First World War. He believed that liberalism was the key to peace and security in international and domestic political affairs, and contended that the only way of securing peace in Europe was to emancipate those under authoritarian rule and enable them to engage in self-government. This built on what Doyle (1992, p.12) refers to as the ‘liberal democratic revolution’, which had promoted the formation and good relations of liberal democracies over the previous two centuries and had provided a level of security internationally.

However, the Cold War created opposition towards this approach and it was not until 1989 that the UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) assumed links between security, democracy and capitalist development led by the USA as the unrivaled global hegemony championing democratisation as a security issue (Harrington 2011, pp.566, 569). In addition, there was less opposition to Security Council resolutions at the UN.\(^7\) The rise in the prevalence of civil conflicts in the 1990s characterised by violence against civilians, collapsed states and humanitarian emergencies, became a common feature of the post Cold War environment (Paris 2004, p.1).\(^8\) Whilst many of these were contained within their frontiers, some wars had wider regional impacts through refugee and arms flows across porous borders that threatened regional security and stability. Many of these “collapsed” states,

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\(^6\) Before Wilson’s focus on the liberal peace agenda it had been used when establishing other international laws such as the Geneva Convention, in 1864 and numerous peace conferences that followed. It also laid the foundations for the formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Court of Justice and League of Nations.

\(^7\) There were 279 vetoes at the Security Council from 1945 (when the UN was established) to the end of the Cold War in 1990 (UN 1992)

\(^8\) Paris (2004, p.41) commented that that post World War I years were very similar to the post Cold War years in that during both periods the international community were trying to prevent the recurrence of conflict and minimise security threats and both responded with liberal peace approaches.
looked to the UN and others to help them deal with enormous humanitarian crises that ensued from years of fighting, and the international community, fueled by global security concerns and media reports, applied pressure to governments to intervene through the established UN architecture.

In response, the international community experimented with new procedures to assist locally and regionally in these sites of conflict. This was seen, as a turning point for the UN and other leading governmental and nongovernmental agencies.9 Those missions deployed mainly in the aftermath of the conflict were now not only mandated to prevent the recurrence of violence but to include techniques that fostered a consolidation of civil order and as such, they began to assist with organising the political and socio-economic conditions for peace. These liberal peacebuilding ideals were also reflected in the UN’s Agenda for Peace in 1992 when the term “peacebuilding” was first conceptualised and clearly reflects these liberal foundations. This approach has been the focus of the UN’s peacebuilding operations since that time. By reviewing the Agenda for Peace in Table 3, it is possible to consider the sections of the document that pertain to liberal peacebuilding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Stand ready to assist in peacebuilding in its differing contexts: rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>…To address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States within the established international system, and the principle of self-determination for peoples, both of great value and importance, must not be permitted to work against each other in the period ahead. Respect for democratic principles at all levels of social existence is crucial: in communities, within States and within the community of States. Our constant duty should be to maintain the integrity of each while finding a balanced design for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Peacemaking and peace-keeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include comprehensive efforts to identify support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and wellbeing among</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9 Traditionally the UN in particular was engaged in third party involvement in sites of conflict, and peace-keeping efforts focusing on non-intervention that was consistent with the Westphalian ideals of state sovereignty and territorial integrity (Sens 2004, p.142).
people….these may include disarming the previously warring parties and restoration of order, the custody and possible destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming and strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation.

…post-conflict peacebuilding may take the form of concrete cooperative projects which link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial understanding that cannot only contribute to economic and social development but also enhance the confidence that is fundamental to peace.

Democracy within nations requires respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as set forth in the Charter. It requires as well a deeper understanding and respect for the rights of minorities and respect for the needs of the more vulnerable groups of society, especially women and children. This is not only a political matter. The social stability needed for productive growth is nurtured by conditions in which people can readily express their will…

Table 3: Liberal Underpinnings of Peacebuilding in the Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali 1992)

From this foundation document it can be deduced that post-conflict peacebuilding in the field focuses on implementing the liberal peacebuilding agenda. However, the emphasis seems to be firmly upon democratisation over liberal economic reform. This is a problem as focusing on one process and not the other, or failing to consider the sequencing of these processes, could result in them not achieving the desired outcome. The issue of sequencing of democratic and of economic reform will be addressed in the next section.

Given that this is the approach of the UN some attention needs to be paid to whether the theory works in practice. Are democracies actually less likely to go to war with each other? The provision of democracy increases the accountability of governments to perform or they will not be re-elected. By performing more effectively it reduces the potential prospect for violence, as citizens are generally more satisfied that their wishes are being represented. It also functions through the legitimacy of the government that acquires certain rights and abides by rules which citizens agree to. Therefore, those that oppose the government are less likely to use force as it will be harder for them to gain support for their campaign as most citizens will support the legitimate and accountable government working under a moral code that reinforces non-violence (Collier 2010, p.19).
In fact, there is overwhelming evidence that democracies are more peaceful than autocracies. Research on this topic began as early as 1972 when Babst concluded that no wars had been fought between democracies between 1789 and 1941. This was followed by numerous studies by scholars in the 1980s/90s (e.g. Doyle 1983a and 1983b 1986; Rummel 1983; Oneal and Russett 1997) that also concluded that although democracies do not exhibit less warlike characteristics than non-democracies, they rarely fight each other (Chan 1997, p.61). Rummel (1984, 1985) found that the more democratic the political regime the less violence was evident in foreign and domestic affairs compared to totalitarian regimes certainly at an inter-state level. Similarly, at an intrastate level further work by Rummel (1995), provided evidence to support the contention that democracy fosters non-violence. He found that the best assurances against state violence are democratic openess, political competition, leaders responsible to their people and a limited government. Furthermore, democracies are also less likely to experience violent encounters such as revolutions, coups d’état, terrorist attacks, political assassinations, insurgencies and the like. These conclusions have been tested both empirically and using historical and anthropological methods (see Chan 1997 for a review) all concluding that while democracies are not more inherently peaceful, wars between them rarely happen, and that democratic practices seem to have some pacifying affect.

The other focus of the liberal peace approach that concerns trade and economy is implemented through marketisation, including measures to promote freedom for private investors, producers and consumers to follow their economic interests, as well as reducing government intrusion into the economy (Paris 2004, p.5). This approach also reduces the chance for violence, as citizens are able to make their own economic decisions and provide more control. However, does the theory perform well in practice? With regards to marketisation, trade theory suggests that when economic links and transnational ties are increased, then war is indeed less likely due to the interdependence of the systems.
There are numerous reasons why commerce is said to affect peace. Conflict can disrupt trading patterns which manifests with an economic impact and those affected are less likely to use force in order to minimise the impact. Similarly, as commerce increases, the incentives to ransack the system decline as the costs are too great. Trade further promotes understanding, cooperation and communication across societies which build a broader and more cosmopolitan identity. McDonald (2004, p.548) shifted the debate towards free trade and theorised that free trade allows the incorporation of state-society interactions which affect links between trade and conflict. He suggested that free trade removes the domestic privilege which can act as a barrier towards trade which, in turn, may make society more likely to rebel and support conflict. When he studied this statistically he found that lowering such trade barriers reduced military conflict.

Whilst these findings are certainly illuminating and the wealth of studies very convincingly support the general liberal peace theory, they frequently focus on quantitative studies which has lead to Paris’s (2004, p.44) comments that these studies tend to focus on those countries that are already established as either market democracies or not. They tell us little about those countries that are transitioning from a period of conflict to a market democracy and the liberalisation process that assists with this transition. Studies that have specifically examined this relationship have shown that this period is often very volatile, especially when transitions are uneven and political opportunists frequently use violent tactics to gain support under the guise of nationalist rhetoric.

More work needs to be conducted to explore the post-conflict period and the relationship between stable peace and democracy through the transition. Coupled with the prevalence of the international community implementing policies and programmes that promote the liberal peace approach it is important to know if these programmes add to the potential for instability or whether they impact positively on creating a liberal market democracy. That said, those that support the project, suggest that it is the best system to build sustainable peace.
and that there is no viable alternative. Authors such as Collier (2010) advocate that those who have emerged from conflict have the same rights as the rest of the world, including a legitimate aspiration to nationhood. He suggests that it is the duty of the West to help these states;

Just as the high-income world should provide a vaccine against malaria for the citizens of the bottom billion, so it should provide them with security and accountability of government….only once they are properly supplied can the societies of the bottom billion achieve their aspirations to genuine sovereignty.

(Collier 2010, p.11)

In summary, the liberal peace approach derived from liberal philosophy suggests that democracies with free markets are more peaceful than those that are not. Empirical research has supported this contention which reinforces the preference for this approach when rebuilding war-shattered states. However, recent scholarship has found many problems with the liberal peace agenda that affects how programmes manifest in societies transitioning from conflict which will now be reviewed.

2.4 Limitations of the Liberal Peace Approach

Detractors who do not agree with the liberal peacebuilding approach cite numerous limitations which, according to Paris (2004, p.5), have led peacebuilding missions in the last twenty years to produce ‘mixed’ results.

2.4.1 Sequencing

The key issue that affects the success of liberal peacebuilding is sequencing. Which processes should be implemented first? Does it matter? According to Paris (2004) it does, as the underlying principles of liberal peace also reinforce inequality. He argues that promoting democratisation and marketisation has the potential to stimulate higher levels of societal competition at the exact moment (following conflict) when states are unable to deal with such tensions. It has been shown that the liberal economic model is a convincing hypothesis but rather that the methods that are used do not foresee the potential pitfalls that arise in some contexts. For example, in certain situations it created an
economic dislocation which consolidated power in the hands of the few who had kept the black markets running during the conflict (Sens 2004, p.147)

This uneven emphasis is also demonstrated in the preoccupation with prompt democratic elections which can be seen to favour the minority, as until democritisation and civil-society building processes have been completed, there is a perceived lack of legitimacy of post-conflict governments as the most powerful and rich capitalise on their contacts and finances to run successful campaigns (Chandler 2007, p.10). Other authors such as Paris (2004, p.7) cite the preoccupation with elections as a problem. He suggests that “quick elections, democratic ferment and economic shock-therapy” are not what is needed immediately, but that a more controlled approach that establishes a rudimentary network of domestic institutions in stages and which are capable of managing the strains of liberalisation and market reform is required.

The notion that democracy should be the focus has also been tested empirically by Collier and Rohner (2008) who suggest that implementing democracy in such transitional situations can actually increase political violence instead of reducing it. They tested this conundrum and proposed that income levels may be a factor given that a low income was a typical characteristic of many countries in conflict. They found that in low-income countries, democracy made society more dangerous. In addition, they concluded that in the absence of democracy as a society begins to gain in income, it leads to increased violence, i.e. rich autocracies lead to violence where as rich democracies lead to peace.

This study is particularly interesting when one considers the methods of post-conflict reconstruction and the focus on democritisation under the liberal peace approach in the Agenda for Peace. Usually the process of establishing free and fair elections is one of the initial procedures to be implemented by the international community (preferably within 2 years) on the understanding that if

10 In fact they found that there was a threshold level of $2700 per capital, per annum ($7 per person a day). For those with income below this level democracy could lead to violence and the opposite for those above.
the population chooses its own leader then there will be less incentive to rebel. However, if Collier and Rohner’s (2008) study is to be followed practically, then there is an argument that the democratisation process should not begin until income levels have reached a moderate stage. This suggests that the focus initially should therefore be on security followed by rebuilding the infrastructure and economy of the country. However, this will also depend on whether there is an effective peacekeeping or other force in place to maintain the status quo and assist with the transitional government.

This finance first strategy was somewhat followed in Sierra Leone when the British government provided budget support to the government of Sierra Leone to help pay for public servant’s salaries such as doctors, nurses and teachers who had not been paid for a very long time. The theory behind this relied on the premise that if those helping to build peace were paid they would be more likely to buy into the process and ultimately make it a success. This strategy was considered risky as corruption had been, and was still prevalent in the country, but it appears to have been successful as the country has now undergone two free and fair elections and is ranked 52nd out of 149 in 2012 on the Global Peace index (Vision of Humanity 2012).

If Collier’s thesis (2010, p.88) is correct and rebuilding the economy should be the focus, then until the economy and infrastructure have recovered to a moderate level (which may take many years), peacekeepers should not be withdrawn. There is an obvious financial implication here as peacekeeping missions are costly affairs. In order to speed the process up, he suggests using donor aid to train locals in key skills that support physical reconstruction including buildings and infrastructure. This approach has been found to be very effective in post-conflict reconstruction situations (ibid). This is an interesting assertion as it provides an opportunity for the DDR programme to fill this gap through the reintegration segment. Yet, experience has shown that DDR programmes often train people in tasks that are not useful for the rebuilding of the nation, as such programmes have been designed at a time when the economy has collapsed and before it is clear how it will be rebuilt.
2.4.2 Western Imperialism

A further limitation commonly proffered, concerns the proposition that the liberal approach is a form of covert Western imperialism in the sense that it camouflages Western interests and prioritises institution creation over human life (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2007, p.492). As such it uses the formation of liberal systems in weak and failed states as a way of maintaining global order and economic supremacy for those that are implementing the agenda, and imposes a Western conception of peace. The state emerging from conflict is often defined as the ‘other’ and as the source of multiple threats such as disease, crime, terror and ‘non-liberal’ approaches are seen as ‘lesser’ than liberal ones (Cooper 2007, p.610). This approach imposes a value judgment. This use of external power has been accused of a neo-colonial agenda whereby external powers promote governance and liberal ideals whilst maintaining superficial neutrality but with wider Western agendas driving the process.

Furthermore, the international normative environment or ‘global culture’ emerging in the post Cold War environment, promoted certain types of peacekeeping policies and practices over others (Paris 2003, p.443). The result was not just a framework but also a mechanism for the transmission of Western ideals and practices which the host populations are expected to embrace and disseminate (Mac Ginty 2008, p.144). It is a kind of globalisation described by Paris (2002, p.637) as a modern form of the ‘mission civilisatrice’ which was a belief common in colonial times that European rulers had a duty to ‘civilise’ the nation that they had colonised. This modern form, however, imparts a particular vision of how the nation emerging from conflict should organise itself based on liberal ideals that are dominant in the Western core (liberal market democracy) and which should be spread to the failed states of the periphery. Paris (ibid) also suggests that the acceptance and focus of this approach is due to the majority of international organisations engaged in peacebuilding having internalised the liberal political and economic values of the powerful industrialised democracies, because that is where they are situated. These
liberal assumptions of good have “a tendency to be accepted non-consciously as morally and ethically ‘right’ for the regions and states that require ‘civilizing’” (Higate and Henry 2009, p.10). These regions are almost always at the periphery.

According to Paris (2002) practical liberal peacebuilding can be transmitted to the periphery in multiple ways reflecting Western dominance. It can affect economic assistance that is provided to a country and if insufficient progress is made towards the liberal reforms, conditionalities can be imposed by those delivering aid in order for this aid to keep flowing. These can include market-oriented economic reforms, privitisation and removal of price controls. It can also manifest in interim proxy governments that step in to help set up these systems, such as was seen in Bosnia and East Timor, and shape the content of peace agreements. They promote liberal values through these peace agreements, and offer ‘expert’ advice in rebuilding under these ideals.\footnote{This is something I saw firsthand over four visits to Liberia. I met some very interesting Western consultants who were helping to reform certain institutions and structures under this agenda. This ranged from members of the US treasury assisting in reforming and setting up systems in the Finance Ministry; Members of the US coastguard helping to train and set up a Liberian coastguard; US specialists engaging in media training with Ministers etc.} As a further complication the UN, governments, IFIs and NGOs may have divergent expectations of what is to be achieved. This can lead to a lack of communication and coordination and result in ‘strategic favouritism’, meaning that the strategy for some of the implementing partners can reinforce relationships within certain sectors of society and provide uneven resource allocation.

Therefore these processes are frequently implemented through interventionist strategies not just by the UN, but also by a plethora of international actors such as regional actors (e.g. OSCE, Western governments and their aid agencies, such as the US, UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, Nordic states, and IFIs) as well as an influential cohort of co-opted international NGOs who work closely with official agencies. Most of these players focus on liberal notions from their Western headquarters or at the table of international collaborative organisations.
such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the IMF etc. For example, Paris (2002, p.643) cites numerous situations such as Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia and Rwanda, in which outside states devise peace settlements that pressurise those being assisted to accept liberal democratic reforms without fully consulting the indigenous population. This has become especially evident since the decline of communism in 1990 after which Western institutions have capitalised on promoting normalised liberal democratic principles as there was little opposition to challenge them. Many international institutions began to revise their mandates and procedures in line with this shift towards liberalism with the understanding that it was the only legitimate form of governance and a prerequisite for sustainable long-term peace and security (Higate and Henry 2009, p.11).

Planning peace agreements in Western headquarters and focusing on the priorities of the West, provides a top-down version of peace which is a further weakness of liberal peacebuilding. The outcome is a set template of tasks that are transposed from one conflict resolution situation to another without sufficiently taking account of the local context. Mac Ginty (2008, p.145) further commented that “It becomes peace from IKEA; a flat pack peace made from standardised components”. (see Box 1).

- Stabilisation of the internal political and security situation
- Development of regional engagement with neighbouring states and regional actors
- Disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration
- Return of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons
- Democratisation (electoral assistance, capacity building, and institution building)
- Strengthening civil society (promotion of dialogue, conflict management training, dispute resolution mechanisms)
- Capacity building and security sector reform (reconstruction of police and army)
- Technical assistance for reconstruction and economic development
- Promotion of human rights, justice and rule of law
- Promotion of intergroup recognition and national reconciliation
- Trauma recovery
- Peace/civic education
- De-mining and awareness
- Promotion of regional and international economic integration

**Box 1: Peacebuilding Activities conducted by the UN system (developed from Sens 2004, p.146)**
2.4.3 Local Ownership

The dominant approach shown above means that there is insufficient emphasis on local ownership and processes which Richmond (2011, p.3) comments “has more agency…than is often assumed”. The liberal peace structure biases a specific set of actors that serve a narrow set of interests and does not consider who peace is being created for. Rather, the approach imposes electoral democracy and preconceived norms of civil society to enforce an economic system that favours the individual (and not the kin group) which in many societies misses out on important networks that could be capitalised upon (Mac Ginty 2008, p.144). Considering indigenous peacebuilding approaches are purported to have a greater chance of community engagement as they prioritise participation and local ownership. However, the liberal model limits the space for alternate forms of peacebuilding as it is often the antithesis of local methods (ibid, p.139). By focusing on democratisation and markets it fails to understand the cultural context that helped to ignite the conflict and the context within which peace is trying to be nurtured.

Furthermore, Richmond (2010, p.27) states that the important social aspects of the liberal peace model are often not well attended to. He suggests that the liberal approach frequently creates an effective illusion of a functioning state but that in reality it merely builds an empty shell which neglects the social relationship between the shell and its parts in the interior. It assumes that if the institutions are built, that the population will naturally follow and adopt the new state. However, this is repeatedly not the case, as those at the grassroots level are given insufficient opportunity to influence the new social, economic and political systems that are being built around them. Providing elections is believed to engage the population sufficiently, but in fact this does not always create a social contract between the new institutions and the population. This approach neglects those who have been working at the local level to build peace and does not consider their practices, networks or conception of peace.
This links with the theory of conflict transformation developed by Jean Paul Lederach (1997) who proposed that peace-building needed to be a multi-level process engaging those at both the grassroots, mid and diplomatic levels on peacebuilding and reconciliatory issues. He theorised that unless all members of society were included over appropriate long-term timescales, which considered the context of the issues as well as issue itself, conflict transformation could not ensue. The issue of ownership and participation are relevant here as not including particular groups in decision-making may result in changes that are informed by flawed reasoning and may be discriminatory, exploitative or exclusionary (Sweetman 2005, p.5). Ultimately this can lead to resentment, further tension and conflict. An example of a group that is consistently neglected in peacebuilding but that are significant to its success are women. However, women are often portrayed in highly specific ways in both conflict and peace and even though they are frequently seen as ‘natural’ peacemakers they are usually sidelined under a highly patriarchal system. This lack of agency has been critiqued by feminist international relations scholars who have tried to reveal the ways that war and peace are gendered.

2.5 Feminist Perspectives on the Liberal Peace

Ann Tickner (2001, p.37) stated in her seminal book, Gendering World Politics, that:

War and peace are frequently portrayed as gendered concepts; while women’s voices are rarely granted legitimacy in matters of war and national security, they have been stereotypically associated with idealized versions of peace. Defining women in this way denies them agency in terms of involvement in conflict and equally restricts men in matters of building peace. In this project, I use Tickner’s (1992, p.7) definition of gender which states that gender does not concern biological differences between men and women but instead refers “to a set of culturally shaped and defined characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity”. Considering gender is important to uncover the exclusions and biases of mainstream international relations (IR); to make women visible in international politics; to analyse how gender relations are embedded into the daily practices of IR; to build a theoretical understanding from the position of women’s experiences; to understand how masculinities and femininities are
forged, shaped and reproduced in relation to global processes; and to consider gender relations outside Western contexts (Steans 2006, p.27). This section will provide some context regarding the exclusion of women in war and peace and consider how these processes have been gendered and exclusionary. It will then explore how liberal peace approaches have helped to reinforce these categories, and explore how documents such as UNSCR 1325 helps to further embed these liberal ideals.

2.5.1 Gendering of Conflict

Traditional cultural conceptions of conflict play out through the media and government propaganda along strict gender divisions in order to help overcome people’s reluctance to fight which, according to Goldstein (2001, p.9), does not come naturally to either sex. However, the justification for war is often waged along gendered lines that are associated with masculinity. Men and masculinity are equated with toughness, valor, and as protectors though combat, whereas women are conceived as victims, pacifists and peacemakers. Elshtain (1987) denotes these divisions as ‘Just Warrior’ and ‘Beautiful Soul’ signifying contemporary rhetoric and popular understanding with men as ‘life-takers’ and women as life-givers’. Conceiving of women as a feminine ‘other’ tends to focus international attention on women’s vulnerabilities in terms of their relationship to others as pregnant women, mothers and/or victims of sexual violence that are in need of protection (Gardam and Jarvis 2000, p.24). This is not necessarily the case however, and the need for female protection may rather have arisen from society’s customs and practices based on patriarchy that have embedded these gender norms (Puechguirbal 2010b, p.162).

These conventional representations of women in conflict are of course still adhered to in many cultures, but changes in gender roles have meant that these stereotypical responsibilities are being challenged as women engage in active conflict.12 This is reflected in statistics presented by Bouta (2005, p.5) who

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12 This phenomenon is not new as women have been active involved in many conflicts. For example Joan of Arc in France, Queen Boadicea in Britain, pre-colonial regiments of Dahomey,
outlined that in the last decade females have been part of fighting forces in 55 countries and involved in armed conflict in 38. Traditionally the volumes of females in fighting forces varying from between 10 per cent to one third, and therefore constitute a significant proportion of military groups. In recent years this has been most acutely observed in civil conflict situations in the developing world, where women and children have been taking up arms to fight. Admittedly their involvement is often coerced and Enloe’s (1998, p.52) investigation of women fighter’s motives reveal they were not intended “to push women’s vulnerability back into the shadows”. Nonetheless, there are many women who join military groups voluntarily for a multitude of reasons. Their justification for recruitment may be to follow or please their parents, escape ill-treatment at home, improve their opportunities, for perceived financial gain or to serve a religious, ethnic or political motive (Tercier Holst-Roness 2006, p.14; McKay and Mazurana 2004, p.22).

This distinction in recruitment is not insignificant. The complexity of women’s roles in war means that a ‘one-size fits all’ approach cannot be used to categorise these women. Their roles can be multiple and fluid and they may simultaneously be both victims and perpetrators (Denov 2007, p.12). Some women do actively decide to join the military groups while others are abducted. However, even those that have been abducted cannot be simply labeled as victims and losers as some use their new situation to navigate the conflict, perceiving it as the best option to pursue their interests and those of their dependents (Sweetman 2005, p.4). In this way they can exert their agency and negotiate their security whilst in the armed group. This form of self-protection allows women to use their social role to ally themselves to more powerful men, making patriarchal bargains to survive and to perpetrate severe acts or through subtle or bold acts of resistance through the use of small arms (Kelly 2000). This can lead to many women assuming a command position to reduce their

West Africa, and, in the more modern period, constituting a significant proportion of armed field agents in the British Special Operations during the Second World War. Likewise, they have been camp followers for centuries providing militaries groups with auxiliary support (Meintjes 2001, p.63).
own victimisation. These women are essential to the way that the war system functions.

Whilst labeling abductees as victims is simplistic, acknowledgement should be made that many women do suffer at the hands of male (and female) commanders and comrades, and do not want to be part of the fighting force.¹³ They can be subjected to human rights abuses and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), can be forced into marriage against their will and encouraged to drink and take drugs, which aside from the obvious health risks leads to social stigmatisation. Furthermore, gender identities are often in a state of flux particularly during wartime when men go off to fight or are killed altering the roles and responsibilities that women undertake to survive with many becoming the head of the household (Moser and Clark 2001). To increase their multiplicity these women can often exhibit more than one identity over the course of the conflict and may transform the way they perceive themselves.

By being both an active fighter and demander of aggression in defense of their community/group, as well as a peacemaker in the post-conflict setting makes the complexity of their identities hard to define (El-Bushra 2000, p.81). This can manifest practically through difficulties of community acceptance. Holding multiple identities (often which challenges the gender norms) can make it increasingly difficult for women when peace returns, and as society tries to recreate new gender divisions. Such divisions are almost always based on patriarchal pre-conflict gender roles that means women who have breached these deeply anchored perceptions of gender identity become socialised out of their local settings (Barth 2002, p.2). It also makes it hard for planners of initiatives in the post-conflict environment to design appropriate programmes for them (especially as men make most of the decisions for their welfare).

Conflict is also gendered in the way that violence is meted out towards women, especially those involved in fighting forces. It is used as a deliberate tactic of

¹³ McKay and Mazurana (2004) note that in African conflicts in the last number of years the major route for entry was abduction with a few notable exceptions such as Eritrea and Libya.
war, control and suppression. Whilst some women manage to promote themselves within the war system, in many cases the tradition of militarized masculinities prevails within armed groups. Gardam and Jarvis (2000, p.42) comment that women are frequently used for menial and dangerous tasks, occupying lowly positions. In addition to their military responsibilities they are expected to perform traditional duties such as cooking, cleaning and providing sexual services for male combatants. Rape is commonplace. Here traditional gender stereotypes are perpetuated within the armed forces. Therefore in post-conflict reconstruction initiatives this suppression prevails with women’s perspectives and access to programmes such as DDR being hindered by their oppression from male commanders.

2.5.2 Gendering of Peace

In order to understand women’s exclusion and how programmes such as DDR manifest, the gendered nature of peace must been assessed. Peace is a much contested concept with common definitions considering its multiplicity. Galtung (1985) defined peace as negative and positive. Negative peace refers the absence of violent conflict associated with war. In addition to the absence of conflict, positive peace considers the removal of potential spoilers or causes of future conflict. However, these definitions tend to revolve around male discourses as they highlight the cessation of violence and prevention of war escalation. They are broad categories which do not always seem appropriate for women or indeed how women would define peace themselves. Enloe (1987, p.538) suggests that feminists define peace more personally. She states that peace is defined as “women’s achievement of control over their lives” which encompasses not just the removal of violence but the absence of poverty and structural violence and the conditions that reinforce it. For women, peace often means practical concerns such as being safe in their own house/camp or being safe enough to move around without fear of sexual or physical abuse (Puechguirbal 2010b, p.164). However, the details of these peace goals are

14 For example. In a recent report women in Liberia described peace as the freedom to live the lives they choose, to send their children to school, to move around freely without threat, to live
rarely considered in peace agreements and post-conflict situations, as women’s concerns are not seen as relevant to settlements being passed or sustained (Pankhurst 2003, p.157).

This is a function of the abysmally low inclusion of women in peace negotiations. The polarised and tense atmosphere of conflict negotiations tends to reinforce prevailing social attitudes that exclude women (Anderlini 2000, p.10). Traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity are reinforced through their exclusion, and women who attempt to get involved are seen as troublemakers and rebels. Men are worried that including women at the negotiating table will cause them to “compromise and give too much away” and because they are in positions of power they can exclude women (Hunt and Posa 2001, p.46). The result is a shockingly poor amount of women included in both peace negotiations and in the planning and implementation of post-conflict recovery initiatives. In 2010 United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) published a report investigating women’s involvement in peace processes. They concluded that of a representative sample of 24 major peace processes since 1992 only 2.5 per cent of signatories, 3.2 per cent of mediators, 5.5 per cent of witnesses and 7.6 per cent of negotiators were women. They also refer to a similar study conducted in 2008, which reviewed 33 peace processes and found 4 per cent, just 11 out of 280 participants, were women (UNIFEM 2010, p.3). Moreover, the resultant affect of this shortfall is revealed by Pathak (2011, p.7) who comments that UNWomen state that less than 8 per cent of actual budgets for post-conflict programming specifically addressed women’s needs.

Excluding women’s participation in peace settlements means that programmes that affect them in the post-conflict environment consistently fall short of meeting their needs. Those programmes, Connell (2002, p.37) suggests, reflect the pervading neo-liberal perspective that focuses on the inherently gender neutral language of ‘markets’, ‘individuals’ and ‘choice’ but which retains an implicit view of masculinity. The ‘individual’ in this approach promotes the

without violence and conflict within their homes and to be able to feed their families (ActionAid 2012, p.29)
attributes and interests of males. This creates competition and a hierarchy that places the power of unregulated corporations in the hands of men thereby creating a particular type of hegemony. Connell sees this as the basis of an institutional masculinity that is common in post-conflict societies where UN agencies, foreign governments, international NGOs, international bankers and investors all exhibit such tendencies. They are often hierarchical in structure, militate against cooperative and consultative working patterns, encourage individualistic and competitive behaviour and are driven by top-down leadership (Pankhurst 2003, p.167). Their admission procedures, rules and working culture similarly reflect patriarchal dominance (Sweetman, 2000, p.3). Within such institutions there are few women in positions of leadership, which means that peace-building strategies can often be inappropriate when implemented from a political level.

The irony here is that even though the global system does not sufficiently acknowledge women’s need to be considered in peace negotiations and post-conflict efforts, it is often left to women to put the structures in place in order to realise agreements on the ground. Women and girls are frequently responsible for rebuilding social and cultural infrastructures, working amongst the community to try and achieve a peaceful end. Women have a history of peace activism and many women work tirelessly within the communities to build peace. Failing to recognise their achievements through their exclusion ultimately sidelines their needs and underestimates the agency of local actors in war and peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2008, p.145). Women’s unique position in society allows them to engage on multiple platforms as they frequently find a commonality with people from different ethnicities, religions or locations based on a shared experience of violence, pain and domination. Collective visions of peace allow women to come together within the community to provide an alternative to conflict and lobby for change. Women’s peace activism at the local level is well recognised and there are many examples of substantial progress towards final settlements that have been facilitated by women e.g. Liberia, Northern Ireland, Bosnia (Gardner and El-Bushra 2013; African Women Peace Support Group 2004). Paradoxically, not including these women’s
voices at the formal peace negotiations and continually commending them for their work at the grassroots, merely legitimises the non-governmental sphere as that appropriate for women’s activism. Hudson (2010, p.259) suggests that evidence of this marginalisation perpetuates violent discourses which sustain conflict and that when women are substantively represented it leads to more sustainable peace agreements.  

The practical result for women is that peacekeeping (and peacebuilding) operations are axiomatically gendered. As Mazurana (2002, p.42) states;

Peacekeeping operations are dominated by defense departments and debates about national and international security – arenas where men, and masculine and militarised values and priorities dominate and where feminist analyses and the use of gender perspectives are rare to non-existent

Moreover, the peacekeeping environment is ‘hyper-masculine’ since it deploys thousands of male peacekeepers to ‘protect the women and children’ (Puechguirbal 2010b, p.163). Female peacekeepers are a rarity, which makes dealing with women’s specific issues difficult. Female staff in mission headquarters are minimal and inconsistently spread across the hierarchical structures, mainly concentrated in administration, legal and civil affairs and human resource management (Whitworth 2007, p.124). This is problematic, as case studies have shown that local women are more likely to confide in female peacekeepers; women negotiators understand the implications of peace processes for women better than men do; and if at least 30 per cent of mission personnel are female, local women will be likely to join peace committees that are responsive to women’s needs (Whitworth 2007, p.126). Moreover, feminist theorists contend that the presence of women results in differences in the content and priorities of decision-making as well as changes in management style, group dynamics and organisational culture (Bielstein 1998, p.144).

Gender equity is usually not considered because the ‘interests of the nation’ are prioritised which means that reconstruction frequently reverts back to the social

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15 The other difficulty for women is that they regularly continue to do the majority of domestic work and so finding time to engage in other activities is often difficult. In developing countries this may include sourcing and gathering essentials such as water which severely limits her time and agency (Shepherd 2011, p.511).
and political status quo that reinforces traditional gender identities to serve the new polity (Afshar 2003, p.54; Karam 2000, p.7). Women are expected to return to their conventional gender roles and the pervading gender ideologies from before the conflict. This is often framed in a nationalist rhetoric reinforcing that for the good of the country and that in order to build peace and democracy women should resume their roles as virtuous mothers and wives. In this situation ‘post-conflict’ can be considered to be a misnomer for women. It suggests ‘going back’ to their position that previously existed, which is often very different to the future that women envision for themselves (Onubogu et al 2005, p.37).

For some women, the post-conflict environment can present a unique opportunity as those who have embraced traditional men’s roles to survive and who have also taken part with military groups have learned skills such as negotiating, managing personnel, planning, coordinating and mobilising groups which are invaluable skills for peacebuilding (Anderlini 2007, p.104). Women’s experiences of coping despite extreme difficulties underscore their key roles and show them their capacity for resilience and autonomous action (Kelly 2000, p.70). This generates a motivation to transform gender roles amongst these women who attempt to harness this moment. Such women have the opportunity to alter their lives and break free from traditional cultural restrictions, to embrace a new form of empowerment and call for greater gender equity. This unique period of time has been defined by numerous scholars (Pankhurst 2003; Coulter 2005; Cockburn and Zarkov 2002) as the post-war moment.

Despite the post-war moment offering the promise for women to change deep rooted inequalities however, often the liberal peacebuilding environment does not allow them to embrace this opportunity. It stifles their chance at equity by focusing on increasing security and assuming that all women’s needs are the same in the aftermath of war and accepting the ‘gender status quo’. In addition, women are not encouraged to internalise their change in role. Meintjes et al (2001, p.9) commented that:
...if women do not transform their sense of themselves during conflict, they cannot defend themselves when, in the wake of the war, men reassert their claims. As the gender norms are reconstructed, unless women make this internal change they can be made to feel shame over their new identity or the part they played in the conflict. The roles expected of them in the post-conflict environment frequently revert back to traditional stereotypes and may be converse to the new identity that they may have been fulfilling for many months or years.

Interestingly, these new identities can be threatening to men who begin to question their place within the new society. Sideris (2001, p.52) comments that although war is a male-dominated arena, men’s identities in the post-conflict era may emerge more damaged than women’s. She asserts that women may gain empowerment and strength from surviving the conflict, motivated by opportunity to reconstruct their lives without the assistance of men. This, she believes is a catalyst for men seeking to find control over gender divisions elsewhere, typically in intimate relationships. Incidences of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) are found to be more frequent and severe in post-conflict contexts and this may be one reason for the sustained levels of violence against women (Cockburn 2007, p.212).

Neither does gendered post-conflict programming account for women’s multiple roles or agency or that victimhood can have varied substantially. For that reason, women can be said to suffer disproportionately but can also profit from war, so it is vital the peace settlement and post-conflict peacebuilding takes account of both this suffering and gains rather than treating women as a homogenised group (Hudson 2010, p.260). Typically, however women are treated as a group based on the naïve belief that women’s shared gender interests are sufficient to eclipse any political, economic or cultural difference between them, causing unfulfilled expectations of post-conflict programming and increased tension (Sweetman 2005, p.4). The rhetoric and philosophy of gender equity in such programmes presupposes gender transformation but the reality is that an immediate need for skills and lack of resources to provide them
provides a particular problem for states emerging from conflict (Sideris 2001, p.69).

2.5.3 Feminist Responses to Liberal Peace: UNSCR 1325 and Gender Mainstreaming

In order to address issues and exclusions for women in both conflict and peace settings feminist scholars and local and international organisations began to convene to discuss these issues. The focus on women, their role in conflict and exclusion from peace processes and programmes was first formally addressed in 1985 at the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi. The subject received increasing attention and with the publication of the Agenda for Peace in 1992, the new focus on bottom up approaches to peacebuilding allowed women to start making headway in this context (Cockburn 2007, p.139; Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011, p.491). The end of the Cold War had signaled a shift in attention towards addressing women’s issues which were viewed with suspicion at the height of the Cold War because the Soviets had actively encouraged women’s liberation and commitment to gender equality (although they omitted attention to SGBV issues) and initially feminists supporting this agenda were regarded as threatening (Harrington 2011).

By 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women prioritised gender mainstreaming as the mechanism to achieve greater gender equity and emphasised the importance of a gender perspective and women’s contribution to sustainable peacebuilding. Five years later a review of the Beijing Platform for Action at the 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000 found that the critical omission in work to date was that of ‘women and armed conflict’. Furthermore, the lack of a gender perspective in the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Keeping Operations (Brahimi Report), commissioned by the Secretary-General in 2000, only referred to gender in terms of balance\(^{16}\) and sensitivity for UN personnel, which fuelled

\(^{16}\) In addition the results of a study by the Department of Peacekeeping Operation’s Lessons Learned Unit in Windhoek in 2000 resulted in the “Windhoek Declaration” and the “Namibia Plan
action by NGOs to call for change (Puechguirbal 2010b, p.165).\textsuperscript{17} As a result an NGO working group was formed to urge the UN to try and pass a resolution that ensured that women in peace and security would be tackled more strategically (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011, p.492).

This work laid the foundations for such a resolution to be considered which culminated on the 31\textsuperscript{st} October 2000 when the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was unanimously passed. It was hailed as a watershed political framework since it was the first time in fifty-five years that the Security Council had recognised the differential impact of armed conflict on men and women (Whitworth 2007, p.121; Cohn et al 2004, p.130). The resolution at a basic level highlights three central arguments (Gibbings 2011, p.528; Sweetman 2005, p.2).

1. There should be increased participation of women in various bodies, institutions and processes that relate broadly to peace and security (i.e. peacekeeping missions, peace and security decision making at all levels).

2. There should be a ‘gender perspective’ in all of these processes and institutions that acknowledge that women’s and girls’ experiences of armed conflict are not shared by men and boys and that it is a human right to protect women and girls during and after conflict. This includes making provision for SGBV, and their special needs as women in policies and programmes through gender mainstreaming.

3. There should be a mechanism through which the Security Council can take into account gender and women’s rights. This can be accomplished through consultation with local and international women’s groups where their specific skills and knowledge should be drawn upon.

By focusing attention on these areas, and since it is a rights-based document, UNSCR 1325, formally pushed women’s rights and gender equality up the

\footnotesize{of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations” which also tended to focus on gender balance (getting more women involved and into senior positions) (Whitworth 2007, p.126).

\textsuperscript{17} Raven-Roberts (2005, p.47) comments that the report lacked any kind of nuanced gender analysis of the causes or impact of conflict or the responses that communities experienced. This meant that issues pertaining to women such as SGBV during and after the conflict are not being addressed in programming.}
security and peace agenda for the first time (Barnes and Olonisakin 2011, p.3). All of the key areas for concern in UNSCR 1325 were organised into four pillars of participation, protection, prevention and relief and recovery which form the basis for implementation.

According to Shepherd (2011: 505) the resolution appears to being taken seriously since there are “102 translations of UNSCR 1325 available, in languages from Albanian to Zulu”, and 37 national action plans that commit respective governments to the full implementation on UNSCR 1325 in their international and domestic activities (Peacewomen 2012). Likewise, there has been increased interest in UNSCR 1325 from feminist scholars wishing to assess its impact in terms of changing global governance and its assumptions about gendered agency and structure, as well as investigating its practical application in sites of conflict (Shepherd 2008a and 2008b; Cohn et al 2004; Special issue of International Feminist Journal of Politics 2011; Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011; Whitworth 2007; Sweetman 2005). Most make passing reference to the beneficial effects of the resolution choosing to focus on the numerous limitations from various feminist perspectives. That said, there are many positive aspects to the resolution, most notably that there was finally a firm and binding commitment to addressing women’s needs in peace and conflict at the highest level. It allows women to be detached from ‘women and children’ and acknowledge the horrors that they experienced through conflict, as well as recognising their agency. Moreover, other international organisations such as the EU and donor governments are beginning to harmonise their policies and positions in line with the resolution (Cohn et al 2004, p.139).

In reality however, not much has been said about the progressive nature of the resolution for women in sites of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction since most critics have chosen to focus on the substantial reservations of its effectiveness. Examining the three central aims of the resolution some research has tracked whether progress has been made towards achieving their ends. With regard to increasing a ‘gender perspective’ focusing on women in various peace and security institutions, little impact has been made. Statistics presented
earlier show only marginal progress in the ratios of women involved in peace negotiations. Furthermore, a report by UNIFEM (2010) confirms that little progress has been made regarding representing women’s perspectives in peace agreements. In a systematic review of 585 peace agreements the report revealed that between 1990-2010 only 92 peace agreements (16 per cent) have contained at least one reference to women or gender. In terms of SGBV, Aroussi (2011) found that UNSCR 1325 adopts a narrow concept of justice focused on sanctions and prosecutions and fails to address strategies that respond to victim’s needs. Furthermore, the resolution adopts a narrow conception of sexual violence, and ignores the multiple causal factors behind rape, the complex identities of the victims and how SGBV is used to continue aggression towards women. Finally, there is limited engagement with women at the grassroots level and limited progress on allowing them to take ownership of the resolution.

The commentary regarding the limitations of the resolution has also revealed other issues regarding attention to its mandate and its implementation. For example, Sandra Whitworth (2007, pp.123,127) in her work on the UN suggested that the UN bureaucracy treats gender erratically. It is attentive when being publicly lobbied by women’s organisations but often silent when dealing with its ‘bread and butter’ issues of war, peace and security. She also notes that there is often a general hostility towards the resolution and gender mainstreaming as they are not seen as central to the UN system and a distraction from the real business of peace operations. The bottom line, Whitworth (2007, p.137) contends, is that there “is simply no compelling reason” to implement a gender lens as in many cases it will not stem an outbreak of violence or bring a resolution to hostilities. This is exactly where the system is failing. What feminist enquiry has uncovered Enloe (2005, p.281) comments, is that:

...patriarchy – in all its varied guises, camouflaged, khaki clad and pin striped – is a principal cause both of the outbreak of violent societal conflicts and of the international community’s frequent failures in providing long term resolutions to those violent conflicts.
If patriarchy is responsible for perpetuating conflict then strategies such as UNSCR 1325 become critical in breaking this cycle. The challenge is whether the resolution as it stands can overcome such an overwhelming obstacle.

Cohn et al (2004, p.137) suggest that one of the fundamental problems with the resolution is that by focusing on women’s dilemmas in peace and security it fails to consider the problematic role of militarised masculine identities within the security agenda and their over representation. According to Connell (2005) this over-abundance of men is a function of hegemonic masculinity being connected to masculinist power that excludes subordinate and marginalised masculinities as well as womanhood and femininity. Parpart (2008, p.82) suggests that those who threaten these ‘militarized masculinities’ and the power they weld can be relegated or expelled from the inner circle or refused entry. She notes that these hegemonic masculinities are complex and can vary depending on the context. For example, in an African environment which is often multiethnic and multiracial, numerous hegemonic masculinities can compete with each other and are affected by historical factors. In most cases then, the reality is that men continue to hold the power in the post-conflict context and even if this is not formalised they often continue to exhibit their patriarchal control in private through such acts as SGBV. Unless notions of hegemonic power are addressed through UNSCR 1325 by engaging with men on such issues the effects of the resolution will remain tokenistic for women.

However, despite all of the implication issues the real problem lies with the document itself. Laura Shepherd (2008a and 2008b, 2011) critically examined the environment that the document was constructed in and by whom. She found that whilst women as both informal organisers and formal actors were acknowledged within the resolution, gender was represented largely as being synonymous with sex, thereby portraying women as fragile, passive and in need of protection. The responsibility for this protection was put in the control of elite political actors in the international system; ergo, men. This, she commented, was “synonymous with a liberal framework” and that the document had constructed a “liberal individual” as their subject. The resolution is another form
of control and even though women’s NGOs were consulted in the writing process there are still many problems. Unless UNSCR 1325 is perceived as belonging to the people that it affects it will be viewed as something imposed – another form of Western imperialism (Sweetman 2005, p.6).

What the resolution does not achieve effectively is to acknowledge women as actors. Rather it continues to represent women as peacemakers, pacifists and victims under a conventional patriarchal vision of women. This is eloquently illustrated by Gibbings (2011) in her article entitled ‘No Angry Women at the UN’. It documents the visit of two Iraqi women to the UN in 2003 that addressed members of the gender offices of the UN agencies, NGOs and representatives from Member States. The women spoke out against the invasion of the USA and UK hailing it as imperialist and criticised the UN for its lack of support. The expectation from those at the meeting had been that the women would speak of the role that they had played in the reconstruction of Iraq, so many people were angry that they had not spoken in accordance with UN agendas. Gibbings believes that because they had not exhibited behaviour that was deemed appropriate to what the UN considers feminine and how a women should behave, that their message was dismissed. This utopian, essentialised vision of what women should be she goes on to document is manifested in UNSCR 1325.

The approach offered by UNSCR 1325 is firmly embedded in liberal ideals as a rights based approach. The explanation for women’s position in society is seen in terms of unequal rights or barriers to women’s participation in the public world beyond the family and the household. The difficulty here is that it does not challenge women’s subordinate role in society or address structural inequality. Even if equality is achieved there are still underlying patriarchal systems in place that obstruct women in their daily lives. Similarly, many peacebuilding liberal strategies that promote women’s equality, utterly disregard embedded gender ideologies and hence unlikely to do much to promote peace (Steans 2006, p.61). Neither is UNSCR 1325 applicable to many civil conflicts in developing countries where women are forced to join militia groups.
The difficulty with this focus on liberal approaches to gender in war and peace is that it assumes that the liberal peace approach is the most appropriate for all. This results in increasing involvement of women but does not address the underlying issues for women. What is needed is a different perspective to listen to the voices and actions of women and women’s organisations at a local level. Feminist research appreciates a women’s viewpoint to explore how they have personally navigated the conflict and define and build peace. This is frequently omitted from the post-conflict environment and settlements, as it is often viewed as neither urgent nor essential to the peacebuilding process (Pankhurst 2003, p.157). Issues that women regard as a priority are often seen as ‘soft’ and less important as they frequently rank social, economic and cultural rights over civic and political ones (Hudson 2010, p.261). This means that gender concerns are poorly accounted for or implemented, often because women are not included at the peace-table to put forward their perspectives. There is therefore a need to develop feminist accounts of women’s local agency and resistance towards international intervention to fully understand how they reclaim agency over the dominant formations of gender that are delivered through UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming.

2.5.3.1 Gender Mainstreaming

The other area of analysis of concern in this debate is the notion of gender mainstreaming, as this is the traditional vehicle for implementing UNSCR 1325’s objectives. Gender mainstreaming first rose to prominence in the early 1980s in response to the women in development/gender and development debate (True 2010, p.190). Initially gender mainstreaming was proposed as a framework for action to increase the status of women in developing countries but it has now extended beyond international development policy into other domains including peacekeeping and peacebuilding, particularly in the UN architecture. Gender Mainstreaming is defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (1997) as:

(…) the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men
benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

(cited in Baksh et al 2005, p.8)

In short, gender mainstreaming concerns the application of analysis to gender issues throughout all UN policies and programmes. 18 Most major institutions and governments now have a gender policy that advocates gender mainstreaming but Moser and Moser (2005, p.15) found that implementation and impact of gender mainstreaming are mostly considered to be inconsistent and lacking in consensus on the method for increasing gender equity and that approaches to gender mainstreaming can still vary widely. For example, the approach used by the UN is to put gender advisors into place to act as catalysts and that all staff bear responsibility to put instantiate gender mainstreaming. Unfortunately, this approach has been found to lack universal acceptance which means that the outcomes are inconsistent and that women may be seen to be a ‘means to an end’, a homogenous group or instrumentalised by policy (True 2010, p.193). Furthermore, Raven-Roberts (2005, p.54) detected much hostility towards gender mainstreaming within the UN system. Since peacekeeping is traditionally masculinised within a military and emergency rhetoric, gender concerns are seen to be at odds with, and in some cases detrimental to this approach.

In addition Whitworth (2007, pp.120,130) found that many people working with the UN admit that they do not know what gender mainstreaming entails within their work or how to implement it. Local NGOs who are often subcontracted by the UN can also find its implementation onerous. The term gender mainstreaming is difficult to translate into other languages, which means that interpretations can also vary widely between stakeholders. In some languages it can convey threatening undertones or become radically oversimplified, which results in the process being omitted or incorrectly implemented in ways that are potentially detrimental rather than beneficial (Charlesworth 2005, p.12). This highlights the need to ensure gender responsive training with all those

18 Other definitions expand on this through prioritising gender mainstreaming of the agency itself as well as incorporating gender empowerment to reflect women’s part in decision-making processes.
delivering programmes in the post-conflict environment so that a coherent agenda is being promoted. However, this often proves extremely difficult as Gender Units frequently suffer from a severe lack of funding which means that efforts towards gender mainstreaming become tokenistic at best, with gender concerns becoming marginalised.\textsuperscript{19}

One reason for these major failures is the idea that gender mainstreaming is a relatively sophisticated concept. As True and Mintrom (2001, p.33) state “The purpose of mainstreaming is to alter the existing social and political order that leads to gendered outcomes”. This is more complex than the traditional commitments to ‘gender balance’ as it views gender as being shaped by class, religious and ethnic differences as well as acknowledging power differentials and that these differences are fluid and unfold in numerous ways (Whitworth 2007, p.124). It is often conceptualised in the wrong direction and seen as a challenge rather than an opportunity.

What gender mainstreaming hopes to achieve is a critical step towards a change in outcomes. For example True (2010, p.191) states:

\[\text{(\ldots) changes in the activities of an organisation - its projects programmes and policies – should ultimately lead to improvements in the situation of the subjects of policy intervention, that is women's material lives.}\]

However, this teleological formation of gender mainstreaming is exactly where the problem lies. Shepherd (2011, p.514) commented that transforming the concept of gender into a verb through \textit{mainstreaming} implies that the issue of gender inequity can be concluded. She suggests that it is not surprising that such mechanisms have come about as current emphasis on effectiveness, accountability and achieving targets remains the focus in international institutions.

In a similar way to UNSCR 1325, gender mainstreaming helps to reinforce the liberal peace project and focus on men. As True (2010, p.195) states:

\[\text{\ldots}\]

\textsuperscript{19} Whitworth (2007, p.132) goes on to point out that under such difficult conditions it is amazing that any tasks have been performed by Gender Units. Often monitoring and evaluation falls by the wayside so the impact of their work is uncertain.
Implementing gender mainstreaming has rarely led to serious questioning of liberal institutional norms and how they may privilege masculine agency and reinforce gendered inequalities in power and resources in the market, state and civil society. Until the method for implementing gender concerns is altered the current approach will continue to be responsible for an “add women and stir” method, rather than addressing the underlying construction of gender inequality. This in turn will continue to threaten the stability of peace processes.

2.6 Effects of Liberal Peace on DDR and Gender

Thus far, this chapter has provided an overview of the DDR process and an explanation as to how it was conceived under the liberal peace process. It has indicated limitations to liberal peace as well as delineating how the approach is gendered. This section will now consider these elements together and examine how the liberal peace affects DDR and gender in terms of delivery on the ground.

2.6.1 Implementation Issues

Given that there is often a multitude of partners involved in DDR it is important that an integrated approach to implementation occurs. Regrettably in practice this is often not the case. Knight and Ozerdem (2004, p.502) cite examples that illustrate this lack of coordination with numerous organisations operating under the banner of DDR but in a disjointed and poorly integrated way. This means that experiences of DDR vary widely and it is often a matter of luck whether a beneficiary has a useful and productive experience rather than procedures and training being standardised.

In order to prevent the above, to mitigate any confusion over tasks and to gain ownership, National Commissions on DDR (NCDDR) are increasingly being established to assist the coordination of DDR activities. Whilst this is encouraging, Muggah et al (2009, p.278) comment that in reality such ‘national ownership’ can be awkward if the host government is fragile. If the host nation lacks governmental capacity or is hostile to the DDR process it can be all too easy for those implementing strands to fulfill their own agendas. In view of that, it is vital that there is a holistic understanding of the process which can facilitate
implementing structures that are organised vertically and horizontally (Knight and Ozerdem 2004, p.507). There is also a move towards harmonization through integrating DDR programmes with Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Transitional Justice, for example.

2.6.2 Focus on Elections

The focus on elections undoubtedly impacts on the DD portions of the process. International institutions need to be seen to be acting swiftly to maintain order and collect weapons. Security is fundamental in order to implement other programmes including elections. However, this can lead to a focus on these security elements to the detriment of the reintegration segment. Most of the finance is spent on these rapid programmes that achieve tangible outcomes. In some cases disarmament commences too quickly which means that funds and equipment are not in place and can produce the opposite effect of making the situation more insecure. This occurred in Liberia in 2004 where the international community needed to be seen to have started the process prior to a high-level donor conference in New York. The disarmament was therefore started before all of the necessary logistics had been set up which culminated in chaos and fatalities at the initial disarmament (this is outlined in detail in Chapter six).

2.6.3 Western Imperialism

The focus on security along with inadequate poor consultation means that reintegration programmes are frequently delivered under Western agendas which do not match the preferences of the indigenous population that is trying to reintegrate. The focus on economics and trade under the liberal agenda means that reintegration prioritises these aspects of the process. Theoretically, providing a viable means of income or educational opportunity should allow the ex-combatant to become a productive member of the community and ease the reintegration. However, the absence of an established market entails being reintegrated back into an economic system that is not yet equipped to deal with them. Those who are educated cannot find employment as fledgling economies with little investment do not create the opportunity, while those trained in
vocational skills flood the market, posing a serious challenge to economic productivity.

Stankovic (2010, p.12), comments that, in general conventional DDR processes have focused exclusively on presumed economic motivations of ex-combatants rather than considering the social aspects and the heterogeneity of ex-combatants who actually have a diversity of support, opportunities, skills and abilities. By this narrow definition reintegration bypasses the important social and psychological aspects of reintegration which are key to ex-combatants rebuilding their lives within the community. It does not fully consider affect and memory which are critical factors for the healing, recovery and reconciliation which are vital for restoring trust relations between populations and factions and are therefore a fundamental aim of DDR.

2.6.4 Insufficient Local Ownership, Participation and Social Reintegration
Focusing on security and economic conditions creates a very narrow view of what DDR is supposed to achieve which is defined almost entirely by those that fund and implement it. There is limited consultation with the grassroots and participation and consultation is frequently scant. Kilroy (2011) found in his study on DDR and Sierra Leone that participation, involvement and consultation were poor and that the resultant outcomes generated incorrect information leading to resentment, unfulfilled expectations and a community perception of unfair rewards for those in the process. He found that for every person that had been consulted, four others had not. This lack of consultation reinforces the trend of implementers to work around their agendas and time-scales focusing on measurable results and exit strategies.

Furthermore, programmes do not account for local methods of reintegration. Traditionally in some communities engaging in customary ceremonies and rituals can be vital for acceptance. These ceremonies are often linked with religious or cultural practices which have been inexistence for generations. They often consist of ritual bathing to cleanse the person from bad spirits or sin and once performed can be a powerful determinant to successful reintegration.
These local practices should be considered during the planning and implementation phases to increase ownership with the wider community.

By failing to take into account local approaches or consult with those that the programme assists, DDR does not achieve the objectives as laid down by the UN. DDR often does not work through structures that are already in existence such as local networks defined by Nan (2008, p.113) as social structures that connect people to each other. In many cases these remain durable throughout the conflict, helping citizens to survive and are used heavily afterwards to locally rebuild relationships and structures from an indigenous perspective.

Research on social networks in this context has been mainly confined to the realm of troop mobilization and political violence. Studies (Themner 2011; Christensen and Utas 2008; Utas and Jorgel 2008) have highlighted the use of social networks (including community, religious, ethnic, business) to create groups of fighters or to incite violence around political campaigns. They suggest that affinity and solidarity with those in their network can breed trust, which in turn leads to social capital as they experience solidarity through coordinated actions. The networks can also be used to instill fear in members to force them to join to fight.

Conversely, these networks have also been used to encourage peace. People come together within their communities, religious groups, tribes and gender groups to provide an economic and social outlet for their members (Paczynska 2010, p.9). Furthermore such networks are vital for ex-combatants when returning to their communities as they are a vital part of social reintegration and acceptance. McKay and Mazurana (2004) found that if child soldiers had a trusting adult to be received by, this constituted a critical consideration in their recovery from war and those children in their study who had a family support structure fared much better.

Unfortunately, the liberal peace agenda forces the focus towards economic reintegration packages. The assumption is that providing a livelihood for the ex-
combatant will assist with social acceptance as well as allowing them to survive the post-conflict transition. The focus lies firmly within a securitisation agenda whereby keeping ex-combatant’s occupied and off the streets the opportunity for reprisals is greatly reduced. The difficulty with this approach is the misleading assumption that economic reintegration constitutes the entire process and places the onus on the ex-combatant to change their behaviour. Furthermore, considering the social and psychological aspects of reintegration are vital as they will have an affect on economic reintegration. El-Bushra (2000, p.78) acknowledges that simply facilitating economic survival and ignoring social and personal elements is limited, as it does not consider the how the context impacts on economic capacity. Furthermore, she states that physical and psychological status also can affect an individual’s capacity for economically productive activity and economic pressures clearly affect the former in a reciprocal manner.

2.6.5 Women and DDR

The gendering of peacebuilding and documents to implement its agenda such as UNSCR 1325 and the gender mainstreaming approach, create delivery issues on the ground for women associated with fighting forces. With regard to DDR programmes UNSCR explicitly;

Encourages all those involved in the planning of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of females and male ex-combatants and to take account of the needs of their dependents.

(UNSCR 1325, article 13, 2000)

As a result the Office of Disarmament Affairs began mainstreaming gender into its work from 2001 and was the first UN entity to develop a Gender Action Plan (UNODA 2011). Within peace support operations gender-mainstreaming is overseen by the Office of the Gender Advisor (OGA) which acts as a focal point to ensure that gender aspects are considered in programming and staffing and is a cross-cutting theme across their work both individually and with other agencies and the government. Reinforcing the integrated approach aims to strengthen coordination amongst key stakeholders and build capacity with regard to advice and technical assistance on mainstreaming gender as well as decreasing the likelihood of duplicating efforts (UNMIL 2010a, p.xi).
According to Hudson (2010, p.274), considering gender through mainstreaming, inclusion and transformational strategies could make peacebuilding processes more representative, effective and provide an insight into understanding how women’s inclusion can link to the causal mechanisms that underpin conflict and solutions to peace. However, the mechanism under UNSCR 1325 currently in place becomes stuck at increasing women’s role into the process. Because it does not address the larger issues of gender inequality it restricts women’s participation in DDR.

This inequality is acutely visible in women’s enrollment. WAFFs/ex-combatants are often not incorporated or voluntarily stay out of the process. Where women do take part, they undergo a similar process to men which does not always meet their needs. However, getting women to simply register for the DDR process may be a challenge. Often women are not aware that they are eligible for DDR either through a lack of knowledge or incorrect information (i.e. that they need a weapon to register). De Watteville (2002, p.6) comments that frequently women are simply not adequately informed of their rights to DDR. For example, in some cases women and girls are unaware that they are free to leave their armed groups as commanders do not inform them of the possibility of their release or do not let them go. Governments can also conceal the use of women in their fighting forces while highlighting their presence in opposition forces which prevents them from registering (McKay and Mazurana 2004, p.113).

Women may also stay out of the process of their own volition. This may be because they are concerned about their security throughout the process or worried about the stigma attached from the community at large of being an ex-combatant and being associated with killing, sexual violence, rape and illegitimate children (Bouta 2005, p.10). Being labeled an ex-combatant in some contexts has also been found to harm marriage prospects which can adversely

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20 Women are also more likely to be illiterate and have less access to news sources (UNDDR, 2006, 5.10: 15)
affect reintegration. The threat of such difficulties can lead some women towards self-demobilisation or ‘spontaneous reintegration’, which can be extremely demanding for those with little support, networks or families to assist them. Such difficulties can narrow a women’s life choices considerably which means that avenues of survival often result in prostitution (Kelly 2000, p.54).

However, if women do opt to participate in the process numerous issues can arise which have attracted much academic scholarship. These limitations include security issues in cantonments (Nilsson 2005, p.77; Mazurana et al 2004, p.3); poor child care provision (Ozerdem 2009, p.36; Kingma 2002, p.192; de Watteville 2002, p.7); poor medical and hygiene facilities in cantonments (McKay and Mazurana, 2004); inequitable transitional assistance that is contingent on being with males and poor provision for families (Farr 2003, p.31; de Watteville 2002, p.1); stigma on reintegration and poor community sensitisation (Nilsson 2005, p.77); poor psychological provision (Denov 2007, p.21; McKay 2004); reinforcing traditional gender roles (Mackenzie 2009a and b); gender discriminatory DDR frameworks (McKay and Mazurana 2004; Jennings 2009).

The gendered nature of the peacebuilding process with its focus on security and inherently masculine ideals coupled with the inadequate representation of women in peace negotiations or dialogue with the grassroots means that DDR frequently falls short for women. With the focus on security and not reintegration these women are not seen as a security threat or given priority through the process despite the large numbers of women associated with armed forces (Nilsson 2005, p.76). Their reintegration training and opportunities are frequently gendered and provide skills training that reinforce traditional gender roles (MacKenzie 2009a and 2009b). It does not take into account any skills they may have learned through the conflict or whether they want to return to a traditional role.
2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that DDR programmes are complex processes that straddle the divide between security and development which is critical to the success of peacebuilding initiatives. Without their effective implementation, former combatants can become potential spoilers and reignite violence. It has examined the DDR processes in detail and explored how they have been developed under a liberal peace agenda that places increased emphasis on democratisation, security and economic reintegration. This approach has encountered problems with sequencing, it may be perceived as a form of a Westernised agenda and it does not afford sufficient attention towards indigenous peacebuilding or local ownership.

For women, this last consideration is a problem as the local level is where they have the most effective voice and authority, but the top-down nature of post-conflict reconstruction ensures that their views are not reflected. Coupled with their exclusion from peace negotiations, it found that programmes that assist WAFFs/ex-combatants with their reintegration do not attend to their requirements and focus on security and economic reintegration. Key debates suggested that they do not sufficiently consider social and psychological factors which are often central to women in how they define peace. Furthermore, it revealed that women are often denied agency and defined as a uniform category despite exhibiting multiple identities during the conflict by functioning as both aggressors and pacifists. Due to the masculine nature of the liberal peace agenda, women are frequently expected to return to their pre-war gender roles and are prohibited from embracing the post-war moment.

Moreover, this chapter has shown that moves towards redressing the imbalance for women in conflict and peace situations through key policy documents such as UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming have found that women are still viewed as victims, peacemakers and need protection. Critics have suggested that although their agency is being nominally considered, the reality is that such documents merely increase women’s involvement in post-conflict processes while crucial issues of contesting patriarchal systems and providing more
gender equity are omitted. What is missing is an appreciation of women’s experiences within processes such as DDR to understand how approaches like gender mainstreaming unfold practically. This is particularly the case with reintegration. It is not clear whether such gender specific approaches can assist with WAFFs/ex-combatants’ successful reintegration from an economic, social and psychological perspective and if they can help women to contest gender inequality and build a peaceful society. Similarly, there is little appreciation of any other indigenous mechanisms and social structures WAFFs/ex-combatants use to assist with their reintegration as the focus under the liberal peace approach is predominantly economic.

This research in this thesis explores these omissions by examining WAFFs’ experiences through a gender mainstreamed DDR process in Liberia, and hopes to understand how the programme met their unique reintegration needs. It also considers what other methods WAFFs employed or systems they relied upon to navigate the post-conflict environment. Revealing these lived realities helps to reinforce the limitations of liberal peacebuilding and further investigates the gendered nature of the process and mechanisms to address them. It also allows for more specific alternative approaches to peacebuilding and gender issues to be considered.
Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction
This chapter will outline the methodological considerations for this study. In particular it will examine the rationale for choosing particular methodologies as well as providing a detailed explanation of the research process in terms of how the research was conducted and why and who was selected to take part, ethical considerations and constraints to the methodology. Finally, it will explore how the data was analysed and interpreted to determine the conclusions reached.

3.2 Theoretical Framework and Philosophical Underpinnings
Chapter Two reviewed the theoretical concerns that are pertinent to this study. There are two interlocking literatures (liberal peace and feminist responses to it) that provide a framework for analysis. Specifically it uses a hybrid peace analysis of gender mainstreaming and DDR by assessing both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. The use of a hybrid peace approach reveals that DDR programmes are much more intricate than traditional analysis has shown. Hybrid peace considers how “different actors coalesce and conflict to different extents on different issues to produce a fusion peace” (Mac Ginty 2010, p.397). Reviewing this case under a hybrid lens allows for an exploration of the broader picture of WAFFs/ex-combatants reintegration and considers the social and psychological elements that are vital for community acceptance and important to women’s conceptualisations of peace. This is useful as “the lens offered by hybridity allows us to more easily recognise the agency and diversity of local actors in peace and conflict situations” (Mac Ginty 2011, p.10). Furthermore, it allows for a consideration of the constraints for those who plan and implement
DDR programmes within the analysis as well as those at the meso level such as NGOs. In sum, a hybrid lens examines opportunities offered by formal reconstruction initiatives as well as local reintegration interventions to provide a more holistic understanding of WAFFs/ex-combatants reintegration.

This hybrid approach works well with the ontological and epistemological perspective of this study. The work is underpinned by a feminist social constructivist approach. In subscribing to this position, the study accepts that individuals develop meanings of their experiences that can be complex and varied, and an exploration of these multiple views allows the researcher to understand the dynamics of the situation (Creswell 2009, p.8). In particular for women, this approach allows a gender analysis to be conducted to reveal differences of equality and dominance and how power and identity is produced and reinforced in a particular way through language, knowing and meaning (Ackerly and True 2010, p. 26-8). It reveals if the WAFFs/ex-combatants have been portrayed in a particular way and had meaning ascribed to them as women through engagement with key informants, literature and policy. Equally, it explores how the WAFFs/ex-combatants themselves construe their reality based on their participative interpretation of their place within society. Within this interpretation a consideration of how historical and cultural factors have affected the way in which women have been portrayed is also examined as it can help to explain how sense has been made of phenomena previously.

In order to understand the findings under this hybrid approach, the data will be reviewed through considering the theoretical aspects of the liberal peace approach by exploring how these elements are embedded into the planning and implementation of the DDRR process in Liberia and the conditions and limitations which this brings to programming. A feminist interpretation of the liberal peace is then formulated by reviewing the gender policy documents and processes that drive implementation for women in post-conflict recovery initiatives, namely UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming. This framework will be used to assess the gender mainstreaming of the DDRR in Liberia process from an implementers perspective in Chapter six.
In order to understand the more intricate nuances of the WAFFs/ex-combatant’s reintegration, data generated from their experiences will be applied to Ozerdem’s (2012) model of social reintegration in Chapter seven. This will be used to as a framework for analysis to ascertain a broader and deeper understanding of social reintegration processes. His approach uses the ex-offender re-entry theory (O’Leary and Duffee 1971) as a basis, which outlines the assistance models for ex-offenders to reintegrate into society.\textsuperscript{21} Although in a different context than ex-combatants, the desistance (process by which they become a non-offender) from crime highlights the importance of the community as a positive contributor to reattachment to society. In adapting these ideas Ozerdem has created a framework to explain the types of reintegration of ex-combatants. See figure 1.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Targeting on the community} & \textbf{LOW} & \textbf{HIGH} \\
\hline
\textbf{Targeting on the combatant} & \textbf{LOW} & \textbf{Self-demobilisation} & \textbf{Community-located reintegration} \\
\hline
\textbf{} & \textbf{HIGH} & \textbf{Reinsertion} & \textbf{Social Reintegration} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{Figure 1:} Model for Community Re-entry for Former Combatants (Ozerdem 2012, p.61)

The model illustrates that without focus on the community or the ex-combatant, typically self-demobilisation occurs where former combatants retreat back into society with no assistance. In many cases they may not return to their original

\textsuperscript{21} Ozerdem (2012) outlines quite clearly that whilst this theory was developed for a different context and there are numerous reasons why people offend/re-offend which differ to those of ex-combatants, there are still many analogies and ideas that are useful for social reintegration of ex-combatants.
communities or reveal that they had been part of a fighting faction for fear of social stigma. Where there is sustained targeting on the ex-combatant and low community interaction the process of reinsertion takes place. This is currently what ‘reintegration’ consists of in most traditional DDR programmes; combatant-centred and focused on skills training, with little or no regard for the receiving communities which often causes substantial resentment. Critics of this reinsertion approach have called for more community-located reintegration programmes, which consider the social context and address the needs of communities through the ex-combatant’s return. While this is happening more frequently, often these programmes are planned, implemented and financed by external actors that place little emphasis on participation (Kilroy 2012). This, in turn means, that the Western, liberal peace approach can be imposed. Chapter seven will investigate in more detail the methods of social reintegration used by WAFFs/ex-combatants.

The final part of the model is where there is a high degree of community targeting and ex-combatant attention, a process referred to as social reintegration. Included within this social approach are the role of the family and community, provision for sustainable employment (seen here as not a separate undertaking but merged as a vital part of social reintegration) and civic participation and political decision-making. Taking account of the local context is fundamental as well as addressing the differences between ex-combatants, especially with groups who may have particular needs, such as WAFFs/ex-combatants or child soldiers.

This study therefore uses multiple theoretical and analytical approaches. These have been chosen as they complement each other and are appropriate as a foundation to answer the research questions. The broad overarching approach of hybridity provides justification for reviewing both top-down and bottom-up perspectives. Attempting to explore more localised perspectives of women’s reintegration utilises a feminist perspective and uses that information to interpret their experiences of social reintegration through using Ozerdem’s (2012) model
as a framework for analysis. All of these approaches require similar kinds of qualitative evidence to reveal the story of the women’s reintegration.

### 3.3 Justification for Case Selection

The case of Liberia was selected because it was a crucial case with respect to the use of gender mainstreaming in peace-making. The UN Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) was the first UN peacekeeping mission with an explicit mandate to mainstream UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 on sexual violence (UNDPKO 2005, p.31; Njoki Wamai 2011, p.52). In addition, some of those appointed with the political will to mainstream the resolution were women, namely the Special Representative to Liberia (SRSG), Ellen Margrethe Løj as well as Liberia’s first elected President since the conflict, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. The uniquely integrated nature of the mission meant that gender mainstreaming was coordinated with the other UN offices present in the country namely (UNIFEM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF). This gender mainstreaming was evident in all programmes and special provision was made regarding DDRR. Finally, the sheer numbers of those that took part in DDRR (nearly 1 in 35) means that Liberia is an exceptional case.

Furthermore, in order to explore how WAFFs/ex-combatants in the longer term had reintegrated socially and economically and understand how they had navigated the post-conflict environment, some time needed to have elapsed following the end of the DDRR implementation. Since phases of the programme studied had been completed it was deemed an appropriate case to explore the impact of DDRR as some of the longer-terms effects of reintegration could be examined. More can be learned about the detail of the conflict and specifics of the DDRR programme in Chapters four and five.

Finally, as Kilroy (2012, p.55) suggests, DDR programmes had been in place for more than ten years allowing for the growth of expertise in the design and

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22 It is worth noting here however that the previous SRSG Alan Doss was heavily invested in improving UNMIL’s gender profile.
implementation of the programmes. DDR was shifting from a minimalist approach with its focus on security to a more maximalist approach that considered reintegration and development processes more carefully. Moreover, in the ensuing years since the first DDR programme took place, more targeted attention was being given to female combatants which gave further justification for selecting Liberia as an appropriate case for investigation.

3.4 Research Methods Overview

Feminist approaches often advocate qualitative methods to collecting data as it permits women to give their perspectives and for hierarchies of power, inequality and injustice to be explored. Based on these assumptions the type of methods employed for this study were qualitative using open-ended, flexible research practices. It also affected the location that the research was conducted in, as by studying people in the specific contexts where they live and work allows researchers to engage with other factors (i.e. historical, political, social, cultural) which may shape their interpretation. The strategy of maintaining an inductive approach and to explore what emerged from participant interactions further supported the use of qualitative methods. Kvale (2007, p.xi) reinforces these ideas by stating that qualitative research refrains from imposing an over-defined hypothesis in the beginning, and rather defining and refining concepts in the process of the research.

After a review of the relevant qualitative methodologies from training earlier in my doctoral studies, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with the WAFFs/ex-combatants, the community, and key informants seemed the most appropriate methods for exploring the research questions. These methods were selected because they allow analysis of how people understand their world and how they communicate about this world in their own words. They were selected over methods such as a survey, as the individual perspective would be lost and it is imperative to have a nuanced understanding of the complexity of reintegration. Other qualitative methods such as participant
observation or ethnography were also deemed inappropriate due to both security issues and language barriers.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are defined by Kvale (2007, p.7) as;

A conversation that has a structure and purpose determined by one party – the interviewer. It is a professional interaction, which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge.

In this study, the WAFFs’/ex-combatants’ opinions of the DDRR process and their own present daily experiences, were explored by asking semi-structured questions from a prepared topic guide. They took place in private and in a one-on-one setting with the research team and the participant. This strategy worked well as the research often dealt with delicate issues. Members of most sampling groups were interviewed twice with the first interview being initially formulaic in order to build rapport, and subsequent interviews becoming more fluid and generating rich, thick descriptions (see 3.6 for further details). Key informant interviews also took place in private using a semi-structured interview guide.

I decided to use interviews as I wanted to understand the women’s experiences of the DDRR process and their life today in their own words, and allow them to raise issues that are important in a confidential environment. I felt, since the subject area was potentially sensitive, that this conversational format may be less threatening than other methods such as surveys which allow for more flexibility in exploration of emergent themes. A detailed account of how the interviews were used and the topic guides is found in the Appendices D and F.

3.4.2 Focus Group Interviews

A focus group discussion is any group interview where the researcher is encouraging and attentive towards fostering group interaction (Barbour 2007, p.3). They are usually conducted by a moderator who has a specific topic guide or specific exercises or stimuli to encourage group interaction. The purpose of
focus group discussions is to identify a range of different views around a research topic, and gain an understanding of the issues from the perspectives of the participants themselves (Hennink 2007, p.4). They take the axiom that ‘two heads are better than one’ and that sharing conversation about an experience can reveal different understandings of that experience than may have been revealed through individual reflection (Ackerly and True 2010, p.172). Group discussions also exert less social pressure to say something as participants know that others will fill the silences. This is realistic as not everyone will have an opinion or direct experience of all factors being researched (Soderstrom 2011, p.147). It also allows the study to mitigate against social desirability bias or wanting to seem better, more normal or acceptable in the interviews (ibid).

Focus group discussions were used in this study to assess if similar perspectives would emerge in a different data collection format. There was a concern that the traditional interviews conducted may be restrictive and not generate their intended outcome so focus group discussions were seen as an alternative to tease out further themes of importance to the WAFFs/ex-combatants should this occur. The research design reasoned that if any of the women felt uncomfortable in the one-on-one interviews that the focus group may feel like a more natural and relaxed setting to express their views. It also allowed for stimulus material to be presented and to generate large volumes of information in a relatively short space of time (Hennink 2007, p.7). The topic guides is found in Appendix E.

3.4.3 Reflexive Journal
Mauthner and Doucet (2003, p.417) suggest that qualitative scholars recognise the importance of our role in the in the research process; our pre-conceived ideas and assumptions and how we interpret the data which affects the validity of the findings. Similarly, Furlong and Marsh (2010, p.200) comment that the interpretivist epistemology puts a premium on the reflexivity of the researcher as they must be aware of their own partialities and as far as possible take them
into account when explaining the respondent’s interpretation of their experiences/actions. In other words, the researcher is also subjectively involved in data collection and brings his or her own interpretations to understanding the meaning of the data. By not reflecting on the feelings, meanings and interpretations of the research environment suggests that a holistic understanding cannot be gleaned. This is particularly important when conducting feminist research as reflecting both on power relations in the research process and how gender equality is reproduced through that process, is vital.

In order to account for the researcher’s interpretations, reflexive journals are often written during the research process. During this study I kept a journal throughout the data collection periods. In this journal I tried to reflect on aspects such as the research process; if I found out anything different; how I was perceived by those in my study and team; strategic decisions made on the process as it unfolded and why; my feelings and how they affected the data; emotional reactions of participants; amount of data collected; quality of the data collected; saturation; do I have the right data? I also used the journal as a form of catharsis to reflect on what had happened each day in terms of the highs and lows and descriptions of where I had been and the detailed process of the research. On many occasions I resented having to write the journal but for the most part I pursued its completion which has been useful for context in the analysis.

On reflection however, I realised that I was not an experienced journal writer (reflexive or otherwise) and perhaps I should have had a set of questions that I tried to answer each day to help focus the reflexivity of the document. Some of the reflections are not comprehensive enough and certainly by the end of the second trip (where I was exhausted and quite ill), the journal tailed off and gave me little that was of use. However, it was an important exercise and helped me to recall small details about the environment or certain situations that would not have been captured in my interview and focus group transcripts. These insights have been particularly useful when assessing the veracity of the interviews as it
helps to build a picture of the post-conflict reality for the WAFFs/ex-combatants, and attempts to explain why they gave certain answers or reacted in a particular way. Whilst essentially subjective, these journals have been analysed along with the data to help provide context and meta data (see 3.7.1.2).

3.4.4 Triangulation
The process of triangulation refers to the combination of different methods, theories, data and/or researchers in the study of one issue (Flick 2007, p.143). The purpose of triangulation is to increase the validity and integrity of the research and explore whether the data converges with similar answers being given. By using a multi-method approach the researcher tries to clarify issues/themes that arose in interviews, debate strategies and to confirm experiences more broadly (Hennick 2007, p.13). This study utilised within-methods triangulation which uses the knowledge potential of two approaches systematically to complement or extend them mutually (Flick 2007, p.72). To this end, the purpose of triangulation in this study was not just to increase validity but also to try and add breadth and depth to the findings by availing of different perspectives. There is some debate over the extent to which triangulation can actually add to the validity of the data in qualitative studies, but it was felt that attempting to get a more holistic picture of the WAFFs/ex-combatants experiences would be worth pursuing and why more than one method was used.

3.5 Overview of Data Collection

3.5.1 Country Rationale
Exploratory visits to West Africa gave me a unique opportunity to meet with many people involved in the post-conflict construction of the region and to try and refine my research to relevant and researchable questions. During these visits fifteen informal interviews were conducted in Sierra Leone and twelve in Liberia. It was decided that Liberia would be the focus of the study for several reasons. Firstly, since I wanted to look at the longer-term impact of DDR
programmes in the region I needed to have a programme that had been completed. Both Sierra Leone and Liberia’s DDR programmes had ceased (2004 for Sierra Leone and 2009 for Liberia) which meant that both were possibilities to study. I also needed a conflict where a significant number of combatants were women; for Sierra Leone this was estimated at 20-30 per cent and in Liberia 30-40 per cent (ECP 2006, p.7; Amnesty 2008, p.5).

On my exploratory visit to the region I learnt of the last phase of the DDRR programme in Liberia and had only been completed in April 2009. As a result there were many individuals who had been involved in the process still available for interview. This final phase also had not undergone a formal assessment and it gave me a unique opportunity to explore the gender components of it, thereby narrowing my research question. Also at that time there had been relatively little research conducted on the Liberian DDRR and women compared to Sierra Leone, which had been a research focus for a number of years. Finally, in Liberia I was able to establish contact with a local NGO that I partnered with and gave me access to the women I needed to meet which Flick (2007, p.33) suggests can be the most important step in the design of a research project. Obtaining this access and liaising with the gatekeeper assisted the feasibility of the study. All of these factors as well as personal contacts in the region and financial considerations were significant in determining Liberia as the country of analysis for this research.

3.5.2 Timescales

The data collection took place in three phases for methodological, financial and personal reasons and amounted to approximately three months in Liberia across all of the visits and a further month in Sierra Leone.

**Phase One: Exploratory visits**

An initial visit to West Africa took place in Jan-February 2010 to assess the feasibility of researching the topic in that location. The aims of the trip were threefold.
1. To refine the research questions, and in particular to, work out what still needs to be investigated regarding women and DDR in both locations; what is achievable to research; what access to participants can be obtained.

2. To organise research logistics (i.e. accommodation, transport, research partners and assistants, other research logistics) and budgeting.

3. To make contacts with;
   a. NGOs
   b. Women’s groups
   c. Government bodies
   d. Academics
   e. UN
   f. Others

I was also invited in April 2010 to take part in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade response to UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The department organised a high level event and workshops in Monrovia and I assisted with the logistics and worked as a rapporteur. This allowed me access to many individuals working in post-conflict recovery and gender issues, and enabled me to interview some and make good contacts for my data collection visits. By the end of April I had conducted a number key informant interviews on DDRR gender issues, post-conflict recovery and the history of Liberia. It also allowed me to revisit the local partner and establish a partnership agreement (see Appendix A) which we both signed to consolidate our working relationship.

In addition I also helped conduct a focus group with WAFFs/ex-combatants which was very useful to identify the kinds of themes and issues that arose and needed to be included in my semi-structured interview guide. By the end of these initial visits to the region and with some reflection, I had managed to focus my research question to investigating what the impact of the gender mainstreaming in various phases of the DDRR programme was for WAFFs/ex-combatants in Liberia. Since this study was being set up after the programmes had been implemented the impact was derived from aspects of the lived reality of the WAFFs/ex-combatants and their experiences through DDRR. It was not designed to be a large N study or to make substantive generalisations, but it
was felt that understanding the women’s experiences was a valid research question and potentially could be used for a larger quantitative study in the future. I had also made links with local partners to develop as my data collection visits began to be planned.

**Phase Two: First Data Collection**

In November 2010 I returned to Liberia for a month to engage in the first data collection with the WAFFs/ex-combatants. It was felt for budgetary reasons that a shorter period that was genuinely productive would work more favourably (Brouneus 2011, p.133). On this visit I focused on collecting evidence from those women who had been involved in the main phase of the programme and those that had self-demobilised, as well as conducting further key informant interviews. I was able to collect all that I set out to achieve and establish the foundations for the second data collection period.

The two-month gap following this trip was used to conduct an initial assessment of the data collected in order to map out the general trends that seemed to be emerging. Following consultations with faculty at the University of Limerick it became clear that I needed to address a wider range of issues in my interview questions. This focused mainly on exploring the trauma that the women may or may not still be experiencing. After an initial basic analysis of the data, many of the women appeared to be recounting traumatic situations and talking about difficulties they experienced today. It was felt that understanding more about the level of this potential trauma would be useful to the discussion of social and psychological reintegration and a number of questions were added. Furthermore the decision to try and engage with the community more explicitly to discuss the women’s return after the war also appeared to be a gap in the data.

**Phase Three: Second Data Collection**

In February 2011 I returned to Liberia for the last stage of the data collection. This visit focused on collecting evidence from the residual caseload participants, self-demobilised women and assessing an alternate reintegration training
programme for ex-combatants. By the end of the data collection visits I had collected information from 72 WAFFs/ex-combatants, 13 focus groups and 31 Key Informants interviews (see Appendix B for summary of interviews conducted). For the major part of the analysis 59 subjects were used (those from the main/residual caseload/self-demobilised). The pilot study interviews were incomplete so I omitted them, and the material from the additional reintegration programme was only used in one part of the analysis in Chapter seven, which is stated clearly. It was felt that a degree of saturation was achieved with the participants interviewed as repetitively similar answers were being recorded. For this reason and for logistical reasons it was then felt that the numbers of participants were satisfactory. However, upon reflection, I would try to conduct further focus groups with community members and more people involved in the residual caseload programme if I were replicate the study again.

3.5.3 Sampling and Participants

In this study the WAFFs/ex-combatants interviewed were selected through non-random purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling which is defined in advance including distribution over certain features (Flick 2007, p.26). In the case of this research the women were selected based on whether they had been involved in the main DDRR programme, residual caseload or had self-demobilised (i.e. not taken part in any DDRR programme). The criteria for the sampling was that the women had to have been through all the phases of the programme and not just the DD which arose as a sampling issue from the pilot studies. Due to the difficulty of finding women to take part these were the only selection criteria utilised. Other factors that could have been used to specify the sample further such as faction, time spent in the militia group, age, position were not accounted for but could be used if further studies are conducted in this area.

In order to have a balanced view of gender it was decided that speaking to men about their opinions of WAFFs/ex-combatants would be prudent. On my first
data collection visit I interviewed a focus group of young ex-combatant males who gave me a very one-sided view of the women. After reflecting on this and discussing it with several key informants, I decided that the age of the men may affect their views, so decided to conduct a focus group interview with old civilian men also to try and broaden the male perspective. I also felt that I should try and speak to the community about the return of WAFFs/ex-combatants and conducted a focus group interview with community members in one of the key data collection areas in Monrovia. Incidentally, this group happened to be consisted entirely of men also so might feed into both groups.

Finally, for the key informant interviews, a mix of purposive sampling and snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling allows for building a sample through referrals and is often used when working with populations that are hard to access (O'Leary 2004, p.110). On my initial visits to the region I had a list of the categories of people I would like to talk to and in some cases actual contacts. Through specifically targeting some individuals such as the UN or NGOs, I was also able to gather other contacts recommended by them that I had been previously unaware of. In many cases this worked effectively as these interviewees essentially acted as a gatekeeper to get access to the new informants.

The sampling strategy used was generally effective. In some locations it was hard to find women who satisfied the required criteria so the search area had to be extended to further communities. I do not think this affected the outcomes of the study adversely. The snowball sampling for the key informants was useful but often the details given were outdated, phone numbers would not work or my schedule would not align with the interviewee, and some key informants that I would have liked to have spoken to did not come into fruition. It is difficult to assess whether this will have a major impact on the research.
3.5.4 Research team

My research team consisted of three people, two female research assistants/translators (AB, TN) and one person to provide access to participants (a position we decided to call ‘fixer’) (NG). All of these worked on a contractual basis for NEPI, my local partner, and I employed them on a short fixed contract. At the start of the employment I provided contracts and terms so that the team understood the responsibilities of the role and payment involved. In terms of background, one assistant (TN) and the fixer had been involved in delivering the DDRR process (including residual caseload) and other ex-combatant programmes as counselors. They were familiar with the intricacies of the programme which was vital in assembling the correct cohorts of people to interview.

The skills of my research assistants varied and together they gave me a good combination. TN in particular, could speak numerous local languages which at times came in useful if the women were unfamiliar with Liberian English or not comfortable speaking it. She was also experienced at working with WAFFs/ex-combatants and had a very caring nature, helping to counsel the women informally and often chat with them at the end to suggest options for them. At times her Krio-accented English could be difficult to follow but she was extremely effective in communicating with the WAFFs/ex-combatants and was very personable and professional which helped put the women at ease. She also looked after me and always recognised if I was struggling and tried to help me. The other research assistant (AB) had not worked in the DDRR process but had been part of a large research team in the past for an US university and was familiar with research processes. She was well educated and spoke and wrote standard English which was useful at explaining things simply both to me and the participants.

Finally my fixer was the vital link for the research. He provided access to the participants by visiting areas to meet contacts he already had or making new ones. Not only did he assist with access, he also helped to moderate the focus group interviews, provide advice to the women, give local knowledge to me and
act as my personal bodyguard. Together with various drivers we made a good team and worked well together.

### 3.5.5 Field Locations

Since WAFFs/ex-combatants are not concentrated in one area and the sampling criteria was prescriptive, we often had to go to more than one location to meet the women that we wanted to talk to. For the most part they were concentrated in Monrovia and its suburbs. Team discussions took place prior to site selection and assessed which communities would be safe to work in and also which communities these women were likely to be living in. Decisions were not made on the basis of how affluent the communities were (although it worked out that a mix of more affluent and less affluent areas were visited). See Appendix C for photographs and descriptions of each location. However, a decision was taken to interview women in both rural and urban locations. For ease eight sites were utilised in Monrovia (Buzzi Quarter, Logan Town, Amagashi, Bannersville, Waterside, Duala, Red Light, NEPI Office) and two rural locations Tubmanburg, approximately 80km from the capital and Tumatu approximately 3 hours drive from the Capital in Bong County (see Figure 2).

Most of the research took place in the capital city, Monrovia. This was mainly due to logistical considerations but also because nearly one third of the population lives in and around Monrovia and many ex-combatants chose to stay in the capital after the war. The rural location was chosen for a variety of reasons but mainly to ascertain whether there was a difference between urban and rural provision for DDRR and reintegratio n of WAFFs/ex-combatants. Due to security and financial constraints it was not possible for the team to travel vast distances from the capital and it was decided that day trips to more rural locations would be preferable. A number of different towns were suggested in the strategic planning, but due to links of the local NGO with some of the DDRR implementing staff in Tubmanburg it was decided that the cohorts and numbers of women that were needed could be accessed in this location. Members of the local NGO travelled to the town prior to our first visit to follow up with contacts,
meet with the women and organise a place for the interviews to take place (a local church). Whilst it would have been beneficial to travel to other rural locations to collect data it was not feasible for this study.

Virtually all of the interviews with WAFFs/ex-combatants took place within their own communities apart from a couple of occasions where the women were not available and it was arranged for them to travel to the offices of my local NGO partner. I felt that interviewing in the office did not work as well as there seemed to be an automatic assumption of formality and the women did not seem as comfortable. On reflection, I would ensure that all of the interviews and focus groups with WAFFs/ex-combatants were conducted within the community.

The final location that data was collected in was in Tumatu, Bong County. On my first data collection visit I was made aware of an alternate reintegration programme run by an international NGO for ex-combatants who had illegally taken over a rubber plantation in a place called Guthrie to the east of the capital. When I made contact with the NGO I was invited to visit the project and on my second data collection visit I was allowed to interview some of the graduates of that programme. This provided an unexpected extra set of data and another example of a different approach to reintegration. Furthermore, this particular reintegration project has been assessed empirically by a research team from Yale so this study can also be drawn upon (see Chapter seven).
Figure 2: Locations of Field Sites (Adapted from Nichols 2005, p.109)

- Monrovia (Monserrado County)
- Tubmanburg (Bomi County)
- Tumatu (Bong County)
3.6 Data Collection Methods

3.6.1 Data Collection Procedure with WAFFs/Ex-combatants

3.6.1.1 Pilot Study

Before arriving in Liberia I discussed my requirements via email with my research team. Whilst some of the planning took place beforehand, the majority was organised upon my arrival in a series of strategy meetings. This allowed me to discuss with my local partner whether my plans were feasible in terms of the data collection. These plans initially involved interviewing the cohorts of women three times and conducting focus group interviews. Since the team and I needed to practice the most effective ways to collect data I decided that we should conduct a small pilot study. This took place in Red Light, a trading and residential neighbourhood of Monrovia.

When I arrived there a large number of women had assembled and it was quite hard to select the ones to take part and to ascertain which women had actually been involved in DDRR. The sampling process was not clearly defined which meant that the content of what the sampling criteria was had not been disseminated clearly. This confused dissemination of information also meant that a large number of the women had only taken part in the DD portion of the programme and not RR which was vital to this study which meant these women had to be disqualified. This was revised for the actual data collection and specified numbers with set criteria were selected prior to the collection by a gatekeeper or my fixer. Subsequently then, as the team arrived at each location the women had been prepped and met the basic entry criteria (i.e. that they had taken part of the whole of DDRR in a specific phase and did not have any other mitigating factors to prevent them from taking part). For example, one woman in the pilot was noticeably high on drugs and after observing this a few questions into the interview we ended the session as we felt she would not have been able to make rational informed consent in her state.

The team also outlined
the consent, recording, and benefits of research at the start which did not need further revision.

The pilot also allowed the team to discuss how we would approach the questions and practice the translation techniques. When interviewing the women my research assistants were experienced and good at translating the questions and answers. I had anticipated that additional translation would be needed but in many cases I could understand more than initially thought and was able to capture the answers in my notes. When I could not understand, the assistants translated and I noted the answers in written form. Initially I had to keep reminding the assistants that they needed to reply as if they were the participant (i.e. in first person) which took some getting used to, but this was adhered to for the most part in the final data collection.

Each initial interview took about 20 minutes and it was soon felt that if this could be shortened it might work better as it was difficult to keep the motivation of some of the women sustained. For the final questionnaire some of the questions were omitted\(^\text{24}\) or revised which took place after the first cohort of women had done both interviews. Testing how long it took to complete the initial interview allowed the team to work out the numbers of participants that it would be feasible to conduct interviews and focus group interviews with, while being mindful of the women’s concerns as well as their time commitments. Working from the amount of data collection days that the research team had (including time for transcription) it was decided that a target of 7 women from each group in both urban and rural locations would be the target totaling 21 in each group. From the numbers of participants in Appendix B it can be observed that in some cases it was not possible to meet those targets. This was for numerous reasons, such as the sampling criteria still failing and the women not meeting some aspect of the criteria and incomplete interviews. Also, by only piloting the first interview and not the second, it was not possible to predict how long it

\(^{24}\) We tested the interviewing with 4 women and I also typed up the responses that evening so that critical reflection could be made on what to change about which questions to ask.
would take to conduct it. Originally there were going to be three interviews but this was changed to two and the third interview collapsed into the others (see Appendix D for revised interview topic guides). On reflection, not piloting the second interview was a mistake as the second interview took anything up to 30 minutes. It was quite a challenge for my fixer to encourage the women to stay after the focus group interview as it accumulated into big time commitment. For subsequent second interviews some questions were omitted and the research team developed an efficient method of asking the questions swiftly. The self-demobilised women had one slightly longer interview as there were less questions.

The other area that the pilot interviews uncovered was the emotional reactions of the participants and it was a blunt reminder to me that many women we would be speaking to remained emotionally traumatised. For example, one woman started to cry as she said it brought back bad memories. In this situation I instinctively terminated the background conflict questions in favour of less upsetting material and asked her if she wanted to stop. Whilst it was uncomfortable to watch, it allowed the team to reflect on what strategy to adopt if this happened again. It was decided that we should assess each situation individually but should have no problem leaving out questions or aborting the interview entirely if the participant was overly distressed. The pilot also revealed that all the women asked at the end of the interview how they would actually benefit from the research. It also allowed us develop a clear response in reiterating that while they themselves would not receive a direct benefit, that the wider research might benefit other women in a similar situation to them in the future.

Even so, on the advice of my local partner who was acting as the gatekeeper, they felt that it was appropriate to leave the women with a small gift of thanks for taking part. There is some debate over giving gifts as it can reinforce socio-economic inequalities if not handled delicately. However, others believe that giving gifts can express one’s commitment to evolving relationships and as long as it the sentiment of the gift is communicated sufficiently it can prevent an
expectation of further presents (Scheyvens et al 2003, p.157). Since the women were giving up vital trading time I felt happy with providing a token of my appreciation and was also mindful of the reputation of the local partner. It was decided that a small bundle of clothes would be given to each woman at the end as this was viewed as a more sustainable gift. In virtually all cases the women were pleased with the gift (often changing into their new outfits!) so it was continued for the main collections and refreshments also provided in the focus group interview and some small toys/pens/candy for their children.

With regards to piloting the focus group interviews, during my exploratory visit I connected with a colleague (Walt Kilroy) from Dublin City University also studying DDR. I assisted him (serving as one of the moderators) with conducting a focus group interview with female ex-combatants which was an invaluable experience. I was able to see how focus group interviews could work in such an environment and also it helped me to explore the kinds of themes that arose from the data for use in designing my own topic guides. My focus group interviews followed a list of set questions with some probes being used. It also utilised a ranking exercise which worked well to generate discussion. See Appendix E for lists of focus group interview questions from the topic guide.

3.6.1.2 Access and Gatekeepers
Access is one of the most important factors in designing a research project. My local partner, NEPI, acted as a gatekeeper for this project and their involvement was crucial to the success of this study. Without a local partner familiar with working within these communities it would have been very challenging for me to access the women that I needed to speak to. Gaining trust in conflict or former conflict zones is often very difficult to achieve. Norman (2009, p.72) points out that it is often viewed in political science as a cognitive process which discriminates amongst persons and institutions that are trustworthy, distrusted and unknown. Being partnered with a trusted gatekeeper that already had a sound reputation allowed me gain an entry point into the community as they could vouch for me.
The women were accessed through my local partner, NEPI. In each location my fixer usually worked via a gatekeeper from within the community who would find women from each group to interview. In some communities this was relatively straightforward and substantially easier when looking for participants of the main DDRR programme as the numbers who took part were much greater. In other cases (particularly for the residual caseload) it was quite challenging to find women who had taken part. In this instance we searched via contacts in one of the training centres for the programme who directed us to the communities of the women who had taken part. My fixer then went to those communities himself to try and access the women. Similarly for the self-demobilised cohort, it was uncertain whether the women would want to identify themselves. As finding women who would take part proved more challenging more locations were sought to access the women.

3.6.1.3 Rapport
Wherever possible I tried to spend some time before and after the interviews, chatting and sitting within the community to try and foster a sense of relationship. I also ensured that in most cases I visited each community more than once to build up rapport and also familiarity.\(^{25}\) In one community in particular, I feel that I achieved a degree of trust. I was lucky enough to visit this community at least 6 times across both visits and on seeing me arrive on one occasion, a participant who I had interviewed in the first cohort rushed over to say hello and gave me a rose (it was Valentines day). There was also a printer in the vicinity and he always gave me off-cuts of paper whenever he saw me. These small gestures helped me to get a sense of how rapport and trust is built. In addition there was a sudden bereavement within the heart of this community during my first data collection on one of the days we were due to visit. We obviously rescheduled the visit but since we had already begun a relationship with the community (and the lady that died) we went to the local pastor’s house to pay our condolences to the grieving family. This seemed to

\(^{25}\) In one case this was not possible due to security issues.
be highly appreciated by the community, so that although I found it very difficult (as the only non Liberian there) I am glad that we went. These types of interactions build over what Swinth (1967, p.343) calls a ‘trust period’ where people observe each other’s behaviours and both have to give something to the relationship before trust is established.

If I was conducting the study again I think I may have limited the amount of locations if possible and spend more time within those I chose. However, due to the very specific sampling in this study it was not possible to do this. For the most part I feel that visiting more than once was a good strategy as the women tended to share more in the second interview after they became more comfortable with me and my team.

3.6.1.4 Ethics and Consent
After I returned from my initial exploratory visit, I completed a full ethics review of my proposed research. Since the study investigated human participants I had to consider actual or possible ethical dilemmas that may occur. Since the research was qualitative and of a potentially sensitive nature it was vital that ethical approval was sought so that the research was conducted responsibly and protected the participants with matters such as privacy, consent, anonymity, storage of data and the truth about what the research entails and hopes to achieve. Adherence to these guidelines seeks to mitigate against harm towards participants and ensure the research is conducted professionally. The ethical guidelines followed in this study were adhered to by all members of the research team who signed confidentiality forms). Ethical approval for this (research was granted by the University of Limerick Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee in May 2010 – reference number FAHSS_REC224.

By adhering to the ethics procedures of the University of Limerick I ensured that the issue of consent was addressed with all participants. At the start of the process, the WAFFs/ex-combatants were made aware of the nature of the study, what their involvement would be, that they could withdraw at any point,
not answer any specific question, that their answers would be confidential and anonymous, that they would receive no direct benefit and should not be harmed in the process, and that their permission to record the interviews was requested. Since many of the women were illiterate it was felt that it would not be appropriate to ask them to sign anything as it would create a formal barrier and possible embarrassment, so verbal consent was gained and recorded in written and audio form.

3.6.1.5 Process, Recording and Note-Taking

The interview guides for the ex-combatant women were organised in advance and consisted of two interviews for those that had gone through DDRR, and one for those that had self-demobilised. These questions were informed by previous visits, literature reviews conducted on the history and politics of Liberia and the DDRR process and the pilot study. Depending on the answers in the first interview some were omitted in the second, so that it took on a flexible semi-structured format with extra probe questions added if something interesting arose. It was found that the initial second interview was too long so a shortened version was conducted for subsequent interviewees. Slightly different interview guides were also employed to interview ten self-demobilised ex-combatant women and the alternate reintegration programme (see Appendix D for all interview guides).

Engaging in a semi-structured interview format was beneficial, as it did not restrict the scope of the participants to express their own points of view. I decided the sequencing of the questions and on occasion left out questions if they had already been answered. Equally, if a line of questioning developed, I would ask relevant additional questions to glean more information. Additionally, I attempted to ensure that any supplementary questions that were asked did not influence the response of the interviewee and thereby decrease the validity of the findings (Lee 1999, p.98). Wherever possible, all of the interviews were recorded and in addition I took detailed notes. This approach was generated
from my own understanding with additional clarification from the research assistants.

3.6.1.6 Translation
In this study translators were used for some of the data collection. Where possible I asked the questions in Liberian English with moderate success. When I could not be understood or could not understand the participant, my research assistants translated. I could understand about 80 per cent of what was being said and wrote down the participant's answers. If there was a local colloquia used, the translators asked the questions and responded with the answers as close as possible to the English meaning. I also used an audio recording as a third back up to be cross-referenced against if needed. Where an interview or section of interview was particularly interesting, I had the research assistants transcribe that section in full during the first data collection. When these transcriptions were compared to any translated notes that I took in the interview I found that I had the majority, if not all that had been conveyed. Each evening I would read back through the notes to check I could understand my handwriting as well as clarifying some questions responses by re-listening to the audio sections to double check inconsistencies. When transcribing the notes, any inconsistencies could be further clarified or explained by referring back to the audio recordings.

3.6.1.7 Management and Storage of the Data
Due to the number of women interviewed there was a substantial amount of data to manage daily. The data was managed in the evening to ensure that notes were understandable and audios were backed up in numerous locations. In addition all notes pages were photographed and uploaded. A reflexive research journal was also kept daily to record progress and reflect on the findings. Since my return all of the data has been kept in a secure, locked location in my private residence and all electronic backups are password protected.
3.6.1.8 Reciprocity

The issue of reciprocity was one of the hardest to tackle. As was highlighted in the pilot study most women wanted to know how the research would directly benefit them. Although we addressed this at the start in the introduction to the research, it came up as a recurrent theme in the women’s questions at the end. Mentally I found this quite hard to deal with and frequently had feelings of guilt. This was reflected upon in my journal where I commented;

I think this is the thing I have the hardest time dealing with, they are giving me this information and I am not doing anything substantial for them…

The gift giving undoubtedly helped with these feelings but the reality is that the research may never have a direct impact on those women who helped me. Being open and honest about this was all that could be done as well as assuring them that I would try my hardest to disseminate the information they had given to me as widely as possible so other women in their situation could be more effectively assisted in the future. Any publications/policy briefs emanating from the research will be shared with the local partner.

3.6.2 Key Informant Interviews: Data Collection Procedure

As part of my data collection I also wanted to speak to people who had been involved in the DDRR process implementation along with people who are currently working in the post-conflict reconstruction of the country, such as government officials and the UN, for example. This type of key informant interview is often referred to as ‘elite’ interviewing as the respondent is often an expert regarding the topic and can reveal how processes have been conducted and decisions made (Burnham et al 2008, p.231). Usually, the interviewer is less interested in the person as a whole and more interested in their expertise in certain fields of activities or in order to generate context (Flick 2009, p.165). It was felt that these interviews were important to conduct because they provided a different perspective to the local community based interviews which were useful to capture for contextual reasons.

Often the interviews conducted are semi-structured and the balance of knowledge is in favour of the interviewee. In this study I had a general topic
guide for key informants (See Appendix F). In advance of the interview or meeting I would usually try to conduct background research about the organisation/person so that I could target the questions appropriately. I would then select the most pertinent ones from the topic guide to ask depending on the interviewee’s role and organisation. If I was unsure I would opt for general open-style questions and followed up with more specific ones based on the answers.

3.6.2.1 Access and Sampling
For this study I employed snowball sampling. Before I left I used networks of contacts to create an initial list of interview possibilities. Before arriving I emailed each contact (where possible) explaining my research and requesting a meeting. For the initial exploratory visit these meetings were generally informal and for others during the data collection a more formal interview was requested. Where replies were received, I was mostly advised to call when I was in country and set up a meeting. On arrival in each location I called the warm contacts first (re-emailed if requested) and then cold called others. I prioritised an initial wave of contacts and once I had a few meetings/interviews other contacts were generated. These were then called using the initial interviewee as the entry point which usually yielded more fruitful results. Without doubt a degree of persistence was required to set up meetings and a high degree of flexibility regarding times and venues was required (sometimes very early or late). See Appendix B for list of interviews conducted.

3.6.2.2 Ethics and Consent
For key informant interviews, letters of information about the study were circulated where possible prior to the interview or given to the interviewee to read before the interview commenced. Consent forms were given and signed or verbal consent given (See Appendix G). In some cases people were anxious about being formally named and asked to be referred to as ‘off the record’. Broneus (2011, p.134) suggests that this is not uncommon as peace research can be perceived as threatening to sensitive processes, assumptions and events which are the topic of study and may not be in line with political rhetoric.
3.6.2.3 Recording and Note-Taking
Where appropriate key informant interviews were recorded, at the start of the interviews, I would seek consent for this and explain that the recording could be terminated at any time. I found that some high level international staff would not sign anything official or agree to recording. In these instances I took detailed notes and tried to ‘read’ each situation and act appropriately. For instance, when visiting a Catholic priest who has lived in Liberia for over 30 years it was inappropriate to take notes as his he shared his life story with me. In these rare situations I listened carefully and wrote a summary of the interaction directly afterwards.

3.6.2.4 Transcription
In advance of transcription all the key informant interviews were listened to and prioritised. I also noted down the timings of certain sections of interviews so that in some cases only the relevant portions of interviews were transcribed. In addition notes (or sections of notes) taken in interviews were typed up.

3.7 Other Methodological Considerations

3.7.1 Constraints of the Methodology

3.7.1.1 Research Fatigue
In one community that I visited there seemed to be a slight feeling of research fatigue. There was a feeling that there had been many researchers in the areas and in some cases there was resentment from the participants that they were getting nothing despite talking to so many consultants and researchers. For example, in one locality one woman was very upset that other WAFFs/ex-combatants had been given the opportunity to travel abroad and she had not. She commented:

Yes, but for us we never had the opportunity though a whole lot of NGO been coming and talking to us, but they had never given us invitation
In this community it was very difficult to motivate the participants and some just drifted away from the in the focus group. I reflected in my journal:

C and M were OK but the other two were totally apathetic and had a ‘what are you gonna give me’ attitude. There is very much a dependency culture. There were the usual questions of what are you going to do long term. When I did the interviews I felt I had to hurry as I was inconveniencing them.

These women were also less interested in the gifts presented and their responses highlight the need for researchers to clearly communicate their intentions and the benefits (or not) of the research at the outset and restate it if necessary so that all expectations are met. Even though in other localities there were some women that probably felt the same, on the whole the majority of women I met were happy and willing to answer my questions.

In terms of the key informant interviews, I found that in some cases the influx of researchers over the last two years to Liberia affected me negatively. One woman I had been trying to contact for weeks eventually answered the phone to me but told me in no uncertain terms that she could not help and hung up. On consenting to a short meeting with me, another complained that I was the 6th researcher to come and he was fed up of giving information and getting nothing in return. We subsequently tried to foster a relationship with him to help gain access to the residual caseload participants but it transpired that he sought payment for this information (even though he was a salaried employee with an International NGO). Despite the evidence that there was a degree of underhanded negotiations it did make me wonder if all key informants were tired with all of the interest. However, approaching numerous key informants meant that amongst those that had been interviewed on several occasions were also others who were generous and kind with their time and information. I often found that approaching the person who was second or third in command yielded more fruitful results, as they were more willing to be interviewed.

3.7.1.2 Meta Data

Trying to evaluate if the participants were telling the truth was also a challenge and I tried to make sense of the responses by using meta-data. Meta data has

26 Incidentally, we did not continue our relationship with this NGO but sought access elsewhere.
been defined as the information people communicate about their interior thoughts and feelings (Fujii 2009, p.148). In conflict and post-conflict settings it can sometimes be challenging for the researcher to determine the veracity of the responses or the extent to which participants are telling the researcher what they think they want to hear. Reviewing the meta data allows the researcher to reflect on the current social and political landscapes and how that might affect what the participant is willing to say to the researcher. In this study meta data reflections were made using Fujii’s (2009) six criteria as detailed below:

**Rumours**

On occasion rumours that I was the TRC or the UN arose. This information must have been misconstrued by the gatekeepers and communicated incorrectly to the women. Alternatively, it is possible that the WAFFs/ex-combatants think all white people work in NGOs and bring projects/money. This is a reasonable assumption to make given that is often the case in post-conflict contexts like Liberia.

**Inventions/Truth**

Trying to discern the truth was difficult on some occasions. We were told by a self-demobilised woman that she had lead the LURD forces naked at the front as a symbol and was a medicine women. She was quite famous during the conflict. However, when speaking to a commander in the forces at a later date we said we had met a woman who claimed to have performed this role (we kept her name and location confidential) and the commander got quite angry and said that she was lying. It is difficult to know who was telling the truth? Why would the original women lie? Maybe she was telling me what she thought I wanted to hear? Why did the commander get so agitated?

Exact time was also complicated for some women to recall, but rather than admitting they could not remember they would make up dates. Also for some women who were child soldiers from very young ages they often quoted the age that they joined as being older than their actual age had been (when worked out from current age and date of joining). This may have been a function of the fact
they did not want to reveal how young they had been for stigma reasons. Ultimately, these details could affect the results of the study as it undermines complete confidence in some responses.

**Denials**

We asked the women if they had a gun, smoke and drank which they would often deny vehemently. Others were more sheepish but would still deny being involved in these activities. Again this could be a function of the perceived social unacceptability in performing those behaviours.

**Evasions and Silence**

There were a few questions that provoked evasions and silence, particularly when being asked about ritual bathings and Juju (see Chapter four for a description) on returning to their communities and about sexual and gender based violence. The women often looked very uncomfortable, shook their head or answered flatly no. In these instances their body language was illuminating. It allowed me to reflect why this was and their cultural context.

3.7.1.3 **Bias**

The adoption of an interpretivist methodology automatically implies that the researcher’s perspective will have some influence on the data collected. However, using the reflexive journal helped me to reflect on my interpretations. I also tried where possible to remain neutral when asking questions and interacting with the research participants and instructed my team to ensure that questions or follow up questions were not leading. Additionally, the opportunity for selection bias was minimised in the study as I adopted a clear sampling strategy for the WAFFs and key informants.

3.7.1.4 **Security**

Security was a significant problem. Liberia remains a highly volatile environment with approximately 9,000 uniformed personnel under the UN
banner consisting of 7,500 UN peacekeepers, 130 military observers and 1,300 police still in place (UN 2012). As a result there are nightly curfews in force for UN staff and many security restrictions. Embassy advice from the UK Foreign Office and Irish Department of Foreign Affairs advises against all non-essential travel outside the capital and the avoidance of certain areas at night and others during both the day and night due to high crime rates and fear of armed violence.

Obviously as a lone female researcher I had many concerns about my safety, which affected the locations selected and consequently did not spend extended periods away from the capital. Initially the advice from the UN and others made me very anxious about conducting my field research as there is little back up for people in my situation should something go wrong. However, I heeded the advice of my local team who, for example advised, that in one community (Waterside/West Point) we should not stay past 4pm as the risk of armed robbery increases as dusk approaches. We did not take any unnecessary risks and ensured we were always safely back in Monrovia by the time night fell. I also always ensured to inform someone of my daily movements in case I did not return.

For the most part, being with my research team of Liberians offset any unwanted attention. I felt comfortable travelling with them and even attended the graduation party of another NEPI colleague in a notorious neighbourhood at night - a fascinating experience as I was the only white person. Equally, the more I spent within the communities the more comfortable the women became with me and vice versa. However, I tried not to become complacent and was vigilant of any possible security issues. On a few of occasions when I was not with my team, I was pursued for social encounters by various men but I was able to politely decline and avoid potentially difficult situations in which my safety could be compromised.
3.7.1.5 Emotions of Participants

The emotions of the participants being interviewed were often very difficult to predict. I was acutely aware that merely recalling aspects of how they joined the military groups may lead them to remember traumatic events and may stir up difficult emotions which may have lead to interviews being incomplete. This happened on a number of occasions where women broke down and began to cry as I reflected in my journal:

Half way through the personal demographic info she started to cry as it brought back memories. She said that all of her family were burnt to death. I felt very bad and stopped all the personal section. We asked her if she was OK to talk about DDRR and she said that she was, so we finished the interview with that. She needs to have more counseling as is obviously very troubled. I didn’t really know how to deal with the situation here and said I was very sorry and hoped she was OK. I didn’t really know what else to do.

The most difficult time we had with a participant was a small girl of 19 who had been a child soldier. When we asked her how she joined she burst into tears – it was just awful.

We tried as a team to be as gentle and kind with the women who were upset and give them the opportunity to either stop the interview or jump to a different section. We reviewed each situation as it arose rather than having a set response. Ensuring that the interview is at the correct level can mitigate this. Brouneus (2011, p.138) states that in-depth interviews should be:

(…) not too shallow and not too deep, and to hold interviewees on the interview track, not leaving them to go too deep into their own, often traumatic experiences.

We also found that some women still seemed to be experiencing trauma and a number were incredibly nervous. As I noted:

One interesting interview was with a young girl of 19 who was petrified. TN was brilliant at trying to calm her but she was picking at her lappa, twisting it around her fingers and speaking so softly. It was a bit painful to watch. Perhaps I should have stopped the interview. I’m not sure if I should have. She did settle down but next time I think we should try and calm her a bit before we talk. I’m not sure what she thought of us, maybe she is of a nervous disposition anyway.

The second time we spoke to her I wrote;

…we tried to reassure her and were as kind as we could be and I think she may have relaxed a little.

For these women we tried to put them at ease as much as we could and recognise when they were finding it hard. If they had been nervous on the first interview it was noted and extra care given when we spoke to them the second
time. Although there were some difficult encounters during the interviews I do not think that we re-traumatised the participants. Wood (2006, p.381) writes that the consent protocol helps to prevent this from occurring as it passes a degree of control and responsibility over interview content to the interviewee.

Finally, some of the women were suspicious of us being there. Always at the start we communicated clearly what the study was about (as highlighted earlier) but some were still understandably wary which may have affected their responses. This was more pronounced in the rural locations. For example I observed:

Quite a few of the women were a bit suspicious of us and nervous and looked tense. One asked us if we were with the TRC which finished over 2 years ago. Having a local gatekeeper helped with minimising these effects but if questions arose like this we reiterated our intentions and always checked they were happy to continue.

3.7.1.6 Emotions of Researcher

Researching in a post-conflict environment was very challenging and I was very anxious in the months preceding the first data collection mainly due to the security concerns of being on my own. However, many of the issues I had anticipated proved unproblematic and others arose that were unexpected.

During the field research other emotional challenges arose. If the participants were upset or I had made them feel uncomfortable I often felt responsible and guilty but I always tried to remain professional in the field and to be sympathetic to the women’s troubles. I frequently thought that I should feel more ‘upset’ myself in my own personal time, but I organically developed a coping mechanism that helped me to switch off my feelings and become immune to the stories rather than deal with their shocking and upsetting realities. This strategy helped me to get through the data collection process and I think I was often too physically tired to be upset. Reflecting in the journal was also a good outlet but I now realise that the stories did take their toll many months later and the
enormity of what these women had been through and shared with me is something I contemplate regularly.

Finally, I did find at times researching in Liberia frustrating. Managing a locally recruited team, trying to impress on them the importance of the research, the high standards I wanted to maintain, professionalism, time-keeping etc. was often the most demanding aspect. I tried to talk with the research assistants to debrief when the interviews had been challenging and allow them to express how they felt about them. Since they had worked in this area before, they had their own coping strategies to deal with the information being gathered. The schedule was grueling, 5 or 6 days in a row often with 5.30/6am starts to miss the traffic and conducting 12/13 hour days with up to 5 hours of interviewing was hard on everyone and may have affected our performance when collecting the data. Keeping the morale of the research team high was hard but we often ate together and we sang truly terrible music on long car journeys and we chatted about life all of which helped to connect us and make the process a bit less difficult.

In line with other feminist researchers (see Sylvester (2011), special forum on emotion and the feminist IR researcher), I found it hard to deal with the information gathered and on return to my home I delayed transcribing and analysing the data for many months. As with many others in this forum I was unprepared for the emotional impact of this research and the fact that there were few avenues for assistance with this. I also found it challenging to ‘write in’ my emotions to the study for fear that others may see this as affecting my professional objectivity (Mackenzie 2011, p.691).

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

The qualitative nature of the research also affected the way that the data was analysed. It attempted to reflect the complexity and detail of the data by identifying emergent categories that had not been predetermined apriori and
respected the uniqueness of each case as well as cross-case analyses (Ritchie et al 2003, p.4).

After both the first and second data collection visits, I conducted an initial simple analysis of the data to try and see what themes were emerging. After the first data collection, this review helped me to discuss my work with peers, refine my topic guides and explore some new lines of enquiry. After the second visit a similar analytical review took place in advance of a conference presentation. The difficulty in adopting this approach is that the researcher can jump to easy conclusions due to some limited evidence leading in a particular direction (Silverman 2010, p.279). What it did allow however, were opportunities to analyse the data set including these emergent themes as well as those already expected to emerge from the previous literature on the topic. For example, the dominance of social networks for reintegration arose as an unexpected theme in the data. These initial ideas were presented to peers as preliminary data at an international conference and advice was given over literature to review to explore these themes further, which proved useful for coding.

3.8.1 Computer Aided Analysis

In order to account for this a more systematic data analysis took place and I engaged in comprehensive data treatment. By looking at the codes initially in a few cases to try and select more and then applying the codes across all participants helped to mitigate against anecdotalism. Also this method was used in order to account for researcher bias such as premature closure, unexplored data in the field notes, lack of search for negative cases, or a feeling of empathy (Flick 2007, p.19).

NVivo data management software was utilised for the formal analysis and four phases of analysis took place.

**Phase 1: Open Coding**

Open Coding involved trawling the original transcripts chronologically to identify, create and code to broad participant driven descriptive thematic codes. These
codes contain clear labels and definitions (rules for inclusion). This process deconstructed the data from its original chronology into broad themes. Throughout this process memos were written when points of note in the data arose, in for example, divergent cases. These were linked to particular codes for easy retrieval. In addition attributes were assigned to each case regarding demographic data such as age, schooling, force fought for, role in faction etc. This was useful for creating charts.

**Phase 2: Reorganisation of Codes**

After the first cycle of coding the codes were reorganised, merged, renamed, distilled and clustered from the themes identified in Phase 1 to broader categories of themes and sub-themes in order to reconstruct the data into a framework for analysis. This occurred on two occasions to produce three phases of coding frameworks. These frameworks attempted to consider more abstract theoretical codes in addition to the participant driven codes.

**Phase 3: Coding On**

By reorganising the structure, some of the codes had to be recoded, deleted (where there were duplicate codes for example), broken down or renamed to reflect the more refined framework. This process continued through as many generations of codes as was required to saturate the data. (See Appendix H for the final coding matrix)

**Phase 4: Generating Summary Statements/Analytical Memos**

With the revised framework now in place, summary statements were written in short memos and linked to each code. In one short sentence these statements synthesised the content of the code which allowed the information to be reviewed in more manageable proportions. In addition analytical memos were written which considered the weightings of responses, graphical representations or relational divergent cases and trends. It also allowed for the codes to be modeled into pictorial representations to consider relationships.
3.8.2 Reporting Findings

Some of the difficulties I experienced concerned how to represent the mostly negative women’s reviews of the DRRR programme to those that planned and organised the programme. Some of these people had been incredibly generous with their personal time and contacts and I underwent a sense of disloyalty at only reporting these negative findings and essentially berating a programme with which they had a long-term involvement. To overcome this I tried to interpret the findings within the broader context of post-conflict reconstruction and the difficulties inherent in this environment and also tried to discuss my interpretations with those in question where I could. This respondent validation although informal, was a useful feedback contribution and most of the people I reported back to in this way agreed that should the programme be conducted again helpful revisions might be made. Additionally, I have tried to account for interactionality in that gender overlaps with other contexts and social forces such as race, age, class, income, nationality, post-conflict context and the like (Ackerly and True 2010, p.28). As such, it is important to consider how ex-combatants are viewed more broadly in Liberian society.

3.8.2.1 Validity

Validity is defined by Hammersely (1990: 57) as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers. Essentially it refers to whether the data is truthful to the participant studied. Social constructivist research translates these issues of validity and reliability into trustworthiness and authenticity and by being able to trust the truth of the data helps to confirm the validity (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, p.277). In order to account for validity this research engaged in comprehensive data analysis to review all cases in the analysis and consider the trustworthiness of the responses.

3.8.2.2 Reliability

Reliability is usually used in quantitative research and refers to repeating a test to see if the results are the same or similar. In qualitative research, reliability is
harder to achieve as the participative nature of the findings make it difficult to provide relevance for this concept. However, it has been referred to in qualitative research by Silverman (2010, p.290) as the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or the same observer on different occasions. In order to calculate reliability he suggests that the investigator needs to document their procedure and demonstrate consistent use of categories. In order to document the reliability of this qualitative research process, the reflexive journal is a useful tool. By outlining the processes that took place, the consistency of procedure, any amendments that were undertaken and by reflecting on issues such as saturation of responses, helped to consider issues of reliability. This research used the reflexive journal to try and document such methodological deviations. Another method to increase reliability is to use more than one method to explore if similar data arises from each method and where they intersect. This was performed through the triangulation of both the interviews and focus group interviews.

3.8.2.3 Generalisability

Generalisability refers to whether the results of the study can be generalised to a population outside that of the research situation (Flick 2007, p.141). It can also be called external validity. The purpose of this research was not to understand a whole population but to investigate a small sample of women in order to understand their experiences of the DDRR process. One of the criticisms of interpretivist work is that it cannot be easily generalised from as only a few cases are being studied. O’Leary (2004, p.104) comments that this is not the aim of this type of research, that qualitative research is not seeking to generalise to a wider population, but rather the applicability of the work is derived from the ‘lessons learnt’ which might be applicable in similar or alternate populations. Since generalisability was not the intention of this work, any perceived lack of it does not pose any serious threats to the credibility of the research.
3.9 Conclusion
This chapter has demonstrated in detail the strategy and process of data collection for this study. It has highlighted the theoretical basis underpinning this research and provided justification as to why the case was selected. It details what methodological approach was adopted and explains why certain qualitative approaches were used to answer the research questions. The methods and procedure are outlined in detail for both WAFFs/ex-combatants and the key informants and the constraints to the research process examined. There is a particular focus on the role of emotions of both participants and researcher as well as how meta-data can be considered as another form of information to feed into the research. Finally the data analysis methods and procedures are summarised to ensure the reader can fully appreciate how decisions for reporting certain results were made.
Chapter Four

Liberia: Background to the Conflict

4.1 Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to provide background or contextual information relating to the case of Liberia. In particular, it seeks to explore the antecedents of the conflict and historical and cultural norms for women before, during and after the conflict. Its purpose is to provide an understanding of the type of society WAFFs/ex-combatants are being reintegrated into. This is vital in order to ascertain which structures can help or hinder their reintegration.

4.2 Historical Background to the Conflict
The Republic of Liberia is located in West Africa and is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south, Sierra Leone and Guinea to the west and north and Cote d'Ivoire to the east (see Figure 3). Its indigenous inhabitants are thought to have been in present day Liberia since the Stone Age, migrating from the Congo-Niger region, Mali and Ghana. The result is that the majority (95 per cent) of the population today consists of sixteen indigenous ethnic tribes (see Figure 4) reflecting these regional movements. 27 With a moist climate and fertile soil its agricultural potential was alluring and Liberia has long been one of the world’s largest rubber producers although it is rich in other natural resources, including diamonds, iron ore, timber, gold, coffee, cocoa, bananas, livestock and hydro-power (Olukoju 2006, p.3).

27 These include Bassa, Gio, Kpelle, Vai, Loma, Kissi, Gola, Gbandi, Dei, Krahn, Belle, Mende, Mandingo, Grebo, Mano, Kru. The oldest of these indigenous groups are thought to have settled from 6000 B.C, with others migrating from the east and north in the 16th and 17th centuries (Olukoju 2006, p.3).
Figure 3: Map of Liberia (Vinck et al 2011, p.8)

Figure 4: Locations of Tribal Groups in Liberia (NationMaster 2012)
The goods initially used to trade with Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, English and French) from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries were almost always natural resources such as gold, ivory and pepper (Sullivan 1998, p.21; Guannu 1983, p.17). However, this changed when the sale of human lives became the focus of trade missions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The trade of human capital became big business and African slave laborers were captured and sent to the New World to work forcibly on plantations such as tobacco and cotton plantations in North America, coffee plantations in Brazil and sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean islands. Domestic slaves were the first to be sold but later larger African kingdoms, assisted by European soldiers, captured smaller kingdoms and sold the captives into slavery. Nearly every tribe was involved in some way. Europeans also kidnapped Africans from their homes and through piracy at sea (Guannu 1983, p.18). The extraction of so many people decimated the native population of the region and also removed many people who enriched the indigenous culture such as artisans, musicians, religious and political leaders. By the time the slave trade was terminated, roughly 11.5 million Africans (with the full complicity of their fellow African middlemen) had been forced to take the dangerous and grueling sea voyage to the New World (Leibenow 1987, p.11).

However, with the British abolition of slavery in the early eighteenth nineteenth century the trade abated and many former slaves who had gained their freedom were looking for opportunities to relocate. Abolitionists felt that emancipating these people and relocating them back to Africa would be in their best interests so they began a planned repatriation of the black population. To manage this removal, the American Colonisation Society (ACS), (a private company based in the United States) was established in 1816 to repatriate to Africa persons brought from the region during the slave years. It attempted to create a colony along the lines of the British rule in Sierra Leone and assisted in the repatriation

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28 Although the subtext to this in reality was that many people including the then president Thomas Jefferson felt freed slaves posed a threat to the white elite in America who saw them as inferior (and did not want racial inter-mixing) and were worried they would rebel, so they began looking into ways of relocating them to their native homeland in Africa (Guannu 1983, p.27; Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.3).
of 19,000 people from 1822-1867 (Olukoju 2006, p.10). However, the primary motivation for the freed slaves was to become free from white oppression and build a great independent black nation. This was enshrined in the country’s motto ‘The love of liberty brought us here’ (Abasiattai 1992, p.108).

In 1820 the ACS received funds and approval from President James Monroe and they embarked on the voyage to seek land on which to settle. A little over a month later, they landed on Sherbro Island just off the coast of Sierra Leone. However, all of the ACS agents and half of those on board died from malaria and the remainder were sent to Freetown to recover. A year later new representatives from the ACS decided to secure a slip of land 200 miles south of Freetown known as Cape Montserado (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.4). Through various conferences with local Dei and Bassa chiefs they negotiated for land to inhabit. After much resistance from the indigenous population and through the threat of the use of force against them, the Ducor contract was eventually signed. This afforded the settlers a piece of land in Ducor (in the area of present day Monrovia) that instigated the new Republic of Liberia (Guannu 1983, p.32). The name Liberia (from the Latin word liber which means ‘free’) was first adopted in 1824, as well as Ducor (which had briefly been named Christopolis – ‘City of Christ’) being renamed Monrovia (after US president James Monroe) (Sullivan 1988, p.24; Nass 2000, p.5).

Further boatloads of people joined this small settlement but the first years were difficult for these people, as many died of disease (mainly malaria), there was further resistance from local chiefs, and the land was initially very hard to cultivate. Those that survived these initial years were the most resourceful and hardy, using the skills that they had learned as formerly enslaved domestic servants, artisans and supervisors (Wiley 1980, p.6). By 1828 the colony of Monrovia was home to 1200 emancipated slaves and over the next decade

29 According to census documents only 8 of the 86 emigrants who initially arrived at Sherbo island were still alive in 1843 and only 171 of the 639 who arrived in 1833 were alive a decade later (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.14).
other settlements (colonies) sprang up along the coast\textsuperscript{30} and the settler population doubled\textsuperscript{31} (Ruiz 1992, p.3; Sullivan 1988, p.16).

As a result of the influx and the different settlements there were five separate American colonies along the coast. In a move to unite them, the Commonwealth of Liberia was formed in 1839. This comprised all the colonies with headquarters in Monrovia and with Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a freeborn Virginia émigré, becoming the first black governor of the commonwealth of Liberia in 1841 (Nass 2000, p.6; Wiley 1980, p.2). In 1847, after the ACS reduced aid to the settlement, the commonwealth declared its independence and became an independent republic. As such it now had sovereign power to elect its own leaders and Roberts was elected as its president. The new constitution provided for an elected President, Vice President, House of Representatives and Senate, and barred white men from becoming Liberian citizens (Abasiattai 1992, p.115). The settlers were officially called Americo-Liberians and were considerably more American than Liberian as they spoke English, and retained the dress, manners, housing and religion of the American South (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.5). This was to emphasise their separateness from the native peoples and exert their superiority (Pham 2004, p.55). Members of the indigenous population who were regarded as inferior and ‘uncivilised’ by the new settlers who referred to the native population as savages and heathens.\textsuperscript{32} This ‘black colonialism’ caused great tension as the resettled American slaves fought, suppressed, 

\textsuperscript{30}These included Edina founded by the New York and Pennsylvania colonization societies with support from the Scots (hence the name Edina after Edinburgh); Bassa Cove founded by the Young Men’s Colonisation Society of Pennsylvania with settlers from Virginia and Georgia; Mississippi in Africa founded by the Mississippi State colonisation society; and Maryland in Africa founded by the Maryland State colonisation society (Guannu 1983, p.42-4).

\textsuperscript{31}Therefore by 1900 over 16,000 African Americans and 400 Afro-West Indians had settled in Liberia, along with 5,500 recaptive Congos. These were slaves bound for Europe from the Congo basin region whose ships were seized by abolitionist efforts, set free and resettled in Liberia (Nass 2000, p.6; Abasiattai 1992, p.107). The Congos were seen by their lighter skinned compatriots as closer to the indigenous population and were seen as third class citizens by the freed slaves from the US and Caribbean (Nass 2000, p.10). Today the slang term ‘Congo’ is used to refer to all the recaptured slave settler groups and distinctions have been blurred.

\textsuperscript{32}Full citizenship was only granted to those natives that the settlers considered ‘civilised’ under their definition. In other words those that had become educated, spoke English, adopted a Christian religion, turned their back on traditional practices and accumulated Western products (Guannu 1983, p.67; Moran 2006, p.78). To be civilised, both in rural Liberia and among migrants to Monrovia was a highly valued position, one which implied both moral and material advantage over natives (ibid).
exploited, traded and mixed with the indigenous groups in the area (Fuest 2008, p.205). This was a startling and paradoxical situation given the experiences the Americo-Liberians had undergone during slavery.

This moral and actual superiority towards the indigenous population was manifested in many forms, for example the latter were required to pay taxes such as a ‘hut tax’, had no representation in the government, and were even recruited as forced labour in nearby regions, itself an act of slavery (Boley 1983, p.47). Continuing this oppressive trend, by 1877 Liberia was a one-party state ruled by the True Whig Party (TWP) which further developed and entrenched the elite group that ran the country. Despite being only 5 per cent of the population the Americo-Liberians had all the political power and controlled the economy which afforded prosperity to their people and stagnation through exploitation to the majority (UNICEF 1985, pp.4-5). Associated with this power and influence were two important movements, the Freemasons and the Christian church. The church and the Masonic Lodge were interwoven because they both provided avenues for social cohesion for those in the upper echelons of the ruling elite (Alao et al 1999, p.15). This emphasis on Christianity further discriminated against the indigenous population whose own cultural practices such as the secret societies were frowned upon by the settler class.

Religion was not only a form of worship for the Americo-Liberian settlers but it was also a way to exert their political authority. In his 1904 inaugural address President Barclay declared “Every convert from heathenism to the Christian faith in this country is also a political recruit” (Pham 2004, p.55). This interrelationship between the two continued throughout the Americo-Liberian reign of power. Pham (2004, p.56) reports that during the nineteenth century every settler who served as a colonial agent, commonwealth governor or president of the republic was either an ordained Christian minister or high-ranking officer of one of the Christian denominations. The close connection

33 The upper levels of government and business were run by 15 interrelated families and the only way to ensure success was through familial connections (UNICEF 1985, p.6).
34 These included Baptists, Methodists, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic.
between the two allowed Christianity to mask any political discord issues. They were also significant in the formation of education establishments which usually had Christian affiliations.

The focus on formal education and religion was a form of *mission civilisatrice*, an attempt to ‘civilise’ the indigenous population. Structures were put in place to undermine paramount chiefdoms\(^{35}\) and reduce tribal power encouraging people to become Christians.\(^{36}\) Joining the church provided the indigenous population with a way to raise their status amongst the ruling elite. Moran (2006, p.81) notes that by the mid-nineteenth century separate towns of ‘civilised’ educated converts to Christianity cropped up along the coast of Liberia. Over time the influx of new Christian denominations and missionaries proselytising the population as well as government’s trade networks dominated by Christians and Muslims, spread the new religious beliefs to the hinterland. For over a century the Americo-Liberian elite saw their mission to improve Liberia through bringing a Christian religion, modern ways of acting and thinking, a republican government and economic development (Ellis 2007, p.223). Religion was merely another form of control as it served to diminish the power of the indigenous secret societies.

However, this spread of Christianity found it difficult to penetrate parts of the Liberian hinterland as Islam had already spread from Mali via the Mandingo traders. These traders consciously disseminated Islamic practices via their business, proselytizing many indigenous tribal groups (Olukoju 2006, p.32). In the early nineteenth century the Via and Loma tribes converted to Islam followed by the Gola and Gbande of Western Liberia. The spread of the religion was propagated through these trade links as well as inter-marriage and the establishment of Islamic educational institutions (ibid). Therefore, through the

\(^{35}\) Christianity was at odds with many of the indigenous beliefs and practices such as the Poro ‘bush devil’ which is the ultimate authority of the secret sect. However, the meaning of devil in Christianity was the personification of evil and used as a hook to get people to convert (Ellis 2007, p.220).

\(^{36}\) Although Pham (2004) suggests these policies had an effect in tribal hierarchies it never infiltrated the secret societies of Poro and Sande that continued to flourish in the interior.
rest of the nineteenth century a considerable population of Muslims lived in the interior of the country.

This suppression of the indigenous population remained for almost one hundred years with little attention being paid to the needs of the local population who lived mainly in the interior. There was some inter-marriage and crossing of boundaries through the ward system but the two groups remained largely separate (Ruiz 1992, p.3). Understandably, this tension lead to violent confrontations between the two groups and there were numerous wars between the native communities and settlers, such as, the Twin battles of 1822, the Port Cresson attack in 1834, the Grebo war of 1875, the Kru war of 1915 and the Gola war of 1918 (Nass 2000, p.7).

Persistent corruption and malpractice by successive governments (Barclay, King) widened the rift between the Americo-Liberian oligarchy and the indigenous tribal peoples. Some progress was made towards bridging discriminatory gaps between the natives and the Americo-Liberians under the 27-year rule of President Tubman from 1944-1971. However, whilst the situation improved for the majority, the indigenes still held few rights and earned substantially less than the ruling elite. Despite the arrival of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in 1926 which improved Liberia’s infrastructure around the capital, the hinterland was still largely underdeveloped. Tubman strove to build roads, schools and hospitals and made the first concrete steps to try and unify the country (Alao et al 1999, p.16; Pham 2004, p.40). He also implemented an ‘Open Door’ economic policy that encouraged foreign investment allowing for the opportunity to improve infrastructure.

37 For example, in the Liberian hinterland where most of the indigenous population resided the people had very few rights despite paying tax. They did not have the right to vote until 1964 and they paid to observe the proceedings of the legislature (Alao et al 1999, p.15).
38 Between 1950-70 the total gross domestic product (GDP) at market prices increased from US$58 million to US$450 million, a growth rate of 10.4 per cent. This mainly came from the export of iron ore (commercial mining began in 1951 with Liberia being the largest exporter in Africa and third largest in the world) and rubber to the USA and Europe (UNICEF 1985, p.15). The Open Door policy encouraged much foreign direct investment. For example the continued support of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company from the USA. This company carved Harbel town out of the forest in 1926 and planted miles of rubber trees on 1 million acres (at a rent of
However, these policies primarily favoured the investors and the Americo-Liberians who benefitted financially, and thus further widened the gap between the two groups. In reality the differences between the elite government officials and local people was enormous and by 1971 it was estimated that 60 per cent of the wealth was held by 4 per cent of the Liberian people, and by 1978 70 per cent was controlled by 2.5 per cent of the population (Nass 2000, p.34). These massive inequalities and the conduct of the government began to be questioned by those indigenous people who had been able to access scholarships to study abroad under the Tubman administration. They began to establish groups\textsuperscript{39} to pressurise the government to address both the state of the economy and their civil and political rights (Alao et al 1999, p.17).

The efforts made by Tubman were continued when his vice-president William Tolbert took the reins of power after Tubman’s unexpected death 1971. He initially introduced some progressive reforms such as pay raises for workers, increased wage employment opportunities, reviewed a number of concessional agreements, and invested heavily in education.\textsuperscript{40} However, his plans were stifled after a year due to the ruling elite of old school Americo-Liberians which made up much of his inner circle and held the positions of power. He failed to follow his manifesto as his rule was characterised mainly by corruption and excessive nepotism within the government architecture. Furthermore, he made it possible for the coerced ‘purchase’ of tribal lands. The consequence was that farmers neglected subsistence and cash agriculture in favour of waged employment, as they could not guarantee a claim to the land that they farmed. This in turn lead to more foodstuffs being imported which aggravated the balance of payments and inflated prices, especially in urban areas. This situation culminated in the ‘Rice Riots’ (with the deaths of between 40-200

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6c per acre for 99 years). At one time it was Liberia’s 2nd largest city after Monrovia with a population of 60,000. The rubber was exported all over the world (Sullivan 1988, p.18). Similarly iron ore mining was extensive and accounted for 72 per cent of total exports in 1967 and 54 per cent in 1980 (TRADEVCO 1968, p.30; Liebenow 1987, p.164).

\textsuperscript{39} Such as the Movement for Justice in Africa, The Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (Alao et al 1999, p.17).

\textsuperscript{40} Tolbert continued the work of Tubman in education with the enrolment of children in primary schools had doubling from 31 per cent in 1960 to 66 per cent by 1980 and secondary school enrolment had rising from 2-20 per cent during the same period (Liebenow 1987, p.162).
people) in April 1979 after Tolbert had implemented an agenda to provide access to rice through a complex series of polices. However, he was accused of controlling the rice monopoly in Liberia along with his agriculture minister, who both had large rice farms (Ruiz 1992, p.4). The suppressed discontent of the Liberian people based on deep set cleavages in society that had festered over hundreds of years, eventually set the stage for the many years of protracted conflict that was to come.

This general unrest continued until April 1980, when Army Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe, along with seventeen enlisted men from the armed forces of Liberia, lead a coup d’état that resulted in the murder of Tolbert and 27 of his security guards. Doe was a twenty-eight year old, quasi-illiterate ethnic Khran from Grand Geddah county in the east of the country (Pham 2004, p.78). By the time of the coup, corruption had reached epidemic proportions. With 76 per cent of the population earning $70 per annum and 2.4 per cent earning $3000 and above, the majority wanted to take action against the elite (Nass 2000, p.34). Both during and in the three days following the coup, more than 200 people were killed and two weeks later a further 13 other top government officials were executed publically in front of journalists and cameras (Ruiz 2002, p.4). Many others fled, including the then finance minister Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (See Box 2). A further ninety more Tolbert officials were also arrested and incarcerated (Dennis 2006, p.2; Leibenow 1987, p.196). Many local people rejoiced and began to ransack and vandalise the homes and commercial enterprises of the Tolbert administration, as well as the Masonic temple in Monrovia (ibid).

Doe assumed power, suspended the constitution and his party, denoted the People’s Redemption Council (PRC) promised new hope. Alao et al (1999, p.18) suggest that for many Liberians it must have seemed that the coup had ended the long period of Americo-Liberian rule and the abuses that it brought upon them. Finally their needs would be taken seriously by an indigenous Liberian. However, very quickly the PRC assumed many of the trappings of authority accumulated by the discredited Tolbert regime. Gradually the populist democratic rhetoric of the PRC which had promised new elections and freedom
from the elite gave way to ethnicity and military repression (Nass 2000, p.48). The overriding concern of the military government was to stay in power and very soon there was censorship of the press, and the economy began to decline as potential investors would not pour money into a volatile state.\footnote{Doe did however have the support of Ronald Reagan as he saw Liberia as a Cold War ally and US satellite. He poured US$52 million into the country in military aid.} In order to solve the liquidity problem the government minted $100 million local coins and sporadically put them into circulation. This created havoc with banking transactions, caused the development of a black market, generated greater foreign exchange problems and brought about critical shortages of essential commodities, such as salt and milk (Nass 2000, p.53; Sawyer 1987, p.7).

Doe became convinced there were plots to overthrow him and he began to exploit his ethnic affiliations. In order to sustain his administration he began to suppress many clans in favour of his own Khran tribe who represented about 4 per cent of the population (Ruiz 1992, p.4). This accentuated long-standing ethnic divisions between tribes which had been previously united in their hatred of the Americo-Liberian elite, and introduced an ethnic dimension to the conflict that ensued. In order to win public support, in 1984 Doe lifted his ban on political activities\footnote{The lifted ban resulted in nearly a dozen parties registering with the board of elections including Ellen-Johnson Sirleaf running for vice-president under the Liberian Action Party, Baccus Matthews formed the United People's Party and Dr. Amos Sawyer established the Liberia People's Party (the latter two were eventually banned from appearing on the ballot). Threatened by them, Doe put Johnson-Sirleaf and Sawyer under house arrest for seditious behavior and then in prison, and killed 50 students during protests (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, pp.119-127).} and arranged for democratic elections to be held in October 1985. He formed the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) and put himself forward as the sole candidate. The so-called ‘democratic’ process was entirely corrupt; vote counting was rigged, there were reports of burning of ballots, switching of boxes, intimidation of voters and open and multiple voting. Inevitably, Doe was deemed the victor (50.09 per cent of all votes cast)\footnote{Since the voting was rigged, official figures are scant. However it is generally believed that Jackson, F. Doe (not related to Samuel Doe) of the Liberia People’s Party, from Nimba County and the son of a Gio chief, was the winner (Ellis 2007, p.59).} and in January 1986 Doe was sworn in as president, an appointment that the Reagan administration controversially supported (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.137).
post-election period featured more civil unrest and a failed coup attempt by Thomas Quiwonkpa one month after the election. Turbulence was by now an endemic accompaniment to Liberian politics, and coupled with the ethnic virus Doe had injected into the political climate, it created an instability which ate deep into the fabric of society (Omonijo 1990, p.7)

4.2.1 Traditional Role of Women

Prior to the conflict the role of women in Liberia was relatively circumscribed by a largely patriarchal society. Both the indigenous women and the settlers operated under hegemonic masculinity with male dominance enacted in virtually every sphere (Keih 2008, p.118). This was propagated through socialisation in family, school, work and peers, and perceived as protection of women’s supposedly weaker demeanor and fragile emotions (ibid). Therefore, under this system women had very specific roles. According to a cultural analysis by Moran and Pitcher (2004, p.206), indigenous Liberian women were characterised as the most important labour force in food crop production, domestic work and child rearing. They purport that the dominant cultural model (apart from the Americo-Liberian subsections of society [and with local variations]) was that women’s reproductive capacities and labour were subject to control by men. This was through the bride wealth prices enforced by tribal elders/lineages or through control over sexual services/children once married.

Customarily then, most girls were groomed for marriage and learned basic tasks needed from a young age, such as carrying water, domestic chores and agricultural skills, with formal Western educational practices in school not deemed necessary, especially in rural areas (Conteh et al 1982, p.20). These skills were learned in conjunction with joining the Sande society (although not all tribes subscribed to this practice) which had a unifying and controlling function. For a women to join the Sande she would be expected undergo an initiation

44 During this failed coup Doe killed not only the plotters and their families but also over 500 civilian supporters who had taken to the streets in the belief that the coup had been successful (Alao et al 1999, p.19). Also there was very violent ethnic brutality of the Gio and Mano clan in Nimba county of which Quiwonka was a member (Ruiz 1992, p.5). The BBC estimated between 2-3000 people died during the coup (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.152).
ceremony which often included harmful customary ritual practices such as female circumcision.\textsuperscript{45} In Liberia, the Sande initiation usually occurs from the ages 2-20, takes approximately two months and is seen as a traditional method of education to enable girls to prepare for womanhood and prevent possession by evil spirits (Divine 1990, p.1). During initiation the girls travel to the bush\textsuperscript{46} and inherit a secret knowledge from elder Sande women which enables a woman to be a good advisor to her husband, and to learn traditional customs and practices such as hunting, farming, medical/healing techniques, music and dance and the correct social behaviour, thus making her an economic and political asset to her community (Wiefueh 1993, p.1; Sullivan 1988, p.41). Traditionally the process is seen as an ultimate sign of respect and enables the initiate to transform from a girl to a woman as she discards her childhood clothes and name (Jedrej 1976, p.237). Once initiated the women remains a member of the Sande group into which she was initiated even if she marries outside of her village. This ritual however, represents a type of peer control as it would be expected of the girl would take part in this tradition even if she did not want to. Women would expect girls to conform and the custom demonstrates a type of subordination. However, these cultural practices were fundamental to the running of society before the arrival of the colonisers and are still performed in some areas today.

\textsuperscript{45} Female circumcision/female genital mutilation (FGM) /female cutting refers to a group of traditional practices that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural, religious, or other non-therapeutic reasons (Jones et al 1997, p.369). This practice is common throughout Africa and estimates of the total number of women operated on, range from 80-100 million, however accurate estimates are difficult to obtain (Kouba and Mauasher 1985, pp.97-104). The rationale for the operation varies but mainly it is to signal that a child is passing from puberty into adulthood and is becoming a full member of the tribe, however other reasons include the myth that it increases fertility, makes childbirth easier and prevents promiscuity, that the clitoris is dangerous/poisonous and a woman should do it to please her husband (ibid). The operation is conducted by village midwives (Soweis) with no formal medical background usually on children who range from babies to those just married. They often use unclean instruments such as stones to perform the operation which can cause complications including infection, extensive bleeding, shock, urinary retention and damage to nearby tissues (Jones et al 1997, p.112). However, the operation to indigenous people bestows family honour, virginity, chastity, purity, marriageability and increased child-bearing potential so the benefits gained from the procedure far outweighs any potential danger in their eyes (Kouba and Mauasher 1985, p.107).

\textsuperscript{46} A special society enclosure in the ‘bush’ (the local English translation for the society’s secret grove) is created for each new session outside the village. The girls are taken away from their families to this place to be instructed in the society’s ways and undergo circumcision (Phillips 1978, p.265; Bledsoe 1984, p.458).
Whilst the Sande tradition was common in Liberia it was not practiced by all tribes, so the institution of marriage held significance as it was more common across regions and at the heart of gender roles. Customary or traditional marriage was seen as a coming of age and emblem of citizenship for men, who by agreeing to marry inherited the women’s domestic and other conjugal services in exchange for cash and goods payable to her father (Olukoju 2006, p.92). Consequently, girls were seen as commodities as dowries can include money, goats, cloth and products. Sons-in-law are expected to perform a long bride service for the family or political patronage to prove their commitment to marry (Bledsoe 1976, p.378). Usually women were married young in arranged ceremonies, often to much older husbands, with any offspring belonging to the lineage of the husband. She would be expected to bear and rear children; work in subsistence farming to produce and prepare food for the family; earn income for the family by selling produce and respect her in-laws (Olukoju 2006, p.92). She would be considered to be the main breadwinner in the family but this did not bestow independence upon her rather allow her to ensure support for her children and husband (Moran 2006, p.81). Since all of her services belonged to someone else (her husband/father), traditionally women had little means of escaping subordination. However, for most being married could be beneficial as it provides them with financial security and their husband’s labour and support for their families as they age (Bledsoe 1976, p.377). It was also not unusual for women to be involved in polygamous marriages which were common in the traditional cultures.

As a consequence of the traditional gender roles and responsibilities of women, before the war few had the opportunity to hold positions of power in politics or rural community groups or to assert themselves within the national economy (Coleman 2009, p.197). For the majority of indigenous Liberian women, farming and agriculture was their main occupation, with women having defined

47 There were a few notable exceptions such as Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Mary Brownell.
roles in within the household regarding crop production and processing. Those women who were involved in agricultural production were often also involved in marketing by selling their produce or by selling their products to other women who trade it at the market. Usually it was the responsibility for women to engage in the processing of produce to sell (for example making beer, cookies, bread, grilling corn) compared to men who can spend twice as much time on farming activities (Hay and Stichter 1995, p.26). The motivation for this was to provide enough income to take care of the household requirements such as rent, food expenses, payment of school fees, clothing etc. (Conteh 1982, p.13).

Trading was usually in neighbourhood markets or larger scale weekly markets where they sold other commodities and imported goods and was usually the main source of off-farm occupation for women in West Africa. The markets also provided an opportunity for agricultural women, female market traders and civilised women to interact socially (Moran 1990, p.114). The women who traded in this way formed informal associations or ‘Market Women’s Networks’ usually headed by an elected female superintendent who ensure the smooth running of the network and pricing structures. According to Hay and Stichter (1995, p.176) these associations fulfilled a variety of functions including assisting their members with capital to start up or expand their businesses (often through rotating credit associations); to train women in new business methods; to provide contacts with potential clients or produce; and to enforce rules concerning prices and competition of commodities. These networks are very robust and normally have representatives on district citizen’s councils who yield considerable power and respect (Moran 1990, p.135). They supplied a means of mobilising support quickly on women’s issues and were vital in the years of conflict, through the peace process and after.

In contrast, Americo-Liberian women who settled in Liberia would have had a very different experience prior to the conflict. Being in a position of financial and

48 This is mainly in small holder/subsistence farming however increasingly women have began to become involved in more commercial farming enterprises such as on the rubber plantations as tappers (Conteh et al 1982, p.9).
societal dominance afforded them more varied employment opportunities. They were typically educated in formal Western schools/universities, spoke English, were Christian and engaged in monogamous marriages (Conteh et al 1982, p.7). Their position also had the effect of further entrenching the indigenous women’s position in society. In addition to a patriarchal system, a product of the settler community for the country was the distinction between women that were considered ‘civilised’ and those that were ‘native’. For women, being civilised referred to urban or statutorily married women, and native to those who live in rural areas and are married by customary law (Coleman 2009, p.196). This division meant that civilised women would not usually work in farm labour as it was thought too strenuous for them and instead they would be dependent housewives and uphold the honour of the household. These two forms of female status were aligned to the divisions in society with the civilised women usually being Americo-Liberian and the native women being drawn from the indigenous population (Moran 2006, p.82). As a consequence civilised women would usually favour Western style dress such as crinolines, heavy wigs and hats decorated with flowers and native women the traditional wrap around skirt or ‘lappa’ (Pham 2004, p.55).

Civilised women’s status was further enhanced by affiliations with the Christian churches, to women’s clubs and organisations open only to them. Moran (2006, p.84) explains that these women played an important role in codifying and elaborating the status differences between native and civilised Christians. Civilised women often organised the wake and funeral services for native Christian women by dressing the room, providing refreshments and prepared the body (ibid). Furthermore, these women would be educated in Christian schools. Therefore, there are many levels to the subordination of women in Liberia. Not only are the indigenous women subordinate because of their gender in marriage, they experience peer subordination through the Sande traditions and are also further discriminated against because of settler community ideologies. This made them a target during the conflicts as they had little power economically or socially.
However, during the rule of the Americo-Liberian elite President Tubman strove to improve gender relations. Kieh (2008, p.118) outlined that in 1945 Tubman granted women suffrage and the right to seek elected public office. This saw many women rise into positions in the higher echelons of Liberian society, government and bureaucracy (see Box 2 for an example) but it did not alter the overarching hegemonic masculinity that underpinned society. Positions were often achieved based on relationships rather than merit. Also it did not alter the rife abuse the women faced in the workplace from male supervisors or domestic abuse from spouses, boyfriends or other males (ibid). Despite inequality for women in the formal workplace Fuest (2008) reports that in decade preceding civil war 25 per cent of women held technical and professional jobs in the capital. However, for most traditional women, especially in the rural areas, their lives were defined for them under strict roles and responsibilities.

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An example of a woman who has succeeded in politics and business is Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who is the current president of the country. Johnson-Sirleaf is of mixed ethnic origin but does not consider herself to be Americo-Liberian. Her paternal grandfather was a Gola chief from Bomi County called Jahmale the Peacemaker. Her father was sent to Monrovia as a ward where he was given a new name. His first name Kamley was Westernised to Carney and he was given the surname Johnson after the then president, was educated and became a lawyer. On her mothers side Ellen’s maternal grandmother was a native farmer and market woman from Greenville, Sinoe County who fell in love with a German trader but who was expelled in WWI and who was never heard of again. Her parents met in Monrovia and gave her a good education. She married at 17 and had 4 children but it was an unhappy and abusive marriage so she managed to study economics and accounting in both Monrovia and the USA most notably achieving an MA in economics and public policy at Harvard.

Johnson-Sirleaf was both the assistant and Minister for Finance throughout the 1970s under Tolbort but had to flee the country in the 1980s when Doe launched his coup d’état. During this time she worked for the World Bank and was also the Vice President of the African Regional Office of Citibank in Nairobi. In 1985 she ran for Vice President of Liberia but was placed under house arrest by Doe and sentenced to ten years in prison for sedition but she managed to flee the country. She returned at the end of the conflict to run for president and was elected in 2005 and again in 2011 for a second term (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009).

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Box 2: Background to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

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49 He may have done this for women’s rights reasons but critics such as Keih (2008, p.119) suggest that he did it to increase the constituency that would vote for him.
4.3 Phases of the Conflict

4.3.1 The First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997)

Despite the growing unrest and almost total state collapse, Doe managed to remain in power until December 24th 1989 when Charles Taylor of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launched a rebellion against Doe leading to the first civil war of recent times. Taylor, of mixed Americo-Liberian and native descent, had succeeded in achieving an overseas education in the USA and used it to gain entry into politics. He considered himself a freedom fighter and his motivation for attack was seen as an intervention to remove a murderous tyrant from power so that the people could choose their own leader (Waugh 2011, p.6). Nonetheless, it was clear that winning the presidency was his ultimate goal and he was prepared to inflict whatever brutal means were necessary to gain this position. His guerrilla organisation entered the country from Nimba County in the northeast of Liberia, was backed by Col. Gaddafi of Libya, and as a consequence had sophisticated weapons and had trained in the Libyan Desert to mount a strategically planned attack.

When Taylor attacked, Doe’s Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) reacted by terrorising the civilians in Nimba County whom they accused of assisting and supporting the rebels (which many did in retaliation to the attacks from the AFL). These people (mainly from the Gio and Mano tribes) were caught in an unfortunate position because those that were thought to be supporting Doe were targeted and attacked by the NPFL and those that supported the NPFL were attacked by the AFL. This caused 600,000 to flee across the borders into Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire (Alao et al 1999, p.20). The attacks from both sides were particularly brutal and set the tone for the whole war and with the use of child soldiers being extremely common.

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50 He was part of Doe’s administration as the Director of General services, responsible for government procurements. However, he was found to have embezzled money and he fled to the United States in 1983 where he was arrested under an extradition treaty. He broke his bail and made his way back to West Africa overland and settled in Cote d’Ivoire where he began plotting against Doe (Alao et al 1999, p.21).
During the first six months the NPFL began to advance on Monrovia after taking every major Liberian town and extending their operations to the far reaches of the country. By March 1990, the NPFL was in control of 90 per cent of Liberian territory (Kieh 2008, p.154). They continued their advance on the capital with main objective to remove Doe from office and end the suffering resulting from his administration (Omonijo 1990, p.28). In addition to the NPFL the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) a breakaway faction of the NPFL lead by ‘Prince’ Yomie Johnson, was also advancing and competing with the NPFL to control power, leading to a stalemate. Monrovia became a fierce battleground between the NPFL, INPFL and AFL with each being an enemy to the other two (Nass 2000, p.64). A series of brutal ethnic murders on Monrovia’s streets and a massacre at the UN headquarters on May 29th 1990 lead to demonstrations of thousands of Liberians demanding Doe’s resignation (Omonijo 1990, p.31). There were many skirmishes and heavy shelling but no decisive battle so that the civilian population continued to be terrorised by all sides with all supplies cut off and resulting in food shortages (Ruiz et al 1992, p.7). By September of 1990, it is estimated that somewhere between 13,000 and 20,000 people had been killed in the conflict (Ellis 2007, p.2).

Many commentators felt that the US and international community should have intervened and in 1990 several members of the UNSC were pushing for a formal debate on the crisis. However, on 2nd August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and the UN, US and the rest of the world promptly forgot about Liberia (Hartwig 2005, p.97). In addition the Cold War had ended and Liberia was no longer a strategic concern for the US and not a priority for them to send troops. For many Liberians this was a huge blow as they felt that the US should have taken action to end the fighting given their previous close relationship (Alao 1999, p.26).

The absence of international assistance lead ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) to send in a military monitoring group to Liberia in late August 1990 as well as establishing an interim government to
help restore order and lead to elections (Ruiz 1999, p.7; Hartwig 2005, p.99). This peacekeeping force, ECOMOG (the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) was made up of 3,500 troops including members from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia and Sierra Leone, and intervened but had little effect on the security situation due to poor military capability, logistics and structure (ibid). As a result, soon after they arrived, ECOMOG found its resources and mandate complicated by the violence of the warring groups so their role shifted from being peacekeepers to active peace enforcement which affected their neutrality (Soderbaum and Hettne 2010, p.24). For example, the Nigerian government (which was the key player in ECOMOG) perceived the crisis in Liberia as a matter of national interest and wanted to get rid of Charles Taylor. As a result, there were rumours that ECOMOG were arming Taylor’s adversaries. Furthermore, some countries allied themselves with certain factions for example Guinea and Sierra Leone were both closely involved with a newly formed faction United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) and the factional struggles within the group. These countries’ interests however were less concerned with ethnic and ideological divisions but primarily with access to the valuable diamond and hardwood trades that ULIMO largely controlled with ECOMOG officers supplying arms to ULIMO in return for a share of the diamond profits (Ellis 2007, pp. 96, 98). Therefore, as time passed ECOMOG troops became heavily involved in corruption, bribery and theft rather than neutral peace enforcement (Moran and Pitcher 2004, p.505). Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (2009, p.193) documents in her autobiography that ECOMOG troops openly took part in the looting of cars, trucks, generators, computers, metal-railings/scrap metal and a host of other goods that were transported out of the country on the ships that delivered the troops. There was a local joke that ECOMOG stood for “Every Car or Moving Object Gone” (Tuck 2000).

Despite the presence of ECOMOG more militia groups were being formed, relying on violence and terror as political instruments and the conflict was

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51 ECOWAS was established in 1975 was an economic grouping of regional states to integrate the economic potential of the countries involved and bridge the Francophone-Anglophone gap. Establishing a peacekeeping force to send to Liberia had many critics suggesting that ECOWAS had gone well beyond its mandate as an organisation (Soderbaum and Hettne 2010, p.24).
becoming more complex and heated. However, finally, on September 10th Prince Johnson and his troops captured Samuel Doe outside the ECOMOG headquarters where they tortured and killed him along with seventy-eight of his soldiers. The event was filmed and the video record was widely disseminated and Doe’s body was placed on public display. In the immediate aftermath Taylor (NPFL), Johnson (INPFL) and other warlords David Nimley (deputy commander of the AFL) and Harry Moniba (Doe’s former vice president) all named themselves as his successor (Levitt 2005, p.208). The majority of those vying for power were not Americo-Liberians. For example, Johnson was from the Gio/Mani tribe (as were much of the base of the INPFL) and Harry Moniba was from humble beginnings in Lofa County. His parents were illiterate and he was educated by missionaries and won various scholarships to be able to study in Liberia and the USA (Alao et al 1999, p.22).

Doe’s death coupled with a ceasefire between the NPFL and INPFL proved to be a turning point in the conflict with ECOMOG taking more control and much of the fighting began to diminish. In November 1990 ECOWAS negotiated a settlement (after a conference of some of the Liberian politicians in Banjul, Gambia) and finally established the Interim Government for National Unity (IGNU) headed by Amos Sawyer, a former dean of political science at the University of Liberia (Dennis 2006, p.3). Sawyer was an Americo-Liberian from Sinoe County but was a liberal who did not affiliate with the TWP. He was a founding member of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) which began as an anti-apartheid consciousness raising group but that did much for the urban and rural poor especially around corruption and equality issues (Moran 2006, p.107; Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.81). He was a popular choice with Liberians but also was also the preferred candidate of Nigeria who was the power behind ECOMOG (Ellis 2007, p.15).

However, Taylor did not recognise this settlement or government and continued fighting knocking out Johnson who sought exile in Nigeria. The IGNU was not in effective control of the state and lacked legitimacy at all levels nicknamed the “Imported Government of No Use” by locals (Levitt 2005, p.208; Pham 2004,
Taylor remained in a strong position as he controlled most of the country and had the backing of Libya, Burkino Faso and Cote d'Ivoire (Ellis 2007, p.15). The fighting continued for the next two years, as Taylor's desire for state power was unrivalled with the NPFL attacking ECOMOG and launching missile assaults on the capital.

Eventually, however the terms for a peace agreement were signed in Cotonou in July 1993 by members of the IGNU, NPFL and ULIMO which included terms for a ceasefire, DDR programme, elections, repatriation of refugees and a general amnesty (Alao et al 1999, p.41). To manage this plan, a five-person council of state elected by all factions was to take power from the interim government until elections were held. Also an important part of the Cotonou plan involved the creation of the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to help supervise and monitor the agreement with ECOMOG (Fleischman 1994, p.173). The ECOMOG force was also expanded under the Organisation of African Unity and by early 1994, 800 Tanzanians and 400 Ugandans were deployed.

This agreement however largely failed due to its outdated formula and new factions (e.g. NPFL – Central Revolutionary Council (NPFL-CRC), Lofa Defense Force (LDF), Liberian Peace Council (LPC)) which began to emerge and who were not signatories to the agreement (Dennis 2006, p.4). These factions developed along religious and ethnic lines. For example, the NPFL was drawn mainly from the Gio and Mano tribes and ULIMO split into two factions in 1994, ULIMO-J (mostly Khran people) and ULIMO-K (mostly Mandingo people) (Dennis 2006, p.3). By 1995 there were at least seven different fighting factions all raging terror across the country and although the international community were trying to find a solution to end the fighting nothing seemed to be working. Many factions spawned notorious warlords that were driven by economic incentives such as control of diamond mines and rubber plantations. Between January 1991 and November 1996 the UNSC adopted fifteen resolutions and issued nine statements directly relating to Liberia. ECOWAS and other organisations also made concerted effort to bring an end to the conflict. During
the same period they brokered fourteen peace accords which all failed (Levitt 2005, p.210).

Finally in 1997 the 14th peace accord (Abuja II) formally ended the conflict and lead to a democratic election (overseen by UNOMIL) which Taylor and his National Patriotic Party (NPP) won with a landslide victory of 75.3 per cent of the votes52 (Dennis 2006, p.4; Levitt 2005, p.210). Although Taylor’s campaign was well oiled and financed it was believed that many people voted for him because war fatigue was overwhelming and many were afraid of what he would do to them and the country if he lost (Levitt 2005, p.210). This fear of Taylor was confirmed by his supporters who sang “He killed my Ma; he killed my Pa; I’ll vote for him” at a rally held at the stadium the night before the election (Hyman 2003, p.51). He was officially sworn in a President on August 2nd 1997.

The toll that the war took on the country and population up until this point was immense. It is estimated that 850,000 Liberians became refugees in the neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, as well as one million people (almost a third of the population) becoming internally displaced (Kieh 2008, p.158). The conflict had been defined by its terrible human rights abuses by all factions and total state collapse. The economy was in ruins with all economic production (e.g. rubber tapping and iron ore mining) ceasing; food production decreasing dramatically; exports diminishing and capital flight of those in the retail and commercial industries. The infrastructure that had been built up in the Tubman years was ruined with the destruction of water supplies and purification systems, electricity, roads and bridges, hospitals, schools and massive environmental damage (ibid).

Between 1997-9, Liberia experienced a period of relative calm with some disarmament and aid flows returning to the country. However, despite the movements towards peace the government began to take advantage of its

52 The election was overseen by 500 members of an international observer team lead by former US President Jimmy Carter and deemed to be free and fair (Hyman 2003, p.51).
position of power. The years after the election were characterised by corrupt
police officials, random abduction/murders and torture of rival leaders and their
families, censorship of the press and inflation of food prices and other goods.
Taylor systematically cleansed his cabinet regularly which lead to numerous
attempted coups. He organised favourable contracts to mine for minerals with
selected companies of which the IMF was very critical and he argued with
ECOMOG regarding the strategy of rebuilding the army which was under
ECOMOG’s mandate according to the peace accord (Levitt 2005, p.215). Taylor
wanted to create his own army out of demobilised soldiers and felt it was his
right to do so. He was also accused in 1999 of supporting (with weapons and
training in exchange for diamonds) the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a
rebel group accused of launching a violent and bitter attack on neighbouring
Sierra Leone (ibid). 53 This lead to heightened political tensions with
neighbouring countries (Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire) which had a
destabilising affect on the region. Furthermore, US-Liberian relations had
soured as President Clinton refused to meet with Taylor when he visited the
USA.

The demographic statistics during that time also reflect the effect of the conflict
and Taylor administration on the country. In 1974 29 per cent of the Liberian
population lived in urban areas; by 1999 it was 46 per cent. GDP dropped from
US$973 million in 1987 to US$396 million in 1999 while the country’s debt
burden per capita rose from US$373 in 1980 to US$700 in 1989 to US$1160 in
1999. The 1999 Human Development Report found unemployment at 80 per
cent, with 85 per cent of the population living below the poverty line and 55 per
cent living in ‘absolute poverty’ (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004,
p.6).

53 In addition Taylor is alleged to have solicited assistance of far right extremist groups/crime
elements, mercenary firms from South Africa and Eastern Europe in his arms and training for
diamonds programme in Sierra Leone with the RUF (Levitt 2005, p.216). Up to 250,000 people
died under the RUF terror campaign with slavery, torture, rape, murder and cannibalism being
commonplace (Cendrowicz 2009, p.1). For this involvement (in Sierra Leone only) Taylor has
been tried by the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague under the mandate of the Special Court in
Sierra Leone. He was sentenced to fifty years in prison which is being served in the UK.
4.3.2 The Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003)

Fragile peace remained in Liberia for barely two years before a second major cycle of violence and conflict occurred. The second civil war broke out in April 1999 when the Liberians United for Reconstruction and Democracy (LURD) launched an attack from Guinea with the intent of removing Taylor from power, due to his inability to deal with the debt burden, provide security and use funds appropriately (Keih 2007, p.67; Hyman 2003, p.117). LURD lead by Sekou Conneh, were described as a “ragtag force of children and the disenchanted and for the most part ill-educated veterans” as they were made up of some former members of Doe’s forces, anti-Taylor groups and remnants of the RUF from Sierra Leone (ibid). In addition, Levitt (2005, p.218) explains that the LURD rebellion also consisted of people of Khran ethnicity (Doe’s tribe who were favoured in his regime) as well as many Mandingos (Muslims) who Taylor had systematically targeted during his rule. They were based mainly in Lofa County and many had been former members of the ULIMO-K. In retaliation to the LURD offensive, Taylor’s forces launched a counter-attack which forced Liberians to flee to seek refuge in neighbouring Guinea. By September 1999 the fighting intensified whilst simultaneously ECOMOG began withdrawing its operation in Liberia. This was despite the fact that the potential for violence was now heightened, the security situation was still not stable and the humanitarian position was desperate with little food or functioning markets. The fighting continued in this region with continued attacks by LURD throughout 2000 from the Guinean border into Lofa County.

In 2001 the UNSC met to act upon a recommendation from a panel of experts that sanctions (which were not agreed by all members) should be imposed on Liberia as a result of Liberia’s support of the RUF in the war in Sierra Leone. In the early 1990s Taylor had supported the RUF to launch an attack on the then president of Sierra Leone Joseph Saidu Momoh. The RUF gained control of the diamond fields in the east of the country and Taylor received access and rough-cut diamonds. According to Ellis (2007, p.168) Liberia had become the third

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54 LURD was funded and armed by Guinea in exchange for coffee, cocoa and diamonds.
biggest supplier of diamonds to Antwerp in 1994 which included those from Sierra Leone and Guinea being passed off as being from Liberia. With the support of Taylor, the RUF developed into a ruthless insurgent force with extensive use of child soldiers and amputating hands and feet as a specific tactic. His support was the “single biggest factor” in the RUFs ability to continue waging war in Sierra Leone (Johnson-Sirleaf 2009, p.225). This accrual of diamonds exported by Taylor from Liberia during that time gave him more power and wealth allowing him to continue fighting within Liberia. Therefore, in May of 2001 UNSC sanctions implemented consisted of a one-year diamond embargo, extending an arms embargo from 1992 and imposing a travel ban for senior officials (Hyman 2003, p.102). These sanctions however, did little to quell the fighting and were called into question in 2002 as they were found to be harming innocent civilians who were struggling as the economy and infrastructure deteriorated. Taylor appealed twice to the UNSC to lift the sanctions as the humanitarian situation was worsening and Guinea and Sierra Leone were supporting LURD with many former RUF fighters from Sierra Leone taking up arms (Pham 2004, p.182). His requests were denied and he blamed the hardships faced by his people on the UN (Levitt 2005, p.219).

In the same year LURD had taken Lofa County and were advancing on Monrovia. From February to September 2002 there was much fighting on the outskirts of the capital and Taylor called for NPFL allies to take up arms and fight against LURD. The fighting was very brutal and despite their name LURD rejected both reconciliation and democracy (Hyman 2003, p.119). Taylor also rejected numerous cease-fire agreements and called for ECOWAS to intervene with a peacekeeping force which they rejected. The fighting continued apace into 2003 with thousands of people fleeing across Liberia’s borders. At the same time another wardlordist militia group backed by Cote d’Ivoire and comprising former Doe supporters was established called Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and making the conflict three-sided (Kieh 2008, p.67).
By April 2003 the situation finally reached the world’s attention as Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN urged the UNSC to not lose sight of an early resolution to the conflict. He called for LURD and other armed forces not to take power by force and cited an ECOWAS report which stated that 60 per cent of the country was under rebel control and humanitarian groups could not reach people in 70 per cent of the country (Hyman 2003, p.119; Levitt 2005, p.223). Throughout this time the fighting was escalating with attacks and counterattacks by rival forces. The rebels were moving through into Monrovia which caused an estimated 200,000 to flee the city. This ‘tug and pull’ by the groups caused the deaths of hundreds of innocent people, massive displacement and vitriolic human rights abuses (Kieh 2008, p.67). Opposition political parties in Liberia opposed the LURD because of their failure to use democratic processes to gain state power and they urged them to disengage from their military campaign (Hyman 2003, p.120). Additionally there was a push for peace talks from the Inter-Religious Council for Liberia and leading civil society and political leaders. But it was not until 2003 that finally the leaders of all factions gathered to try and find a resolution to the conflict (Hayner 2007, p.5).

4.4 Peace Process

In early June 2003 all the leaders from the militia groups met in Accra, Ghana for Peace Talks which were mediated by General Abubakar, the former President of Nigeria. However, on the opening day of the ceremony Charles Taylor announced that he was removing himself from Ghana and left the talks immediately (Hayner 2007, p.4). This was because earlier that day it had been revealed that he had been indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes during the civil war in Sierra Leone in the mid-1990s (ibid). This

55 Such as the True Whig Party; Free Democratic party; Liberian People’s Party; Unity Party; United People’s Party, National Democratic Party of Liberia, All Coalition Party etc. (Hyman 2003, p.120).

56 Taylor vehemently disagreed with the charges. The court charged him with receiving uncut diamonds in exchange for his support of the RUF proceeds of which were invested all over the world. His and all his relatives Swiss bank accounts were frozen and estimates suggest that it totaled US$1.5 billion which belonged to public and private Liberian interests (Hayner 2007, p.4). Taylor was tried at the International Criminal Court in The Hague and sentenced in 2012 to fifty years in jail for war crimes and crimes against humanity (AllAfrica 2012).
effected a change to the dynamics of the talks, which made it difficult for parties to come to agree ceasefire terms and drew out the proceedings for seventy-six days while fighting continued unabated in Liberia.

The stalemate persisted between the parties because Taylor refused to step down. Any attempts to send peacekeeping forces (by ECOWAS and the US) were threatened with attack by LURD who wanted to remove Taylor from power. Initially the government, LURD and MODEL, were the central actors in the talks, but as the discussions continued representatives from civil society and the international community also played a part (Hayner 2007, p.11). Given the number of players and issues to discuss the talks were very slow and few agreements could be reached. Eventually in mid-July, the first draft peace agreement was circulated which did not include factional representatives in the transitional government. This caused further unrest and actually resulted in increased shelling in Monrovia. Those at the talks found it hard to approve on the terms of the plan but eventually, instead of an amnesty or war crime tribunal all agreed on a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) as it was seen to be less contentious. There was also little attention to judicial reform or reparations for victims but the agreement did include the establishment of an International Human Rights Commission. By the beginning of August ECOWAS announced it would send a peacekeeping force to arrive around 4th August and would be subsumed by a larger force (ECOWAS mission in Liberia - ECOMIL) at a later date (Soderbaum and Hettne 2010, p.4). Taylor, still in Liberia, undertook to exit the country and go into exile in Nigeria once ECOWAS arrived in August. He eventually left Monrovia on 11th August describing himself as a ‘sacrificial lamb’ (Levitt 2005, p.235).  

57 In total there were 18 political parties represented at the talks. Many were recently formed by Taylor in an attempt to dilute the process (Hayner 2007, p.11).

58 The US also sent a seven member marine team to assist in the logistics with the Nigerian peacekeepers and work out how to secure the port from LURD so that humanitarian aid could arrive. They eventually sent two hundred more marines a week later but just to assist in stabilising the situation.
A final Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was eventually signed a week later by the warring factions, political parties and civil society groups on August 18th 2003 in Accra, Ghana. A National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) was formed in October lead by businessman Charles Gyude Bryant which included positions being taken up by members of three of the armed factions within the conflict, as well as those in civil society groups. This NTGL remained in power for two years until democratic elections took place in 2005 (Jaye 2009, p.10). Despite the CPA, the fighting continued in Monrovia. Taylor was in daily contact with his people who incited violence. In response to this, in September the UNSC signed resolution 1509 to establish the UN Mission in Liberia which would subsume ECOMIL (Weiss 2005, p.79). It was established with a Chapter VII mandate and tasked to carry out two broad functions; to support and protect (Aboagye and Bah 2005, p.103). The force was deployed in October for twelve months (later extended) with approximately 14,100 military personnel from forty-seven countries including 250 military observers, 607 international staff officers, and approximately 750 civilian police officers (ibid; Paes 2005, p.253). At the time it was the world’s largest and most expensive mission with an annual budget of US$846 million. Furthermore, it was a wholly integrated mission which meant that all key components were located under a unified command structure (Paes 2005, p.253; Lotze et al 2008, p.33). Table 4 sets out the mandate and responsibilities of UNMIL.

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<tr>
<th>Supporting Role responsibilities</th>
<th>Support for the implementation of the ceasefire agreement</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Support for humanitarian and human rights assistance</td>
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<td>Support for security sector reform</td>
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<td>Support for implementation of the peace process</td>
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<th>Protection Role</th>
<th>Protect UN personnel, facilities, installations and equipment</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel without prejudice to the efforts of the government</td>
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<td>Protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence and their capabilities</td>
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<th>Implementation Goals</th>
<th>Peace and security</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disarmament and demobilisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishment of the rule of law, including judiciary and corrections</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishment of safeguards for human rights</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Restoration of state authority</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provision of factual information through public media campaigns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Coordination of UN agencies for humanitarian assistance</td>
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Table 4: Main Roles of UNMIL and Implementation Goals
(adapted from Aboagye and Bah 2005, pp.104-5)
During the fourteen-year civil conflict at least half of the country’s estimated two and a half million population had been displaced and the war had claimed the lives of between 150,000 and 250,000 people. In consequence, rebuilding the collapsed state and securing the reconciliation and the trust of the nation was a considerable challenge for the new government (Fuest 2008, p.205).

4.5 Women’s Role During the Conflict

4.5.1 Women as Combatants
Despite deeply entrenched patriarchal structures in Liberia that might have been expected to discourage the enrolment of women in active combat or any other kind of association with armed forces, they were actually involved in large numbers during the fourteen year civil war. Estimates suggest that 30-40 per cent of all fighting forces (25-30,000 people) were made up of women and girls in Liberia (Sheriff 2008, p.27). Whilst some engaged in active combat, others provided a supporting, ancillary role to the group, often referred to as ‘bush wives’ (Spect 2006, p.20). These roles included hauling ammunition, farming, cooking and serving as sex slaves to multiple partners. These women were frequently raped and abused and bore children (Amnesty 2008, p.12). In Liberia age seems to have been a determining factor as to which role was performed (although not in all cases), with younger girls performing domestic chores and older women serving as commanders (ibid). This also meant that they were treated differently within the factions with those in supporting roles experiencing significantly worse treatment than higher-ranking female soldiers (Spect 2006, p.20).

Many women and girls willingly signed up to militia groups to exert their political affiliations or for revenge but thousands more were simply abducted as rebel groups passed through the country. Forced recruitment was a common tactic in Liberia, with women and girls (some as young as ten) being ‘chosen’ by conquering commanding soldiers and forced to leave their villages and accompany them. Whilst in the groups they had to endure many hardships
such as the loss of family members, having to kill, being beaten and shot at, starved, raped, threatened with death and being forced to engage in drug taking, alcohol consumption and cannibalism\(^{59}\) (Amnesty 2008, p.15). Spect (2006 p.21) also revealed in her study on girl combatants that most girls recruited in the second war were still in their early childhood during the first war. This disrupted their education and many were illiterate, did not recognise society at peace, and grew up with feelings of anger and resentment.

Despite the inclusion of many abducted women and girls the agency of women fighters in the Liberian context is not insignificant. Women’s roles changed through the conflict years, as they had to take on new responsibilities when family members died or went off to fight. Challenging traditional gender roles through these actions often gave the women courage to join the fighting groups. They also frequently used the conflict to their advantage to assist them with their survival through the conflict. Research by Utas (2005) suggests that many women navigated their way into the armed forces for their own protection. For example, he recounts the story of Bintu, a young woman who utilised whatever means necessary to survive. At one stage she became the girlfriend of a military commander solely as a source of protection and for economic gain in an environment that would otherwise be lethal for her. Being associated with a high-ranking boyfriend also gave women the chance for upward social mobility and more economic security by having access to more looted goods.

However, as another option in the last phase of the conflict, LURD forces had special military units that consisted solely of women and girls. These were referred to as Women’s Artillery Commandos (WAC) and were a unique feature not seen previously. Spect (2006, p.23) reports that at their peak these units consisted of several hundred women who received basic training prior to their acceptance in a combat role. The units consisted of ranks and specific roles and women could be promoted on the basis of prior experience, time with the faction and ability. A female director headed all the units and female generals

\(^{59}\) Cannibalism is linked to Poro rituals which is rumoured to bestow power in indigenous beliefs (Ellis 2007, p.231).
would assist with the management. The WACs raised the profile of women’s fighters from being subordinate to male fighters and offered a degree of solidarity and protection between the women under the overall responsibility of the commander. Whilst women fighters were also seen in the AFL, large groups of female only units were not common.

Moreover, when women were in active combat situations they were often purported to be at least as fierce as their male counterparts with civilians often shocked by their ruthlessness. There were also a number of prominent high ranking female commanders including Julia Rambo, Ruth ‘Attila’ Milton and Black Diamond, who functioned as role models for many young women during the war. In a study by Bennett et al (1995, p.6) it was noted in their interviews on women and conflict, that often people claimed that women combatants were more brutal than their male counterparts. Girls who trained as combatants were found to be very aggressive, particularly against other women. At checkpoints, it was claimed that female combatants would rob women and perform sexual acts on them and it was suggested that women were more afraid of female than male soldiers. However, the WACs in LURD had a strict code of conduct which forbade harassment, looting, rape and assault and female commanders were often known to be stricter than their male counterparts in enforcing these regulations (Spect 2006, p.24). As a result of these experiences for women throughout the conflict their perceptions of themselves and identities altered. Whilst some in the community accepted these changes, many felt that women should not have fought as it contested their traditional roles and led to stigmatisation.

4.5.2 Women as Peacemakers

Despite being the victims of the conflict in Liberia, women’s groups were instrumental throughout the peace processes. Moran and Pitcher (2004, p.504) found in their investigation into peacebuilding that there was significant peace activity by women’s groups in the post conflict period. Such peacebuilding groups were not limited to one social strata, but involved all women, from
powerful urban elites to illiterate villagers. In particular networks that stemmed from women’s religious groups to market women’s networks, that remained resilient through the conflict, were utilised to gather support and finance to run the peace movement. For example, women risked their lives to deliver food through particularly difficult periods of fighting. When ULIMO forces captured Kakata in 1992 they blocked the flow of traffic and goods along the main road from the capital to Gbarnga (Bong County) which lead to acute food shortages. When this information reached the women the Concerned Women’s Organisation held meetings in Monrovia and Gbarnga along with market women to develop a plan to collect and deliver food to the capital (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004: 11). Therefore, through the use of networking women could use their influence to positive effect, such as, persuading militias to open roads to allow aid to pass. These networks were powerful, effective and far reaching and often built upon the pre-existing networks women developed through their customary roles in market trading. Liberian women created a ‘grapevine’ information system among villages and women’s groups to plan meetings, consultations or demonstrations within a few hours, and also used Diaspora groups around the world to spread their messages of peace (ibid 2004, p.14).

However, despite the important work women conducted during the initial phases of the conflict they were still sidelined from formal peace negotiations. As a result they focused on direct political activism. For example, in 1994 The Liberian Women’s Initiative was formed (including women of all social classes) which took a unified stance at the October 1994 Liberian National Conference in order to call for peace. Headed by Mary Brownell, a schoolteacher, they called for the disarmament process to be speeded up and questioned the way the peace process was being conducted. They mounted a series of protests on the streets of Monrovia demanding the recall of a UN envoy whose presence they deemed inappropriate (Anderlini 2007, p.56; AFELL et al 1998, p.133). The group had little money and raised funds by auctioning cakes and other

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60 Mary Brownell is from Maryland County and has a degree in teaching from the university of Liberia and a MA from San Francisco.
informal activities (Anderlini 2000, p.10). They led some very successful campaigns in 1995-6 called “stay-home” days. The stay-home days paralysed Monrovia, closing markets, government buildings, transport and businesses (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004, p.17). The formation of the Liberian Women’s Initiative was considered a turning point for women’s groups as it brought a stronger and more inclusive peace movement which sought to include the voices of all sectors and elements of the female population of the country. The initiative was also a catalyst for bringing women and gender issues into the national political agenda (Anderlini 2000, p.20).

Another significant group was the Mano River Initiative in which women peace activists from the Mano river basin of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, launched the Mano River Union Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET). This group was formed under the auspices of ECOWAS along with International NGO and UN support and gathered representatives from local women’s peace activism groups that had been at working to distribute food and keep transport links open. The women who were part of this initiative were responsible for bringing the feuding leaders of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea together in the same room for a regional peace summit. When President Lansana Conte of Guinea had been adamant about not meeting Charles Taylor, Mary Brownell told him:

You and President Taylor have to meet as men and iron out your differences, and we women want to be present. We will lock you in this room until you come to your senses, and I will sit on the key.

For this work these women won the 2003 UN Human Rights prize (Fleshman 2003, p.4).

As the conflict progressed and women continued to be victims, they became war weary and decided that they must take action. In a fascinating 2008 documentary called ‘Pray the Devil Back to Hell’ the efforts of women in Liberia to bring about peace in 2003 are detailed (Reticker and Disney 2008). Women came together through religious groups to call for peace. For the first time Christian and Muslim women worked together to call for action and lobby their pastors and imams to speak to leaders and warlords to urge them to go to the
peace table. Whilst the impetus for this movement was via religious networks it reached out to already existing organisations such as the Liberian Women’s Initiative and the Concerned Women of Liberia group that had already been engaged in food distribution via market women’s networks who came together to back the cause. Furthermore, at both community and national level women used their personal contacts with civil society organisations, religious and professional affiliations, kinship ties, old friendships, marketing chains and the Liberian diaspora to leverage support (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004, pp.11,14).

It resulted in thousands of women dressing in white and walking very long distances to launch the campaign on April 11th 2003. After this they organised a sit-in at the Airfield in Sinkor, opposite the fish market in Monrovia for weeks in order to elicit some response from Taylor, under the banner WIPNET (Women’s Peacebuilding Network) (African Women and Peace Support Group 2004, p.47). Similar gatherings spread to other towns around the country to lend strength to the campaign. Everyone was welcome, both urban and rural, those with many languages and those that could only speak local languages. They also implemented a sex strike during which they denied their husbands and partners sex and urged them to take action.

Eventually they presented a position statement to Taylor at the executive mansion with hundreds of women gathered on the lawn outside. The statement that was read out to Taylor by Leymah Gabowee (coordinator of WIPNET) is as follows:

Kindly present this statement to his Excellency Dr. Charles Taylor, with this message, that we the women of Liberia including the IDPs, we are tired of war, we are tired of running, we are tired of begging for bulgur wheat, we are tired of our children being raped. We are now taking this stand to secure the future for our children, because we believe as custodians of society, tomorrow our children will ask us “Mama, what was your role during the crisis?” Kindly convey this to the President of Liberia. Thank you.

(Reticker and Disney 2008)

Taylor realised that the women had extensive popular support and finally relented and agreed to attend the peace talks in Accra. The women also
travelled to Sierra Leone where the other warlords were meeting and were successful in getting them to promise to attend in Accra. Women throughout Liberia came together to raise money to send several key women leaders to the talks and they gathered with Liberian refugees outside the talks every day and urged for decisions to be reached. However, as the talks dragged on they decided that they needed to take more direct action, and 200 women barricaded the doors to the talks. They seized the peace hall and said the men could not come out until an agreement had been signed. When security guards attempted to remove the women, Leymah Gbowee, one of the leaders of the women threatened to strip naked (which is widely considered a curse in Africa). They urged General Abubakar who was running the talks to move forward a resolution or they would come back with even more women. From that moment onwards the mood of the talks changed to being more serious and two weeks later the CPA was signed. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf acknowledged the achievements of Liberian women in her inaugural speech to the nation on 17th January 2006. She said;

I want to here now gratefully acknowledge the powerful voice of women from all walks of life, whose votes brought us to victory. They defended me, they worked with me, they prayed for me. It is the women who laboured and advocated for peace throughout our region.

Without the efforts of the Liberian women’s peace movement it is doubtful that the parties would have come together to develop and sign the CPA and their role in the peace process should not be underestimated. For their work in the peace process and in reconstruction both Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee (WIPNET) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined in detail the case of Liberia. It has explained the antecedents of the conflict and offered a detailed account of the phases of war. To bring attention to the focus of women it has examined the traditional role of women as well as their role in the conflict and peace process. The war impacted

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61 For example in South Africa women stripped naked in Dobsonville to protest against the demolition of a squatter settlement as a signal of their anger and as a means of cursing perpetrators. They used their nakedness as a form of agency positioning their vulnerability as a political tool (Meintjies 2007, pp. 357, 365).
on women in many ways. Coming from a patriarchal environment where men in most spheres dominated women, the war provided opportunities for women that may not have otherwise been available. Women were able to capitalise on networks that remained durable throughout the conflict to assist with their survival. Working together these women risked their lives to provide food and support over many years.

This empowerment gave women the impetus to push forward with their own peace movement which was a critical component in managing to call an end to the long and protracted war. The war also shaped women’s lives in their capacity as combatants where they were involved with fighting forces both of their own volition but also as a circumstance of the situation. Whilst many women suffered greatly, the conflict ultimately laid the foundations for women to begin to challenge their pre-war gender roles. These new identities in the post-war environment will now be explained in the next chapter.
5.1 Introduction
This chapter seeks to outline in more intricate detail the components of the DDRR process and gender mainstreaming in Liberia. It begins by explaining the various phases of the programme paying particular attention to the provision for women. It then reviews the moves towards post-conflict reconstruction in the country by outlining and evaluating the key processes that have been implemented in the post-conflict period under a liberal peacebuilding framework. These include security sector reform (SSR), transitional justice mechanisms, poverty reduction strategy, the UN Peacebuilding Fund and unemployment and crime. Finally it considers issues for women in the country as it rebuilds by focusing on empowerment as well as issues such as SGBV, access to justice and human rights.

5.2 DDRR in Liberia

5.2.1 DDRR Period 1 (1994-1997)
The first period of DDRR was started in 1994 under the terms of the Cotonou Agreement signed in July 1993, which provided a blanket amnesty for all fighters but was temporarily aborted due to violence (Jaye 2009, p.6). As a result, the DD (conducted by ECOMOG) disarmed only 3,192 ex-combatants. It resumed in 1996 when a new peace agreement was signed (the Abuja II Agreement) and UNOMIL in conjunction with ECOMOG were successful in disarming 20,332 ex-combatants, including 4,306 children and 250 female fighters. They collected 10,000 weapons and 1.24 million rounds of ammunition (Aboagye and Bah 2005, p. 113). The ex-fighters were provided with an
assistance package and tools for work, as well as rice and canned food, in exchange for a serviceable weapon and 100 rounds of ammunition (Jaye 2009, p.6).

This phase of the DDRR process was stalled however, as the country descended back into civil war and many ex-combatants re-enlisted. This was mainly because the DDRR was not implemented strategically and the tight timetable led to a ‘quick and dirty’ approach, with the whole process being completed within three months. This was especially drastic in the case of demobilisation which was reduced to one day (Hyman 2003, p.54). The general consensus during this period of disarmament was that it focused too heavily on gun carrying combatants that usually excluded women and children. It failed to coordinate the process in conjunction with the national army. It lacked accountability measures and Taylor’s government showed no real commitment to the process (Jaye 2009, p.8).

5.2.2 DDRR Period 2 (December 2003 – June 2008)

The second period of DDRR was established during the CPA in 2003 and supported by the NCDDR, which was comprised of representatives from all warring factions, ECOWAS, the UN, the African Union (AU) and an international contact group on Liberia (UNDDR 2009). The design of the Programme Strategic and Implementation Framework was developed in one month in October 2003. It was a comprehensive programme with a specific strategy for each target group and considered to be the UN’s first integrated DDR framework.

The programme was implemented by UNMIL’s Joint implementation Unit (JIU) which consisted of members from the DDRR Unit of UNMIL, members of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the NTGL. The JIU subcontracted much of the technical and educational aspects of demobilisation to local service providers, usually international organisations, such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Norwegian Refugee Council
and the World Food Programme (Paes 2005, p.254). See Figure 5 for the connections and functions of the bodies involved.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5**: Bodies and Functions of those involved in DDRR (ECP 2008: 86)

This structure was operationalized under a liberal peacebuilding agenda in a top-down fashion with many of the directives and decisions being made prior to deployment and UN headquarters in New York. Hence, from the beginning, a priority with planners was the creation of a stable environment for multiparty competitive elections: this was a concern that probably induced planners to view disarmament and demobilisation as the key components. Even though the NCDDRR was a national committee it was not really localised as it was comprised of various representatives of which many were international and still operating within a liberal framework. Furthermore, UNDP which was responsible for the rehabilitation and reintegration (RR) phases as well as monitoring and evaluation, operates in Liberia in so called Direct Execution (DEX) mode. This means that they do not transfer funds to the national authorities to distribute according to their priorities because of corruption and to minimise fiduciary risks (Andersen and Sending 2010, p.25).

The programme cost US$110 million. Just over half (US$68 million) of these funds came from trust funding consisting of contributions from multilateral and bilateral donors e.g. the European Commission and countries such as the US,
Ireland, UK, Sweden. The disarmament phase fell under the budget of UNMIL and US$20 million was donated by the Norwegian government for reintegration (ECP 2008, p.5). See table 5 for a list of donors and amounts.

Table 5: DDRR Trust Fund Contributions (ECP 2008, p.87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Contributions (millions $)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden / AIDS</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL (devolution)</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK DFID</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR-Small Arms Reduction</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>&gt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DDRR programme was scheduled to run from December 2003 to June 2008. It was spilt into a number of phases which will be outlined in turn.

5.2.2.1 Disarmament and Demobilisation (Dec 2003 – Nov 2004)

Phase 1 (December 2003)

The first phase of disarmament was started on December 7\textsuperscript{th} 2003 at Camp Schefflin on the outskirts of Monrovia and focused mainly on former government of Liberia soldiers. However, the disarmament lasted only a few days as UNMIL had grossly underestimated the amount of people that would arrive to register. UNMIL planned for a total 38,000 people\textsuperscript{62} across the country and its difficulties were compounded by organisational and resource issues with UN staff’s inability to communicate effectively with ex-combatants causing further issues. As a consequence rioting broke out leading to nine deaths, as not all those who registered received the monetary allowance that was expected (ECP 2008, p.5; Paes 2005, p.254). As a result, the programme was stopped until April 2004 so

\textsuperscript{62} Based on lists of fighters provided by faction leaders at the peace process. These were not comprehensive (Munive and Jakobsen 2012, p.366).
that the UN could re-design the process. However, Paes (2005, p.254) notes that despite these adverse conditions, UNMIL managed to process 13,123 combatants and collect 8,679 weapons and 2.7 million rounds of ammunition during these few days.

**Phase 2 (April 2004)**

Extra time allowed for key lessons to be learned, and the revised programme began on 15th April 2004. It was conducted in cantons in Gbarnga (for Government of Liberia (Government of Liberia Forces - GoL), Buchanan (for MODEL), Tubmanburg (for LURD) and Monrovia the VOA camp (for GoL) but people were not restricted to these locations. The daily rate of disarmament was carefully regulated to about 250 ex-combatants per cantonment site per day, and a degree of balance was designed so that different factions could be disarmed simultaneously (Aboagye and Bah 2005, p.110). Unlike the first phase where the combatants had to hand over a firearm, the entry criteria was expanded to also include 150 rounds of ammunition. This was an attempt to include women who did not have access to weapons and the definition for these people was changed from camp follower to women associated with fighting forces (WAFF).

In addition, the ex-combatant had to answer questions to prove that they had been an ex-fighter in a warring faction and also be identified by their commander (Jaye 2009, p.14). Once again, supply exceeded demand, resulting in the demobilisation component being cut to 5 days from 3 weeks (Paes 2005: 255). When they went onto the camps they registered, received some basic goods and clothes, underwent medical screening, had a series of training sessions on careers counselling, civic education and human rights, health issues such as HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases and peace training. During the careers counselling they were required to choose between agriculture, employment, formal education or vocational training options. At the
end of the demobilisation they received US$150 cash, food for one month, and transport back to the location of their choice.  

**Phase 3 (July 2004)**

In early July 2004 the third phases of disarmament and demobilisation commenced by establishing new cantonments, focusing on the Zwedru area, and targeting the mainly MODEL caseload in Grad Gedeh, Nimba, River Cess and Sinoe counties. In Nimba county two camps D1 (Kpein) and D2 (Ganta) targeted the GoL soldiers and in Voinjama in Lofa County a camp was in place for the LURD caseload (Aboagye et al 2005, p.111).

By its conclusion on 1st December 2004 the DD process had disarmed and demobilised between 101,449 to 107,000 (figures differ on the total) persons. The vast numbers of people who underwent the DDRR process relative to the small population of 3.5 million means that this is a rather exceptional case as approximately 1 in 35 Liberians experienced the process. A total of 27,000 weapons had been collected, along with just over 6 million small arms and ammunition and nearly 30,000 other types of ammunition. This made the weapon to man ratio 0.28 which is one of the lowest in DDR history (Munive and Jakobsen 2012, p.365). See table 6 for figures of weapons and ammunition collected during the phases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weapons</th>
<th>Small Arms Ammunition</th>
<th>Other Ammunition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>8,679</td>
<td>2,717,668</td>
<td>2,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>9,417</td>
<td>2,290,285</td>
<td>17,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>8,904</td>
<td>1,145,678</td>
<td>9,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>6,153,631</td>
<td>29,794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Consolidated Summary of Weapons and Ammunition Collection  
(Aboagye et al 2005, p.113)

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If the fighter was a foreign national they could be repatriated or opt for refugee status within Liberia.
However, because certain groups (i.e. women and children) did not need a weapon to take part, it is estimated that only 67 per cent of this caseload actually disarmed. Demobilisation took place in eight cantonment sites around Liberia which provided separate facilities for men, women, girls and boys. Health assistance for women included pre and ante-natal care as well as family planning information and information on sexually transmitted diseases. All those who demobilised received civilian status at the end of the process and an identity card and unique number to access reintegration benefits.

5.2.2.2 Rehabilitation and Reintegration (Nov 2004 – June 2008)
Those that had passed through the DD process moved on to the rehabilitation and reintegration programme which was to begin on arrival in their settlement areas. They received a second payment of US$150 and they began to receive the benefits of training and education depending on what they had selected. Reintegration was administered by UNDP and various partners, e.g. UNICEF and local/international NGOs. Paes (2004, p.258) details that 45 per cent of the total caseload opted to transfer to the greater Monrovia area because they thought there would be better employment opportunities and many were afraid to return to their homes. Understandably this caused a huge strain on the area both economically and socially.

Statistics show that of those who passed into the R and R process (85,629) the largest proportions of ex-combatants opted to go into formal education, 41.01 per cent, and vocational training, 54.04 per cent, while 4.05 per cent decided to pursue agricultural activities and 0.65 per cent passed straight into employment (Aboagye and Bah 2005, p.115). The median age of participants was 26 years old and the majority fell between the ages of 18-34. For most, the level of prior education was very low, 38 per cent had their own families and access to farmland (ECP 2008, p.88).
The rehabilitation component was designed to encompass psychosocial and trauma counselling to help the ex-fighters to reintegrate into their communities although it is unclear when this took place. Throughout their training or education a subsistence allowance was paid to the ex-combatant and wherever feasible, tied to a 75 per cent participation in the programme. For formal education programmes lasting a number of years, in the first year ex-combatants were given US$30 per month, which was reduced to $15 per month in year two and to nothing in subsequent years. Skills training programmes usually ran for between 3-9 months during which time they ex-combatants received US$30 per month. At the end of the programme successful students were awarded with a graduation certificate and a toolkit.

5.2.3 Period 3 - Residual caseload (July 2008-April 2009)

By the end of the DDRR process UNDP realised that there were a number of people who had registered had not received any RR assistance despite having gone through DD. As a result they set up a rehabilitation and reintegration programme designated “Reintegration Assistance to the Liberian DDRR Residual Caseloads” – or the residual caseload programme, for short. The residual caseload programme ran between July 2008 - April 2009 during which time UNDP managed to validate 7,200 genuine cases (4,614 male and 2,674 female) through an extensive advertising campaign (Tamagnini and Krafft 2010, p.931). Approximately 18,000 people applied for the programme but a very strict policy was enforced to ensure that there were no proxy cases (UN in Liberia 2008, p.3).

This much more comprehensive programme was funded by the Norwegian government and ensured that there was no substantial funding shortfall (as in period 2 where it is estimated that the funding shortfall was 66 per cent). The budget was US$7.03 million (UNDP 2008, p.1). The process incorporated the ex-combatants being given careers guidance for one week before choosing a training programme that had been fully explained to them. They were asked what they wanted to do and the counsellors tried to match their existing skills to the training opportunities. After being trained in new skills, wherever possible,
they were to be placed in employment. The emphasis was on providing marketable skills which could enable participants to reintegrate more successfully into the community. Job mapping was conducted in all districts to minimise people with the same skill flooding the market. There was also an apprenticeship category and packages to help people form cooperatives.

Crucially in this programme, participants received rehabilitation opportunities. The psychosocial component was standardised throughout the programme, and unlike phase one and two of the DDRR, local NGOs provided counselling. There is currently limited assessment of this programme but most experts consulted in Liberia felt that it was far more successful than the original RR programme.

5.2.4 Provision for Women in DDRR

UNMIL was the first UN mission to mainstream gender issues under the rubric of UNSCR 1325 with a dedicated gender advisor to coordinate the gender aspects of the mission. This gender mainstreaming took place in all sectors of the mission’s work and made particular provision for DDRR.

The UNSCR 1509 mandate on Liberia (article 11) highlights the importance of a gender perspective in peace operations by UNMIL and Liberian parties. This resulted in targeted provision for the gender specific needs of female ex-combatants as well as wives and widows of former combatants (UNMIL 2010a, p.12). In particular, the mandate of the gender unit of UNMIL (UNSCR resolution 1509) explicitly has the responsibility to:

(...) design and develop a strategy for gender-mainstreaming to ensure that gender issues are adequately addressed in the implementation of the mission’s mandate, ensure that the process of DDRR takes into account the different needs of female and male ex-combatants, encourage national institutions to incorporate gender concerns in their programmes and activities and ensure the involvement of women as participants and beneficiaries of these activities.

The practical measures emanating from the sweeping policy revisions in gender and DDR since UNSCR 1325 therefore gave the Liberian programme a specific focus. According to UNMIL (2010a, p.15), it also designated targeted resources to gender mainstreaming, including separate cantonment facilities, specialised
programmes for health and counselling and gender-centric rehabilitation programmes. The gender mainstreaming provision of the DDRR programme will be reviewed in detail in the next chapter.

5.3 Post Conflict Reconstruction

According to the 2008 National Population and Housing Census (Government of Liberia 2008) the population of Liberia is 3.49 million with 1.14 million living in Monserrado County where the capital Monrovia is located. Fifty six per cent of the population live in the three counties of Monserrado, Nimba and Bong. The large influx to the capital occurred after the conflict as people were displaced and also moved there to seek employment. The legacy of the conflict left the country in ruins and in some cases the infrastructure had to be rebuilt from scratch. This has meant that there has been slow progress with regards to economic growth and provision of basic amenities (such as health and education) and employment for the population. The country ranks fourteenth from the bottom (174th/187th) in the 2013 Human Development Index, which is a composite measure of health, education and income and is considered one of the poorest in the region (UNDP 2013). The country also remains a highly food insecure country, with a “serious” state of hunger rating according to the 2012 Global Hunger Index (IFPRI 2012). The table below outlines some of the major demographic statistics for Liberia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNI per capita</td>
<td>$330 ($569)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy at birth</td>
<td>57.41 years (54.2)</td>
<td>55.82 years</td>
<td>59.04 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality</td>
<td>72.71 deaths/1000 live births (69.4)</td>
<td>77.08/1000 live births</td>
<td>68.2/1000 live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population below the poverty line</td>
<td>63.8 per cent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: CIA WorldFactbook (2012); WorldBank (2011) brackets show the Sub-Saharan African Averages

Table 7: Demographic Statistics for Liberia
Much has been done over the past decade to move the country toward middle-income level and the resurgent structures and systems will be briefly examined here.

5.3.1 Security Sector Reform

SSR is an integral part of post-conflict reconstruction as in order to establish the law and order of a peaceful society there is a need to strengthen the legitimacy and efficiency of security institutions (Andersen 2007, p.17). The purpose of SSR is to reform state security structures so that human security is assured in accordance with democratic norms, good governance and human rights (ibid). During the war the security forces in Liberia were unpopular due to their lack of professionalism, corruption, frequent human rights violations and exploitation by their political patrons to intimidate and terrorise people (Al-Bakri Nyei 2010, p.48). The CPA outlined plans to reform and revitalise the security sector but the major challenge in Liberia was (and still remains) the population’s distrust of the state security forces which for so many years formed the basis of misery and conflict.

Upon the signing of the peace agreement the post-conflict security situation was fragmented, dysfunctional and extremely volatile, with no national army and increasing lawlessness and robbery (Jaye 2009, p.11). Despite efforts to reform the sector, SSR is still a major priority for the government which is reflected in its commitment to the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) with the first pillar being, ‘consolidating peace and security’. In order to achieve progress under this pillar, the police and army have been reformed.

During the Taylor regime the police force was highly militarised and used weapons indiscriminately against civilians. Under the CPA the UN Police Force (UNPOL) managed the transition and also supervised the training of the new force. The new Liberian National Police (LNP) was established in July 2004 and by 2008, 3500 officers had completed their basic training and 3662 had graduated from the National Police Academy (Zounmenou 2008, p.6). Police
reforms have gone beyond the mere recruitment of officers to a process of institutional capacity building, including reform of the rank and file of the police force, and salary increases of 100 per cent (Al-Bakri Neyi 2010, p.52). The new force also includes a Women’s and Children’s Protection Section and an Emergency Response Unit to deal with armed robberies and riots (ibid).\textsuperscript{64} Despite progress with the LNP, its work is hampered by a lack of basic equipment and running costs such as radios, vehicles, fuel, handcuffs and raincoats. In addition, most of the officers have been assigned to areas around Monrovia leaving 676 police officers to patrol the remaining 14 counties (Zounmenou 2008, p.7). Furthermore, the public still distrust the new police force and it remains unclear whether their negative reputation can be rehabilitated in the short term.

There have however, been beneficial advancements regarding women in the LNP. The 2005 LNP Gender Policy was implemented to attain more gender balance in the police force (UNMIL 2010a, p.19). It crucially introduced an educational support programme to assist women who wanted to enroll, by allowing them to attain the minimum educational standards (in a condensed high school diploma) necessary to join the police force. This initiative increased the number of female LNP officers from 8 per cent in 2006 to 15 per cent by 2010, a figure well on the way to the target of 20 per cent outlined in the Gender Policy (UNMIL 2010c). It has also had a multiplier effect, especially in the rural areas as more female police officers have encouraged other women to enroll despite the limitations of the training and other issues such as family and social pressures, pregnancy and health concerns, and financial and transportation constraints (UNMIL 2010a, pp.21, 23).

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has also reformed during the post-conflict reconstruction period. Under the terms of the CPA, restructuring the armed forces caused great debate. Members of the warring factions wanted to feature

\textsuperscript{64} In view of its critical role in safeguarding peace and security, equipment and training of the Emergency Response Unit has been funded by the US (US$ 5 million), Ireland (US$1.5 million) and Germany (€1 million) (Zounmenou 2008, p.6)
their generals in the new army and civil society and political parties wanted a more transparent system. As a result the new army has come to include members of all factions and is supported by the US which played a key role in its reform. A US-based private security corporation called DynCorp, along with Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE), won the contract to coordinate AFL’s restructuring and training (Al-Bakri Nyei 2010, p.50). This created some controversy within civil society groups who complain that private military companies lack transparency, accountability and loyalty which can affect the outcome (Zounmenou 2008, p.6).

With a budget of US$200 million, to date 2000 people have been trained and sent to barracks (ECP 2008, p.1). The AFL has participated in capacity development and efforts have been made to ensure that it is a literate force, with a minimum of a junior high education. There has also been a focus on community initiatives to enhance trust such as rebuilding infrastructure including roads, bridges and so on. While these reforms represent a positive step forward Liberia still remains vulnerable due to domestic difficulties. The government has not been able to deliver on all of the population’s expectations which causes resentment and eruptions of violence.

5.3.2 Transitional Justice and Human Rights

With regard to transitional justice, many civil society groups were instrumental in getting the issue on the agenda during the peace negotiations. The final outcome resulted in the CPA including a TRC to help disseminate the truth about what happened during the conflict and unearth the root causes (Jaye 2009, p.5). This TRC was officially launched in June 2006 and investigated a period from January 1979 to October 14th 2003. Although the TRC had no criminal accountability measures it helped to start the process of reconciliation and attempted to build trust between perpetrators and victims, as many were able to tell their stories of the war and impunity was tackled. Over 20,000

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65 Although this TRC was a compromise as civil society groups called for a war crimes tribunal and armed factions wanted an amnesty.
statements were taken from victims and witnesses from around the country and from the Liberian Diaspora (ibid).

The TRC released its final report in December 2009. This included a number of recommendations, such as the establishment of an extraordinary tribunal and domestic criminal court to prosecute 124 people who had engaged in gross violations of human rights and 58 who had violated international humanitarian law. A reprieve was granted for 38 people who cooperated with the TRC and a call was made for 49 individuals, including President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, (who was said to have supported Taylor’s campaign financially)\(^{66}\) to be lustrated or ceremonially purified and banned from public office for 30 years. Reparations, the establishment of a traditional ‘Palava hut’ truth-seeking mechanism, a national memorial, a unification day and investigations onto economic crimes, corruption and the establishment of new judicial procedures were also recommended (James-Allen et al 2010, p.3). Despite these recommendations, implementation remains slow as the TRC has been criticised by international organisations as having a lack of due process and inconsistent evidence to support recommendations (Weah 2012, p.5). There have been no prosecutions and no reparations distributed. In addition, a new Supreme Court has been inaugurated and other judicial reforms established to consolidate the integrity of the system.

Other transitional justice mechanisms that have been used have included institutional reforms and vetting of individuals (with data stored in an ‘integrity bank’) who sought positions in the new security architecture of the country. For example, in the new AFL, photographs of applicants are displayed in the community for citizens to review and object if the applicant has caused human

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\(^{66}\) Johnson-Sirleaf in the early days of the conflict wanted to see an end to the tyrannical rein of Samuel Doe so supported the campaign of Taylor in 1990. She apologised for her error in judgment during her TRC testimony and said that she stopped supporting him once she realised she had been fooled. Despite this she was recommended for lustration. Implementation of the recommendations has been stalled however due to the inconsistency of prosecutions. For example, Weah (2012, p.5) outlines and example where Joshua Milton Blahyi (General Butt Naked) claimed responsibility for mass atrocities and 20,000 deaths but was pardoned. These inconsistencies have caused much debate and have stalled progress towards implementation of the TRC report.
rights abuses (Al-Bakri Nyei 2010, p.52). Where human rights offenders have managed to be recruited to the army, police or security services some have been openly sacked to ensure the public’s trust in the new security arrangements. Similarly over 17,000 members of the Armed forces of Liberia, the LNP and the Special Security Services have been deactivated or retired.

5.3.3 Debt Issues and Poverty Reduction Strategy

At the end of the conflict the economy had collapsed and the annual revenue fell to US$85 million which allowed public expenditure of approximately US$25 per capita (one of the lowest rates in the world) (Government of Liberia 2008, p.16). The government had defaulted on debt repayments in the mid 1980s and by 2006 external debt stood at US$4.5 billion equivalent to 800 per cent of GDP and 3000 per cent of exports. In addition, domestic debt added US$900 million, which left Liberia in a very challenging position (ibid).

In spite of the crippling debt and lack of infrastructure at the end of the conflict, Liberia is making efforts to address its debt burden and to effect poverty reduction. In 2008 Liberia became the 33rd country to reach a decision point for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and now qualifies for debt relief. Liberia reached the completion point by clearing long-standing arrears to the IMF and has received interim debt relief from some creditors (IMF 2008, p.1). Since 2008 the country has worked hard to implement a broad set of reforms to comply for HIPC, including the PRS.

The national PRS was published in 2008 and is based upon participatory consultation with all sectors of society in the 15 counties. It was implemented (1st April 2008 to June 30th 2011) and is based on the interim PRS and 150 day action plan. It is seen as a stage of a broader process which will hopefully lead Liberia towards long-term development, sustainable growth and will assist

67 The HIPC initiative was launched by the IMF and World Bank in 1996 to create a framework for all creditors (including multilateral) to provide debt relief to the world’s poorest and most heavily indebted countries. It was enhanced in 1999 to lower thresholds, provide interim debt relief on decision point and to create a greater link with poverty reduction (IMF 2008, p.1).
progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (Government of Liberia 2008, p.13). The PRS is split into 4 pillars, Pillar 1: Peace and Security; Pillar 2: Revitalising the Economy; Pillar 3: Governance and Rule of Law; and Pillar 4: Infrastructure and Basic Services. These pillars are being implemented through numerous initiatives which, whilst ambitious, are essential to laying the foundations of building a peaceful nation. Since its implementation the growth rate has been around 7 per cent per annum with the aim being to reach middle-income country status by 2030 (Developing Markets 2012, p.1). The PRS has also been used to drive the Priority Plan of the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

5.3.4 UN Peacebuilding Fund

Since October 2006, the UN has established a Peacebuilding Fund in Liberia in order to support strategic gaps in provision of those programmes and organisations that were working towards sustainable peace. It is a MDTF and under the authority of the Secretary General with UNDP responsible for its administration. A Steering Committee decides around a targeted agenda on which projects to fund with the committee members being drawn from the UN, Embassies, International NGOs and local organisations. In 2010, Andersen and Sending (pp.24-28) conducted primary research on the mechanisms under which the Peacebuilding Fund operates. They discovered that the committee was highly bureaucratic and that frequently local organisations were overwhelmed with the technical details. Also because the fund will only channel money through UN organisations (due to the fear of corruption) it allows the UN to control the kinds of projects that are funded around its very specific liberal peacebuilding agenda. The result are programmes that focus on a UN-orientated system of governance with decisions being made largely at the UN mission at a country level or at the UN in New York. Furthermore, in Liberia most of the implementation work was being conducted by the UN with very little local engagement. The result reveals programmes that have very little ownership locally and resentment from local organisations over what is funded according to an external strategy. Andersen and Sending found that local
ownership was not prioritised which resulted in a lack of capacity, motivation and responsibility from indigenous groups to attempt to become more involved.

5.3.5 Unemployment and Crime

Rates of unemployment are unreliable as the context of Liberia means that ‘strict’ definitions of unemployment\(^\text{68}\) are not always relevant, as most people have to do some kind of work to survive. In 2011 a government survey on the labour force of Liberia\(^\text{69}\) found that investigating people’s status in employment was more useful. It found that there are about 1.1 million employed persons aged over fifteen, most are working for themselves (own-account workers) or are unpaid for their household work (contributing family workers). These two categories can be combined to represent ‘vulnerable employment’ indicating that these people are unlikely to have any financial security from working or benefits such as pensions, sickness benefit and the like. Moreover, rates of informal employment can also be useful as they reveal that nearly 68 per cent of the population is employed in this way. See Tables 8 and 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paid employees</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Own account workers</th>
<th>Members of producers’ cooperatives</th>
<th>Contributing family workers</th>
<th>Vulnerable employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>195,000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>675,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>174,000</td>
<td>850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>282,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>327,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>393,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>523,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>302,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>370,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>373,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>107,000</td>
<td>480,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Monrovu</td>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>166,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>178,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Status in Employment (persons aged fifteen and over) (LISGIS 2011, p.xiii)

\(^{68}\) This definition requires that a person should not have done any work in a given reference period, should be available and looking for work.

\(^{69}\) This survey sampled 6233 households in 523 enumerator areas across the country.
What is illuminating from these figures is the confirmation that women are more likely to be in the vulnerable employment category (87.3 per cent) and nearly three quarters (74.7 per cent) of all women are employed informally.

The constraints of informal employment reveal themselves through other indicators such as access to health care and education. Being unable to plan financially can be particularly stressful and undoubtedly affects crime rates. There are large numbers of youth (70 per cent of the population is aged 15-35) who do not have formal employment and rates of drug trafficking, crime and associated violence are high (Adolfo 2010, p.45). In two recent studies conducted by Small Arms Survey (2011a and b) findings revealed that almost one in seven households reported being victims of an act of violence or crime between mid 2009-mid 2010. Crime was found to be more prevalent in the capital where 20 per cent of households reported a crime, usually robbery and theft (40 per cent). However, despite high crime rates a second survey concluded that 70 per cent of respondents described their neighbourhood as ‘safe’ or ‘very safe’.

It is interesting that often high crime rates are attributed to ex-combatants who remain within some sort of command structure. These command structures are often perpetuated by former commanders or ‘Big Men’ who work hard at retaining or gaining access to such networks which they utilise to further their political or economic agenda. Former combatants who are used to working collectively are often employed by these Big Men to provide personal security, to intimidate political opponents and for economic and criminal ventures (Themner 2012; Themner 2012, p.206). To exacerbate the situation, not all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labour force participation rate (%)</th>
<th>Inactivity rate (%)</th>
<th>Employment-to-population ratio (%)</th>
<th>Unemployment rate (%)</th>
<th>Vulnerable employment rate (%)</th>
<th>Informal employment rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Monrovia</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Labour Market Indicators (LISGIS 2011, p.xiii)
weapons were disarmed during DDRR and porous borders between neighbouring countries mean that arms are available to perpetuate violence. In an environment where few other formal job opportunities exist, drug trafficking and crime have become very lucrative for former combatants and pose a constant threat to the security of the country.

Multi-national companies need to be attracted back to the country to provide opportunities for jobs. The private sector is the key driver in the short term for growth in the country. Until now progress in this regard has been slow despite the rich natural resources that the country possesses. In 2012 the President held a UK-Liberia Investment Forum in London attempting to attract investors. The report outlined the efforts made by the government to attract private investment into the country. Rubber currently remains one of the biggest exports with Firestone (USA) and, Sime Darby (Malaysia) investing in the country. However recent foreign direct investments from multi-nationals in palm-oil (again from Sime-Darby which is the world’s largest palm-oil producer for US$800 million), iron ore (US$ 2.6bn with China Union, Arcelor Mittal and BHP Billiton) and offshore crude oil, hope to increase the employment base of the country, but as yet this has not trickled down to those who are in vulnerable employment (Developing Markets 2012, p.6; Adolfo 2010, p.28). There are also concerns from NGOs that some of the palm-oil plantations have been subject to land-grabbing processes which have forcibly removed people from their land without input or consent from the communities. There is also the opportunity in the lowlands of Liberia to grow rice which is the staple foodstuff. This resource is presently under-utilised but could be a key area of growth and potential to decrease and offset imports of rice from the USA and elsewhere.

5.3.6 Women’s Empowerment

Many Liberian women have relished a new found independence as they have proved themselves resilient during both the wars and peace processes and are aspiring to get a better job and have an education. This empowerment has enabled women to embrace the post-war moment and contest the oppression
on the basis of gender and demand equality of rights and opportunity. For example, in socially conservative areas like Lofa County, women who had remained in their locality and had a defined role before the war, became emancipated during the conflict in that they had to assume various tasks usually reserved for men and travel long distances to trade, including going abroad. They are now included in weekly assembly meetings and some women hold positions of seniority in local authorities. Many women have also availed of increased opportunities to divorce as they become more economically self-sufficient and able to choose their own partners (Ellis 2007, p.144).

This assertiveness of women is in part due to the President being female. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected to her second term in office which began in January 2012. She has been instrumental in increasing the number of women in positions of both national government and in local and district council positions. Nevertheless, Liberia still remains 110th (out of 145) in the world averages of women in parliamentary positions. Members of both houses are elected in single member winner-takes-all districts which Coleman (2009, p.206) suggests leads to substantially lower levels of representation of women than in proportional representation systems. With a relatively low level of women in the legislature the country lags behind those other African countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Mozambique. However, with a female head of state the country has attracted the attention of the international media as an African nation with a pioneering feminist government (Fuest 2008, p.203).

5.3.7 Women’s Issues

Despite these advancements UNICEF (2005, p.24) reports that gender discrimination is still in evidence in numerous areas including SGBV, education and access to justice. The peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction environment remains inherently masculine in orientation and little has been done to begin to address issues of gender inequality at a structural level. Typically women are employed informally and have fewer educational opportunities but the statistics below indicate a changing balance with little
difference in completion rates between men and women. Table 10 outlines some of these indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>per cent Ratio of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in the non-agricultural sector</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Employment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Trade</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary School</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary School</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Liberia Gender Indicators (adapted from UNMIL 2010c)

One of the greatest problems for women is that almost a quarter of girls in Liberia have a child before they are eighteen. In consequence it has one of the highest educational attrition rates. Other reasons for dropping out of school may include the lack of school fees and poverty and it is estimated that 60-80 per cent of Liberian teenage girls sell their bodies to fund their education (Coleman 2009, p.195). In rural areas low literacy rates can be further exacerbated due to traditional customary roles for women which do not include formal education continuing to be the norm. Women’s impoverishment and lack of education can contribute to their lower status and suppression in terms of health, property, economic development and employment (ibid). Furthermore, it does not allow them the opportunities to understand their rights, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and SGBV.
5.3.7.1 Sexual and Gender Based Violence

According to Fatoumata (2005, p.147) the Liberian war impacted most severely on women. This was particularly prevalent with regard to heightened rates of SGBV which were tolerated more readily in the conflict environment. Rape was frequently used as a weapon of war causing extensive trauma, pregnancy and spread of disease. However, in Liberia rape was usually not used for ethnic cleansing purposes as was seen in other conflicts such as Rwanda, but as a celebration of the hyper-masculine warrior identity. Consequently, rape was frequently carried out indiscriminately against any unprotected woman, regardless of whether they had ethnic or political affinity with those who perpetrated the violence (Utas 2005, p.418).

This exposure of SGBV during the conflict made its acceptance more widespread and the pervasive incidences of SGBV is one of the legacies of the conflict. Among the different facets of SGBV rape is the most highly, reported crime to the police with approximately 15-19 cases being reported weekly throughout the country in 2008 (UNMIL 2010b). In the same year, an UNMIL study on prevalence and attitudes to rape in the fifteen counties of Liberia, found that on average one out of every five respondents in their survey knew someone who had been raped (although this was as high as 48 per cent in some counties such as Lofa). This was more prevalent in urban areas and was usually on young women aged 10-19 years with the perpetrators mainly being young adult and middle-aged men. They also found that most rapes went unreported due to the stigmatisation and fear associated with the act and that 44 per cent of males believed that rape could not be committed in a marriage. Furthermore if SGBV is found to have been committed to a women they can experience rejection and divorce.

This issue of SGBV and domestic violence is a focus of much of the development assistance in the country with many programmes trying to change attitudes and implement new policies on such practices which empower women. Developments include a National GBV taskforce (2002); UN Joint Programme on SGBV (2008) and a National Plan of Action to prevent and manage SGBV.
cases (Johnson-Sirleaf 2007, p.34). The national plan of action aims to strengthen the health sector in order to manage SGBV cases, reform the legal system to deal with SGBV cases, establish outreach and psychosocial services and ‘safe homes’ for women, provide skills for social and health professionals and support for women and girl’s economic empowerment (ibid).

The government is also making moves to curtail the harmful practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Although not universal among Liberian indigenous groups the process is entrenched in certain cultures and belief systems which make it difficult to tackle but the Minister for Gender and Development Julia Duncan-Cassell has provided assurances that the government is working with local communities and Soweis to start reducing the practice whilst retaining the positive aspects of a traditional Sande initiation (Lupick 2012). Additionally, they advocate the right to let individual eighteen year old women choose whether or not they wish to undergo the Sande education rather than have parents forcing them to take part at a very young age. The provision of information about the process allows young girls to make a more informed decision having considered the positive and negative aspects.

5.3.7.2 Justice and Human Rights

On the SGBV agenda new policies and structures have been put in place to address the issue. They include the 2006 Rape Law along with the establishment of a dedicated court set up in Monrovia to try cases of rape. Criminal Court E covers SGBV and rape crimes in Monserrado County and is the only court of its kind in Liberia. To date, prosecution has been hampered for logistical reasons, such as a lack of credible evidence (i.e. lack of forensic capacity) and trouble getting witnesses to court or to call the hotline to report cases. Six trials have taken place and four convictions have been made with the maximum life sentence being given for one case. In an interview with Counsellor Coleman from the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) in April 2010 who runs the SGBV referral programme, she stated:

(...)...the main reasons that people don’t call the hotline are stigma, trauma, family pressure...some move or are forced to move and others change their mind.
Therefore, pressures of the overarching patriarchal society prevent many cases being tried and as a result there is widespread impunity for perpetrators.

On paper Liberia conforms to international law on gender equity, as it is a signatory to the International Humanitarian Law and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has ratified the UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), and is committed to principles of gender balance. In reality however, the application of these principles remains hard to achieve due to the prevalence of traditional customary law that discriminates against women but to which much of the country continues to subscribe (Coleman 2009, p.199). Many see it as an implanted Western ideal, which is inappropriate to Liberia, despite embracing other Westernised practices such as democratic politics and equality among different subcultures (ibid). Once again there is a lack of ownership over such policies and processes due to local resentment of the perceived imposition of international law.

Patriarchal gender inequality is further complicated by differences ‘within’ different groups of women and an intra-gender inequality between “civilised” (educated Americo-Liberians) and “native” women. Coleman (2009) states that these two groups are governed by different laws, and although some changes have been made, native females still have many of their rights denied. They are viewed (along with their children) as the property of their husbands, have no claims on his property when he dies and cannot divorce without repaying the dowry. Whereas ‘civilised’ women have the automatic right to inherit their husband’s property, can have custody of their children, can marry again and can divorce under statutory law. In the post-conflict environment, organisations such as AFELL have pushed forward new gender equity laws, such as ‘An Act to Govern the Devolution of Estates and establish Rights of Inheritance for Spouses of both statutory and un-statutory marriages’, which tries to redress the imbalance. This act however has suffered from the complications of polygamy which is popular under customary law and makes it hard to divide property upon death.
Finally, in March 2009, Liberia was the first post-conflict country to develop and launch a National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325. This was published in 2008 to complement other gender polices already in place and to coordinate with other country’s national action plans around the globe. It aimed to reinforce extant initiatives in the post-conflict environment, such as zero tolerance policies on SGBV and the promotion of women in the peace and security. Liberia had a female Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and the first all female-formed UN police unit deployed by India (Government of Liberia 2008, p.7). However, what is still unclear about the NAP is how it is implemented locally and informs local NGOs work. This is in spite of the fact that many NAPs have been conducted in consultation with local actors and civil society organisations that are meant to help set the mechanisms for action as well as methods for monitoring and evaluation. Critics have suggested that there are still considerable gaps between the reality for women in conflict-affected contexts and international institutions and policy maker’s perceptions of what women’s needs are (Caesar et al 2010, p.8).

5.8 Conclusion
This chapter has demonstrated that the DDRR process in Liberia was protracted and complex. It was designed within the liberal architecture which drove much of the post-conflict reconstruction within the country. It has revealed that many of the peacebuilding processes still taking place are stifled by this top-down approach which pays tokenistic attention to local ownership and processes. The development of the country economically and socially is moving forward at a very slow rate with significant unemployment, poverty and crime rates.

The situation for women is being supported to some extent by the female president and new structures and initiatives to provide rights and access to education, justice, divorce and positions in local and national leadership that were not available to women in the past. However, despite these advances women are still lagging behind men on a number of indictors and less likely to
be employed formally. Moreover the attrition rates (mainly due to pregnancy) for
girls in formal education are very high reducing their opportunities for formal
employment. This insecurity increases women’s vulnerability. Furthermore,
concerns of SGBV and abuse rates, which have increased since the end of the
conflict, are a constant cause of insecurity for women in Liberia today. This
chapter has allowed us to understand the broader context for women and
provided important contextual information which sets the scene for the data
analysis chapters.
Chapter Six

Results: Gender Mainstreaming Perspectives from Above

6.1 Introduction
In accordance with viewing this research from a hybrid perspective, this chapter will explore the success of gender mainstreaming of the DDRR programme in Liberia from the perspective of informants viewing the programme “from above”. In order to define its success it will analyse the design and implementation of the programme and the extent to which these have responded to relevant gender issues. It aims to tell the story of gender mainstreaming and show how critical decisions/omissions impacted upon gender provision and on the process more broadly. For this inquiry key informant interviews will be drawn upon as well as DDRR evaluation reports and research to provide evidence for the assertions. This analysis will provide the context for Chapter seven, which will examine the lived realities of the WAFFs/ex-combatants and those who self-demobilised in order to understand how gender mainstreaming unfolded from below.

6.2 Explanation of Analysis and Discussion
The key informant interviews in this study were subjected to numerous rounds of coding and reorganisation during data analysis based on the content of the interviews as well as theoretical assumptions. This revealed a number of significant areas that key informants emphasised with respect to gender issues in the planning of DDRR. Comparing the relative weightings of their responses under the different codes generated, demonstrates the relative importance of each topic under examination and ensures that the data drives the analysis. The matrix in Appendix H displays the relative weightings in detail associated
with each code. To explain the planning of gender mainstreaming in DDRR based on these weightings two broad themes will be explored. Firstly, it will consider the lack of local participation and women’s voices in the planning of DDRR and reveal how the top-down nature of this planning affected WAFF/ex-combatant engagement with the process. This is manifestly clear in the entry criteria issues for women, which were exclusionary. By following the narrative of the eventual engagement with women’s groups it will explore the more formalised gender attention which occurred in the programme, and assess how it affected participation of women within the process. It will consider whether altering the entry criteria also affected the amount of fraudulent cases (proxies) which resulted in massively inflated numbers registering for DDRR. Secondly, it will demonstrate how these increased numbers influenced budgets and the subsequent impacts on various elements of the programme. These include the effect on timescales, monitoring and evaluation, planning and implementation of skills training and the missing R (rehabilitation) and how this ultimately shaped gender mainstreaming.

6.3 Local Participation Issues

6.3.1 Top Down Planning: Lack of Local and Women's Involvement in DDRR Planning

Two of the most significant categories of responses related to the lack of local engagement in DDRR planning. There were concerns within communities that the design of the programme was organised in a top-down fashion. Numerous key informants commented that the DDRR programme was written at UN headquarters and did not consider local perspectives. As one Liberian NCDDR worker noted when asked about the planning of the programme:

The DDRR process was written in New York. During the crisis, DDRR processes are designed around a generic framework. It’s dangerous having a generic framework as its not applicable to all cases.\textsuperscript{70}

Another respondent who worked for a local NGO, and had been a DDRR implementer echoed a comparable sentiment:

\textsuperscript{70} Interview with Liberian DDRR implementer, Monrovia, 22/02/10
(...) the programme was donor driven. The blueprint for DDRR was not developed in Liberia.  

Using a relatively fixed and pre-arranged template was problematic as those that were due to implement the process felt that they had no ownership over its content and it would be difficult to encourage ex-combatants to see the benefits. One example regarding local engagement recounted by Sekou Conneh who ran one of the largest cantonments (VOA cantonment) in Monrovia, illustrates the rigidity of the design and lack of willingness to alter plans. When consulted about the demobilisation cantonments and reintegration aspects it was clear to him that the design process of the DDRR had already been finalised. When reflecting on this situation he said:

And I remember very well when we as partners, implementing partners were assembled to discuss what would be the design of the cantonment sites, you know, what would be some of the different components of the cantonment site, whether you know the male and the female are going to be in the same place you know. I mean outrightly, we were told that they had passed some of those stages. Well, it was just formality just trying to say that they got involved with us but those things were not really incorporated in those documents. I can say that for sure.  

Clearly, if those engaged in implementing demobilisation felt very frustrated that the process was being imposed. Sekou Conneh further explained that there seemed to be little regard for local context. He reflected:

So much so about professionalism, about being an expert on DDR, when you don’t consider the feelings of the people that are involved in the process and who are supposed to make things change. They [the international community] are just looking for new ground to make their money.  

John Dennis formerly of the NCDDRR also expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of ownership. He commented:

We should have made the agenda and they [the international community] pay for it but they did it and enforced it on us…. It was like you either accept it forget it. 

Sekou Conneh recounted that, in the cantonment sites the participants distrusted the foreigners who were in charge of security. He was frequently called at night to settle disputes since he could explain things in ways that both parties could understand. In addition, the food provided was cooked by French

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71 Interview with Johnson Bohr, NEPI Inc., Monrovia 24/02/10
72 Interview with Sekou Conneh, Head of VOA cantonment, Monrovia, 27/02/10
73 Interview with Sekou Conneh, Head of VOA cantonment, Monrovia, 27/02/10
74 Interview with John Dennis formerly of NCDDRR. Monrovia, 04/02/11
chefs and was unfamiliar to the locals. This particular issue was resolved, but the fact that it arose at all shows a lack of consideration for local cultural sensitivities. The absence of context-specific planning was also important during reintegration. Podder’s (2012, p.199) study of ex-combatant reintegration in Liberia found that the failure to acknowledge local historical and anthropological explanations for youth violence and militarisation resulted in reintegration programmes which remarginalised and disempowered those reintegrating. Local participation in the design of the programme can result in more effective programmes. In his study on participatory approaches to DDR, Kilroy (2012) found that participation and ownership are only present to a very limited extent in his cases of Sierra Leone and Liberia. He found this shortcoming to be particularly serious with respect to women who were frequently excluded from programmes.

Furthermore, a frequent criticism from those who had worked on the DDRR, was that it had been ‘cut and paste’ from the programme in Sierra Leone.

(...I think the basis for that for my understanding is that these people had come from Sierra Leone where in their mind they had done DDRR and it worked, so they just decided to replicate what they did in Sierra Leone. 75

In the course of discussions two further people also confirmed this by stating that information on various Sierra Leonean towns and military factions had been left in the document, thereby further devaluing its credibility with local implementers. One revealed:

When it was discussed with the CSOs (Civil Society Organisations), they left in factions from the conflict in Sierra Leone. UNDP were very defensive when this was challenged. Very few people were vocal about criticising the document. 76

The blueprint approach was significant for women’s participation in DDRR as it had direct implications for how gender was written into the programme. Shortcomings that had been associated with the gender aspects of the Sierra Leonean programme were left unattended to and uncorrected (O’Neill and Ward 2005, p.50). Such an undiscriminating transfer of arrangements from the Sierra Leone programme was a concern, since informants felt that the antecedents to the conflict and the ethnic and cultural context in Liberia were different. A former

75 Interview with Sekou Conneh, Head of VOA cantonment, Monrovia, 27/02/10
76 Interview with Johnson Bohr, NEPI Inc., Monrovia 24/02/10
An employee of UNMIL noted when discussing the differences between the programmes:

The DDR from Sierra Leone was transported to Liberia but the institutional arrangements were not the same. The UN took over in Liberia and there was no national ownership. The government left it in the UN’s hands but they should have tried to think through which institution could carry the process.  

These narratives therefore, demonstrate the imposed nature of DDRR. They provide an example of a pre-determined liberal peacebuilding plan being transferred to the periphery through programming without consideration of local or regional differences. Richmond (2011, p.152) comments that this reluctance to engage with local processes within the liberal peacebuilding agenda is due to a fear that there may be contradictory agencies. Ensuring those involved were all supporting the standardised approach was a priority but resulted in a DDRR process that created divergent expectations between international implementers and local implementers and beneficiaries and of what can and should be achieved.

Furthermore, given that that programme was supposed to be gender mainstreamed under UNSCR 1325 no assessment took place to see what work was already being conducted locally on this resolution. The programme that did little to facilitate or encourage local ownership over the gender dimensions or indeed women’s agency in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 during post-conflict recovery. Although, UNMIL (2010a) has argued that key policy documents (such as a DDR Action Plan focusing on gender concerns) encouraged pre-planning and early attention to WAFFs and ensured resource allocation, it appears that there was insufficient gender responsive needs assessment and the OGA initially had no official budget (ibid). Furthermore, there was no gender advisor at UNMIL when the DDRR process was planned and a lack of baseline data collected before the programme commenced. The Head of the UN Peacebuilding Commission lamented the difficulties faced during this planning phase:

77 Interview with former UNMIL employee, Monrovia, 18/02/10
Well, truthfully it is difficult to meet needs. I mean, in such instances. In fact I’m not quite sure there were any base lines done in terms of determining what the women’s needs were. 78

This dearth of baseline data meant that it was impossible to design the programme coherently with appropriate and achievable monitoring and evaluation processes (Pugel 2009, p.76). Another key informant who worked for an international NGO at that time acknowledged:

Based on what they should have learned from Sierra Leone, there should have been more programmes to cater for special needs (…) 79

In order to address the gender concerns, one viable strategy could have been to engage with local women’s groups to understand the situation of WAFFs/ex-combatants in order to plan for their needs adequately. This research however, found that there is no evidence to suggest that local women’s organisations were consulted regarding the planning and implementation of the DDRR programme before the first stage of disarmament commenced. This was all the more surprising considering the key role women had played in moving the peace process in the country forward. Women’s leaders could have been expected to have valuable relevant insights derived from local experience but this was not capitalised upon. Women’s NGOs efforts to engage in consultation on the DDRR planning process were frequently rejected, since their officials were not considered specialists. This also may have been because such women were not the kind of ‘local’ with which the international community wanted to engage with as they most certainly would have challenged the DDRR blueprint and approach in favour of more localised processes which may not have aligned with the Western liberal peacebuilding agenda. This failure to address local women’s perspectives ensured that the programme, at least initially, was exclusionary for women.

Owing to the pressure from donors/UN to start the programme by the end of 2003, full gender mainstreaming was sidelined. The first disarmament was scheduled for 7th December 2003 at Camp Scheffelin, an army barracks on the

78 Interview with Wilfred Grey Johnson, UN Peacebuilding Fund, Monrovia, 20/04/10
79 Interview with International NGO worker, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
outskirts of Monrovia. Three thousand heavily armed troops arrived to disarm but there was insufficient food and water and most had to stand in the sun for hours to register. Many ex-combatants became intoxicated on drugs and alcohol. Fighting broke out, and led to gunfire, rioting, looting and nine fatalities. Disarmament had to be abandoned until April of the following year. According to Nobel Peace prizewinning activist Leymah Gbowee from the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), their repeated attempts to offer local knowledge before the disarmament was started were refused and it was only when helping to sort out the rioting that they were brought on board (Gbowee and Mithers 2011). In one interview Frances Greaves, the head of Women’s NGO Secretariat, shared her experience of this situation:

(…) the women who were active in the peace action got involved and were trying to tell them [UNMIL], okay this is not how you should do it because we know the way in which things have unfolded in Liberia. But again they had their formats and were going according to format. It was only the day where we had a serious situation where the combatants were rioting – they did not give them food - and the women were trying to tell them [UNMIL] what was happening and they did not listen (…)\(^{80}\)

These accounts clearly illustrate UNMIL’s failure to recognise and support the work already being carried out in the community by women’s organisations, including their key role in the dissemination of the CPA (Njoki Wamai 2011, p.60). Indeed, the manner of the DDRR implementation exacerbated problems rather than facilitating a smooth transition process. Failure to acknowledge local women’s agency reinforced the imposed, patriarchal nature of liberal peacebuilding operations. Using standardised DDR formats maintained women’s identity as victims within the process and repeated the errors and omissions of the past.

The pitfalls of this lack of engagement was most evident in the recruitment criteria of ex-combatant women. During the first disarmament recruitment criteria were exclusionary. Initially, in the aborted 2003 disarmament programme, there was a ‘no weapons, no entry’ rule which excluded many eligible women (whose weapons had been taken away by commanders, or who

\(^{80}\) Interview with Frances Greaves, Head of Women’s NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and local NGO Voice of the Voiceless, Monrovia, 19/04/10
had no weapon). This explains why only 2000 women were included in the initial plans and budgets for the Liberian programme. According to UNIFEM (2004, p.13) shortly before the suspension of the initial disarmament, Liberian Women’s Groups held a press conference to highlight problems with the process, under the banner of “Concerned Women of Liberia”. They emphasised difficulties with the logistics of the cantonment sites and the need for better dissemination of information and communication to potential participants. In response to this, in the interim between the start of the new disarmament in 2004, the now functioning OGA at UNMIL and the Ministry of Gender and Development, managed to have the entry criteria widened to allow women with no weapons to register. The title was also changed from ‘camp follower’ to WAFF (UNMIL 2010a, p.12). Whilst this recognised in theory the multiplicity of roles of women connected to armed groups, the reality was that this title considered WAFFs as a homogenous group. There was little differentiation between roles women played in fighting forces and specialised attention in DDRR. However, by the end of the disarmament, 21,086 women had registered to take part, due mainly to an extensive sensitisation campaign delivered by WIPNET who had been finally engaged to assist with increasing the participation of women.

6.3.2 Too Little, too Late? Engagement with Women’s Organisations and Community Groups

Extensive countrywide sensitisation programmes were conducted in conjunction with WIPNET who helped with the campaigns to encourage women to take part through local consultation, radio broadcasts and print media coverage. This was a very difficult task, because the pervasive patriarchal structures in the country discouraged women’s participation in the process (UNIFEM 2005, p.2). However, WIPNET used the local structures (such as market women’s networks and birth attendants) to disseminate information which one DDRR camp leader said “made themselves relevant”. He further commented that using such
networks made people (and especially women) listen to what was involved which:

(...>) really helped in bringing the women ex-combatants who were affected, women out of their shelter to say, look our mothers are involved, our sisters are involved, so we feel safe or we feel protected in the process, so we get involved.81

Even though the sensitisation campaign was a success, other than this partnership with WIPNET, there seems to have been little engagement with regionally and locally embedded women’s community groups or other strong structures such as the women’s religious groups which had been invaluable in advancing the peace process. Besides WIPNET, there were other significant national and regional level women’s organisations already involved in implementing UNSCR 1325 prior to the establishment of UNMIL, for example, MARWOPNET, the West African Network for Peace (WANEP) and AFELL (Njoki Wamai 2011, p.56). These organisations were familiar with the resolution and its advancements locally and were well connected to the local level. They could have helped to considerably extend the reach of sensitisation campaigns and DDRR planning. O’Neill and Ward (2005, p.61) suggest that this omission may have happened because the UN was reluctant to work with local civil society groups who it perceived to have limited capacity, transparency or accountability. Due to constrained budgets the UN did not have the resources to build local group capacities so did not engage fully with them. Furthermore, Pratt and Richter-Devroe (2011, p.498) assert that:

The liberal peacebuilding agenda that is privileged by the UN and advocates working at/through the UN represents limited strategy for those women’s movements engaged in a more radical agenda of social and political transformation. Perhaps, because WIPNET had proved itself through its work on moving forward the peace process, it gained recognition and legitimacy as a partner that could be trusted and which accepted the dominant liberal peacebuilding strategy.

Despite all of the efforts of local women’s groups, many WAFFs/ex-combatants stayed away. Thousands had already quietly slipped back into communities and did not want to reveal that they were ex-combatants. Even though women may

81 Interview with Sekou Conneh, Head of VOA cantonment, Monrovia, 27/02/10
have been recognised as actors this does not automatically ensure that those women have agency or the capacity to act (Shepherd 2011, p.512). Much of the damage had already been done via the misinformation that had been circulated prior to the revised disarmament. One notorious female commander said that she tried to encourage her troops to attend but she had not been given sufficient information:

Even I was not informed. The encampment was not explained and many women did not go through because of lack of information.

She continued:

They told you that you would be sent to The Hague or that you could not travel. They gave the wrong information. They couldn’t reach the right people who could explain about it. Lots of people are not educated and it’s hard to get them to understand. 82

Similarly the women that were interviewed who had self-demobilised explained that they were given incorrect information and had thus chosen not to take part. From the 17 self-demobilised WAFFs/ex-combatants interviewed for this study, 76.4 per cent cited misinformation as the reason for not disarming. In addition 11.8 per cent listed logistical reasons, such as they were still in the bush or had moved locations, and the remainder (11.8 per cent) cited prior bad experiences from a short disarmament in 1997, as the main barrier to entry.

Of the 76.4 per cent who listed misinformation as the primary reason for not disarming, this was attributed to two causes. Firstly, because of practical reasons, for example, they would receive no benefits from taking part, or their weapons had been removed by their commanders (38.5 per cent). One recounted her experience:

He took the guns from us. There were no guns and no ammo so we got nothing. 83

Regarding the perceived benefits a WAFF/ex-combatant recounted:

Because I feel that there were no benefits. The first people that disarmed said they never got nothing so there was no need for me to disarm. 84

Secondly, others cited the prospect of stigmatisation (61.5 per cent) as a barrier, with many stating that they were worried about rumours already in circulation, for example, that their photos would be taken and displayed:

They said that they would take your photo and that you will not travel. My sister was in America and I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to go and see her. 85

82 Interview with female commander, 22/11/10
83 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 14, location 1, 14/02/11
84 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 5, location 5, 22/11/10
Another echoed these sentiments:

I didn’t do it because of what people thought of ex-coms.86

These findings are in line with those of the larger N (590) quantitative study conducted by Pugel (2007) of male and female former fighters. He found the main reason cited for non-registration was fear of being identified as an ex-combatant. Similarly Spect’s (2006) Liberian study with girl ex-combatants also revealed congruent trends. She found that girls did not register due to fear of repercussions and social exclusion, that they were denied access through weapon removal or were not on the commander’s list, as well as issues concerned with access and timescales.

The reasons the self-demobilised women cite were not predicted beforehand by those planning DDRR even though increased participation was a fundamental objective of the gender mainstreaming remit. Many of the women who slipped through the cracks might have taken part in the programme if there had been a more accurate pre-programme gender assessment embedded in the local context and that utilised the knowledge of local networks and groups. 82.4 per cent of these women regretted not taking part:

I deeply regret it because those that took part have finished college. They have a good job and are living a normal life. They are not stigmatised. If I did it I’d be earning my own money, I regret it every day. 87

Yes I regret it, when they killed my mother and father. Yes I regret it because some of the girls that went, learnt to bake and sew and make money, but because of what we heard we were held back and I regret it a lot.88

There is some evidence that in the last reintegration phase the residual caseload enjoyed better local engagement as there was adequate time to plan and learn from the first phase. In a joint interview with two former NCDDRR workers about the final reintegration, one pointed out:

At the community level it was participatory….the second phase had greater local ownership and greater participation.89

85 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 11, location 1, 14/02/11
86 Interviewee, self-demobilised, NEPI office, 17/11/10
87 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 15, location 1, 14/02/11
88 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 7, location 5, 22/11/10
89 Interview with former NCDDRR employees, Monrovia, 26/02/10
They maintained that the gender elements were more successfully organised when women were involved in the planning:

The Ministry of Gender was part of the technical committee and the NCDDRR deputy director was Ruth Caesar, she drove the whole process.\textsuperscript{90} Therefore, on paper, many of the gaps that had been revealed in the reintegration process of the main DDRR were apparently addressed in the residual caseload but in reality their implementation was poor.

The efforts to get women to register led to almost a quarter of those in the process being women. However, the main differences between the treatment of men and women in the specifics of the programme concerned the demobilisation and cantonment sites, which were separate. The OGA designed appropriate gender sensitive site layouts and practices and procedures for dealing specifically with WAFFs/ex-combatants (UN DPKO 2005, p.31). Within the cantonments they received medical attention and basic counselling and most women in this study reported that demobilisation was generally positive. This finding corresponds to a study on girl ex-combatants in Liberia by Spect (2006, p.95) who also found general satisfaction with demobilisation.\textsuperscript{91} After release from demobilisation, however, the women were treated in much the same way as adult males, with no gender specific attention and few attempts to address their particular needs (Njoki Wamai 2001, p.54).

The entry criteria expansion and sensitisation programmes resulted in the amendments unfolding as a double-edged sword. Whilst they manifested in increased women’s registration as nearly a quarter (21,086) of those taking part were women and girls, the widened definitions made the process vulnerable to many non-genuine or proxy cases. Kilroy (2010, p.3) observes that this is one of the major difficulties of setting what he calls the ‘entry price’ (the amount of hardware to be handed in) into the process. If it is set too low, the system has to cater for many people who were not ex-combatants. However, expecting participants to bring a particular type of weapon or a particular amount can be

\textsuperscript{90} Interview with former NCDDRR employees, Monrovia, 26/02/10
\textsuperscript{91} There were some reports by UNIFEM (2004: 16) however that in one cantonment in Bong County that women had to walk through the men’s camp to access their own receiving considerable verbal harassment.
exclusionary towards those who did not have access to weapons. In Liberia the former occurred which had a resultant adverse affect on logistical planning such as programme delivery, the sustainability of reintegration assistance and implementation of special assistance for vulnerable groups such as women (discussed below). The inflated numbers generated through proxy cases also affected the funding of the DDRR programme. The funding impact was mentioned very frequently in the responses of key informants which will be examined in detail with its influence on monitoring and evaluation, timescales, lack of economic planning and on reintegration skills training being considered.

6.3.3 Proxy Cases
When the entry criteria were relaxed in April 2004 following the aborted disarmament, it caused a huge influx of people to register with the process. From a DDRR planning perspective, interviewees suggested that widening entry criteria created the potential for the participation of between 50-70 per cent non-genuine combatants. The initial planning and budgeting of the UN had only planned for 38,000-45,000, but by the end of the disarmament, a staggering 101,495 had registered in the process (UNMIL 2009, p.22; Jennings 2008, p.20). The head of a local NGO confirmed the prevalence of proxy cases:

There were lots of non-combatants in the DDRR process. Lots of generals gave their family members weapons to register. 92

When asked their opinion of proxies, two informants explained that the situation had escalated out of control and the UN overlooked the proxy issue. An International NGO worker reflected that:

These proxy cases were supported by the NCDDR, they said it was acceptable. 93

Another DDRR implementer echoed the same sentiments. He commented:

The policy advisor from Sierra Leone, Charles Achodo let the issues of proxies slide. He shouldn’t have allowed it. They reintegrated 80 year olds with ID cards. How can you plan for psychosocial reintegration of a person who has not been involved? 94

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92 Interview with Rev. Bartholomew Colley, Chair of the board of NEPI Inc., 20/02/10
93 Interview with International NGO worker, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
94 Interview with Liberian DDRR implementer, Monrovia, 22/02/10
Research by Paes (2005, p.255) outlines how children were sometimes accepted into the DDRR programmes without the need to surrender arms or ammunition. As a result commanders would recruit children and adolescents to enter the process and split the cash payment between themselves and the child’s family. Other scams included commanders providing incomplete lists to UNMIL after which they sent more people to disarm. Vulnerable and easily manipulated people were also handpicked to go through the process so that they could recover the money. Nichols (2005, p.121) states that in some cases, this approach was so successful that for a weapon with a market value of USD$30-50 a commander could yield approximately USD$300. Paes (ibid) comments that this ‘commercialisation’ of the DDRR process was made possible by the lack of reliable data on who actually served with the armed groups and the instant cash reward made available. He comments;

There is little doubt that UNMIL’s own disarmament policy is responsible for the inflated caseload, by having lowered the threshold from one firearm per person to 150 rounds of ammunition. The comparatively high cash reward of US$300 and the lack of social stigma attached to being registered as an ex-combatant provides powerful material motivation. The relaxed entry criteria and lack of reliable data was confounded by the fact that the war had been so protracted that it was entirely possible for individuals to have been associated with the fighting forces at some point or another. In this way, the now relatively vague entry requirements permitted many to make a case for being included. Inadequate screening (often by poorly trained local staff) could not identify those that were ineligible and UNMIL frequently relied on information from commanders local NGOs or NCDDR staff who had a record of providing false information (Nichols 2005, p.121).

There were additional problems in assessing whether the correct person was receiving the benefits on offer as DDRR ID cards were routinely traded or family members who looked similar to the photographs on the card took the training being given. The verification processes were totally ineffective. A former UN staff member explained:

Proxies were a serious problem in the first phase, ID cards were stolen and sold. The situation was corrupt and people were admitted to school with no cards. They tried to
face match but it was a headache. The original person would receive the money but someone else would come to the school.  

This huge influx of increased cases immediately impacted on the budget of the programme. The initial budget was set at $110 million (ECP 2009, p.85). However, given the numbers registered had more than doubled, this posed an issue for the latter stages of the process as most of the budget had been spent on the disarmament process, leaving a funding shortfall gap of $44 million. This made donors understandably nervous about committing further funds into the process. One former UNMIL employee shared his feelings on this issue:

In Liberia, the donors realised that people were not really ex-combatants and refused to give money. Therefore, there was no money for reintegration. The attractive phase was the DD, for the RR they were cautious and the funding didn’t flow. 

Lack of funds was also confirmed by John Dennis, the former Assistant Executive Director for NCDDRR. He stated:

(...) the budget set for the first phase was not enough because they expected around 35,000 and all who went to disarm was 103,000 so the budget was overstretched.

In other words, the difficulties of funding were problematised at two levels. Firstly, the mismanagement of funds meant that not all elements of the process were funded adequately, and secondly, the vastly increased numbers rendered the original budget woefully inadequate. Nowhere was this seen as acutely as in the gender mainstreaming provision which appears to have had very little specific budgetary allocation other than for sensitisation programmes and gender resource packages for UN personnel on gender issues (UN DKPO 2005, p.6). The focus in Liberia was on security under the standardised DDRR approach prioritising male ex-combatants.

The budget constraints unfolded in many aspects of the DDRR which were discussed widely by key informants and WAFFs/ex-combatants alike. The next section will examine some of the most prevalent aspects contained in the key informant interviews.

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95 Interview with former UNDP DDRR worker, Monrovia 23/02/10.
96 Interview with former UNMIL employee, Monrovia, 18/02/10
6.4 The Impact of Funding Issues

6.4.1 Timescales

A number of commentators including those who worked for the UN, expressed concern that the programme had been started too early. Informants spoke of a donor conference that took place in New York in December 2003 which affected the start date of DDRR. In reality UNMIL were not actually ready when disarmament began in November 2003. According to an international NGO worker:

They also made a mistake by starting the process too early. There was a conference in New York in January and they needed DDR to have started before and there was a constant time pressure to get it up and running by November 2003…no one questioned starting the process too early. 97

This situation raises important questions about accountability of the UN mission. If the timescales were set around the conference, then the mission and DDRR programme prioritised upward accountability of the Member-State donors rather than the beneficiaries. It provides further evidence that the liberal agenda and policies were focused on short-term stabilisation and security around a fixed agenda rather than longer-term social development and change under a looser arrangement.

In addition, the UN did not comply with policy guidelines which recommended commencing the disarmament simultaneously with all three major factions. Instead it started with the pro-government fighters. When LURD and MODEL members heard this they rushed to participate too in case they would be left out of the process. This overwhelmed the UN who had not carried out adequate political assessments of the country or made contacts with the relevant people within each faction (Jaye 2009, p.13). Furthermore, there were insufficient peacekeepers in place (even at the inception of revised disarmament in 2004) creating potential security concerns when difficulties arose, Camp Sheffelin being a case in point.

97 Interview with International NGO worker, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
The fact that the process was rushed coupled with insufficient or weak assessments had an immediate effect on planning prior to the start of the programme. Wilfred Grey-Johnson, the Director of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, suggested that this was ‘improper’ planning as opposed to ‘poor’ planning as the UN and partners were caught off-guard when the increased numbers arrived to register. When discussing timescales more broadly he suggested that the DDRR was rushed due to the wider peacebuilding timeframe. He remarked:

All in all, and when I talk about these several factors and some of the urgency to deal with these former fighters, you know was there at the same time coupled with the urgency to meet specific deadlines for the implementation of the peace agreement, you know, so all of that was, was like that, you know, there was a specific time frame; we need to move the elections, the election is this, it has some political honour too and political ramifications, so even we need to make sure this, all of these are in place.98

There was clearly a sense of urgency to ensure that that the security situation was calm in order that elections could be planned and implemented. This reflects the liberal peace approach’s preoccupation with democratic reform and elections under the assumption that rapid liberalisation would create conditions for stable and lasting peace (Paris 2011, p.34). However, this approach did little to address the drivers of the conflict and had a resultant impact on the rest of the toolkit of peacebuilding programmes. In Liberia, such prioritisation on elections appears to have been at the expense of a well planned DDRR programme.

Stretched budgets also affected the timescales that affected the management of the demobilisation camps. Originally the participants were to be kept in the cantonments for three weeks but this was cut to five days in order to accommodate all of the additional people (Paes 2005, p.255). This impacted on the gender implications of the process at many levels. It firstly resulted in an insufficient female presence to assist in running the programme and providing security. For example, a lack of female military UN observers to help with screening and security in the camps meant that implementing the gender components was challenging, especially outside the capital (Fatoumata 2005, p.157; O’Neill and Ward 2005, pp.52, 56; UN DPKO 2005, p.31). It was not until

98 Interview with Wilfred Grey-Johnson, Director of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Monrovia, 20/04/10
as late as 2007 that female UN peacekeepers were made a priority with consecutive battalions of Indian women’s peacekeepers stationed in the capital (UNMIL 2010a, p.39). In the meantime this potentially put women in the cantonments at risk.

Secondly, there was an insufficient time allocation to start to address issues of trauma and to allow the participants to accept their new life and what had happened to them in the conflict. Vaiba Flomo, who works in the field of trauma and healing, expressed frustration at the limited time in the cantonments and how this affected psychological rehabilitation:

It’s just impossible to take just less than a week to reintegrate the child that was nine years old during the fighting force and he was in second grade or the third grade, he stays in a force until 23/26 and you take just less than one week to reintegrate him that is completely difficult and this is the challenge that we have.99

In a similar vein Frances Greaves, the head of The Women’s NGO Secretariat, observed:

(...) in fact, the whole process was so swift that there was no way in which you could disconnect the person as a soldier afterwards and what do I need? Some of these children started fighting when they were five/six years old in 1990 when the war started. Our final war ended in 2003 so that’s almost 13 years of war that they had been combatants off and on, and you come and say bring your gun, they brought their gun and you say you go out there they give you a number, they give you maybe a package and you have the psychosocial counsellor who is there to spend only an hour with you. It does not heal the person.100

In fact, the entire rehabilitation process suffered from the rushed planning of the programme which will be further discussed in section 6.4.4.

More disturbingly, the restricted time that the ex-combatants and WAFFs were in the demobilisation cantonments was insufficient to break down factional command structures. Nichols (2005, p.127) reports that in some instances this lead to ‘former’ commanders relinquishing the transitional assistance payments once they had left the site. During reintegration when the lines of power were still in place he cites an example of a former commander being brought in to quell rioting of ex-combatants in Tubmanburg. More importantly however, failure

99 Interview with Viaba Flomo, Trauma and Healing Specialist Lutheran Church, Monrovia, 04/02/11
100 Interview with Frances Greaves, Head of Women’s NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and local NGO Voice of the Voiceless, Monrovia, 19/04/10
to dismantle power relations between former combatants led to remobilisation and insecurity (Nilsson 2008).

Whilst there was a rush to commence the disarmament, the opposite situation arose for reintegration. This component took an exceedingly long time to conduct due to the swelled numbers. It resulted in thousands of people waiting many months and in some cases years to access their reintegration training or educational opportunities. This was repeatedly confirmed in the testimonies of those women who took part in the residual caseload programme. When they were asked why they did not take their training in the main programme, some described packed training centres and waiting many years for their name to come to be called. One woman recalled:

> Any time I go there, the place can be packed. People were forcing me and stepping on me. When I went they say my name were not coming.\(^\text{101}\)

Another endorsed a similar experience:

> During the first/second phase the place was packed and there were many people. If you had contacts you had it sooner. So I decided to wait a little while before going training.\(^\text{102}\)

This delay may also have been attributable to structural challenges of the post-conflict environment. Due to the physical destruction of buildings during the protracted conflict, many vocational training institutions were not functioning in a way that could absorb eligible beneficiaries within the short timeframes needed to prevent discontent and destabilisation (Tamagnini and Krafft 2010, p.14). Furthermore, according to Paes (2005, p.260) UNDP administered funds and played a “passive, reactive and neglectful role in administering the Trust Fund”, by merely waiting for agencies to approach them, rather than designing what was required. This disruption of the flow of funding may also have had an effect on reintegration timescales.

### 6.4.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Another persistent issue with the programme was the lack of monitoring, evaluation and reporting. Whilst this could be a result of poor planning it may have been as a result of constrained budgets. John Dennis who had worked for

\(^{101}\) Interviewee, Residual Caseload, Participant 4, Location 3, 03/02/11  
\(^{102}\) Interviewee, Residual Caseload, Participant 2, Location 4, 02/02/11
the NCDDRR, made the following comment when discussing the lack of monitoring and evaluation:

The results based planning was not done. I think that's where we actually slip a bit but I think I also attribute that to the lack of funding. 103

Other key informants confirmed that the reporting was weak. In an anonymous interview, an International NGO worker who had been involved in the DDR process was very insistent that the reporting had little substance. He said:

It was just hailed as a success. The donors did not insist on this reporting and were satisfied with bland statements…..They made narrative reports that had no correlation to financial. The donors didn’t know what was happening. 104

He went on to comment that this additionally affected programmes for vulnerable groups, such as WAFFs.

There was little reporting on the implementation of the programme. They didn’t explain why the special programmes did not happen and what else happened instead. 105

The impact therefore of the success of the gender dimensions of the programme and the way in which the gender mainstreaming components were implemented were never fully analysed. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of exact definitions of what actually constitutes a successful gender mainstreaming approach or indeed a successful DDR programme and especially in the reintegration component. This lack of clarity, Jennings (2008, p.37) suggests, complicates determinations of policy success and weakens accountability.

Poor accountability remains a further concern with the gender elements of the DDR. Since the process was driven from above and there was limited voice given to the local level in terms of planning there were few (if any) opportunities for bottom-up aspects of concern within the programme to be presented for discussion. Moreover, gender experts from the UN and international organisations were often junior staff and/or consultants with limited power to influence, advise or hold decision makers to account (Moser and Moser 2005, p.17).

103 Interview with John Dennis formerly of NCDDRR. Monrovia, 04/02/11
104 Interview with International NGO worker, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
105 Interview with International NGO worker, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
Given that the main programme ran for approximately five years, regular cycles of monitoring and evaluation would have been useful to track progress, streamline implementation and ensure that those taking part were receiving assistance that matched their needs. However, the impact of gender mainstreaming activities is an area that the UN reports as being a limitation in their work generally and more specifically in DDR (UN DPKO 2005, p.4). This finding is in line with a survey of monitoring and evaluation practices in DDR programmes. Conducted throughout 11 countries, it revealed that monitoring and evaluation units were insufficiently resourced both financially and in terms of skilled staff for the requirements of DDR programmes (Suber Consulting 2006). Furthermore, lack of clarity over the indicators to assess gender mainstreaming resulted in difficulties in determining the effect programmes have on gender equality and peoples’ lives (Moser and Moser 2005, p.18).

In Liberia difficulties in tracking results were particularly acute as the budgets were so stretched. Financial constraints meant that monitoring and evaluation only took place towards mid and end points limiting opportunities for adjustments based on feedback. Reporting on the gender elements of the programme was scant (in some cases only a paragraph or two) and frequently omitted altogether (e.g. UNDP 2004; UNDP 2006; Pugel 2007). There appears to have been no formal monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming of the DRRR programme specifics other than a best practices report published by the UNMIL OGA in 2010. This report provided four pages detailing the gender mainstreaming provision of the DRRR process but focused on the activities concerned with increasing participation. It only mentions the gender aspects of reintegration in passing. Specific monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming, whilst the process was ongoing, did not apparently occur. In addition, a short assessment of the baseline data to support the implementation of UNSCR 1325, was published by UN INSTRAW in 2009. This document consisted of a two-page evaluation of DRRR published after the process had all but ceased. It was therefore of limited use for those who participated in the process.
Despite these limitations, the final evaluation reports produced served two useful purposes. Firstly, they revealed that a number of people had not received any reintegration training, which resulted in the development of the residual caseload programme. Secondly, a reflection of lessons learnt facilitated a much more comprehensive reintegration phase (at least nominally on paper). However, not including specific reporting on gender mainstreaming provision in the main programme meant that the issues with the gender aspects of the main programme were carried forward. There also appears to have been no gender budget analysis conducted specifically for the residual caseload which made planning for the gender mainstreaming elements of the programme extremely challenging. This feature of the post-conflict situation is not unique to Liberia. In their review, Rhen and Johnson-Sirleef (2002) state that in both war and peace, gender initiatives are persistently underfunded. Citing examples in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo and East Timor, they demonstrate that commitment to, and appropriate funding for gender initiatives, are frequently sidelined. This not only perpetuates gender inequality but also wastes an opportunity for a more seamless transition from war to peace. They state:

(…) investing in women may be one of the most effective means for real, sustainable development and peacebuilding (ibid: 28).

Even when monitoring, evaluation and reporting of information took place it was poorly disseminated. There appears to have been little coordination between groups and agencies regarding the planning, implementation and monitoring of the gender elements. Oscar Bloh, who works for Search For Common Ground in Liberia, commented that implementation was problematic. There was no unified strategy common to all of the groups working on DDRR. Observing that UNMIL had one strategy, UNICEF another, and UNOCHA another, he remarked:

They found it hard to coordinate re communications which meant that mixed messages were circulating and it was difficult to build trust.106

He also said that there was poor monitoring and evaluation of the phases of the programme and that different agencies were implementing different programmes in the cantonments with no common curricula. Interpretations of

106 Interview with Oscar Bloh, Search for Common Ground, Monrovia, 22/02/10
the mandate of UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming approaches appeared to differ between groups, preventing coherent implementation of it (Njoki Wamai 2011, p.56). Amnesty (2008, p.22) confirmed a similar finding in their report on women and DRRR. They observed that implementing staff had a lack of familiarity with the internationally agreed guidelines on DRRR and UNSCR 1325 which inevitably impacted upon their provision for gender mainstreaming. Conveying the concept of gender mainstreaming as a process rather than an outcome can be challenging for the implementing partners.

There were similar problems with the coordination of the various UN agencies that delivered different phases of the programme. Only at the start of the DD components was there any kind of network of gender advisors from all the institutions coordinated by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This did not exist for the RR sections and there was no universal understanding between agencies about the mandate of 1325 and gender mainstreaming, or how to monitor, evaluate and collect data on its implementation (Njoki Wamai 2001, p.57). Additionally UNDP was responsible for the RR components and it may not have had the same gender mainstreaming mandate as UNMIL. Since there were only seven demobilisation camps and limited sites for disarmament it was perhaps easier to coordinate the organisations implementing the gender elements in DD. There was no lead agency to cater for women’s needs in the reintegration phases (UNIFEM covered it in DD) largely because of the multitude of organisations that were delivering training and education in numerous locations. Gender mainstreaming seemed to disappear once DD was complete. According to some reports (Fatoumata 2005; UN DPKO 2005, p.31), the OGA at UNMIL did monitor and evaluate the DD portions of the programme by conducting assessment missions to six cantonments to investigate gender mainstreaming in the programme and assess the camp structure and layout. Fatoumata reports that recommendations were circulated among implementers and partners to improve gender concerns in the mission area by providing tracking sheets to collate sex-disaggregated data. They conducted open forums and senior management meetings where DRRR issues were discussed and options to improve gender mainstreaming proposed. These combined efforts
certainly exerted a positive impact on increasing the numbers of women in the DD process, but this did not translate into the RR.

Moreover, the process has been found to lack universal acceptance which means that the outcomes are inconsistent where, women can be seen to be a ‘means to an end’, a homogenous group instrumentalised by policy (True 2010, p.193). Those implementing gender mainstreaming often see including women’s concerns as a tick-box exercise. Moreover, Whitworth (2007, pp. 120,130) found that many people working with the UN admit that they do not know what gender mainstreaming entails within their work or how to implement it. Translations into other languages can also mean that the meaning is lost or altered. This underlines the need to ensure gender responsive training for all those delivering programmes in the post-conflict environment to ensure that uniformity of agenda is being promoted. Charlesworth (2005) also suggests that there may be an element of ‘gender-mainstreaming fatigue’ which affects commitment to action in planning, budgeting and implementation especially when this is conducted by mainly white, Western men.

6.4.3 Planning and Implementation of Skills Training
The attention of the reintegration elements of the programme prioritised economic reintegration in line with a focus on regenerating markets under the liberalisation model. However, problems with the reintegration elements, and more specifically the skills training, often arose as a particular issue. This highlighted numerous logistical concerns around the exclusion of women which did not take account of their local circumstances or prior commitments. These included, for example, setting the requirement for attendance at training at 75 per cent which in many cases was difficult for women to achieve due to child care considerations as there was no assistance provided at the training (Adrian-Paul et al 2009, p.17). Similarly, the location of training centres often proved hard for women to get to. Wilfred Grey-Johnson referred to several of the issues that resulted from such locations from his own experience of working in the DDRR in rural districts:
Another challenge they had was that then the training centre was centrally located on the outskirts of the town whereas most of these lived far away from and often they had to walk every day long hours to the training site and then in the afternoon back home, so it turned out that a lot of them did not go on for training. Or of course the issue of fending for their families that they’d left at home was something that was never considered how that would work out. 107

A number of interviewees felt that there was insufficient attention paid to job market analyses particularly in the main programme. For example, Allan Quee who works for the NGO PRIDE, and assists in reintegrating ex-combatants from the rubber plantations, had been told that an assessment of the labour market had taken place, but he was skeptical. He provided an example that illustrated that skills’ training was not context based:

Often the R training is not focused on the locality. For example, in Sino it is a fishing area but they were given carpentry, tailoring and no one turned up. A labour market assessment was completed apparently. Auto mechanic training was provided but there were only 4 cars in the locality. 108

Another international NGO implementer also revealed analogous opinions suggesting that sources of income were very narrowly defined. He noted:

In phase one it was a short-term quick fix. Skills required were not adequate and resulted in no employment and meaningful livelihood. 109

The result subsequently was that markets became flooded with people possessing the same skills with huge competition for limited opportunities. This was particularly acute in the capital Monrovia as many people chose to stay in the capital or migrate there after the war, believing there to be better employment options. The result is that almost a third of the population resides in the capital and its environs in Monserrado county (more than a million people). This overcrowding has created stiff competition for limited resources (Sheriff, 2008, p.32).

Furthermore, there was little attention paid to whether the ex-combatants would be interested in learning the particular skills being offered. When asked his attitude about the skills training offered, Rev Colley, who has worked on ex-combatant projects in Liberia, had this to say:

107 Interview with Wilfred Grey-Johnson, Director of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Monrovia, 20/04/10
108 Interview with Allan Quee, PRIDE, Freetown Sierra Leone, 09/02/10
109 Interview with Oscar Bloh, Search for Common Ground, Monrovia, 22/02/10
The skills they learnt, they have nowhere to practice and nowhere to sell goods. The training wasn’t adequate. The issue was that the trades were not exactly what the people wanted. Wilfred Grey-Johnson, the head of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, who had worked on the DDRR process reaffirmed a similar perspective. He suggested that in some areas even if participants had expressed an interest in a particular skill, that it may not have been available:

Another thing that was happening is that in instances where people listed their needs for specific kind of training when there were no NGOs to do those kind of trainings in the areas where these people were, they would end up enrolling for training opportunities in areas they really, really have no interest in but those were training opportunities that were available. Because there was some payment to them on that basis they will want the money so they will enroll but their interest really was not you know their interest was not in the particular area.

This situation was remedied, however, in the residual caseload programme through careers guidance counseling and dedicated job mapping based on the local area. According to a former employee of the NCDDRR who worked on the residual caseload:

In the first phase there was no job opportunity mapping because of time and security concerns. In the second phase, we looked at job mapping in localities such as mining, commercial rubber, agriculture. The YMCA were brought in to do careers guidance counselling where they were given lots of options that were discussed with them. In theory this approach should have helped the participants choose the best training for their skills but the reality was that the training that was offered still came from limited selection which again inherited a gendered element and with specific training directed towards women.

In terms of gender mainstreaming the women were offered skills training that could be considered to be ‘gendered’ in a non-discriminatory way. According to Jennings (2009) the DDRR programme was developed under a ‘default male’ setting and the reintegration training was highly gendered for women, such as sewing or hairdressing rather than being given the opportunity to learn business skills to start small-scale enterprises. However, this study found this tendency to be less pronounced. Whilst most women did partake in skills training that had been defined under a fixed idea of what women’s gender roles should be (e.g.

110 Interview with Rev, Bartholomew Colley, Chair of the board of NEPI Inc., 20/02/10
111 Interview with Wilfred Grey-Johnson, Director of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Monrovia, 20/04/10
112 Interview with former NCDDRR employee, Monrovia, 26/02/10
tie-dying, soap-making, baking/pastry production), it found that if women so wished they could take part in other skills that were targeted more towards men such as carpentry, masonry and auto-mechanics. However, they did not seem particularly encouraged to do so and women who took these opportunities appeared to be in the minority from this sample. See Figure 6 for a breakdown of the training undertaken. There were also a few skills that seemed to be more gender neutral such as tailoring and agricultural training. The result of training the women in these types of skills is that it forced them back into the informal economy and pushed them towards their traditional pre-war gender roles which was not the equality aim of gender mainstreaming.

Figure 6: Breakdown of the Training Undertaken by WAFFs/Ex-combatants in DDRR

The skills training in Liberia showed that WAFFs/ex-combatants were denied agency through the design of the programme that was ultimately dominated by a gendered framework. This is in spite of women being conceived of as actors through UNSCR 1325 and through the changed definitions of their roles. This limited group of gendered skills viewed women as a homogenous group and as Shepherd (2011) suggests reduced their concerns as being teleological. In
other words their problems can be solved rather than gender equality being a dynamic process from both gender perspectives. Moreover, the system of DDR was designed to privilege men into the formal economy through skills such as auto mechanics, carpentry and the like, with women likely to remain in the informal economy as a consequence of the skills that they have been taught. This discrimination may be based on the fact that women have comparatively less education, have to arrange childcare, are competing with men in a flooded labour market, and it is more culturally acceptable for women to trade informally (Jennings 2009, p.486). Skewing the design of the programme in this way is problematic as it does not address gender inequality, but actively reinforces it.

Another area of concern for both key informants and WAFFs/ex-combatants was the omission of toolkits at the end of training for large swathes of participants. In the first phases of the main programme the ex-combatants had been provided with toolkits which were later sold by a number of participants. In an informal social chat with a UNDP employee it was suggested that it was this, rather than funding issues, which explained why toolkits had not been provided in subsequent phases. However, an NGO implementer suggested that many women were frustrated at not having toolkits in later phases. She said that although it was correct that some had sold them, that many more were still using them. Withholding the promised toolkits made the implementation of skills extremely challenging for the participants and a matter that was very prevalent in the responses of the women which will be discussed in the next chapter.

6.4.4 Missing R: Lack of Psychosocial Planning
The normative DDRR framework and funding issues also had an impact on the planning of the rehabilitation component of DDRR and in particular, on the provisions for psychosocial counselling programmes and trauma healing. Rehabilitation was not defined sufficiently and its specific purpose and expected outcomes never clarified other than by a reference to a ‘psycho-social’ component in one early planning document (Pugel 2009, p.73). Pugel (2009)
further comments that rehabilitation was discussed around the periphery of the mission but it was largely unacknowledged. Activities included within rehabilitation were meant to encompass psychosocial counselling and reconciliation initiatives and again were supposed to be specifically targeted to meet women’s needs. UNMIL (2010a) stated in its report on gender mainstreaming that resources for women were available which included ‘gender-centric rehabilitation programmes’. Virtually all women confirmed that they received some form of group counselling in the demobilisation cantons, but that it had been more along the lines of gentle recommendations on how to be a good citizen. It focused on forgetting about the war and moving forward.

In the main programme, a mere 3 per cent of the total budget for the DDRR programme was utilised for psychosocial counseling (UNDP 2006). This is despite the CPA stating explicitly that NTGL should:

...accord particular attention to the rehabilitation or vulnerable groups or war victims (children, women, elderly and the disabled) within Liberia who have been severely affected by the conflict.

and:

With the support of the international community, the NTGL shall design and implement a programme of rehabilitation for such victims.

(Accra Peace Agreement 2003, Article XXXI)

A lack of funding for rehabilitation was seen as a major drawback by key informants who felt that not dealing with trauma had the potential to lead to instability. A local Liberian implementer who had worked with NCDDRR observed:

The major problem in DDRR was psychosocial reintegration, it was a major setback….psychosocial reintegration can vary from person to person and trauma differs significantly. The psychosocial in the first phase was weak because of the large number of proxies. 113

When discussing this further with Hh Zaizay, who works at the Liberian Ministry of Gender, he felt that trauma was a significant issue, which if not dealt with, can escalate:

(…) in the absence of a real, constructive programme, a programme that seeks to de-traumatisise, they get more traumatised with the situation, yeah, the trauma keeps building up, the hate is there.

113 Interview with local implementer and NCDDRR employee, Monrovia, 22/02/10
The limited budget for rehabilitation meant that much of this poor provision for trauma counselling may once again have been a function of the fact that there were not enough institutions/professionals available to deal with demand. Adrian-Paul et al (2009, p.17) revealed adversely in a UN INSTRAW report that there were only four recognised psychosocial institutions in the country which affected delivery of the psychological elements of the programme.

However in contrast, the residual caseload placed much greater emphasis on the psychosocial needs of the participants in its planning. The next chapter provides a detailed illustration of how this lack of psychosocial provision affected the participants in DDRR by reviewing the social and psychological reintegration strategies adopted through assessing reintegration using Ozerdem’s (2012) model as a framework for analysis.

6.5 Conclusion
This analysis has revealed that the gender mainstreaming of the DDRR process in Liberia had minor successes which resulted in increased numbers being drawn into the process over what had been expected. In addition, the separate cantonment facilities ensured safety and enabled the provision of more focused initiatives during demobilisation. However, during, the reintegration programme in particular the vocational training did not pay enough attention to women’s specific needs. They were treated in the same way as men and planners assumed that they faced similar obstacles. This treatment helped to perpetuate existing disparities between the sexes (Charlesworth 2005, p.13). Despite a DDRR policy which recognised that WAFFs/ex-combatants have different needs and the promotion of gender mainstreaming, these needs were not addressed in programme delivery. Allowing women’s agency on paper is insufficient; Kabeer (1999) suggests that there are certain pre-conditions which facilitate the exercise of agency. These include proximity to resources, control over life choices, mobility and decision-making opportunities and status. Clearly in the reintegration programme in Liberia many of these elements of agency were denied to women as they were steered towards the traditional gender
appropriate vocational skills in the informal economy or were often far from training centres.

Whilst the DDRR programme made some progress towards increasing women’s participation, it failed to change institutional agendas or tackle the more pervasive structural differences in gender inequality. Under the highly masculine liberal peace approach there was very little space for women to influence the new political, economic and social systems that were being developed and designed around them. This is despite UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming championing women’s inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction and DDRR. The case of Liberia illustrates that liberal peacebuilding largely marginalised women’s engagement in DDRR preferring to rely on institutionalised norms and policies to develop programmes for women. It continued define view women through their absence or victimhood in the process and focus on masculinity and security concerns. The planning of DDRR considered women as a homogenous category rather than collecting information on their roles, skills and abilities so that the programme could be better tailored to their needs.

As was observed in Chapter two, international peace and security systems remain inherently male in orientation, philosophy and staff composition. While the women’s movement is robust in Liberia, the underlying structure of society remains dominated by patriarchal systems. Moreover, the liberal peace doctrine with its emphasis on security, democratisation and marketisation creates certain emphases, priorities and predispositions which explain why DDR becomes reduced to focusing on DD and not RR. The need to create a secure environment as quickly as possible leads to rushed processes such as disarmament, and does not take sufficient account of local contextual factors or the particular needs of specific groups particularly in RR.

The limited attention to the requirements of women in the planning and implementation of the programme will now be analysed from below and WAFFs/ex-combatants experiences of the process and how it impacted upon
their lives considered. It will also examine whether other mechanisms which had been omitted by planners, were used to enhance successful reintegration.
Chapter Seven

Results: Gender Mainstreaming Realities from Below

7.1 Introduction
This chapter will explore the DDRR programme from the perspective of WAFFs/ex-combatants. In particular it will reflect on the extent to which the process may have helped to socially reintegrate them through an investigation of their experiences. This, in turn, will promote an understanding of their lived reality and of the ways in which gender mainstreaming approaches unfolded practically. By analysing these programmes “from below” an opportunity is provided to reveal further shortcomings in them as well as certain more positive features.

The structure of this chapter will reflect the story of the research process as it unfolded inductively. In order to organise the findings, the initial focus will reveal the gender mainstreaming elements of DDRR. These will be examined during the main phase of the programme as well as the residual caseload and the experiences of women that self-demobilised. In particular it will explore women’s experiences of disarmament and demobilisation followed by an examination of reintegration through utilising Ozerdem’s (2012) social reintegration model as a template (a full description of which is available in section 3.2). This model provides a more holistic approach to understanding reintegration and it prompts us to consider the role of the family and community, provision for sustainable employment (including an analysis of economic reintegration processes) and civic participation, as fundamental to successful reintegration. This section will investigate those social processes that women highlighted in their testimonies as critical to their reintegration. It will attempt to understand how they reintegrated given the failures and omissions of the
gender elements of DDRR. Exploring how women rebuilt their own social structures, namely their networks, organisations, and social codes, will allow us to achieve a deeper and more nuanced understanding of their reintegration experience. The results will provide support for the theory of social reintegration and suggest how it can be and improved for use with WAFFs/ex-combatants. Finally, the psychological reintegration (rehabilitation) of the WAFFs/ex-combatants will be examined as this component was heavily exposed by participants.

7.2 Explanation of Analysis and Discussion

Following a similar strategy employed in Chapter six, the data derived from the testimonies of the WAFFs/ex-combatants was subjected to numerous rounds of coding and reorganisation based upon the components of reintegration. Due to the magnitude of data, those codes with the highest rates of response have been the focus of extended analysis and discussion. To begin and in order to supply context, some general demographic information will be presented in graphical and narrative form. This contributes some of the basic information about the women’s time with the fighting forces and about their current situation. Following on from this, the lived reality of the experiences of the WAFFs/ex-combatants who proceeded through DDRR will be reviewed and there will be a brief discussion of their experiences of disarmament and demobilisation will be examined before considering their involvement in the reintegration process. As reintegration is a multifaceted concept it will be scrutinised by exploring social reintegration, economic reintegration, and finally investigations of their psychological reintegration. Appendix H contains the coding matrix which illustrates the levels of coding that have been reported and rates of responses.

7.3 General Demographic Information about the Sample and Their Time with the Fighting Forces

In contextualising the WAFFs/ex-combatants responses regarding DDRR it is useful to present some general information about the sample and their encounters within the fighting forces. The women that took part in this study
ranged in age from 19-47 (making some of them as young 12 when they fought) and they participated (for between 1 month and 14 years) in various combat factions. See Figure 7.

![Figure 7: Faction Fought for by WAFFs/Ex-Combatants (including amount)](image)

The factions with the largest membership were LURD forces and Taylor’s Government of Liberia militia. This is because most of the women in this study were involved in the latter stages of the fighting in which these two groups were most significant. According to Pugel (2007, p.42), LURD forces primarily originated outside Monrovia and in particular Tubmanburg, which was a site for data collection in this research and was a stronghold for the force. However, whilst members of LURD were predominately of a Mandingo origin (subscribing to the Islam faith) this was not necessarily the case in the final offensive in which many ethnic backgrounds were represented (Boas and Hatloy 2008, p.40). See Table 11 for a breakdown of tribes represented in this study.
Table 11: Distribution of Tribal Affiliation of WAFFs/Ex-Combatants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bassa</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbande</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gola</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grebo</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khran</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kpelle</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kru</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loma</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mano</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mende</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vai</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Testimonies of women on how they came to join the faction make it clear that the majority (78 per cent) were forced to join or were abducted, what they referred to as ‘captured’. However, this process of capture seemed to vary. Some mentioned rebels sweeping through their towns and villages and being press-ganged into joining for fear of death or being raped. Others told horrific tales of family members being brutally killed or burned in front of them and being forced to go along:

For me I was in Rivercess County in my 22 years when I join the people. They killed my two sisters and cut their head right in front of us. They kill my little brother and said that they wanted to use me if I was not joining them. That is how I joined them to go on the battlefront.114

A number also said that they had been singled out as a potential girlfriend for a commander. Usually this was a male commander but there is one narrative where a female commander selected a woman to be her girlfriend. Some (8.5 per cent) also mentioned that they joined to obtain advantages as the rebel groups and armed forces usually had food and in some cases they had no choice but to enlist due to hunger. Such women ostensibly joined voluntarily but their circumstances afforded little choice, in reality. For example one young woman recalled:

Because I was having nothing, no way to eat, no money, I had to join to survive. I joined in Monrovia.115

114 Focus group, self-demobilised, location 5, 22/11/10
115 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 1, location 10, 17/11/10
The remaining, 13.5 per cent joined willingly, often for revenge or because their friends were volunteering. In certain settings the disruption of society in times of war can lead people to join armed groups because these can offer a degree of social order and even prospects of upward social mobility (Utas 2003, 2005). In these situations people could also be considered to be navigating the conflict for personal survival.

During their time with their factions, women had numerous roles ranging from supportive tasks needed to run the unit such as a porter (23.7 per cent) or cook (13.6 per cent). Two (3.4 per cent) reported their role was to ‘love to’ or be the wife/girlfriend of a commander as their sole responsibility. Eleven (18.6 per cent) women were combatants on the front line and 8.5 per cent said they had been commanders or assistant commanders (1.7 per cent). Some spoke of killing although most remained silent on this matter if guns were discussed, possibly due to the social stigma of having possessed one:

(...) I really killed people and used to slaughter people. When you smoke you can’t be yourself.116

For me, people did all kinds of things to me, they raped me, I killed and we did all kinds of things.117

The final 27.1 per cent said that they held multiple roles within the faction. This could range from two ancillary tasks to being a wife of a commander as well as a cook, for example. Usually, those who reported having more than one role said that they were performing two supportive tasks with 18.6 per cent saying that they cooked and tolled ammunition. The remainder listed roles of being a lucky charm or mascot (1.7 per cent) and as a security soldier (1.7 per cent). See Figure 8 for a chart which illustrates the distribution of roles across the sample.

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116 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 13, location 1, 14/02/11
117 Focus group, WAFF, Monrovia, 02/10
The skills that the women spoke about acquiring in the war related mainly to learning how to use a weapon, predominantly a gun, such as an AK47. They learnt how to package the ammunition, load the weapon and shoot the gun, although for the majority the gun was more for defensive rather than offensive purposes. Many recounted that they had smoked or injected drugs and drank alcohol to give them the courage needed to fight or to alter their perception of what they were doing.

(...) when you fight the war your brain can’t really be set because you take drugs to do a lot of things to kill, to just be brave... 118

I used to smoke drugs because if we didn’t smoke it we will feel sorry for the people and they looked like other things, not real people if we smoked. 119

Some told of learning leadership skills in a commanding capacity and a number said that they regularly used abusive language. These diverse experiences from the basic demographic information of the women during their time with the faction illustrate why it is challenging to design programmes to meet their needs and why gender mainstreaming of DDRR is often so limited in its impact. The following section will explore these challenges in greater detail.

118 Focus group, main programme, location 2, 19/11/10
119 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 11, location 1, 14/02/11
7.4 Disarmament and Demobilisation

In terms of the gender elements of the DDRR programme there was little evidence that the sensitisation programmes that were run, directly influenced the women to join DDRR. The majority expressed their own agency regarding the decision to get involved. Others cited family members or friends encouraging them to submit weapons and register into the process:

My mother and father encouraged me to go disarm because the war is finished and we want peace in Liberia.\textsuperscript{120}

A striking number of respondents that went through the process who cited incorrect information as making them worried about taking part. Of the women who did take part, approximately half expressed that they were anxious about DDRR, and expressed sentiments such as:

Yeah, I were scared. I were afraid to go and disarm. If people who knew me saw me there they would know I fought, but after I disarmed the worry left me.\textsuperscript{121}

Incorrect information could actively discourage them from taking part. In particular the rumour that photographs would be taken and circulated which would prevent people from travelling. Twelve specific references to this fear were reported, such as:

Because my sister and sister’s boyfriend told me to go disarm, but I not want to do it because I was ashamed of what people will say. You cannot travel ‘cos your picture in on paper and you will be on TV and everyone know you are an ex-com’.\textsuperscript{122}

This mirrors responses given by self-demobilised women unfortunately kept away from the process altogether by a similar prospect of stigmatisation. Whilst the sensitisation programme implemented under gender mainstreaming proved to be successful with regard to general participation, it was apparently ineffective at dispelling myths already in circulation. Whilst some women decided to take a chance in balancing the perceived benefits against the potential losses, it nevertheless often caused much personal anxiety prior to and during the initial stages of disarmament:

Me, I were happy to give up my gun. Even if I could not travel, I were happy to give up my gun.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 8, 12/11/10
\textsuperscript{121} Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 6, location 3, 11/02/11
\textsuperscript{122} Interviewee, main programme, participant 3, location 2, 17/11/10
\textsuperscript{123} Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 11, location 8, 09/02/11
I was scared in one way. Some people said that if you disarm you will not travel. I said to myself, whether I travel or not I will disarm.124

After initial disarmament the women progressed into the demobilisation cantonments for a 5-day stay. Most spoke favourably about their experiences at this juncture and this is where evidence of gender mainstreaming appears to have been most visible. This is congruent with key informant testimonies regarding the planning of the programme. To reiterate previous discussions of the cantonment arrangements, men and women were separated and provided with facilities that were appropriately directed to their needs. Women confirmed that they had medical check-ups and that if found to be sick, were treated and given assistance. One woman reinforced these generalised impressions in her reflections on the medical treatment:

Yes, they gave us medicine and the medicine was good. They checked me and realised I was pregnant. They also confirmed that they ate regularly, many exclaiming that they ate 'three times a day' and that they were provided with basic amenities. Most women said that they felt secure and safe, although three mentioned security concerns that mainly involved those women who were withdrawing from drugs or alcohol and still exhibited violent behaviour. Interestingly, one of the interviewees did suggest that there may have been some intra and inter-factional fighting which had the potential to escalate in confined spaces. As she recollected:

No, not really I never felt safe, because they were fighting among themselves, they were saying faction things so I never felt safe because the other faction groups were fighting among themselves.125

Finally, in the matter of the choice between reintegration training or returning to school, most women said that they themselves decided which to do and what skills training to pick. Although in some cantonments there appears to have been better attention and careers guidance counselling with efforts to match the training to the person, in the main the testimonies of this study suggest that the

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124 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 8, 16/11/10
125 Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 2, 17/11/10
women made those decisions with little professional advice. On several occasions the women complained that they could not obtain training for their first choice of skill and were told to opt for something that they were not interested in, which hampered their progression. This could be seen as an inevitable consequence of the fact that women were not consulted in the planning and implementation of the DDRR process or asked what their requirements were. For example, one woman remarked:

> Really I wanted to do hairdressing but they only had four courses and three of them were meant for men and it was hard work.\(^{127}\)

More encouragingly however, women were not prevented from taking training that was considered to be traditionally male oriented (e.g. auto mechanics, carpentry, masonry), although most women selected skills that may be viewed as gender specific such as tie-dying, soap-making and baking/pastry production, as those were the courses designed for women. When women undertook training in traditionally male skills, they remained in the minority, and in one case, discriminated against. In the residual caseload, a woman who had selected carpentry commented:

> I tried so much but there were plenty of people and they didn’t pay attention to women cos carpentry’s a men’s course. When we were in the field practicing, we were not allowed to go on the roof because we were women.\(^{128}\)

Whilst it is commendable that women were given the opportunity to select any training regardless of gender, it appears that traditional gender roles were still enforced by trainers, an inconsistency which obviously undermined any intentions to promote gender equality. Moreover, other research has suggested that training women in traditionally male trades is often fruitless as it is very hard for them to secure employment in a market based on societal norms which dictates who gets a job (IRIN 2013).

After five days the women verified that they were given some reinsertion assistance (cash, basic equipment) and transported to the community that they had chosen to return to. Typically those that had some family members still alive returned to live with them. There were only five instances of women not

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\(^{126}\) The careers guidance counselling was supposed to be formalised in the residual caseload phase however most women revealed that they chose the training themselves.

\(^{127}\) Interviewee, main programme, participant 7, location 8, 16/11/10

\(^{128}\) Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 11, location 8, 05/02/11
wanting to return to their original communities because of issues of stigma (explored in the next section). Interestingly, three of these women had not taken part in DDRR. The majority (64.4 per cent) reported that they did not currently live in their original pre-war communities and a number mentioned moving numerous times. Given the intervening length of time since disarmament, this is not surprising. Some explained that their reason for moving to the capital was simply to look for work or to be with family, and not necessarily due to a fear of stigma. The majority said that they lived with family members or with extended families if their parents and siblings had died. In some cases they moved to be closer to family but did not reside directly with them.

I had the training in Bomi and I lived with a lady while going to school. After the training in Bomi they brought me to Clara Town [Monrovia] and after one month they came back to check on my and carry things for me [brought her belongings]. My uncle lives in Clara Town which is why I came back here.129

A significant 64.7 per cent of the self-demobilised group did not return to their original communities. Of these, 46.7 per cent maintained that people were unaware that they had been associated with fighting forces which for most was a deliberate strategy so that they could discreetly reabsorb themselves back into the community.

7.5 Reintegration: A Social Reintegration Analysis

Reintegration has been traditionally conceptualised as a complex process which encompasses economic, social, political and psychological components (Muggah et al 2009, p.279). The UN defines reintegration as:

...the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance.

(International DDR Standards, UNDDR 2006)

However despite the multiple components, this above mentioned definition, devised under the liberal peace agenda, forces the focus towards economic reintegration packages which continue to be the focus of DDR programmes worldwide (Bowd and Ozerdem 2013). This is predicated on an assumption that

129 Interviewee, pilot study, participant 3, location 7, 10/11/10
providing a livelihood for the ex-combatant will assist with social acceptance as well as allowing them to negotiate the post-conflict transition. The focus lies firmly within a securitisation agenda in which keeping ex-combatant’s occupied and off the streets greatly reduces the opportunity for reprisals. As already shown, such a notion is highly gendered and does not factor into account women’s roles in conflict. The difficulty with this approach is the assumption that economic reintegration constitutes the entire process. This can be misleading as it provides a “very limited scope of opportunities for successful reintegration” (Ozerdem 2012, pp.51, 68). Essentially, according to Ozerdem, it is reduced to merely becoming a method of reinsertion. It also places the onus on the ex-combatant to reintegegrate and change their behavior rather than promoting a reciprocal process which considers how those in the receiving community interact with the ex-combatants.

Due to the focus on economic reintegration, little is actually known about social reintegration mechanisms and their importance. These social processes (such as the women’s networks, affiliations to groups, partnerships, etc.) are significant for ex-combatants as frequently utilised to gain social acceptance within the community in cases where traditional reintegration programmes have failed. In order to conceptualise the social reintegration process, Ozerdem (2012, p.53) has argued that the most effective model for ex-combatant reintegration is not to divide reintegration into the components of the traditional definition, but to encourage a social reintegration approach which incorporates three dimensions of the family and community, sustainable employment and civic responsibilities. In this way, economic reintegration is subsumed as one component of the overall process rather than being the central goal of reintegration as it also focuses on more inclusive considerations of considering community perspectives as well as those of the ex-combatants.

This section will explore the social processes that the women spontaneously embraced and consider how they navigated the post-conflict environment to gain social acceptance. It will also consider the economic reintegration components and the sustainability of their employment and civic responsibilities.
The analysis hopes to provide some limited, yet important empirical support, for the social reintegration approach as a more effective mechanism for DDR programmes than those that are currently favoured. The findings will be discussed under the three dimensions of social reintegration as outlined above.

7.5.1 Family and Community

7.5.1.1 Social Networks

In considering the first element of social reintegration, namely, that of the family and community, it is clear that these ties were seen as very important to the women interviewed in this study. The women used multiple social networks to assist them with their reintegration as illustrated in Figure 13.

![Social Networks Used by WAFFs/Ex-Combatants](image)

Figure 9: Social Networks Used by WAFFs/Ex-Combatants

With regard to ease of reintegration, 78.5 per cent of WAFFs/ex-combatants who completed DDRR confirmed that they found it easy to reintegrate and 90.5 per cent expressed that they felt trusted by the community. This mirrors comparable studies with ex-combatant women. The Annan et al (2011, p.893 study on female reintegration in Northern Uganda (N = 881 male, 857 female),
found that there was weak evidence of widespread social rejection. They rather suggest that social troubles tend to be confined to the minority and improve over time. Pugel (2007, p.59) found similarly positive findings regarding social acceptance. In his study, 77 per cent of women perceived that they had been accepted by the community. Establishing mutual trust between the WAFFs/ex-combatants and the community helps to foster social capital and gaining trust and acceptance by the community has therefore been the aim of most women as they reintegrate. Putnam (1993, p.171) suggests that the greater the level of trust within a community the more chance there is for cooperation and that cooperation itself breeds trust. He goes on to comment that (p.169)

(...) social networks allow trust to become transitive and spread: I trust you, because I trust her and she assures me that she trusts you.

Having a family or support network to vouch for the WAFF/ex-combatant who returns to her village has assisted many women that interviewed for this study. Of the 59 participants of the study 32.2 per cent cited family networks as a source of assistance with a further 13.6 per cent mentioning partners and family support structures as helpful. This follows the same trajectory as a study of ex-combatant reintegration in Liberia (N = 490) by Boas and Hatloy (2008, p.49). They discovered that almost three quarters of their sample live with either parents or close relatives and found little evidence to support assertions that ex-combatants are ex-communicated from their families and communities. It is also possible that the protracted and staggered time scale of the conflict helped to socially normalise the involvement of women. Furthermore, this normalisation could also be a reiteration of women having been involved in conflict in other areas of West Africa during pre-colonial times. For example, Goldstien (2001, p.60) documents that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a women's standing army functioned in the Dahomey Kingdom of West Africa (present day Benin). These female warriors usually comprised one-tenth to one-third of the force. This was extraordinary in a society in which women were traditionally subservient (Shillington 2005, p.30). However, it was also not uncommon for women to accompany armies to provide food and comfort.

Regardless of the possible normalised paradigms of historical female fighters, the family support structures utilised by the women in this study apparently
served as a buffer to any potential acceptance issues in two ways; to mitigate the effects of stigma and to provide economic assistance. With regard to possible stigmatisation, in many cases the women commented that they were welcomed back because they had not done anything bad within that community. In a focus group of WAFFs/ex-combatants a participant confirmed this by revealing:

I just moved to this community but in the community I lived in before people welcome me because I never did any bad thing to anybody there because I was fighting all the way in the bush. So in my community I was living in, when I went back they accepted me as I never did anything bad to anybody.  

Another revealed:

I'm living with my parents now; because I never did anything wrong it's easier for me. 

Such acceptance is critical as it allows these women to lean on their family structures to assist them economically when returning and undergoing or waiting for their reintegration training. One woman had this to say about her family support:

I survive through my aunty she does everything for me. The baby’s father disowned me. I was selling oil for my aunty before but since the baby was born I am not doing anything.

Another WAFF echoed a similar sentiment:

I survive by the grace of God, I live in my father’s house and he does everything for us.

The family support however, was not always from immediate family. A number of participants explained that family members living abroad sent money to help them. For example:

My older brother is in America, another in Thailand and one in Ghana, and they send support and that's how I live.

My brother is in Asia and my sister in Europe, at times they send me money.

Family assistance was not just financial however. The emotional and medical support also provided many women the opportunity to heal both physically and mentally:

My husband died and I was suffering. I could not pay school fees. Since then I am alright. My family people put their hands around me and helped me so my living conditions are alright.

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130 Focus Group, self-demobilised, location 1, 14/02/11
131 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 8, location 8, 09/02/11
132 Interviewee, main programme, participant 7, location 8, 16/11/10
133 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 14, location 1, 14/02/11
134 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 14, location 1, 14/02/11
135 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 9, location 5, 22/11/11
Other participants reflected on the assistance they have received from families for health concerns:

My people can help me, my mother, pa. I am sick now and my parents brought me here to get good treatment. 137

My family help at times. They helped me when I gave birth and they brought things. 138

So whilst some women expressed how family support structures had enabled a smooth transition for them both economically and emotionally, the community also apprehended the importance of aiding this process. Supporting the social reintegration model, considerations of the community perspective are vital. In a focus group discussion with one community the participants reflected on the importance of this acceptance from their perspective:

Really at the beginning everybody were afraid but little we have to accept them because they are our brothers, they are our sons, they are our nieces and nephews so that’s how it was.139

Another community member recounted a parable to illustrate the same ideas:

(... if you kill an animal which of the part will you give to the father and which of the part will you give to the mother? I don’t care how bad your behavior and attitude are your mother will never change her heart about you. You can even be crazy and in the street, that is why you have given the heart to your mother. The chest will be given to your uncle. Your uncle can stand on your behalf and knock his chest for you…. 140

Clearly, the importance of these familial support structures to the women’s successful reintegration and community acceptance cannot be over emphasised as it impinges on the wider reconciliation process and social cohesion. According to Colletta (2000) social cohesion is the intervening variable between social capital and violent conflict, such that should a community have weak social cohesion, the risk of social disorganisation, fragmentation and exclusion are increased as the channels of socialisation and social control are not reinforced. In order to create a harmonious environment in the post-conflict context, fostering cohesion is imperative and family support networks are a common method for this. However, these findings are in apparent contrast to other authors such as Coulter’s (2005) ethnographic study.

136 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 14, location 8, 09/02/11
137 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 13, location 8, 09/02/11
138 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 1, location 5, 22/11/11
139 Focus group, community, location 1, 14/02/12
140 Focus group, community, location 1, 14/02/12
of ex-combatant women in Sierra Leone. There she found numerous instances when even when women had been accepted by their family, they were shunned by the wider community, perhaps suggesting that social cohesion and social capital had been disrupted between community members during the conflict and that these had not yet been rebuilt at the time she collected her data. Furthermore, for those whose families had died it was often increasingly difficult. In another study on Liberia, Podder (2012, p.194) found that rejection or loss of family was the preeminent reason for a slow drift towards living on the streets or working with former combatant friends in Rubber plantations.

The greater success of those reintegrating with families ready to accept and assist them was underscored in a key informant interview with a Liberian employee who worked for a large US based international NGO. He noted that those being supported by family:

(...) did very well [in DDRR] and were often still living with their parents or one parent. Those that had the most problems were the ones with no support. Female participants of the programme did very well compared to men in terms of trust, confidence and doing business behavior. Those with support were more focused. Upbringing is key. Those you interact with is key. If you only interact with peers you can be encouraged down the wrong path.¹⁴¹

He also reflected that not having enough bio-data collected in DDRR was a major drawback in the planning:

One of the shortcomings of DDRR is that they did not have enough bio-data. If we knew, then we could deal with those that had no support differently.

In light of these reflections and the comments from the women and community, the significance of these structures to keep the WAFF/ex-combatants moving forward positively, and encourage them to become productive members of the community (thereby enhancing social cohesion) is critical but was an element that was omitted in the Liberian case.

In direct contrast however, women who had no support or inconsistent non-familial support (partners/friends) found reintegration to be much more challenging. Issues surrounding stigma seemed to be particularly frequent as they did not have family or others to assure the community that they were not a threat. Of the 26.8 per cent of participants who highlighted stigma through

¹⁴¹ Interview with NGO worker, YMCA, Monrovia, 26/11/10
verbal abuse or discrimination, just over a third said that they had no support networks and were surviving alone. One women who self-demobilised, commented:

It was hard, I couldn’t find my family. I needed to make a life on my own. Initially people were afraid of me, but I decided to leave those ways and become a changed person so now they have come around.

I find it hard because I had no one here. If I had family here it would be easy for me. Another women explained how she found it difficult to garner trust within the community:

No they don’t trust me because they are saying that I am a rebel. And rebel can do anything out of the way. Rebel can kill, rebel can steal and rebel can do anything. This reinforces the need to further support the role of receiving families and communities in social reintegration. Without the targeted provision in DDR to assist them in fostering community ties, those who are socially alienated find the reintegration process extremely daunting. However, in keeping with other similar studies, (e.g. Boas and Hatloy 2008) the evidence of stigmatisation in this sample is limited.

Lack of assistance can further impact upon women as often they are primary care-givers for dependents. Eighty per cent of the women in this study had children. In many cases the father of the child had died or left, leaving women with no other support structures in a very difficult situation. A woman reflected on this in her response in a focus group:

Now I am doing everything for myself with my little daughter that I fought hard to be born during the war. She has no father, I am the only caretaker, we have no relatives to turn to….As for us we are stranded.

Others lamented that being alone meant they had nowhere to live:

As for me, I can’t lie to you. I’m on the streets now because my mother is not around here, I don’t have a stable place. Anywhere night grabs me, I sleep there [I sleep wherever I find myself when night falls].

Limited support may also have further affected the desire to re-enlist. All but two women interviewed in this study said that they would not rejoin the armed forces should war break out again. The two that considered re-enlisting were both in

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142 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 12, location 1, 14/02/11
143 Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 2, 19/11/10
144 Focus Group, self-demobilised, location 5, 22/11/11
145 Focus Group, WAFF, Monrovia, 02/10
the self-demobilised category. The first woman explained that she had no support networks, had experienced considerable stigma and currently earned a living engaged in transaction sex. She remarked:

Because of my living conditions, if the war came back I’d re-join. 146

The other woman’s parents had died and she likewise had few support networks which made reintegration demanding. During the interview she initially said that she would not re-enlist but rethinking it ultimately led her to change her mind. She concluded:

I would go back as I have no one to help me and going back, I could get something for myself. 147

Hill et al (2008, p.5) echo these findings in a study of former combatants Liberia (N = 1400). Their research explored whether ex-combatants would rejoin the armed forces and fight again. They revealed that those who found it hard to be accepted by their communities and families were more likely to want to fight again.

In a similar way, some self-demobilised women chose not to return to their home or reveal that they had been associated with a fighting force for fear of discrimination. When asked if she had revealed if she was a WAFF/ex-combatant, one recounted:

I don’t want it for me on my record. They will not take me to be a good girl in the community. 148

Some women preferred to give up the opportunities that DDRR promised in order to slip back anonymously into the community. Whilst evidence of stigma was relatively uncommon in this study, there were some women who shared their negative experiences of reintegration:

I left Logan Town because my friends used to point fingers at me, you know, and saying all kinds of things about me. Oh, she love to the man, what she get for herself, you know, all kinds of things, so I left. 149

Others revealed similar incidents:

After I left the camps I went to King Peter’s town and I found it hard there because people used to come in my face and tell me I was an ex-com, so I decided to come to Logan Town. 150

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146 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 3, location 2, 19/11/10
147 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 6, location 5, 22/11/10
148 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 14, location 1, 14/02/11
149 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 1, 11/11/10
150 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 1, 18/11/10
I were living in Front Street. They knew I was a fighter. Some people used to point and say ‘you rebel, you killer’ and didn’t want to be associated with me.\textsuperscript{151} Mostly the accounts of stigmatisation and discrimination were derived from the wider community but there were a few instances of families who rejected their own daughters:

I never went back because my name had already leaked to my family that I fought in the war. They said I ‘played with blood’. My people are Christian so they didn’t accept me. My family blame me for killing my brother (he died in the war) so none of them want to listen to me.\textsuperscript{152} Another WAFF explained how her rebel commander boyfriend (called Fast Killer) had killed a family member and she received the blame:

Due to what my boyfriend did in Bomi, and Bomi that’s my town especially in my area, in my own house. He raped my sister when she was pregnant and she died and delivered prematurely and died. Everyone was blaming me for that because he was my boyfriend.\textsuperscript{153}

For these women the challenge of reintegrating whilst facing personal shame can be extremely difficult. Stigma can also transfer into the workplace with it often being more difficult for ex-combatants to gain formal employment. A bright and articulate female commander shared her experience of trying to get a job:

I want to work but they penalize me when you go for a job if you are an ex-combatant. Some provoke you in the street - if you are in a group, they will come from nowhere saying ‘we don’t want no rebels here’. The stigma is still there. It’s worse if you are an ex-combatant woman, for men it’s easier. For ladies it’s more shameful being an ex-combatant. My reputation is tarnished.\textsuperscript{154}

In order to ameliorate the negative attitudes towards ex-combatants following the end of the DDRR process, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf announced that the term ‘ex-combatant’ would no longer be used. In an attempt to try and mitigate some of the negative connotations, a new term ‘war affected’, which did not discriminate between victims and perpetrators was suggested. However, this term is problematic as it assigns these women into victimhood rather than acknowledging their agency. Furthermore, it seems that the uptake of this terminology is slow to filter through to the communities as many women associate part of their identity with being a fighter and only NGOs and international institutions seem to use the terminology with any regularity. Local attitudes are clearly complicated and variable, which in retrospect is an omission in the evidence of this study. Ideally more information from the

\textsuperscript{151} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 12, location 1, 14/02/11
\textsuperscript{152} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 8, location 5, 22/11/10
\textsuperscript{153} Interviewee, main programme, participant 2, location 2, 17/11/10
\textsuperscript{154} Interview with female commander, Monrovia, 22/11/10
perspective of the communities that received and rejected the WAFFs/ex-combatants needed to be collected to explore this in more detail.

Although family support structures constituted the majority of the avenues of social support available for WAFFs/ex-combatants, another significant source of support came from boyfriends and husbands with 20.3 per cent citing their partner as their main provider of support (with another 13.6 per cent citing partners and family as support structures). See Figure 14 for the relationship status of the participants.

![Figure 10: Relationship Status of WAFFs/Ex-Combatants](image)

These partnerships assisted the women with their day to day living although many women affirmed that they found it hard to get a boyfriend or start a stable relationship. One commander added her voice to this debate:

> Ex-combatant women can’t get any man, it’s very hard for them. If someone loves you they should love you for who you are, even if you are a murderer, but they can’t look past that. That is why ex-combatant men prefer civilian women. It’s hard for ex-com women to get a civilian man because of the stigma, he is worried that it will transfer to him.  

She continued:

> It’s more shameful being an ex-combatant…my reputation is tarnished.

Another participant reiterated a similar reaction to the issue of getting a partner. She complained:

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155 Interview with female commander, Monrovia, 22/11/10
We don’t have men because men are afraid of us and as a woman you cannot live without a man no matter what condition, you cannot make it alone. There still appears to be a preference in this society towards having a partner rather than being alone and marriage difficulties can be viewed as a form of stigma and discrimination unique to WAFFs/ex-combatants. Acquiring and retaining a reliable boyfriend seemed to be their highest aspiration as emphasised by one woman who enthused:

Like for me I only tell God, thank you for the kind of boyfriend he gave me. I am proud of him because he tells me that I am not too big to do something for myself. Like he encouraged me to go to school under education to be fixing hair, so I tell God thank you for the kind of boyfriend he give me.

Moreover retaining a boyfriend/husband was also highlighted in the testimonies of the women. Having partners who abandoned them often left participants in a precarious situation in terms of daily survival in the difficult post-conflict environment. A participant from Tubmanburg narrated her story highlighting such a situation:

Myself, I don’t know. The difficult issues with men that I am talking about are such that, when I had my first pregnancy, I was two months pregnant when my boyfriend went away. Presently, I have the child with me, the child has turned six this year. The second time I was about one month pregnant when my boyfriend left for another woman.

A number of other women had also lost partners in the conflict which they were still finding it hard to deal with:

I miss him at times because you know you have days when you think of the war and your partner leave you and just die, it’s too bad and up to now I’m still feeling hurt. In such circumstances women often had to lean on other support structures to help them.

The same commander commented further that it was easier for these women to find a partner who has also been an ex-combatant:

Some are getting married but only ex-fighters are around them. The ex-combatant men don’t put us down. Often they support us. Others suggested that men were afraid of ex-combatant women and in some cases when they returned old boyfriends left them. Coulter (2009) also reported difficulties for ex-combatant women when marrying. This was usually because they were considered to have been physically spoilt by the armed forces due to

156 Interviewee, main programme, participant 2, location 10 17/11/10
157 Focus group participant, self-demobilised, location 5, 22/11/10
158 Interviewee, main programme, participant 3, location 8, 12/11/10
159 Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 2, 17/11/10
their roles as bush wives and instances of rape. Furthermore, Alison (2004, p.458) found that female fighters in Sri Lanka were not seen as passive enough and their non-traditional behavior and dress constituted a threat to traditional societal norms. As a result the wider community does not see them as suitable wives. This hindrance to marriage exacerbated the reintegration problems of women for whom it had seemed the solution. It was assumed that through marriage they would become more honorable and fulfill the traditional gender stereotypes. Without marriage they could not.

For women with no family or partners to support them, other networks, such as tribal affiliations, can also be of support to returning WAFFs/ex-combatants. Due to the tribal dynamics of the conflict, in some cases returning ex-combatants have been lauded as heroes and heroines, underlining the need for more knowledge of cultural attitudes concerning women and warfare (Podder 2012, p.187). This seemed to be more common in rural locations compared to the capital city where many different tribes live together and blur the connections. This was reflected in the diversity of tribes that the women purported to belong to, some 13 of the 16 in existence in the country. Traditionally tribes would have lived in one location but in the capital there are many localities where mixed tribal affiliations coexist.

However, tribal support was found to help only one WAFFs/ex-combatant directly:

For myself our tribe (Gbande), we help one another in terms of sickness, death etc. 160

This support is subsequently context driven and the rural/urban divide needs to be considered. Other networks specific to women are more prevalent in rural locations and include market women networks and secret society affiliations (Sande). Whilst it was not possible to access any direct information on such networks due to their restrictive nature, there is a possibility these connections may have also been influential.

160 Interviewee, main programme, location 8, 16/11/10
Other important networks also considered were factional support networks. Factional support structures are often used by male ex-combatants to provide economic support such as the establishment of the motorbike taxi cooperatives which are very common in the capital, Monrovia. Whilst these can be seen as a positive opportunity for men to create revenue they also frequently provide opportunities to engage in illegal activities which have been of major concern to the government, UNMIL and international partners (Tamagnini and Krafft 2010, p.931). These networks are a threat to the international institutions as they can potentially upset the peacebuilding project by disrupting the liberal structures that are being built in the post-conflict setting by challenging the law and order being developed. Furthermore, it allows for the previous command structures to remain in place which could be potentially dangerous. The Rev Colley commented on this by saying:

Ex-combatants are still together, there are still command structures in place. Mob violence and crime is common.\textsuperscript{161}

Persson (2012, p.107) also confirms that vigilante groups are common in the capital and in other large towns. Ex-combatants often play a significant part in these groups in concert with former rebel structures and chains of command. Where the DDRR programme has failed in providing a livelihood for these men and the security provisions remain in their infancy, these informal security structures are prevalent. However, they bring with them instability and the potential for the security situation to deteriorate. They are also vulnerable to re-recruitment and one key informant mentioned:

Right now we are hearing that some of our former combatants are now crossing over to the Ivory Coast.\textsuperscript{162}

The volatility of the surrounding countries, porous borders and the fact that embedded networks of ex-combatants have not been broken down is a concern for the stability of the entire country. In Tubmanburg this type of criminal behaviour was reinforced by a participant who verified that women are also involved:

Like some people who also disarm and are presently living in this town are right now are involved with stealing activities. They have no employment but are passing around with a lot of noise behind them.

\textsuperscript{161} Interview with Rev. B Colley, Monrovia, 02/10

\textsuperscript{162} Interview with Wilfred-Grey Johnson, Director UN Peacebuilding Fund, 20/4/10
She then suggests that had these women were employed then they may not have had to resort to crime. She continues:

(...) presently in this town the criminal rate is so high such that if you are coming out at night and not being very careful, someone could waste [throw] acid water on you. The criminal rate is so high in this town due to the absence of employment, that’s why.\textsuperscript{163}

In contrast, factional networks do not seem to be utilised in the same way for women. In this study only one case used friends that they had made during their time fighting for their daily survival. Most women wanted to move on from the lives they had during the conflict. A number commented that they saw those who they fought with and helped each other out on occasion. This may simply be a an outcome of the fact that in the locations where these women were interviewed many ex-combatants had assembled to live together with fewer external support networks. This was reinforced by one participant who noted:

We are together. Lots of people who fought live together.\textsuperscript{164}

However, there was one example where a self-demobilised woman still visited her factional comrades but it appeared that she was bringing things for them. Whether she was being coerced into this it is unclear but her comments suggest that this may have been the case and that she felt uncomfortable with the arrangement:

I see some of them when I go to Congo Town to Charles Taylor’s base. None of them help me. I help them with cigarettes. I don’t want them to harm me now. I’m scared of them.\textsuperscript{165}

If the factional command structures were still in place then she probably would have been at a low rank which seems to be indicted by her fear and the fact that she was conducting a menial task usually for ‘Big Men’.

There was also one case where factional support was used for daily existence but this could be considered to be a deviant case. In this particular instance a woman remained with her friend from the fighting forces after the war as her family had died. The friend brought her to live with her family who helped her to train in hair dressing. She recounts:

\begin{flushleft} \textsuperscript{163} Interviewee, main programme, participant 7, location 8, 16/11/10 \end{flushleft}
\begin{flushleft} \textsuperscript{164} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 7 location 5, 22/11/11 \end{flushleft}
\begin{flushleft} \textsuperscript{165} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 2, location 2, 19/11/10 \end{flushleft}
I fought with her. After the war she found her people. We were close in the war so I followed her and lived with her parents. She is my sister now. I watched one woman through her and learned to fix hair and I lived with her until I found work and made a shop to fix hair.\textsuperscript{166}

This case is very interesting as she has a successful small business which makes her enough money to put herself through formal education at night. If she had not had the support from her friend’s father then this would not have been possible.

A female commander interviewed similarly expressed that every night she fed at least one or two former members of her troop. Another commander in Monrovia gave the following account about helping other women that she had fought with:

If I come across them, especially those children that were captured during the war, who have lost their parents, we can still help them. But just tell me now if you were struggling for yourself and for the children to go to school with the everyday reality of us having a bad character which could live after the children, you will need to build them up. Because that stigma would still follow them, so we need to improve their living conditions. Because of that we can’t help those that were captured too much because we don’t really have it [money]. But when we see them we share few words of encouragement with them and tell them to look at our condition and encourage them. We make them understand that anybody can fall short in life, but what is more important is to tell people that it was not anybody’s career. Some people did it to survive and because of what they were doing to women. You would get raped, men would see you and force you, men that you are not suppose d to sleep with would sleep with you, so you had to protect yourself. And the only way you could get better protection was to hold the gun.\textsuperscript{167}

The encouragement and support that female commanders provided is interesting. It reinforces that female commanders are very protective of the women in their care during the conflict and remain so afterwards. Whilst breaking down factional networks may be encouraged to mitigate potential security risks and opportunities for crime, for female WAFFs/ex-combatants these support networks may be of social, psychological and economic benefit. This dichotomy yet again problematises the gender bias rationale which informs the DRRR securitisation framework.

7.5.1.2 Personal Reform

Women are often made to feel shame for their past associations with fighting forces and are expected to conform with social rules and obligations that are

\textsuperscript{166} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 1, location 10, 17/11/10
\textsuperscript{167} Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 2, 19/11/10
often highly gendered. Breaking factional ties and turning away from any shameful and disturbing associations with their time in the fighting forces was a prevalent tactic used by women in this study to counteract this. In order to help navigate and overcome this discrimination, women may also embark on a degree of personal reform and engage in activities displaying the composure considered positive within the community and thereby fulfill these social norms. Simply being respectful, polite and neighbourly or joining religious or community groups can improve social perceptions that they have changed their behaviours for the better. This has the knock-on affect of widening the support structures available to women from just family and friends, which can be important for those who are alone in a new community.

Interestingly, Podder’s (2012, p.198) study of more rural locations in Liberia, found a predominance towards respect and obedience which aligned with the teachings of secret societies. She commented that:

Spiritual initiation and membership of secret societies was premised on a deep-seated socialisation into unquestioned obedience and respect for elders together with an overarching submission to their privileged knowledge.

Despite the disruptions of Poro and Sande during the conflict, she suggests that they are now regrouping. This was confirmed further by Richards (2013, p.13) in his work on sodalities in Sierra Leone. He suggests that post-war initiation of children into Poro and Sande has revived and that the initiation of girls has been prioritised ensuring that sodality values are engrained at the basic level of mother and child. Ex-combatants who return to communities seeped in these traditional practices can use them for social acceptance but for many who do not embrace them it can result in tensions between the forces of tradition and modernity.

One example of modern practices that occurs readily in towns and cities in Liberia (where traditional practices are less pervasive) is the prevalence of religiosity as an avenue for social reintegration for WAFFs/ex-combatants. As they begin to develop their own identities, Maclay and Ozerdem (2010, p.357) note that people ‘take cues’ from trends occurring within the community. An example is becoming a born again Christian which Ellis (2007, p.267) suggests
is a particularly useful tool for former fighters’ reintegration. Christian doctrine allows the ex-combatant to assign their evil acts connected with the conflict to acts of Satan and ‘rebirth’ within Christianity affording more social acceptance. They also provide a vital source of assistance when states have collapsed or are being rebuilt. Piot (2012) suggests that such Pentecostal churches offer a form of institution and culture that can stand in for the family in largely anomic urban conditions. They make people feel good about themselves and provide a system of will-power to take control of their lives. Such is the strength of these churches (particularly in West Africa) Marshall (2009, p.2) states that in Nigeria they constitute the “single most important socio-cultural force”. In the current study, just over a quarter mentioned the church as significant to the level community inclusion and integration. As one woman reflected:

Yes, for now they trust me. Because I am a born again Christian and they see me going to services on Sunday and all of the activities at church I am part of them. 

In some cases modifying behavior to match that prescribed for women in a traditional patriarchal society and by displaying that the women had ‘changed’, assisted their successful reintegration.

I don’t bother anybody and I have changed and I’m not that kind of person. People expected me to be rude and rough. I keep my cool so people embrace me”.

Another added:

(...) because I want to be a changed person for now. At that time I didn’t know Christ but I do now.

Initially people were afraid of me but I decided to leave those ways and become a changed person so now they come around me.

Yes, the way I live, I am obedient.

I sell cold water, little table market to help me and my boyfriend. I also sell juice so people tell me, ‘I think you have tried to do something with your life’.

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168 Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity has seen a major rise in popularity throughout West Africa over the last 30 years signifying a systematic decline in the traditional mission churches including Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian. Nigeria has been a focal point for this explosion which also pervades popular culture including soap operas and films which are exported throughout the region (Piot 2012).

169 Interviewee, main programme, location 1, 11/11/10

170 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 4, location 4, 11/02/11

171 Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 1, 18/11/10

172 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 16, location 1, 14/02/11

173 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 4, location 4, 11/02/11

174 Focus group participant, Monrovia, 02/10
Coulter (2009, p.214) drew a similar conclusion in her Sierra Leonean study. She found that only those women who managed to conform to acceptable codes of behaviour change were successfully reintegrated. Women who assumed ‘traditional female behavior’ in contexts such as subservience, humbleness, and some cases religious observance managed to improve their status in post-war society and were less discriminated against. In many cases the WAFFs/ex-combatants in Liberia just wanted to forget about their time fighting and resume a quiet and peaceful existence, and were therefore prepared to embrace pre-conflict gender norms and power relations to this end. This renewed acceptance of personal reformation was also reflected in responses by community members, who emphasised that those that had engaged in DDRR and were trying to change were generally welcomed:

(...): most of the women that took part in the DDRR process, some of them went to school, so for this reason the community look at them and say ‘Oh Miss X’ used to be so and so, but she has changed to become this, so we will accept her.\(^{175}\)

There is the also the added possibility that becoming a Christian could be perceived as a method of upward social mobility and an avenue towards becoming ‘civilised’ for impoverished native women. Remnants of the pre-war social structures still find some social and economic relevance today and many people continue to aspire towards emigrating to America where they envisage numerous opportunities. Joining a religious group helps them begin this process and start realising their ambitions.

It was often family members who encouraged the women to join a religious group with the cleansing rituals of Christian baptism understood as rebirth and repudiation of their ‘bad ways’. Religion was similarly advocated as a form of reconciliation in Mozambique where ecumenical ceremonies were performed in major cities. Religious communities have also played an important role for reconciliation in Cambodia and Namibia (Nilsson 2005, p.57). However, the study identified a conspicuous lack of evidence of the traditional tribal ritual cleansing ceremonies which are common in other contexts, such as, those which traditionally welcome home returning fighters in Northern Uganda. Podder (2012, p.198) yet again reiterates that the limited occurrence of tribal cleansing

\(^{175}\) Focus group with community, location 1, 14/02/11
ceremonies (and a preference for Christian baptism) is but another example of the tension between tradition and modernity.

This study found only four references to traditional cleansing with the women all coming from the different tribes of Loma, Kpelle, Gola, Kru. The participant from the Gola tribe commented:

Yes, they bathed me. One of my uncles did it. It wasn’t my will to do those things. Traditionally they bathed me to be clean from bad luck.  

However, what is not clear here is if these references to bathing are in fact baptism into a formal religion. For example one self-demobilised woman recounted:

Yes. I hadn’t seen my people for 14 years and when they saw me they were very happy and took me to church to pray for me. They also bathed me because the medicine I used to play with affected my children.  

This woman had already discussed that she had been a naked lucky charm at the front of the troop and a carrier of a ‘Pot of Juju’. The term Juju can have numerous meanings but according to Awolalu and Dopamu (1979, p.24) it if frequently used to refer to medicine or magic and as a consequence West-African traditional religions have been described as magico-religious (Lucas 1970, p.317). From discussions I had with a range of informants it emerged that often Juju involves placing curses and spells on people, practices that are greatly feared. Lucas (1970, p.322) confirmed that by far the most common use for magic is for evil purposes and even I even encountered an acquaintance who told me his brother had been cursed, poisoned and died the month before. It is understandable then, that many women were reluctant to talk about these ritual forms of cleansing and when asked would often the women looked visibly uncomfortable, either looking down or away, refusing to answer or passing on to the next question quickly. Their responses could suggest that in general, it was no longer socially acceptable to be involved in traditional forms of religion in the post-conflict society and that formal non-indigenous religious activities (Christianity, Islam etc.) was now favoured. The prevalence of women using this

176 Interviewee, main programme, participant 7, location 8, 16/11/10
177 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 10, location 5, 22/11/10
178 Medicine in this context refers to remedial herbs, plants or prescriptions and denotes the means used for medical purposes (Lucas 1970, p.321).
179 Or simply that it was too secret to talk about with a stranger.
as a mechanism for social approval may also signify how the “born-again” devotional practices of evangelical Christianity conflate with tribal rituals. In this way Christianity may be seen to replicate and hence be more easily be substituted for older local religious beliefs and rituals as there are obvious parallels in traditional cleansing ceremonies and baptism.

Becoming a born-again Christian also afforded the women with an opportunity to widen their social support structures. For some, the support from religious networks thereby assisted them financially and emotionally:

You know after, my daughter’s father was helping me and then it stopped. My pastor from church helps me.\textsuperscript{180} Gifford (1993, p.288) suggests that in the 1980s the rise of religious observance was a corollary of the economic and social collapse of the country that occurred under Doe’s regime. During these difficult times people turned to religion to provide themselves with the relative stability of an alternate community. The many thousands that arrived in the capital looking for employment who could no longer rely on tribal support structures turned to Christianity and Islam for emotional support and a sense of shared identity (ibid). He argues that this was particularly the case for women who were often alone and bringing up children single-handed. The church provided them with care, status and a new identity.

This was also the case when mass post-war migrations to the capital resulted in the emergence of displaced communities seeking a sense of shared identity and inclusion. Furthermore, Fernando (2006 cited in Betancourt and Khan 2008) found that religion could be used as an important foundation of how trauma and healing are interpreted in war-affected children in Sri Lanka. This study found that orphans identified Buddhist religious practices as important for coping with daily existence and also to help them to make sense of their experiences of the war and associated trauma. Therefore, formally joining a world religion allows WAFFs/ex-combatants to deal with trauma and become part of the shared religious culture which they perceive appears to be vital for cohesion and acceptance.

\textsuperscript{180} Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 1, 18/11/10
The difficulty with promoting personal female reform in this way is that the Pentecostal churches are underpinned by patriarchal structures. Parsitau (2012) suggested that churches uphold the sanctity of the patriarchal family and offer few opportunities for women in leadership and decision making. Women are expected to provide support roles which can provide them with opportunities to learn new skills and gain confidence. However, the structure provides a paradox as whilst the church offers liberation for women it can also be disempowering and controlling. In spite of this, in her research in Kenya Parsitau has witnessed a rise in women founding their own ministries with ordained female clergy. In a similar fashion there is some evidence that female pastors are becoming prominent in Liberia with examples of Dr. Katurah York Cooper running to become the 2016 Episcopal bishop and several other women clergy members in different denominations.

However, for the majority of women the overwhelming patriarchy can negate any emancipatory advancements that the women may have achieved through the conflict and afterwards. As was seen in Chapter two, women’s roles frequently change over the duration of the conflict as they acquire new roles and responsibilities. This can give them an enabling level of empowerment. Frances Greaves confirmed these changing identities, suggesting that women who took on traditionally male activities began to question their pre-war gender roles:

So women had realised that ‘hey, our liberties are more lax’ you know, they did not want to go back to the start where they were submissive and the man made the decisions because at the time of the war they were making decisions.181

However, as the DDRR programme promotes behaviours that were concurrent with pre-war gender roles, particularly through psychosocial counselling and community structures, it undid much of the positive identity development which women may have experienced during war time. In short, the process of reintegration stifled their opportunities to embrace the post-war moment and capitalise upon gains that women had made.

181 Interview with Frances Greaves, Head of Women’s NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and local NGO Voice of the Voiceless, Monrovia, 19/04/10
Whilst most women were prepared to revert to these traditional gender norms in order to reintegrate successfully, a few maintained their own agency over their reintegration. Not wanting to fit in with a prescribed masculine agenda they took responsibility for making changes for themselves. A respondent in a focus group in the capital explained how she strove for autonomy:

I sat down one day, I looked at myself, I looked at my life and I woke up. I said, this thing, that’s foolishness. I need to do something for my future and my children. And now, I’m doing better things for myself. I sent for my Mum, she’s here with me. I’m selling, doing everything, sending my children to school, sending myself to school – I [am] attending night school – just for me to be [an] independent woman tomorrow. 182

Another women reflected:

I’ve started a new life and I’m going to school to try and become someone in society. 183

Importantly, when the women were asked whether life was better for women in general today, most responded that the advancements in gender laws have improved and provided some opportunities for women:

Yes, I can say yes, because now we have general equality now. We have women and children’s protection units, and if someone in the community does something very wrong, you can go to the police station, you know and they will settle it. For me, I feel that things are improving. 184

Another echoed this opinion:

For now, life is OK with us, because we have our rights. Men can’t just command us to do anything as before, because we know our rights. 185

In spite of this, many of the women suggested that life had only improved for certain for some women and that for those who lived in poor communities with little education, it was very hard to find work:

Women get opportunity if you learn. It’s better for women today, but only if you have learned and been to school. Then, you can get a job. But if you don’t learn, you will sell pepper, sell coal and life will be hard for you. 186

That being said, there were some examples of women who challenged the social position they were expected to fulfill. Whilst there were relatively few success stories from the DDRR programme in this sample, there were some women that proved it is possible to contest traditional female roles. See example in Box 3.

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182 Focus group participant, Monrovia, 02/10
183 Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 16, location 1, 14/02/11
184 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 1, 18/11/10
185 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 8, 16/11/10
186 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 11, location 8, 09/02/11
Martha lives in a town outside Monrovia, is 40 years old and a mother of five children. During the conflict, around the year 2000 she was forced to join LURD forces and was a front line fighter for approximately three years. With the advent of the peace agreement in 2004 she registered in the disarmament process and waited a further two years to access her vocational skills training where she chose to take masonry training, and was one of only two women that graduated from a class of sixty men. She proudly displayed her certificate and said that she was the spokeswoman for the entire training group, challenging organisational decisions the group were not happy about. Despite not receiving the promised toolkit she has managed to establish a small business and undertakes masonry contracts in her town. Three men now work for her. Having this trade has made a significant difference to her life as prior to the conflict she was engaged in informal market trading with the attendant financial insecurity. She commented:

Before the war, things were hard. I didn’t know nothing then, before the war. I did not know trade, but with the trade I learnt I can earn something for myself.

She said that she found it easy to reintegrate into the community because:

I never did anything bad to anybody.

Her current support structures from the community were good and she would not rejoin the armed forces if war returned.

Box 3: From Female Fighter to Stone Mason

Such strong role models show that it is possible to challenge inequalities but these cases seem to be exceptional in this research. A number of women commented that they had new rights and are more empowered:

Because we have our rights. Men can’t just command us to do anything as before because we know our rights.

However, structural inequality issues have not been tackled in the DDRR programme. On the contrary, traditional gender stereotypes were reinforced by the complex mechanisms through which gender is created and sustained by social and power relations left unconsidered (Charlesworth 2005, p.13).

7.5.2 Considering the Community

Social reintegration theory also highlights the needs of the community and considers its absorption capacity. In other words, the success of social reintegration depends on the degree to which communities are willing to accommodate ex-combatants (Bowd and Ozerdem 2013). As well as allowing

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187 Interviewee, main programme, participant 5, location 8, 16/11/10
188 Interviewee main programme participant 1, location 8, 16/11/10
for the characteristics of those reintegrating, the characteristics of the community and broader society must be taken into account (Jennings, 2007, p.213). Reintegration initiatives need to be embedded into community structures to give both the community and the ex-combatant, a degree of ownership over the process. Highlighting participatory processes and establishing community development initiatives, allows for the development of mutual respect and understanding and the opportunity to plan for a common future. It also helps to develop the trust and support networks which allow the economic potential of training programmes to be harnessed. Furthermore, it addresses resentment and fear issues that are commonly cited:

Yes, yes, ah! Because when you think about their attitudes in the war and they coming back into the community it worried people a lot.\(^{189}\)

Communities sometimes feel aggrieved that as the victims they receive nothing and that the ex-combatants receive all of the assistance. An ex-combatant male in a focus group related such sentiments:

For me, other people who did not fight the war and are dwellers of other communities, seeing ex-combatants are coming back will have bad feelings for them. So if people don’t sensitise them about the ex-combatants, they will have a bad feeling for them. People will start to mock you.\(^{190}\)

This research found little evidence of reconciliation initiatives in Liberia, other than some radio programming that encouraged communities to accept the ex-combatants back. This lack of formalised reconciliation was particularly short sighted since this is a key aspect of conflict transformation. Lederach (1997, pp.26-29) conceptualises reconciliation as a social space where people come together and where truth and forgiveness converge. Without proper reconciliation, misconceptions surrounding ex-combatants can come to be accepted as the truth believed by receiving communities. Unless they are addressed directly they can result in stigma, xenophobia and prejudice, all of which risk further isolation and trauma for those trying to start a new life.

\(^{189}\) Focus group, participant 4, location 1, 14/02/11
\(^{190}\) Focus group, male ex-combatants, Monrovia, 12/11/10
A lack of reconciliation activities means that women are discouraged from speaking out about their experiences resulting in community misconceptions of them which are commonly based on rumours (Coulter 2009, p.212). It also places the onus on the ex-combatant to revise their attitude and conduct rather than acknowledging that the whole community must engage in reconciliatory activities. In one WAFF/ex-combatant focus group, community sensitisation was called for:

(...) for the community sensitisation it is good to tell the people in the community because for some people when we returned, they will be calling us with names. So for the people to come behind us and talk to the community people it is good to come and do that. This will help to reduce the misinformation from some of our friends. 191

There are also numerous precepts within the established community which by their very nature encompass community forgiveness and which could have been utilised. Linking back to cleansing rituals and symbolic ceremonies, these are useful to build trust between the community and ex-combatants and may assist with trauma and healing. According to Nilsson (2005, p.57) such rituals can symbolise a combatant's metamorphosis from warrior to civilian and mark their acceptance into the community. This was popular with RENAMO fighters in Mozambique but tend to have more impact in rural locations.

Placing emphasis on local practices privileges indigenous forms of reconciliation and may include village chiefs, elders and advisory boards, which settle disputes. Women in this study commented that perpetrators of local community violence were punishable by a system of fines imposed by the chiefs rather than using the formalised central systems that had been established through the government campaigns. The traditional Palava hut is also used in some localities to resolve intra-community conflict. However, Raddatz (2013, p.191) states that these systems are patently predominated by male gender bias as elders who administer process are men who almost always subscribe to traditional practices. Such gender-segregated secret societies can, in some cases, teach returning ex-combatants appropriate behavior and respect (Podder 2012, p.195). The difficulty here once more is that women are being

191 Focus Group, location 9, participant 1, 09/02/11
forced into their pre-war gender roles, which, if they have embraced a new identity during the conflict may be frustratingly disempowering. Further empirical evidence is needed to fully understand the ways in which secret societies continue to function in the post-conflict context and how they affect the integration of WAFFs/ex-combatants who subscribe or do not subscribe to their practices.

7.5.3 Sustainable Employment
Providing sustainable employment for ex-combatants is another avenue to social reintegration. Many women expressed the need to have a consistent income in order for them to plan for the future and ensure their children’s education. However, the reintegration programme in Liberia focussed on providing vocational training and education which usually has limited success in terms of sustainability. The women’s experiences of the economic and educational reintegration opportunities will now be outlined below as well as a comment on the sustainability of these aspects of the programme.

7.5.3.1 Economic Reintegration
In this study it was revealed that upon leaving the cantonments the women often had to wait many months or years to access their training due to the large numbers that had registered. In the capital this was exacerbated by the rapid urbanisation in the post-conflict period (Paes 2005, p.258). This meant that in some cases the women ultimately chose not to take part in the training as they had meanwhile established themselves with an alternative livelihood such as petty trading. Jennings (2009, p.480) states that this delay impacted more significantly on women with only 50 per cent eventually accessing reintegration programmes as compared to 70 per cent of males. The residual caseload was put into place at the end of the reintegration to attend to those that had not accessed their reintegration assistance. When those women who took part in the residual caseload programme were asked why they did not take their training initially, some described situations in which the training centres were over-subscribed and uncomfortable.
It is worth noting here that as part of the reintegration package individuals also had the opportunity to take part in formal education and return to school. Only five of the women spoken to adopted this course. This may have been because most had limited prior education and they therefore perceived the skills training as being more useful to them. Also it could simply be the fact that classes were mixed with other non-combatants and very often there may have been an adult sharing a classroom with children which the women found personally embarrassing:

...I never entered school as I was so big so I decided on trade instead of school.192

Furthermore, a large proportion of women had received no education at all prior to the conflict and were completely illiterate. The majority only had basic education up to primary level. See Figure 9.

Figure 11: Education Levels of WAFFs/Ex-Combatants

There were mixed reactions to the skills training in the main phases of the programme. This could be explained by differences between the quality of the training in different centres. There were also different timescales, with some women reporting training for a couple of months and others training for up to a year. There were several accounts of women not completing the process citing

192 Interviewee, main programme, participant 4, location 8, 16/11/10
multiple reasons but most often sickness, pregnancy or childcare issues, which meant that they were obliged to drop out. It appears that there were few opportunities for them to postpone their training until a more suitable time. For example, one woman reflected as to why she had not graduated:

I was pregnant at that time, because I had a miscarriage I had to stop. 193

In addition the training frequently did not include childcare provision for the women. As such, women often had to bring children along to the training which hampered their progression as they were unable concentrate fully. Furthermore, in the residual caseload there were reports of poor teaching with trainers not turning up, and as a result women felt that they had wasted their time.

The majority of women in both phases also complained that even if they did finish the training they were often not provided with the graduation certificate essential to improve the chance of getting employment. This reflection illustrates the issue:

(…) they did not give us a certificate, they did not give us nothing. They promised to bring the certificate but they never brought it. 194

In addition, those who took part were expecting to be given a package of tools upon graduation so that they could fully implement what they had learnt. All but three participants (and 5 who went into formal education) did not receive materials. Understandably the women felt very frustrated and angry about such promises not being honored:

The people promise us that when we learn the trade they were going to give us many things. For instance, if you learn tailoring, tie-dying, carpentry or masonry and graduate, they will give you materials to live your own life, but nothing came through which hurt my feelings. Whenever you learn something, it is good to put such skills into practice which proves that you can rely on such skill to get a little money to support yourself. But this did not happen, there was no materials after the training, that is how some of us are sitting down and doing nothing. It made us feel bad about the process. For the beginning the process was good but at last they spoilt it. 195

As for me the people told us that when we go through the nine months training and graduate, we will be able to get benefit which included machine to start life. But after I went through the process I never got anything, I felt bad. 196

193 Interviewee, main programme, participant 3, location 2, 17/11/10
194 Interviewee, main programme, participant 6, location 8, 16/11/10
195 Focus Group, Main programme, location 8, 16/11/10
196 Focus Group, Main programme, location 8, 16/11/10
A woman who took masonry training discussed how the implementers wanted it to look like they had received toolkits by boring a hole at the bottom of their ID cards to indicate that they had received the kit. She reported:

When the card has four holes bored, it indicates that you have finished the whole process. After the training, the class noticed the first group never got any toolkits, so the class decided they [the implementers] would not put the last hole in the ID card to show that they had got materials. But the people fooled us and put the hole in without giving us anything. They promised us zinc, cement, shovels….¹⁹⁷

The lack of toolkits was most certainly an effect of the under-resourcing in the main programme. However the provision of toolkits for the residual caseload does not seem to have been much more forthcoming even though there were more appropriate budgets in place. In this instance, it seems to be an outcome of corruption as opposed to poor planning. A number of women in this phase of the programme described how the DDRR trainers sold the equipment or used it for their own gains:

They said there were no tools for us. They [the trainers] had machines but the people used to bring trucks and take them to Monrovia. After the training Ellen [the president] called all the things that were made in the programme to the pavilion for people to buy in an exhibition. They gave the money to the head but they stole the money from the goods that were sold.¹⁹⁸

No, because they didn’t give it [tools] to us. I am sure that the funds came to the people who were controlling the centre but they didn’t give it to us.¹⁹⁹

This is surprising since the UN system favoured the DEX mode outlined in Chapter five. UNDP would have ensured that monies were not transferred via national structures to try and prevent corruption. Obviously what did not happen sufficiently in the last phase was close monitoring and evaluation to prevent issues such as these arising. Trusted NGOs were used in this phase and perhaps less attention was paid to implementation issues given that the rest of the programme was already complete and the residual caseload was beginning to wind down. In his study (N = 127) of participatory approaches to DDR in Sierra Leone and Liberia, Kilroy (2012, p.226) produced a similar finding with regards to toolkits. He highlights numerous examples of broken promises, and corruption.

¹⁹⁷ Interviewee, main programme, participant 5, location 8, 16/11/10
¹⁹⁸ Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 12, location 8, 05/02/11
¹⁹⁹ Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 2, location 4, 11/02/11
As a result, only 19 per cent of women felt that they had got what they were promised from the DDRR process in terms of benefits and employment. Interestingly they tended to be clustered in one community near to the Barclay Training Centre in Monrovia. The rest felt that they had been cheated or that the process did not meet their expectations in some way. This is comparable with Pugel’s (2007, p.46) larger mixed-gender study (N = 590). He found that 90 per cent of respondents who participated in reintegration training believed that the training they received through the DDRR programme would ensure sustainable income. Likewise, in this study women emphatically asserted that their expectations had not been met, that they often felt they had been lied to and that they had not received the benefits that they believed had been pledged to them:

Because of the promises that when we disarm they were going to give us things. But after the disarmament I never saw any of those promises being fulfilled. 200

They said they would give us money. They said they would do plenty for us. They said they would put us in a group and build a shop for us, give us materials so we could make things and sell them to make life better for ourselves. 201

Johnson Bohr the head of the local NGO, NEPI, that works with ex-combatants, explained why this situation arose:

Lots of fighters were upset that they did not get what they thought they would. The programme did not take into account illiteracy rates so information got distorted about DDRR so it resulted in misconceptions of expectations. Things that were said on the radio made people think that reconstruction and development would be immediate i.e. after DDRR you would get a job. 202

Unfortunately, the situation did not appear to be more favourable in the residual caseload programme with respect to managing expectations. As one disappointed respondent noted about the process:

But the last training phase that I went through, they never treated us good. I felt bad because they never taught us good. We only went for six months and out of the six months they said we graduated. When we graduated they never give us anything so I feel bad. 203

When Kilroy (2012) asked what participants would avoid doing if they were running a DDR programme themselves, 32 per cent mentioned corruption or theft as the aspect they would prevent. To make matters worse, for those that

200 Focus group, Main programme, location 8, 16/11/10
201 Interviewee, main programme, participant 3, location 8, 16/11/10
202 Interview with Johnson Bohr, NEPI Inc., 24/02/10
203 Focus group, residual caseload, location 3, 10/02/11
felt dissatisfied, there was no formal grievance procedure to allow for them to seek redress for benefits that were not received or for alleged corruption (Human Rights Watch 2005, p.63).

In the rare instances where women received these toolkits they were frequently expected to share them with other women. The difficulty with this approach is that if someone wanted to move to a new location then the equipment was often sold so that each person received their share:

They gave a certificate but they gave a machine to 3-4 persons. But if I stay in Tubmanburg but the others want to leave we had to sell it and share the money because none of us can use one machine.204

In informal chats with UNDP workers during the data collection, the selling of toolkits was frequently cited as the rationale for not providing other cycles with equipment although undoubtedly the realities of budgetary constraints must have played a significant part. In Sierra Leone, Coulter (2005) found that training there was also often too short and did not provide sufficient materials for women to procure an income. Moreover, she found that there was often little emphasis on ensuring the beneficiaries understood the economic viability of the skills or the basic principles of business. In any case, there was not enough demand for products or services being offered.

This study does however reveal that in the cases of women that were given toolkits all three reported that they were doing well and using their skills to survive or had used them to send themselves to school. The first case completed computer training and she was given tools at the end to repair computers. Whilst she does not use this skill now she has managed to find herself a sponsor and is at school. She describes her life in the following way:

Things are fine, they are really fine. It is well improved since after the war because I associate myself with good friends and sponsors around me and I’m going to school.205

The second case learnt and graduated in hairdressing through the vocational training. She considers her life to be ‘alright’, uses the skills to style hair and is also sending herself to school. She also has the support of her mother and

204 Interviewee, main programme, participant 7, location 8, 16/11/10
205 Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 1, 18/11/10
boyfriend. The final case went back to live with her family and also completed hairdressing training and reported being provided with tools:

Yes, they gave me hair roller, comb, pressing iron.206

Through the training, toolkit and support structures she has opened a successful business. This confirms that the provision of a toolkit can provide women with the opportunity to make a living for themselves and without it the skills acquired are rendered of futile. This ensures the sustainability of the economic opportunities for the women over the long term and results in a much greater impact.

A further drawback of the main programme was that there was little evidence of a systematic job market analysis. The skills provided often needed substantial start-up capital or the materials to employ these skills usefully. The residual caseload on the other hand, appeared to have been more successful at conducting a job market analysis and finding out which skills women wanted to acquire and what would be sustainable with minimal resources. This approach is vital in a post-conflict environment where unemployment levels can be high. Flooding the market with one skill or teaching trades which have high startup costs are common shortcomings in reintegration programmes. This research found that 71.5 per cent of those interviewed in the residual caseload were using the skills learned from reintegration to assist themselves financially, compared to 28.5 per cent in the main phase. This is almost certainly derived from the fact that the majority had trained in cosmetology, which includes hair plaiting, (a popular activity and livelihood for women in Liberia). Despite not being given toolkits this trade is relatively easy to implement with modest start-up capital and is flexible enough to fit around other commitments. One participant commented:

If my friends come, I plait their hair and they give me small money.207

It’s OK. It’s not like how I were living before. Through my fixing hair I get a little thing [money] and my sister and myself we add our money together and we eat.208

206 Interviewee, main programme, participant 2, location 10, 17/11/10
207 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 4, location 4, 03/02/11
208 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 6, location 4, 11/01/11
I tell God thank you, at least I can plait someone’s hair. I plait one or two people’s hair. Even the little money can help me and my children.  

Although many said that they could not survive solely on this trade they found it gave them some additional income or they could do it when they had money for materials in the case of soap making and tie-dye. Conversely, those in the main programme were left at the end of the training with a skill that is difficult to implement without assistance (e.g. tailoring, masonry, bakery, auto mechanics). Another WAFF lamented:

If they gave us the toolkits we can help ourselves.  

7.5.3.2 Sustainability of Economic Opportunities

The unsustainable nature of skills training had a significant impact on the WAFFs/ex-combatants. The failure of the DDRR to provide useful, productive livelihoods for the women meant that most engage in the informal market and in petty trading endeavors which they refer to as ‘selling’. Informal activity such as this is estimated to account for 80-90 per cent of the labour force in Liberia (Jennings 2009, p.485). Frances Greaves, who heads a women’s NGO based in the Capital, reports that:

(...) poverty is a major situation for women in Liberia. In terms of sustainability, you find women in the informal trading sector but most of the informal trading is just to put food on the table.  

Therefore, whilst most women were able to earn a living, trading can lead to inconsistent returns in a crowded market with few opportunities for women to save for other expenses. Some women mentioned that they joined a ‘Daily Susu’. This is a local microfinance scheme which encourages saving and is one of Africa’s most ancient traditional banking systems popular across West Africa. According to Alabi et al (2007, p.202) the system involves regular and periodic deposits of fixed amounts which is made available to the owner after a specified period or allows them to borrow within the scheme for a set fee. Some consider the initiative to be risky because it is not regulated by the government but it thrives on self-regulation by the operators. However, these initiatives are vital for women who do not have access to formal banking and live in insecure

209 Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 4, location 4, 11/01/11  
210 Interviewee, main programme, participant 6, location 1, 11/11/10  
211 Interview with Frances Greaves, Head of Women’s NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and local NGO Voice of the Voiceless, Monrovia, 19/04/10
locations. It also allows them to borrow money which can be useful for starting up small businesses. Specific forms of women’s Susu have been documented in Sierra Leone which comprise more of an informal support network. Called Osusu, this type of scheme is a system of revolving savings where the women contribute a certain amount every week/month which is then distributed to each member one after another so that each gets their share (Coulter 2009, p.198). If conducted fairly these initiatives can be an important source of financial support for women with inconsistent revenue streams.

Despite these systems, a small proportion of the women testified that they had no work and were trapped in a cycle of poverty, trying to survive whilst bringing up children in very difficult conditions. Presently, there is a very high unemployment rate, and the ILO estimate that approximately 85 per cent of the population that do not earn more than one dollar per day (Tamagnini and Krafft 2010, p.931). The precarious financial situation of many ex-combatants is further compounded by the feeling that they are overlooked by employers because of their past. Evidence of this was voiced in a focus group discussion in Tubmanburg where one WAFF/ex-combatant commented:

Even if you learn, for instance, masonry, when it comes to company jobs, they will take people from Monrovia to come and work in the rural communities. As a result we have no option but to sit down.212

Many other women expressed the frustration at not having employment which they referred to as ‘sitting down’ or ‘doing nothing’. Usually this did not include any informal trading they may have been engaged in, as this did not seem to count as a real ‘job’ in their view. More disturbingly, in a general chat after one interview had ended, one woman recounted that in order to get a job women were often expected to provide ‘extra’ services. She said:

Job opportunities are very difficult now. One of the many reasons is that when you go to the, how you call it, the employment agency, they will ask you to take a test and say please bring it back - it is free. And when you go there sincerely and you sit for the test and then you pass the test, they will ask you for money – $75 USD. Where you taking the funds from? You are not working. And if you don’t provide that money you will be denied that job. They will not give the job to you. I feel that it is not right, yes. If you don’t have money to beat the system, you won’t get the job. **TN (research assistant):** or they ask you to sleep with them.

Yes, it happen to me. I went to the place and I took my test and I passed because the test was very easy and then they asked me for 75USD and because I didn’t have the

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212 Focus Group, main programme, location 8, 16/11/10
money I went back to the man and he said that I should lie down with him before he
gives me the job. So I told him no, I will not work for him. 213
Despite campaigns attempting to counteract this situation, it seems to be
commonplace. Furthermore the incidences of sexual harassment in the
workplace are so common that it is frequently not reported and there are no
accurate statistics of its prevalence or laws to combat it (Williams 2011).

As a result of the lack of sustainable employment opportunities, other women in
this sample complained that it was hard to get basic necessities such as food:

It's not easy now because some days we can't get food to eat and we have to sleep like
that [with an empty stomach]. 214
Women explained that having no employment means that their living conditions
are challenging:

For now, things are a little bit hard because of my financial problems. I really want to go
to school and continue my education. I have no money so things are hard.

In a focus group in Monrovia a women described their plight:

There's no jobs, nothing. How will they make it? So-so poverty life we (are) living. We
don't have money. Some of us are living poverty life. Some of us are living poverty life,
and some of us, we don't want to live like that. Some of us, we know ourselves, we
know how we were living before. 215

Figure 10 illustrates how women from the main programme are surviving today.
Pugel’s (2007, p.6) study found that ex-combatants who completed the entire
process had an overall 8 per cent increase in socio-economic situation when
compared to those fighters who self-demobilised.

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213 Interviewee main programme participant 1, location 1, 18/11/10
214 Interviewee, main programme, participant 6, location 8, 16/11/10
215 Focus group, WAFFs/ex-combatants, Monrovia, 02/10
Despite these difficulties, 76 per cent of women from the main programme and 76 per cent of women in the residual caseload, confirmed their living conditions were acceptable. However, in the residual caseload many more were using the skills that they had learned in the reintegration to earn a living. See Figure 11.

Figure 12: How WAFFs/Ex-Combatants are Surviving Today: Main Programme

Figure 13: How WAFFs/Ex-Combatants are Surviving Today: Residual caseload
In contrast, women who self-demobilised conceded that their living conditions were very demanding:

I’m suffering. I got my own room but I have nothing inside it. I just have a matt on the floor.\textsuperscript{216}

(...) for now I sell orange. My little daughter cannot go to school and not eat. If I had done DDRR my life would be much better.\textsuperscript{217}

Before the war life was alright for me, I had food to eat. Now things are very hard for me, man.\textsuperscript{218}

Many of these women found that daily survival was a challenge and 65 per cent agreed that their living conditions were not satisfactory and that life was ‘hard’. Very few had a regular income. See Figure 12.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure14}
\caption{How WAFFs/Ex-Combatants are Surviving Today: Self-Demobilised}
\end{figure}

Insufficient money to survive resulted in at least one case in which woman had no choice but to turn to prostitution. Hh Zaizay who works for the Gender Ministry of the Liberian Government added his voice and experience on the subject:

\textsuperscript{216} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 6, location 5, 22/11/10
\textsuperscript{217} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 5, location 5, 22/11/10
\textsuperscript{218} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 4, location 5, 22/11/10
That is what you say if you ever talk to any girl who says I go out at night to hustle, it means I’m a prostitute. I spoke at a conference some time ago and I said the idea of girls selling sex after the war can also be attributed to the lack of economic opportunities for these women so they resort into a survival strategy. She has to live...\(^{219}\)

There were other testimonies from women suggesting that they or their friends in the past have had no choice but engage in transactional sex for money to survive:

(…) at night time, when you walk on the road you come across friends standing in the street corners calling for men as an act of prostitution. \(^{220}\)

I can’t get money. I beg someone to help as the father go [her baby’s father]. I go on the streets.\(^{221}\)

Living conditions is very difficult such that when you are not strong enough to do for yourself, you will end up getting involved with prostitution work. And the men will take advantage of you for little or nothing.\(^{222}\)

This study reveals an interesting exceptional case in this group who had managed to capitalise on the peacekeeping economy.\(^{223}\) This woman said that she has managed to get a job as a house girl for a UN staff member and she was very well dressed compared to her counterparts. Whilst she had managed to get regular employment, the peacekeeping economy can also provide demand for the local sex industry, which often flourishes. In a recent study by Beber et al (in press), a sample of 1441 women aged 18-30 in Greater Monrovia were asked a series of questions about their experiences of transactional sex with peacekeepers. Their anonymous answers revealed that nearly one third of the sample had engaged in transactional sex with an UNMIL peacekeeper and highlights that for some women, their lack of alternative paid work and difficult conditions, drive them towards the streets.

This supports MacKenzie’s (2007) notion of idleness = prostitution for ex-combatant women. She purports that the female equivalent of idleness = instability for men is the concern that idle women will turn to prostitution to survive. However, Jennings (2009, pp.481-3) asserts that rarely are women in

\(^{219}\) Interview with Hh Zaizay, Ministry of Gender, Monrovia, 20/11/10
\(^{220}\) Focus Group, main programme, location 1, 15/11/10
\(^{221}\) Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 5, location 3, 03/02/11
\(^{222}\) Interviewee, main programme, participant 1, location 2, 19/11/10
\(^{223}\) The peacekeeping economy refers to the services and business that appear when a peacekeeping operation comes to a country/region.
post-conflict situations really ‘idle’ as they perform multiple roles as caregivers and as income-generators. Usually, prostitution is linked to their victimisation and desperation which affords a different dynamic to the idleness = instability presumption about males. She suggests that this idleness = instability narrative drives much of DDRR’s rationale which is therefore inherently gendered. Thereby, because women do not provide the same level of threat they are less important.

Similarly, McMullin (2012) presents an alternative perspective which mirrors the same ideas but for male ex-combatants. He considers that by assuming that all male ex-combatants are a threat can be equally damaging and filters the way that the DDRR programme is delivered. The ‘threat narrative’ that underpins DDR’s rationale is therefore limited. For McMullin it is another form of metropolitan condescension arising from the liberal peace approach which attaches labels to ex-combatants suggesting that they are all dangerous, apolitical and would rejoin if war resumed. McMullin criticises this causal chain as fallacious and suggests that unemployment does not necessarily lead to people taking up arms. It is also important to remember that not all those civilians who have not fought are helpless victims. They too can cause difficulties within communities. It points once more to the need to consider local context within DDR, not just with regards to women’s multiple identities but also to male ex-combatants and community dynamics. The difficulty here is that the international peacebuilding system that implements DDR, is worried that these local processes could permeate or even subvert the liberal project. According to Richmond (2011, p.153), local methods have an ambiguous position in the West as whilst premodern, undeveloped, clientelistic, patriarchal, patrimonial and corrupt they are also able to support the modern state so are a potential threat.

However, despite McMullin’s assertions, the lack of sustainable employment undoubtedly causes incidences of crime rates to rise. In the community focus groups there were frequent references to ex-combatants committing crimes, particularly armed robbery, along with drug use and gambling:
A community member reflected:

Some of them actually change but some of them are not satisfied yet. This is what I am telling you and this is what brings a lot of armed robbery. People have been used to arm and even when we are sleeping they rob….the ex-combatants are catching a hard time so many of them are in the street….many of them are frustrated and they are on the street some of them have turned crazy, many of them are crazy.  

Another responded similarly:

The act of getting things from people by force has been part of their wartime life and they have gotten use to it. The moment they take the narcotic drug they can become aggressive and most often insulting community members. This behaviour is a serious problem and only the Government can get rid of it by coming up with a penalty, such as serving a jail term for six month or one year in prison which will be better, that is my opinion.

Another member commented that gambling was particularly prevalent within his community:

Three places here in the community people play gamble for 24 hours. Those people are ex-combatants that have been relocated to this community. Like right around the school building here you come here at night and it can be full. You go in the government toilet (they can have one light there), people there are playing gamble.

Non-sustainable employment magnifies these problems and affects the social cohesion of the community. Since 2006 however, UNMIL have created over 75,000 jobs in short-term intensive programs which include ex-combatants and women (who make up 20 per cent). These programmes have rehabilitated 600km of primary road networks and engaged people in more sustainable agriculture (Tamagnini and Krafft 2010, p.19). In an impact assessment conducted by the Liberian Institute for Public Administration in 2008 in four counties, it was furthermore found that short-term labour intensive programmes had a positive impact on security in communities where there was a perception that crime had fallen. The communities more readily accepted those who were engaged in legal employment while those employed were likely to reinvest the income received into expanding their livelihood activities (ibid). As a result, 70 per cent concluded that their living conditions had improved and 90 per cent felt that short-term employment had helped to increase community peace and reconciliation. This example demonstrates the link between social reintegration and economic reintegration, and is a telling illustration of how the provision of sustainable income generation is a critical link in the chain towards social acceptance.

224 Focus Group with Community, location 1, 14/02/11
225 Focus Group with Community, location 1, 14/02/11
226 Focus Group with Community, location 1, 14/02/11
Petty trading also provides a link between social and economic factors. The process of trading in agricultural products or cheap commercial goods is vital to most women to varying degrees. Coulter (2009, p.195) suggests that the success of trading in Sierra Leone was dependent on personal relations with selling on credit seen as a way to maintain and strengthen relationships. Selling on credit allowed women to ‘save’ money for future use and conceal it from husbands and boyfriends. It also allowed women to generate informal networks which were durable enough to provide food and support throughout the conflict with women often risking their personal safety to deliver food to people. In a similar way these associations were drawn upon during the Liberian women’s movement’s Mass Action for Peace and in post-conflict reconstruction. Today the Sirleaf Market Women’s Fund has been instantiated by the president with a view to strengthening such market women’s networks and creating initiatives for women marketeers. During the conflict, 78 per cent of the informal sector was made up of market women and today there are approximately 450,000 market women in Liberia (SMWF 2012).

During the course of this research I was fortunate enough to visit a women’s market in Paynesville in Monrovia (see Appendix C for a description and photographs). Here, on the outskirts of the capital a women’s market and empowerment project has been established by a local Liberian woman, who saw a need to help the women to trade in that location and strengthen the market women’s network. By applying for small grants from international donors, the community cleared the forest and established a covered market area. Using the local networks, both WAFFs/ex-combatants and civilian women were trained in food preservation techniques, literacy, small business management and health awareness. The centre and market are used exclusively for the women to trade and a school built for children to attend while their mothers work. This market provides an important social network for the women and fortified existing networks. One woman said:
If someone is unhappy we talk to each other and counsel each other, we support each other of we have difficulties. By capitalising upon the existing networks, the project has been very far-reaching and over 350 women now run the market under the leadership of a democratically elected female market superintendent. Another declared:

I am proud of this project. I have got so much experience from here. The programme made me active. Through adult literacy I can read and write and when I sell I know how to manage my money. The programme has made me proud and I am proud of myself.

This project shows that maximising the potential of existing social networks and embedding the programme into the community facilitates the social and economic success of those involved and increases the likelihood of employment sustainability.

In light of these findings it can be concluded that the sustainability of economic reintegration was generally poor in the main phase of the programme, largely because of the limited circulation of toolkits and graduation certificates. The impact of the programme on women’s lives was minimal. In the residual caseload there was a more comprehensive job market analysis, which meant that the skills offered for women were easier to implement, but poor teaching and corruption resulted in women still not receiving the post-reintegration benefits that they were promised. The gender mainstreaming of the programme was not evident. Other than offering certain courses for women which were often highly gender biased, they were not provided with any other opportunities to meet their needs, such as childcare assistance and opportunities to postpone training on medical grounds.

These omissions suggest that gender mainstreaming of economic reintegration in its current format would benefit from revision and to ensure its sustainability. In order to do this, women must firstly be represented within the planning stage of DDR programmes along with more extensive research on the ground to properly ascertain women’s needs for economic reintegration. Such information could then be used to design a more appropriate and effective programme with

\[227\] Market woman, Paynesville, 15/02/11
\[228\] Market woman, Paynesville, 15/02/11
an extended timeframe based on women’s needs and current skill level. This would acknowledge their changed roles and support and expand expertise. Most crucially, appropriate financing must be put into place so that the programme can be run more effectively and allow women to use the skills learned in economic reintegration and to ensure their sustainability. A scheme that arranges small cash loans to start businesses and buy equipment and acquire basic skills in business management, should also be included to enhance training and employment sustainability. Full details of the scheme should be communicated clearly to those awaiting training, with timely and continuous monitoring and evaluation to help manage expectations.

7.5.4 Civic Responsibilities
The final element of the social reintegration model concerns the ex-combatants’ civil responsibilities. Ozerdem (2012, p.67) views this in three ways; through justice mechanisms which deal with crimes committed by ex-combatants during the conflict; whether they respect the rule of law in the post-conflict society; and whether they are involved in decision-making mechanisms (political reintegration), such as voting or involvement in community groups and structures. Although this study had no explicit remit to record civic responsibilities it nonetheless unearthed some evidence of spontaneous fulfillment of such responsibilities.

There was evidence of women actively engaging in community responsibilities and a number of women spoke about how they could be trusted to look after money. As one women proudly exclaimed:

> People trust me. Sometimes, you know, even in the house I am living in they call me the second landlord. I collect the rent. Even in the community organisation, I am the treasurer. I am a spokeslady in the community.

229 Interviewee residual caseload, participant 11, location 8, 09/11/10

In another community focus group reports of women taking on responsibilities in the wider community were highlighted. For example, one participant revealed:

> (...) some of them are holding big positions in the community, some of them are community leaders and youth leaders…some of them have used the DDRR process and benefitted from it.

230 Focus group participant, location 1, participant 5, 12/11/10
In one community, there was also some evidence of ex-combatants assisting with drain clearance and cleaning of the hospital compound. This was viewed very favourably by the community members who upheld the concept that civic engagement aids social reintegration. In a participatory action research study with young mothers who had been involved with armed groups McKay et al (2010, p.23) found evidence of some women in Liberia engaging in community projects. They cite an example of young mothers engaging in “community clearing” as a way of giving something back for support they have received from advisers and leaders and to reduce jealousy and increase goodwill. Thus engaging in civic responsibility increased their level of respect from the community which, in turn gave rise to further support and enhanced confidence.

Taking an interest in the country and community affairs shows a commitment to local processes which helps to foster good relations. Additionally, encouraging ex-combatants to participate in local democratic institutions ensures that they are able to influence decisions that affect them (Nilsson 2005, p.58). However, encouraging this political reintegration can be challenging. In a study by Soderstrom (2011, p.327) in Liberia, ex-combatants experiences in DDR was intricately linked to their political reintegration. The research revealed that participant’s feelings of efficacy in DDR were carried over to the political arena where ex-combatants continue to have a heightened sense of efficacy. By receiving socio-economic resources through reintegration training can signal a new pact with the post-war state. However, conversely if DDR programmes do not achieve the outcomes they promise it can be perceived as an additional failure of the state which can make the ex-combatant less likely to engage with it politically. This highlights the potential political ramifications of DDR programmes.

Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) mechanisms can be very useful for encouraging civic responsibilities of ex-combatants. If the community can see that ex-combatants are willing to testify in TRC mechanisms it can help to generate further reconciliation and trust which are key aims of both DDR and transitional justice. In integrated DDR programmes, coordinating the design of transitional
justice alongside DDR is now being suggested. This can have both positive and negative connotations. Duthie (2005, p.2) suggests that while some individual guilt is can be alleviated through TRCs, many ex-combatants believe the opposite is true and that they can stigmatise members of certain groups as criminals and create incorrect stereotypes. This hinders reintegration as members of the community misapprehend the ex-combatants and assign collective guilt to their actions (ibid). Conversely, some ex-combatants may seize the TRC as an opportunity to tell their story, ask for forgiveness and may ultimately assist in community reintegration (Cutter Patel 2009, p.255). Local justice procedures can also be utilised to promote trust so that mutual confidence is built between the former combatant and the community (Ozerdem 2009, p.21). These judicial processes (for example, the gacaca courts used after the Rwandan genocide) can be based on local customs and are more accessible to the community.231 However, they can also be inappropriate for addressing serious human rights violations and reinforcing gender biases and local discriminatory processes (Duthie 2005, p.39).

7.6 Psychological Reintegration: The Missing R

One area that Ozerdem’s model does not encompass is psychological reintegration, or rehabilitation in the Liberian programme. This was an aspect that arose in the testimonies of the women and thus important to consider in the analysis. The narrow focus of the reintegration training on livelihood provision in line with the liberal peace agenda also resulted in other vital aspects of reintegration being sidelined. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Rehabilitation component. Elements of psychological support and healing were purported to have been covered in the rehabilitation section. But as was

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231 The Rwandan gacaca courts are an interesting case study. In the post-conflict reconstruction period after the 1994 genocide the gacaca system was set up to deal with the enormous numbers of perpetrators. Gacaca means ‘justice in the grass’ and is based on a traditional method of dealing with disputes. 11,000 gacaca courts were established which has found nearly 800,000 people guilty of crimes during the conflict. The gacaca’s aims contradicted the DDR programmes which reintegrated 54,000 ex-combatants, and research suggested that ex-combatants did not mind testifying in front of the courts as huge backlogs means that they are skeptical that any allegations made will ever come to trial (Cutter Patel 2009, p.259).
observed in the previous chapter, actual planning for counselling and addressing trauma and psychological issues was scant. In fact, counselling tended to be delivered within demobilisation and usually consisted of gentle remonstrations relating to conduct and behaviour. Reflections by WAFFs on this topic revealed:

They used to give advice on how to live among people. Not be rude and misbehave.\(^\text{232}\) Another said:

(...) they would tell you that you have to forget about the past. You have to act normal. You have to face life.\(^\text{233}\)

What is interesting here is that the counselling focused on the WAFF/ex-combatant changing their behavior. There was little emphasis on the community and clarifying their role regarding acceptance. In some cases the pressure to reform could cause anxiety for the ex-combatant even before they returned to the community. Another example was discussed in a focus group in Tubmanburg:

(...) the counselling process taught us how to conduct ourselves in the community, whenever we heard about some things we should mind our business and avoid getting involved in gossip and live in the community with good conduct.

This example seems to be actively encouraging the WAFFs/ex-combatants not to get involved in community matters, which is in direct contradiction to conventional approaches to reconciliation and community restoration.

Some did receive further counselling during reintegration training (this was more prevalent in the residual caseload) but this seemed to be ad hoc and inconsistent across training centres. The counsellors themselves were usually trained by members of international NGOs or religious groups in basic therapeutic skills, but most of the trainers did not hold internationally recognised qualifications. As a result, the content and quality of the counselling varied from site to site, with no apparent unified approach to what was taught or whether it met the individual needs of traumatised women. Due to this poor psychosocial provision, the women relied on their social support networks to help them move on. For some this was through the church and for others talking to their friends and families. One woman said:

\(^{232}\) Interviewee, main programme, participant 2, location 1, 11/11/10
\(^{233}\) Interviewee, main programme, participant 5, location 1, 11/11/10
My pastor counsels me. If I sit alone, he talks to me and encourages me not to think about the past and only focus on the present. Your present is better than your past. If you think about the war and all the things you passed through, so so many bodies you see, your friend lying down. Sometimes if you go to bed your whole mind can be disturbed and you don’t get good sleep.\textsuperscript{234}

Others spoke of chatting with friends but the majority wanted to forget about the past and move on. Other studies such as (Betancourt and Khan, 2008) suggest that family connectedness and social support provide the essential protection related to reduced symptoms of distress and ability to cope in studies concerning child soldiers. In particular, they cite instrumental support (the help and assistance to carry out necessary tasks) and emotional support (that fostered self-esteem) was correlated with lower levels of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In the residual caseload, more attention was paid to psychosocial counselling. During an interview with a key informant who had worked for the UN on DDRR he revealed:

The major problem in DDRR is psychosocial reintegration. It was a major setback. In the residual caseload it was much better. It was very strong to incorporate women in the last phase to meet their needs.\textsuperscript{235}

Since the training had been poor for the women from this last phase, many said that they found the counselling useful and the best element of the process for them. In contrast to the counselling received in the main phases which emphasised behavioural change, it appeared to be broader and considered how the women should use their skills and interact with customers. In one locality a participant reflected upon her experiences:

Yes, the same lady that counselled us, she came to us and she counselled us to help us learn about how to prosper from what we learnt and the trade we are doing. It helped me a lot.\textsuperscript{236}

However, as with the main phases, the frequency of counselling ranged from one or two visits across a six month training block to weekly in some facilities.

The traditional type of ‘talking-based’ counselling in the format in which it is currently delivered in DDR can be extremely limited in terms of impact for those dealing with trauma, especially if it is restricted to a couple of sessions. Trauma

\textsuperscript{234} Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 12, location 1, 14/02/11
\textsuperscript{235} Interview with former UN DDR worker, Monrovia, 23/02/10, 02/02/11
\textsuperscript{236} Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 6, location 4

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symptoms can be wide-ranging and present differently so wherever possible, therapeutic intervention should be tailored to the individual. Due to the limited training of counsellors traditional techniques used for trauma such as cognitive behavioural therapy, narrative therapy or psychodynamic approaches may not be available. In such cases alternatives could be considered, such as confessional story telling or the use of psychodrama as an alternate to group therapy which recommends behavior change with little input from those involved (Kaminer and Eagle 2010). In a piece of participatory action research with young mothers who had been involved with fighting forces in four countries including Liberia, researchers found that developing dramas and songs which contained rich details of their lives with armed groups and pregnancy difficulties allowed the community to interact with the women and understand their experiences. This helped with acceptance and support (McKay et al 2010, p.13). However in parallel with such local level approaches within the larger structural rebuilding of the country, special attention should be given to amplifying mental health professionals, institutions and services for those individuals who continue to suffer from trauma and its associated symptoms.

In spite of that, a number of the women interviewed for this study mentioned that they still had difficulties dealing with wartime experiences which were not well attended to during DDRR in Liberia. The failure to prioritise these women’s particular psychosocial needs was one of the greatest deficiencies of the process. The severe trauma that many women experienced was insufficiently addressed and some women have still not dealt with their experiences and broke down in tears in interviews or displayed nervous body language. In the residual caseload phase, 53 per cent spoke of having nightmares and flashbacks and virtually all said that they wanted to forget about the past and move on. When asked to reflect on trauma one woman explained:

Sometimes when I talk about it I start crying because of the killing and dangerous things we did. 237

Another revealed:

I can dream about it, sometimes we are running, sometimes fighting. My mother died so I always see my mother in my dreams telling me to take a load and run. 238

237 Interviewee, residual caseload, location 4, participant 4, 03/02/11
Another self-demobilised woman explained how the trauma of her experiences in the war prevented her from taking part in DDRR:

As for me the reason why I never disarmed is that I suffered too much. As they were carrying me [being forced to go along], I was raped all on the road. The suffering I went through was very severe. More than five men went out with me. After raping me they killed my brother and sister so for me I have got [want] nothing to do with the war business. So that is why I never disarmed, I just decided to sit down and leave the government people with them and let them do what they want to do. 239

This highlights that the situation is complex for WAFFs/ex-combatants and the trauma of being a victim and a perpetrator can manifest itself in numerous ways.

A study by Johnson et al (2008, p.676) on mental health outcomes in Liberia found that of her sample of 1666 people, rates and symptoms of PTSD and major depressive disorder (MDD) were higher in former combatants and those that had experienced sexual violence (mainly women). Based on their findings and the current population of Liberia these researchers estimate that approximately 800,000 adults meet the criteria for PTSD and 750,000 adults for MDD. In addition they estimate that 205,000 adults have suicidal ideation and 112,000 adults may have attempted suicide (ibid, p.689). This confirms the high burden of psychiatric disease and highlights the urgent mainstreaming of psychosocial counselling in DDRR programmes and in particular that addresses the unique needs of traumatised females.

As Johnson’s study reveals, trauma of course, is not something that is exclusive to women but her’s and other studies have consistently shown that women and girls are likely to experience more fear and trauma than males during and after conflict. This is turn has important repercussions for trust levels and social institutions within communities (Moser and McIlwaine 2005, p.181). With that said, some males also experience PTSD. In this study, even with its relatively limited engagement with men, it found a former male ex-combatant calling for greater psychosocial assistance:

I really wanted to go through the process in order to cope with my traumatic situations and be useful to the society. I had fear of those people and I was intimidated that when they see me they will harm me. 240

238 Interviewee, residual caseload, location 8, participant 11, 05/02/11
239 Focus group, self-demobilised, location 5, 22/11/10
240 Focus group participant, location 1, participant 4, 12/11/10
What was also revealing was evidence of the desire for psychosocial assistance that emerged in focus group discussions with community members. This research found that there is tension, not just regarding the fact that WAFFs/ex-combatants received skills training or education, but in that they also received some psychosocial assistance. There was a desire for similar support within the broader community. One participant in a community focus group commented:

They say we should change our minds and attitudes but we are changing it. So to even rebuild Liberia we need to rebuild ourselves, when we rebuild ourselves emotionally then we can rebuild our country but if we cannot rebuild our minds and attitudes we cannot rebuild the country, we cannot.241

In South Africa Kaminer and Eagle (2010, p.154) suggest that looking beyond individual treatment and harnessing community support and resilience to enable a more holistic approach to be delivered has been found to be beneficial. This highlights the need for community rehabilitation and reconciliation activities, which should have been delivered in the rehabilitation component.

During the course of this research another reintegration programme was discovered. This was established for ex-combatants who had not gone through formal DDRR processes, but had illegally taken over the Guthrie Rubber Plantation that had been abandoned during the conflict. The Tumatu Agricultural Training Project (TATP) was run through the international NGO Landmine Action (now known as Action on Armed Violence) and it trained 400 ex-combatants at a residential agricultural training course in Tumatu, Bong County. The programme, which began in 2009, ran over a several months and aimed to train 400 participants at a time in various aspects of agricultural production (rubber culture, rice production, animal husbandry, vegetable production and tree crops (palm oil)). In addition, the students were taught basic literacy and given regular psychosocial counselling from onsite counsellors.

In an independent assessment of the project by Blattman and Annan (2011, pp. 19-21) they found that even though the counsellors were not trained mental health professionals there were some improvements in mental health indicators as a result of the programme. I was lucky enough to visit this project and

241 Focus group participant, location 7, participant 5, 16/02/11
interview some of the students who confirmed how important the counselling was to their reintegration. A participant recalled:

It helped me a lot because the mind I was having before, it changed to a new one. We used to see people fighting and go there to make peace. With the skills I learned I am respected in the community.\textsuperscript{242}

Another recounted:

It’s helping me because what I used to go through before, the violent behavior, I don’t do it. They also helped me to assist in the community and talk to them.\textsuperscript{243}

In tests for self-reported symptoms of PTSD\textsuperscript{244} and depression\textsuperscript{245}, Blattman and Annan (2011, pp.19-21) found female participants saw marked positive progress on both sets of indicators compared to a control group. Specifically women reported 30 per cent fewer symptoms or intensity of PTSD and 30 per cent fewer symptoms or intensity of depression/distress as compared to a 6 per cent reduction and 3 per cent reduction respectively for males. They suggest that in line with other studies that males are often more resilient to trauma in populations with a high exposure to violence and that healing often takes place without psychological intervention. In contrast, women reported higher levels of PTSD and distress/depression at the start of the programme and consequently needed more assistance than male ex-combatants. Furthermore, being exposed to continuing violence and SGBV may perpetuate and further embed symptoms making psychosocial assistance more imperative.

Whilst the majority of women in this research did not comment upon the prevalence of SGBV (seeming very uncomfortable if the topic arose) a number suggested that it was a significant issue because such behavior was exposed during the conflict and male ex-combatants still exhibited violent behaviours. An example of this came from a commander who noted:

Ex-combatant women are facing problems every day. Rape is not just in the war, there are rape cases every day.\textsuperscript{246}

Another WAFF observed:

\textsuperscript{242} Interviewee, participant 3, location 9, 08/02/11
\textsuperscript{243} Interviewee, participant 5, location 9, 08/02/11
\textsuperscript{244} The PTSD scale included symptoms such as nightmares, feeling jumpy, feeling detached and avoiding things that are reminders of trauma.
\textsuperscript{245} The depression scale includes standard symptoms such as feeling sad, fatigued, or having lack of appetite, as well as culturally-specific manifestations and perceptions of depression and distress, such as having your ‘heart spoiled’ or your ‘body feeling dry from worry’.
\textsuperscript{246} Interview with female commander, 22/11/10.
Before the war it wasn’t common for men to beat on women. Men respected women before, but now violence is everywhere to women, everywhere you look. 247

Frances Greaves from a local women’s NGO supplied additional insight into why this violence was more prevalent:

So I believe it has also been a psychological trauma that they went through during the war that has not really been dealt with properly….but again you find domestic violence on the increase also because of the psychological aspect because men are prone to do that when women argue with them…248

Dealing with such violent episodes is often very hard for women who are already vulnerable from their wartime experiences. However, mechanisms are being put in place to strengthen prevention, with opportunities to report incidence of SGBV, local fines and prosecution. Whilst women are speaking out about SGBV in greater numbers, there are still underlying patriarchal mechanisms which have been reinforced through DDRR which make it hard for women to report any attacks and merely reinforces any residual trauma they may be experiencing. This highlights how important psychosocial support is for WAFFs/ex-combatants. It is an integral part of the reconciliation process which can help them to explore their traumatic experiences both personally and within group community structures so that greater understanding, acceptance and forgiveness can take place. It would also help to dispel rumours and explain behaviours from both perspectives and remove emphasis from the personal reform of the ex-combatant and promotes building responsibility towards reconciliation and rehabilitation as a reciprocal process with the community.

Although the rehabilitation and economic reintegration elements of the programme were limited, there was some evidence in this study that the training provided more than just a skill. A key informant who worked for UNDP revealed that the DDRR programme resulted in broader gains. She explained:

DDRR gave them a sense of belongingness, it helped them gain their confidence. 249

Women in both phases said that it gave them the confidence to move away from activities related to transactional sex.

247 Interviewee, main programme, participant 3, location 8, 16/11/10
248 Interview with Frances Greaves, Head of Women’s NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL) and local NGO Voice of the Voiceless, Monrovia, 19/04/10
249 Interview with Shipra Bose, UNDP, Monrovia, 24/11/10
Yes, I felt fine because I know I have something for myself and I don’t have to pass in the street.\textsuperscript{250}

Others became more confident from learning new skills:

Before the war, things were hard, I didn’t know things before the war. I did not know trade, but with the trade I learnt, I can earn something for myself.\textsuperscript{251}

Despite the lack of toolkits, the skills they learnt in demobilisation and reintegration had a positive psychological impact and some stated that they felt good after completing the training. For example, one WAFF stated:

\ldots because I never had anyone to send me to school, learning soap-making made me feel fine.\textsuperscript{252}

Other focus group participants conveyed the same sentiment:

As for me, it did not help me get a job, but it helps me to have pride in myself. At my present age I am out of high school. Even though I do not have a job to do I can go to places where educated people go at least.\textsuperscript{253}

It [DDRR] helped me to come back to my community because I was trained in the camp to be a respectful person, \ldots things that I was doing I am not doing now, I came back I became a changed person, so people are willing to receive me.\textsuperscript{254}

The women felt empowered\textsuperscript{255} through learning skills, because they felt that they had learned something that gave them the potential to earn money and further personal development. Coulter’s (2005) study in Sierra Leone also mirrored this finding as she found women more proud and self-confident post training. Similarly, Soderstrom (2011, p.328) found that ex-combatants in Liberia who gained a ‘trade-identity’ found it easier to win trust from the wider community allowing them to take on positions of representation.

However, this empowerment was somewhat undermined by the poor training in the residual caseload and the lack of toolkits/certificates across all phases which had a converse function of disempowering the women. On one hand, they felt better about themselves and simultaneously they felt worse because they could not use the skills learned. This empowerment-disempowerment condition was summarised by one participant who exclaimed:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{250} Interviewee, residual caseload, Participant 4, location 4, 05/02/11
\textsuperscript{251} Interviewee, main DDRR, participant 5, location 8, 16/11/10
\textsuperscript{252} Interviewee residual caseload, location 3 participant 6, 03/02/11.
\textsuperscript{253} Focus group WAFF, participant 1, location 1, 15/11/10.
\textsuperscript{254} Focus group, main programme, location 1, 15/11/10
\textsuperscript{255} Empowerment is defined here as a process of change through the ability to exercise choice and includes the resources available, the ability to define ones goals and act upon them and the combination of the two that leads to achievements (Kabeer 1999, p.438).
\end{flushright}
I feel fine because it was something to learn for myself and if I had the materials I could make a life. \(^{256}\)

In contrast those women who self-demobilised seemed to exhibit more feelings of low self-esteem as compared to their counterparts that took part in DDRR. When asked if they felt confident many responded that they regretted not taking part:

(... I do not feel proud, because I didn’t disarm or train and I didn’t get any benefits. \(^{257}\)

I can feel bad about myself. I regret my life in the war. Why did I have to kill innocent people for nothing? If I didn’t smoke I wouldn’t have fought cos I not brave. \(^{258}\)

Therefore, both the economic reintegration and the rehabilitation components of the DDRR process in Liberia, had serious flaws in terms of its gender remit and ultimately it did little to actually help women reintegrate. However, during interviews for this study most women reported a general satisfaction with their lives and their relations with the community. This was intriguing as they reflected upon specific social processes as being significant to their well-being and life today. These elements of social reintegration were clearly not considered as a key variable in the gender mainstreaming of DDRR. In order to explain the satisfaction women felt despite the shortcomings of the programmes they underwent the following section will explore the “home-grown” or self administered social reintegration methods that WAFFs/ex-combatants employed to assist them with reintegration.

### 7.7 Conclusion

Drawing upon the experiences of the WAFFs/ex-combatants, this chapter has confirmed that gender mainstreaming within the DDRR process clearly focused on the DD components. Once revised, DDRR programme, did implement a number of programmatic elements that were designed to meet the needs of women and encourage them into the process. However, the study revealed that the reality of actually meeting DDRR requirements were less than compelling. In

\(^{256}\) Interviewee, residual caseload, participant 9, location 8, 05/02/11  
\(^{257}\) Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 12, location 1, 14/02/11  
\(^{258}\) Interviewee, self-demobilised, participant 13, location 1, 14/02/11
other words, while it did little to discourage them from taking part, following demobilisation it did even less to encourage them to stay with a course largely designed for male participants with scant attention to the extant and unfolding needs of the women in the process.

The skills being offered were heavily predicated on gendered presumptions of how women were acculturated according to their pre-war gender roles. There was little if any, female participation, at the programme design stage. Due to insufficient resourcing of the RR components, graduation certificates and toolkits were not readily distributed as promised, and this prevented most women from utilising any skills they had learnt affecting the sustainability of employment. The main body of the programme did little to appreciably change their situation. While there were minimal differences in the gender mainstreaming of the residual caseload versus the main programme, the job market assessment does seem to have been conducted more thoroughly which led to more women using the skills acquired to provide some income. Paradoxically, the women who took part often displayed increased levels of confidence and empowerment, while being simultaneously disempowered through the non-sustainable nature of the skills that they learnt. There was very inadequate attention to psychosocial rehabilitation in either phase and women continued to exhibit signs of trauma and distress. In the main, those women who had self-demobilised had more difficulties with daily existence and expressed regret at not taking part.

However, the majority of the women reported that their lives today were acceptable and although they had no formal employment they seemed content. They reflected seriously on the social reintegration processes they engaged in and suggested that they experienced a reduced sense of stigma and felt mostly welcomed back into the community. In line with comparable studies they displayed resilience rather than rejection. Using Ozerdem’s (2012) conceptualisation of social reintegration, it was revealed that the social networks possessed and operated by the women were imperative in their ease of reintegration and acceptance. This occurred primarily through family and
partners but was seen as significant to their survival. Such networks helped to mitigate threats and stigma, provide emotional and economic support and encourage personal reform of the women. This reform appears to be one of the most important determinants of successful reintegration and often entailed the joining formal religious groups which encouraged the modification of female conduct in compliance with entrenched patriarchal structures.

In most instances, the potential interrelatedness of the returning women and the community was not properly attended to in advance of formal reconciliation activities. Discussions with the community revealed that they mostly accepted the women back but there were some evident significant tensions around perceived problems of drug use and gambling. Gun crime and petty theft was prevalent in some neighbourhoods, possibly due to the unsustainable nature of employment for those that had been through the DDRR process. Finally, some women engaged in civic activities that helped to strengthen trust and relationships with the community.

In summary this chapter provides ample evidence that the women have indeed succeeded in their reintegration and in the main are managing to survive. But the nature of their survival and the mechanisms that allow them to succeed (namely their networks and social structures) owe relatively little to DDRR in its current form. This once again raises questions regarding the assumptions that underpin the design of DDDR, the priorities that arise from liberal peace theory, and in particular, the emphasis on economic reintegration. In terms of actual gender mainstreaming, the focus was steadfastly one dimensional in reintegration, and only evident in the skills training through the offer of ‘gender appropriate’ skills courses. There appears to be no connection with the social factors that are critical to women’s survival, such as personal reform or effective attention to their psychosocial trauma that appears to be enduring for many and is exacerbated by the current prevalence of SGBV. This may be due to the necessity of DDR being underpinned by standardised formulas which prioritise security and economic reintegration. By revising the social reintegration as a composite measure through assessments of family and community, sustainable
employment and civic responsibilities, this study has revealed a more subtle understanding of the realities of reintegration. Considering social reintegration in this composite format in concert with psychological rehabilitation could be an alternative option for successful WAFFs/ex-combatants reintegration.

Furthermore, the personal changes that many women engage in mainly focus on altering behavior to reflect patriarchal dominance. This is utterly at odds with the objective of gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve gender equity. Not including moves towards gender equality of both men and women at the start of the programme, and failure to follow this up through reintegration with the community ensures that women do not know that there is an alternative and are forced to adopt the disempowering behavior patterns shown in this study. An alternative approach to gender mainstreaming which incorporates details of the reintegration potential of existing social structures to advance gender equality issues necessitates the urgent consideration of planners. Attaching gender equality initiatives to the available networks, such as the market women’s group, religious groups and similar organisations may be an intelligent place to start.
Chapter Eight

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction
Over the last twenty-five years the role of peacebuilding in reconstructing countries emerging from conflict, has been developed under a liberal democratic model. The liberal peace approach focuses its attention on democracy, rule of law and economic reform which has a resulted in a set of programmes which reflect this specific rhetoric and have numerous associated limitations. One example of this is DDR’s attempt to create a secure environment by collecting and destroying weapons and assisting in initiatives to reintegrate former soldiers back into society as a productive citizen. The downside with these programmes is that they have tended to prioritise males who are identified as potential spoilers to peace agreements. This stance has been exclusionary to women who have been involved in large numbers in fighting forces and feminist commentators have critiqued the liberal peace approach as being unfairly gender biased as it consistently assigns the role of victim and peacemaker to women despite the many women who fight on the front lines.

Policy modifications however, have lead towards a more targeted attention of women in conflict and peace, particularly with the advent of UNSCR 1325 (2000) and its attendant methods of gender mainstreaming. Whilst many early DDR programmes have been extensively researched to understand the limitations of gender provision, this study set out to assess the gender mainstreaming process specifically in Liberia, which is where the first DDR programme to implement a targeted policy to gender mainstream across all elements took place. So, this study endeavored to gain an understanding of gender mainstreaming from the two distinct and arguably opposing perspectives
of those who plan and implement the programme, “from above” and those who are the beneficiaries of DDRR, “from below”. This hybrid approach facilitates a more comprehensive interpretation of the realities of gender mainstreaming, rather than prioritising the views of the implementer’s views or romanticising those of the local. It also allows women’s experiences of DDRR to be considered as well as taking account of the constraints of the implementers and apportioning blame for any programme failures. This approach reveals much more about women’s actual reintegration and the importance of the social and psychological processes which have been traditionally neglected under a liberal peace designed DDR programme. This final chapter will formulate conclusions about the research questions, will consider the implications of these conclusions in terms of gender mainstreaming, UNSCR 1325 and liberal peace more broadly, and will finally offer some policy recommendations and avenues for future research.

8.2 Gender Mainstreaming of DDRR in Liberia

At the start of this project a series of research questions were posed to address omissions in the study of gender mainstreaming processes in peacebuilding programmes, using the case of DDRR in Liberia as the focus. These questions are as follows:

- To what extent was the DDRR programme in Liberia gender-mainstreamed?
- What were the constraints of the gender mainstreaming process on those implementing its objectives?
- How did gender mainstreaming in DDRR assist WAFFs/ex-combatants with successful reintegration and how does it contrast with those in different reintegration phases (residual caseload) and those that did not take part?
- What other social, economic and psychological mechanisms did the women use to assist their reintegration?
- In light of these findings how does gender mainstreaming in DDR affect gender equity more broadly and what can the experiences of WAFFs/ex-
combatants reintegration in this case uncover regarding the limits of the liberal peacebuilding model and policies such as UNSCR 1325?

How can this information be used to drive policy amendments and practical recommendations for WAFFs/ex-combatants in DDR?

The results of this study will now summarise the answers these questions.

8.2.1 To what extent was the DDRR Programme in Liberia Gender Mainstreamed?

8.2.1.1 Gender Mainstreaming and DDRR: Constraints From Above

This research has revealed that aspects of the DDRR process in Liberia were gender mainstreamed but were apparently inconsistent across the phases of the programme. Initially, the top-down nature of the planning of DDRR (with rumours of it using a template copied from the Sierra Leone programme) meant that the disarmament component excluded many women, due to restrictive entry requirements, and a lack of specific gender budget and gender responsive needs assessments. In any event, due to timing complications, this phase was aborted and in the interim the UNMIL OGA did important work on increasing awareness of women’s concerns and ultimately managed to have the entry criteria altered and the new title WAFF adopted. They also linked with a local women’s group (WIPNET) to implement a countrywide sensitisation campaign. This campaign proved very successful at encouraging women to take part, with over a quarter registered in the revised programme, but the expanded entry criteria also opened the process up to many non-genuine cases which swelled the numbers registered to two and a half times more than the original estimate. And despite all of the efforts of the women’s groups, in some cases it was simply ‘too little too late’ as thousands of women who had already self-demobilised chose to stay away from the process, predominantly due to incorrect information that was in circulation not being dispelled sufficiently during the sensitisation campaign.

The huge levels of proxy cases created difficulties for the implementers of DDRR, most notably with overstretched resources. This forced demobilisation to be cut short which then resulted in insufficient female military observers to help
administer camps, limited psychosocial provision or time to dismantle factional command structures, inadequate monitoring, evaluation and reporting and increased waiting times for reintegration training. Furthermore, as the process had grown coordination difficulties arose between all of the UN agencies and other organisations that delivered the different phases of the programme. That there was no unified understanding of the mandate of UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming and how to apply it to DDRR made implementation even more challenging. It is unsurprising that gender mainstreaming was inconsistently planned and delivered.

All of these issues led to restrictions in provision of gender appropriate skills training that did not reflect the women’s agency through the conflict or address any psychosocial trauma. This inevitably compelled women to revert back to their pre-war gender roles. This study highlighted that whilst there is an expectation that the international community will devise the most appropriate programmes for post-conflict situations, the constant fluctuations of limited budgets, pressure from donors, and restrictive bureaucracy mean that many groups are left trying to protect their own targeted agendas. Since DDR’s focus tends to favour the promotion of security and male ex-combatants, DD often receives the lion’s share of the overall budget to ensure stabilisation. In this tricky climate the OGA achieved significant progress regarding participation of women. Unfortunately, by the time that RR began in earnest finances were severely strained and the sheer number of people to process meant that gender mainstreaming became merely tokenistic. A proper apprehension of these factors helps to provide a clearer picture of the limitations of gender mainstreaming in DDR which can in turn offer a different approach for policy revision.

8.2.1.2 Gender Mainstreaming and DDRR: Experiences From Below

The experiences of WAFFs/ex-combatants who went through the DDRR process were mixed but there were some shared commonalities. Firstly, most found the overall experiences of disarmament and demobilisation to be favourable. Interestingly, it is here that gender sensitivity was most discernible
and produced positive perceptions of those phases. The vast majority felt safe in the cantonments and appreciated regular meals, medical attention and basic counselling provided. They expressed their relief that the conflict had ended and were eager to move forward with reintegration skills training. However, due to the elongated timescales resulting from strained budgets, many women had to wait for extended time periods to access their vocational skills training. Furthermore, since the gender provision in reintegration was more limited and largely gender specific, they were given fewer skills options. They were only given a single opportunity to take part so that if they had to leave (to have a child, for example) they were not given any alternate participation options. Additionally, they received no assistance with their other commitments (mainly childcare), nor were they presented with the graduation certificates and equipment they had been led to expect. This did not vary greatly between phases of the programme. Those that had received the necessary equipment were using their skills to earn their living and those (particularly in the residual caseload) who were engaged in skills which were easy to implement with a high demand (such as hair plaiting) were uniformly better off.

Great levels of frustration were felt as women’s expectations failed to be met and allegations of the corruption of local partners and poor teaching standards were frequent. The result is that today most women who participated in the main phase were not using their recently acquired skills but surviving through the informal economy and most confirm their living conditions were acceptable. Those that went through DDRR had received some kind of empowerment benefit from the training and felt more confident. In contrast, those women who did not go through the process found their daily existence more difficult and virtually all regretted not having taken part. In a couple of cases this had led to women turning to prostitution for survival. In short, the gender mainstreaming of DDRR had little positive economic impact on the lives of most women interviewed for this study.

What was striking in a small sample however was that, just over half still seemed to be still suffering from some lingering trauma in line with other
comparable studies. As the psychosocial provision in the rehabilitation phase was inadequate, it did not actually assist women with their unique problems or help with their healing. Trauma stemming from conflict tends to be more pervasive for women than men. In other reintegration programmes where recognised psychosocial assistance was prioritised, women seemed to respond very well, displaying reduced symptoms of PTSD and MDD following extensive counselling. Had there been appropriate specialised attention to help Liberian women with their unique experiences they too may have adjusted more easily to civilian life.

8.2.2 So, how did the Women Reintegrate?

Exclusions from effective gender provision and a focus on economic factors did not in the main help women to reintegrate. Nevertheless, they had all managed this process. With only negligible levels of stigma, most were surviving and relatively content with their lives. This research confirmed that DDRR did not play a significant part in their reintegration. Rather it was their social structures and traditional networks that seemed to be critical which is where this study advances our understanding in women’s social reintegration. Given the underlying liberal peace model with its bias towards security in DD and economic reintegration in R, the process paid scant attention to social reintegration and made little provision to psychological rehabilitation. In order to explore the concept of social reintegration this research used the framework postulated by Ozerdem (2012), which incorporates the three dimensions of family and community, sustainable employment and civic responsibilities.

Of those who had taken part in DDRR, just over three quarters confirmed they had found it easy to reintegrate and almost all said that they now felt trusted in the community. They experienced little, stigma for their involvement with fighting forces. This study found that the social networks utilised by women helped to mitigate potential hostility by providing a buffer to stigma and an avenue to social acceptance. In particular, those women who had returned to families found that this helped to reintroduce them to the community and provided for them economically whilst they waited to access their vocational skills training.
Families and communities also helped emotionally with their residual trauma and with health concerns. Those who did not have these avenues of support seemed to find it harder to be accepted and experienced greater levels of stigmatisation.

Despite a lack of overt stigma such as verbal and physical abuse, some women claimed that they found it hard to find a civilian partner due to their prior association with military groups. This type of stigma was a delicate issue but many overcame it by committing to partners who were also ex-combatants. Such relationships provided another vital source of support. Other women used tribal and factional networks to their advantage when re integrating, although most women wanted to break their ties to groups with whom they had served (only 2 wished to rejoin if war resumed) with most preferring to engage in personal reform to move on with their civilian life. This personal reform took many forms, most notably a conscious decision to behave with the passivity and obedience traditionally associated with pre-war gender ideologies based on patriarchal structures (stemming from secret societies and traditional teachings). However, in the cities traditional religious practices were being shunned (as evidenced by a lack of traditional cleansing ceremonies) in favour of imported religious teachings, such as Pentecostal and charismatic branches of Christianity and Islam. As a result many women purported to have ‘changed their ways’ by being baptised as “born-again” Christians.

The problem with embracing these reintegration strategies is that they force women to regress to pre-war gender subordination to men and prevent them from capitalising on any degree of female emancipation they may have achieved through the changing roles and identities they assumed during the conflict. The failure of DDRR gender mainstreaming to address issues of structural gender equality and to provide tools to contest pre-war gender stereotyping has left women with little choice other than to create a new sense of shared identity by joining such structures. While formal religious adherence is obviously not inherently damaging to women as such, the patriarchal hierarchies underpinned by and perpetuated through such organisations are a
clear hindrance to women’s advancement towards equality and personal agency. Although, there were some examples where DDRR proved successful and where women were making a living, exerting their own agency and contesting traditional hegemonic masculinities. These women unfortunately remained in the minority. Had reintegration assistance fulfilled its espoused objectives and provided these women with sustainable employment, numerous examples of women becoming more empowered to challenge dominant structures might have been evident. There was certainly a sense that many women wanted to move forward, educate themselves and provide better opportunities for their children but that their present circumstances did not allow for this to happen. There were numerous female role models including the president and the women’s movement that led the Mass Action for Peace and many women in this study talked about their new rights and hopes for the future.

Operating in the informal trading sector had both positive and negative benefits for these women. Firstly it provided many of them with another form of social support through both the market women’s associations and the opportunities to save in women’s-only saving clubs (susus). But the uncertain nature of this work also led many women and men to engage in more lucrative criminal activity, with reports of armed robbery being frequent. Receiving communities complained of gambling and crime as a source of tension between ex-combatants and the community at large. There were few examples of official DDRR community reconciliation DDRR other than radio broadcasts and no systemic support at all for the more familiar indigenous reconciliation methods, such as, the Palava hut system. If there had been more attention to this it may have done much to strengthen community and ex-combatant relations. There was some support for the contention that involvement in their civic duties such as community work, voting and engaging in justice measures such as the TRC, can help with the social reabsorption of ex-combatants.
8.2.3 Implications for the Limitations of Theory and Gender

Mainstreaming

Liberal peace theory is first of all liberal which means that the theory is shaped by 18th Century ideals concerning rights that are held by individuals in which the emphasis is on freedom, participation, private property, equality of opportunity and protection from oppression. The foundations of the liberal peace argument are built around Kant’s proposition that democracies tend not to go to war with each other. Democracies develop an interdependent relationship and when countries are at peace they build linkages through trade for example, which themselves become an incentive not to go to war.

Liberal peacebuilding ideas were reflected in the 1992 UN Agenda for Peace. These argue that respect for democratic principles at all levels will help to alleviate many of the causes of conflict in countries and societies that have been at war. The principles set out a sequence of operations which suggest that DDR should precede and be followed by elections and that after elections, work can begin on strengthening government institutions. These political initiatives in the liberal peace approach are accompanied by market reforms that in particular facilitate trade between countries given that trade linkages are supposed to reduce the likelihood of conflict ensuing between nations.

As noted in the review of liberal peace approaches in Chapter two, critics of liberal peace theory have focused on questions about sequencing of actions that are implicit in the theory with certain authorities such as Collier and Rohner (2008) arguing that economic reconstruction should be the first priority. Secondly, the pace of programmes is a further issue.

The notion that disarmament and demobilisation and other peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures are themselves a phase which can be undertaken fairly quickly and completed before other reforms begin, has also been criticised. Authorities such as Lederach suggest that peacebuilding should continue for at least as long as the conflict took place and in most cases longer.
A third general criticism of liberal peacebuilding is that the argument that it is a procedure that is imposed rather than a process that evolves from the bottom up. This top down perspective can hence lead to the failure to address local preoccupations and local concerns. Very frequently this top down approach, feminist detractors have suggested, reinforces existing patterns of masculine domination. In particular understandings of conflict from such perspectives fail to acknowledge the presence of women in war not simply as victims but also as active agents (or both) and hence DDR programmes fail to take the needs of WAFFs/ex-combatants into account. Furthermore specific policies that attend to women in conflict and peace settings such as UNSCR 1325 and associated gender mainstreaming initiatives, have been found to reinforce these masculine ideals and the victim status of women.

The final criticism of liberal peace is that it has a culturally biased normative quality in which particular western understandings of democracy and freedom can easily lend themselves to the extension of imperialist interests. It allows for the liberal agenda to be transposed to states emerging from conflict as way of global order and economic supremacy for those imposing the system.

In this thesis, the Liberian case has generated substantive evidence to support and develop these criticisms of liberal peace theory and gender mainstreaming. One key problem with the sequencing implicit in the liberal peace agenda - in which initial attention is focused on DD and the establishment of democratic government - is that demobilised combatants, particularly WAFFs find that there is no market for both the skills that they have acquired through warfare as well as those learnt in their reintegration training. Again and again in the thesis, it became clear that the women who were interviewed had failed to construct livelihoods around the skills that they had acquired. This is because the dominant paradigm influencing the way that economic reconstruction would take place was driven by beliefs concerning the regenerative capacity of markets. It was believed that simply equipping women with skills would enable them to reintegrate into Liberian social and economic life. In fact, the testimony from the informants suggested that market reform in Liberia had created few
opportunities for the deployment of the skills the women had acquired. As a consequence they had to rely on informal trading sectors (see p.221) and traditional patriarchal relationships. A more planned approach to economic reconstruction might have been more helpful. This might have involved transitional measures in which certain sectors of economic life might have had to be stimulated or protected by non-market means. Using donor money to employ ex-combatants in reconstructing infrastructure (roads, social facilities and buildings) might also in the long term have provided more security and opportunities.

In Liberia the sequencing implicit in the liberal peace agenda in which the provision of democratic government becomes such an urgent pre-requisite for other reforms, helps to explain why the DDRR programmes were initially very rushed and undertaken in a perfunctory way. The programmes borrowed a blueprint from Sierra Leone and the focus of the programme revolved around securitisation and the DD components. In order to focus on the development of a democratic government disarmament was prioritised. The need to calm the security situation so that elections could be held, blinded planners to the longer term challenges of reintegration. This led to the failed disarmament in Camp Sheffelin (p.178/9) and restrictive entry requirements put in place for women. The fact that women were not deemed a security concern delayed attention to their needs. By the time a gender advisor was appointed and the entry criteria widened, the issue of proxy cases (see page 185) had become a reality which affected budgets and gender provision for the life-span of the programme. This impacted on WAFFs/ex-combatants at many levels from the limited amount of female peacekeepers to assist them in demobilisation; a lack of monitoring and evaluation to review progress and amend programmatic elements; and a lack of specific needs based rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

The evidence collected in this research also helps to support the critiques of the effects of imposed and top-down planning of DDRR (see section 6.3.1). Despite lip service to the notion of gender mainstreaming in which in theory attention to and the protection of women’s needs should be addressed in all aspects of
DDRR, the reality was that attention to women’s needs was cursory. This was a consequence arguably, of biases in the planning that reproduced masculinised understandings of warfare and peace. There was little engagement with local women’s groups. This resulted in the failure initially to acknowledge the multiplicity of women’s roles through restrictive entry requirements (p.178-182); the inadequacy of the resources directed at reintegration and training (section 6.4); the absence of any serious consideration for the kinds of skills they most needed (section 6.4.3); the failure of the programme to acknowledge specific requirements around child rearing and related issues (p.216); the lack of attention to psychosocial issues (section 6.4.4./7.6); and the failure of democratic reform at the local level to address institutionalised issues of gender inequality. This is all the more surprising in a national setting in which an active women-led peace movement existed (based around markets and churches) and which had the programmed been designed in a more locally participative way could well have made a telling contribution to the design.

There is plenty of evidence in this thesis about the way in which DDRR neglected particular and local concerns. What the gender mainstreaming process failed to do was place women’s actual situation at the forefront of the programme. As such, it did not consider the significance of the local context and the diverse roles played by women associated with fighting forces. Scholars such as Cohn et al (2004, p.137) have been critical of the UNSCR 1325 and the international structures for perpetually problematising women by insisting upon perceptions of their absence or victimhood as the defining characteristics of women’s connection to a peace and security agenda. They also agree that UNSCR 1325 fails to take note of the dominance of masculine identities and male over-representation within all peace and security programmes.

This is indeed a valid assertion, but in order to understand the reasons behind such over-representation it is necessary to examine the context and the way in which this happened. Returning to this study, masculine identities were prioritised in the Liberian DDRR because the majority of ex-combatants were male fighters. In contrast (in this study at least) the majority of the women
performed ancillary roles and as such were not seen as a security threat. Their roles were essentially menial such as cooking, washing, carrying and availability for sex (p.209/10). They had little power over this system that perpetuated the hegemonic masculine lines as established in pre-war society. Since most were forced to take part their agency was denied in the process. Ultimately they were victims (and had I asked I suspect they would have defined themselves as such). It is all too easy to see how in a situation where local context was not considered in detail how women were reduced to an analogous victim status in the post-conflict environment and, by extension, in DDRR.

This analysis is not intended to condone the characterisation of women as passive victims lacking agency which is essentially a gross inaccuracy, but rather to understand how the sustained prioritisation of security issues under a liberal peace designed programme gave rise to this misrepresentation. Nor does it mean that all assumptions of female victimhood should be automatically contested. After all, there were a proportion of women who considered themselves combatants, but an assessment of the gender mainstreaming of DDRR in a hybrid manner has allowed us to understand why decisions were made and to offer realistic recommendations for future DDR processes. This study revealed numerous cases of women who enlisted of their own volition, navigating the process for their own benefit and becoming front-line fighters or commanders. Here we see a branch of agency frequently omitted through policy and programing for women in the post-conflict context, but as they are often minority or exceptional cases, and budgets are stretched to the maximum, it is unsurprising that need and provision is determined by the homogenous majority who do consider themselves to have been victims.

Therefore, the issue that needs to be better targeted in the gender mainstreaming of DDR programming for women is the homogeneity of the categories to enable DDR to be more effectively tailored to the actual needs of women based on skills and abilities whilst being mindful of the local context. We should acknowledge that not all women are victims and equally not all women have exerted their agency when taking part with armed forces. What is needed
is a more nuanced form of inclusion for women and a similar apparatus for men. Indeed, as was evident from this research in Chapter seven, some women would consider themselves to have been a victim and others quite the opposite. The assumption that all women necessarily occupy one category or the other results in the type of flawed gender mainstreaming of DDRR which unfolded in Liberia.

In addition, ignorance of the local history that helped to explain the initial causes of conflict leads to a failure to appreciate differences in gendered perspectives and generalised attitudes. For example, in this research key decisions about where cantonments would be located, food served and courses delivered were decided by planners outside Liberia which were complex to amend in the face of local objections. The choice of skills in training programmes was decided in ignorance of local economics, needs and structures. Job market assessments were inconsistent through the phases of the programme (p. 220). Women were taught skills which served to strengthen local, informal markets. This helped them to trade in the informal sector but the planning of DDRR did little to encourage job creation or training in more formal sector-led markets. Men were taught skills which were more akin to formalised employment. This distinction reinforced women’s position in society as subordinate. Furthermore, ignorance of local conditions and the resultant influx of proxy cases (see section 6.3.3.) and associated budgetary constraints (section 6.4) helped to explain supply problems and shortages of toolkits (p.216-220).

The most important consequence of an imposed top-down agenda was the failure to appreciate and hence exploit the potential of existing social networks to which both women and men had belonged to and which had been durable through the war (section 7.7.1.1). These networks could have been supported to help speed up their reintegration into social, economic and political life. Such networks included secret societies, religious groups and evangelical churches and the pre-existing female headed market trading groups. This is not to say that such networks necessarily always act in a way which may have emancipated women because they also had the potential to draw women back
into patriarchal social life. However, the point of this criticism is that initially DDR programmes were designed without any acknowledgment of the local existence of these networks on the ground.

Critiques of liberal peacebuilding suggest that its priorities are mainly directed to maintaining existing patterns of global power and economic supremacy. There is some resonance in this thesis with this claim. In particular in the background of the women’s lives suggests the reconstruction of an economic life that essentially reproduces features of pre-war patterns of exploitation. The women are not being offered fresh opportunities, merely skills which might enable them to survive. Essentially what is happening is that liberal peacebuilding with respect to women has operated in a socially conservative fashion so that it reinserts WAFFs/ex-combatants back into society which reinforces pre-existing patterns of social domination and social inequality. Arguably, reproducing such patterns helps to maintain liberal status as dependent country occupying a marginal position in the global economy.

That this is the way that DDR works is a tragedy. There is plenty of evidence in this research that these women entered the programme with high hopes and expectations and that passage through DDRR would bring not just security but self-reliant independence and a better life for them and their children. The end of the war represented a moment of opportunity for women. There were large numbers of WAFFs/ex-combatants who through their experiences in the war had become detached from their older pre-war social relationships. Some of these women had acquired skills, experience of leadership and confidence. In Liberia around these women there existed a social world that had for a while become fluid allowing women to exercise leadership in political life for the first time, not just at a national level but also in the activities of a popularly based peace movement. A DDR programme directed at the democratisation of Liberian social life should have taken the potential of this period seriously so as to enable the WAFFs/ex-combatants to have achieved their aims and in so doing shift social relations between men and women over the long term.
However, because the DDRR prioritised the economic elements of reintegration and the market (which is supposedly gender-neutral) this merely consolidated traditional gender divisions by pushing women towards the informal economy. Certainly, gender mainstreaming is extremely challenging in a post-conflict context. As Raven-Roberts (2005, p.45) suggests, attempting to combine gender equality issues as a platform for policy action and response, with the challenge of rebuilding a state emerging from war is ‘nigh on impossible’. Nevertheless, this is precisely what gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is determined to achieve via a blueprint for a common policy framework. The core problem with the approach taken to gender mainstreaming under a liberal peace agenda, is that equality concerns become watered down and women’s issues subsumed in more pressing security matters, such as persuading former combatants to relinquish their guns and ensuring they are otherwise occupied.

Given the truncated timescales, under-resourcing and focus on security, achieving gender equity seems very challenging in a DDR programme but that does not mean that attempts to address this imbalance should be abandoned altogether. Understanding both men and women’s experiences within the conflict and their situations afterwards is critical to ensure that highly gendered assumptions which stereotype men as naturally violent and instable and women as naturally passive and constrained are not perpetuated (Jennings 2009). Perhaps treating men and women equally in economic reintegration programmes would be a start but it is still important to note that trauma is often more pervasive for some women, and that they have specific needs (childcare and health) which fundamentally differ from those of men.

Moreover, the timescales and pace struggling to eradicate deeply entrenched gender divides and unequal power relations through DDR within an approximate five-year period is unrealistic as it envisions the cessation of gender issues as a goal. Ensuring gender equality is a long-term and continually evolving process which continues beyond the post-conflict phase as the country develops is vital. Therefore, gender programmes need to be conceptualised to endure over many
years and merely use DDR as a starting point. Initiatives put into place in DDR must be continued as the country re-establishes itself if it is to have any chance of a meaningful impact on the realisation of gender equity. The following section will provide a detailed outline of practical and policy recommendations for gender mainstreaming in DDR.

8.3 Policy Implications

The results of this study offer a set of clear policy and programming implications that might be considered when planning gender elements of DDR programmes in the future. These will now be outlined.

Clear Definitions of Gender Mainstreaming in DDR

This study has shown that the concept and definition of gender mainstreaming in this context requires significant amendments. Those responsible for designing DDR programmes must be far more transparent in their objective to bifurcate the dual concepts of gender balance and gender mainstreaming. There needs to be a specific reference to women rather than just underlying gender equality assumptions. Furthermore, both approaches must be acknowledged and accepted by all involved in the design and delivery of DDR programmes so that women are not disadvantaged in the process.

Consider Gender Concerns in DDR from the Initial Assessment Phase

As was seen in Chapter six issues for female ex-combatants need to be reviewed before the DDR programme is designed. This involves gender specialists being part of initial assessment teams and ensuring that baseline studies and risk assessments are conducted to help inform the planning and budget allocation for gender mainstreaming (p.177). Organisations facilitating such assessments need to help provide access to WAFFs/ex-combatants to conduct such research. These assessments should aim to reveal any special considerations that need to be made for vulnerable groups such as women and girls so that the planning is sensitive to actual rather than perceived needs. Such measures could include considering security concerns in DD, health concerns specific to women, childcare issues, cultural context for women,
stigma and trauma concerns and requirements for RR. Furthermore, women’s NGOs and stakeholders in local peace initiatives should be identified as potential partners.

**Consider the Multiplicity of WAFF/Ex-combatant’s Roles and Needs**

This research has revealed that in contrast to male ex-combatants, women who are involved with fighting forces tend to occupy multiple identities and roles (pp.206-210). Often very complex, these roles see women and both victim and perpetrator. DDR programmes need to pay closer attention to the varying needs of WAFFs/ex-combatants in the DDR process and not plan for them as a homogenous group or as either combatant or camp follower as was the case in Liberia. Data on the types of roles and approximate numbers should be gathered during initial assessments to assist in driving such categorisation. There should be some flexibility in the options available to women that are sensitive to these differences.

**Establish Appropriate Budgets for Gender Mainstreaming**

Through ensuring a thorough and comprehensive assessment prior to the planning of a DDR programme allows gender specialists to advise on an appropriate budget to conduct all phases of the programme. Unlike in the Liberian situation, this budget should be allocated appropriately through all phases of the programme and not just consumed by DD. Allocation of budget lines to cover specific interventions for WAFFs/ex-combatants should be safeguarded by gender specialists and not swallowed into the programme at large. If this does not take place a situation like the Liberian DDRR could ensue where limited budgets had a resultant affect on timescales; monitoring, evaluation and reporting; planning and implementation of skills training; and a lack of psychosocial provision (section 6.4)

**Offer Appropriate Training For Implementing Partners**

As part of the commitment to setting a joint agenda for gender initiatives, Njoki Wamai (2011, p.62) advocates gender sensitive needs assessment of potential partners and agreement by both national and local level staff on strategies of
engagement and capacity. However, at an institutional level the responsibility for ensuring that gender elements are properly carried out must remain a collective responsibility. Unless there is adequate training within all offices of UN missions and with implementing partners relating to gendered elements of DDR programmes, effective application will be almost impossible. At present, this takes place to a limited extent by training with key staff and through ‘gender resource packages’ which facilitate awareness of gender issues for peacekeeping personnel (UN DPKO 2005, p.4). Such training needs to be on going and consistently refreshed so that new partners and peacekeepers have guidance on gender issues. Therefore, an increased budget for gender training should be allocated.

**Increase Co-ordination Between Implementing Partners**

Once a transparent agenda and strategy for gender initiatives is set, there needs to a more concerted commitment towards coordination between implementing partners. In such a crowded market place and in a programme of the scale of DDR, the potential for the sharing of best practices, successes, failures and challenges should be a priority. In the first instance one larger agency should undertake the lead to ensure regular meetings and the monitoring and evaluation of the gender elements. More importantly, this needs to take place throughout out the duration of the programme and not just during the initial stages, as was the case in this research (pp.194-5). Regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of gender mainstreaming initiatives shared between partners would assist in streamlining procedures, avoid duplication and enable appropriate implementation strategies and funding to be put into place. A system for the accountability of all operation members should also be agreed and instituted.

**Work With Local Women’s Groups/NGOs**

Working with local women’s groups and NGOs to plan and implement DDR programmes is vital. As UNIFEM (2004) suggest women’s organisations can provide a window into local perceptions of returning WAFFs/ex-combatants and their unique needs and dangers. They are also a useful source for
dissemination of information regarding DDR programmes as was seen in the Liberian case when WIPNET were engaged in the sensitisation campaign for DDR (section 6.3.2). This is important as such groups tend to be respected within communities and can dispel myths and rumours that circulate about DDR programmes which can have a significant impact on participation as the Liberian example is a testimony to.

**Advocate for more Female Peacekeepers**

Although female peacekeepers are growing in numbers they are still in the minority. The UN (2012) estimates that 3% of military personnel and 10% of military police are women. The presence of female peacekeepers is vital in DDR programmes especially in the initial DD phases. This is particularly the case in demobilisation cantonments where, as it was seen in this research, female peacekeepers are necessary for security of female only camps. They are also critical for uncovering issues such as SGBV and helping to make the force approachable for women. Fast tracking of female peacekeepers should be encouraged for deployment peacekeeping missions and particularly for DDR purposes.

**Set Appropriate Timescales for DDR and Gender Concerns**

The results presented in this thesis revealed that timescales were an issue in the Liberian case. With rushed disarmament programmes and packed reintegration training centres (p.191) the timings of elements of the programme were problematic. DDR processes need to acknowledge the imperatives of appropriate timescales and set more realistic and achievable goals. In the short-term, commitments to gender balance should be written into all stages of the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the process. A separate demarcated budget to help realise these aims is vital, along with the provision of appropriate metrics of success in terms of the indicators, impacts and outcomes of gender balance. Once participation of women in the programme has been ensured then the more conceptually complex process of gender mainstreaming can begin to take place over a much longer period. In other words, gender
balance needs to be put in place during disarmament and gender mainstreaming commenced during demobilisation and reintegration.

The advantage of taking a long-term perspective is that it allows for regular monitoring and evaluation of DDR, that it permits the programmes to change in accordance with the country’s development, such as, implementing follow-up programmes in line with poverty reduction strategies for example. DDR cannot be designed on an inflexible blueprint and a sensitive consideration to the context is vital to the success of the programme (Muggah 2010, p.4).

A further advantage of taking this long-term approach to RR is that it gives more of an opportunity for follow up programmes to take a bottom-up approach and focus on reconciliation with the community as well as economic empowerment. There is often a dilemma about the ethics of providing continued resources to ex-combatants without assisting communities. This can lead to considerable disquiet and this approach provides an opportunity to move this forward.

**Focus Financial Assistance Towards Economic Independence and Job Creation**

When planning DDR specific labour market analyses should take place as soon as possible which reflects an understanding of local gender norms and standards of gender appropriate labour as well as recognising changes that have occurred during the conflict (UNIFEM 2004, p.34), This should consider the gendered nature of roles for women as well as the implication of women entering male dominated roles.

Furthermore, as other authors (Hill et al 2008; Walton 2010) suggest, there needs to be a focus on post-DDR job creation. Employment creation should ideally be based on local structures and networks already in place and work with the training received in reintegration. In this study the pre-existing and durable social networks that the women utilised for successful reintegration were vital (section 7.7.1.1). To capitalise on these and help women with business skills and micro-credit loans to set up small enterprises within these
structures, would allow them to utilise what they already know and have an immediate impact while they wait for retraining or attend school. Similarly, in more rural areas, strengthening agricultural skills and access to land in line with development initiatives like the PRS would ensure longer-term commitment.

**Consider the Context**

Both empirical chapters of this thesis provided evidence that the local context was not considered in great detail rather that a blueprint approach to DDR was adopted. Greater attention to the local context needs to be considered more carefully. Reintegration initiatives need to be embedded into the community structures where possible, to give both the community and the ex-combatant, ownership over the process. By highlighting participatory processes and establishing community development initiatives that both the WAFFs/ex-combatants and community at large can engage in, allows for mutual respect and understanding. This helps develop support networks and trust and allows the economic potential of training programmes to be harnessed. Such participatory approaches are preferable as they encourage the community and ex-combatants to develop their own agenda for reintegration. The difficulty, however, is the cost and time of these initiatives, which in the immediate aftermath of the conflict are perhaps unrealistic. Lengthening the reintegration period would allow for such initiatives to be more fully implemented making a lasting impact on sustainable peace.

**Consider a Social Reintegration Model**

This research has demonstrated that not using grassroots knowledge and expertise damages DDR’s opportunity to capitalise upon structures that already function well. For WAFFs/ex-combatants, spending more time using familial, partnership, factional and religious networks could advance aspects of DDR; so they need support to engage with such networks. Such relational networks could also be used to disseminate the correct information regarding the DDRR programme and this might encourage more women to register and receive their benefits. Additionally, more sophisticated knowledge of the socio-economic data of the ex-combatants such as their geographic origins, family situation,
education and past occupation would be an advantage in the planning of realistic reintegration support (Collier et al 2003, p.160). Establishing reintegration assistance around such existing social structures allows a visibility within the community and sense of agency which would provide an alternative and more emancipatory approach for post-conflict women, in contrast to having to adopt subservient behavior or join a religious group for acceptance.

**Pay greater attention to psychological factors**

The enduring symptoms of war trauma that women spoke of (section 7.6) should be addressed in a more systematic way. Firstly, an appropriate budget and timescale should be allocated to provide regular counselling during reintegration in school or training. This should be regularly monitored and evaluated. It is unrealistic to expect highly trained counsellors to be in situ in a post-conflict environment but provision for the training of counsellors in trauma healing should be incorporated into the strategy. Psychosocial attention should continue to be provided in demobilisation with consistent and systematic counselling sessions provided for all involved in reintegration. A more generous budget should be earmarked for women given that they tend to experience more resilient trauma symptoms.

**Embed Issues of Structural Inequality Earlier in DDR**

Since the aim of gender mainstreaming is gender equality this process needs to commence much earlier in DDR where it could be used as a vehicle to begin to break down hierarchical patriarchal structures. One example would be to avail of the captive audience within the cantonments and reintegration training centres to make inroads into issues of inequality. Another would be addressing issues of SGBV which occurred during the war and potentially will occur in its aftermath. Since rape is seen as a weapon of war, DDRR could be used to ‘disarm the mind-set’ of rape and SGBV from the perpetrators, using education programmes which work with those men being demobilised to try and break the

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259 Research has shown that when there is violence against women after conflict it is often more frequent and severe (Cockburn 2007, p.212).
cycle of SGBV. The involvement of men as agents of change in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is critical in reversing gender stereotypes, changing male attitudes and challenging flawed masculinities (Rhen and Johnson-Sirleaf 2002, p.5). This work can be further developed during reintegration training and within the transitional justice mechanisms.

8.4 Future Research

Both the findings and omissions from this study suggest areas of future research.

1. From a micro perspective the prevalence of religion to ex-combatants reintegration merits greater exploration. Understanding in detail how religious affiliations (in particular Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity) helped with both men and women’s social acceptance would elucidate the strategy of personal reform. Exploring whether they have been involved in religion before, what their involvement was during the conflict, why they decided to join/return afterwards, how they chose their church and how they benefitted would provide greater understanding of the social processes involved in reintegration. Is there a difference between those that have become Pentecostal Christians and those that have become Muslims? Moreover, are the presumed patriarchal structures prevalent within these orders or do women actually perform a more significant role? Is it a method for social mobility? Finally, former commanders often use the church as avenues to continue to maintain power and there are numerous examples of notorious commanders becoming pastors. What influence does this have? Why do women not lead religious groups in the same way as men?

2. Understanding the role of traditional teachings, such as secret societies, and the manner in which they assist with reintegration and social acceptance (particularly in rural areas) would be a useful contrast to more modern practices of the formal non-indigenous religions found mainly in cities. Do these traditional practices hold the same function as religion? Do they both suppress women’s advancement?
3. A social network analysis of WAFFs/ex-combatants in a community which would enable us to assess systematically the relative importance and strengths of the different strands in their webs of social relationships. Using a social network analysis alongside other methods of capturing data on social reintegration such as social capital measures and other participatory rural appraisal methodologies as outlined by Bowd and Ozerdem (2013), would help to build a more comprehensive understanding and measurement of social reintegration.


E


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N


O


Parsitau, D. (2012) 'Agents of gendered change: empowerment, salvation and


Persson, M. (2012) 'Demobilized or remobilized? Lingering rebel structures in


Puechguirbal, N. (2010a) 'Discourses on gender, patriarchy and Resolution

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UNMIL (2010c) *Women in Peacekeeping in Liberia*, Monrovia: UNMIL.


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Z


APPENDIX A

Partnership Agreement between Helen Basini of the Centre for Peace and Development, University of Limerick and The National Ex-Combatant Peace-Building Initiative (NEPI), Monrovia, Liberia

The research being conducted is investigating the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme in Liberia. Specifically it is interested in women’s experiences of this process in the two phases of reintegration; the main large-scale programme from 2003-2006 and the residual caseload programme that was run in 2008-2009 by UNDP. It is hoped that through engaging in the research the women involved will have a chance to tell their stories of the DDRR process, which will be useful to inform policy and programming in other post-conflict zones and may help the women to heal. The research will take place on two occasions (at the end of 2010 and at the beginning of 2011, dates tbc).

In order for this research to be undertaken Helen Basini (the researcher) will work in partnership with NEPI. It is hoped that the research will be of mutual benefit to NEPI in their advocacy work with war affected communities and victims. It is anticipated that as part of this collaboration that NEPI will be able to provide the following assistance in order to facilitate the research;

- To act as gatekeepers/facilitators to research subjects (namely ex-combatant women) for interviews and focus groups
- To assist with translation where necessary
- To provide advice and guidance on interaction, security and ethical issues
- To provide the use of their office on occasion for focus groups and interviews
In return for their assistance NEPI can expect the following from Helen Basini;

- The assistance of NEPI will be acknowledged in all thesis, conference papers and publications arising from the research
- The findings will be made available to NEPI in an accessible format for use in their work
- The findings can be consolidated into a policy brief for NEPI to use in their advocacy work
- The findings can be made into a leaflet for NEPI to use
- A presentation will be made to subjects at the end of the research to explain findings

In order to facilitate this relationship and research and to enable activities, resources will be made available up to a maximum limit of $1000 (receipts will be required). This may also include small travel donations where appropriate and necessary for research subjects when engaged in interviews and focus groups.

For NEPI Inc. Liberia

Rev. Modre Gyuqo Zaurai, 04/10/2010

Helen Basini

Postgraduate Student
University of Limerick 04/10/2010
## APPENDIX B

### Summary of Data Collected WAFFs/Ex-Combatants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus Group interviews</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WAFFs/ex-combatant women, pilot</strong></td>
<td>3 x 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Red Light</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>(interviews not used in analysis)</em></td>
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<td><strong>WAFFs main programme</strong></td>
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<td>Buzzi Quarter</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4 x 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Logan Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 x 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amagashi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 x 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>NEPI Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 x 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tubmanburg</td>
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<td><strong>WAFFs residual caseload</strong></td>
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<td>Amagashi</td>
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<td><strong>WAFFs self-demobilised</strong></td>
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<td>Logan Town</td>
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<td>1 x 1</td>
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<td>NEPI Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 x 1</td>
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<td>Waterside</td>
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<td><strong>Community members</strong></td>
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<td>Buzzi Quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tumatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men (old and young)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Duala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Used for Analysis</strong></td>
<td>59 WAFFs/</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex-combatants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternate reintegration programma</strong></td>
<td>10 x 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tumatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>72 WAFFs/</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex-combatants</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Association and Role</td>
<td>Date of Interview</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Allan Quee</td>
<td>PRIDE</td>
<td>09/02/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Off the Record</td>
<td>International NGO</td>
<td>09/02/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Francis Kai Kai</td>
<td>Chief of Civil Affairs, UNMIL</td>
<td>18/02/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Off the Record</td>
<td>Worked for NCDDRR</td>
<td>22/02/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Oscar Bloh</td>
<td>Heard of Search for Common Ground</td>
<td>22/02/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Cecelia Brattan</td>
<td>SGBV Legal Expert</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Paul Allan</td>
<td>ICTJ</td>
<td>23/02/10</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>Worked for UN during DDR</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>K. Johnson Borh</td>
<td>NEPI</td>
<td>24/02/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>John Hummel</td>
<td>The Carter Centre</td>
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<td>11/12.</td>
<td>Off the Record</td>
<td>Worked for NCDDRR now UNDP</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Sekou Konneh</td>
<td>Head of VOA Cantonment. Monrovia</td>
<td>27/02/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>14/15.</td>
<td>Rev. Bartholomew Colley and Samuel Duarko</td>
<td>NEPI/ University lecturer</td>
<td>Feb 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Counsellor Felicia Coleman</td>
<td>AFELL</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Frances Greaves</td>
<td>Voice of the Voiceless, local NGO</td>
<td>19/04/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Wilfred Grey-Johnson</td>
<td>Director of UN Peacebuilding Fund</td>
<td>20/04/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Fr. Gary Jenkins</td>
<td>Catholic Priest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>Chris Lang</td>
<td>LM action</td>
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<td>Gender ministry</td>
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<td>22.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Shipra Bose</td>
<td>Gender Advisor UNDP</td>
<td>24/11/10</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>NGO Worker</td>
<td>Head of Development YMCA</td>
<td>26/11/10</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Carole Doucet</td>
<td>UNMIL Senior Gender Advisor</td>
<td>26/11/10</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Viaba Flomo</td>
<td>Trauma and Healing Programme Lutheran Church women’s officer</td>
<td>04/02/11</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>John Dennis</td>
<td>Formerly NCDDRR</td>
<td>04/02/11</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Awanah Flee</td>
<td>WIPNET (local NGO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Lucy Page</td>
<td>CEP (local NGO)</td>
<td>15/02/11</td>
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</table>

In addition I had a further fifteen meetings/interviews in Sierra Leone which were useful for regional context but not directly applicable to this study.
APPENDIX C – Details of Field Locations

Monrovia Location 1 – Buzzi Quarter

Buzzi Quarter is a residential area in Monrovia. It is called Buzzi Quarter because 75-80% of inhabitants are from the Loma tribe in Lofa County and Buzzi is a local term denoting this tribe. Buzzi Quarter is densely populated because it is next to the Barclay training centre (BTC) barracks where DDRR took place so many people stayed in the area to be near to their training. The water is free which many inhabitants cited as the reason for moving there.
Monrovia Location 2 – Logan Town
Located on Bushrod Island towards the west of Monrovia this community is one of the busiest and largest communities in term of mixed commercial activities. The inhabitants are mostly engaged with the sale of basic commodities and services and it is occupied by numerous tribes due to displacement during the conflict. It was a popular refuge during the war and many people decided to stay in the locality.
Monrovia Location 3 and 4 – Amagashi and Barnersville

These communities are located next to each other in the Somalia Drive area of Monrovia. Amagashi was a stronghold of LURD forces in the last phase of the conflict in 2003 and consequently the inhabitants are mostly Mandingoes (Muslim) who made up the majority of this militia group. It is a popular transit point for Mandingoes who are travelling to the capital and there are numerous guest-houses, hotels, motels and garages. Barnersville is one of the communities which the Liberian Government built to provide low cost housing and is almost entirely residential. It is inhabited by different ethnicities and people who live in this area often have formal employment in the government and other agencies.
Monrovia Location 5 - Waterside/West-Point

Waterside (West Point) is located on a peninsula, which juts out into the Atlantic Ocean, and prior to the war was one of the biggest and oldest commercial centres in the country. There is a still a large market and lots of commercial activity. It has a very large population of mixed tribes. This area has many environmental and sanitation problems as well as overpopulation and very high crime rates so considered to be dangerous especially at night.
Monrovia Location 6 - Duala

Duala is another large community on Bushrod Island. It borders one of the main thoroughfares to the city and there are many small and large-scale enterprises in the area. The inhabitants are predominantly Mandingoes and it was another LURD stronghold in the conflict.
Monrovia Location 7– Red Light (Pilot Study)

The “red light” is the bypass to Caldwell and Bushrod Island going from Careysburg to Monrovia that was also constructed circa 1976-77. It is a business and trading area and is the biggest trading centre in Liberia selling foodstuffs, building materials, clothes and dry goods. It is densely populated and expanded after the war as rents were cheaper attracting those who had moved to the city. In addition many people come from the rural areas to purchase goods so it has a large transitory population. Red Light has some good schools like the Salvation Army school and St. Krzrto catholic school.

Residential area in Red Light

Red Light Trading Area
Location 8 - Tubmanburg, Bomi County

Tubmanburg (also known as Bomi) is named after President Tubman and is about 80km to the north-west of the capital. There is a good road and it takes about 2 hours in a vehicle to reach the centre. It is predominantly occupied by two tribes the Via as well as Gola. There are mining opportunities (iron ore and diamond) in the area at Weasue and Lofa Bridge and the Blue Lake mineral water company is a major employer for the area. Most of the citizens survive on small scale farming while their commercial activities are done in Monrovia particularly in Duala.

Central Tubmanburg

The Blue Lake on the outskirts of Tubmanburg
Location 9 – Tumatu, Bong County

Tumatu means ‘Under the News’ and this community is an extension of the original town of Salala and is approximately a 2.5/3 hour drive from Monrovia due north in lower Bong County. The new community was predominantly those that wanted to practice Islam and they established this settlement so that they could worship together. Most people who live here are involved in agricultural production and coal burning and have largely embraced the residential agricultural reintegration programme (detailed in Chapter seven) and the new settlers to the area.

Tumatu Reintegration Centre (refectory)

Rice Fields – Tumatu Reintegration Centre
Traditional Dwellings – near Tumatu Bong County

Location 10 – NEPI Offices Downtown Monrovia

Location 11 - Monrovia Women’s Market, Community Empowerment Project,
Paynesville
Paynesville is an example of a conurbation that has expanded since the end of the conflict and covers a large geographical area. It is one of the largest commercial centres to develop and is approximately 17km from the centre eastwards along the Robertsfield Highway. Many people come to trade in this area since it is on the outskirts of the city which begins beyond the Redlight market. Some of the residential areas are quite rural with poor road access. Due to the transitory nature of the people in the area the ethnic background of inhabitants is mixed.
**APPENDIX D**

Revised Interview Topic Guides – WAFFs/Ex-combatants Data Collection

Interview Guide 1 – WAFF General Background Info

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewers:</th>
<th>____________________________________________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview no:</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>____<strong><strong>/</strong></strong> 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Times: start:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>finish:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything Unusual Occur:</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Information:</td>
<td>____________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONSENT (to be read to interviewee)**

- My name is Helen Basini (research assistant’s names also) and I am trying to find out what women think of the DDRR process and what your experiences were like and your opinions of it.
- I am a researcher at a university in Ireland and your responses may help to make the DDRR processes in other countries better for women. Unfortunately this work will not be able to offer any assistance to former combatants in Liberia but your answers are very important to help others.
- The answers that you give will be confidential and we will not tell anyone your name.
- I have a list of questions that I would like to ask you and would be very happy if you could answer the accurately as possible. If you do not want to answer any question that is OK.
- If you want to stop the interview then that is fine too and we cannot go ahead with the interview without your permission.
- I would like to tape record the interview but if you are unhappy about this we will not record the interview or stop the recording.
- You can ask me any questions you have at any stage.
- **Is that alright?** Y/N  *(Circle one)*
- **Can I record the interview** Y/N  *(Circle one)*
- **Did you take part in DDRR?** Y/N  *(Circle one)*  *If all “Y”, then proceed.*
1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born and raised?
3. What age are you?
4. To which ethnic group (tribe) do you belong?
5. What education have you received during your life?
6. What job do you do? (Are you trading? (or at school?)
7. Are you married? Boyfriend?
8. Do you have children? How many?
9. What age were you when you joined the armed forces/militia?
10. What did you do before you joined the armed forces/militia?
11. Which group did you fight for? (Name all)
12. Did you have a special rank/title? i.e. a commander (if commander how many in their troop? Were they girls?
13. Why/how did you join?
14. What year was it?
15. What was your role? Did you have a gun?
16. Did you learn any new skills? What were they?
17. How long did you fight for?
18. Do you live in the community that you lived in before your joined?
19. When did you do DDRR?
20. Where did you do DD?
21. What did you pick for Reintegration training? Was it what you wanted?
22. How long did you train? When? Where?
23. Did you graduate?
24. Do you use the skills now? (if not why?)
25. Did you get a toolkit at the end?
26. Were you given advice on what training to pick?
27. Who encouraged you to go into the DDRR process?
28. What were your expectations of the DDRR process beforehand?
29. Did it give you confidence going through DDRR? How?
30. Did you feel safe in the camps?
31. What kind of psychosocial support did you get in DD? And RR? Was it useful?
32. Did you get any medical support?
33. Is there anything else you would like to add?

In addition in Data collection 2 included further questions:
1. Why did you not do RR until the residual caseload 2008-9?
2. How did you find out about the new RR programme?
3. Did you get careers guidance counseling? If yes, was it helpful?
4. Did it give you confidence going through DDRR? How?
5. What do you think is the most important thing that you learnt in DDRR?
6. Do you find it hard to sleep and do you have bad dreams about the war?
   (find out what they are about if they do)
7. Would you rather forget about the war and move on or would you rather tell your story and talk about your experiences?
8. Do you wish you still had counseling? If yes, why?
9. Do you feel confident in yourself?

**Impact of DDRR Today (Interview 2)**
1. When you did DDRR, did the organisers give you what they promised?
2. Do you live in the community that you lived in before you joined?
   If not why not? If yes ask if they have family there?
3. Do you think it is easier to reintegrate into a community where there is a family connection? If yes, why?
4. Has reintegration into a community been difficult? How?
5. Were you involved in any local ceremonies (cleansing rituals) to welcome you back into the community?
6. Were you worried about going into the DDRR process – in terms of what other people thought of you?
7. Do people in your community trust you?
8. Is life harder for you now than before the war? Why?
9. What are your living conditions like now?
10. How many times a day do you eat?
11. If they were to come back, what could the organizers of the DDRR process have done to make your life better now?
12. Do you still see other women you fought with and your commanders?
13. Do they help each other with support?
14. Where else do you get support from when you need help? (explore family, friendships, tribal affiliations)
15. Would you consider rejoining an armed group if war broke out again?
16. Is there a lot of violence towards women in your community?
17. Is life better generally for all women now than before the war?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Self-Demobilised
1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born and raised?
3. What age are you?
4. To which ethnic group (tribe) do you belong?
5. What education have you received during your life?
6. What job do you do?
   Are you trading? (or at school?)
7. Are you married? Boyfriend?
8. Do you have children? How many?
9. What age were you when you joined the armed forces/militia?
10. Which group did you fight for? (Name all)
11. Did you have a special rank/title? i.e. a commander (if commander how many in their troop? Were they girls?)
12. Why/how did you join?
13. What year was it?
14. What was your role? Did you have a gun?
15. Did you learn any new skills? What were they?
16. How long did you fight for?
17. Why did you decide to not take part in the DDRR process?
18. Did you tell the community that you were an ex-combatant? (Explore this answer)
19. Did you return to the same community that you lived in before the war? If no why not?
20. Do you think it’s easier to reintegrate into a community where there is a family connection? If yes Why?
21. Do you regret not taking part in DDRR? If yes, why?
22. How do you earn a living today?
23. What are your living conditions like now?
24. Do you think you would have had better job opportunities if you had taken part in DDRR? How?
25. Is life better for you today than it was before the war? How?
26. Would you consider rejoining an armed group if war broke out again? Why?
27. Do you still see other women you fought with and your commanders? Do they help you out with support?
28. Where else do you get support from when you need help? (explore friendships and tribal affiliations)
29. Do you find it hard to sleep and do you have bad dreams about the war? (find out what they are about if they do)
30. Would you rather forget about the war and move on or would you rather tell your story and talk about your experiences?
31. Do you feel confident in yourself?
32. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Tumatu Reintegration Programme**

**Background (interview 1)**

1. What is your name?
2. Where were you born and raised?
3. What age are you?
4. To which ethnic group (tribe) do you belong?
5. What education have you received during your life?
6. What job do you do? Are you trading? (or at school?) Do you have a garden?
7. Are you married? Boyfriend?
8. Do you have children? How many?
9. What age were you when you joined the armed forces/militia?
10. Which group did you fight for? (Name all)
11. Did you have a special rank/title? i.e. a commander (if commander how many
12. Why/how did you join?
13. What year was it?
14. What was your role? Did you have a gun?
15. Did you learn any new skills? What were they?
16. How long did you fight for?
17. Did you do DDRR?
   When? And where? If not why not?
18. Why did you come to the Guthrie plantation? When was it? (if appropriate?)
19. What job did you do there?
20. What was life like in Guthrie before you went to Tumatu?
21. How did the local community react to you being at the rubber plantation?
22. Why did you decide to take part in the Tumatu programme?
23. What did you learn?
24. Do you think the Tumatu project was better than DDRR? How?
25. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Tumatu Training (interview 2)**
1. What did you like about the training programme at Tumatu?
2. Tell me about the reintegration skills training? What did you learn?
   How was it useful?
3. Did you have Individual counseling?
   If yes – how was it helpful? Do use the skills you learnt?
4. Has your confidence increased since you were involved in the Tumatu programme? How?
5. Did you return to the same community that you lived in before the war? If no why not?
   Do you have family there? Do they help you?
6. Have you been accepted back into that community? Do they trust you?
7. Are you using the skills you learned in the Tumatu project to earn a living? (What are you doing? Do you have your own land?)
   Are you self-sufficient with your farm/garden? (do you need to do other trading/jobs)
8. What tools were you given at the end of the training?
9. What are your living conditions like now?
10. Is life better for you today than it was before the war? How?
    Do you live peacefully?
11. Would you consider rejoining an armed group if war broke out again?
    Why?
12. Do you still see other women you fought with and your commanders?
    Do they help you out with support?
13. Where else do you get support from when you need help? (explore friendships and tribal affiliations)
14. Do you need more assistance with running your farm from those that ran the training programmes? What specifically
15. Do you find it hard to sleep and do you have bad dreams about the war? (find out what they are about if they do)
16. Would you rather forget about the war and move on or would you rather tell your story and talk about your experiences?
17. Do you wish you still had counseling? If yes, why?
18. Is there a lot of violence towards women in your community?
19. Is life better generally for all women now than before the war?
20. Is there anything else you would like to add?
APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP – WAFFs/Ex-Combatants (Data Collection 1)

Moderator: ____________________ Notetaker: ___________________________________
Other: __________________________________________________
Focus Group no:_________________________ Focus Group Code: _________________
Location____________________ No in Group:____________________________________
Date: _____/ _____ 20 10      Times: start________ finish:___________ ______________ __
Language: _____________________________________________________
Start Pg No in Transcription Pad where interview is written: ______________________________
Anything Unusual Occur:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Other Information:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

To be read out to the Group

Explanation of Procedure
You are invited to take part in a discussion as part of research conducted by Helen Basini for
the University of Limerick in Ireland. The discussion is designed to help us understand you
knowledge and beliefs about women’s experiences of the DDRR process in Liberia and this
group discussion is a vital part of the process.

Risks and Discomforts
Some of the issues that will be discussed may be uncomfortable for some people and if you do
not want to answer a question then you do not have to. Your participation is voluntary and you
may withdraw at any time. You may also ask any questions if you are unclear about the
procedure.

Benefits
You will not personally benefit from this research but your answers and this discussion may be
very important to help develop programmes for other ex-combatant women in other DDRR
programmes.

Confidentiality
All of the information shared in this focus group will be kept confidential. The session will be
tape recorded and converted into a written format. Both recording and written transcription will
be kept secure and you will not be identified personally in the transcription or analysis.

Consent
Do you agree to take part? (get verbal consent from all in group) Y/N (Circle one)
Can we record the focus group? Y/N (Circle one)
Ground Rules
Before starting the focus group we need to set group rules……
  o There are no right/wrong answers
  o It’s OK to disagree
  o Please respect what each other has to say
  o It’s a discussion so let everyone join in
  o Please don’t interrupt or have side conversations

Focus Group Questions
1) Let’s begin by introducing ourselves to the group by telling us your first
   name and how many people live in your house?
2) I want to ask the group about the DDRR programme – can you tell me
   why you decided to take part in DDRR?
3) As a group discuss what you think were the best bits of DDRR?

Ranking Exercise – to help you look at this in more detail I would like
you to help with a ranking exercise. There is a list of different aspects of
the DDRR programme and I would like you as a group to discuss which
is the most important and put them in order with 1 being the most
important…. 
- ask them to explain their answers – why did they put them in that order
4) Therefore – following on from that what were the worst bits of DDRR
5) Did you find that going through DDRR helped you get a job?
6) Did it help you reintegrate into your communities?
7) What is life like for you today in your communities?
8) Is life different for you as an ex-combatant women?
9) I would like you to go back to the end of the war in your mind – if you had
   the opportunity again would you have gone through DDRR?
10) If you were going to set up a DDRR programme for ex-combatant women
    in other countries what would you include?
11) Is there anything else you would like to add?
In addition in data collection 2 these additional questions were added for WAFF focus groups:

1) Why did you not do your reintegration until 2008?
2) Are you more confident after having gone through DDRR? Do you feel empowered?
3) Do you think about the war a lot or have you moved on?

Focus Group Self Demobilised Women

1) Let’s begin by introducing ourselves to the group by telling us your first name and how many people live in your house?
2) I want to ask the group about the DDRR programme – can you tell me why you decided not to take part in DDRR?
3) Do you wish that you had taken part? (explore answers)
4) What could have been done to have encouraged you to take part?
5) Do you think you would have a better job?
6) Does the community know you were an ex-combatant?
   a. If yes – has the community accepted you?
7) Do you feel confident in yourself?
8) Do you think about the war a lot or have you moved on?
9) Is life harder for you today than those women who went through DDRR? How?
10) If you were going to set up a DDRR programme for ex-combatant women in other countries what would you include?
11) How would you encourage women ex-combatants to take part?
12) Is there anything else you would like to add?
Focus Group Men

1) Let’s begin by introducing ourselves to the group?
2) I am interested in what life is like today since the war. Can you tell me about the difficulties you face that you did not face before in your day to day living?
3) I want to ask the group about women’s role today. Can you tell me about how women’s roles have changed since the war?
4) Can you tell me about women who were ex-combatants, are they different today from women who were not? Why?
5) What does the community think of them (ex-combatants)?
6) Have they accepted them?
7) Do these women have jobs and are happy in your opinion?
8) Can you tell me about what it was like for women who took part in DDRR? Do they use the skills they learned?
9) What difficulties do you think they faced?

Ranking Exercise – to help you look at this in more detail I would like you to help with a ranking exercise. There is a list of different aspects of the DDRR programme and I would like you as a group to discuss which you think is the most important FOR WOMEN and put them in order with 1 being the most important….
- also ask them if the order is the same for men – what would they change.
- ask them to explain their answers – why did they put them in that order

10) Are the women that took part in the DDR programme empowered and more confident?
11) Do they still experience trauma and do you think they need counselling?
12) If you were going to set up a DDR programme for ex-combatant women in other countries what would you include?
13) Is there anything else you would like to add?
Focus Group Community

1) Let’s begin by introducing ourselves to the group?
2) When the ex-combatants came to live in your community, what did you do to help them resettle?
3) What were the main problems that you were called upon to sort out?
4) Were there worries from other people in the community about them coming?
5) Did people welcome back the ex-combatants or were they frightened of them?
   a. If they had fears what were they?
6) Today are the ex-combatants still living in one group or do they live scattered in the community?
7) Are there problems arising from their presence?
8) Have they made friends with their new neighbours or do people complain about them?
9) Are there any marriages between ex combatants and local community members?
10) Are the ex-combatants productive members of your community? How?
11) Have you learnt anything from them?
12) Is there anything else you would like to add?

Focus Group Tumatu Graduates

1) Let’s begin by introducing ourselves to the group by telling us your first name and how many people live in your house?
2) I want to ask the group about the DDRR programme – can you tell me why you decided not to take part in DDRR? (assuming that they didn’t and went to Guthrie)
3) Do you wish that you had taken part? (explore answers)
4) What could have been done to have encouraged you to take part?
5) Do you think you would have a better job?
6) Tell the group what it was like living at the rubber plantation in Guthrie?
7) Were you happy to go to the Tumatu Agricultural project?
8) What were the best bits of the Tumatu Agricultural project?
9) Have the skills helped you earn a living?
10) Have the skills helped you reintegrate with the community? How?
11) Is life harder for you today than those women who went through DDRR?
12) If you were going to set up a DDRR programme for ex-combatant women
    in other countries what would you include?
13) How would you encourage women ex-combatants to take part?
14) Is there anything else you would like to add?
APPENDIX F

Interview Topic Guide Questions – Key Informants

(Select relevant questions depending on interviewee)

Go through Information and Consent Forms

**DDRR and Women in Liberia**

1. Can you tell me what you know about the DDRR process?
2. Were you involved?
3. Were women asked what their needs were for DDRR during the planning and consultation? If not why not?
4. Who was asked? Were women at the grassroots consulted?
5. Were women included in high-level negotiations? If yes - What were they asked?
6. To what extent were the findings mainstreamed into implementation? How, through what process?
7. Was there follow up done regarding if DDRR met their needs? Could improvements be made?
8. What did women receive that was different from men in DDRR?
9. Did they get counselling and medical assistance?
10. Were they restricted in terms of what reintegration training they could choose? Could they select jobs traditionally conducted by men?
11. Did most women return to their original communities? If not why not?

**Women and DDRR – Budgets**

1. How were the funding streams planned and implemented for DDRR?
2. What provision in terms of funds were allocated to special groups such as gender? How were decisions made regarding what aspects of DDRR to fund?
3. Who ensured these monies were delivered and implemented?
4. Were there funding difficulties of the DDRR programmes?
5. What aspects were under-funded and what implications does this have for DDRR programmes socially, economically, politically, developmentally?
6. What are the implications of not funding the gender specific aspects of DDR?
7. What are the implications for underfunded groups and peace-building?

Women and DDR – Stigma
1. Were/are women ex-combatants in Liberia stigmatised being former-combatants?
2. Why do women feel stigmatised for being in an armed group?
3. What are men’s perceptions of women in fighting forces? Was stigma of women addressed in DDRR with men?
4. What are community perceptions of women in fighting forces? Was it addressed in community sensitization programmes?
5. What do you think can be done to modify the effects of stigma to increase participation rates in DDRR?
6. What could have been done to make reintegration more successful for women?

DDRR and Women – Other
1. Does the role that a former women combatant has within an armed group affect how they proceed through DDRR and how well they reintegrate? Why is this?
2. Do you think the ethnic group that the women belonged to affected how well they reintegrated?
3. What kind of society are women being reintegrated into? Do traditional roles still apply for women or our boundaries blurred since the end of the conflict?
4. Does this vary with ethnic group? Geographical location? Religion?

General – Women in Liberia
1. What are the main issues that women face today in Liberia?
2. What is being done by the government and community to overcome these?

3. How are SGBV and rape being tackled in Liberia?

4. Are women becoming more empowered since the conflict? In what ways?

5. Is there still a high prevalence of secret societies and initiations in Liberia? Can you tell me about it? Are they still a significant force in modern life in Liberia?

6. Do you know of any incidences where women ex-combatants have turned to crime to survive in the post-conflict environment?

7. Do you have any other contacts that may be able to assist me in my research?
APPENDIX G

Information and Consent Letter

DEPARTMENT of POLITICS and PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

February 2011

Dear

I am a doctoral student at the University of Limerick in Ireland and am currently engaged investigating the gender aspects of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) of former combatants in Liberia. This research requires me to explore the issues around this topic and to seek the opinions of experts in the field and former combatants. The research is being supervised by Tom Lodge who is the Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick.

I would like you to consider volunteering to take part in this research as your views are of particular relevance to the study. If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview at a time and place convenient to you, before the 30th November 2010. Interviews will be audio recorded and will last for no more than 1 hour.

During the interview you will be asked to discuss such issues as:

- The DDRR process and its various phases
- Gender issues, gender mainstreaming and DDRR
- Post-conflict reconstruction
- The role of women in the conflict
- The role of women in peace-building, conflict transformation and transitional justice
- Sexual and gender based violence and the issue of trauma for ex-combatant women

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may choose not to answer any of the questions put to you during the interview. Further, you may choose to withdraw from the exercise at any time without giving a reason. The interview should not pose any risk to you. In the days following our interview, I will produce a typed account of our discussion. If you wish to check the accuracy of this account, I will arrange to meet with you for this purpose, or email you the transcript, before the 31st March 2011.

I will be the only person with access to the recording of our interview and the recording and typed account will be stored in a locked cabinet at the University of Limerick. After a set time period they will be destroyed. If required, your name and any other non-essential information that might identify you can be removed from the documents but will only be done if agreed at the interview or after. I will check with you on the day of the interview regarding your preference.

If you have any questions regarding this research, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please don’t hesitate to contact me, Helen Basini at the University of Limerick by email on helenbasini@mac.com or helen.basini@ul.ie or on +231 (0) 76109118 (Liberian cell). You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof. Tom Lodge at +353 (0) 61-213085 or tom.lodge@ul.ie. We would be happy to answer any queries you may have.

I will contact you again in one week to seek your decision. If you are happy to participate in this interview, I will ask you to sign the attached consent form, which details your rights as a participant. Although the study doesn’t benefit you directly, it does offer you the opportunity to voice your opinions on DDRR that will feed into the research and hopefully have important policy implications. I would like to thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this project.

Yours sincerely,

___________________________
Helen Basini

Telephone 353-61-202633     Facsimile 353-61-202572     Web: http://www.politics.ul.ie
Consent Section:

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in doctoral research entitled “The Gender Dimensions of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Liberia”.

- I am 18 years of age or older.
- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

By signing below you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Participant Information sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

<table>
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<th>I would like a copy of the recording of the interview.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like a copy of the transcript of the interview.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Printed Name of participant

Signature of participant Date

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent, you may contact

The Chairman of the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee
c/o Anne O’Dwyer
Graduate School
University of Limerick
Limerick Tel: +353 (0) 61 202672
APPENDIX H

Coding Matrix – Fourth (Last) Round of Coding

The screenshots below from NVivo display the coding hierarchy that was developed during the numerous phases of coding. There were many codes generated and therefore there are multiple screenshots to show the entire structure. Each screenshot follows on from the one above. The highest level (or parent codes) are furthest to the left of the screen, and the corresponding number of sources and references. Under these parent codes are a series of related sub-codes (or the child codes) that are displayed at levels to the right and underneath. This structure helped to drive the discussion in Chapters six and seven.
### Phase 4 Coding

#### General Planning info
- **Residual Completed Planning**
  - Sources: 3
  - References: 21
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 12:52
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  - Modified On: 11/10/2012 17:51
  - Modified By: H

#### Demobilization Planning
- **Disarmament Planning**
  - Sources: 1
  - References: 1
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
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  - Modified On: 11/10/2012 16:28
  - Modified By: H

#### Demobilization Planning
- **Reintegration Planning**
  - Sources: 4
  - References: 6
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
  - Modified On: 11/10/2012 17:19
  - Modified By: H

#### Research fatigue
- **MILFAF and ex-combatants Voices**
  - Sources: 2
  - References: 3
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
  - Modified On: 09/06/2013 20:49
  - Modified By: H

#### Demobilisation
- **Combatants**
  - Sources: 12
  - References: 11
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
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  - Modified By: H

#### Childcare issues
- **Healthcare**
  - Sources: 2
  - References: 12
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
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#### Medical Attention
- **Psychosocial Support**
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#### Training advice
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#### Demographic Information
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#### Frequency of seeing
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#### New skills learned in life
- **New Skills Learned in Life**
  - Sources: 2
  - References: 12
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
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### Phase 4 Coding

#### Gun Skills
- **Leadership Skills**
  - Sources: 18
  - References: 22
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
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#### Leadership Skills
- **Other Skills**
  - Sources: 18
  - References: 22
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
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#### Smuggling and Drinking
- **UNIFAF in group**
  - Sources: 42
  - References: 48
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
  - Modified On: 09/06/2013 21:02
  - Modified By: H

#### Comrades
- **Dissenter**
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  - References: 16
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  - Created By: H
  - Modified On: 10/06/2013 20:14
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#### Dissenter
- **Dissenter**
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  - References: 16
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#### Economic Reintegration
- **Current Guidance for Ex-Combatants**
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  - References: 20
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#### Current Guidance for Ex-Combatants
- **Criminal Record**
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  - References: 16
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#### Criminal Record
- **Rape**
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#### Rape
- **Looting**
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#### Looting
- **Looting and Theft**
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### Phase 4 Coding

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#### Skills Training Plan
- **Unemployment**
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#### Unemployment
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#### Crime
- **Unemployment**
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#### Unemployment
- **Living Conditions Today**
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  - References: 48
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#### Living Conditions Today
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  - References: 48
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#### Living Conditions Today
- **Positive Stories of DDRR**
  - Sources: 7
  - References: 12
  - Created On: 27/01/2013 20:52
  - Created By: H
  - Modified On: 27/01/2013 21:02
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#### Positive Stories of DDRR
- **Skills Training Plan (DDR)**
  - Sources: 26
  - References: 38
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#### Skills Training Plan (DDR)

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## Phase 4 Coding

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